**ARTICLE 1**

In Love with Flensburg

Sarah Bartling grew up near the Missouri River in Omaha, Nebraska. She went to school from Kindergarten through high school, graduating from Omaha North High School in 2008. Sarah knew that she wanted to study abroad in Germany and came to St. Olaf College in southern Minnesota because of its great exchange program with Flensburg University.

In middle school she participated at an international summer language camp. The camp offered language courses in German, French, and Spanish and Sarah chose German.  That started her interest in everything German, and she continued on with German classes in high school.

From a friend who had visited some students in Germany, Sarah heard great details about the area around Flensburg: Sailing on the Baltic Sea, hot dogs in Denmark, Theodor Storm’s Husum, and Emil Nolde. Sarah’s German professor at Saint Olaf College, Goethe expert Karl Fink, told her about Flensburg University and its emphasis on education.  Since she wants to teach German at a high school in the USA, she thought it would be the perfect place for her to spend a semester “at this wonderful campus”. In January 2010 she studied the German way of life in Berlin and Weimar, so she is well prepared. Sarah will arrive in her beloved Flensburg in January 2011.

**ARTICLE 2**

Graduation Day

After four years of hard work, American university students celebrate with their families and professors. In early summer, that year's class comes together for an important ceremony: Graduation. With hope and pride, each student receives their diploma. It is important not only for the students, but also for their friends and family, who supported the students during their intense and often expensive studies.

Universities also have a role. They are expected to find an appropriate keynote speaker. Former President Bill Clinton spoke one year at Carleton College, Northfield, Minnesota, and former Vice-President Walter Mondale gave a graduation speech at St. Olaf College in the same town. But it's not just politicians. Universities invite authors, movie stars, successful businesspeople, and famous scientists. The more well-known, the better. The keynote speaker's fame is seen by some as a symbol of prestige.

A keynote speech wants to inspire with an eye toward the future, and to make the audience proud with a look to the past. Each speaker is using their words in reference to their own life, and connects to the students' lives. Former President Bill Clinton said, “I honestly believe the next 50 years can bring the greatest period of peace, prosperity, and humanity the world has ever known.” Making Clinton's words into a reality is up to the students.

**ARTICLE 3**

**Homecoming**

U. S. colleges (undergraduate institutions) above all intend to help their students to become responsible citizens of the world. Therefore, a solid academic and professional education is being offered. The colleges want to support the young adults’ dreams and wishes, so the students can be successful in life. It is almost more important , however, that the student’s experience will be part of a large college community. They have to serve also the needs of that community.

Every year, one of the most exciting events at American colleges is the so-called Homecoming Weekend. From all over the U.S.A. former students return to their Alma Mater. It is the college where they received their undergraduate education. They will meet their former classmates and friends. All former students, teachers, administrators, etc. of the college, come together to celebrate with a huge party. They want to strengthen the spirit and community of their college. For Americans it is important to keep a very strong contact to their Alma Mater even long after they had graduated. The former students do know fully that most things in  their lives would not have been possible without the quality education that they were fortunate  to receive. The financial thankfulness of alumni helps colleges to constantly develop their academic programs even in times of financial recession.

The solidarity amongst alumni and students of American colleges and universities ought to be a role model for academic communities all over the world.

**ARTICLE 4**

German Studies in the U.S.

In Germany, not much is known about American interest in German language and literature. But, as hard as it is to imagine, the leading German specialists (scholars) are American professors. Where does this interest in German studies come from? What does it tell us about German studies at American universities?

The author’s friend, Steffen Kaupp, has had the good fortune to be able to study German literature in the U.S. as well as in Germany. A graduate of the University of Konstanz, Steffen is beginning his doctorate at Duke University in North Carolina. The huge work load at Duke surprised him. Used to reading lists of only 8 or 9 books per semester, he was lately shocked. His first American seminar expected him to study twenty seven books in fourteen weeks. American professors want students to develop a deep understanding of German literature. In-depth seminar discussions are based on many primary works as well as secondary texts. These university classes are small.

It is therefore not surprising that some of the best German studies scholars are products of American universities. The leading expert in Goethe’s history of the sciences is Professor Karl Fink at Saint Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota. His excellent teaching style and Goethe research has motivated students to become German scholars themselves.

**ARTICLE 5**

Harvard's Money Madness

Harvard, perhaps world's most famous university, faces a financial crisis. Harvard was established in 1636 in Cambridge, Massachusetts. By December 2008, the university had accumulated 36.6 billion (in German “Milliarde”) dollars to a fund.  Former students, many with very successful careers, had donated this huge amount of money called an “endowment fund." It was almost four times more than the whole gross national product of Afghanistan.

After the crash of the Lehman Brothers Bank and Wall Street, Harvard’s endowment was reduced to 25.7 billion dollars – a huge loss of money. The income (interests and dividends) earned on the endowment fund is an important part of the university's daily operating budget.

What had happened? Harvard, like many private U. S. universities and colleges, had changed from its historically conservative investment strategy to hedge funds, etc. In 2009, Harvard needed money to keep up with their daily teaching costs. They had to borrow from the expensive money market. Harvard’s dilemma – it is now paying the amount of 87.5 million dollars a year in interest.

Andrew Hacker, co-author of “Higher Education? How Colleges Are Wasting Our Money and Failing Our Kids” (Times Books, 2010) said: “They thought they were terribly clever and they took those risks and now they are paying for them.”

**ARTICLE 6**

US versus German Universities

What's the single biggest difference between colleges and universities in the U.S. and those in Germany? Ask a German exchange student, and chances are he'll point to the detailed American course syllabus. Yes, these exchange students like the smaller class sizes and greater access to professors, but above all, they value having the educational cards laid on the table at the very beginning.

In essence, the American syllabus is a detailed roadmap showing the student's ultimate destination and the route that will be taken to get there. It describes the topics to be covered; includes a schedule of reading assignments, homework due dates, and test dates; and gives the professor's grading policy and class rules. Exams must be based on information included in the syllabus. With the instructor's expectations, course requirements, and teaching philosophy so clearly pointed out, the single student suffers minimal confusion and frustration.

In the 1800's, education in the U.S. had largely been reading, writing, arithmetic, and memory. As more and more immigrants arrived, including many German educators well-trained in the teaching methods of Fröbel and Pestalozzi, American education became more responsible and vital. Today, however, the shoe seems to be on the other foot, and it's obvious to many that German professors could profit by adopting some U.S. teaching techniques. Detailed course syllabuses might be a great place to start.

**ARTICLE 7**

College versus University

When American high school students start looking for a good college, they must answer a question. Is a small private elite college or a large public university better for them?

Kate Vohs decided to begin her college career at a small private institution. St. Olaf College has a strong interest in teaching classics. Every student receives a well-rounded education. With just three thousand students, St. Olaf's class sizes are relatively small. There are many one-on-one teacher-student contacts. This makes the change from high school to college easier. The students can focus very much on their studies.

After completing two years at St. Olaf, Kate decided to go to the University of Iowa. This is a public university with thirty thousand students in a larger city (Iowa City). She had a bigger variety of subject offerings and a different social life. The number of students in her seminars was larger and the academics not as difficult as at St. Olaf College. Kate enjoyed these different topics, including one on Latin American government. The larger university and the larger town offered her a more cosmopolitan life-style.

In other words, Kate enjoyed a "hybrid" education. The first part happened at a small private college and the second part at a large public university. She could benefit from the best that both forms of higher education have to offer in the USA.

**ARTICLE 8**

Freshmen

After being dropped off at college by his or her parents, the American first-year college student ("freshman") is confronted with a myriad of changes. A new room in a dormitory, a new town and maybe even a new state, and new people: everything seems so different from the protected and happy days of high school, yet at the same time, so exciting.

Orientation week eases the transition. *Listen intently to your instructors.* *Get off to a good start with your dorm roommate.* (Unlike many German students, most Americans must live on campus and share a room with a stranger.) *Explore the campus and the new college town. Drink responsibly.* (Since the drinking age in America is 21, some students have very little experience with alcohol before beginning college.) *Phone your "empty nester" parents, letting them know you're still their son or daughter. Expect homesickness during the transition from home to college.*

Yes, the early days and weeks in college can be stressful, but also exhilarating both intellectually and socially. In essence, much of the first semester is spent learning how to be a successful college student, about learning how to strike a balance among diligence, discipline, and having a good time.

**ARTICLE 9**

Exchange

Stuck in a rut. Sometimes no matter how hard you try, sameness and familiarity prevent advancement to the next level.

So it was with Markus Rollwage, a gifted classical guitar student at Lübeck conservatory. Encouraged by professor Bernd Ruf, Markus traveled to America to continue his studies at McNallySmith College of Music in St. Paul, Minnesota. There, his talent was nurtured and developed by outstanding professors, and Markus went on to release two successful CDs and perform to critical acclaim back in Lübeck.

Something happened to Markus in America, sparking his innate artistic talent to another level. Were American professors better than their German counterparts? Was the grass really greener on the other side of the fence? Markus would be the first to dismiss these notions. Living in an environment far removed from one's routine with friends and family, making new social contacts, and speaking a different language all combine in a mystical manner to broaden the exchange student's horizons. Mind, heart, and soul, freed from familiarity, are more receptive to life's nuances. Like a journeyman carpenter of days gone by, a foreign exchange student becomes more self sufficient, learns valuable life lessons, and masters different techniques of his trade. Away from the familiar, he learns to trust his instincts. For an artist like Markus, this is critical.

If helping a child study abroad is financially feasible, the investment will be repaid many times over. In today's economy, how often can *that* be said?

**ARTICLE 10**

Minnesota Life College

In recent years, there has been a lot of research on learning disabilities (“problems”). 30 years ago, students with these disabilities were labeled “bad students.” We now know that we can help them live with their disabilities and challenges in real life. They just need someone to teach them how to deal with it in their everyday lives.

In 1996, Beverly and Roe Hatlen started the Minnesota Life College (MLC) in Richfield, Minnesota. MLC is a three year, life-skills training program for young adults who have learning disabilities. In contrast to most colleges or universities, MLC helps these young adults develop skills and tricks for an independent life: doing their own shopping, washing their clothes, and preparing for the job market.

After graduating, the students can join the Graduate Living Program. It is a group where they live on their own, but still get a lot of support. Many graduates find finally real jobs with a normal income. Success is about decision-making, fitness and wellness.

MLC was founded when the Hatlens' son was about to finish high school. His learning disability made it impossible for him to attend a typical college. That was when his parents decided to start MLC. Since then, this college has helped many children become independent young adults. They can succeed in life and have success in their jobs.

**ARTICLE 11**

Russian Accent

Robin Jenks Vanderlip of Fairfax County, Virginia, had a terrible accident. She fell down the steps in her house and landed head-first on the floor. When she woke up after two days, Robin suddenly spoke American-English with a thick Russian accent. “Home” sounds suddenly more like “herm”, instead of “with”, Robin says “wiz” and “this and that” sounds like to “dis and daz”. She has never been to Russia nor did she study Russian in school. She cannot remember ever having heard Russian spoken or even of anyone speaking with a Russian accent.

Allen Braun of the National Institute of Health, is a leading expert on Foreign Accent Syndrome. It is a little understood medical condition first described by a neurologist at the end of World War II. A woman in Norway fell into a coma after a bomb attack. Medical literature tells us that she woke up speaking her native Norwegian –unfortunately for her- with a German accent. There is a Japanese patient talking with a Korean accent and a Spanish speaker who has a Hungarian accent.

Shelia Blumstein, speech specialist from Brown University, has written many scientific articles about Foreign Accent Syndrome. According to Blumstein, most patients still speak their original language with correct grammar but with the new accent. No speech therapy has been able to change the new pronounciation. Sheila continues her studies and research because “there is still so much we don’t know.”

**ARTICLE 12**

Kierkegaard

Sometimes you meet the most interesting people at the most unlikely places and times. Many years ago, Gitta and I were shopping late at night in a supermarket near our Northfield, Minnesota home. As we perused the cheese labels, Gitta remarked how obsessed Americans were with eliminating fat from their food. Overhearing Gitta, an elderly man approached us: "Great to hear the German language, especially at this late hour! I'm Howard Hong, director of the Søren Kierkegaard Library at St. Olaf College. Please stop by the next time you're on campus."

We did just that, discovering that 1930's St. Olaf graduates Howard and Edna Hong had assembled an 11,000-book collection chronicling the works of noted nineteenth century Danish philosopher and author Søren Kierkegaard. The collection includes the Hongs' 26-volume translation of Kierkegaard's complete body of work. Grants and donations, many from philosophy professor Howard Hong's former students, have made it possible for scholars the world over to travel to Northfield to pursue their Kierkegaard research.

Before every Christmas, Gitta and I attend the annual Kierkegaard lecture. This year, retired history professor Bruce Kirmmse brilliant talk focused on Kierkegaard's failed love affair with Regine Olsen. Ten years older than Regine, Søren had fallen in love with the 14-year-old. Although they later engaged, Regine was destined only to become the "wife of his soul," Søren having concluded he could not serve both a spouse and his literary calling.

Yogi Reppmann, 52, Northfield (Minnesota) and Flensburg (Schleswig-Holstein), historian and consultant. He co-founded de.us Inc. International Connections in order to navigate your transatlantic expansion. Since 1992 he lives in Northfield.

**ARTICLE 13**

Syllabus

What's the single biggest difference between colleges and universities in the U.S. and those in Germany? Ask a German exchange student, and chances are he'll point to the detailed American course syllabus. Yes, these exchange students like the smaller class sizes and greater access to professors, but above all, they value having the educational cards laid on the table at the very beginning.

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In the 1800's, education in the U.S. had largely been reading, writing, arithmetic, and memory. As more and more immigrants arrived, including many German educators well-trained in the teaching methods of Fröbel and Pestalozzi, American education became more responsible and vital. Today, however, the shoe seems to be on the other foot, and it's obvious to many that German professors could profit by adopting some U.S. teaching techniques. Detailed course syllabuses might be a great place to start.

**ARTICLE 13**

Donating Dictionaries

Last Friday, there was a huge 100th birthday party. The Rotary Clubs of Minneapolis and Saint Paul were chartered (started) on February 18th and 19th of 1910. They were the 9th and 10th clubs in the world. John Kenny, Rotary World President, gave the keynote address. According to Minneapolis Rotarian Quinn Tierney his club coined (invented) the Rotary Club motto: service above self.

They all support [www.DictionaryProject.org](http://www.dictionaryproject.org/), which gives copies of a 500-page paperback dictionary to third grade students in Minneapolis and St. Paul. Since 2006, more than 25,000 dictionaries have been donated to nearly all elementary school students in the cities' schools. The book is more than a list of definitions: it has 150 pages of history, maps and biographies. For eight-year-old Anaya Finn, FAIR School Downtown Minneapolis, it was the first book she ever owned.

In 1992, Annie Plummer of Savannah, Georgia, gave 50 dictionaries to kids who attended a school close to her home. The non-profit Dictionary Project was born and over 12,219,846 young students have received their own book, thanks to the generosity of sponsors. There are several benefits. Third grade students are encouraged to have fun with words, while the donors have fun visiting their former elementary schools. On an international level, The Dictionary Project's organizers would love to expand the project to Germany.

**ARTICLE 14**

Goethe in the “Big Apple”?

Henry (Heinz Alfred) Kissinger, 87, recently opened an exhibit in Marbach. Titled “German Spirit. An American Dream”, the show has been produced by the Deutsches Literaturarchiv. It could have easily been called “American Spirit. A German Dream”. After the failure of the democratic revolution in 1848, many rebellious German intellectuals were attracted by the US concept of personal freedom. (The exhibition will be open through October 3rd.)

Philadelphia or New York, rather than Weimar, might have become the birthplace of German Classism. In the 18th century, Lili Schoenemann, Goethe’s charming fiancé tried to convince him to emigrate. In 1783 Schiller wrote: “If North America were to be totally free, there is no doubt that I would move there.”

Hitler pushed the center of German Culture to California. Brecht, Adorno, Marlene Dietrich, Max Reinhardt and the Mann brothers Heinrich and Thomas are some of the cultural leaders who settled in and around Pacific Palisades. This was the greatest concentration of German poets, thinkers and artists in a small area since the “Weimarer Klassik.” Pacific Palisades today is the home of Hans Gudegast from Bredenbek near Rendsburg. He is better known as Hollywood star Eric Braeden.

A German-American dream would be to have Schleswig-Holstein open a cultural center in Thomas Mann’s residence in exile.

**ARTICLE 15**

Wartburg College

Waverly, Iowa in the U.S. and Eisenach, Germany are sister cities. They have something more in common — each has a Wartburg. In Eisenach, it’s the castle where Martin Luther translated the New Testament and began the standardization of German orthography.

The castle in Thuringia gave its name to Wartburg College in Waverly. The forests of the American Midwest reminded George Grossmann, a native of Neuendettelsau in Bavaria, of Thuringian forests. In 1852 he founded Wartburg College as an institution of the Lutheran Church in America to train teachers and pastors for the German immigrant community.

The students, professors and alumni are very proud of the college's German background. There is a strong friendship between the sister cities Eisenach and Waverly. Every year, Wartburg College groups travel to Germany and visit Luther’s castle, Goethe’s Weimar, and Schiller’s Jena. Wartburg College continues to honor the importance of America's German roots.

Christine Lieberknecht, the Governor of Thuringia, may visit Waverly in the nearer future to accept an honorary doctorate from Wartburg College. Dr. Jürgen Schöning has been Governor Lieberknecht’s office manager and Secretary for European Affairs since the end of 2009. Before, he was the chief administrator of the Schleswig-Holstein Parliament and President of the European Academy in Sankelmark near Flensburg.

**ARTICLE 16**

Carmen in China

Most of us recall Henry Kissinger’s successful “ping pong diplomacy” with China. After the infamous Cultural Revolution, US college students became ambassadors as table tennis players. They paved the way for President Nixon’s first visit to the Great Wall in Beijing.

But who was part of the next step in opening China to American capitalism? Carmen Pomponio from Northfield, Minnesota was a member of a small group of US language instructors who came to Shanghai in 1979. The future boom town already had ten-lane roads for its millions of citizens in blue uniforms, but there were hardly any cars to drive on them. Carmen with his ten-speed bike became the main attraction in Shanghai.

Carmen, a former GI in Schweinfurt and Augsburg (1955-56), recalls wonderful stories of his Asian adventure. One day, someone on a tiny motor bike tried to race against him on his bicycle, but the motor bike's piston and cylinder broke, before the race was over. Those days, the temperature often reached 110 Fahrenheit (37 Celsius). Most fondly Carmen recalls the first night on a bench in Shanghai’s City Park where he met his future wife Xun for the first time. The Chinese Ministry of Education had forgotten to reserve him a room at the university. Today, Xun Pomponio is a distinguished Professor of Economics at St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN.

**ARTICLE 17**

Bismarck

"In 1492, Columbus sailed the ocean blue." It's a rhyme American schoolchildren have learnt for generations. It is a historical fact. Historians, however, find little else on which to agree when analyzing the explorer's life. Although long considered as a hero in American textbooks, there's no current historical consensus, with Columbus "alternately praised as a great guy and a super scientist, or accused as an ignoramus, and charged with piracy." Such is the nature of history: every generation writes it anew.

During my college days, it was politically correct to express a negative view of Otto von Bismarck, whose career was seen as paving the way for Hitler. Today, no less than Henry Kissinger views the "Iron Chancellor" as the greatest politician of the past 150 years. After reading Bismarck's memoirs, I hold a similar view, even though knowing that "anyone who believes you can't change history has never tried to write his memoirs."

With our understanding of historical events constantly changing, does the study of history make any sense? The great philosopher Hegel didn't think so, believing the only thing we learn from history ... is that we never learn from history. Others, however, feel those who don't study history and learn from it are in danger to repeat it. Perhaps common ground for both sides can be found in the words "God alone knows the future, but only a historian can alter the past."

**ARTICLE 18**

**Words from America — National party convention on the banks of the Mississippi, 2008**

Mesmerized. That's what the American public and most of the world have been for the last two weeks while watching the Republican and Democratic parties' national conventions. These mega political party extravaganzas kicked off the final, frantic phase of the U.S. presidential election.

As luck would have it, the Republican convention was staged in St. Paul (one of Minnesota's famed "Twin Cities") which is located less than eighty kilometers from our American home. More than 45,000 people attended the convention, including thirty thousand guests, fifteen thousand journalists (including yours truly), and delegates from all fifty states. Also included among this vast number of attendees were several German party managers and their staff, who no doubt noted that the convention was part carefully crafted media event and part spontaneous and euphoric grass roots democracy. If the convention were a movie, it might be titled *The Rolling Stones Meet the Party of Abraham Lincoln*.

The fifty million dollars raised by the Minneapolis-St. Paul business community helped roll out the red carpet for the delegates (who paid only for their hotel accommodations), the media, and visitors. Nor were the millions viewing the convention each day on their television sets overlooked. Over ten million dollars alone was spent modifying the gigantic Xcel Energy Center (the sports arena that hosted the convention) to make it more video accessible.

According to Minneapolis City Manager Steven Bosacker, this investment paid huge dividends for the Twin Cities business community, as an additional 160 million dollars was pumped into the local economy during the convention. It's estimated that the national and international media coverage produced more than eight billion media impressions, the equivalent of a $330,000,000 advertising campaign.

Bosacker organized a hugely successful party for ten thousand media members that was held on the banks of the Mississippi. The size of this gathering is best illustrated by the quantities of food and drink consumed: 2,300 ears of corn, two thousand Kobe beef sliders, fifteen hundred shrimp shooters, sixteen thousand hors d'oeuvres, and four thousand bottles of water. Despite the success of the event, Bosacker still insists that his favorite party occurred five years earlier when Peter Harry Carstensen and his artistic daughter Anja introduced him to an old Germanic tradition of tapping a wooden beer barrel in the *Husumer Brauhaus* during the night before May 1st.

**ARTICLE 19**

**Barack Obama in the World**

After over a year of the start of Barack Obama’s presidency, Americans are beginning to look back. They are deciding if they are happy with their president or not. His approval rating is around 50%, which is a lot lower than his 68% at the beginning of Obama. However, it is not bad if you consider that 53% of Americans voted for him in the first place. It seems that most people have stayed the same as when they elected him.

One of the big hopes that Americans had for President Obama is that he would be a reason for the world to like the United States more. Most Americans feel they are judged for being from the US. They also know that many of those people like Obama.

Some parts of the international community (countries in the Middle East and South America) still don’t like Americans yet. Students who had lately gotten back from those areas said it was easier to lie and say they were from Canada. They were treated poorly when they mentioned America. So far, it seems the world needs more time to forgive America for what had happened in the past. It also seems that Americans are willing to be patient to earn back old global respect. The US’s foreign relationships are extremely important. Hopefully American citizens and Obama can work together these next years to make things better.

**ARTICLE 20**

**Clinton**

Every summer, Concordia Language Villages in northern Minnesota proves Mark Twain wrong. Twain, as you might recall, didn't care much for the German language: "My studies have satisfied me that a gifted person ought to learn English (barring spelling and pronouncing) in 30 hours, French in 30 days, and German in 30 years."  In the Waldsee program at Concordia, students (ages 7-18) learn German quickly — very quickly.

At Waldsee, you check your American identity at the front gate and receive a new name like Jürgen or Helene. You exchange your dollars for euros (recently, a painful process!) and relinquish any American items; they're strictly *verboten*.

Each day begins with German folk songs and a traditional Teutonic breakfast. Having to ask for their food in German is one of many ways used to get students to learn German quickly. Each moment of the day, the student-camper is immersed in German culture and painlessly learns the language through play, songs, theater, and real life scenarios.

Former President Clinton's daughter Chelsea attended Concordia for three summers and is a firm believer in the cultural immersion method of teaching German: "It made the language click." When my wife and I met Hillary Clinton during her presidential run, she recognized the names of Chelsea's Waldsee friends who later became my students at St. Olaf College in Minnesota.  Given Chelsea's positive experience, perhaps Mrs. Clinton will one day convince her new boss to have his daughters spend a German summer in Minnesota!

**ARTICLE 21**

**Stoltenberg**

Some debts — like the one owed to a mentor whose faith changed the arc of your life — can't be paid with euros or dollars. Gerhard Stoltenberg was such a mentor for me.

As a young student of history, Stoltenberg spent some time in the U.S. in 1952. There, he met the young Harvard professor Henry Kissinger, and the two men established a close friendship.

Fast forward 25 years. Perhaps remembering what his own U.S. visit had meant, Stoltenberg, now *Ministerpräsident* of Schleswig-Holstein, gave money to send a poor student from Flensburg to the New World.

Some years later, and now a professor myself in Minnesota, I received a call from newspaper editor Stephan Richter who had just published Stoltenberg's latest book. He was hosting a party for the author and asked me to produce a short video interview with Kissinger as a surprise. Speaking in his native German, “Heinz Alfred” Kissinger expressed his deep admiration for "Stolti," his German friend and colleague.

Watching the video, tears welled up in the eyes of the old politician, the man many thought would be Germany's next chancellor. Sadly, Stoltenberg died less than two years later with my "debt" to the great man still on the books.

This October, I'm staging a conference on the legacy of that most remarkable immigrant group, the 1848ers. It will be dedicated to the friendship of historians Kissinger and Stoltenberg. Gerhard Stoltenberg's faith in me changed my life; I will always do what I can to honor his.

**ARTICLE 22**

**Ahrens**

Exports account for more than a third of Germany's output. Germans can be proud. Unfortunately, the same can't be said about our university education.  In fact, there's been a marked increase in the number of German students studying abroad, because they are unhappy here. Why is this?

My Kiel University experience 30 years ago provides some insights, which unfortunately, are all too applicable today. I and many others found our professors inaccessible, possessed of a poor attitude, and often more interested in how our research could profit them rather than how their expertise could benefit us. Classes were often very large and impersonal, and ironically, many in the English department were taught in German.

Luckily, I became acquainted with Governor Gerhard Stoltenberg and his aide Hans-Jürgen Ahrens. They completely supported my research and helped me travel to the U.S. to pursue it.  While in America, I learned English and gained a great appreciation for the education provided at their colleges and universities. Many classes were much smaller, and there was a great deal of personal interaction with the professors, alums, and staff on campus.

I think back on those days 30 years ago. Had it not been for the friendship, encouragement, and assistance of men like Hans-Jürgen Ahrens, my educational goals wouldn't have been realized. Isn't it time we aggressively begin addressing German higher education so that our students don't become one of our leading exports?

**ARTICLE 01 (Very Beginning)**

**Shopping for a College**

In their last year of high school, many American students go “college shopping.” They travel around the country visiting various colleges. They ask themselves “Which college will help me find the right job? Which one will develop my talents and will strengthen my character?”

Tommy Schultz, a senior (his last year) at Mora High School in Minnesota recently visited St. Olaf College in Northfield. He has a special connection to this private institution. More than 50 years ago, his grandparents, Pat and O. Jay Tomson, graduated from St. Olaf. His grandfather is now director of the board of regents -- which is something like the German “Aufsichtsrat”.

Many US colleges are very expensive (around $ 35.000,00) and compete with each other. They want to attract excellent students and St. Olaf is no exception. Volunteer students led Tommy on a tour of the impressive campus. Tommy also ate in the cafeteria, met several professors, and he even had the chance to sit in on a German seminar.

Tommy Schultz is a brilliant high school student and loves his grandpa O. Jay. But his decision about “college shopping” has not yet been made; he still plans to visit Princeton (where Albert Einstein began teaching in 1930 and Joschka Fischer was a guest professor). Princeton would also be a great choice. Tommy cannot promise his grandfather that he will decide for St. Olaf College.

**ARTICLE 23**

**German Heritage in Washington, DC**

After four hundred years and the arrival of over seven million German-speaking immigrants, Washington DC's German-American Heritage Museum (GAHM) has opened. German-Americans are the largest ethnic group in the USA. They always seem to be late to the party when it comes to paying homage to their culture and contributions.

GAHM is partnering with various museums and institutions around the world (such as Hamburg's BallinStadt Emigration Museum). The new facility in Washington is a small but serious museum. In an educational way, its permanent exhibits pay tribute to well-known German-Americans (such as President Eisenhower; and the famous Forty-eighter, Karl Schurz). German immigration and migration across America is the main focus. A multimedia kiosk informs visitors about the Germany of today. A series of temporary exhibits for the new museum including "1848ers from Schleswig-Holstein as leading journalists in the USA" and "Low German in America" are being planned by Executive Director Rüdiger Lentz (whose mother lives near the Schleswiger Dom). The successful fundraiser is Bern Deichmann (a former Bredstedt resident).

After touring the museum, one cannot help developing a greater joy for the wonderful diversity of the German-American experience. GAHM is centrally located near the White House. This museum is a "must see" for anyone visiting Washington, DC.

**ARTICLE 24**

**New Holstein – “this new Eldorado”**

73 percent of the residents of New Holstein, Wisconsin, have German background. This little town of 3,300 lies north of Chicago and Milwaukee (known for its breweries and Harley Davidson motorcycles). The history of the town began in Schleswig-Holstein. In the fall of 1847 William Ostenfeld travelled to visit his mother in Kiel. Ostenfeld was accompanied by Charles White who wanted to sell US land to Europeans. One evening the two men were in Heide visiting Karl Grüning, a professor of languages. Grüning was interested in “independence, and for a free life in the American forests.” Soon, a group of around 70 persons from Holstein decided to follow Ostenfeld and White back to America. They were mostly highly educated and, in America, were later called “Latin farmers”.

They sailed from Hamburg on April 2nd, 1848. The emigrants spent much of their time on-board intensively studying English.  One day at sea, William Ostenfeld suggested that it would be a good idea to name the new settlement “New Holstein – to remember where we came from.”

The settlers were working hard in the new land and the earliest records of town meetings were written in English. Nevertheless, Plattdeutsch survived for more than a century. At the centennial celebration in 1948 some lines of a long poem recalled their heritage: “Sij klaerten busch un saihtn gudn weitn – dat geif dann brout in hand.”

**ARTICLE 25**

**Church**

Despite the omnipresent Internet and an ever faster pace of life, family and church still form the bedrock in the Midwestern states of the USA. My American home of Northfield, Minnesota (a town of 18,000) is a good example. Each Sunday, 15 Christian denominations hold 40 church services and bible study lessons throughout the city – visited by thousands of participants. Supported by generous donations of both time and money, churches also sponsor non-worship activities during the week with many directed at the younger generation and missionary projects in the Third World.

Whether it's saying "God bless you" after a sneeze, or praying at the dinner table, religion is a natural part in most Americans' lives. This very fact, however, is also reason for many conflicts in the U. S. society. Should a pastor's Sunday church service be limited strictly to religious matters, or are political issues fine as well? More fundamentally, can religious and political beliefs be separated like whites and colors in a load for a washing machine?

Most Americans agree with the Prussian King Frederick the Great's wisdom that "All religions must be tolerated, for in this country, every man must go to heaven in his own way." On the other hand, many struggle with thorny topics such as whether "In God We Trust" should appear on every U.S. coin and dollar bill, and if a public school is a right place to say The Pledge of Allegiance (loyalty to the home country) with its words "one nation under God."

**ARTICLE 26**

**Wind**

Wind power is an important topic, and Schleswig-Holsteiners are proud of their world leadership. Few Germans know, however, that Europe was inspired by 1980's California governor Jerry Brown. Although successful, Brown's legislation never gained traction, and he's best remembered for his affair with the singer Linda Ronstadt.

Today, Iowa Gov. Chet Culver is America's leading wind energy standard-bearer. He's traveled to Husum's huge wind fair. A former schoolteacher, Culver knows well the role North Germans played in settling his state and founding proud towns like Schleswig and Holstein. While in Husum, Culver hoped to meet with Gov. Carstensen, but sadly, the opportunity was squandered by notoriously dissentious Ralph Stegner.

Attempting to mend fences, German energy expert Willi Voigt attended a renewable energy conference in Northfield, Minnesota. His presentation's final slide showed a poster with a windmill designed as a Holstein cow and the caption "Milk the Wind!" After opening up the question and answer session, Willi was dumbfounded when Lisa Daniels stood up and said, "What a small world, Willi. I gave you that poster when we visited Germany years ago!"

It was a fitting irony illustrating the bridges between America's Midwest and Schleswig-Holstein. What type of traffic will the latest bridge carry? As songwriter Bob Dylan famously wrote, "The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind."

**ARTICLE 27**

**Martin Wind**

I recently had the pleasure of attending a jazz concert at the Cachaça, a Brazilian-themed, late-night jazz club in the heart of Greenwich Village in New York City. One of the musicians performing that night was 88-year-old flute/saxophone legend Frank Wess. Impeccably dressed and graciously supportive of the three younger artists appearing with him, Wess was the epitome of the gentleman musician. His fluid playing belied his age and the 69 years spent performing in smoke-filled jazz clubs.

Appearing with Frank was double bass virtuoso and native Flensburger, Martin Wind. Martin's rare talent was discovered 25 years ago at the *Altes Gymnasium*. Using the school's Fender electronic bass, Wind's talent was nurtured by private lessons paid for by a proud grandpa. After playing with several bands and earning a diploma from Cologne's Music Conservatory, he received a scholarship from the German Academic Exchange Service to study at New York University. Today, Martin is a music professor at NYU, directing two ensembles and teaching 15 students in one-on-one lessons. In 2000, Wind was honored as the first jazz musician to win Schleswig-Holstein's Cultural Award.

After the concert, **Frank Wess opined that Martin Wind was probably the best bass player in the world.** Coming from a man who's played in bands headed by jazz greats such as Count Basie, Clark Terry, and Billy Eckstine, this was high praise indeed, and like the performance that night, was music to the ears of this proud Flensburger.

**ARTICLE 28**

**Matt**

Why do we fall in love? It's a simple question that often has no simple answer. Take the case of Matthew Wojick, a Northfield, Minnesota college student. He's in love with Germany, and even his father is at a loss to explain it: "We have no German ancestors and wonder why Matt has been so interested in Germany since his early childhood."

In Matt's case, a high school foreign exchange program was the impetus for his first trip to his beloved Germany. In 2004, Alt Möllner Sören Jessen traveled to Minnesota as an exchange student. He and Matt, who share a love of music, traveling, and soccer, became good friends.

After returning home, Sören invited Matt to visit his family. Matt had the time of his life in Germany, enjoying trips to Lübeck, Potsdam, and Berlin, as well as the highlight of his trip, a soccer game at AOL Arena between Hamburger SV and Wolfsburg.

Although noting similarities between Schleswig-Holstein and Minnesota, Matt was struck by the huge difference in the educational systems. "From kindergarten to a PhD degree, every single step is different in Germany. I really enjoyed the Mölln Gymnasium and think it was more intellectually challenging than my high school."

Matt now attnds St. Olaf College, a private, pricey (over $40,000 a year for room, board, and tuition) liberal arts college in Northfield, Minnesota. While driving around Northfield in his gearshift German Jetta, Matt's thoughts often return to the friendly Schleswig-Holsteiners he met and his fondness for Flensburg beer, Lübeck marzipan, and currywurst. Matt tells me he wants to return to Germany as soon as possible, and to that end, he plans to be an exchange student at Flensburg University through St. Olaf College's German department. "It may sound strange to some, but I guess I love it more in Germany than here at home." On hearing this, my German-born wife Gitta smiled knowingly and remarked: "I'm the same, just vice versa."

**ARTICLE 29**

**Birte**

I've never been a jazz aficionado. That changed after I heard Birte Prüfert, a 23-year-old exchange student from *Musikhochschule Lübeck*.

Through Professor Bernd Ruf's efforts and the support of a Possehl Foundation 3,000-euro stipend, Birte is studying vocals and drums at McNally Smith College of Music in St. Paul, Minnesota. This fine private rock and pop university has chosen a Latin motto: *Effectus – Negotium – Technologia - Compositia*.

The college was founded 23 years ago by Jack McNally and Doug Smith. Although trained in classical guitar, the two professors wanted to fill a void in contemporary music instruction. The initial class had only 18 students; today, 500 pupils learn everything from composition and songwriting to recording technology and the business of the music industry.

The college's 80-member faculty is actively engaged in all aspects of popular music and has received gold and platinum records, Grammy awards, and acclaim on Broadway and other major performance venues. Their work has resulted in the support and participation of people like the iconic Diana Ross and producer/director Craig Rice of *Purple Rain* fame.

After taking our seats in the college's large auditorium, Birte Prüfert and the 11-piece McNally Smith Jazz Orchestra took to the stage. In but a few minutes, Birte's wonderful soprano voice had completely mesmerized the audience. Someone seated next to us whispered *"We might be listening to the world's next jazz star!"* I nodded and smiled, knowing that we were also witnessing another splendid example of German-American friendship.

**ARTICLE 30**

**Profanity**

It's the ultimate mystery. 9% of Americans are bilingual; 52% of Europeans are. 58 million Americans are of German descent, but only 1.5 million speak some German. These numbers baffle even more when one considers how many American public schools, junior colleges, and universities have a second language requirement and urge their students to study abroad.

Perhaps educators should take a cue from one of my former Carleton College (“Harvard of the Midwest”) students, Stuart Gorman. I've never met anyone who perfectly mastered so many languages in such a short time. Stu combined his linguistic abilities and love of *Plattdeutsch* (he won the Fritz Reuter prize for "Low German: Platt in America" in 2005) into an educational card game called "Dirty Deutsch." Gorman, a former graduate student at Berlin's Humboldt University, believes becoming familiar with swear words is one of many important lessons in mastering German and understanding German culture.

Is Gorman's philosophy on target? Does political correctness prevent students from becoming familiar with the full spectrum of the German language? Even gifted wordsmith and renowned author Mark Twain felt that cursing had its place: "In certain trying circumstances, urgent circumstances, desperate circumstances, profanity furnishes a relief denied even to prayer."

Now that I reflect on it, perhaps that statistic about only 9% of Americans being bilingual is incorrect. Maybe American hockey icon Gordie Howe had it right when he said that "Americans *are* bilingual; they speak English and profanity." **www.dirtydeutsch.com**

**ARTICLE 31**

**Wall Street**

While in New York recently, I visited ground zero. No, not the site of the World Trade Center destroyed in the horrific terrorist attacks of September 11, 2009 (9-11), but Wall Street, ground zero for the worldwide financial meltdown.

Conducting my tour was Lars Halter, a German-American journalist who regularly reports financial news from the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) for n-tv. Ironically, Lars has not only reported on the latest economic crisis, but also had provided eyewitness stories of the events of 9-11.

Although I'd seen Wall Street on TV, the excitement of viewing it in person was quite another thing. The size and grandeur of the buildings and the palpable intensity coming from the epicenter of the recent financial chaos was moving. Equally fascinating was the building next door, Federal Hall, America's first capitol, the site of George Washington's first inauguration.

After experiencing all that on the street, Lars guided me through the strict security measures and onto the exchange floor of NYSE. There I received an in-depth tour of where "money makes the world go round," although at a speed less than that of just six months ago.

Much as 9-11 caused many to reflect on whether the world they'd known had gone to exist, the economic information presented during my Wall Street tour gave me similar pause. Was our way of life once again in danger of collapsing? Was it really possible for the free flow of money to come to a sudden stop?

**ARTICLE 32**

**The Day of Silence**

On April 15th, many US students do not speak a single word. They are silent - all day long. Why? What is this silence about? These students participate in the Day of Silence ([www.dayofsilence.org](http://www.dayofsilence.org)) organized by the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network ([www.GLSEN.org](http://www.GLSEN.org)). It is an annual event to protest the discrimination and problems that gays and lesbians face in the USA.

The first day of silence was organized at the University of Virginia in 1996. Only one year later, it became a national event. In 2008, over 8,000 middle schools, high schools, colleges and universities took part. Their message is simple. The organizers and students ask, “What will you do to end the silence?” Often, gays and lesbians are treated with disrespect and they choose to be quiet about their homosexuality. The protestors are sad of gays and lesbians being silent and living in fear of negative reactions by society.

At St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN, many students showed their solidarity by taking part in this year’s event. They wore red T-shirts. Everyone could immediately see that those students would not speak that day. The large number of silent students showed that lesbian and gay people are still facing problems, even in a small community of open-minded and intelligent young students. Their silence is heard loud and clear: the culture has to change.

**ARTICLE 33**

**Mayo Clinic Medical School**

In the 2009/2010 academic year, more than 40,000 American students applied to US medical schools (universities). Taking a look at the data book published by the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), we learn that medical schools received more than 500,000 applications. One of the nation’s best programs is the Mayo Clinic Medical School in Rochester, Minnesota.

Mayo Clinic is known worldwide for specializing in hard-to-treat diseases. The experts at Mayo have developed many innovative treatments for rare diseases. What makes the Mayo Clinic so special? First of all, the working place allows the doctors to focus on every patient individually. They earn a fixed salary, so that there is no monetary motivation to see as many patients as possible. Therefore, they can spend more time with each of their patients in order to guarantee the best possible treatment. Secondly, Mayo Clinic Medical School is one of the leading programs in the US. Every year, more than 5,000 students apply for about 50 open places to study medicine in Rochester.

German colleagues also benefit from the research done at Mayo. Flensburg Diako hospital doctors like Dr. Christian Hansen (a magician as a surgeon), Prof. Machraoui (also a great Rotarian born in Morocco), and Prof. Müller-Hülsbeck (x-ray specialist) at Flensburg Diako hospital study the Mayo publications.

**ARTICLE 34**

# “Sex, Drugs, and Rock 'n' Roll ...”

... is the title of a seminar offered by Professor Richard Langston in the German Department at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill this fall. What has this university class to do with German studies, and why is the title in English?

This seminar is an introduction to pop culture and German philosophy. More than one hundred years ago, great thinkers like Georg Simmel analyzed the very same problems that students still face today. For example the US students do enjoy these days Simmel's scientific thoughts on “flirting”. In order to connect his theories to pop culture, the students study the movie “Fast Times at Ridgemont High”. It is a very fun and pleasant way to introduce a German star of philosophy to young American students. Pop culture helps the US students to understand those “big questions” in their own lives.

Professor Langston’s seminar is taught in English but deals with the country of “poets and thinkers”, who are the key to German studies. In the past everyone thought that a “German seminar” must be taught in German. Lately, American professors have come to the understanding that it is more important to teach the students about “everything German”. Once the students find out about the richness of German culture and literature, they are more willing to also learn the German language. Courses like “Sex, Drugs, and Rock 'n' Roll” are a great way to motivate students and help to keep German studies in the US alive.

**ARTICLE 35**

**Campout 2010**

Sports play an important role at American colleges and universities. In a sports team, students learn what it means to be responsible for the success of a group. Sports strengthen the spirit of the whole community. At Duke University, [Durham, North Carolina](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Durham,_North_Carolina), the men’s basketball team (Duke Blue Devils) is very, very popular. They have won four national titles; the last one in the 2009/2010 academic year.

It is no surprise that season tickets for their games are also very popular. Therefore, the university had to find a way of handing out these tickets. They came up with something called “Campout”. Every year in early October, around 2000 students camp outside the ticket office on campus. “Campout” always starts on Friday night at 7 pm and ends on Sunday morning at 7 am. During these three days, university officials make sure that students do not leave the “Campout” area. Still, not everyone who makes it until the end (early Sunday) will automatically get a season ticket for the Duke Blue Devils. Their names enter a lottery and 700 lucky students win one of the valuable tickets. However, “Campout” is not only about basketball. It can be seen as a social event of thousands of students. Everyone has a good time. Some activities of the mega party include having barbeques, dancing and playing games.

The example of “Campout” at Duke University stresses the importance of college sports in the US. It is definitely not only about basketball. More importantly, students learn what it means to be a proud part of a large college/university community.

**ARTICLE 36**

**World’s Best Whiskey**

Templeton, a tiny town in Carroll County, Iowa is located near the City of Holstein in Ida County and Schleswig in Crawford County. Templeton is known for “Templeton Rye”, one of the best whiskeys in the world.

During Prohibition (1920-1933, the 18th Amendment to the US Constitution made any production of alcoholic drinks illegal) more and more Americans from out-of-town had begun to enjoy the high quality booze. “Speakeasies” (illegal pubs) in Omaha, Kansas City, and Denver served Templeton Rye to their guests. Al Capone, infamous mafia gang leader in Chicago was a loyal and paying fan.

Even today, this heavenly drink is still being secretly produced by one family in Templeton. However, it is next to impossible to buy a bottle unless one knows a “friend of a friend,” who has direct contact to that mysterious whiskey family. Fortunately, the writer of these lines had the pleasure in 1989 and 2009 of receiving a huge bottle as a gift. One of the few human beings with these magic contacts is Ron Colling, veteran newspaper publisher of “Manning Monitor”, Manning, Iowa. (Please, see his photo and read his story on page 64, “Triumph of Will – Printer’s boy to publisher: The remarkable story of German Immigrant Henry Finnern”.) Do not hesitate to contact the author, if you would like to taste this bourbon.