

The Goff Gazette

Volume 19

Metterich, Germany

December, 2003

Buon Natale e Felice Anno Nuovo!

That's Italian for "Merry Christmas and Happy New Year". No, we are not in Italy; but we did spend our spring break there. From our home to yours, we send the warmest of greetings and the wish that the year 2004 be the best ever for you and all those you hold dear. Once again as we start the new year, let us all take a moment to reflect on the good in our lives and to share it through an act of kindness to a loved one and to a stranger. Be good to yourself and a friend to those in need. Be happy.

Ed's 2003

In last year's Gazette, I failed to mention that my running streak was still intact. Well, it was then; and it continues today. In August, I started year 24 so, who knows, maybe I'll make it to 25. I had always thought that if I kept on running, I would stay young in mind and body. Well, that does not seem to be the case. Now that I am closer to 75 than 45, I can verify that running does not get easier or even stay the same if you run every day. I think I am much better off than if I had not started this running streak, but I still don't have the vim and vigor I had 10 years ago either.

Teaching and my web master duties keep me quite busy, too busy. I often spend parts of both Saturday and Sunday at school trying to catch up. Barbara has repeatedly pointed out that I volunteered to do too much this year, and I have to agree. My teaching load includes Physics, Web Page Design and Maintenance, Networking (as in computer networks), Computer Service and Support (we build and repair computers), and Computer Applications II. As I mentioned, I am also our school's web master (<http://www.bitbhs.eu.odedodea.edu/>) and do some freelance web work on the side (<http://www.firebird-tours.com>). I am also the school's Distance Learning Facilitator, which means that I supervise all our students who are taking classes over the Internet.

We returned to Germany in July with the intention of spending a month or so driving around England; but, for various reasons, that didn't happen. One reason being the purchase of a house in Florida, which turned out to be much more complicated than we anticipated. Our intention is to retire to that house when that time comes (hopefully two

(Continued on p. 2, Ed...)

Matt and Sarah

Matt is still living in the Russian Hill area of San Francisco, about three blocks away from the crooked street that's always in movies. His new apartment has a nice view of Alcatraz and the water. He enjoys living in the city and wouldn't have it any other way, but he does not love his commute to Intel. He has taken advantage of the great locations nearby. When Sarah was visiting



Barbara, Matt, Sarah, and Ed in Florida, December, 2002

this fall, they also got to see all four Roamin' Homans.

Sarah completed another degree last May. This one was from Parson's School of Design in NYC, which is part of the New School group of colleges. She is presently freelancing 40+ hours a week at Gwen Stefani's while working on her own designs, which she hopes to highlight eventually on the website her brother gave her for her last birthday.

As a mom, I'm thrilled that the kids are such good friends. I have vivid memories of touring the USA in the summers when they were little in our 1970's VW campervan. I can still see my hand putting the chalk line down the center of the back seat, while announcing in my most stern, teacher, parent voice, "No body parts will cross this line."

Sarah and Matt both moved into their new, waterview apartments on September 1,

(Continued on p. 3, Matt & Sarah...)

Barbara's 2003

SY 2003-2004 is my sixth year at Spangdahlem Middle School and my thirty-eighth year of teaching. I am blessed to be in a profession I still enjoy after all these years. I am still amazed at how I love teaching sixth graders. It's a great way to end a career.

This year I teach two classes in Reading/Language Arts, and one class in remedial reading including READ 180, a Scholastic program that uses computers. The site license is \$30,000, so I feel fortunate to have it. Since we have a block schedule, I see my R/LA classes for 85 minutes daily and READ 180 for eighty-five minutes on alternating days. My class sizes remain small at 20, 14, and 8, which allows me to individualize and do small group work easily. Some of my students are so creative and bright that I'm able to work on skills at the high school level.

For a dose of reality in this rosy picture, however, I must tell you that today one student, who felt one of his two other group members wasn't working hard enough toward their project goal decided that punching him would provide motivation. The "punchee" determined that his best choice was to give the "puncher" a dose of his own medicine. All this action took place during the last minute of a five-minute passing period. As soon as my adult aide arrived, I left her in charge, while I stepped across the hall to lock the reading lab door. She threatened to become ill next week when I leave school three days early for the States. I hope I have a hearty sub. Teaching is never dull.

Ed has touched on two of our overseas travel highlights in his article. Aachen is as amazing a city today as it must have been in Charlemagne's reign. In summer, it's worth a visit to see the fountains and street cafes. In December, Aachen like all of Germany is magical. The Christmas markets are a wonderful tradition. Even tiny villages have a weekend market. The old towns in the city centers mushroom with huts and booths sell-

(Continued on p.3, Barbara...)

Ed...

years) but in the meantime, we are trying to rent it. That is taking a lot of my "free" time too. Next semester looks like things will improve. I won't have the Networking class and my Physics class should get smaller.

We plan to be in Florida for the Christmas holiday arriving on December 17th and departing on January 1st. If you want to talk, give us a call (941) 778-2113. We also plan to be back in the States for at least part of the summer. I may be attending Cisco training (more networking) for three weeks in late July and August.



Oh, I almost forgot to mention that in September I took 3rd place in the annual Bitburger Stadtlauf (Bitburg City Run) in my age group. I finished the 10K in 50:04 on a very hilly course. If I had known that I was so close to breaking 50 minutes, I know I could have squeaked out another 5 seconds along the way. Next year....

Shaving isn't one of my favorite things to do, so I decided not to do it for a while during the summer and guess what? I grew a beard, a white one. It makes me look a lot older, and people treat me that way too. I still have it, although I have trimmed it back to a mustache and goatee. After Christmas, I think I'll cut it back to just a mustache and maybe I'll darken it; but, eventually, it will all go.

So, that's about it. I have strong feelings about the war in Iraq but that's another story. Take care and have a great 2004.



Rapunzel's Castle near our house.

Travels

Our primary destination this year has been the good old USA. Our year started out there. We spent a month there during the summer, and we'll be back there for the Christmas holidays. During our summer visit, we flew into Florida on a non-stop flight from Dusseldorf, which sure beats having to change planes two or three times. Barbara's parents and aunt and uncle live in Florida so they were primary on our visit list. We also have friends in the area whom we visited; and, of course, we took care of business such as having a new roof put on our duplex.

We JetBlued out of Tampa for Rochester and were hosted for two nights by Nancy and Fred Goris, my sister and her husband, who had a nice townhouse on Lake Erie. While there we got to get reacquainted with some of their kids, their spouses, and their children. Amazingly, they had changed quite a bit in the past fifteen or so years since we saw them last. It was really a fantastic time.

From there we drove to Elmira where we stayed with Connie and Jim Young, my sister and her husband, who are always gracious hosts. Once again we made the rounds visiting brothers and sisters and their spouses in the area. It is always wonderful to visit the Elmira area to see how my nephews and nieces have changed and to visit places that hold such fond memories of my youth. On our last day there, Carol and Bruce Beavers, my sister and her husband, had a "gathering of the clan" at their new cottage overlooking Seneca Lake. We really appreciated the effort everyone made to be there. After

spending the night there, it was great to have a little one-on-one time with Carol.

Back in Florida, we finished up a few business details, said goodbye to Barbara's family, and headed back to Germany. Our plan was to spend a month or so driving around England. It did not happen for a number of reasons among them being complications with a house purchase in Florida, extremely hot weather in Europe, and a very weak dollar. Maybe next summer...

Our spring break was spent in Tuscany. We rented a villa for the week and took day trips out to places of interest including Pisa, where the famous leaning tower is, Florence and its famous museums (couldn't miss Michelangelo's



David), and Assisi. We treated ourselves to delicious meals and enjoyed cozy evenings in front of the fireplace in our villa.

Our plan for the Thanksgiving break was to go to the Dijon region of France but...that didn't happen either. Departure day found the weather to be bad and getting worse so we elected to stay home. We did journey up to Aachen for a visit to the cathedral, the burial place of Charlemagne, and their fantastic Christmas market. We also went to the Duldorf Christmas market and then on a tour of a castle reputed to be Rapunzel's castle.

I have always said that I wanted to travel until it wasn't as interesting as staying home or at least as interesting as sightseeing in the local area. It looks like we are close, although we still want to visit Greece, Egypt, and England, of course.

Barbara...

ing gluhwein, a hot, spiced red wine, special holiday cookies, and every imaginable craft and treat. My favorite markets are in the small towns, where the villagers set up booths in front of their homes. They fill them with their handmade goods (a year's worth, often made in the cold, dark days of the last winter). The larger markets last from mid-November until Christmas Eve.

Another special holiday, which breaks the boredom of winter, is Fasching. Last year



Barbara (left) and friend.

on March 2, we attended the parade in Bitburg. Even the spectators wear costumes. One of our friends wore a cheesehead, a sight the Bitburgers hadn't seen before. Their garb is similar to a New Orleans' Mardi Gras or Carnival. Riders on floats throw candy to the crowd as they pass by. Others fill wine glasses, which is quite a trick even when they aren't moving.

I didn't realize until I moved here and studied a globe, that we are farther north than anywhere in the contiguous 48 states. At this time of the year, our least favorite, we go to school in the dark and come home in the dark. Ed's running streak becomes a challenge in the dark and cold.

After an inactive period of years, after my ankle/foot injury on Kwajalein, I have finally found a way to exercise, and it's saving my life. I can stand and walk only for short periods without pain. I save up to teach school and sightsee. Last year about this time, Ed saw the President on his Texas ranch on a machine that he thought would work for me. It turned out to be an elliptical trainer. I went to the base gym and, following my orthope-



New York City skyline as seen from Sarah's bedroom.

Matt and Sarah...

and only a continent away. I think they miss the water of Kwajalein and feel drawn back to the sea. Sarah is still in Brooklyn, where starving artists and budding fashion designers can survive on their meager money; but she has moved from her dark, ground level mole hole into a bright sunny room with a lovely view, good surroundings in which to be creative.

How do I know what the kids' places look like since I haven't been there yet? I love digital cameras! Being in the States last summer and not seeing either child pained Ed and me both. We are thrilled the kids will be with us for a vacation on Anna Maria.



San Francisco Bay as seen from Matt's apartment on Russian Hill

dic doctor's recommendation, began with ten minutes on alternating days. It was hard to keep motivated since finding a parking place and waiting for one of the three machines could take thirty minutes for ten minutes of exercise, but I was determined. By summer, I was up to sixty minutes, Monday through Friday, on nonmeeting days.

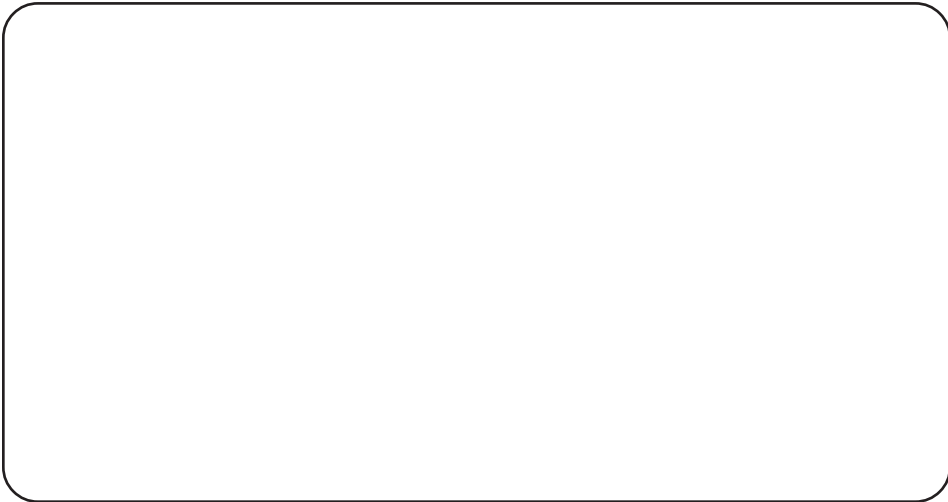
After we returned, and while we were waiting around to close on the house, Ed decided that I needed a machine at home. He talked our landlord into renting us a basement room in our house (which they had been using for storage) and located a machine at Mainz-Kastel (about two hours away). I started back on twenty minutes after my month's hiatus, and now I'm back up to 60 minutes on good days and 20 minutes no matter how much I've been on my feet during the day. I still have a long way to go, but my health is improving. The Air Force has stringent new fitness requirements, and many deployed pilots are back from the desert. The gym is so busy that I would never have had enough time to continue exercising there. I'm really grateful to Ed for his initiative.

Finally, I am so excited to have a house to come home to. After being overseas for many years, I just couldn't imagine our transition. I am thrilled that we found a comfortable house in a good location for us. Now

while I'm toiling away on schoolwork, I can picture where my pay is going! Ed and I are homebodies, so having our first home we own and live in is going to be wonderful. We look forward to visits from our family and friends from around the world. Like Ed, I love Provence and Tuscany, but I'm also eager for our new adventure—living in the USA!



German Santa

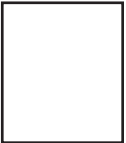


The Goff Gazette
Published by
Goff Publications, Inc.
PSC 118 Box 157
APO AE 09137
E-mail:
ed@goff.com

For Subscription
Information call:
011-49-6565-931015

Editor: Ed Goff
Features: Barbara Goff

**The Goffs
PSC 118 Box 157
APO AE 09137**



FIRST CLASS MAIL