

# How Teachers Spent The Summer

## Sarah Stern, AHS

In my wildest dreams I never thought I would be rooting for Germany to win anything, especially not the World Cup. But on June 27th, I was at a beer garden in Stuttgart cheering just as loudly as the locals for the home team. When Germany beat England 4-1 in that game I went out into the streets with the rest of my study tour participants to continue the celebration. My enthusiasm for the German soccer team never wavered and I was devastated when they lost to Spain.

Everything I had learned about Germany came from my New York State public school education, my Jewish

upbringing and Hollywood box-office films like *Schindler's List*. After spending two weeks on The Goethe Institut study tour of Germany, I now realize it was a lopsided view of the country and its people. The New York State curriculum tends to focus on Germany as an aggressor and a failed state. It emphasizes Germany's role as an instigator in WWI and WWII. There is little mention of the vital role Germany plays today as a model democracy and the biggest European Union economy. The Goethe Institut offered me the chance to explore the new Germany through a tour geared toward history teachers. I came away from the trip absolutely in love with the country and its people.

Some highlights of the trip included the Mercedes-Benz museum; an exhibition of artwork that had been

auctioned off by the Nazis; a German high school where we met with teachers and teachers-in-training; the Buchenwald Concentration Camp; the medieval school where Martin Luther studied; and the chilling Stasi headquarters.

My favorite memory of our final stop, Berlin, however, is not of a museum or tour, it is of me and my study participants picnicking on the lawn of the Reichstag among the locals on one of our last nights in Germany. The food was fabulous, the beer was great (of course), and the company was wonderful, but more than anything I remember feeling this great sense of belonging. I don't often have that when I travel in a foreign country and I never expected to feel that way in Germany.

There is a good chance I will be rooting for Germany again in 2014.



Sarah Stern (center) poses with some friends in local garb.

## Jason Venier, Vail Farm

My ten year old daughter, Olivia, and I took an adventurous tent camping trip to some of the north central national parks this summer. We visited ten breathtaking monuments and parks in Idaho, Wyoming, Montana, South Dakota, Colorado, and Utah. While all were beautiful, Yellowstone is still unmatched in its grandeur and diversity. However, each park had its own unique features from a variety of wildlife (bison, black and grizzly bears, coyotes, pronghorn antelope, moose, and elk), to incredible geography, and amazing history. We had the opportunity to horseback ride, whitewater raft, and explore the second and fourth largest cave systems in the world. At each park and monument, Olivia was

able to participate in the fun and educational Junior Ranger Program. Our country has so much to offer, and we hope to explore new national parks next year.



Jason Venier and his daughter, Olivia, rush to see more parks this sum-

## Marc Hawes, AHS

This summer I worked with a semi-regional theater called TriArts. It is located in Sharon, Connecticut and was actually founded by Sarah Combs, our resident theater teacher here at Arlington High School. The production actually started with auditions back in early February, but rehearsal did not start until July. I was involved with *Oklahoma!* one of Rogers and Hammerstein's great musicals. This was my second season with TriArts. Last summer I played Marcellus Washburn in *The Music Man*. This summer I played a character called Slim. I was primarily an ensemble member but truly a show like *Oklahoma!* is made by the ensemble. I worked with many talented actors, most of whom had college degrees in theater. It was very nice to be surrounded by people who truly want to make it their living. There was a great sense of professionalism throughout the whole experience. The end of the show was somewhat bittersweet. On one hand, having five to seven shows per week can get very tiring, so when the end comes it's a nice break. But after spending six weeks with those people we became a very tight-knit family and it was hard to say goodbye. It almost feels like I did not have a summer at all, but I love what I do and if I didn't do it my summer would have been very boring indeed!