

# HISTORY OF THE COLUMBIA SISTER CITY ORGANIZATION

## THE EARLY YEARS, 1990 through 1997

1990

On October 18, 1989 the *Columbia Star* first reported that officials from several different organizations in Columbia are proposing the establishment of a Sister City relationship with a town in West Germany. Barry Krizan, representing the group, approached the City Council and asked for assistance to get the program started. After explaining the benefits of Sister Cities he asked the Council for \$200 to pay the International dues and the City agreed. He reported that visitors from Waterloo's Sister City had spent approximately \$50,000 in Waterloo last year. The effort is being spearheaded by Marilyn Harres, 54, a Columbia housewife who was a member of the Waterloo Sister City Organization. In September of 1989 she had a goal of following Dwight D. Eisenhower's idea to form Sister Cities Organizations to promote global understanding in an ever-changing world and to promote people to people contact and support world-wide peace. She began making calls to people that she felt might be interested in Sister Cities in the fall of 1989. The group is looking for a city with roughly the same population and geographic features as Columbia. Mayor John Coats was enthusiastic about the program and suggested the Council could budget for it the following year.

On Thursday, January 4, 1990 the Columbia Sister City group met at Herb Schueler's Realty Office. Jack Brucker, acting chairperson, presided over twelve citizens in attendance and reported incorporation papers were given to the law firm of Arlie Traugher. David Asselmeier, President of First Bank, agreed to underwrite the expenses of incorporation through bank sources. By-law proposals were discussed and the six names that were to appear on the articles of incorporation were decided upon. Marilyn Harres, Barry Krizan, Elizabeth Diehl, Norman Kutterer and Jean Henderson were chosen.

On January 18 the group again met at Schueler Realty. Chairman Brucker reported that they were official a corporation and Marilyn Harres reported that Mayor Coats had appointed Alderman Jeff Griesbach as ex-officio member to act as a liaison between the group and the City. Brucker asked the group to consider strategies to increase membership. The proposed By-laws were reviewed, amended and adopted.

On February 14 twelve members attended a meeting at Schueler Realty. *The Columbia Star* sent reporter Dennis Lambeck to cover the meeting, interview members, and take pictures. A leadership committee chaired by Barry Krizan was formed. Marilyn Harres, Herb Schueler, Delbert and Sandy Straub volunteered to serve on the committee,

On March 22 fifteen members of the Sister City group met at Schueler's. Jeff Griesbach reported that the Civic center was done and ready to be used for meetings. Exchange programs, organizational dues, and publicity were further discussed.

On April 12, 1990, the *Columbia Star* reported that a group of dedicated citizens was working to find Columbia a Sister City. A membership meeting was scheduled on April 19, 1990, at the Columbia Civic Center that, according to Jack Brucker, chairman, would include an explanation of the benefits of the organization followed by a question and answer session. One of the benefits of the organization could be family or student exchanges, added Harres. Committee member Barry Krizan, middle school geography teacher, said that the Columbia area was originally settled by the English, but German immigrants started moving here in the mid-1840's. Jack Brucker called Harres the sparkplug of the organization as she began calling people she thought would be interested in Sister Cities over eight months ago.

The Columbia Sister Cities held their first meeting at the Civic Center in Metter Park on April 19, 1990. Alice Horcher told the group about her experiences in hosting a German family. Brett

Steffenauer discussed his experiences with exchange programs. Jean Conrad collected membership dues.

On May 17 the organization met and the first financial report was given. The group's tax exempt status was discussed. The consensus of members was to try to locate a German city to partner with. A search committee was formed that was made up of Chairperson Jean Henderson, Brett Steffenauer, Sandy Straub, Marilyn Harres Bob Schaefer and Debbie Straub. Norman Kutterer made a motion to join Sister Cities International Brett Steffenauer seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. The City of Columbia agreed to pay the registration fee. Vera Kohlmeier told the group about how Waterloo established their Sister City program and how helpful the Waterloo City Council had been.

On June 7 1990 the Search Committee met and Sandy Straub recommended contacting High School Principal Dennis Patton who had been conducting Student Exchanges since 1985.

Marilyn Harres gave a search committee report at the June 21 meeting. She said Bob Schaefer was planning to travel to Germany with the Waterloo Sister Cities and he was going to pursue a lead that immigrants from the Gedern area came to Columbia in the 1840's. Also, Sister Cities International had sent the committee some names of German cities looking for a partner. The election of new officers coming up in October, 1990, was discussed.

The first *Sister Cities Newsletter* was published in July, 1990. All member were invited to the July 19 Board meeting at the Civic Center on Metter.

Barry Krizan, co-chairman, called the July 19 meeting to order. Marilyn reported that 75 membership pleas had been mailed out and the organizations financial balance was \$242.67. Jean Henderson volunteered to pay for a postage box in memory of her husband. The group decided to have a decorated car in the 1990 Columbia Homecoming parade.

Vice- President Barry Krizan opened the meeting on August 16. Formation of an annual budget was proposed and a Sister Cities publicity brochure was discussed.

The *Columbia Star* reported on September 12, 1990 that a formal certificate of membership in the International Sister Cities Organization was issued to the local Columbia Chapter. Columbia Sister cities was formally recognized at the Annual International meeting in Albuquerque, New Mexico in late July Sister Cities International serves as a creative force for international cooperation through community action. Columbia is planning to hold its first annual meeting in October, the meeting will be open to the public and officers will be elected.

The September 20, 1990 meeting was called to order by Barry Krizan. Fundraising efforts, membership cards, and post cards were talked about. The October Annual meeting agenda and arrangements were discussed.

The second Newsletter was printed. It reported that Delbert and Sandy Straub decorated and auto and members passed out organizational flyers during the Columbia daze parade. Robert Schaefer was chosen as a delegate to the Illinois Chapter of Sister Cities International Convention in Springfield.

The first Annual meeting was held on October 18, 1990 at the Columbia Civic Center. The treasures report indicated the organization had a balance of \$266.87. A slide presentation about European travel sights was presented. Nominations for officers were made and second. They were approved by acclamation. Barry Krizan was selected as organizations first President; Norman Kutterer was chosen Vice-President; Jean Marie Conrad was named Recording Secretary; Bob Schaefer was Corresponding Secretary; Jean Henderson was selected Historian; Brett Steffenauer was Treasurer. Lester Schneider, Betty Eckert and Marilyn Harres were chosen as Board Members.

President Krizan called the November 15 meeting to order. The financial balance swelled to 4295.87. Bob Schaefer replaced Jean Henderson as chair of the search committee. Egon Scheuring and Betty Bassy joined the committee. Youth involvement in Sister Cities was first discussed. Barry said he would talk with Principal Dennis Patton who had organized a Columbia High School partnership with

the Secondary School in Siegen, Germany in 1987. Barry had assisted Mr. Patton with the first ever Columbia Student Cultural trip to Germany, Belgium, Austria and Switzerland in 1885.

On December 20 the final meeting of 1990 was called to order by President Krizan. Bob Schaefer reported that a city profile had been prepared for Sister City International and there had been no real progress on finding a partner city. Bob Schefer, in researching his family history, noticed that the history of the long abandoned village of Wernings, near Gedern, indicated the residents had left Germany, sailed to New Orleans on the ship "Mimer" and traveled up the Mississippi to eventually settle in the Columbia area. The search committee announced that they would like to send a packet of information to Gedern. Bob was going to ask Bill Rauch to gather some photographs that could be used in a brochure to be sent to potential partner city in Germany where over 100 immigrants had lived prior to coming to America and settling in our area.

## 1991

The January 17, 1991 meeting of the Columbia Sister Cities was called to order by President Krizan. The Columbia profile papers had been typed by Shirley Asselmeier and sent to Sister Cities International.

Bob Schaefer reported at the February 21 meeting that the search Committee was sending the City Profile and fifteen photographs to the German City of Gedern. The informational packet also includes a cover letter, a map of Columbia, and two pages of research about the immigrants who came from Wernings, Germany, near Gedern.

At the March 21 meeting Board Member Lester Schneider suggested some changes to the By-laws and Jean Henderson reported on the upcoming April Semi-Annual Meeting.

The Columbia Sister Cities first Semi-Annual Meeting was held on April 18, 1991. The search committee reported they were waiting for a reply from Baden-Wurtttemberg search for an American Sister City. Bob Schaefer handed out information about Wernings, Hessen-Darmstadt and the immigrants that came to the Columbia-Waterloo area in 1842. Twenty-five members returned an interest survey that was mailed out. Tracing family trees, travel, cooking, photography and pen pals were the most sited interests.

The April 25, 1991 *Columbia Star* reported the Robert Schaefer, the corresponding secretary for the Columbia Sister Cities discovered an interesting relationship between the Gedern, Germany area and the Columbia area. During a visit to Germany to trace his genealogy Schaefer met Erwin Diehl of Gedern. Herr Diehl referred him to a book written in German that described the immigration of several German families to this area. The book had been written for the 650<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Wenings, a small farming town near Gedern. When Schaefer returned to America he enlisted the help of Lucille McKinney and Ursula DeMarquez to help translate the writings from German to English. In 1840 a small farming village, governed by Wenings, now incorporated into the City of Gedern, was experiencing very hard economic times. Heavy church tithes, harvest taxes, stable rents, restaurant and distillery fees and farmer-tenant fees all weighed upon their decision. They had heard that America was the Land of Plenty and, at the encouragement of the local teacher, Wilhelm Reifschneider, at their town meeting, voted to sell their property and the town and move across the Ocean. They were joined by other German immigrants from surrounding areas combining for a total of 156 travelers. At that time a list of all the immigrants planning to travel had to have their names printed in a local newspaper so people that they owed money to could contact them before they left. By 1942 all arrangements had been made and 118 immigrants from Wernings set sail the Swedish Ship, "Mimer", from Bremen, Germany.

They reached New Orleans on December 2, 1842 and continued up the Mississippi River by steamboat until halted by ice near Chester, Illinois. They completed their journey by wagon and reached St. Louis on the Day after Christmas in 1842. Almost all of the travelers chose to settle in the Columbia-Waterloo area. Until about 1900 the immigrants corresponded with friends and relatives back home in the Gedern area, but after that communication slowly subsided. "A Sister City relationship with a connection to our local history would give it a unique quality," said Schaefer. He had written a letter to a pastor at a church in Gedern asking him to see if Gedern City officials might consider pursuing a possible partnership with Columbia. Schaefer also announced that another Sister City member, Marilyn Harres, was planning to visit Gedern, Germany during the summer months. Barry Krizan reported that Gedern was a town similar in size to Columbia located in a wooded resort area 25 miles northeast of Frankfurt, Germany.

On May 16 Marilyn Harres brought up the idea of Lifetime Memberships, which was covered in Article 6, Section 6 of the By-laws. Bob Schaefer reported that things were looking good concerning Gedern, Germany. Marilyn Harres has been in contact with Gedern official via fax. Gedern is a small city of around 3,000 residents located northeast of Frankfurt in the Vogelsberg. The corporate boundary of Gedern includes the small municipalities of Wernings, Oberseemen, Mittel-Seemen, Nieder-Seemen, Wenings, and Steinberg. The area has a total population of about 6,000. Marilyn Harres announced that she would be visiting Gedern later that month.

In May of 1991 Marilyn flew to Frankfurt and visited distant relatives. She asked them to help her make contact in Gedern since she did not speak German. They contacted Burgermeister Rainer Schwarz of Gedern and he told her he would attempt to locate the informational packet sent by the search committee and could briefly meet with her in Gedern. While in Gedern for only one hour Marilyn Harres was able to meet with Mayor Rainer Schwarz, a City Councilman and a minister on a Saturday morning. She returned to Columbia with a telephone book so the organization could compare the names of Gedern residents with Columbia citizens. She also brought back information about Gedern and the names of officials to contact and two English words from the Burgermeister, "looks good!"

The June 1991 Newsletter first reported that Gedern was a prospective Sister City partner.

On June 20 Jean Marie Conrad reported the Sister Cities would be selling pretzels at Columbia Daze. Bob Schaefer will try to put together a publicity poster about Gedern to display in the Sister City booth. Bob and Barry reported that they had updated the Columbia City Council on the progress made to secure Gedern as our Sister City. A copy of letter from Mayor Coats to Burgermeister Schwarz was reviewed at the meeting. The Columbia City Council gave a unanimous decision to support Sister Cities. The June 20 Edition of the Columbia Star reported that Barry Krizan had updated the Columbia City Council on the progress organizing a relationship with Gedern. Krizan told the Council that Columbia Sister Cities would need the cooperation of the City, schools, churches, and local civic organizations if the partnership was going to be successful. A search committee had left an informational packet in Gedern while visiting during the spring and correspondence was ongoing between the Cities. He told the Council that the Burgermeister of Gedern was very interested and pursuing the issue vigorously.

At the July 18 meeting was called to order by Bob Schaefer, He reported that he was putting together a slide show about Gedern. The nominating committee reported that Barry Krizan notified the group that he would not be seeking the Presidency for 1992.

Barry Krizan called the August 15 meeting to order. Barry reported on his discussions with Columbia High Principal, Dennis Patton, concerning Gedern Burgermeister, Rainer Schwarz', proposal to start a Columbia-Gedern School Partnership. Mr. Patton explained the current School Partnership with Siegen, Germany had placed a large burden on our High School. Siegen is a city of over 100,000 and their secondary school wads quite large also. Siegen wanted to send 50 students every year to

Columbia and Mr. Patton felt it would be difficult to continue the partnership. He was very interested in opening lines of communication with Wilfried Molz and the Gedern Secondary School.

President Krizan called the September 19 meeting to order. The organizations bank balance had fallen to \$109.07. Bob Schaefer reported that progress was being made between Columbia, Gedern and Sister Cities International. Discussion of By-law changes and the slide show for the Annual Meeting were discussed. Marilyn Harres reported that she had received a fax from Gedern on September 13 and that they were ready to send a delegation to visit Columbia. The five day visit would include visits to the school, churches, city government, and to St. Louis. Barry will contact the mayor to secure dates and Bob Schaefer will contact Gedern. The proposed dates are early to late November.

On October 3, 1991 a special committee meeting was called to order by President Barry Krizan. Barry reported that Belleville would be signing a Sister City agreement with Paderborn, Germany on October 20. Mayor Coats proposed that the City provide the visitors from Gedern with a meal at the Columbia House Restaurant where special presentations will be made from the City Council. Dennis Patton reported that twelve Columbia High German Language students would attempt to visit Germany this spring and hopefully they could include Gedern on their itinerary. The remainder of the meeting was spent planning activities for the visit by Gedern officials.

The October *Newsletter* reported that Vice-President Norman Kutterer won the Magna Bank MAGI award for community service.

The Second Annual Meeting of the Columbia Sister Cities was called to order by President Barry Krizan on October 17, 1991 at the Columbia Civic Center. Barry reported that the year long search for a Sister City would conclude on November 26 as ten delegates from Gedern would be spending a week in Columbia. He informed the group that hosts would be needed. A Thanksgiving week visit from a delegation of Gedern officials was approved. Norman Kutterer thanked outgoing President Krizan and Board Member Betty Eckert for their service to the organization. New officers were approved: Bob Schaefer, President; Norman Kutterer, Vice-president; Brett Steffenauer, Treasurer; Jean Marie Conrad, Recording Secretary; Jean Henderson, Corresponding Secretary and Historian. Bob Schaefer presented a slide show from his trip to Gedern and a video entitled "German Christmas Traditions and Observances" was shown. A set of revised By-Laws were passed by unanimous vote.

The November 28 issue of the *Columbia Star* reported a potluck Dinner was being held that evening at the Turner Hall for representatives of Gedern, Germany. The Columbia Turnverein Gymnastics Association (Turning School) was founded 125 years ago was a fitting place to host guest from the ancestral home of many Columbia residents. Lester Schneider, a Turner's board member and a member of the Sister Cities noted that the Turner's By-Laws were written in German until around 1920. Schneider also said a wide range of Columbia citizens were invited to the dinner so the guest could talk with a large cross-section of Columbia's residents. On Thursday the German guest were being treated with traditional Thanksgiving Dinners with their host families. After visiting churches, schools and local sites the Germans were scheduled to visit the St. Louis Gateway Arch, the Brewery, Botanical Gardens, and the Forest park Art Museum and possibly the Science Center. After a Farewell Breakfast at the Lantern they guest would depart to Lambert Airport for the return flight to Frankfurt, Germany and trip home to Gedern.

On November 29 new President Bob Schaefer called the meeting of the Columbia Sister Cities to order at the Columbia Library. President Schaefer handed out a list of Board members to Burgermeister Rainer Schwarz. He then reviewed the history of the organization beginning with Marilyn Harres initial calls in late 1998. Bob Schaefer told how his search for his family genealogy had resulted in finding Herr Diehl who gave him a manuscript, written in German, concerning the immigration from Wernings to this area. Marilyn then told of her efforts to get a Sister Cities organization started. Burgermeister Schwarz spoke of the events that took place after Marilyn's visit to Gedern in May of 1991. He told of Gedern's hopes for the program and concerns. He stressed the value of the Student Exchange

Partnership and how it could serve to foster the Sister Cities program in the future. He explained that he felt a relationship with Columbia would be good for both communities and that the final decision would be made by the German Parliament, not Gedern alone. He hoped the younger students could develop a pen pal relationship. He also wants to share news articles and community information between the cities. April is the best time for German students to visit Columbia because two of the three weeks is vacation time for their students. German vacation times are set by the State and Country. He would want the Student Exchange to begin immediately and Gedern and Columbia could alternate years for their visits. He said that Mr. Patton and Wilfried Molz, respective Principals, have already begun making preparations for the Exchange Program if the agreement is approved and signed by Parliament. If approved a delegation of city officials could come back in April, 1992, to sign the Official Agreement with Columbia's city officials. Bob Schaefer presented a framed aerial photo of Columbia and arm patches from the fire and police department. Jean Henderson presented a molded Redbird to Burgermeister Schwarz.

The December 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the *Herald* also reported extensively about the Official Visit. Marilyn Harres commented, "It has been fabulous having the delegation here. It has exceeded our expectations and we did not expect so much enthusiasm from them or from our own community. The head of the Gedern delegation, Burgermeister Schwarz, responded, "It is important that people in different countries make a connection. It is especially important for people who have roots in our country." Parkview Elementary school teacher, Gina Ronshausen's, first grade class prepared pen pal letters for the delegation to take home to Gedern elementary students. At Columbia High School the group heard from the Eagle band, toured classes and had lunch in the school cafeteria with Mr. Patton and the students. In the afternoon the visitors toured the cemeteries in Columbia where they marveled at names similar to family names in Gedern. The local families that served as the first hosts were: Myron and dianna Hanna for Burgermeister Rainer Schwarz; Michael and Janice Raeber for Werner Herroder, and engineer; Bill and Elfreida Roth-Roffy for Willi Herbst, machinists; Ron and Helen Nowak for Reinhold Landmann, painter; Homer and Loretta Stempler for Klaus Hein, factory foreman; John and Jean Marie Conrad for Michael Giers, journalists; Carl and Irene Riebeling for Christian Gottschick, pastor; Lester and Carol Schnieder for Wilfried Molz, school administrator and Gerhard Ringel, accountant; Wilbert and Vera Kohlmeier for Werner Kehm, building inspector, and Hans-Willi Kehm, farmer. Herroder, Kehm, Landmann, Werner and Giers are all aldermen in city government. Gottschick served as the interpreter for the delegation. Mayor John Coats was quoted, "Getting a Sister City is a bigger deal than I thought it would be. There is more ceremony involved with lots of protocol and orchestration. It is something positive for our town. It looks like we will be planning a trip to Germany in the spring and I am interested in going along." On Friday the group visited Roger Schaefer's swine farm and Leslie Stumpf dairy farm where the Burgermeister hand-milked a cow. Later they visited the Herbert Mueller farm to see how his record-sized mules were raised. On Friday the visitors attended the Optimist Club Annual Prayer Breakfast before visiting the historic Zoar Church and cemetery. At the Friday night Potluck Dinner Monroe County Board Chairmen Harry Reichert presented the group with tourism brochures. Gedern Pastor Christian Gottschick performed on his guitar and the Kaskaskia Trail Barbershop Chorus sang several songs. Gifts, books, and slide presentations were exchanged and shots of schnapps toasted the new Partnership. Jean Henderson, Sister Cities Historian, summed up the visit, "Even if I spoke a dozen languages I couldn't express the fun we had with the delegation. It will be sad when they leave on Sunday."

On December 5 the *Columbia Star* reported that the headline in the Gedern Newspaper read 'Gedern is Welcomed by Trumpets and Drums'. Marilyn Harres said, "Grown men cried when they said goodbye, I was impressed with that." She reported that the delegation said they did not feel there would be any problem getting the declaration for a Sister Cities partnership approved in Gedern. The Columbia City Council must also approve the declaration before the partnership become official. The

visitors were interested how many Columbians could still speak German. They were very interested in cowboys and Indians and wanted to buy cowboy hats. They thought it was nice to live so close to St. Louis and still maintain a small town atmosphere. A small bus was donated by St. Paul Lutheran Church to transport the visitors to local sights. The official gift from Columbia to Gedern was a Cardinal statue and the guest presented a book about Gedern to the Sister Cities. A large Gedern banner and rocks from the old church in Wernings was also presented to the City of Columbia. "You can see in the stones the handiwork of your forefathers," said Gerhard Ringel of the foundation stones. Mayor John Coats presented the Key to the City of Columbia to the delegation from Gedern. "I cannot help but think many of us in this room can trace our ancestry back to Germany," replied the Mayor. "The citizens themselves must be the ones who build the bridge from heart to heart. The partnership will come to life if we do not just talk of friendship, but work and strive for it," announced Schwarz.

The December 5, *Star* also reported a story about Pastor Christian Gottschick. As he was visiting St. Paul United Church of Christ he noticed the names of interim pastors Jack and Janet Smith-St. Cry. "I know Janet Smith St. Cry," exclaimed Pastor Gottschick. Gottschick had met a couple by that name when he was studying at Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, California, in the late 1980's. Janet was attending the school while her husband served as an interim pastor. The Smiths met Gottschick and his family before they began serving the UCC as interim pastors around the country. Gottschick returned to Germany and coincidentally was chosen to visit Columbia at the same time the Smiths were serving here. After seeing the names Gottschick tried to contact the Smith's, who were out of town for the day. When they returned they were able to connect and catch up and renew their friendship. "What are the odds of this happening?" a surprised Janet asked.

Rainer Schwarz, Burgermeister (Mayor) of Gedern, estimated that there are over 300 Sister City partnerships in Germany. The Burgermeister noted that things were more spread out in America and one needed a car to get around town. "The land near Gedern is much more hilly and forested than it is here. Gedern has 100 camping spots and in the summer there are almost as many campers as residents. Gedern is a very old community and was preparing to celebrate its 1,260<sup>th</sup> Anniversary." He laughingly added that none of the residences in Gedern are that old.

The December 19 regular meeting was called to order by President Bob Schaefer. The city of Columbia placed \$1000.00 in the Sister City account. Marilyn Harres suggested a Youth Group be formed at the High School and then the school German teacher could help in the selection of students for the exchange. It was suggested that Mr. Patton be contacted for his input on the Student Exchange Program. He has been dealing with exchanges for many years and may have an idea how he wants the High School to proceed.

## 1992

The January 17, 1993 meeting was called to order by Bob Schaefer. Jean Henderson displayed the organizational scrapbook and a Gedern, Germany newspaper article that she had placed in it. Several are interested in pen pal relationships. Marilyn was to contact Gedern to initiate the process. Principal Dennis Patton, the Belleville Junior College local coordinator, told Marilyn that a class in conversational German would be taught at Columbia High School on Tuesdays from 7-9 P.M. Paul Berowski, the German teacher from New Athens, will be the instructor. The Sister Cities is also offering a conversational German class, taught by Lucille McKinney, at the City Hall on Tuesdays for a minimal fee of \$10.00. The Sister Cities agreed to offer the McKinney's a year free membership for her efforts. Mr. Diehl has offered to translate the poem of the travelers from Wernings. Marilyn

reported Mr. Patton had altered next summers student trip to Germany so Gedern could be included. The group suggested that October would be a better time for the delegation from Gedern to come for the official signing ceremony. Marilyn also suggested that Columbia add a student to their Board as Waterloo has done.

On February 3, 1992 the Columbia City Council passed a resolution asking Gedern to become our Sister Cities. The Gedern City Council is expected to pass a similar resolution on April 16. The City approved a budget of \$1,600 for Sister City's activities.

On Thursday, February 6, the *Star* reported that Columbia taxpayers would be paying to send the mayor and two aldermen to Gedern as official representatives of Columbia. A second article stated that Waterloo's Mayor, Verlyn Smith, encouraged Columbia to send someone as it would be very beneficial to the City. In July 1990 Waterloo paid for Mayor Smith to visit their Sister City of Portawestfalica and the good will created was tremendous and a financial benefit will be realized when exchanges begin. The council debated the proposal before the vote and some sighted that the decision might be controversial. The Council had budgeted \$2000 for the year ending April 30<sup>th</sup> and the only amount spent was on dinner for Gedern's delegation. Mayor Coats and Jeff Griesbach will be the City's official representatives from April 28 through May 5. Twenty-three other representatives from the Columbia sister Cities will attend and pay their own expenses. The City had originally voted to send three representatives but Alderman Vic Reichert reported that he was not interested in attending.

On February 17<sup>th</sup> the City Council voted 2-1 to send three representatives to Gedern after Alderman Jeff Griesbach reported that the German Sister City was expecting an official delegation to participate in their official signing during the week of April 27. While everyone can be part of the official delegation the Sister cities is allowing anyone interested to go on the trip. The group will tour Gedern, Southern Germany, Austria and Switzerland. A Rhine River Cruise, the Black Forest, Heidelberg, Frankfurt, Munich Rothenburg will be visited along with Salzburg and Innsbruck in Austria.

Bob Schaefer called the February 20 meeting to order. The budget balance was reported as \$258.14 after all bills were paid. Bob Schaefer gave Dave Braswell a copy of the German immigrant letter for translation. Carol Waide reported that Mr. Patton offered to have the CHS German class students travel to the signing ceremony in Gedern in May. The decision was made that time was too short and they should wait until the Sister Cities agreement becomes official. Barry Krizan was to meet with Mrs. Welker, CHS German teacher, concerning the organization of a youth club. It was noted that 1992 would be the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the immigration from Wernings, Germany to Columbia.

The February *Sister City News* announced that the engagement process got underway on February 4 when the City Council when the City Council voted to pass a resolution inviting Gedern, Germany to be Columbia's Sister City. Gedern is to approval a similar resolution in April and the wedding of the two Cities is being scheduled for May.

The *Monroe County Clarion* newspaper reported on March 4 that Mayor John Coats had received a fax from Burgermeister Schwarz informing him the Gedern city commissioners voted to finalize the partnership with Columbia at their February 29<sup>th</sup> Meeting. The relationship will not become official until it is formally signed in Gedern in May. Gedern's Sports and Cultural Commission was to begin working on the details of the official resolution and have it prepared for the signing date in May, 1992.

The March 11 *Herald* ran a banner headline stating '*German City Approves Sisterhood with Columbia*'. The article reported that Gedern's Burgermeister Rainer Schwarz had requested that churches in Columbia and Gedern begin corresponding and that stores in Gedern were going to display information about Columbia's history in their windows.

The March 19, Sister Cities meeting was called to order by Bob Schaefer. The agenda for the Semi-Annual meeting was discussed. Gedern's return visit to Columbia for the official signing was mulled over with August and October selected as the most appropriate times. A discussion and answer session for those traveling to Gedern in May will be held at the City hall on April 9. Lucille McKinney is



scheduled to play a concert in Gedern. Mayor Coats has received a letter from Burgermeister Schwarz thanking Coats for sending the Resolution of Partnership.

An Editorial in the March 19 *Star* supported the Sister City trip and the sending of two representatives at taxpayer's expense. The cost of \$1,600 out of a 5 million dollar total budget was, according to the editorial, well worth the good will and the promise of future benefits.

The March 26, 1992 edition of the *Columbia Star* reported that the Columbia Sister Cities was asking residents to display German flags beside American flags during the week of April 27 to May 5 to commemorate the partnership between Columbia and Gedern. Both countries' flags were available at Conrad travel in Columbia.

The Semi-Annual Meeting was called to order by President Schaefer on April 16, 1992. Luella Mueller and Vera Kohlmeier gave a report on the Sister City International Convention in Tulsa held the past July. Lester Schneider reviewed the itinerary for the First Official Visit to Gedern by the Columbia delegation. A short Board meeting was also held on April 16. Carol Waide reported that the Student Exchange Program being organized by Mr. Patton is progressing nicely. Lucille McKinney was thanked for teaching the German class and awarded a free membership.

The April 16 *Columbia Star* reported that approximately 20 people would soon be departing Columbia for Gedern, Germany. Host families were being arranged and many of the delegation were taking conversational German lessons to be better prepared.

The same issue of the *Star* also reported on the School-partnership between Columbia High School and Siegen, Germany. That partnership was begun in 1988 and this will be the final student exchange as Columbia High and Gedern's Secondary School will be starting a Sister City School Exchange. Seventeen students from Siegen had been in Columbia since March 31 learning about life in America. Siegen is a city of 1000,000 about an hours drive from Cologne and this is the German School's third and final visit. They came in 1988, 1990, and 1992. Columbia students and German teacher Christa Welker visited Siegen in 1989. The 1991 trip was canceled due to Iraq desert Storm.

John Conrad, former owner of the *Monroe County Clarion*, sent an article to the *Columbia Star* and it was printed in the May 7 edition. It reported that the Gedern citizens attending the signing of the official agreement were delighted when mayor Coats referred to John Kennedy's famous speech at the Berlin Wall. American flags flew all around Gedern and the American guests were pleased when Dr. Christian Schwarz-Schilling, a member of the German cabinet, flew by helicopter to Gedern for the signing. Schwarz-Schilling said his affection for America began with the airlift of goods to Berlin when he was a young man. Residents from around the Gedern area gathered at the ruins of the foundation of the old church at Wernings for a special prayer service honoring the partnership. Reverend Janet Smith-St. Cry and Pastor Christian Gottschick presided over a joint service with over 300 German and Americans in attendance. Lucille McKinney played the piano in the service at the sight of the now abandoned town whose residents came to Columbia in 1842. On May 2, Columbia's delegation was entertained at the Liederkranz Hall near Wernings and the guests were presented with apple wine mugs characteristic of the area.

The *Star* reported that Columbia residents who flew to Germany for the signing of the Sister City agreement found themselves part of a major news story when they arrived at Frankfurt Airport and found workers on strike. Some of the departure flights from St. Louis Lambert were delayed a day and some return flights were canceled and rescheduled. The article also listed the Columbia delegation as: Mayor John Coats, Alderman Jeff Griesbach, Wilbert Kohlmeier, Vera Kohlmeier, Robert Schaefer, Janet Smith-St. Cry, Jean Henderson, John Conrad, Jean Marie Conrad, Fred Harres, Marilyn Harres, Carl Riebeling, Irene Riebeling, Myron Hanna, Diane Hanna, Lucille McKinney, Les Schneider, Ron Raeber, Roman Altgilbers, Al Kroencke and Neal Harres.

On May 5 Michael Beczkala and the CHS Band played a mini-concert at City Hall Fountain Park to celebrate the official signing taking place in Gedern. John Conrad of Conrad Press printed the Official Declaration of Friendship that was taken to Gedern by his wife, Jean Marie.

The May 21 meeting found that the budget balance had grown to \$1,612.49. The student exchange program was discussed. Principal Molz has written Principal Patton about the upcoming October visit of Gedern students. German students should stay in the homes of high school students if possible. Bob explained that the State of Hessen helps fund German student's trips to America and questioned if the Columbia Sister Cities offer some type of financial assistance. The Board voted to have the Declaration framed and hung in the City hall. The Sister Cities will once again have a booth at Columbia daze.

The June 11 *Columbia Star* reported that members of the Columbia Sister cities shared photos of their visit to Gedern for the official Sister City Signing Ceremony at Turner Hall on June 15. It is expected that a group of thirty-five Gedern citizens will be visiting Columbia in May of 1993.

The June 18 meeting saw the budget balance increase to \$2,264.35. Diane Hanna reported that Gedern fourth graders had written the Columbia fourth graders and there had been no reply. Carol Waide will contact the fourth grade teachers and encourage them to have their students reply. Mr. Patton has reviewed the Sister Cities Student Exchange information and discussed a youth group with Mrs. Welker. She has been very involved in the Siegen, Germany Exchange and seems a little resistant to the Gedern Partnership. Mr. Patton informed Carol that he could not force her to participate and was disappointed that she has not pushed the CHS German students to write to students in Gedern. He said he will take charge of the program if Mrs. Welker resists. Mr. Patton will meet with the current High School German Club to promote the exchange. A separate Youth Group may not be needed.

On July 16 Bob Schaefer called the meeting to order. Ms. Goeddel gave a report on the Sister City International Convention in Tulsa. The 1993 Meeting will be in Houston and 1994 will be in Louisville. Bob brought up plans for the 1993 visit. The May 28-June 7 dates are not good for Gedern. Letters from Gedern Students have been given to the administrators, but school is not in session until mid-August. Bob wrote Burgermeister Schwarz a letter thanking him for the hospitality shown during the visit and explaining our school situation. Gedern students are in school in the summer months. Bob suggested that Mr. Patton and Mr. Molz host each other. He also suggested a meeting with Columbia's new District Superintendent. Bob has an idea for a Sister City sign and will discuss things with Mr. Griesbach. Norman Kutterer has a conflict with meeting dates and offered to resign if a replacement can be found. \$1,981.61 is the July budget balance.

The Board meetings were moved to the remodeled City Hall on the third Thursday of each month. A fund raising stand will be set up at Columbia Daze.

The August 20 regular meeting saw the budget balance drop to \$1,884.12. The lack of attendance at Board Meetings was discussed. The 1993 visit was discussed. A motion passed that \$25 be spent to pay dues for the Sister Cities International Youth Organization. Mr. Patton continues to prepare goals and directions for participation in the Youth Exchange. A meeting with all the school administrators will be scheduled as soon as possible. A review of the current By-laws will begin this year. The final dates for the Gedern Delegations official visit is still pending, with May still a possibility. Carol Waide brought up communication she had received from an organization that comes to town and teaches students German for free.

The *Columbia Star* of September 10 reported that the Columbia City Council had given approval to allow the Sister Cities to develop a new emblem. The aldermen asked Sister Cities to seek community involvement in designing the emblem and alderman Jim Agne said the street Graphics committee was working with the Sister Cities to find a suitable place north and south of town to place a sign displaying the new emblem.

The September 17 meeting was called to order by Bob Schaefer. The treasurer's report saw a balance of \$2,024.51. The Sister City decal drawings were unveiled by President Schaefer. Carol

Waide reported on her meeting with Mrs. Welker and Barry Krizan concerning a youth group. Mrs. Welker was not willing to form a new group but would work through the CHS German Club. Barry would consider forming a club later on if this approach does not work. Carol will coordinate efforts to meet with grade school teachers about letter writing and pen pals. Gedern students are not planning to come to Columbia in the fall, but have decided spring is better. A goal to creating a separate youth group to foster future growth in the Columbia Sister Cities was discussed. No further information has been received about the official visit from Gedern.

The Annual Meeting was held on October 15, 1992. The Declaration of Friendship between Columbia and Gedern that was signed last April will be framed and presented to Mayor Coats. Mr. Patton reported that the first Student Exchange between Gedern and Columbia will be held in Columbia from April 18 to May 9, 1993. Columbia students will be traveling to Gedern during the summer in 1994. The official Sister City Delegation from Gedern will be coming to Columbia from May 7-17. A ceremony including students and adults can be held on May 7 or 8. New Board members elected at the annual meeting were: Bob Schaefer, President; Joe Bassy, Vice President; Jean Henderson, Historian; Brett Steffenauer, Treasurer and Recording Secretary; Diane Hanna, recording Secretary. Carol Waide, Les Schneider and Marilyn Harres completed the Board. A slide presentation about the Sister city visit to Gedern in May was shown to the members in attendance. An article in the *Star* about the Annual meeting stated that High School Principal Dennis Patton was organizing a Sister city Student Exchange Program and that anyone interested in serving as a host family should contact him at the High School. Slides from the first official visit were shown.

High School Dennis Patton announced in the October 28 *Herald* that fifteen high school students and their teacher, Andreas Heuser, from Gesumptschule Gedern, were going to visit Columbia from April 18 through May 9, 1993. This will be the first school exchange associated with the Sister Cities. "A school partnership is the heart of an exchange program and a strong bond develops between schools, involving not only students and host families, but staff and the community as well," said Patton. He added that while students were at the partner school they would attend classes and activities and participate in specially organized field trips.

The November 15 edition of the *Monroe County Clarion* advertised that the Sister Cities were seeking local participation in a City emblem design contest and a \$100 prize was being awarded to the winner. The purpose of the contest was for citizen to be given the opportunity to express themselves through original artwork that featured the City's history or unique characteristics. Entries were to be judged on January 9, 1993.

Bob Schaefer called the meeting to order on November 19. The cash balance was \$2,131.90. One-thousand window decals were approved for purchase. Marilyn Harres suggested a special January membership. Herb Schueller could present a slide show of his recent trip to Russia. The matter was tabled until December. It was decided to notify Gedern that a maximum of 45 guest could be accommodated during the may visit. The following Committee Chairs were appointed: Jean Marie Conrad, Fundraising; Marilyn Harres and Betty Bassy, Newsletter; By-Laws, Les Schneider; Barry Krizan and Carol Waide, Youth Group; Bob Schaefer, May Visit; Evelyn Blank, Semi-Annual Meeting; Diane Hanna, Membership.

Mayor John Coats selected Sister City member Marilyn Harres as one of the recipients of the 1992 Mayor's Award of Excellence for her dedication and tireless efforts to organize a Sister City in Columbia.

The final meeting of 1992 saw a year end balance of \$1,755.17. Carol Waide reported on a meeting with Mr. Patton, Mr. Turner, Mr. McDannold, Mr. Kish, Bob Schaefer, and Marilyn Harres to discuss the letter exchange and the student exchange. Superintendent Turner did not feel the importance of the schools involvement relative to the success of the organization. Marilyn returned to the school the next day and spoke to Mr. Patton about the Burgermeister Schwarz and Principal Molz taking offense to our

school's attitude about returning letters between Gedern students and Columbia students. Mr. Patton explained the situation that he was working under and that he would do his best to foster the program. Bob Schaefer reported that the Goethe Institute in New York had a program to help pay the expenses for a chaperoning teacher and small grants for students traveling to Germany. He said he will pass the information to Mr. Patton. Joe Bassy presented the legal aspects of liability insurance to the Board. Fire Chief Al Holden informed the Sister Cities that 20 band members from Gedern could be housed at the Fire House. Mr. Patton has also offered to arrange for school bus transportation for day trips with buses leaving after morning student delivery and returning before the afternoon pickup. Seven new family units have joined the Sister Cities. It was decided to have a bake sale for the student exchange program.

The December 1992 *Newsletter* shared a story of how Barbara Gundlach and her husband discovered Gundlach Street as they looked at a Columbia map that had been taken to Gedern. John Gundlach had come to Columbia from Gedern in 1859. Also reported was Gedern's Bib band, "Stolberger Buwe" would be coming on the official visit in 1993. The Gedern Area Sister City was organized with the following Board members.

President Barbara Gundlach; Secretary Wilfried Molz, treasurer Monica Hein; Members, Elka Hartman, Bettina Mobus, Helmut Mobus; Cultural Chairperson, Irmtraud Kohler; Auditors Reinhold Landman and Wolfgang Mueller.

## 1993

The first meeting of the New Year was called to order by President Schaefer on January 21, 1993. President Schaefer is planning to be present at the welcome ceremony for the Gedern exchange students. The High School German classes and the ICS English classes have sent pen pal letters to Gedern. Jean Marie Conrad suggested having the students and their host attend the semi-Annual Meeting. The May adult visit was discussed and it was noted that the major expense would be transportation costs. Barry Krizan agreed to be the Master of ceremonies at the Signing Ceremony. The Sophie and Elmer Oerter Charitable Foundation donated \$2000 for the visit. It was agreed that Sister Cities could host 47 band members. The City of Columbia presented Sister Cities with \$3000 that was budgeted for Sister City expenses for 1992-93. The January fund balance was \$1,958.70. Michael Giers visited the Conrad family in January. Jeff Griesbach won the Sister Cities Emblem Contest.

It was reported at the February 17 meeting that Gedern has said that 144 adults, 21 band members, and 16 students will be attending the Gedern signing ceremony. The adult trip itinerary was reviewed and cost to the organization analyzed. The Belleville Sister Cities Newsletter had an article on the Columbia Organization.

The Board met on March 18, 1993. Four new members bring the total membership to 89 units. The Official Signing Ceremony will take place at the High School Gym April 15. A dance at Turner Hall will be held that evening. The March fund balance was \$2,245.84.

Gedern Students and an adult delegation comes to Columbia for exchange and official signing on April 15.

The Semi-Annual meeting was held on April 15, 1993. Forty-nine members in attendance were called to order by Bob Schaefer. Various mementos were available for sale that could be used as gifts for the visitors from Gedern. Tickets to the various events were also available for purchase. Gene

Haller ended the meeting by giving an enjoyable presentation about the City of Columbia's street names.

On April 18 fifteen students and Andreas Heuser made the first official student exchange to Columbia. On May 7 the students attended the signing ceremony along with the adult delegation. The students departed on the 9<sup>th</sup> and the adults, who arrived on the 17<sup>th</sup> will depart on the 17<sup>th</sup>. A celebratory dance was held at American Legion on the evening of the signing.

On May 8 a joint meeting of the Sister City Boards from Columbia and Gedern was held at the Turner Hall. The discussions centered on seven points of concern about the visit and Gedern's questions about the student exchange program. It was Gedern's wish that all students in Columbia, regardless of the High School they attend be allowed to participate. Carol Waide and Barry Krizan assured the group that Mr. Patton was open to that concept.

The May 20 meeting was called to order and the members present discussed the Signing Ceremony and dance. The firemen submitted a bill for \$561 the fish used at the fry and the Jaycees submitted a bill for \$610.11 for the food and beer used at the bar-b-que. Each group reported that these bills were lowered due to donations. It was reported that the Gedern Stolberger Buwe Band was very good and really enjoyed themselves. They were transported to various events by the firemen and they played at the Turner Hall, Catholic Church and United Church of Christ. The beer for the fish fry was donated, and Turner's gave Sister Cities a discount on the slaw and soda. The 1995 return trip to Gedern was discussed. Summer would be the best time for members to go to Gedern, but airline prices are much higher at that time. The organizations May fund balance was \$5,724.88.

The June 17 Board meeting was called to order and after all expenses were paid the balance was \$3,761.60. Barb Gundlach, President of the Gedern Sister Cities, sent a thank you to Columbia and suggested a Summer 1995 visit so more people could attend. Bob Schaefer and Marilyn Harres had prepared a slide show to present to other groups as a form of publicity. Discussions were held about forming a nominating committee for the fall election of officers.

Vice-President Joe Bassy called the July 15 meeting to order. Diane Hanna reported that a video tape was sent to Barb Gundlach in Gedern. Europe has switched to a five digit Zip Code and Gedern's is 63688. The fund balance after bills were paid was \$3,930.70. A suggestion was made to create a photo album of the organization and members to send to Gedern. Councilman gene Ebersohl was to present the framed Proclamation of Friendship to the City Council at their next meeting.

Columbia High Principal Dennis Patton met with Bob Schaefer, Carol Waide and Marilyn Harres on August 1. He discussed the upcoming student tour and visit to Gedern scheduled for the summer of 1994. Several students would be staying with host families in Gedern, and adult chaperones were planning to stay in the hotel or castle hotel. Some of the adults will be going on their own side tours. Monthly informational meetings were being scheduled for chaperones, parents and students. The geography of the area, local customs, and conversational German were going to be discussed at each monthly meeting to prepare everyone for the trip. This has been the procedure Mr. Patton has used while organizing numerous student exchanges in the past. Free flights will be offered to the adult chaperones as an incentive for taking on this great responsibility. The budget balance was \$5,135.20.

The Sister Cities met on August 19 and the organization decided that Lester Schneider should present the Proclamation to gene Ebersohl at an upcoming council meeting. Jean Marie Conrad reported that the Columbia Sister Cities were featured on KSDK-TV with John Pertzborn and also mentioned on Channels 2 and 4. It was reported that Kristen Harres had recently visited her pen pal in Gedern. Two Columbia boys also visited Gedern this summer. It was suggested that the three be asked to come to the Annual Meeting to tell about their visits. Carol Waide reported on the conference with Mr. Patton and the plans for the 1994 student visit. Mr. Patton reported to her that Viola Frank, who was part of the original Gedern student visit to Columbia, would like to return and spent one entire school term at Columbia High. He would like to approve her visit, but host families are needed. One

possibility would be for her to staying in several different homes over the course of the year. After all bills were paid the final fund balance was \$4,794.58. It was reported that \$710.00 had been pledged to the Flood of 93 Relief Project. The Gedern Fire department sent \$721.61 to the Columbia Fire department for flood relief. Thanks you letters were sent to Baskin-Robbins, Kinko's, Margo's Fine Design, The Market Place, The Lantern, Subway, and Hummers for supporting the relief project. It was estimated the \$2,400 had been raised.

The September 16, Board meeting was attending by Gene Ebersohl, City Council Representative. Gene replaced Jeff Griesbach. It was reported that the Stolberger Buwe Band, Citizen of Gedern, and the Gedern Sister cities had sent more funds for flood relief. A \$554 profit from Columbia Days was reported. Lester Schneider, John Conrad and Lou Schafly were charged with overseeing the disbursement of all Flood Relief Money. Ed Likowski presented a slide show on the History of Columbia along the Mississippi River.

The 1993 Annual meeting was held on October 21 and thirty-one members were in attendance. Lester Schneider resigned his position on the Board. Janis Raeber, Sandy Straub, Marilyn Harres and Bob Schaefer were appointed to the Board. It was decided that the 1995 Adult Official Visit to Gedern would be in June. Following the Annual meeting the regular Board meeting was held. The members voted to send a video of The Flood of 1993 to Gedern.

The elections of new officers highlighted the November 18, 1993 meeting. Diane Hanna was selected as the President of Sister Cities. Other officers selected were: Joe Bassy, Vice President; Carol Waide, Recording Secretary; Jean Marie Conrad, Corresponding Secretary; Janis Raeber, Treasurer; Jean Henderson, Historian. Carol Waide, Jean Henderson and Diane Hanna were commended for the Sister City display placed at the Library. Jean Marie Conrad reported that the Sister City sign at the south edge of Columbia was in poor repair. Gene Ebersohl reported he would pass the word along to the City Maintenance Department. Marilyn Harres reported she is working on the Sister City Photo Album. It was decided that any funds from the Columbia Recycling Day be given to the students who would be visiting Gedern in 1994. The fund balance for November was \$3,698.18.

Twenty new members joined in 1993. Dennis and Sue Patton, Mike and Jean Kish, Amy, Kristi and Andrea Kish, Christa Welker. Al Holden, Christa Holden, Harold and Dorothy Harres, Delores Alspach, A.J. and Ben Waide, Sylvia Siegler, Ray and Louise Griesbach, Heidi Flach, John Gundlach, and baby Hanna Marie Raeber.

Tom and Ingrid Sorghan donated a large German flag to Sister Cities. Luciulle McKinney is now teaching a German class at CHS for Belleville Junior College.

The December *Newsletter* that in the spring of 2003 Barbara Gundlach stayed at the Tom and Ingrid Soraghan home during the official visit. Midway through the stay Herbert Gundlach and Ingrid's mother Katherine Ruegge had a long conversation about each others ancestry. Names of family members known to both began to surface and it was discovered that Herbert's grandmother and Katherine Ruegge's father were first cousins. They had been separated during the war years and the link was an aunt known to each separately. As Herbert glanced through a photo album he found a picture of his grandmother.

The final meeting of 1993 was called to order by President Diane Hanna. A letter from Barbara Gundlach reported that Rainer Schwarz was no longer the Burgermeister of Gedern. Barry Krizan reported that he had sent out letters to Junior High students to see if any wanted to join the 1994 student trip. It was reported that the City agreed to landscape the area around the Sister City sign south of town. The dates June 22 to July 3 were discussed for the 1995 Official Visit. The December 31, 1993 bank balance was \$6,805.07.

## The Emigration from Wernings, Hessen-Darmstadt in 1942

The small market town of Wernings, to which the inhabitants of the Village of Wernings belonged, offered advantages in forest, meadows, pasture and water. Wernings, a small agricultural village, couldn't prosper because the agricultural situation was poor. The three field system employed in Germany didn't help matters. One of every three fields was left fallow and farming tools were primitive, farming methods lacking and agricultural machinery non-existent. Most men had developed a trade and farming income was very small. There was no industry in the immediate area and the village of Werning had considerable dept of 22,500 Gulden in addition to mortgage debt and individual family's trading debts. Required payments also included tithes to the local church, harvest taxes, stable rental paid to landlords, restaurant and distillery fees and farmer tenant fees. When weather conditions were bad the harvest was bad. The wet years of 1815 to 1818 and again in the 1830's were miserable. Only those with considerable money could purchase food from other areas not affected by the weather.

In 1824 the Gerhardt and Blum families emigrated to Brazil. They were promised by agents 200 morgen (0.6 to 0.9 acres) of land. They were given livestock and there would be no required payments for four years. The families sent word back to Wernings that things were good in the Americas. The remaining inhabitants were excited by the news and began planning to emigrate to the promisedland across the ocean. There was much agitation in the small villages in the Vogelsberg Region of Germany and the idea of emigration took hold. The entire population of Wernings, half the villagers in Wippenbach, thirteen families from Wernings, twenty families from Seemengrund and Pferdsbacher decided to leave their homeland.

One evening in 1840 the people of Wernings met at their local village inn. Their leader was a teacher named Wilhelm Reifschneider. After discussion their plight he urged the villagers to emigrate. He had those wanting to leave sign their names and then contacted the government offices in Darmstadt for emigration permits. The first thing they had to do was to find a buyer for their houses and land. On January 29, 1841 a contact was concluded between the village and a real estate agency headed by a lawyer, Mr. Bruehl, from Giessen. His company sold all of the common and private assets to the Count of Solms-Lubach for 110,000 Gulden. Each morgen of land was sold for 70 Gulden and twenty-eight houses sold for 16,300 Gulden. On May 7, 1841 there was an announcement in the *Grosse Hessische Zeitung* newspaper to permit creditors to make any claims against the emigrants before they left. Only after a period of time were the villagers free to leave Germany. Everything was cleared up by August 22, 1842, and the county court in Buedingen declared that the emigration was permitted and Wernings villagers free to leave. The ministry of the State of Heson charged Mr. Schaaf, District Secretary in Buedingen, to arrange the emigration. On August 30 the villagers were discharged from the vassal union in the State of Hessen. After the deduction of individual payments the Count paid 55,681 Guldens and 31 Kreuzer. From the communal account 142 Guldens, 41 Kreuzer were set to the Schmidt bank in Frankfurt. This company placed the balance of the money in barrels and sent it by post to Bremen because payment by check was not possible. The money weighed 318.25 kilos and cost 236 Gulden in postage to send. The departure of the villagers of Wernings was scheduled for September 19<sup>th</sup>.

District Secretary Schaaf departed early to make all the necessary arrangements. After a three day trip to Bremen he began negotiations with Luedering and Company to secure passage. The negotiations were futile and the search finally ended with bookings on a Swedish Ship, the *Mime*, which had arrived from Rio de Janeiro with Captain Sjoberg at the helm. Mr. Schaaf found the ship seaworthy and comfortable, the captain "relatively relaxed, prudent, good natured and with sufficient knowledge of the German language." The contract was signed on September 23<sup>rd</sup> for 156 passengers at 50 Gulden per person. The emigrants were not only Wernings villagers, but also some people from neighboring

communities. There were 118 adults, 14 youngsters 8-12 years, 7 youngsters 4-8 years, 9 youngsters 1-4 years and 8 babies. The oldest emigrant was a man of 89 years and the youngest was not yet 2 months old.

In a pharmacy in Bremerhaven they ordered 30 bottles of sweet milk delivered to the ship; also meat and a “considerable” quantity of schnapps. The provisions were planned to last 90 days.

After a difficult 10-day trip from Wernings the wagons carrying the emigrants arrived in Bremen on September 29<sup>th</sup>. Secretary Schaaf had organized everything. On October 4<sup>th</sup> the passengers left in a small boat for the harbor. Two days later Secretary Schaaf and some deputies arrived with the money.

There was no east wind to get the ship from the Weser River into the open sea. The villagers waited 9 full days in the harbor. On October 8<sup>th</sup> the wind shifted and Secretary Schaaf brought the remaining community money on board and paid the captain. There was an emotional farewell. Secretary Schaaf, who had done so much in an unselfish way for these people, had completed his work. He was back in Buedingen on October 29<sup>th</sup>.

The *Mimer* arrived in New Orleans on December 2, 1842. From here the passengers continued on a steamboat up the Mississippi River until large ice masses made the continuation of the voyage near Chester, Illinois impossible. They left the boat and continued the journey to St. Louis by wagon, arriving on December 26, 98 days after departure from Wernings. Almost all settled in the state of Illinois near Waterloo and Columbia. Until the end of the century there was correspondence back and forth to Germany, but since that time things were very quiet.

To improve the agriculture of the area, the houses in Wernings were torn down and large portions of the former community land were given to those who remained for use as pasture. Today only the ruins of the Marlen Church and the house of the forester of the Count of Solms-Laubach remain of the former village of Wernings.

Translated from the German as published in 1986 in “650 Jahre, Stady Wenings, 1336-1986.”

## 1994

1994 was the second year of the official partnership with Gedern, Germany. The goal of the organization for 1994 was to reach out to new segments of the community of Columbia, Illinois and encourage them to join Sister Cities in efforts to strive for peace and understanding throughout the world.

Reaching out to the young people of Columbia resulted in the formation of a formal youth program, the Columbia High School-Gestumpfschule Gedern School Partnership. Fifteen students and an adult chaperone visited our Sister City of Gedern, Germany. Our local organization contributed the proceeds of a recycling event to students who helped collect recyclables.

In Gedern students attended classes, toured local attractions, and experienced firsthand culture similarities and differences. Students formed lasting friendships and gained a greater appreciation for diversity. A seventeen year old Gedern male student traveled to Columbia and lived with hosts families for two week durations, allowing the young man to experience how different families live.



1994 saw an increase in community meetings as Sister Cities attempted to reach out to the community. A genealogy class was held and was open to the public. An information booth about Sister Cities was incorporated into the manifest and cooler cups and buttons were sold. The organization sponsored a game booth for children at the Annual School picnic in late May. Sister Cities participated in the Annual Columbia Daze parade in August and had a wine and pretzel booth at the Columbia Daze festival.

The organization reached out to Columbia businesses by meeting with the Chamber of Commerce to propose a business exchange program and business memberships increased from two in 1993 to nine in 1994.

Sister Cities reached out to local members with special programs to allow members to get better acquainted and share common interests. A genealogy class was offered; a special speaker from the Olympic Festival Committee provided the program for the Semi-Annual meeting in April; a bar-b-que and auction was held to commemorate the signing of the Sister City agreement; a special meeting was held where student exchange participants shared photos and stories of the experience; a long-term student exchange student was hosted by members; and the October Semi-Annual meeting consisted of German cooking and stories shared by several members from Germany; a Christmas party was held for the entire membership.

Sister Cities reached out to Gedern when a four-man delegation traveled to Gedern for the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of a Sister City relationship involving one of the tiny villages that make up the Stadt of Gedern. Mayor Lester Schneider, Fire Chief Al Holden, and Roma Altgilbers made up the delegation. They presented silver plates to the German and French delegates as gifts from Columbia Sister Cities to the Wenings/Nucourt Anniversary.

The Columbia Sister cities also sent a \$50 donation to the Poti, Georgia Fund after hearing of the city's plight at the National Convention in Louisville, Kentucky.

The Columbia Sister Cities entered a summary of the year's activities in Sister Cities International Contest for Best Overall Program. The application included documentation and photos.

**The Sister Cities affiliation activities for 1994 included:**

Honored by St. Louis/Stuttgart Sister Cities as the newest area affiliation at their Winterball

Gedern Sister Cities sent items for the Anniversary Bar-b-que/Auction

Four members attended Wenings/Nucourt Sister cities 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

A Gedern Journalist, Michael Geirs, visited Columbia and attended a Board meeting

Fifteen students and a chaperone visited Gedern, German and stayed with host families

Columbia Sister Cities members hosted a long-term exchange student

The possibility of a business exchange were explored and guidelines drawn up

At the January 1994 Board meeting the idea of building a stand for Columbia Daze was first discussed. Marilyn Harres agreed to chair the 1995 Visit Committee. The addition of three new Board members was discussed. President Diane Hanna announced plans to attend the Annual Sister City International meeting in Louisville. Seventy-three units had paid their membership dues. The year started with a bank balance of \$6,805.07.

The February 1994 Sister City Newsletter reported the local organization had received gifts at the St. Louis/Stuttgart Winterball attended by twelve members: Homer and Loretta Stemler, John and Jean Marie Conrad, Wilbert and Vera Kohlmeyer, Bob Schaefer, Don Gleiber, Joanne Goeddel, Doris Ripplemeyer, Myron and Diane Hanna.

The genealogy meeting had to be canceled due to bitter cold weather and will be rescheduled. Marge Krizan, a member, was honored with the distinguished Emersion Electric Excellence in Teaching Award. Gedern selected a new Mayor, Wolfgang Zenkert. The Burgermeister began duties in January 1994 and has sent Columbia Mayor Lester Schneider a letter of willingness to work together.

The genealogy meeting was held on February 22 and Gene Haller and Bob Schaefer gave tips on how to research family history.

The following students will participated in the Student Exchange Program: Ericha Bense, Robbie Dehn, Chad Goodman, Jeff Haberl, Jessica Hamilton, Susan Jansen, Robbie Kelly, Chris Kennedy, Chris Mace, Janelle Mohme, Phillip Peters, John Ritter, Irene Rund, Regina Rund, Ryan Zach Smith, and Andrew Waide. Carol Waide, ICS teacher and Sister Cities recording secretary, chaperoned the students. The trip is being organized by High School Principal Dennis Patton. Joe Bassy and carol will meet with Mr. Patton to develop a Sister City waiver form.

Lifetime memberships were discussed at this meeting and Marilyn Harres reported how waterloo Sister Cities used the life membership funds.

On April 7 the host list for the Columbia visit to Gedern arrived. Sister Cities purchased ceramic boots to give to each host family.

The March Newsletter notified the members that the Spring Semi-Annual meeting would be held at the firehouse on April 21. A special meeting to celebrate the anniversary of the Columbia /Gedern partnership was scheduled for May 7, 1994.

Wenings/Nucourt is celebrating a 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on May 21 and mayor Les Schneider, Al Holden and Roman Alktgilbers are planning to attend.

The Semi-Annual meeting at the firehouse saw 33 members in attendance. After an explanation of the new By-laws by Diane Hanna the organization voted to amend the By-laws. Bob Schaefer resigned from the Board of Directors and Bill Roth-Roffy was appointed to fill his term. It was announced that Lucille McKinney would be offering three conversational German classes in June.

The decision to separate the Life Member account from the savings account was clarified at the April 21 meeting. The visitation dates of June 22 to July 3 were confirmed. The organizations membership was now 174 members. A letter from Barbara Gundlach asked if our Sister City Group could host a student for a full year. A meeting with Mr. Patton would be scheduled concerning her request.

The minutes from the Semi-Annual meeting were approved at the May 19 Board meeting. Janice Raeber displayed the organizations entry in the Reader's Digest competition. A set of policies and procedures for treasury related business were presented by Janice Raeber and unanimously adopted.

Word was received that Heinz Steckmann had passed away and condolences were sent. Heinz had played an important role as Columbia and Gedern initially came in contact. Fifty members met at the Columbia Sportsman Club for the First Anniversary Dinner. The hall was dxecorated in Germany's colors and pork steaks were enjoyed. A silent auction of German gifts sent by Barb Gundlach was one of the highlights of the evening. Barbara Henrich became Gedern/Columbia Sister City's 100 member and was presented a bouquet.

A news clipping from Gedern showed the new Columbia Platz, a place where the Columbia/Gedern Sister City sign was placed. The sign features a Columbia Eagle and a fish, Gedren's symbol.

Member Gene Haller reported the on September 24, 1994 the USS Columbia nuclear powered LA Class Submarine will be launched in Connecticut.

A fish bowl game was set up at the School picnic. A wine cooler booth will be set up at Columbia daze. The students traveling to Gedern this summer earned \$245 and with the Sister City match will have \$490 to help defray costs.

The June 23 Board meeting was held at the Columbia Public Safety Complex. Michael Giers, a journalist from Gedern, was a guest. Roman Altkilbers spoke about his recent visit to Gedern and Wenings. Membership chairman Bill Roth-Roffy suggested new membership cards be mailed out. Youth chairperson Carol Waide reported that the students would be leaving soon at they were taking along a slide presentation to show at Gedern's Secondary School. President Diane Hanna reported that

Mayor Les Schneider was planning on hosting an exchange student arriving in August for a six week stay. Mr. Patton gave Carol and Diane the guidelines for Student Exchanges that he developed with input from Christa Welker, CHS German Teacher and Gedern's English Teacher, Andres Heuser. It was decided to place an entry into the Columbia Daze parade.

Youth chairperson Carol Waide reported on the Student Exchange to Gedern at the July 17 meeting. The students attended school for a week, witnessed a prank day and attended graduation exercises. They gave several slide presentations and saw many sights. They attended a bread baking event, toured the countryside in a wagon, cruised down the Rhine River, visited Lumbourg castle and the medieval towns of Rudesheim and Budingen. Host families also took their individual students to many other areas of Germany-Heidelberg, Frankfurt, Hamburg, and even to Austria. The food and water took some adjusting and at departure there was hardly a dry eye.

On July 2 President Hanna announced that Columbia Sister Cities was receiving a special award from Readers Digest for the organizations outstanding program with Gedern. The award will be presented at the Sister City International Convention in Louisville on July 26. President Hanna, Mayor Schneider and his wife Carol, Janice Raeber, and Vera and Wilbert Kohlmeier will attend and accept the prestigious award.

The September board meeting minutes stated that the Columbia Daze stand netted \$416. The Readers Digest Award was presented to City representative Gene Ebersohl.

In October the Board decided to have a December Christmas party. The Semi-Annual meeting was held on October 14 at the Firehouse. The nominating committee suggested John Coats and Homer Stemler as new Board members. Ursala Marquez and Egon Scheuring presented a program on German food and shared several recipes. Everyone tried Bier Soup was enjoyed by all. Mariyln Harres reported that 38 had signed up for the 1995 visit to Gedern. Carol Waide reported the Gedern student Marcus Harbich had been hosted by the Mace and Peters families so far. Other hosts are the Goodmans, the Drexlers, Bill Groenert. Mr. Patton has been taking Marcus to judo lessons weekly in Belleville. Additional host families are needed. Diane gave a report on the international Convention.

The November 17 Board meeting was called to order and new officers were elected. Diane Hanna will remain as president, Joe Bassy is vice-president, Jean Marie Conrad will serve as recording secretary, Homer Stemler is the new corresponding secretary, Janice Raeber is Treasurer, Bill Roth-Roffy is new member chairman, Carol Waide continues as Youth Chairperson, Marilyn Harres will handle the Newsletter, John Coats board member and Jean Henderson, Historian.. The Christmas party was scheduled for December 8 at West Park Clubhouse. Marcus Harbich was scheduled return to Gedern on December 20 from his one semester exchange at Columbia High.

A special Board meeting was held on November 3, 1994. After a lengthy discussion it was suggested to accept Heartland travel and United Airlines for the 1995 visit to Gedern. Some members were planning to use Frequent Flyer miles and travel by American Airlines.

The December 1994 Board meeting was called to order by President Hanna on December 17. The organization had a checking account balance of \$2,127.09 and a savings account of \$6,341.56. Barbara Gundlach was notified that forty people had purchased tickets to Gedern. The Bavarian Dinner Dance date was set for March 19, 1995. New members added in 1994 were Ken and Virginia Harres, Alex and Pat Tegtmeier, Hilbert and Carol Harres, Charles Roth-Roffy, and Ken Roth-Roffy.

Paul Frierdich, local contactor, announce a new sub-division in Columbia to be named Gedern Village.

In News from Germany, members Cybele and Dan Weilbacher spent their honeymoon riding through Germany and visiting Gedern on Harleys.

## 1995

The year 1995 began with a checking account balance of \$2,933.65. Janice Raeber announced at the January Meeting that business surveys would be mailed out soon. A special program meeting was held in January and Bonnie Gumms of SIUE spoke on the areas archeology digs.

The Columbia Sister Cities held their first Bavarian German Dinner Dance on March 17, 1995. The Waterloo German Band provided entertainment and 300 people attended the dance at Turner's. A profit of \$88 was realized.

The City hall remodeling project was nearly complete and Sister Cities will have a display area and display case in the second floor auditorium. Fifteen students from Gedern and Andres Heuser will make the second student exchange visit to Columbia from March 20 to April 9.

On March 9 an information meeting was held for all members planning to travel to Gedern during the summer.

While the students were here in March/April Wilfried Molz, the Principal of Gesamtschule Gedern arrived and an official agreement of partnership between CHS and Gedern was signed by Molz and CHS Principal Dennis Patton. As a result of the 1994 trip to Gedern two CHS students, Zach Smith and Robbie Kelly, submitted essays about their experiences and were each awarded \$2000 college scholarships. Lucille McKinney offered a conversational German class to members in May and June.

Forty members gathered for the Semi-Annual meeting on April 20 and Gene Haller gave a program about the 2004 launching of the USS Columbia LA Class submarine. Sub sandwiches were served.

Members wrapped 3,800 toys for the advent calendar fund raiser. E Hanna and Janice Raeber continued to gather material and pictures from 1994-95 for the Readers Digest Contest.

It was reported in the May Newsletter that the Columbia City budget currently pays for dues to SSI and the Mayor and Council Representative expenses to attend Sister City functions. They also pay for gifts from the City to Gedern. The Sister Cities once again had a Zima and Wine Cooler booth at Columbia Daze on Main Street.

Fifty-six members traveled to Gedern for the Second Annual Official Visit from June 24 to July 4. Members visited the newly established Columbia Platz, a park in the center of Gedern recognizing the partnership. Thirty-five members who could not visit Gedern held a picnic on July 1 and enjoyed beautiful weather. A thank you was printed in the May Newsletter thanking Lucille McKinney for teaching members German, translating correspondence, and providing beautiful music on all occasions.

A show-and-tell night was held at the City auditorium on September 8. Pictures, slides and mementos from Gedern were shared by all. The Public Library will also soon be displaying mementos from the Gedern visit. Debbie Straub was selected as a replacement for Board member John Coats who resigned due to work conflicts.

The final recycling program was held in the spring. Columbia begins city-wide recycling this year. Fred Harres and Mike Raeber repaired the Sister City sign at the south end of town. Helmut, Evi and Maria Schwartz from Gedern visited the Waides. Maria is an elementary teacher in Gedern and they met during the 1994 student exchange.

In September the Board voted to have Conrad Printing prepare a two-color brochure for Sister Cities. Bill Roth-Roffy resigned from the Board. The final recycling event netted \$310. The Hot Columbia Daze stand netted \$580.

At the November 16 meeting Joe Bassy was nominated to become the fourth President of Sister Cities. Diane Hanna was nominated to be Vice-President; Janice Raeber was nominated as Treasurer; Jean Marie Conrad nominated Corresponding Secretary; Homer Stemler as recording Secretary; Debbie Straub as Membership Chair; and Jean Henderson as Historian. All were unanimously elected.

1996

Joe Bassy began his presidency by calling the January 23, 1996 meeting to order. Betty Bassy, Marilyn Harres and Diane Hanna agreed to publish the 1996 Newsletter. A book about Gedern was sent to the Board and they agreed to donate it to the Public Library. It was announced that nine visitors from Gedern would be in Columbia in April.

Sue Kutterer agreed to fill a one year vacancy on the Board for Mariyln Harres. Alex Tegtmeier agreed to fill a two year vacancy created by Bill Roth-Roffy's resignation.

The 1997 visit committee consist of Joe Bassy, Debbie Straub, Jean Marie Conrad, Alex Tegtmeier and Homer Stemler. The German visitors would be given the option of three day trips trips to Branson or Las Vegas. It was decided that Sister Cities would sponsor a bake sale at the Waterloo Walmart on April 6 with proceeds going to Student-Exchange Program. It was also decided to have a golf game at the May 18 school picnic.

In April Barbara Gundlach sent word that 32 people had signed up for the 1997 trip. She also reported that Sementaller Musikander would like to make the trip along with Stolberger Buwe.

Thirty members attended the April Semi-Annual meeting and Janet Racen presented a program on Medicinal Plants.

In May Bill Brucker donated pipes to make a new Wine Cooler Stand. The Bake sale made \$225 and Walmart matched it.

On May 27 seventeen students chaperoned by Dick Lanoue and Dennis Patton made CHS second exchange trip to Gedern. After arrival in Franfurt the group was treated to a bar-b-que and trips to Saazburg, Hessen Park, Cologne and the Rhine River. A disco and farewell party were held and students attended school and gave presentations about Columbia.

In July the Board agreed to purchase fifty-one German wind socks. Sister City adopted two-block in the Columbia Main Street Adoption Program. The July bank balance was \$5,541.25. Over 50 people, 45 from the Waterloo and Columbia Sister Cities, visited Frankenmueth for the three-day Bavarian Festival.

On September 26 SDister Cities Historian Jean Henerson was honored for her 37 years of service as public librarian and dedicated community service.

In the fall Mariyln Harres and Marion Schlemmer gave presentations about Gedern to Parkview first graders. Plans for Gedern's 1997 official visit were discussed at the August Board meeting. Mayor Schneider informed the Board that the City was covering the cost of the Welcome banners. Sister cities planned to enter three Model A's in the Columbia Daze parade. Ingrid Sorgham was selected to replace Sue Kutterer on the Board for 1997. Dennis Patton notified the Board that the student exchange would be held from April 6 through April 27. The Semi-Annual meeting was set for August 17. All Board members agreed to remain in their current office. \$450 was made at the Columbia Daze booth. Barbara Gundlach sent a letter that Stolberger Buwe would be the only band coming in October 1997. The Christmas party was held on December 5 at Meadow Ridge Clubhouse.

1997

Twenty-four students from Gedern and their teacher Andreas Heuser, visited Columbia from April 5-26. They attended the Sister Cities Annual Spring Meeting in April 17 and gave wonderful presentations about their lives back in Germany. The students enjoyed a pizza party prior to the meeting. While in Columbia they attended school at Columbia High and visited many tourist attractions around the Metro St, Louis with transportation provided by the School District.

***COLUMBIA SISTER CITY***  
**1990-2003 Chronology**

1990

Marilyn Harres proposes Columbia Sister Cities  
Meetings held at Schueler's  
Chairman George 'Jack' Brucker  
First Bank underwrites expense of Incorporation by Traugber Law Firm  
By-Laws discussed in January  
Six names on Articles of Incorporation:  
George Brucker  
Barry Krizan  
Elizabeth Diehl  
Norman Kutterer  
Jean Henderson  
Mayor Coats supports Sister Cities  
Jeff Griesbach is City Council Representative to meetings  
By-Laws adopted January 18  
Columbia formally accepted by Sister City International in September

1991

Barry Krizan elected first President  
First Semi-Annual Meeting on April 18  
Bob Schaefer visits Gedern on Waterloo Sister City trip  
Bob Shaefer reports in February about Gedern (Wernings) Immigrants  
Marilyn Harres visits Gedern in May, contacts officials  
Barry Krizan presents idea of Gedern/Columbia Sister Cities to Council  
Burgermeister Rainer Schwarz proposes Student Exchange with CHS  
Mr. Patton agrees to drop Seigen, partner with Gedern  
First Sister Cities Newsletter published in July

Marilyn Harres is editor of Newsletter  
Sister Cities has first Columbia Daze pretzel stand  
Ten man delegation from Gedern visits Columbia in November  
Principals Patton and Molz agree on Student Exchange  
Mayor Coats and City Council welcomes Gedern delegation  
1992

Bob Schaefer becomes President  
City Council official invites Gedern as Sister City in February  
Gedern accepts on February 29th  
A delegation of 21 members, including mayor Coats, visit Gedern in May  
The official agreement is signed in Gedern in May  
Prayer Service held at Wernings church ruins  
An emblem Contest was held in the Fall  
1993

Gedern students and teacher Andres Heuser make first visit in April  
Adult delegation visits Columbia in April  
Official signing ceremony at CHS on April 15  
Alderman Gene Ebersohl replaces Jeff Griesbach as City rep  
Board Member Les Schneider elected Mayor of Columbia in April

1994

Diane Hanna become President  
By-Laws amended  
First year anniversary of signing at Sportsman Club  
Mayor Schneider and delegation attend Wenings/Nucourt Anniversary in May  
Students visit Gedern with chaperone Carol Waide in June  
Gedern places new Columbia/Gedern Sister City signs  
Sister Cities participates in School picnic with Fishbowl  
First Christmas party held  
1995

First Bavarian Dinner Dance held on March 17  
Wilfried Molz, Rainer Schwarz, Reinhold Landmann, Michael Giers visit Columbia in March  
School Proclamation of Friendship signed in March  
Fifteen Gedern students and Andres Heuser visit in March, April  
Fifty-Six members visit Gedern on second official visit in June-July  
Columbia-Platz dedicated in Gedern in July  
1996

Joe Bassy becomes President  
Seventeen students and five chaperones visit Gedern in May-June  
Principal Dennis Patton accompanies students and chaperone, Dick Lanoue  
Betty Bassy, Diane Hanna and Debbie Straub take over Newsletter  
Second Annual Bavarian Dinner/Dance held March 10 with Waterloo German Band once again  
Sue Kutterer replaces Marilyn Harres as Board Member  
A June trip to Frankenmueth was scheduled  
The first bake sale for students was held at Waterloo Walmart  
Columbia Daze booth now at Turner Hall  
Ingrid Sorghan replaces Sue Kutterer on the Board  
Two clocks, Gedern and Columbia time, installed at City Hall

1997

Twenty-four students from Gedern visit Columbia  
Gedern Sister Cities host an Western bar-b-que with Country Music  
Official Visit from Gedern Adults  
Stolberger Buwe performs at Grant's Farm, Turner Hall

1998

Dianne Hanna become President  
4<sup>th</sup> Annual Bavarian Dinner Dance held  
First Trivia Night held  
Gedern Fireman come to 100 Anniversary OF Columbia Fire Dept.  
Band Seementaler Musikanten accompanies Gedern firemen  
Firemen visit Grants Farm, have a Pig Roast at Stemler's Farm, go to Fireman's Dance  
Denise Nobbe chaperones the Columbia-Gedern Student Exchange to Germany

1999

German Stuidents speak at Semi-Annual meeting  
Lucille McKinney teaches German Classes in June-July  
41 Columbia Sister Cities members visit Gedern  
Weather Delays Flight in Chicago

2000

Columbia students, Principal Patton and School Board Member Sam Habermehl  
Visit Belin, Munich, Alps before arriving in Gedern. Visit Koln, Rhine, Fulda  
Columbia wins Illinois Sister City of the Year Award

2001

Gedern Students visit Columbia with teachers Heuser and Heike Schwing  
Gedern sister Cities official 2001 visit is canceled after September 11, 2001 tragedy  
Gedern visit is rescheduled for June 2002



