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Letter from the Chair

Dear Friends,



As the department's new chair, I would like to thank my predecessor, Helmut Puff, and our former chair, Geoff Eley, for being so generous with their time and advice during the transition. But they were not the only ones who made this process much easier than I had anticipated: I'm also grateful to our fantastic staff, Sheri Sytsema-Geiger, Nancy, Blasch, and Marga Schuhwerk-Hampel. Like everyone else, I very much regret Marga's departure for the Screen Arts department, but wish her best of luck in her new position. We are fortunate in welcoming Kate Ballentine as her replacement. I'm especially pleased that I was able to convince Johannes von Moltke to serve once more as associate chair. Johannes is replacing Silke Weineck, who did a splendid job as associate chair last year.

During the past academic year, we were fortunate to hire Andreas Gailus, a specialist in modern German literature, philosophy and political theory. I am also delighted to report that Vanessa Agnew received tenure in 2008. This year we are preparing the case for tenure and promotion for Kerstin Barndt.


As always, our undergraduate major continues to thrive. We are becoming used to the number of majors increasing every year thanks to the tireless efforts of Hartmut Rastalsky and Kalli Federhofer. Years ago we decided to switch toward an interdisciplinary model both on the undergraduate and graduate levels, a decision which has earned us recognition as the leading model for a twenty-first century German department. The excellence of our department is reflected in the awards and grants that our faculty continue to earn. To read our weekly report on events in the department, awards, etc., please go to www.lsa.umich.edu/german and click on "This Week's News." We are happy to announce another major conference (planned for fall 2009) on the topic of German idealism. This is the latest in a series of international conferences sponsored by the German department, starting with *The Unification Effect* (1999), and continuing with *Weimar Cultures* (2002) and *Ruins of Modernity* (2005). Each of these has given rise to a subsequent publication; *Ruins of Modernity* is forthcoming with Duke UP in April 2009.

One of the most significant results of our interdisciplinarity is the breadth of our undergraduate curriculum. We are now offering courses on topics as diverse as soccer, engineering, film, opera, business German, German and Dutch colonialism, contemporary German politics, Icelandic sagas as well as the more conventional courses in German language and literature. Highlights of undergraduate education include our Max Kade trip to Berlin in February; a trip to Helsingborg, Sweden, also in February; an evening of German songs and opera in Ann Arbor; and a student video project starring Johannes and Joris von Moltke.

As for our graduate training program, we are happy to report that we are continuing to attract the very best students. For the first time, the graduate students organized their own conference in the fall on the topic of rethinking the avant-garde with Richard Langston (UNC-Chapel Hill) as keynote speaker. Silke Weineck finalized the details of an exchange program between Michigan and Berlin's Humboldt University. Already one of our students is spending the year in Berlin and we will be hosting the first Berlin student next year.

Together with the Center for European Studies, we are now starting to plan a series of events (lectures, readings, films) to commemorate the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

With warm regards,


Julia Hell [hell@umich.edu]

Community Connection

40 Years after 1968: The 12th German Film Institute

By Johannes von Moltke

The Institute, this time devoted to films and film culture from the tumultuous years around 1968, was once again a great success. Including the directors and organizers, a total of 24 participants from across the country convened for the six-day seminar. In keeping with the successful format of previous years, the Institute was divided into morning seminars and afternoon/evening screenings. Given the participants' broad and interdisciplinary expertise, the seminars invariably generated intense discussions at a high intellectual level. Topics ranged from the politics of the student revolt and the sexual revolution to the era's avant-garde and its "meta-films," which provided often heady reflections on the situation of filmmaking at the time. The seminars were devoted both to advancing the research agendas in the field (which they did successfully, thanks to the impulses provided by the organizers and by the films themselves) and to airing pedagogical concerns regarding the teaching of German film.

The screenings were again divided into two categories: video and DVD copies were screened "internally" in the seminar room for participants only; 16mm and 35mm prints were screened publicly. Audiences once again enjoyed the rare opportunity to view archival prints in mint condition; the University's own Film Projection Services, now ISS, ensured professional, smoothly run shows, giving viewers a first-hand glimpse of film history. Comments after the screenings were uniformly appreciative, and occasionally ecstatic.

Regarding the logistics of the event, participants were full of praise for the efforts of the organizing staff. They repeatedly expressed their gratitude at the warm welcome, the glitch-free running of the event, the hospitality at the Humanities Institute, and the overall suitability of the University of Michigan as a venue for the GFI, which may return in 2010. There could be no better proof

of the enormous success of this event than the ongoing investment in the German Film Institute by scholars, the directors, and the sponsors alike. We thus remain grateful to all units and sponsors involved in making this event possible, including: the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD); The Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures and its superb staff; The Department of Screen Arts and Cultures; The Office of the Vice President for Research; The College of Literature, Science, and the Arts (LS&A); The Rackham Graduate School; The International Institute; the Institute for the Humanities; and ISS.



Alexander Kluge's *Artists in the Big Top: Perplexed* (1968)



Jean-Luc Godard's *La Chinoise* (1967)

Hounding the Elusive Professor Scott Spector



Scott Spector with his canine companion Pye. They were featured in a recent Ann Arbor Observer article.

Since completing a year's fellowship at U-M's Humanities Institute in 2007-2008, there have been repeated sightings of Scott Spector around the Department, and some claim to have spotted him on a nearly daily basis. Whether these rumors are true or exaggerations cannot be confirmed, but we decided it was time to nail down this important but elusive figure. Who is this man? We sought him out to ask.

Spector seemed surprised that we considered him a person of mystery, having served in the Department for fourteen years, and having taught so many courses on the graduate and undergraduate level in the unit, having served on so many graduate committees, and having initiated the office of Associate Chair in German a few years back. Trained at the Johns Hopkins University chiefly in the Department of History, Spector completed his Ph.D. in 1994 with a dissertation that was to be the foundation of his prize-winning book, *Prague Territories: National Conflict and Cultural Innovation in Franz Kafka's Fin de Siècle* (University of California, 2000). This work and a series of related articles explored the complex cultural identities and ideas of a single generation of German-speaking Jews in Prague while it was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It was in this sense a way to link his interests in cultural history, German-Jewish studies, and the innovations of modernism. "Kafka was a fulcrum for all of these interests," Spector explains, "although he was really just a cameo figure in the original dissertation. That all changed by the time the book came out, and I've published a series of essays on Kafka himself as well." These include recent essays in German publications, including one on Kafka and literary modernism in the standard reference work known as the *Kafka-Handbuch*. A number of other essays on German-Jewish history will eventually be collected in a volume on German-Jewish Subjects and Histories.

Kafka and the nationality conflict of the Habsburg monarchy are really past interests for him at this point, though. His current project, which has occupied him for nearly a decade, explores the way that sexual and criminal persons were conceived and conceived themselves in Vienna and Berlin, and the ways in which such identities were linked in the public mind to fantasies of violence. Violence, we asked? "Well, yes... I'm thinking of a whole series of widely known cases of sensational character, from sex scandals involving public figures to Jack-the-Ripper-style murders of prostitutes, to the sudden revival of accusations that Jewish communities abducted and murdered Christian children for ritual murder purposes." These court cases and newspaper scandals, he argues, were an integral part of a network of kinds of knowledge about the pathological individual, through which he hopes to show a changing way of thinking about self and society.

Spector has received an impressive number of grants and awards recognizing his scholarship, including the DAAD/German Studies Association book prize; residential fellowships at the IFK in Vienna, the Library of Congress, the Rutgers Center for Historical Analysis, and Michigan's Humanities Institute; and a host of other grants and recognitions, including LSA's Distinguished Research Award. He values nothing more highly than his own students, and is now working closely with graduate students in both the German and History departments, where he holds a joint appointment. He is also active at the Frankel Institute for Judaic Studies and the Program in Women's Studies. Perhaps all this involvement, we suggested, is what makes him seem so hard to pin down? Spector just laughed. "I'm not elusive, some people think I'm a media hound. Or my hounds are. We're constantly in the Ann Arbor News and the Observer..."

News from Retired Faculty Professor Hermann Weiss

Hermann F. Weiss, born in Beuel (Germany) in 1937, joined our Department in the fall, 1968, just after completing his Ph.D. at Princeton University. He taught his last classes in fall, 2000.

While German literature and culture has been the major focus of his research, he recently became involved in studying World War II and its immediate aftermath in the region of Silesia, part of Poland since 1945. In his book *Buschvorwerk im Riesengebirge. Eine ländliche Gemeinde in Niederschlesien von den Kriegsjahren bis zur Vertreibung* (2006), he portrays developments in this community where he and his family lived in 1944.

More than half of the book concentrates on a German missile development firm that set up a factory in this remote location. Most of the workforce consisted of forced laborers from several

occupied countries, including Jewish men who were imprisoned in ZAL (Zwangsarbeitslager) Schmiedeberg on the grounds of this plant. The book is based on archival sources from a number of countries as well as interviews with Jewish survivors, other former forced laborers, and Germans who were expelled from this village after the war. At present Hermann Weiss is writing several articles on two ZALs in Upper Silesia, which have also not been investigated by historians.

Since his retirement he has been involved in several citizen's initiatives. He and his wife, Becky, enjoy traveling. In July they vacationed in Oregon where he spent his first year in the United States (1964 / 1965). In October they will be in Germany and Poland, and next March they will explore parts of Peru and Ecuador.



Hermann Weiss would be delighted to hear from his former students. He can be reached at hfweiss@umich.edu, or by telephone at 734-663-9673.

Congratulations to Our Recent Ph.Ds



David Choberka, Ph.D. Graduating in the Spring of 2008, we accidentally omitted David from the newsletter. His dissertation title is "Calling, Charisma, and the War of Material: The First World War in the Politics of Ernst Toller, Ernst Jünger, and Max Weber."

He is currently a lecturer in the department and an Interpretive Content Designer for the University of Michigan Museum of Art.



Jay Michael Layne, Ph.D. Mike defended in August, 2008 and his dissertation is titled "Uncanny Collapse: Sexual Violence and Unsettled Rhetoric in German-Language Lustmord Representations, 1900-1933."

Mike will be teaching German 457 in the winter term. He is also rewriting a chapter as an article on the metaphor of the sexual murderer as a monster.

Avant Garde Conference

By Seth Howes

On October 16th and 17th, the German graduate students convened an interdisciplinary conference entitled "Examining the Avant Garde." The conference analyzed the utility of the concept 'avant garde,' and provided a transdisciplinary forum for readings of avant garde art, politics, and self-understanding. Thursday night's keynote address—"Boring Avant-Gardes"—was delivered by Professor Richard Langston (UNC-Chapel Hill), who spoke on post-war German film and happenings, and their relation to German critical debates on appropriate aesthetic strategies and the relationship of art to life. The conference panels began Friday morning, and throughout the day four full panels (on Introspective-, Cold War-, Gendered-, and Neo- Avant Gardes) convened for an hour and a half each. Presenters traveled from Berkeley, Munich, Mainz, Oklahoma, and Seattle.

Michigan graduate students joined us from the Departments of English, Slavic Languages and Literatures, Romance Languages and Literatures, and the History of Art; German Ph.D students Joshua Hawkins and Solveig Heinz presented on May Ayim and Richard Strauss, respectively. Finally, a banquet and round table discussion closed out the day.

The event was made possible by generous sponsorship from the Department of German, Dutch and Scandinavian; The Institute for the Humanities; Rackham Graduate School, and the Avant Garde Interest Group; The Museum Studies Program; Center for European Studies-European Union Center (CES-EUC); History of Art; The Department of Comparative Literature

"Examining the Avant Garde..." was also the first event for the Avant Garde Interest Group

(AGIG) – a new Rackham Interdisciplinary Workshop. The AGIG is an interdisciplinary group designed to bring together graduate students and faculty from departments across campus to critically explore the diverse topic of the Avant Garde. The AGIG will soon send a call for participants, and will schedule a series of events for the Winter Semester 2009, including a workshop, an avant garde film series, and a guest lecturer/artist. For more information about

the AGIG, please contact avantgarde@umich.edu.



Ph.D students Robert Wells (U-M), Solveig Heinz (U-M), and Priscilla Layne (Berkeley) look on, as Michael André (U-M) introduces their panel, "Introspective Avant Gardes."

German-American Career Day Continues to be a Success

By Peggy Wunderwald-Jensen

On October 9, 2008, our third German-American Career Day took place. The German-American Career Day is a joint initiative of the German Department and our partner organization CDS International, Inc. CDS has been administering a Summer Internship Program since 2002 to help our students to get internships in Germany in a variety of fields ranging from automotive manufacturers and businesses to museums, government and political institutions to nature parks and football teams.

Michigan and welcomed a total of 18 companies at the event including Volkswagen, Bosch, MTU Detroit Diesel, Wacker, Fraunhofer USA, ZF, Behr, Brose, IAV Automotive Engineering, Freudenberg-NOK, Benteler Automotive, and the Deutsche Schule in Metro Detroit and Ann Arbor. Over 100 students used the 2-hour career fair to learn about each company and to talk on an individual basis—in English or German—to recruiters about hiring procedures, open positions and expectations for internships and entry-level positions.

The German-American Career Day was created in 2005 to complement this program and give students the opportunity to explore internship and job opportunities with German companies here at home. Despite the current economic situation, we received a surprisingly positive response from the German Business Community in Southeast

It is now up to each student to build upon these contacts and to turn their German knowledge into a useful tool to compete on the job market. We are very glad to be in the position to help our students make the transition from campus into the job market by giving them opportunities such as internships or the German-American Career Day.

More than 100 students attended the 2008 German-American Career Day, where they spoke with potential employers about multi-lingual opportunities.



DeVries–VanderKooy Memorial Lecture presents David Barnouw

By Ton Broos



Professor David Barnouw (left) was the guest speaker for the 2008 DeVries–VanderKooy Memorial Lecture. Pictured with Prof. Ton Broos (U-M).

In The Netherlands, a small and friendly nation, everyone was helping Jews during the Second World War. The country was unanimous in its resistance against an overpowering Nazi German occupier, who even used paratroopers dressed as nuns. These and other myths were discussed during the DeVries–VanderKooy Memorial Lecture “Myth and Reality about the German Occupation of the Netherlands; Then and Now.” This was presented by David Barnouw, who came to our university from Amsterdam, where he works as researcher and spokesperson for the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation. It was already our thirteenth lecture, organized by Dutch and Flemish Studies in our Department. Although we had heard before from Holocaust survivors Jacques Polak and Ina Soep, rescuer Marion Pritchard and author Philo Bregstein, on this occasion our speaker brought new and surprising light on several misapprehensions that were standing in the way of reality about that painful period in the history of the Low Countries. There are the myths that Dutch people themselves have created about the war, e.g. that a highly trained German SS division overran a Dutch defense line formed by Dutch prisoners as a shield. An American, almost amusing, myth tells of the fact that the Dutch were supposed to have been wearing yellow tulips in their lapels as protest against the Germans and in support of the Jews. Our guest also spoke of several conspiracy theories and betrayals that were the result of vivid imaginations after the war when the number of resistance workers increased from reality. The view of resistance is largely made after the war. There is also the story of Himmler who wanted to deport the whole country, but his personal masseur “saved” the Dutch population by pleading their case. And many people still believe that there was betrayal involved in Operation Market Garden, known in the world from the movie “A Bridge too Far.”

The audience brought many questions afterwards, ranging from queries about the number of resistance workers, to comparison with other countries, or the recent Paul Verhoeven movie “Black Book.” In answer to a question about the number and threat of neo-nazis in Holland, our guest speaker assured the audience that these groups are small and just out to shock people, as youngsters would. Anti-semitism in the Netherlands is of the anti-Israel and pro-Palestinian variety.

It became clear from this inspiring lecture that history is a continuum. David Barnouw stressed that we should keep studying, but also remain skeptical doing research, as there is still hard work to be done.



U-M President
Mary Sue Coleman
www.giving.umich.edu

President Coleman’s Challenge for Graduate Fellowship Support

President Mary Sue Coleman has created a new gift challenge program to enhance support for graduate students as a concluding phase of the current Michigan Difference Campaign. Every \$2 contributed for graduate support will be matched by \$1 from the President’s Challenge Fund. The Challenge will apply to gifts to existing named endowments or expendable accounts, as well as to gifts that are designated specifically for graduate studies directed to the Department’s Graduate Student Fellowship Fund. We urge you to consider contributing. Funding is a key factor in helping graduate students decide where to pursue their studies. We know that attracting these students is critical to the vibrancy of the Department and the future of German studies; you can make a difference. The Challenge will run until December 31, 2008 or until \$40 million is committed in gifts, whichever comes first. Hence, we encourage you to make your gifts as soon as possible.

Scandinavian Studies

Summer in Sweden

By Justin Kushner

I spent last summer at the Uppsala International Summer Session in Sweden. I first found out about the program many years ago, way before I was old enough to attend. My brother studied the Swedish language at UISS over ten years ago and as a result had the time of his life while becoming a nearly fluent speaker.

One of the top reasons I chose to attend Michigan in the first place was because of the appeal of studying Swedish. My mother was born in Sollentuna, close to Stockholm, Sweden, and moved to the United States over thirty years ago, after meeting my father. I was fortunate enough to visit my Swedish family many times in my life, but never had a real opportunity to immerse myself in the culture and study the language on a full-time basis. In an effort to broaden my understanding of the great country as well as better my language comprehension, I decided to apply to the intensive language program at the UISS. Through the Scandinavian program I received a much needed scholarship that helped with airfare and living expenses while abroad.

I arrived in Sweden and was at first more anxious than I had first anticipated. I knew that there would be a lot of studying to be done and was not sure where I would be living or what kind of people I would meet. I soon met the program director, Nelleke Dorrestijn, who gave me the keys to my summer apartment which turned out to be a wonderful place to live. I was only a 15 minute walk from central campus, and my room overlooked one of the largest tourist attractions and places of worship in Scandinavia, Uppsala domkyrka.

Last summer will not be soon forgotten. The classes were intense; four hours in the morning with two more in the afternoon turned me into a Swedish-speaking machine. We took trips all around, but the ones I enjoyed most of all were the Värmland, Dalarna and Stockholm trips. The weekend in

Värmland was a camping excursion gone totally Swedish, and we had the option of horseback riding, hiking, or rafting. I chose to go rafting with several others and it was nothing like I had expected! We actually had to build our rafts from timber and tie the logs together with rope. It was an experience like none other.

While classes required some time and study, they lasted from Monday through Thursday so the weekends were often the time to either travel with UISS or on our own. A couple of weekends I took the train to see my grandparents in Sollentuna, and on one occasion my aunt picked me up on the way to our summer house in Dalarna. Of course, there is always Stockholm nearby which is sure to keep you entertained. If you are in Stockholm, make sure to visit Vasaskeppet museum, which is a recovered ship from the 1600s.

A summer spent in Sweden has opened my eyes to the world and Scandinavian culture. I was able to improve my language speaking skills, meet a ton of people from all over the world and spend some vital time with my family overseas. My experience was truly amazing and I'll surely never forget my time spent in Uppsala. I am so grateful for the Scandinavian program at Michigan which made it all possible.



Congratulations to our student Justin Kushner, psychology major, who graduated in 2008 from the University of Michigan. Justin spent the summer of 2007 in Sweden at an intensive language program.

Dear Alumnus and Friends



It is my great pleasure to write to you for the first time as a member of this Department and in my new capacity as our Development Liaison. I am inheriting this position from my colleagues Fred Amrine and Andrei Markovits, whom I would like to thank for their dedication in building up this community of friends of the Department.

As I am settling into my new academic home, I am stunned to learn about the size of this community and the level of support you have given to us since Fred may have contacted you over a decade ago. At a time when higher education, and in particular the humanities, are under constant financial and political pressure, it is truly heartening to know how many of you care about our work as teachers and researchers. Without your help, we would not be where we are today.

And as somebody who just decided to join this department, I can assure you that “we” are doing wonderfully. Over the last few years, our department has gained a reputation as one of the most innovative and spirited Germanic Studies programs in the country. The “Michigan Model”—our emphasis on interdisciplinary work—is being copied nationwide. Our faculty explores all aspects of German culture—from literature and history to film and museums, from music and politics to philosophy and paintings. In short, we are constantly exploring new aspects of German culture, and our students seem to enjoy our curiosity.

Last year, more than 62 of our students studied abroad, 28 students lived in the Max Kade House and over 1,970 students attended our undergraduate classes. We currently have over 260 concentrators/minors and 20 graduate students. Our graduate students just organized their very first graduate student conference, which brought together participants from across campus and from five US and European universities.

As you can see, there is a lot happening on the 3rd floor of the Modern Language Building. But in order to maintain this rich array of activities, we need your generous support. These are difficult economic times, and public funding for the university is likely to decline even further as our state struggles through this crisis. So please keep up your support. We need you.

And please contact me with any questions, suggestions, or wishes concerning the Department (gailus@umich.edu). I am eager to hear from you.

With all the very best wishes,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Andreas Gailus".

Andreas Gailus
Development Liaison
Associate Professor

Donor Showcase

Arati Sharangpani's Memory Lives On

As a child, Arati Sharangpani was outgoing and involved in many activities. In high school, she was an exchange student to Germany, and as an undergraduate at U-M, she continued her involvement with many university groups, and was awarded outstanding Resident Advisor twice. She was a double major in German and Organizational Studies.

In January of 1997, Arati was offered a job in marketing with Procter & Gamble in Cincinnati, Ohio. She perished in a plane crash returning from Ohio that same day. To honor her memory and many contributions, her family and friends established the Arati Sharangpani Memorial Award. This award provides travel scholarships for students to study abroad in Germany. The Arati Sharangpani Memorial Award has helped nearly 30 students realize their desire to study abroad, including Jaimie Cavanaugh.

Jaimie Cavanaugh, pictured here in the Arati Sharangpani Lounge in Mary Markley Hall, is an LS&A senior who will graduate with a German/Linguistics major and Global Change minor in May 2009. During her sophomore year, she decided to study abroad and received the Arati Sharangpani Memorial Award for study in Freiburg. Before her year-long program began, she enrolled in a language course at the Goethe-Institut. After her return, Jaimie was selected to be a one of the 28 American DAAD Young Ambassadors who are spokespersons for study-abroad on their local campuses. Jaimie plans to pursue a career in Environmental Law, where we are certain she will make a difference.



By Jaimie Cavanaugh

Making a Difference

My final three months in Germany were some of the most memorable of my year abroad. I'd been in Germany for 9 months and had been attending a German University before I began my internship with the City of Freiburg. I had no idea what to expect, but was excited to work with the environment.

I was nervous to work in an office; I'd heard that professional settings in Germany can be very formal. I timidly began my first day, but was greeted by a welcoming team. I immediately felt comfortable and knew fitting in wouldn't be a problem for me. During my first week I got the chance to go on a field trip with a local elementary school class and help teach the students about a local river. It was on this day a coworker of mine looked at me and said, "With us you will see the most beautiful parts of Freiburg." And she was right.

Although I also did some office work, my internship took me to streams flowing through forests, meadows and down mountainsides. For the final 3 weeks of my internship I worked to fight invasive plant species with groups of American high school students traveling through Europe. Somehow, an ocean away from home I was meeting Americans from all over the United States. They were usually quite shocked to find me living in a small city in southern Germany, but I always assured them that my year abroad had been very meaningful.

My internship ended up teaching me a lot; my German improved greatly and I finally felt a stronger connection to the city I'd been living in for a year. I was able to say I'd done my part in improving Freiburg and it made me want to come home and continue to give back to the environment.

The Department of Germanic Languages & Literatures

812 E. Washington St., 3110 MLB
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1275
(734) 764-8018 • www.lsa.umich.edu/german

Chair: Julia Hell

Asst. Editor & Layout: Rachelle Grubb

The Regents of The University of Michigan

Julia Donovan Darlow

Laurence B. Deitch

Olivia P. Maynard

Rebecca McGowan

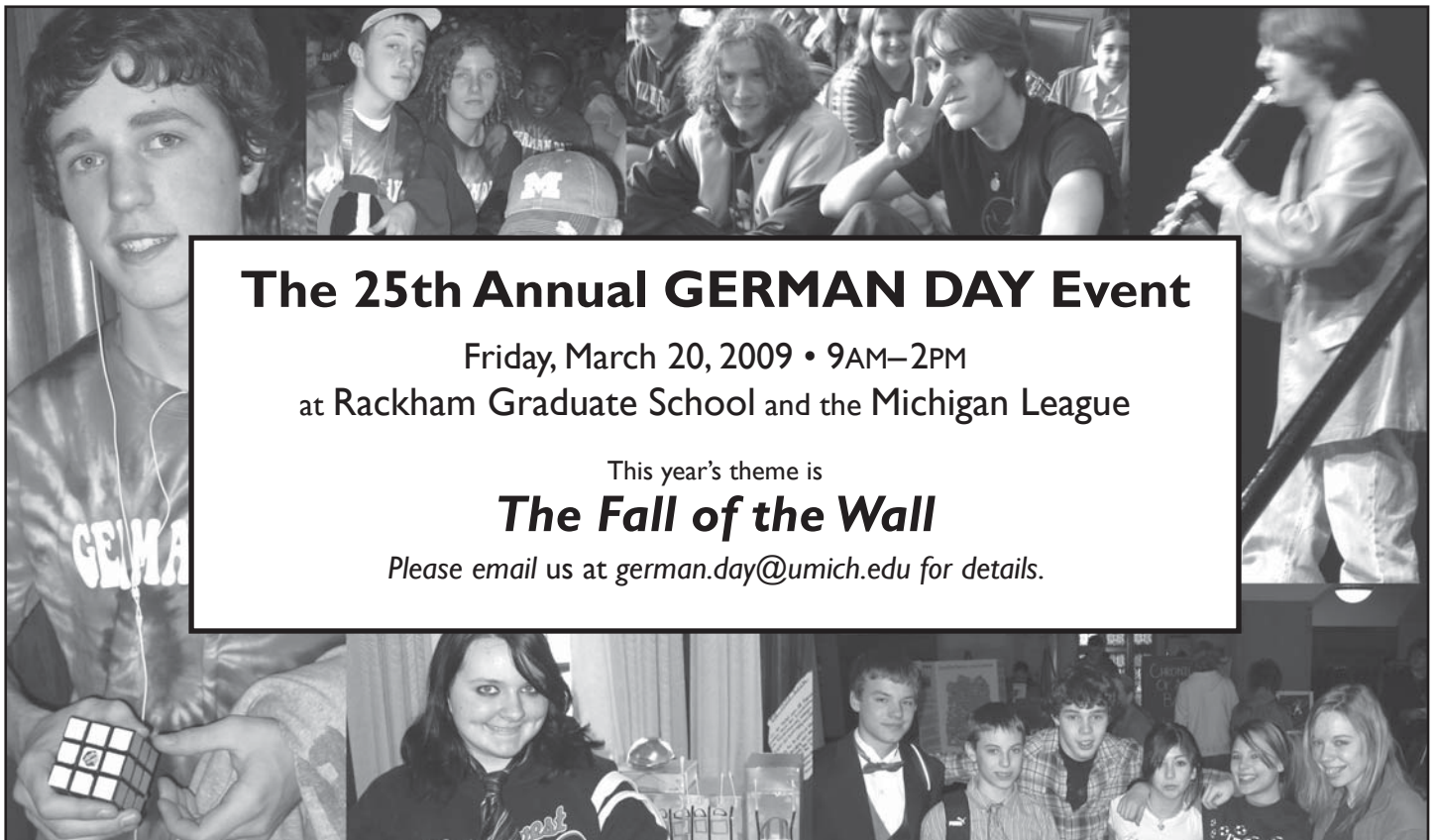
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The 25th Annual GERMAN DAY Event

Friday, March 20, 2009 • 9AM–2PM
at Rackham Graduate School and the Michigan League

This year's theme is
The Fall of the Wall

Please email us at german.day@umich.edu for details.