

City that spurned her invites her back

Despite all the griping we do, it is inconceivable for any loyal U.S. citizen to stop calling himself an American.

Mrs. Erna Leopold of Southfield is an American citizen and says "gold mountains" couldn't lure her away from the United States.

She was born in Germany in 1900 and lived in Frankfurt until 1938 when it became a matter of survival to leave her homeland with her husband and two children in tow.

Jews were no longer welcome in the town their ancestors helped to build. Like many German Jews, Mrs. Leopold and her late husband got to hate Germans.

The same man who was awarded the Iron Cross as a World War I fighter pilot and member of the elite Richthofen Staff squadron changed his first name from Joachim to John shortly after arriving in the States.

To this day, Mrs. Leopold must stop and convince herself that the sons of the Nazis are not guilty of the crimes of their fathers.

It was former residents like Mrs. Leopold who once were spurned by the city of Frankfurt that Walter Wallmann, current mayor of that city, invited back last month to see the new Frankfurt, the new Germany.

The Frankfurt City Council set aside \$120,000 to bring 106 Jews — 70 from the United States and 36 from Israel — back to the city that once was home to such famous Jews as philosopher Martin Buber and Nobel prize winner for medicine Paul Ehrlich.

Mrs. Leopold and the tour group found Frankfurt a changed city. The great synagogue, burned during the war, is gone. The bombed-out opera house has been rebuilt. And her school, a Jewish gymnasium called Das Philanthropin, is still standing, thanks to a preservation effort.



Erna Leopold will never forget, but she is learning to forgive. (Staff photo by Mindy Saunders)

BUT SO MANY so many old buildings have been replaced by shiny skyscrapers that the old-timers on the tour starting calling the city on the Main river "Mainhattan."

Mrs. Leopold still recalls the familiar slogan of Holocaust survivors, "Never forgive, never forget." But since the trip she tempers that phrase with the admission "I have no hesitation to say that I was glad I went because it gave me a different view . . . not of the era of the Nazis but of the Germany that might come out now."

Later, she says of young Germans, "I tried to forgive, but I can't forget" — an important distinction.

Still, she can't help wondering if the group got the pro-

verbial Russian tour — seeing the side of Germany officials wanted them to see. Some anti-Semitic sentiments from the '30s and '40s must remain, even if dormant, she said.

Mrs. Leopold can't help remembering the fervent Nazi devotion — "especially from the women, they were running through the streets, it was like hypnotic. Now nobody was a Nazi when you talk to them."

At one point during a walk, Mrs. Leopold says a young Communist handed them a leaflet explaining that there was still a Nazi bookstore in Frankfurt.

"I didn't get excited," Mrs. Leopold said. "We have a Nazi bookstore here."



Craig Plechura

The group was given the grand tour by Frankfurt city officials. And at almost every stop they were greeted by notebook-bearing reporters and TV camera crews.

Stern, the German equivalent of Life Magazine, did a big spread on the contingent before they left for Frankfurt, going so far as sending a camera crew to the United States to shoot pictures of persons such as Joseph and Mary Adler of Livonia, who accompanied Mrs. Leopold on the trip.

Mrs. Leopold and the Adlers were quoted by New York Times reporter John Vinocur in May 31 story about their bittersweet reunion.

A DOCUMENTARY filmed the national television station of West Germany, is scheduled to be rebroadcast in this country this summer.

"We were never alone," Mrs. Leopold said. "When we came down to breakfast, they were there, the boys from Stern, Mr. Vinocur from the New York Times and NDR (the German television network). There was no escape from the press, no escape from TV."

Despite the modesty, it's clear Mrs. Leopold enjoyed all the attention. Press clippings and photographs are stacked high on a table in the living room of her Knob in the Woods condominium.

Not all the trip was somber recollections and displays of reparation from her Frankfurt hosts. After all, it was a vacation, too, and the tour group was taken on a special train ride to the forest outside the city to help Frankfurters celebrate the third day of Pentecost in the annual Ebbelwei Festival.

The Jewish expatriates took a boat ride on the river Main and sang songs in German they knew as youngsters to the accompaniment of an accordion. Ebbelwei means apple wine, and the festival is celebrated only in Frankfurt. Since it was an apple wine festival, did Mrs. Leopold sample some?

"Sure, what do you think?" she answered incredulously.

It would be reaching for a metaphor to say that Germany is a wine that turned sour but is once again fit for all to drink. Besides, Mrs. Leopold has a better image.

The first time she returned to Frankfurt was 1958 and every man she saw on the street was wearing a black S.S. uniform.

"There was no uniform," Mrs. Leopold said. "I saw the uniform. I imagined it."

"(Before) I can see the men on the street in their uniforms, and now he wears a suit."

Much ado about nothing

Middle class musings on leisure time

Leisure didn't used to be a problem for me.

For the first 20 years or so of my life, I had plenty of it and I got pretty good at it. In college, if I didn't have anything to do some afternoon, I'd hitchhike to the Upper Peninsula and get in a week or so of trout fishing.

Tie yourself down during the day for 40 hours a week, though, and you have to exercise more care in how you spend the time when your not tied down.

Everybody has their favorites. Some guys spend half their lives pruning roses and think they're really having fun. I go bowling every Wednesday night from October to April, and I have an ironclad rule on summer sports: Regular as clockwork, whether I feel like it or, I play one round of golf every year. As a rule to live by, it's better than most.

Even those hardcore commitments still leave me with a lot of time on my hands, though. I occupy this time with fishing, gardening, following the stock market, working on cars and drinking.

Of these, I would have to say drinking is my favorite. The beauty of drinking is that, depending on



Mike Scanlon

the preferences of the guy on the next stool, you can spend your drinking time talking about any or all of the other things you do and kill two birds with one stone. It could be an answer to American productivity problems. The government ought to give somebody a grant to study it.

NORMALLY, of course, you don't meet a lot of stock market enthusiasts on the next stool. This is basically OK. Interesting as they may be when you lay them all out on the dining room table between a couple of crumpled packs of cigarettes and a pocket calculator, I think advance-decline curves and econometric models are basically drier conversational stuff than martinis.

You run into a lot of car enthusiasts sitting at bars, though, and it seems to me that every man over the age of 55 has some kind of garden in his backyard. Most of them are worried as hell over it. You should hear the language they use about aphids.

Now the nice thing about cars is that they're easy to please. There's a 1964 Dodge Dart convertible in my garage that I've been meaning to get around to doing something with for damn near a year. Not that it hasn't already given me a world of pleasure. I've had 10 or 15 bar conversations about what kind of camshaft I should stick in it. Someday I'll get around to doing something about it, but when I go out there and look at it in the meantime, it hardly ever whines at me.

But plant some cucumber seeds and tomatoes in the yard and you're committed. It's like buying a dog, or getting married. Suppose you just don't feel like getting out and watering them some weekend. It plays on your mind for a few hours, and finally, out of pure guilt, you go out to take a look.

There's no more pitiful sight in the world than a dehydrated cucumber tendril reaching out and tugging at your pants cuff. It kind of gets to you.



Lynn Orr

Graduating means coping with unknown

To the Class of 1980:

So you're the class that's supposed to be goal-oriented. In junior high, you were planning the four years of your high school career to accommodate whatever you were going to do after this summer.

Now, many of you have planned what you're going to do for the next few years as well — apprenticeships, college, vocational school, jobs.

Armed with 13 years of education, many of you have mapped out your lives to age 30, and perhaps beyond.

A few others may have slipped through the planning cracks. Other than a summer spinning through town, some of you may not have the slightest idea of what you're going to do come September.

Welcome to the club.

Don't let those commencement addresses mislead you; few adults have the slightest inkling of what you're going to do beyond next week. We may spend two hours deciding on wallpaper or when to mow the lawn, but we've given little thought to next year — let alone the maze that stretches beyond.

MOST OF US simply don't want to think about it. Age is upsetting because it limits our options. When we are 18, multitudes of career choices beckon, and education may be planned accordingly.

But at 31, or 42, or 53, we're forced to reject some of those dreams. Options become locked doors. A few of us make dramatic changes. But only a few.

That's why all the adults in your lives persist so maddeningly in attempting to put you on the "right" path now. Many of them aren't very happy in their choices. But they may be too fearful of the unknown, or can't fathom what's beyond the locked door, to attempt any rerouting of the past.

The adults in your lives want you to somehow have the knowledge they lacked to choose the right path, to live happily ever after in a career and lifestyle.

It's best, in their minds, if you follow their pattern, because it's comfortable and they know the obstacles. They can point out the rats.

Your choice of a radically different route may force them to question their past choices as well.

YOUR EDUCATION has been directed by people who, with all good intentions, want you to know what you're doing. They want the choices to be as well planned as possible.

They're convinced all this expert planning has given you the ingenuity they lacked at the same age. In other words, they've got high hopes that somehow you are better equipped than they were.

But without spreading the news, they're aware that life isn't that simple.

If you're as goal-oriented as they think you are, you may be in for a peculiar kind of trouble — the perils of technocracy.

Ask your teacher who was just pink-slipped about that. That's when your choices have been made, the right education has been pursued and the world changes. Who would have believed in 1964 that Zero Population Growth had a chance?

THE FUTURE is far too intangible a commodity to be charted on a graph. We've learned that honing our skills too finely leaves us with a very slim blade to carve out a niche in a complex and constantly changing world.

With what, then, does that leave you? Hopefully, some appreciation of flexibility.

Without reverting to a totally unstructured philosophy, the kind that saddled us with unemployed philosophy majors in the '60s, keep in mind that being prepared for change may be the best way to be prepared for what promises to be an eventual decade.

Dr. Lawrence Berkove, a professor at the University of Michigan-Dearborn, says that freedom is the ability to surprise God, in explaining determinism.

Freedom, 1980-style, may be the ability to bounce back with whatever gets thrown at you.

Welcome to the world of verbal report cards — and break a leg.

from our readers

Teacher objects to article on Dunckel choral program

Editor:

When I was informed the Observer would be doing an article on the 23-year-old choir tradition at Dunckel Junior High, I was thrilled.

Very little has been printed about this tradition established by Eddy Ellegood, a very creative, talented teacher who has devoted years of service to Farmington public schools.

Your article was extremely poorly written. I was misquoted. Information was inaccurate. Most importantly, the emphasis was misplaced.

The article didn't reflect the feelings of those involved, nor did it address the dedication, hard work, time and energy that was given by the participants.

In fairness to the hundreds of people who have been a part of the Dunckel choir, more should have been written about the origin history and progression of the program as well as addressing the anticipations for the future of the Dunckel Middle School.

As I said after closing our concert with "You'll Never Walk Alone," "It is not the end, it is a beginning."

Perhaps if the writer had attended the concert, she would have had a more accurate understanding of the emotion, dedication and camaraderie that is typical of Dunckel.

Your article has done a great disservice to the originator, alumni, present members, director and friends of the Dunckel music program.

Vandalism column hits nail on the head

Editor:

Bravo. Your article on June 9 — "Vandalism Bares Questions for Parents to Answer" — was most encouraging and heartwarming.

Thank you for your courage to speak

openly to an issue of such importance.

I am a teacher in Farmington. My wife is a secretary in the public schools and we have two sons now in college.

Your assessment of student behavior being directly related to parental

teaching and/or example is a societal problem we need to give greater attention.

Without multiplying words unnecessarily, let me simply state that my wife and I agree with you in the entirety of

this article and wish you to know that there are others who support you in this approach to community awareness and education.

ROGER GAULT,
Livonia