



Berlin Brats Alumni Association Newsletter

January 2021

Volume 17, Issue 1

70th Anniversary of the “Luftbrücke!”



The Berlin Airlift Monument (the air bridge 1951)



Plaza der Luftbrücke



Picture taken: May 12, 2019 during the 70th Anniversary of the End of the Berlin Blockade....which 33 Berlin Brats attended.



The base of the Memorial: dedicated to those who gave their lives to save the peoples of West Berlin during the Berlin Blockade '48-'49

Memories....from '50-'52

By: Karl Balys '56

I arrived in Berlin in June 1947 with my mother. Dad was already in Berlin waiting for us. Mom and I came across the pond on the USAT Henry Gibbins arriving in Bremerhaven. We settled into our first residence at Deisterpfad 37 which is just a couple of blocks from Onkel Toms. Dad was with the Constabulary (the Circle C Cowboys) located at that time on Argentinische Allee. Mom went to work for OMGUS.

That fall school opening was delayed because of a polio epidemic and AFN filled in by broadcasting school lessons in the meantime (sound familiar?). I don't remember exactly when school reopened but at some point I joined my new schoolmates in Mrs Kirkpatrick's 4th grade for the remainder of the school year. The ones I remember from that class were my good friends Richard and Gertrude Hansel and Elizabeth Parsons. I vaguely remember a kid named McCrory who's dad as it turned out was my dad's CO.

Summer of '48 my parents and I took a vacation trip to Switzerland and France. Our family "car" was an old surplus reconditioned and winterized jeep. I loved it. Mom, not so much. But being an army wife of many years had conditioned her to accepting whatever came along with good humor. Anyway, while driving through the countryside in France one day we came across a car with USA occupation license plates and they waved us down. We stopped and they asked us where we were stationed. We said Berlin. They inquired if we had heard the news. We replied no, what news? We then found out that the Russians had blockaded Berlin and no traffic was getting into or out of Berlin and here we were out in the middle of nowhere with no way to get home. Since we were on our way to Paris they suggested we go to the embassy in Paris for further information and instructions. Upon arriving in Paris the embassy told us to finish our vacation and then my parents were to report to their respective headquarters in Frankfurt.

When we got to Frankfurt dad went to the Constabulary headquarters and I went with mom to the I.G. Farben building where the OMGUS head office was. It turned out it had been decided that we were to be returned to Berlin by air.



Karl in Chicago, present day

Mom and I got separate orders and an earlier flight date out of Rhein Main than dad. Mom and I were assigned to an EATS (European Air Transport Service) C-47 which turned out to be a plush leather seated VIP transport which mom thought was very nice until the sergeant who was the crew chief handed out parachute harnesses to everyone. This apparently was regulation at the time. For mom, who was a nervous flyer at the best of times, this was too much and she was clearly ready to bolt for the exits. The crew chief talked her down and reassured her that if we did have to jump he'd take me out with him. To which I, in my best 9 year old bravado insisted, "no you won't. I can go out by myself". How we got mom into her seat after all of this I don't know but the flight turned out to be quite routine. We arrived in Berlin later that afternoon. Dad came in the next day having been assigned to a plane carrying milk. He got to stretch out on cases of milk bottles. Our jeep, in the meantime, remained in storage in Frankfurt until a future undetermined date. Years later I came to realize we had flown in on some of the very first flights of the Berlin Airlift.

Fifth grade started that fall with Mrs Phillipi (sp?) as our teacher. New good friends joined the class. David Overton and Charlie Sawicki. Life in Berlin continued. Life with no electricity except for brief periods, some in the dark early morning hours. It became known as the time of the candles. Candles, candles, and dripping candle wax everywhere. Medieval living at its finest. For us kids it was an exciting time. Even the grown-ups had their many social parties which was enlivened with the infamous "Blockade Punch" which as I understood it was a BYOB concoction deposited in a common bowl for everyone to partake from.

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Strangely enough, virtually everyone who was there during the blockade, both kids and adults, agree that was the time of our best memories. At some point, I'm guessing just after New Years 1949 we moved into a new residence at Hueninger Strasse 8 which is just off Gary Strasse near the Harnack Haus.

Sixth grade began with a new teacher whose name I've forgotten. I do remember she said she had taught in the Los Angeles school system before coming to Berlin. She was only there that one year as I recall. New good friends that year were Chuck Rain, Suzanne Wilson, Virginia Peters, Sandra and Ace Coker. The year 1949 also brought us the West German peace treaty which created the new state of West Germany. With that OMGUS was replaced by HICOG and mom became an employee of the State Department with a new office just across the street from Truman Hall. The mention of Truman Hall jarred out another old memory. I was having lunch with my parents in the dining room at Truman Hall one day. Of course naturally the place was filled with military personnel in uniform having lunch. Nothing out of the ordinary until I noticed a couple of tables over a rather unusual bemedaled individual in a bright somewhat garish uniform. I nudged my dad and asked, hey, isn't that a Russian? This could have been sometime in 1948, I just don't remember. My dad looked over and casually said, yup, it sure is and continued eating his lunch. I later learned it was Soviet Marshal Sokolovsky having lunch with General Howley and his staff. I was aware even then, I'm now pretty sure this had to be before the blockade, that tensions were high between the Russians and the allies at the Kommandatura. So to my 9 year old mind this was like breaking bread with the enemy. I was shocked and scowled at the intruder. Fortunately the Marshal had his back to me and was unmoved by my disapproval.

Seventh grade brought some significant changes to TAR. The Korean War had begun in June. Miss Biggs was our new teacher. The number of students attending TAR was dramatically reduced as a result of the blockade and normal attrition due to already scheduled transfers out and very few transfers in. As a result we met as a combined 7th and 8th grade class. All together there was just enough of us to fit in one small classroom. Looking at the yearbooks it's crazy to see just how small the junior high and high school population was back then.

But looking back that was my favorite school year of all my time in Berlin. All the kids in that combined class are indelibly etched in my memory.

Eighth grade brought more of the same. Another combined 7th and 8th grade class but even smaller than the year before with Miss Biggs reprising her role as junior high teacher. Other changes were in the offing for me and my family. Dad had retired from the army with the intention of staying in Berlin in civilian capacity. Unfortunately, in the infinite wisdom of the army they immediately recalled him to active duty and reassigned him to Fort Ord, California effective January 1952. Sadly, so ended the wonderful Berlin adventure.



Karl in 8th grade

At this point I'd like to point out a few of the kids I knew for special mention -

David Overton. 5th-7th grade. A person of great character and leadership. He and his family left Berlin with a large crowd seeing them off. I've never been able to find out what happened to him.

Peter Riddleberger. 5th-7th grade. One of the most courageous kids I've ever had the honor to know. Currently with the World Bank.

Suzanne Wilson. 6th grade. A great friend and special person.

Richard and Gertrude Hansel. Wonderful friends from beginning to end. They got there before me and left after me.

Darryl Hersant. 7th grade. A great friend and fellow Boy Scout. Future West Pointer. Now Director of the JFK International School in Berlin.

Charlie Sawicki. 5th-8th grade. A good chum and fellow altar boy.

And a special shout-out to one of the greatest teachers of all time: Alexander Kyrios.

Kids I ran across after Berlin -

Norman Church. We both ended up at Monterey High (CA) in the fall of 1952 as freshmen.

Tonia Dolozik. Saw her a few times at Fort Ord football games in the fall of 1952.

Mitzi Neville. Chance meeting with her while walking with friends in Pacific Grove, CA. Probably around 1953 or early 1954.

Sandra Coker. Chance meeting with her at the bus station in San Rafael, CA. Probably around 1955 or early 1956. Her dad was stationed at nearby Hamilton AFB.

Richard Hansel. Telephone call out of the blue from Richard. Sometime around 1995-1998.

When I did my military service 1960-1963 with the Army Security Agency I naturally hoped to get assigned to Berlin. But again, the Army in its infinite wisdom, decided to send me to Bad Aibling in Bavaria. A pretty decent consolation prize I'd say.

In the end I spent 33 years with the California Dept of Justice in IT as a systems programmer and finally a Unix systems administrator before I retired in 1999. My wife and I and all our kids and grand kids are now living in the Tampa Bay area in Florida. And as you can see I still carry a lot of the memories of my time in Berlin to this day.



First row: Buddy Tuell, Bruce Trapnell, Jim Durbin, Burtis Franke, Charles Robeson, Karl Balya
Second row: Sandra Coker, Helen Daley, Gertrud Hansel, Ellen Corcoran, Ellen Mathewson
Third row: Ace Coker, Bucky Trapnell, Richard Hansel, Charles Sawicki, Edwin Jeffress



JUNIOR HIGH

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Remember these?



40 SIGNS YOU WERE STATIONED IN GERMANY

One of the perks of military life is the opportunity to see the world. If you're lucky enough to get orders to Germany, you will learn that pieces of Germany will stay with you for years to come.



If you have ever lived in Deutschland, you may find that:

1. You get frustrated by speed limits.
2. You have a collection of *Bier Steins*, *Pilsner* glasses, *Wein* glasses and *Gluhwein* mugs.
3. You recycle like a boss.
4. You wish you could still receive a *Pfand* for your bottles.
5. You're initially hesitant about using a garbage disposal.
6. You start stories with "In Germany..."
7. You throw in words like *danke* and *tschuss* when talking to others.
8. You miss delicious wine that only costs 1.99 EUR a bottle.
9. You miss fests — seriously, there is one for every season.
10. You own *Lederhosen* and/or a *Dirndl*. If not, you know someone who does. (And yes, we know it is representative of Bavaria, in case any of my German friends read this.)
11. You wonder why every house doesn't come with *Rolladen*.
12. You appreciate not having to pay 50 cents for a public restroom.
13. After a late night out, you could really go for a *Döner*.
14. You know what it's like to live without AC, so you either rough it now or crank that system — it can go either way, really.
15. You're amazed that you can shop on Sundays and holidays.
16. You miss how German radio was full of surprises — Elvis one minute and your favorite '80s jam the next.
17. You enjoy free drink refills, but don't like feeling rushed in American restaurants.
18. You think twice before jaywalking.
19. You can't seem to find a good *Schnitzel* over here.

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21. You laugh when you hear the censored version of a song because you know what the artist REALLY says.
22. While on road trips, you miss road beers.
23. You know that ice cream doesn't have anything on *Eis*.
24. You're still amazed by the ample parking in the States.
25. You miss choosing your own table at a restaurant.
26. Sometimes you wish you could just buy a ticket and hop a train.
27. You feel that everything here is so spread out, and you miss being able to walk everywhere.
28. You agree that the yellow light between red to green makes sense.
29. You signal when exiting a traffic circle.
30. You miss the delicious breads and bakeries with inexpensive pastries just around the corner.
31. You make eye contact now when you *prost* your drink because who wants to be cursed with seven years of bad sex?
32. The beer. The beer was so, so good.
33. You overdress your child in the winter because *Omas* will ask why your child isn't wearing a hat/scarf/gloves/snowsuit.
34. You got to know musical artists like Cro, Seeed, Peter Fox or Sido and play songs from your stint in Germany from time to time.
35. You've realized that you can mix beer with cola or lemonade...and it isn't terrible.
36. If you celebrate Christmas, you have ornaments from a *Weihnachtsmarkt*.
37. You feel a bit guilty using plastic bags at the grocery store, because you once brought your own.
38. You realize that our foods are sugary sweet and laden with additives that aren't even legal in Germany.
39. You miss cobblestone, church bells, and beautiful green space between villages.
40. You remember what it was like struggling with your few German words, only to have a German national switch to perfect English.
41. You hope to get back there one day, whether on orders, during retirement or simply for vacation.

"School Spirit Pins" from various American High Schools in Germany – Peter Stein's ('80) collection:



The first traffic light in Germany was in BERLIN

The first traffic light tower in Germany was erected at Potsdamer Platz on 20 October 1924 and went into service on 15. December 1924 in an attempt to control the sheer volume of traffic passing through. This traffic had grown to extraordinary levels. Even in 1900, more than 100,000 people, 20,000 cars, horse-drawn vehicles and handcarts, plus many thousands of bicycles, passed through the platz daily. By the 1920s the number of cars had soared to 60,000. The trams added greatly to this. At the Potsdamer Platz up to 11 policemen at a time had tried to control all this traffic but with varying success. The delays in tram traffic increased and the job was very dangerous for the policemen. The *Berliner Straßenbahn-Betriebs-GmbH* started researches to control the traffic on the main streets and places in 1924. Berlin traffic experts visited colleagues in Paris, London and New York. They had to organize the traffic, define traffic rules and

select a solution to control the traffic. In New York, Fifth Avenue they found traffic light towers designed by Joseph H. Freedlander in 1922 which can be regarded as a model for the Berlin tower.

Pictured below: Potsdamer Plaza – 2005the replica of the 1924 one. In the background stands the Beisheim Centre



1924



Pictured in 2020

DODEA EUROPE CHIEF OF STAFF IS A “BERLIN BRAT!”

Dr. Charles "Chas" Kelker '73 - Europe Chief of Staff



Dr. Charles "Chas" Kelker currently serves as the Europe Region Chief of Staff for the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA). Prior to his current position, Dr. Kelker served as the Chief of Education Policy and Operations at DoDEA Headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia, from May 2017 to November 2019.

DoDEA is responsible for planning, directing, coordinating, and managing pre-kindergarten through 12th grade educational programs on behalf of the Department of Defense (DoD). DoDEA is globally positioned, operating 166 accredited schools in 8 districts located in 11 foreign countries, 7 states, Guam, and Puerto Rico. DoDEA employs approximately 15,000 employees who serve more than 71,100 children of active duty military and DoD civilian families.

Previously, Dr. Kelker served as the DoDEA Pacific Chief of Staff, located at Torii Station in Okinawa, Japan, from November 2008 to May 2017. During his tenure with DoDEA Pacific, he was involved in the opening and closing of DoDEA schools in support of military transformation actions taking place across the Pacific-region. This included staffing, student meal programs, transportation, public affairs and procuring furniture and equipment to support schools.

Prior to joining DoDEA, Kelker was the Deputy Director, Manpower, Personnel and Support (J1), Headquarters United States Forces Japan at Yokota Air Base. He retired from the United States Air Force in February 2006 with 32 years of distinguished service in uniform and continued his federal service as a DoD civilian.

A native of El Paso, Texas, Dr. Kelker grew up in an Army family and spent his formative years living in various locations around the world. **Dr. Kelker graduated in 1973 from a DoDEA school in Berlin, Germany.** He went on to enlist in the USAF in August 1974 and has since earned a bachelor's degree in occupational education from Wayland Baptist University, a master's in human resources development from Webster University and a doctorate in education from North Central University.

Dr. Kelker is married to Regina Kelker who retired from the USAF during her final assignment as Director of Public Affairs at the Air Intelligence Agency in San Antonio, Texas. They have two sons and a daughter.

"Here at DoDEA, our expertise lies in educating children," said Dr. Charles Kelker, chief of staff for DoDEA Europe.

'Candy Bomber' Honored With Mural In Tremonton, UTAH

By: MIKE ANDERSON, KSL TV | OCTOBER 13, 2020

People in Tremonton honored Colonel Gail Halvorsen, known as the "Candy Bomber," with a 76-foot-long mural, just in time for his 100th birthday.

In a city that has become known for murals, Arts Council Chair Leisl Sorensen said they wanted to make this one special for a local hero.

"We've won best of state, for city art for the past five years in a row," she said. "He also grew up in this area, so we wanted to be able to kind of have something to honor him, and to honor his legacy, as well as the fact that it's sort of our shared legacy because he's from here."

And a legacy it is. Halvorsen is known as the candy bomber for dropping treats to children during the Berlin airlift, after World War II — something that helped improve U.S. relations, and brought hope, to West Berlin.

"His story seems so pertinent to our history and this area, so kind of a lot of pressure to represent that through painting," artist Erik Burke said. "But he's a really fascinating man, so hopefully we could do him some justice." Burke methodically pieced the tribute together, spraying away over five days.



Col. Gail Halvorsen, also known as the "Candy Bomber." (KSL-TV)

"The people of this area are very proud to have him from here, and to have that be a part of their legacy," Sorensen said. He's now 100 years old, and still just as humble as ever. "Well, this is a pretty big tribute for a guy that used to work here in Tremonton," Halvorsen said. Halvorsen said he's grateful for his time in the U.S. Air Force and for his time here in Utah.



"Had some good times in Tremonton and Garland," he said Tuesday. The dozens of people who came to see him were grateful to call him one of their own, now brought to life in a very big way. "And he's just a really great example of kindness, especially in times like right now, when things are so crazy," Sorensen said. The mural sits across from the city's veterans' memorial, located right in the middle of downtown Tremonton, making it hard to miss for anyone coming through here. "I don't know that he feels that he's done anything necessarily super-huge, but we all can see that it was," Sorensen said. "I mean, he's made a huge impact. People all over the world have heard of him." An example of kindness, and now a fixture in this city. "God bless you, and remember that you're lucky to be in America." Halvorsen said.



A mural honoring Colonel Gail Halvorsen, known as the "Candy Bomber," in Tremonton. (KSL-TV)

UPDATE ON THE C-54 SPIRIT OF FREEDOM

FROM THE BERLIN AIRLIFT HISTORIAL FOUNDATION

As we reported in our April 2020 Newsletter the Spirit of Freedom was damaged on April 13th in one of the tornados that hit South Carolina.

There was a breakout of 4 tornados in the Walterboro, SC area and the worst of the 4 remained on the ground for 9 miles tracking directly across the airport destroying several hangars and 22 airplanes, one of them the C-54 "Spirit of Freedom."

The C-54 damage is in excess of \$300,000. With the loss of airshow income due to covid and then the damage incurred from the tornado the Foundation board of directors unanimously agreed the best course of action would be to locate a replacement C-54 and salvage what spare parts they can from the beloved C-54, the "Spirit of Freedom". The Spirit of Freedom will still live on inside the replacement C-54 by providing valuable spare parts and of course the on board museum/ exhibit which will be transferred to the replacement C-54 with marked improvements to the displays.

The Historical Foundation only survives by the public's generous contributions. To date they have raised \$70,887 towards the goal of \$125,000 to cover the transition from one plane to the other. If you'd like to join the ranks of those ensuring the future of it's "Mission of History, Education and Remembrance," you can help via:

GoFundMe: <https://www.gofundme.com/.../c54-spirit-of-freedom-road...>



Or send your contribution to:
Berlin Airlift Historical Foundation
PO Box 782
Farmingdale, NJ 07727



SO SAD.....WITH THIS PLANE'S HISTORY!!!!

BRAT GET-TOGETHERS

Brats unite after 34 years in "Berlin Township" no less! Lauraann (Chapman) Ohman '85 and Lisa (Glisson) Gould '85, October 31, 2020. Berlin friends are the best friends.



CHECK THIS OUT IN TUCSON, AZ!

Just found out that I am on a mural on S.12th Avenue! A most unexpected and humbling honor. I am truly humbled.

*(I did ask Howard Paley to take a few decent photographs of the art)
Joel Smith '81 (front and center below)*



Remember these? Signs we lived with....day in and day out:



Congratulations to our BRAT BROTHER, Marshall Todd '88, for the renewal of #WOKE. We're so proud of you!!! #BAHS #BRATStrong. Marshall is the Co-Creator/writer for the show. 'WOKE' Renewed for Season 2 by Hulu



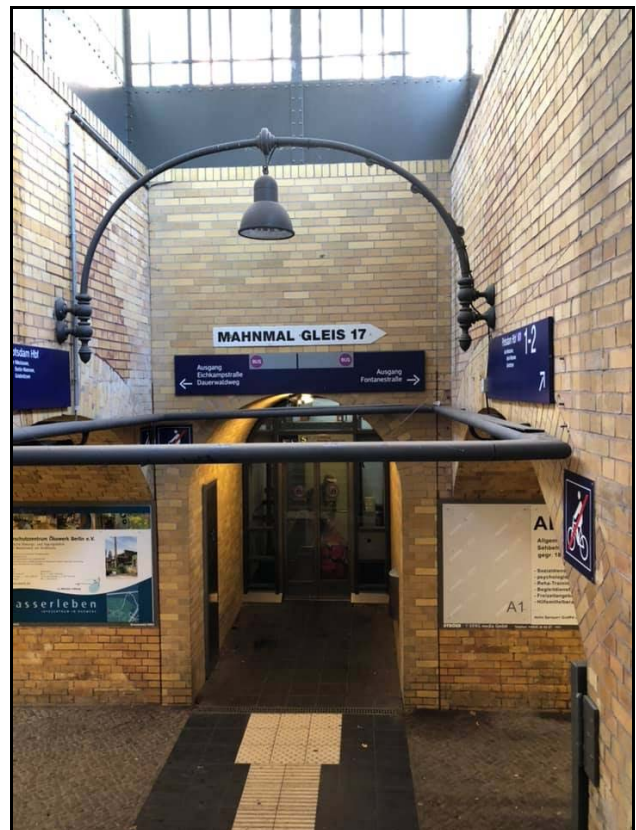
Grunewald S-bahn's History

Memorials at Grunewald train station

In memory of the deportation of Jewish citizens of Berlin from Grunewald train station to the extermination camps of the National Socialist state. The first deportation train went to Litzmannstadt (Lodz) on October 18, 1941, the last one to Sachsenhausen on January 5, 1945. Every year since 1988, pupils and the state police school have been organizing a school commemorative event here on November 9th. So far, this event has always been closely tied to the person of Isaak Behar, who has been a witness to his book "Promise me that you will stay alive" and his life experience as a Jew in Germany for over 20 years in Berlin schools. Mr. Behar died in 2011. The Israeli Prime Minister and the Israeli Foreign Minister laid wreaths during state visits in 2006 and 2007. On January 26, 2010, former Israeli President Schimon Peres and former Federal President Horst Köhler commemorated the victims here. On October 18, 2011, at the suggestion of the writer and contemporary witness Inge Deutschkron, the Berlin Senate organized a memorial event to mark the 70th anniversary of the first deportation.

Our own Stacey (Clayton) McFarland '88 was living in Berlin until recently and brought this piece of history to our attention:

I wanted to share with you the memorial for Jews that were taken from the Grunewald S-bahn station to concentration camps. This was a very emotional visit for me and I feel everyone should see this. There is a stone wall that has images of people walking up to the Gleis 17 track and a bronze marker with each train that left showing how many were on it, the date and the final destination. A very moving and very factual memorial that hit me hard. Please take the time to look at the markers. There were so many but here are just a few pictures. We all must never ever forget this.....



Revealed on Jan 27, 1998 on the tracks themselves it documents the deportation trains to the concentration camps using metal plates that are lined up next to each other.



A concrete wall (unveiled on Oct 18, 1991) with negative prints of human body shapes and a bronze plaque with the following text:

In memory of the more than 50,000 Jews in Berlin who were deported and murdered by the National Socialist state to its extermination camps between October 1941 and February 1945, mainly from the Grunewald freight yard. As a reminder to us to courageously and without hesitation oppose any disregard for human life and dignity.



Memorial plaque revealed on April 3rd, 1987, with the following text in Hebrew and German: In memory of the victims of the extermination.



In memory of tens of thousands of Jewish citizens of Berlin who were deported from here to the death camps by the Nazi executioners from Oct 1941 to Feb 1945.

Early Berlin School Days (1954-1957)

By: Don Conner '65 (....whose father was posted to Berlin twice. Don returned to Berlin for his Senior Year)

In 1954, I had just finished first grade when my father received orders to report to the 6th Infantry Regiment in West Berlin. We had been living at Ft Benning, GA for almost three years, so the orders were not unexpected. He would report for duty that summer and my mother, three brothers and I would join him in the fall when family quarters became available. The six of us packed into the family car, a 1952 Chevrolet Styline station wagon and drove to Millburn, NJ where he settled us in to live with my grandparents until the Army arranged a place for us.

In September we received the go ahead for travel to Germany. My grandparents drove us to Ft Hamilton in Brooklyn for processing. We spent two days preparing for our final journey, primarily receiving the vaccinations required for travel to a country that was still recovering from the devastation of the war that had ended only nine years before. On the evening of the second day we boarded a Lockheed Constellation for the long flight to Frankfurt, Germany. There would be intermediate stops in Newfoundland and Shannon, Ireland before reaching Frankfurt late the following night. The highlight of the trip had to be the donuts on arrival, although it may not have been a good idea at one in the morning. My mother now had four sugar jazzed boys to settle down in our hotel room. I don't remember the next day, except that we had to wait until 7:00 pm to board the overnight U.S. Army Duty Train for travel to Berlin.

We arrived in Berlin early the next morning where my father was waiting at the station. He had a surprise for us. Instead of an apartment in the US family housing area, he had secured a three-story duplex at 115 Thielallee in what had been an upscale neighborhood before the war. It had a living room, dining room and music room complete with a grand piano. The property had been confiscated from a high ranking Nazi official at the end of the War.

The basement of the house had something that my brother Rick and I thought was really cool: a bomb shelter. A separate room in the basement was reinforced and had a massive steel door with naval style dogged latches. The backyard of the house had a garden with pear and apple trees and currant bushes. It was also home to hedgehogs, that would become temporary pets on occasion. The third floor of the house had two bedrooms, one of which would be used by a succession of live-in maids. The economy, especially in Berlin, was still recovering, and from an American standpoint, goods and services were very inexpensive. (Brotchen and Danish from the local bakery were five and ten pfennig apiece respectively, 1.25 and 2.5 cents) Live-in maids were an affordable luxury because of the supplied room and board and a small salary. One of the ladies stands out in my memory. She had been a concert pianist before the War and would play in the music room on occasion. She wasn't with us too long, before she disappeared on a visit to East Berlin. It was assumed that she had been picked up by the East Germans. This was all before the notorious "wall" was erected.

The surrounding neighborhood was a boy's delight, with all sorts of interesting new things to explore. There were still many bombed out houses in the area with nothing remaining except a rubble filled foundation that just had to be explored for treasure. During the two and a half years we lived there I amassed quite a collection of old German and Russian small arms ammunition that was confiscated by my father as we were packing for our return to the States in 1957. There were also a number of American families living within a few blocks of our house and we had plenty of kids our age to plot mayhem.

I began second grade at the Thomas A. Roberts School. It had been opened just the year before. I had no way of knowing, but eleven years later I would be part of the last high school class to graduate from TARS. School was fun with the exception of penmanship exercises. I rebelled against the seemingly endless repetition and often found myself in front of the class demonstrating correct letter formation.



Dated: October 19, 1954. The article mentions that the senior class that year had only six members! Rick is class of '67. Note the last paragraph reference to remote learning 66 years before COVID!

Among my early memories of our stay in Berlin were the armies of laborers, predominately women, who toiled to reclaim the bricks from bombed out buildings throughout the city. Another memory was of the long lines of displaced persons, essentially victims of the War that still didn't have a home. To this day I have a strong aversion to standing in line for anything.

The Berlin Brigade had regular parade reviews and drew large crowds. My father was assigned as the Sixth Infantry Regimental Adjutant. As such, it was his duty to form the regiment for the review. This entailed performing the stylized "adjutant's walk" diagonally across the reviewing field to a position in front of the regiment where he would report the unit ready. The soldiers would coach their schatzis and even streetwalkers to call out to him using his first name. I have no idea how he maintained his composure.

Berlin at Christmas was a magical place for kids. The PX opened a large toyland where we could browse and dream. There was a German Christmas market with all sorts of goodies to try and the school distributed bags of candy and German Christmas cookies to the American elementary school children. As I understood it, these were gifts from the Berliners in recognition of the support from American families during the Airlift in 1948-1949. When the Soviets blockaded Berlin, the US military governor, General Lucius Clay, offered to evacuate the American wives and children. Most declined the offer and stayed.

Organized activities for American children did not end with school. During the summer Army Special Services arranged for a full slate of things to entertain us. Mornings, a bus would take us to an indoor swimming pool that had been used for the 1936 Olympic Games. After several hours frolicking and receiving swimming lessons, we were returned home for lunch, followed by a bus to afternoon arts and crafts sessions. I'm not sure if she participated in the summer activities, but the school's art teacher was Margot Pietsch, who became a fixture at the school for many years. There was also an active Boy Scouts program and I joined the Cub Scouts. My impression of the Cub Scouts is that it was organized for the sole purpose of testing volunteer den mothers' sanity. In addition to the normal scouting activities, we also went on field trips to attractions around Berlin. Two of my favorites were a visit to the US armored unit and a tour of Tempelhof Airport. We had the opportunity to don helmets, climb all over tanks and pretend we were at war. At Tempelhof, the Air Force demonstrated aircraft fires and the use of fire-fighting foam, ground controlled approaches that were used during the Airlift and an opportunity to fly a Link trainer.

For the Easter break in 1956, the family traveled to Garmisch-Partenkirchen. The trip took us through East Germany and then south through West Germany into Bavaria. The start of the journey required negotiating a series of checkpoints at either end of the highway through the eastern zone. In Berlin we cleared the American checkpoint and our time in was noted. (We had a time window for the transit; too fast and we were speeding. If we took too much time the Army would send out a search party.) At the Soviet checkpoint we were met by stern faced Russian soldiers carrying submachine guns at the ready. As we cleared that checkpoint, my brother Rick and I opened fire with our toy cowboy pistols from the car's rear facing seat. My father almost had a heart attack, but the Russian soldiers merely started laughing. Bavaria was a treat, with visits by tram to the top of the Zugspitze, tours of King Ludwig's castles, a trip down into an ancient salt mine and a showing of the Ice Capades.

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Our Berlin adventure came to an end in March 1957, with orders to return to the United States. We left Berlin on the Duty Train bound for Bremerhaven where we would embark on a ship for our return. For me, it was "auf wiedersehen".



Photo taken atop the Zugspitze during the Easter break. Note the requisite headgear! A bit of trivia for photo buffs—the case Don is holding is the battery for the flash attached to his father's Rolliflex camera.

Now that Tegel is closed, Nostalgia for the old airport has started.....

<https://airportag.com/collections/txl-berlin-tegel-otto-lilienthal-airport>



Congratulations to Mikel (Fisher) Brightman '64

On her ordination this past June 13th, 2020. Mikel was part of the 2020 Graduation Class of Ordination to Diaconate of the Episcopal Diocese of West, TX. (San Antonio)

From BAHS cheerleader to Deacon:



Mikel will be serving at "St. Philip's Episcopal Church" in San Antonio



Mikel entered the seminary in 2017. She has two adult children, two granddaughters, one great granddaughter, two degrees from UT Austin, and has lived in San Antonio for over 30 years. Her father was a career Army (JAG) officer and her mom a Kindergarten teacher. Her only brother and his family live in Houston. Mikel was in Berlin from '60-'63, being 8th grade through her Junior year.

She has spent most of her 50-year career serving children in need and their families. Mikel taught/administered and directed in some interesting places: like the International School of Bangkok, Thailand, the former TX Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, Richmond State School and the Beaumont State Center, Houston Independent School District, Edgewood ISD, Harcourt Assessment, San Antonio ISD and the City of San Antonio from which she retired in August 2018 as the City's Director of Head Start.

"From one long career in education to serving in God's Episcopal Church may seem an unusual transition, but it is truly my call to be with those at St. Philip's."

SUZANNE SUMMERVILLE – FAC '74-'75 school year.



1974-75 school year



2016

FAIRBANKS, AK, November 21, 2016, Suzanne Summerville, Owner of ArtsVenture, has been recognized by Elite Women Worldwide, for dedication, achievement and leadership in music publishing.

As a lifelong lover of music, Dr. Summerville is proud to serve as the owner of ArtsVenture, a music publishing company that distributes the music of 19th century German composers, primarily women. The company also publishes songs to the poetry of Adelbert von Chamisso, as well as poetry by Adam Bert.

Dr. Summerville holds more than two decades of diverse experience in her industry, boasting talents as a mezzo-soprano singer and music producer. Building upon an impressive 20 years as a professor of music for the University of Alaska in Fairbanks, Dr. Summerville continued to employ her expertise as a music publisher, reaching the pinnacle of her career as an entrepreneur with the launch of ArtsVenture. She has recorded three CDs as a mezzo-soprano singer in Fairbanks, Alaska.

Dr. Summerville received a Ph.D. in musicology from Freie Universität Berlin, a master's degree in music from the University of Houston and a Bachelor of Arts in music from Randolph College. Additionally, she holds a diploma in song and oratorio, earned from Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien. She maintains affiliation with The Byron Society, Opera Fairbanks and the Fairbanks Arts Association. In recognition of her hard work and talent, she was presented with a Governor's Award for the Arts in 1990. In years to come, Dr. Summerville intends to continue spreading music to other passionate enthusiasts.

Submitted by: Paul Markey '77

"I attended BAHS for the 1972-1975 school years. I was a member of both the band and the chorus. Mr. Fenstermacher led both groups, and he was a very inspirational teacher that brought the best out of me. He left BAHS at the end of the 1974 school year, and his replacement, Ms. Summerville took over for the 1975 school year. Mr. Fenstermacher left very big shoes to fill, and Ms. Summerville tried very hard to fill them. While she struggled with the band, I felt that she gave me extra insight into vocal and choral work as that was her expertise. I think that was the year that we put on the Broadway Review concert in the gym where I both played in the band, solo'd on trumpet on stage with the chorus, and sang solo on-stage in snippets from "West Side Story" and "South Pacific". It was a fun way to end my time at BAHS."

Paul Markey '77



(L) Steve "Tex" Flanary '75, Paul Markey '77 middle, Kipp Keller '74, performing "Officer Krupke" from "West Side Story." Steve and Paul were tough gang members. ('73-'74 school year)



Carla Baker '75 and Paul Markey '77, West Side Story ('73-'74 school year)



The Berlin Brats once again find ourselves looking for a new "Newsletter Brat." David Spiech '83 stepped up to the plate a year ago when Kimberly Keravouri '85 had to step down. Now a year later David finds himself in the same situation with family and work and has to step aside.

Carl Fenstermacher '73 stepped in - in a pinch to get this issue of the Newsletter out the door. He is currently our "Web Brat" - so we need someone who can fill the position more permanently.

If you're a Brat who has experience in "layout" and an "eye for detail" contact us for more information on volunteering for this position with the Alumni Association. You do not need to be a "writer" nor the collector of articles/stories & pictures. That is all provided each quarter for the issue.

Email: BerlinBrats@gmail.com

We look forward to hearing from YOU!

Upcoming Events

2021 Regionals:

April 17th Wichita, KS
(based on AOSHS grand re-opening)

Early May
Melbourne, FL
Stay tuned for details on both

**OSB Gathering
San Antonio, TX
Oct 28-31st, 2021**

www.overseasbrats.com

Next Reunion

TBD at a later date

**Evaluating Large Group
Authorizations per
COVID restrictions
nationwide**

Contact Information



Berlin Brats Alumni Association

Jeri (Polansky) Glass '72, Director

41910 N. Crooked Stick Road
Anthem, AZ 85086
telephone: 623•764•1105
email: BerlinBrats@gmail.com
website: www.berlinbrats.org



Find us on Facebook @
"Berlin Brats Alumni Association"
(the official fan page site)

"Berlin American High School (BAHS)"
(an open group chat page)



follow us on Twitter
@BerlinBrats

Newsletter Brat: Carl Fenstermacher '73

Early '60s Site

By invitation only
Contact Jim Branson '64
jbranson01@hotmail.com
for an invite

American Overseas School Historical Society

Gayle Vaughn Wiles, President
email: overseasschools@aoshs.org
website: www.aoshs.org

Overseas Brats

Joe Condrill, President
email: joeosbpres1955@gmail.com
website: www.overseasbrats.com

Communication Brat:

Peter Stein '80
pstein80@msn.com

WebBrat:

Carl Fenstermacher '73
WebBrat@BerlinBrats.org