



Sheboygan Area Chapter

Happy Easter

April Newsletter 2017

Student to speak on Building Bridges between Cultures

Our April meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, April 12**, in order to avoid Maundy Thursday church services. The speaker for this evening will be Muhammad Usman Rasheed, an exchange student from Pakistan, who is attending school at Sheboygan Falls High School. He is spearheading an effort to break down stereotypes and misconceptions related to Pakistan and Islam. Rasheed is a Muslim, and he says the religion is one of peace and mercy. He has found the people in America to be friendly and accepting. He has given presentations at his school ranging from discussions about the history of Pakistan to full song and dance numbers inspired by the culture of his country. He says that when he returns home in June, his mission will flip from spreading the culture of Pakistan to educating his friends and family about American culture.

The menu for the evening will be broasted chicken, beef tips, twice baked potatoes and gravy, sweet peas and baby carrots, salad bowl, rolls, and beverage. Dessert will be provided by Judy and Mike Slawny.

Social hour, 5:30; dinner, 6:30; program, 7:30 pm.

The cost of the dinner is \$16.00 per person. To make reservations, please make out a check to PTP-Sheboygan and send it to Esther Weiss at 1426 N. 15th St., Sheboygan, 53081. **Deadline is March 27.**

The board will meet at 5:00 pm on Wednesday, April 12 at the Elks Club. Please call Bob Quasius at 451-8565 if you need to be excused from the meeting.

Coming Events



- Apr. 12** (Wed night) Chapter meeting at Elks Club
- May 11** Chapter meeting at Elks Club
- July 18** Middle School students leave for Germany
- Aug. 17** Chapter picnic in Howards Grove (note that 5-8 PM this is a Thursday evening)
- Sept. 14** Chapter meeting at Elks Club
- Oct. 12** Chapter meeting at Elks Club

Meet Jeremías Meier

If you attended the March 9 meeting, you met our newest exchange student from Córdoba, Argentina. Jeremías Meier (Jere) arrived on February 25 and is staying with Andy and Laura Kittelson and family. He is attending South High School and likes his classes. He has always wanted to study in the U.S. and has been studying English for 8 years. Jere says he wanted to be an exchange student so he could “see the American lifestyle up close, not just as a tourist, but by actually living the culture.” His future plans include attending law school in the U.S. In Argentina he played baseball and he says he is “the only Argentinian who is bad at soccer.” He has two sisters back home in Córdoba, and his hobby is reading. His favorite subject in school is English. He has noted that there are a lot of Spanish-speaking people here and that Americans go to bed very early. Jere will be here through mid-July and will participate in commencement ceremonies as a senior at South High School. That is one big advantage the Argentinian students have over the Esslingen students. Attending graduation is a unique American experience. Jere will be here until the end of July.



PTP This newsletter is produced monthly for members of the Sheboygan, WI People to People Chapter, which is affiliated with People to People International. Newsletter items should be submitted by the **15th of the month** to Ann Keckonen, 1542 Golf View Dr. E., Sheboygan, WI 53083 or by Email to akeckonen@charter.net. Our website is www.ptpsheboygan.org

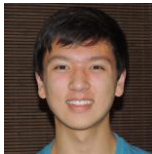
Kittelsons and Jeremías



Andy and Laura Kittelson are hosting Jeremías Meier from Córdoba, Argentina. They encourage all chapter members to make an effort to get to know him. If you would like to host Jere for a day or an evening, please contact Laura Kittelson at 803-9768.

Exchange Students in Germany

We have three exchange students in Esslingen right now, and they just completed a “crash” course in German with Beth Hejl. When Beth is not helping our students to learn German quickly, she is teaching German lessons to refugees from Syria and other countries. On one of the last days with our Sheboygan students, she invited three of her refugee friends to visit Esslingen and talk to the Sheboygan students. After that meeting, Nat Werth, a sophomore at Lutheran High School, wrote a very thought-provoking blog, and he has given permission for it to be shared with the chapter.



Thank you, Nat, for sharing your thoughts

“Okay, I understand that the United States can't just let anyone across its borders because there wouldn't be enough jobs to support the sudden influx of immigrants, possibility of terrorism and whatnot else. But the Syrian refugees that I got the privilege to talk to today were probably some of the nicest and hardest-working people that I have met so far in Germany. They were the kind of people that I would *want* in my country.

Take for example Ahmar and Asaad. They have both been in Germany for 16 months and speak nearly perfect German. They are currently both taking classes in Horb to further their education. A question that I asked was, *Warum haben Sie Syrien verlassen?* or *Why did you leave Syria?* Since we were speaking in only German, I could only understand the gist of what was being said, but luckily I had Ms. Hejl to clarify the details. The answer to the question “Why leave?” was very clear, however; to not get killed and to not have to kill others. Ahmar had said that the war is not as simple as one side fighting another, but rather *hundreds* of sides

all fighting each other for different reasons. Because of this, Asaad said that, as a Syrian, there isn't really a country “identity” per se due to the corrupt government and various groups with all of their different agendas. So if he were to have gotten “drafted” he wouldn't really have been fighting for his country, but rather for a cause that he may not even believe in or agree with. Asaad also said that he left because he wanted to start a family and be able to further his education. I found it particularly interesting that Asaad and Ahmar both had relatives that were forced to fight in the war because they were not accepted as a refugee into any country. As a result, they were killed. They died, and I'm sure many more have died, fighting for a cause that they didn't even believe in, because someone in the first world said that they didn't want to give someone else the opportunity that they were born into.

The story of Abdul also struck me as pretty cool. Abdul had helped the revolution against the corrupt Syrian government originally by providing medical help. He fled and came to Germany when the rebels started dividing amongst themselves and things were starting to get hairy. Abdul has been in Germany for 16 months as well and is hoping to be able to study to be a doctor, not for his own benefit, as yes, he could make a lot of money being a doctor here in Germany, but rather to go back to Syria regardless if the war is over or not and help people. He wants to do this because (1) it is not easy to currently receive an education in a crumbling country, and (2) to go and help replace the many doctors that are *leaving* due to the war and instability. Sure, he's using tax dollars to receive his education, but his selfless attitude and the help that he's going to give to people is something that no government could ever hope to pay for.

I also found what they thought of the United States very interesting. They said that before the immigration ban, refugees that got accepted into America were very lucky as it is the most favored country by refugees because of its many opportunities and freedoms. The immigration ban has created many obstacles even for current refugees living in America already. For example, Ahmar has a cousin who is currently living in Madison, WI and his cousin cannot visit Germany because he would not be allowed back into the States. Another thought that they had about all of the other countries getting involved in the war, is that they are the ones sending in the tanks and soldiers into the country. Sure, they may be helping a little, but their opinion was that they are only making the war more deadly.

Before this interview I had no opinion on immigration, but now I definitely can say that I know what *both* sides are thinking.”



Summer chapter picnic

The summer picnic will be held on the evening of Thursday, August 17th, from 5 PM to 8 PM at the Howards Grove Village Hall Community Center. The address is 913 S. Wisconsin Drive (Hwy 32). Please enter at the back door, lower level.

The cost is \$6 per person, paid at the door. The menu will include smoked pulled pork sandwiches prepared by Dale and Mitzi Stoltzman. Each family is asked to bring a dessert if your last name begins in A through L, or a salad if your last name begins in M through Z.



A picnic sign-up sheet will be placed on each table at the May 11th People-To-People meeting. If you are not attending that meeting, but wish to attend the picnic, please call Dale or Mitzi (after May 3rd) at 920-565-3756.

Please put this date on your calendars now. We are trying a Thursday evening instead of a Sunday afternoon in the hope that more people will be able to attend.

Another successful brat fry

Rich Miesfeld reports that our 2017 was a very successful event, and the exact numbers will be sent out to chapter members when they are available. Henry Schoen thanks everyone who pitched in with the following message:



“A big THANK YOU to the brat fry committee: Jon & Ann Keckonen, Esther Weiss, Lynn Rogers, Rich Miesfeld, Char Gumm, Tom Hammond and Anna. With the help her friend

Martha and our newest member Lindsay Ortega, Anna is going out with a bang; this was her last year in charge of the wine & cheese raffle. Thank you to Curtis Hancock for his wonderful entertainment. Lastly I would like to thank everyone who gave of their time and generous donations. Thank you everyone!”



Anna Schoen also wrote a message of thanks: “To all chapter members and friends: Thank you for your contributions of wine, cheese, sausage, baskets, and dollars. Your monetary contributions enabled us to fill out the baskets with crackers, cookies, and unique items to make each basket special. A special thanks to Lindsay and Martha who spent many hours helping fill 79 baskets, in addition to donating several baskets themselves. Your assistance in making up the attractive baskets was invaluable. A special thank you also to the wonderful raffle basket volunteers, who sold, sold, sold those tickets, enabling us to break last year’s record! Awesome job! We are also grateful to our corporate friends: Sargento, Masters Gallery, Gibbssville, Salon Sase, and Kohler Waters Spa for their donations.

Anna



These are just a few of the photos showing the fun we all have at the brat fry.



Students learn about sister city

During the first two weeks our high school exchange students are in Esslingen they attend a class to learn the basics of German as well as getting acclimated to life in Sheboygan's sister city. The following pictures show some of the "assignments" and fun they have had in the last two weeks.

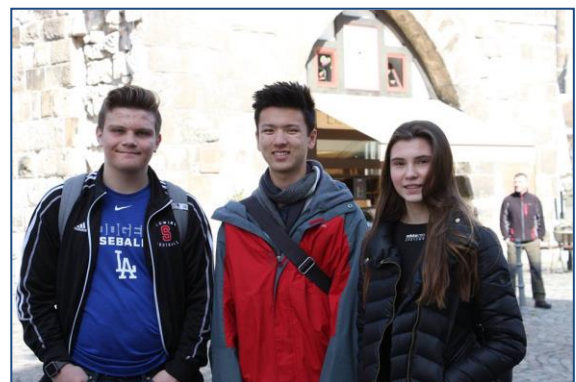


Beth Hejl reports that the students have been very attentive in class and have been eager to learn as much as they can in two short weeks. She writes, "They are very observant. It's fun to hear them talk about the differences between life here and in Wisconsin, the different foods, the confusion of which garbage to use... And they are gaining experience with the fine points of language."

They learned the "old fashioned" way of communicating by buying postage and actually mailing a letter home.



Beth Hejl, Nat, Ryan, and Jutta Fahrion



Ryan, Nat, and Grace