

**1990 - 2010**

**Belleville Sister Cities  
celebrates its**

**20th Anniversary**

## **In the beginning. an idea**

The document officially joining Belleville, Illinois, and Paderborn, Germany, as sister cities was signed by the mayors of Belleville and Paderborn on Sept. 2, 1990, but the story of the organization really begins 10 years earlier. It begins with a conversation in a car on Oct. 2, 1980.

Belleville Mayor Richard Brauer became interested in the sister cities program through meeting representatives of the international sister cities program at a convention in Chicago and with Eberhardt Gress, who was affiliated with the Strassenfest in St. Louis. Then he heard of Mayor James Conway's search for a sister city for St. Louis. That set the stage for the conversation that initiated Belleville's efforts to find a German sister city. It took place as Brauer and his wife, Dottie, were on their way home from Waterloo, Ill., where they had witnessed the signing of the Portaloo/Porta Westfalica Sister Cities agreement.

"You know," Dottie said, "Belleville should look into getting a sister city."

"Honey, you're absolutely right," Rich replied after a moment's hesitation, "and I am naming you committee chairman."

Rich obtained the City Council's approval and Dottie sent out letters to businesses, organizations and government offices, inviting them to provide members for the committee. The initial members were William A. Badgley, David Braswell, Dottie and Rich Brauer, Frank Haefner, Gerry Hermann, Becky Jacob, Walter Merz, Charles Rhein, Ed Schefknecht, Myrna Steinhardt and Henry Wittlich. The committee held its first meeting on May 6, 1982.

Lou Ann James of the Belleville Library helped the committee prepare a list of German cities and gather statistical information about them. They included Trier, Bad Kreuznach and Bitburg. Then the committee began writing letters to them. Some letters went unanswered. Even when they were answered, Dottie said, "sometimes it would take eight months, nine months, a year." Some responses led to follow-up letters, but ultimately these were answered in the negative.

Henry Wittlich drew the group's attention to Wittlich, Germany, a city on the Mosel River. Dottie Brauer and another committee member, Doris Roach, made unofficial visits

to Wittlich. Several letter exchanges brought an invitation from Wittlich for a delegation to visit it and discuss a possible relationship. A delegation of about 12 made the trip in 1985. While Wittlich officials favored a friendship with Belleville, they decided they were not interested in a formal relationship.

Years had passed since that car conversation.

Then in 1986 Friedel Schutte, a newspaperman from Lohne, Germany, came to the United States and met with an officer of the Waterloo Sister Cities organization. She asked him to visit Belleville. Herr Schutte recalled the conversation and what followed in a 2000 letter:

Vera Kohlmeyer from Waterloo . . . asked me to make a first visit to Belleville: ‘Mayor Brauer wants to ask you for a convenient city in Germany!’ My answer was, after so friendly saluted by Rich: ‘Will try to interest people of Paderborn for nearby “New Paderborn” and “St. Libory” shows me some relationship.’

On his return to Germany, Schutte wrote a full-page story about Belleville’s search for a sister city in the Paderborner Volksblatt. It got the attention of Ellen Rost, the founder of the German-American Friendship Society in Paderborn. She began negotiations that led to an invitation from Burgermeister Wilhelm Luke for Mayor Brauer to visit Paderborn.

A delegation of six visited Paderborn in 1988. It was the first official meeting of the mayors of both cities. The Belleville group also met with Paderborn council members and officers of the German-American Friendship Society. Both mayors agreed with the concept of a formal relationship, but Burgermeister Luke said, “First I think we must have an engagement before we have a wedding.”

A delegation from Paderborn was invited to visit Belleville later that year. Activities during their visit included a western dance with a barbecue at the Fritz Distributing warehouse. On their return to Paderborn, the delegates gave Belleville rave reviews. In 1989, both city councils agreed to form an official Sister Cities relationship. And so, on Sept. 2, 1990, that relationship was formally established.

## **The First 10 Years**

**3** Belleville Sister Cities officially began, first, with formal ceremonies in Paderborn,

Germany, and then with similar ceremonies in Belleville. A 45-member delegation from Belleville was present for the signing of International Sister City documents in Paderborn on Sept. 2, 1990. Paderborn Burgermeister Luke led a delegation that attended a rededication signing in the Belleville City Hall in October 1991.



**Mayor Brauer, left, and Burgermeister Luke sign the Sister Cities documents in Paderborn in 1990.**

The Belleville Sister Cities logo that has appeared in Belleville on everything from stationery to brochures, banners and signs made its first appearance at the rededication ceremony. It was designed by graphic artist Colin Bakse, who presented it as a gift. It has also become the official trademark of the German American Friendship Society throughout Germany.

The logo is replete with symbolism. It combines the medieval shield of Paderborn, Germany, and the post horn of Belleville's city flag. The circle signifies a unified group of people bound together by common interests and goals. The crosses represent the religious histories and the diocesan seat in each city. The ribbon is for the love and friendship that bind the two cities and their peoples. The colors are taken from the flags of Belleville and Germany.

During their 1991 visit to Belleville, the Paderborn delegation toured the St. Liborius Church in northwest St. Louis where they saw two peacock chairs in the rectory. The oak chairs had been made and elaborately carved in Germany, perhaps in Paderborn where St. Liborius is the patron saint and, according to legend, a peacock magically flew down to lead a procession bringing the remains of the saint to Paderborn in 836. All had their pictures taken sitting in the chairs. Later the church closed and items including the chairs were sold at auction. Ellen Rost of Paderborn asked that an attempt be made to buy one of the chairs, which had been purchased by Wolfgang's Restaurant and Brewery in O'Fallon. Negotiations over a price were unsuccessful and the matter was dropped. But



the adventure of the Peacock Chair was just beginning.

The youth exchanges between Belleville and Paderborn began even before the signing of sister city documents. Fourteen youths from Belleville went to Paderborn in July 1990. Then 15 youths from Paderborn came to Belleville in August 1991.

Dottie Brauer became the first president of Belleville Sister Cities. When it first started, she said, the organization held carwashes and quilt raffles. "We did anything to make money." Belleville Sister Cities had a balance in its account on Dec. 31, 1991, of \$2,207.43.

Officers were elected on July 1, 1992. In addition to Brauer, they were Chuck Oelrich, vice president; Christy Klein, recording secretary; Carrol Moore, treasurer; Ruth Fritz, corresponding secretary; and Norma Bergkoetter, Walter Gauspohl and Irvin Schaefer, trustees. The mayor of Belleville was the honorary chairman. Their first meetings were held in the Belleville city council chambers.

It was also noted at that July 1 meeting that planning was underway "for a day or evening in October to serve an Authentic German Dinner to be held as a yearly event. We must come up with a good name for this." Chuck Oelrich chaired a committee that included Rich Berkel and Shirley Schaefer. That dinner, of course, emerged as the first Taste of Germany and, from the start, it showed a profit. That first year, it was \$1,540.29. The name was inspired by the Taste of Germany dinners held by the German American Heritage

**COME AND JOIN  
1<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL  
"TASTE OF GERMANY"**  
(EINE KOSTPROBE AUS DEUTSCHER KÜCHLE)  
**SUNDAY OCT. 18<sup>TH</sup> 1992**  
PANORAMA BANQUET ROOM  
DINNER 6 PM CASH BAR 5-6 PM  
ENTERTAINMENT: "THE BUKER HUSARS"  
(A FIFTY PIECE MARCHING BAND  
FROM PADERBORN, GERMANY)

**MENU:** potato pancakes with homemade  
crunchy applesauce  
au gratin potatoes  
creamed peas and carrots  
german green beans  
sweet and sour red cabbage  
carved sauerbraten with  
gingerbräu gravy  
bratenders  
wiener schnitzel  
brown rolls and butter

**DESSERTS:** apple dumplings with cinnamon sauce  
lemon pudding with custard sauce  
cherry stuedel  
pumpkin pie with sweet cream  
served with coffee

**TICKETS: \$ 17 each** Belleville Sister Cities, Inc.  
P. O. Box 535  
Belleville, Ill. 62220  
For information or tickets call Tony Norviel at 618-233-4330

**BUKER HUSARS**  
**MARCHING  
BAND**  
from the Paderborn region of Germany



Saturday, October 17, 1992  
7:00 p.m.  
Belleville Area College Campus Theater  
2500 Carlyle Rd. Belleville, Ill.  
The Concert is free to the public.

Free tickets may be obtained by contacting the College Activities Office at Belleville Area College at 235-2700 or 1-800-BAC-5131 ext. 205.  
The Concert is being co-sponsored by Belleville Area College and the Belleville Sister City Inc.

Society of St. Louis.

Ron Fritz designed and built a second stand in the form of an outdoor German cafe for Belleville Sister Cities at the 1992 Oktoberfest. Members sold strudel, pie, hotdogs, pretzels, coffee and tea. They also sold sweatshirts and T-shirts.



The youth exchanges continued in 1992 when nine youths left Belleville on July 27 for a three-week visit to Paderborn. Sister Cities also made plans to host 15 youths from Paderborn in the summer of 1993 and it started a penpal program.

Sister Cities had 96 members by the end of 1992, including 53 families, seven family life, 25 single, six single life and six corporations. Those who joined before the end of 1992 were recognized as charter members.

Ellen Rost, president of the German-American Friendship Society, was among visitors from Paderborn in 1993 and while in Belleville she looked into the matter of the Peacock Chair. Wolfgang's had changed ownership and its name. It was now known as J.D. Nicks. When she visited the pub, she found that the peacock had been removed from the chair and no one knew where it was. Without the peacock, the chair was of no interest to her. The owners later called Ruth Fritz and said the peacock had been returned and the chair was for sale. This time purchase negotiations were successful and Sister Cities began making arrangements for shipping it to Paderborn.

The offerings in the souvenir stand at the 1993 Oktoberfest were expanded to include canes, shields, hat pins and windsocks.



In the fall of 1994, the Peacock Chair made its trip across the Atlantic, arriving in Paderborn on October 3. Extensive restoration work was required – the peacock had been damaged when it was removed from

the chair – and the chair did not go on display until 1995.

Dottie Brauer, who was president at the time, said, “getting the chair overseas was quite a job. We talked to Audry Marsh King and she shipped the chair with a regular Marsh overseas shipment and never charged us a dime. Belleville Sister Cities did pay to have it wrapped for shipment. It now proudly sits in the Paderborn city hall and most wedding couples have their picture taken in it.”

Sister Cities raised the price of the Taste of Germany meal in 1993 from \$17 to \$19. The menu included potato pancakes, applesauce, spaetzle, creamed peas and carrots, sweet sour red cabbage, beef rouladen with gravy, bratwurst, pork schnitzel, apple dumplings, bread pudding with custard sauce and cherry strudel. Entertainment was provided by the 30-member Volkstanzgruppe, wearing traditional dress of Laboe, Germany, and Die Spitzbaum, a small group playing and singing music in German during the cocktail hour. The dinner, held at Panorama Lanes, drew 388 persons. The first Taste of Germany commemorative program booklet was produced that year.

Rich Berkel, who has been chairman of the Taste of Germany dinners since the second year they were held, said it was easy to get entertainment groups from Germany during the first years of Taste of Germany. He made a connection with the German American National Congress in Springfield to get the groups. The funding for them was provided by Germany, he said. The groups would perform first in Springfield and then come to Belleville.



In 1994, Sister Cities added a Fruehlingstanz (in Rich Berkel's words: "a beer and pretzel dance with great German music") to its activities. It was held April 15 at the Belleville Elks Lodge and drew 225 people. Die Spitzbaum provided the music.

Two Belleville delegations visited Paderborn that year: four adults in June and four youths with their chaperone in July. One of the students, Kit Stricker, wrote about their trip: "Billie Schiff, Mandy Gasparich, Liz Gasparich, and I, along with our chaperon Victor Klein went to Paderborn, Germany for 26 days on a Sister City sponsored visit. A government official met us at the Frankfurt Airport and brought us to Paderborn. We stayed with our host families for the first week. We accompanied them to such things as church, museums, night clubs, and sightseeing trips. We took a day-trip to Cologne to see the historic buildings and churches along the Rhine river. By staying with our families we got to see how typical German families live. We became close to our families and made many new friends.

"Our group from Belleville then went to a Multi-National Youth Camp. We stayed there with other Paderborn Sister City groups from Poland, England, France and Spain. While there we went canoeing, biking, horseback riding, swimming, fencing and water skiing. We spent three days building a Viking ship on a playground in the Landes Gartenschau. The ship will be a permanent part of the playground in the park and we presented it to Mayor Luke in an official ceremony. We also attended the Libory Festival, which is an eight day festival held in the historic district in Paderborn. After our two week stay at the youth camp we went back to our host families for two days before flying home. We learned much about German culture and life, and made many new friends. Thanks to Belleville Sister Cities for this opportunity of a lifetime."

Another adult delegation – 39 persons – traveled to Europe in July 1995. Norma Bergkoetter made the arrangements for the trip, which was the first that was set up as a structured tour. It included stops in Amsterdam, Antwerp, Paris, Munich, Berlin and

**FRÜHLINGS  
TANZ**  
*(Spring Dance)*

**Friday, April 21, 1995**  
7:30 to 11:30 PM  
Belleville Elks' Lodge • 1481 South Illinois • Belleville, IL

Music by **DIE SPITZBUAM**  
*One of the metro area's finest German bands  
featuring Polkas, Waltz's, etc.  
for your dancing and listening pleasure*

**Tickets:**  
**\$6.00 in Advance**  
**\$7.00 At the Door**  
Includes:  
Beer, Soda, Pretzels

Cash Bar available for  
mixed drinks  
Snack Bar available for  
sandwiches

Given by  
**The  
Belleville-Paderborn  
Sister City  
Committee**

*For tickets and additional information  
call Richard Berkel 234-2331*



Potsdam, in addition to Paderborn. The group arrived in Paderborn for the beginning of its Liborifest. Mayor Luke greeted them in the Rathaus, where they viewed the restored Peacock Chair.

Gary Hopfinger, as director of Belleville's Parks and Recreation Department, and Charlie Giedeman, coordinator of the Horticulture Department at Belleville Area College, designed the Belleville Sister Cities garden display at Paderborn's Landes Gartenschau for 1994. Each of Paderborn's six sister cities designed a garden. Belleville's included flowers in the colors of the city's high schools and Belleville Area College with two dogwoods, a fountain and prairie grass.

Jutta Rieping, one of the German youths who came to Belleville in 1995 in the youth exchange program, was able to meet the American pen pal she had corresponded with for five years. "During our stay," she wrote afterwards, "we were doing stuff like horse riding, a float trip, visiting The Science Center, the Muny, the Arch, eating fast food (by the way I love Taco Bell)."

Sister Cities slowly added members during its first years, to 130 in November 1994. But the membership list more than doubled in the next year, to 300 in November 1995. Its financial resources had grown too, with a balance of \$18,711.17 reported as of Dec. 31, 1995.

Four youths went to Germany in 1996, and a nurses exchange took place in the spring of 1997 when five nurses and an administrator from Belleville stayed with families of staff at St. Vincenz Hospital in Paderborn and visited the mother house of the Third Order of St. Francis in Munster. Twenty-four Sister Cities members from Belleville made the trip to Paderborn in September 1997.

The Sister Cities booth at the 1996 Oktoberfest won first place for German authenticity.

A dance group from Paderborn, die Tanzgruppe Araneida, was the featured entertainment at the 1996 Taste of Germany, which was held that year at Fischer's for the first time.

Work began in 1996 on a translation of "Auf nach Amerika!," a book written by Dr. Otmar Allendorf and Ellen Rost about the emigration of Germans from the Paderborn area to America. An Illinois Arts Council grant was obtained for the project.

In 1997, a \$500 scholarship was established for the study of German at Belleville Area College, more recently renamed Southwestern Illinois College.

Sister Cities sponsored two dances in 1997, a Winter Karnevalstanz in January and the Fruhlingstanz in April. Both were held at the Elks Club.

In July 1998, 23 adults and 13 youths from Belleville traveled to Paderborn to observe the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first meeting between Belleville and Paderborn representatives. Others attending the event included John Kornblum, U.S. ambassador to Germany, and Archbishop Johannes Degenhart.

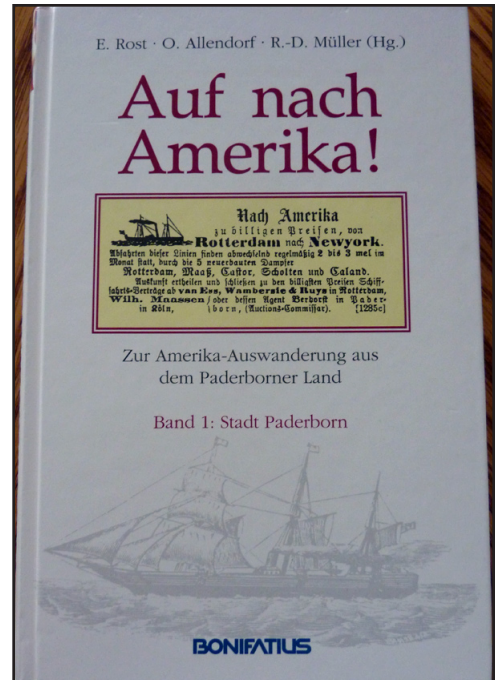
Three delegations from Paderborn came to Belleville in 1998. They included nine students who arrived in September on an exchange program with the Illinois State University, 39 Germans who came in early October, in time for the Taste of Germany dinner, and nine nurses and a sister consultant who came in late October.

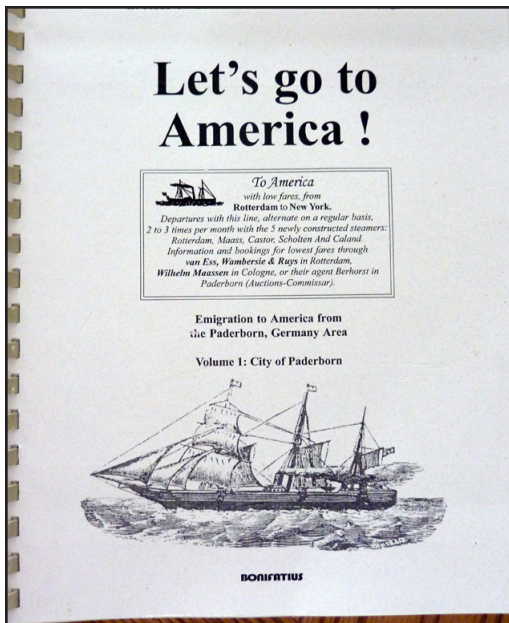
In May 1999, Belleville Sister Cities membership had grown to 344.

Fourteen youths and two adult leaders came from Paderborn in the youth exchange in 1999. Fifteen students and two chaperones went to Paderborn in 2000.

During the first 10 years of Belleville Sister Cities approximately 230 youths and adults from Belleville visited Paderborn and the Belleville organization entertained about 600 visitors from Germany. The German groups included the 54-member Buker Husars band, the 30-member Tanzgruppe Araneida and the 30-member Magellan Shanty choir, all of which performed at Taste of Germany dinners.

Belleville Sister Cities celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary in October 2000 with events that culminated in an anniversary dinner that 91 persons attended at the Belleville Country





Club on Oct. 6. Belleville Mayor Mark Kern signed a document proclaiming the day to be German/American Day in recognition that more than 60 million Americans have German ancestors.

An 11-person delegation from Paderborn included former Burgermeister Wilhelm Luke and his wife, Ursula; the president of the German-American Friendship Society, Bernd Broer, his wife, Barbara, and daughter Stefanie; the society's secretary, Dr. Otmar Allendorf, and his wife, Helga; and two of the society's board members, Brunhilda Siewart and Wolfgang Stuken, as well as Stuken's wife, Renate. Also attending was Wilhelm Bokamp, stammtisch meister for the German American Friendship Society.

Other invited guests at the anniversary dinner included Mayor Kern; Illinois State Rep. Tom Holbrook; Anna Mayer Beck, honorary consul of the Republic of Germany; and George Stemmler, founding director of the German-American Heritage Society in St. Louis.

Ellen Rost, founder of the German-American Friendship Society who had died just two months before the anniversary, was remembered with a plaque that Belleville Sister Cities President Gary Hopfinger presented to Mayor Kern.

Mayor Kern also received a copy of the second volume of "Auf nach Amerika!," and a copy of the English translation, "Let's go to America!," of the first volume. Bernd Broer made the presentation of the second volume and Belleville Sister Cities President Gary Hopfinger presented the first.

Dottie and Rich Brauer received a standing ovation for their work with Sister Cities. Bernd Broer presented an 80-centimeter-high concrete statue of Cheruskers Hermann. It was an especially appropriate gift because Belleville Sister Cities had established a Hermann Award in 1996 to recognize businesses or individuals for significant

contributions to Sister Cities.

Hermann is a German folk hero who in 9 A.D. ambushed and annihilated three Roman legions in the Battle of Teutoburger Wald, effectively ending Roman efforts to control territory east of the Rhine. The statue given by Herr Broer is a replica of a 19<sup>th</sup> century monument to Hermann that stands near Detmold, Germany.



A dogwood tree in honor of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary was planted in Ever and Anon Park in downtown Belleville on Nov. 18, 2000. A plaque recognizing Rich Brauer, chairman emeritus of Sister Cities, was placed near its base.



## The Second 10 Years

The events of Sept. 11, 2001, added uncertainty to planned exchanges with Paderborn. There were no visitors from Paderborn in 2002 but a youth trip to Paderborn did take place.

Sister Cities had three vehicles in the 2002 Shriners parade.

New stands, cookers, counters and a canopy made their appearance at the 2002 Oktoberfest, but the beer cooler owned by Bob Fritz was stolen.

Paderborn Burgermeister Heinz Paus came for a four-day visit in August 2003. Thirteen students from Paderborn, accompanied by three adults, also visited in August. An adult visit, scheduled for October 2003, was cancelled because of a SARS scare in Canada.

Forty-two Belleville Sister Cities members and guests made a shorter trip in May 2003, to Missouri, taking a Weinstrasse bus tour. During the ride to vineyards in the rolling hills of Missouri they had fun guessing which members or guests said such things as “I attended a tea at the White House when I was 21 or 22.” “As a high school baseball player, I struck out twice against a pitcher named Whitey Herzog.” “I formerly owned and raced thoroughbreds.” And “I’m related to Lillian Gish.”



The Oktoberfest beer stand reported a loss in 2003 but the food stand was profitable. The board decided that in 2004 the food stand would “probably not handle ham hocks. They fall apart when left in the cookers too long and they did not seem to be such a big seller.” Strudel, however, was a big seller.

Doris Roach created a flag for Sister Cities in 2003. It had a silk-screened logo of the organization in the middle with Paderborn’s colors in stripes at the top and Belleville’s colors at the bottom.

A Paderborn artist, Petra Hartmann, participated in Art on the Square in May 2004. Ten persons from Paderborn arrived in Belleville two weeks later – the Fruhlingstanz was moved to May 28 to take place during their visit. The guests included a teacher, Jay Erdmann, who came to arrange three-month student exchanges between schools in Paderborn and Belleville. The exchanges began in 2005.



**John Roach during the 2006 Oktoberfest.**

On a sadder note, the Paderborn visitors arrived just a few days after the death of Rich Brauer. They attended his funeral and former Burgermeister Luke spoke, thanking Rich for what he had done in establishing bonds between the cities and calling him a “wonderful friend.” Just two weeks before his death, Rich and Dottie Brauer received The Federal Republic of Germany Award “in recognition of your efforts on behalf of German-American relations.”

Fourteen youths from Belleville, Paderborn, Ill., and St. Libory traveled to Germany in 2004. The following summer 14 students from Paderborn came to Belleville for two weeks. In addition, four students from Paderborn arrived to spend a semester in Belleville schools.

**13** Rob Thornberry from Belleville took part in an exhibition of young artists in Paderborn

in June 2005. Seven Sister Cities members visited Paderborn during its Liborifest in July.

In 2005, Belleville Sister Cities had a “German Christmas” float in the annual Santa Claus parade. Doris Roach provided mulled wine, Gluehwein, for the crew that created a snow-covered forest scene on a flatbed. The scene included a mountain, “which was supposed to represent the Alps,” Doris wrote in a 2006 newsletter. “Well, it turned out to look more like a tepee.”

Sister Cities had a float in the 2006 Santa Claus parade, too, and it won First Place and \$100.

A second Paderborn artist, Andreas Kopp, came to Belleville in May 2006 to exhibit in Art on the Square.

Three Belleville students went to Paderborn for six weeks in June 2006 and attended school there for the first three weeks of their visit. A teacher exchange also was arranged in 2006, and an O’Fallon High School teacher, Kathleen Ashby, was the first teacher to participate in it. Three teachers at Goerdeler Gymnasium in Paderborn came to Belleville in October 2006.



**Bishop Edward Braxton met with visitors from Paderborn in July 2007. Bernd Broer, president of the German-American Friendship Society, is at the bishop’s right and Martin Muller, Paderborn district executive, is at the bishop’s left.**

The 11 Belleville students who went to Paderborn in July 2006 helped raise funds by selling strudel, pretzels and chili dogs at the Belleville Jaycees Deutschfest in June. Rain and winds reaching 80 miles an hour made that fundraising venture more of an adventure (and less profitable) than anticipated. Their booth was anchored by six cement-filled buckets and it survived the storm; not all vendors were so fortunate.



**The Belleville Philharmonic Orchestra accompanied Doris Roach as she sang in German at the 2007 Taste of Germany dinner in Fischer's Restaurant.**

A heavy rain on one of the two days of the 2006 Oktoberfest made that less successful than usual, too.

Belleville Sister Cities, with four other area Sister Cities organizations, hosted the 2007 state Sister Cities Conference, which was held at Our Lady of Snows Shrine. Belleville Sister Cities was awarded first place for its display table, prepared by Doris Roach, Theresa Fritz and Sally Berkel.

The teacher exchanges continued in 2007, with two O'Fallon High School teachers going to Paderborn. There was also talk in Belleville of starting an exchange of police and firemen.

Sister Cities took second place in the 2007 Christmas parade with a float that featured an antique black sleigh, a nutcracker, gift wrapped packages and a Christmas tree. The parade theme was An Old Fashioned Christmas. Past presidents Norma Bergkoetter and Rich Berkel, wearing period attire, rode in the sleigh. Sister Cities also entered the float in Millstadt's Weihnachtsfest parade.

Fourteen students from Belleville went to Paderborn in July 2008, followed two weeks later by a delegation of 22 adults who made the trip in part to join the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the German American Friendship Society on July 28, 2008, in the Paderborn Rathaus.

**15** In May 2008, Christine Steuernagel became the third artist from Paderborn to participate

in Belleville's Art on the Square. In September, six Paderborn policemen arrived for an exchange visit during which they accompanied Belleville police on their rounds. They also toured the department headquarters and the St. Clair county jail.

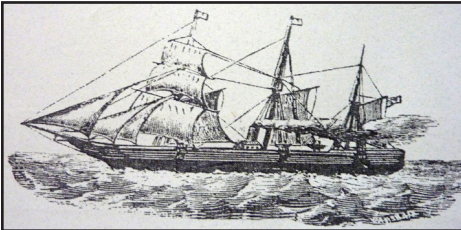
Rinder Rouladen has become a tradition on the Taste of Germany menus. The dinners have been held since 1996 at Fischer's but this meat dish is prepared each year, not by the restaurant, but by Doris Roach and her crew of "rouladen rollers." Rich Berkel, long-time chairman of the dinners, wrote that he "heard many favorable comments about the food" at the 2008 Taste of Germany dinner and he specifically noted the Rouladen.

Twelve students and three chaperones from Paderborn visited Belleville in July 2009. Their visit was unusual in that it marked the 20th year of youth exchanges between Paderborn and Belleville.

The anniversary was observed in a ceremony at Belleville City Hall during which the first BSC President, Dottie Brauer, and the current President, Ron Fritz, accepted a plaque presented by Lansing Hecker, honorary German consul from St. Louis. Josephine Wittenauer, Sister Cities coordinator for Southern Illinois, also presented a certificate from Sister Cities International.

Bratburgers were added to the Oktoberfest menu in 2009 and turned out to be a big seller. An electrical failure Friday night created unexpected challenges for the cooks. They managed to get the lights back, but all the roasters were out, as was the pretzel machine. So they heated everything on the grills: sauerkraut, cabbage and potato salad. And they succeeded in selling it all.

Belleville Sister Cities, Inc. has had nine presidents in its first 20 years. They are Dottie Brauer, 1992-1995; Rich Berkel, 1996-1997; Ruth Fritz, 1998-1999; Gary Hopfinger, 2000-2001; Karl Mandl, 2002-2003; Doris Roach 2004-2005; Norma Bergkoetter, 2006-2007; Ron Fritz, 2008-2009; and Tom Heiting, 2010 - .



*The history of Belleville Sister Cities is rich with events and people. It is because of people sharing their lives that we look to our past with pride and to our future with hope, with open arms to the friends we have yet to make in Belleville and Paderborn.*

*- Tom Heiting*