

GLLS

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Letter from the Chair

Dear Friends,



Academic life has its rhythms, its adrenaline-driven peaks as well as periods of concentrated work. Every year when the Winter Term draws to a close, the pace on campus and in the department changes perceptibly. The quiet that ensues invites reflection—time to think back and time to look forward. Let me share some of my thoughts with you, as we are transitioning into the summer.

This past year has, once again, been an extremely successful one for the department. At the time of my writing this letter we have just heard final word from the university: I am delighted to report that our colleague Vanessa Agnew has been promoted to the rank of Associate Professor with tenure. Recently, we had a book party to celebrate the publication of her book, entitled “Enlightenment Orpheus” (Oxford University Press), at a local bookstore. In this study, Vanessa reassesses the place of music in European colonial expansions and the German Enlightenment. Have a look if you get a chance. This book is a grand and formidable achievement. It encapsulates what this department stands for, cutting edge work between the disciplines.

We also have ample reason to celebrate the continuing growth of the department. Seventy-five majors and minors proudly graduated from the department this past April, the department’s largest graduating class ever. The room where the celebration was held almost burst out of its seams. It is noteworthy that more than 80% of our German concentrators pursued another concentration: Business, Psychology, Chemistry, English, Engineering, and Music are among the fields students chose to pair their German major or minor with. German is more than a language; knowing a foreign language is highly meaningful for many academic or professional contexts. I was also impressed to find out that over 80% of our majors had either studied or worked in internships abroad. These figures testify to our students’ tremendous ambition and sense of responsibility, to their maturity and vision.

Around the time of graduation, we enrolled our 300th concentrator. (In the meantime, the number has grown to 320.) This is a first for the department. We never thought hitting this magic number would be possible. Our department has been growing while the field of German Studies elsewhere has faced cuts and contractions. Some departments in the country have closed shop or been merged into foreign language departments; at other places, Ph.D. programs are about to be discontinued. These facts remind us that having a German Department at University of Michigan is not a given. It is predicated on our doing excellent work. It is predicated on the excellence of our language program, the teaching of our excellent graduate student instructors, the work of our committed lecturers, a great faculty, and a formidable staff. It is predicated on support from this university and beyond.

The countdown is on. Soon, I will hand over the baton to my successor Julia Hell who will be writing to you in the fall. Chairing the department as interim has been an eye-opening, formative, and wonderful experience.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Helmut Puff'.

Helmut Puff [hpuff@umich.edu]

Community Connection

Thursday Noon Stammtisch in Ann Arbor

By Ted Wilson

“Um zwölf Uhr.” Each time I type that in our weekly Stammtisch email I am reminded of my parents who taught me as a child to count in German. Although I am not of German descent, this sparked an interest in the language, which has appeared in both of my children who have studied and worked in Germany. After my wife and I visited them in 1993, I became involved with the weekly conversation group, ‘Stammtisch’.

Janie Knieper who helps to coordinate our meetings and has also been involved for more than fifteen years. As a student she studied in Münster, and continues to enjoy speaking German at our weekly Stammtisch.

We meet at Dominick’s in the summer and at the U-M School of Education in the winter. Our members

vary in degree of fluency, but there are several native speakers who generously help the rest of us to improve. In return we offer them a respite from the dominant English-speaking culture in the U.S.

Germans, Austrians, Swiss, and a cross-section of Americans seem to mix quite happily. The only rule is that you have to try to speak in German. Here is a typical exchange:

Ted: Kommt ihr beide, Rudi und Iduna, aus der selben Gegend in Österreich?

Rudi: Österreich ist so klein, dass alles in der selben Gegend liegt.

We’d love to have you join our group for informal German conversation! Come by Dominick’s on Thursday, or drop an email to tywilson@umich.edu. Tschüss!



Recent Stammtisch attendees are (from left to right) David Lindemer, Janie Knieper, Ted Wilson, Marcelle Henley, Rudi and Iduna Hanel, and Tom Layher.

Silke-Maria Weineck, Associate Professor

Silke is a comparatist with degrees from the Johns Hopkins University (M.A., German) and the University of Pennsylvania (Ph.D., Comparative Literature). Her intellectual passion is the long life of literary figures. She is convinced that the stories we tell not only record but anticipate and drive cultural change. Story-telling, she says, is like a collective laboratory where writers and their audiences try out new configurations of thought, work through violent upheaval, plot new ways of living together, and share fantasies of a community's origin and future. At the heart of her research are the exchanges between literature, philosophy, and political thought.

Her first book, *The Abyss Above: Philosophy and Poetic Madness in Plato, Hölderlin and Nietzsche*, follows the figure of the mad poet in writings that are both deeply philosophical and intensely literary. Probing the idea that the greatest art has been created by madmen, she shows how the image of the divinely

possessed poet has served the aims of philosophy which, from Plato on, suspects literature and the arts of superior insights not accessible to the slow labor of reason.

Her current project is a book tentatively titled *The Laius Complex: Fatherhood and Politics*, named after Oedipus' father. "Whenever I ask my students why Laius tried to have Oedipus killed," she says, "they tell me that there was this oracle that said his son would kill him if he let him live." That is, however, only one way of telling the story, she explains. In Aeschylus' tragedy "Seven Before Thebes," the oracle says something quite different: "You can only save your city if you die childless." The father king, then, torn between his love for his city and his love for his child, is not a monster, but a tragic figure who is called upon to sacrifice his child to the future of the state. In this light, Laius becomes the companion of Abraham who, too, was told to sacrifice his son to something purportedly greater than his personal happiness. The book traces the two stories, the ancient Greek and the Biblical one, through two millennia of literary, philosophical, and political thought, closing with Freud's story of Oedipus, perhaps the most successful retelling of an ancient myth ever.

Her teaching, too, centers on the different ways in which philosophy and literature tell their stories. Her class on 20th Century Philosophy includes sessions on Kafka's short stories, and students in her *Introduction to German Literature* are sometimes surprised to see Kant and Nietzsche on the syllabus. "Figures of speech and figures of thought have always come as a package," she says. "The best of philosophy is shot through with powerful images, and the best of literature is dedicated to philosophy's oldest question of philosophy: how to live life."



Silke Weineck can be reached via email at smwei@umich.edu.

Welcoming Andreas Gailus

Lisa and I just returned from Ann Arbor, where we closed on our house and ran a thousand errands to become true Michiganders: registering to vote (for Lisa, I'm a German citizen), getting drivers' licenses, car plates, and above all—our new U-M ID card. It's true then: in a few weeks I will move into my office, put up books and posters, and become a member of the German Department. I'm incredibly excited about this move, as is Lisa, who will hold a joint appointment in Political Science and Women's Studies.

Strange though it may sound, after many years of city living I look forward to the relative quiet of Ann Arbor. I received my M.A. from the FU Berlin, my Ph.D. from Columbia University, taught for several years at the University of Chicago and most recently at the University of Minnesota. I also spent a year at the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles, where I worked on my book, *Passions of the Sign: Revolution and Language in Kant, Goethe, and Kleist* (Johns Hopkins UP, 2006). I'm a literary scholar with a fondness for theory, so most of my work is concerned with the intersection of literature with philosophy or psychoanalysis and with questions of literary form. But no matter what I write on, I seem to return to one abiding concern: to understand the conceptual underpinnings of



Western modernity and their particular articulation in German culture. I have a rather grim view of our contemporary world—of the way we have organized our relations to each other and to nature—and I believe that in order to understand and change what has gone

wrong, we have to explore the foundations and presuppositions of our thinking and doing. And for me, literature and philosophy are archives that hold our deepest thoughts and beliefs.

If this sounds overly somber and Teutonic, I should add that when I am not diving for submerged foundations, I thoroughly enjoy floating on the surface. I've recently taken up swimming and cycling after my doctor told me that 40 years of running and playing soccer had taken their toll on my knees. And although it is probably not a pretty sight to others, I also like yoga and even Tai Chi. Lisa and I enjoy entertaining, and we've found a beautiful house with a large patio that is ideal for hosting dinners. Located on the North Side, just a few minutes from the river, the house is also perfect for taking long walks with our two dogs, a sweet well-behaved Shepherd-mix (Lisa's) and a mischievous, kitchen-counter-cleaning Pointer-mix (mine). In short, we're set and ready to begin our lives in Ann Arbor.

Andreas Gailus can be reached through the main office telephone at (734) 764-8018

Rackham Outstanding Graduate Student Instructor Award Winners: Michael André and Ela Gezen

By Hartmut Rastalsky

Michael is a tremendously dedicated and creative teacher whose success in the classroom rests on a unique combination of seriousness, high expectations and subtle levity. Michael works especially hard at adjusting his teaching each semester in response to students' feedback and his perceptions of their strengths and difficulties, and even in elementary language classes he is able to give students the sense that he is also interested in learning from them. Students always know they are not only welcome but strongly encouraged to meet with him individually in order to seek help and to continue discussions, and many students take advantage of this and note on their evaluations how much it helped them.



Dr. Rastalsky with our 2008 Outstanding GSI Award Winners, Michael and Ela

Ela has been a Graduate Student Instructor in the department since 2005. With her energy and her infectious enthusiasm, she motivates stronger and weaker as well as more and less motivated students to do their best work in her classes. Students call her a "spectacular teacher," love her enthusiasm and sense of humor, and say that her classes are "exciting, fun, but you're learning so much at the same time." Ela teaches all her classes the German expression "X ist der Hammer," which is a way for young people to express their complete satisfaction with something, and their surprise that it could have been so good. One can recognize students who have been in Ela's classes by their use of this expression, and the phrase "Ela ist der Hammer" always appears on her end of semester evaluations.

German 232 theater Performance

This winter semester the students in German 232, section one, participated in a new, and somewhat experimental, course: *Introduction to German Theater*. The first minutes of class were marked by a



Inspector and Newton
(Nick Miller and Seth Howes)
perform a scene from
Die Physiker

certain anxiety as the students revealed that their motivations for taking the course ranged from an interest in theater to a necessity of scheduling. They soon discovered, however, that even the least experienced in theater could get into the spirit of

things, and learn some German along the way as well. The course incorporated a range of materials and activities, including excerpts of dramas from the 18th to the 20th century, reading Dürrenmatt's *Die Physiker* in its entirety, and theater games and exercises in the classroom which developed students' language skills and comfort with acting. The course culminated in an evening of selected scenes, which the students, and special guest GSI Seth Howes, performed for an audience of students and instructors from other German courses, as well as family and friends. The performance included scenes from *Die Physiker* (Dürrenmatt), *Leonce und Lena* (Büchner), *Amphitryon* (Kleist), and *Die Büchse der Pandora* (Wedekind). The hard work and many hours of preparation paid off in the end as the students gave outstanding performances and were showered with applause and praise from the audience.

Congratulations Graduates



Concentrators



Ams, Chelsea	Carpenter, Alison	Ernst, Benjamin	Levin, Ryan	Patterson, Rebecca
Andrews, Cassie	Chang, Connie	Griffin, Jacob	Lewis, Matthew	Porter, Jenny
Barbosa, Bruna	Cheung, Hoi Lam	Gutenschwager, Terra	Luttrell, Justine	Proulx, Rachel
Bashore, Audrey	Chitoiu, Robert	Hoppe, Julia	Malek, Alisyn	Przybylinski, Andrew
Becker, Stephanie	Crawford, Kate	Johnson, Kelly	McAuliffe, Robert	Rouls, Emily
Bernstein, Alex	Davisson, Liz	Jolta, Dora	Michalsky, Andrew	Shapiro, Rebecca
Boullion, Jessica	Dawsey, Erica	Kelner, Kathryn	Mitroka, Kate	Swartz, Sarah
Brodbeck, Christy	Dawsey, Sonja	Kiesel, Christie	Morris, Abigail	Tyler, Henry
Bronsky, Christina	Earls, Matthew	Kozman, Miranda	Narayan, Rohit	Wittmann, Andrea
Cantle, Tiffany		Leinwand, Sarah		Zalewski, Kristina

Minors



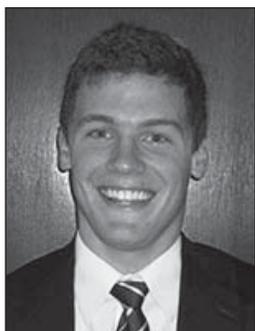
Azadbakht, Elena	Brockman, Irene	Honkala, Alexander	Moberg, Sean	Sprow, Gretchen
Bailey, Erin	Byrnes, Grace	Jordan, Amanda	Moran, Amy	Srivastava, Benjamin
Baron, David	Fenner, Jacqueline	Klaver, Sarah	Perez-Tamayo, Claudia	Stauffer, Julian
Behrens, Kristina	Gromacki, Courtney	Klooster, Alicia	Reboulet, Olivia	Turett, Neal
Booth, Maxwell	Grunwald, Annalisa	Kozak, Jerry	Sandstrom, Kelly	Whitbeck, Laura
Borden, Laurel	Gunawan, Steven	Mastic, Kristin	Siroky, Adam	Wilson, Katherine
Branam, Stephanie	Higgins, Kevin	Mills, Ryan	Sloan, John	Wogh, Ryan



Dutch Studies

Hague Internship Leads to Grad School in Amsterdam

Keal Harter graduated this spring with a B.S. in Political Science and completed the Dutch language program. As an intern for the U.S. State Department and the U.S. Embassy, Keal had the opportunity to work in The Hague, where he is returning to work this month. This fall he will begin Masters Studies in International Relations at the University of Amsterdam.



Where did your interest in Dutch language and culture come from?

My ancestry is Dutch. My grandparents came here from the Netherlands, and my family lives in Holland, Michigan. I didn't grow up speaking Dutch—in fact, I took four years of Spanish in

high school. I considered sticking with Spanish in college, but really wanted to try something unusual so when I found out that U-M offered Dutch, it fit perfectly with my heritage and desire for something different. My first course was so enjoyable, that I decided to stick with it until the end. Professor Broos is one of the best professors I've encountered.

You did an internship in The Hague—what was that like?

It came about because I wanted an opportunity to use my Dutch language skills. I applied for an

internship with the U.S. State Department at the U.S. Embassy in The Hague. I got the internship and spent three months in the Netherlands. I loved it, and I had a great time. They hired me on for the summer and I was able to stay longer.

It was funny because I thought I was going to be able to polish up on my Dutch but when I got there, everyone wanted to speak English with me. I never thought that going to the Netherlands would actually make my language skills worse.

The opportunity to immerse myself in another culture was very good for me. I learned a lot about Dutch culture, and until this day I eat French fries with mayonnaise—it's good!

You're returning to Amsterdam this summer?

Yes. After I complete the spring term, I am planning on going back to the Netherlands to work at the embassy again. I am currently enrolled in a Master's program at the University of Amsterdam in International Relations and look forward to starting in the fall. And of course to French fries with mayonnaise!



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. For this challenge, corporate matches for an employee's gift are eligible for a match if the money comes in within the designated time frame of the Challenge (\$40M raised or Dec. 31, 2008). Hence, we encourage you to make your gifts as soon as possible.

Scandinavian Studies

Knowing Swedish Saved My Life (or kept me from eating fermented fish)

By Aaron Kahn

The Swedish Program is inspirational. Within the span of just a few months, I realized how much fun and exciting foreign language study is. That indicates how successful the program is. The passion instilled in me by my instructors Maria Gull and Johanna Eriksson led me to study abroad, which in turn led me to staying a semester longer, which then led me to teaching a bunch of Swedish 16 year olds. And this made me want to become a teacher. But I'm getting ahead of myself...

When I arrived in Uppsala last August I was nervous and excited like all foreign exchange students are. Of particular worry was my language ability, which had come a long way since I began three years prior, but one quickly learns that there is a big difference between the theoretical language spoken and practiced in the classroom, and that used in everyday life. It was, to say the least, a humbling experience. In the course of using Swedish everyday while simultaneously enrolled in three intensive language courses, I quickly became comfortable with the language. Understanding and using Swedish has become a reality of my life and one that I truly enjoy. The best bit is being able to listen in on conversations when riding public transit (known as the Swedish art of 'tjuvlyssning') and knowing *not* to order fermented fish from a menu.

But, if getting my language abilities to a comfortable level was a highlight of the Uppsala experience, it was still not quite there at the top. Regardless of one's Swedish skills, Uppsala is an amazing place to spend a term abroad. Uppsala has a wonderful and unique student culture that has developed for more than five centuries. The famed 'Student Nations' provide a variety of events and groups that ensure that anybody, regardless of nationality, can

find a social circle that suits them. I quickly fell into my own social place there, and ended up working, and later helping to run, the 'Nation's' pub. It was through this work that I had some of my greatest experiences in Sweden, and had a firsthand look into some of the bizarre and unique aspects that make Uppsala student culture what it is.

But, like all good things, this came to an end. Through my Swedish professor Johanna Eriksson, I found a high school in Stockholm willing to take me on for a term as a student intern. I was funded from the Scandinavian Program through a grant from the Barbara Osher Pro Suecia Foundation. Within a week of starting the job, and with no teacher training under my belt, I was teaching full-time in a first-year world history class while their teacher took paternity leave. Instructing a class using lessons plans I had written myself was an amazing experience, and one I never could have had in such a context back in the States. Not only that, I've actually been able to put my liberal arts degree to use. The Swedish educational system is so different and so much more informal than American public schools—it's been fascinating to see the approach used here, and to watch the effect it has on the students. This, combined with the opportunity to spend four months living in Stockholm has been absolutely fantastic, and, frankly, helped me to reevaluate my career plans.

What I've gained from all of this—three years of language courses, a semester in Uppsala, a teaching internship—is that there's much more out there than I thought and that I expected. The ability to study abroad has helped me to reevaluate my life and my view of the world, and it's something that I am incredibly grateful for. This has by far been the most rewarding aspect of my undergraduate experience. I wouldn't trade it for the world.

Congratulations to Aaron Kahn, a history major graduating with a minor in Scandinavian Studies. Aaron spent his last academic year on exchange at Uppsala University and on internship in Stockholm teaching at a high school called Viktor Rydbergs Gymnasium.



He still won't eat fermented fish. That's just asking too much.

Professor Honored through Creation of \$10k Endowment

The Freiburg class from 1968-1969 met in May 2008 in Chicago for a 40 year reunion at the home of Margie and Rich Franklin in Winnetka, Illinois. Fifteen of the 50 students who studied in Germany were there. Classmates traveled from as far away as Israel, Norway, and Germany. Many stories and experiences were shared.

The group came to honor their advisor, Hans Fabian, and his wife, Myra. Professor Fabian, a Holocaust survivor, wrote afterwards to Barbara Foster, who organized the reunion, "One thought I want to share with you and wished I had shared with the group is, how we, having gone to Germany, not to do good, but merely to study and to get to know another language and culture, coming from a variety of backgrounds, over a period of forty years, merely by staying in contact with each other, have, in an almost miraculous fashion, overcome the effects of the Holocaust, certainly within our group and beyond. It gives me hope for the future as little else does at this point in time."

One of the goals of the reunion was to raise \$10,000 to fund an endowment to benefit future Freiburg students in experiencing those extra travels and

experiences that these students felt led to the cohesiveness of the group. For example, in the picture below, Eleanor Satlow (center) is holding a picture from 1969 when the group traveled to Berlin for a week. The 1968-1969 Freiburg group would like to continue the effort to fund this endowment in honor of Professor Hans Fabian to an even higher level to increase the amount available for students. If you'd like to help with this goal, please send your donation to The University of Michigan, Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures, In Honor of Hans Fabian, 3110 MLB, 812 E. Washington St., Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1275.

By Barbara Foster

To see an interview with Hans Fabian and his wife, go to <http://elearning.umich.edu/media/intcomm/index.htm>. To view the videos you may need to download the free Adobe Flash player at http://www.adobe.com/shockwave/download/download.cgi?P1_Prod_Version=ShockwaveFlash&promoid=BUIGP. The videos are pretty long, so you may encounter some problems on slower connections. The best way to remedy this is to pause the video for a few seconds and allow it to download some more.

From left to right
Nancy Greiger
Teichert, Jill Lund
Franssell, Kirby
Bouthilet, Catherine
Srenock Franssell, Rich
Franklin, Eleanor Braun
Satlow, Terri LaRocco,
Kris Serfling Sneeringer,
Mike Ehmann, James
Knirk, Hans and Myra
Fabian, Hans Bernet,
Barbara Foster, Doug
Derby



Frank X. Braun Award for Excellence in Teaching

By Hartmut Rastalsky

The Frank Braun Prize for the Outstanding Graduate Student Instructor in the German language program is awarded each year in honor of the late Professor Frank Braun, who was a dedicated teacher in the department for many years. This award was established in 1989 when it was presented to Ann Schmitt. The following year it was presented to Hartmut Rastalsky. In 1994 it became a memorial endowment, furthering Frank X. Braun's legacy. As we acknowledge our GSI's commitment to teaching and academic excellence, we hope you will consider contributing.

This year, the prize is shared by two outstanding GSIs: Sara Jackson and Solveig Heinz, who both joined the department two years ago after completing a Masters Degree in German at the University of Oregon. Both of them have received enthusiastic student evaluations for every course they have taught. Students describe their teaching as fun, and motivating, and say things like "Solveig was, is and will forever remain AMAZING"; "[Sara is] by far the best GSI I have had at the UofM...

extremely dedicated to making sure that students succeed. Ich liebe Sara."

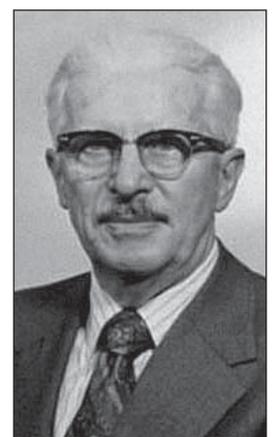
Both of them have designed innovative fourth semester German sections: Sara's section on German Theater introduced students to some classics of German Theater, and gave them the chance to perform excerpts from these plays towards the end of the semester. The performance, which Sara organized and directed herself, was one of the highpoints of the semester: the students really brought scenes to life. Solveig designed an *Introduction to German Opera* in which she provided the students with the tools for understanding and enjoying opera by working with them to analyze scenes from a range of famous operas. This course culminated in final presentations in which students worked together to apply what they had learned to an opera of their choice. It is an indication of Solveig's breadth as a teacher that she had taught our fourth semester course on Scientific German in the previous semester with the same enthusiasm and creativity.



Sara Jackson (top) and Solveig Heinz (bottom) will be jointly teaching our second year intensive German course this summer.

Frank Xavier Braun was born in 1904 in Spaichingen, Germany, the eldest of a long line of Swabian organ builders. He followed his father to the U.S. in 1923, becoming a citizen in 1930. Living in St. Louis, he made various scientific instruments ranging from microscopes to submarine engines. In 1928 Ford Motor Company offered him a job as toolmaker. From there he was promoted to inspector, and finally Chief Inspector of the Experimental Department. While working full-time at Ford, he completed his college prerequisites, and went on to receive his bachelor of arts degree in 1934 from Wayne University, a master of arts degree in 1935 and a doctor of philosophy degree from the U-M in 1940. In 1945 he was appointed an instructor in German at the U-M, assistant professor in 1949, associate professor in 1954, and full professor in 1960. Upon being granted Emeritus status in 1974, a local (unidentified) paper quoted the Regents as saying, "Above all else Professor Braun demonstrated excellence as a teacher... He displayed amazing skill in motivating and captivating students with a teaching style that was at once compelling and highly effective."

In addition to his extraordinary classroom success, Professor Braun was deeply involved with student housing needs and spearheaded the effort to establish the Max Kade House; moving it from an idea to reality within two years. He also was an ardent supporter of the LSA Language requirement (which was threatened to be removed around 1966), the Junior Year in Freiburg program, and counseling students' academic endeavors.



Professor Emeritus Frank X. Braun (1904-1994)

The Department of Germanic Languages & Literatures

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Scenes from German Day 2008: 'die 68er'



This year's theme was 'die 68er'. The first-place art entry by Lauren Schwartz, Hartland High School is titled "mach Deutschland einen besseren Ort für die Zukunft" (left); the second place art entry is "Kultur für alle" by Daryl Alexsy, of Grosse Pointe North; and below are students from Ferndale High School.

