9th Year

Geborener Deutscher®

A Newsletter for German-Born Adoptees and Their Birth/Adoptive Families

Volume IX, Number 1 *(Issue #30)* *Spring 1996*

The Sister She Left Behind

by Jean Libman Block

From Good Housekeeping, August 1995

© Jean Libman Block / Reprinted with permission

Lore Schimkus remembers that her hands were shaking when she opened the letter with the Austrian postmark last October. Would it bring news of her younger sister, Alwine, whom she hadn't seen in 53 years?

Lore, now 63, lives with her husband in North Port, FL, and Toronto; she was 9 and her baby sister 2 when they were separated in an Austrian Refugee camp. After years of searching for Alwine, she finally turned to the Red Cross for help in July 1994: Her name and story were broadcast on an Austrian radio program that reunites scattered families. Now, someone was responding.

The letter was in German, which Lore speaks and reads. The writer was 55—the age her sister would be. Hopeful but cautious, Lore wrote back asking for more information.

A second letter arrived in November, along with a faded snapshot. "I gasped when I saw it," Lore recalls. She recognized her father, her three brothers and two sisters, her three step-sisters, and her step-mother. Little Alwine, the youngest, sat on her mother's lap. "I ran to another room for the only picture I had of Alwine, when she was still a baby," remembers Lore. "It was *her*. I was so excited, I cried for three days!"

Letters flew back and forth across the Atlantic. Phone calls became so emotional the sisters could barely talk. On January 7, 1995, Alwine and her husband, Alex, flew to Florida from Vienna. "Alwine and I kissed, hugged ... and just kept looking at each other," exclaims Lore.

Lore and Alwine's parents were German Lutherans who had settled in Romania. During the war, as part of Hitler's repatriation policy, they were forced to return to Germany. Their father, by then a widower, and his six children were sent to a refugee camp in Austria in 1939. While there, he met a widow with three young daughters. She agreed to marry him on one condition: that he make separate arrangements for Alwine, sick from rickets, because she required too much care. Fortunately, a local Austrian couple offered to raise the little girl.

Lore and her newly merged family moved around southern Germany. In 1953 she resettled on her own, in Toronto, where she met and married Henry Schimkus. The couple adopted a boy and a girl. But Lore never stopped thinking about the sister she left behind. "I tried so many times to find her. I was afraid she might not even be alive."

Alwine, meanwhile, learned the truth about her background from her foster parents when she was 11. Some day, she promised herself, she'd find her birth family. In 1960 she married Alexander Tuczai; the couple moved to Vienna and later had two daughters. By chance, Alwine's foster mother heard Lore's story on the radio.

During the two-week visit in Florida, the sisters compared photo albums, shopped together, and went sight-seeing. Now they talk by phone each week and are making plans to see each other again soon.

"We made an instant connection," exclaims Lore. "I never thought I'd see a miracle, but now I know I've been part of one!" ***Ende***

A Word From the Editor

1996 marks the beginning of the 9th year of publication for Geborener Deutscher. When I started this project, I didn't imagine that it would last this long, and I have been greatly gratified by the response of readers, many of whom have written about their reunions or searches for publication.

I want to encourage readers to continue to support GD, particularly by submitting their search-&-reunion stories; or whatever small sum they can afford to help defray costs. — WLG

Search Journal
by Gail Miller

I grew up always knowing I was adopted. Because I learned at such an early age, it never seemed to affect me; that is, until the day I accidentally came across my adoption papers. Suddenly I had information in front of me: my birth place, birth name and dates. I was reading about myself and everything seemed so closed and so final.

From that point on, I began to get curious. I began asking questions. I found out my name was Regina Gisela Jurcyzk, born in Hildesheim, (West) Germany, in 1956. I lived in an orphanage for a while and, at the age of 18 months, was adopted and brought to the United States.



Gail Miller
(Adoptee)

I always felt lucky. I had a happy childhood, good parents and one brother. Even though life was good, the wondering and curiosity were still there. When I was in high school, the urge to learn more became very strong. At one point, my father helped begin a search for my birth mother, but as he began to get close to finding her, I changed my mind. I don't think I was mature enough and ready for the emotions that would take place.

Through the next ten years, I married and had three children of my own. My life was full and very busy, but I still wondered about my birth mother. What did she look like? Would she want to see me? And many other questions.



Gisela Jurcyzk
(Birth Mother)

In 1993, I separated from my husband, got a job and started a different life. My job was fulfilling, but I was in a lot of emotional pain at home, and I became distanced from anyone I was ever close to. Finding my birth mother grew to become a matter of utmost importance.

In February of 1995, I finally decided I was ready to begin my search. I knew I had the strength and courage to take any consequences that would come my way. After a few telephone calls, I was connected with Leonie Boehmer. She said she needed more information than I had, so I spent a lot of time calling different places. Finally, Catholic Services, through which I was adopted, gave me a lot of information. ⟹

Geborener Deutscher is published quarterly by William L. Gage, who is solely responsible for its content. Readers are encouraged to submit articles, letters and/or photographs, for publication herein. Material submitted for publication should be sent to **William L. Gage, 805 Alvarado Drive N.E., Albuquerque, N.M. 87108 USA**. All material submitted for publication becomes the property of *Geborener Deutscher* and cannot be returned except by written request. The publisher assumes no responsibility for unsolicited manuscripts. Subscriptions are FREE: to individuals upon written request; and to search-and-support groups, either upon written request or other notice of their existence.

Copyright © 1996 William L. Gage ISSN 1052-3189 ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Search Journal *cont. fr. pg. 1*

They told me my mother's name was Gisela Jurcyzk, and her birth date. What a thrill! My birth mother had given me her name as my middle name.

There was no birth certificate on file anywhere, so I gathered all my documents and information and sent it to Leonie. As I studied every piece of paper, everything I read led me to believe she really cared for me, and that out of love she did the hardest thing: giving me up so I would have a better life.

Leonie started with my birth place: Hildesheim. She wrote to the Resident Registry Office to see if Gisela still lived there, but as it turned out, she had moved to Hannover in 1967. That meant that we would have to make further inquiry in Hannover, which meant more waiting. The waiting was hard. Between my children and my job keeping me busy, the time passed quickly, but still I counted the days. I work with a great group of people who knew of my search and were following its progress with every new development. We discussed my search quite often and the positive response and support from them also helped ease the waiting.

On a Sunday night early in September, Leonie called and said she had found my birth mother. Words cannot express the feelings that went through me the rest of the night. Now it was in my hands totally. It was time for me to write the most important letter of my life. What would I say? What would I ask? Once I got past the first line, the rest of the letter just flowed out. I mailed the letter and again, the waiting began. I always felt pretty positive I would get a welcoming response, but I was still nervous. I checked the mailbox every day and, on September 30th, my heart began racing as my son gave me the mail.

There it was, a letter marked "Air Mail United States." I fumbled to open the envelope and couldn't read it fast enough. Gisela welcomed me with an open heart. She was happy I had found her. She said she had searched for me years ago, but had gotten nowhere.

Gisela and I have exchanged a couple of letters now and have sent each other pictures. I decided to take a German language course so I could call her someday. And I also hoped someday to be able to afford to go to Germany, but I didn't know when we would get to meet in person. Then, in December 1995, my boss gave me quite a surprise at the company Christmas party. He told me that he and the other four owners wanted to send me to Germany. It was the greatest gift I have ever received, not just because my dream will now come true and I will get to meet my birth mother and see where I was born, but also because they have shown me that people do care. I will always treasure their kindness and generosity.

I would like to thank everyone who was involved in my search. I now look forward to a trip this summer to see where the first few years of my life were spent.

This has been a wonderful dream, an end to my wondering, an end to my search, and another new beginning of my life.

— Gail P. Miller
Englewood, OK

Search Journal
by Scott Singletary

To borrow a line from Steve Martin in his 1979 movie, *The Jerk,* "I was born a poor white child." That sounds like a good way to start my story! I was born 36 years ago in a small town in Germany—Augsburg.

For as long as I can remember, I always knew I was adopted. My parents never tried to hide that from me, and I never doubted their love for me. My father was in the military and was stationed at the Army base in Augsburg, (West) Germany. My mom and dad had already adopted two children: my sister from California and my brother from Luxembourg. While they had no plans for immediately adopting a third child, a visit to a local orphanage changed all that. My parents took particular interest in me because of my age—I was almost four years old and had been raised in the orphanage my whole life. They were moved with a great deal of compassion and decided to adopt me. I was the newest member of my adopted family and at the same time the oldest of three children: my sister was one year younger and my brother was two years younger.

It never bothered me that I had been adopted. I loved my parents and never doubted their love for me as their very own. I had no reason to be insecure; yet I knew if I ever had the chance, I would try and meet my "birth" family. Not because I was missing anything, but because I was very curious. What do my mother and father look like? Do I have brothers and sisters? How old are they? Do they know about me? Am I heir to a huge fortune? I knew I could live without knowing ... but if given the chance, I would try and meet them.

That opportunity presented itself 12 years ago. I had recently graduated from college and was offered the opportunity to go to Israel and Europe with a group from my church. The timing seemed right and I decided to go. My parents had given me a copy of my adoption papers, so I knew my birth mother's name. Other than that, however, I had little to go on. I spent three weeks in Israel and then pressed on to Europe with a couple of friends. About a week into my trip, I arrived in Augsburg—excited and anxious.

I spent the first part of my first day trying to find out if my birth mother was still alive and still residing in Augsburg. I decided to take a bus to the area where she had lived. Sure enough, the information on my piece of paper matched the address of the 3-story apartment complex I was facing. I took a deep breath and walked up three flights of stairs, down a hallway and stopped at the door. Posted on the outside of the door was the word "Kammerl"—my birth mother's last name! I put my ear to the door and could hear people talking inside. All of a sudden I could no longer hear because the pounding of my heart was so loud!

What now? You would think I would have rehearsed what to say, but I hadn't. I think I kind of realized this was something you couldn't very well rehearse. Yet I felt there must be a better way to handle this. She is not young any more (60 at the time); I might give her a heart attack; plus I don't know if she knows a lick of English! I left and decided to try and find some kind of help. I located a police station down the street and explained my predicament to an officer. He offered to call her and explain everything. He wasted no time in picking up the phone and dialing her number. Some words were exchanged in German and then, before I could catch my breath, he handed me the phone and said, "She speaks good English; you talk to her." I'm sure I didn't make much sense at first, but I said something like, "Hello, Luise, this is Scott Singletary. My name used to be Rolf Max Kammerl and I am your son. I have come to Germany and I was hoping to meet you. Before I did, I wanted to make sure you want to meet me." As I suspected, she was utterly shocked. After the initial shock and ten "Oh my God"s, she said, "Yes, I want to meet you very much, please come. But you must know you have a brother who is a year older than you, and he will be here shortly. He knows nothing about you. If you come, I must tell him that you are a friend from America." I wasn't going to argue and told that would be fine.

Back I walked down the street to the small apartment complex. Up three flights of stairs and, instead of a closed door, I found an elderly woman with long hair standing in the doorway. She looked at me and I looked at her.... I don't remember if we shook hands or hugged; all I remember is looking at her features and knowing that I was related to this woman. I am 6'4" and she is 5'11"; I have large hands, as did she; the face shape was the same ... it was her! The best way to describe the rest of our time together would be "interesting" and "awkward." Interesting, as I learned the answers to those questions I had for so long, and awkward, as neither of us knew what to say after the facts were made known. There was nothing else to say. I felt no emotions towards her and she was terribly nervous. During my visit, my brother, Kurt, did show up. He must have wondered, "Why does this guy have a grin on his face?" If only he had known what I knew! That evening, Kurt took me home and Luise offered to take me out for dinner the following evening. As Kurt drove me to my hotel, it was tempting to tell him the truth, but two things hindered me: my conscience, and the fact that Kurt could not speak a lick of English!

The next day, Luise took me out to dinner. I knew that this restaurant was a special place to her, and I looked forward to an authentic German meal. I'm afraid the food was a little *too* authentic, and neither of us knew how to be. She was extremely nervous, smoking continuously. I realized then that my mission was accomplished and that it was time to move on. We shared nothing other than a bloodline. I had never felt more thankful for my parents than I did that night.

While it was uncomfortable, I learned much from Luise. I now know that my father was Jewish and from New York. I learned I had a brother and a sister in Germany. I know why I was put up for adoption. Luise was never married and I was her last child. Although she was 36 at the time, she still lived at home with

her mother, a sister, a brother and two of her children. Her mother was quite emphatic that there was no room for one more child and I was immediately placed in an orphanage. Apparently, Luise would come by occasionally and visit, but those visits became more and more rare. I was glad to know "my story" and wondered if we could continue to communicate. Perhaps the saddest part was knowing that she hadn't the courage to tell her children about me then, and she couldn't muster up the courage to tell them before I left. She did, however, write me once or twice a year, always promising to one day tell the other children. I tried to encourage her without being pushy, but to no avail. It did not look as though she ever would.

I work for a prison ministry which is both national and international. We train volunteers from churches how to get involved in prison ministry. One day, to my surprise, I was contacted by our international division. They explained that a volunteer from Germany had won a trip to Atlanta and wanted to make contact with somebody locally. We were more than happy to meet someone from Germany. We had no idea what Ellen's visit would mean to us months and years later.

I met Ellen at the airport and brought her to our home. She seemed somewhat shy and spoke only broken English. We enjoyed our conversation with her, and enjoyed getting to know her while she was in Atlanta for five short days. As I shared "my story" with Ellen, she seemed genuinely interested. I asked her if she would be willing to contact my mother and try and encourage her to tell the other children about me. Ellen said she would be happy to. Although I did not know her well, I sensed that she would follow up, but I really had my doubts that anything or anyone could persuade Luise to release her deep, dark secret.

Ellen faxed us from Europe right away to let us know she had contacted Luise and had had a very nice talk with her. She went on to tell us that she had mentioned the other children and that Luise indicated she felt badly and that she did want to tell them, but just didn't know how. Ellen attempted to encourage her.

Several weeks transpired and we received another fax from Ellen indicating that she had spoken with Luise again and asked her why she had not told the children yet. She then proceeded to tell Luise that what she was doing was very unfair to me and to the other children. She approached Luise in a way I never could—she was very honest and blunt with her. The conversation was very painful for Luise and Ellen indicated that Luise was in tears. She finally agreed to tell them and said she would try and muster the courage to really do it this time.

To my great amazement, in June of 1995, I received a call from my long-lost sister—Gilda. I will always remember picking up the phone and hearing a voice say, "Hi, Scott ... this is Gilda, your sister in Germany. I am so happy to know about you. Mother has told me all about you. I am so happy!" I think I was in a state of shock! It had been 12 years since I met my birth mother, and now I was on the phone talking to my 41-year-old sister who has only just learned she has a baby brother she never knew about. It was a wonderful experience which I am sure I will never forget. God had used Ellen—an angel in disguise—to bring about something I could not do myself.

As if that were not enough excitement, Gilda's first letter—six pages long!—was even more interesting. Below I have quoted a small portion of that letter:

> Dear Scott,
> The destiny has not allowed us to grow up together. This is very very sorrowful. I am sure we have a lot in common. The best happening since the birth of Stephan [her son] was the message that I have a third brother ... let me tell you, you have another brother beside Kurt. It is Jochen, born 1945, now 50 years old. I was told by mama that you did not know his existence ... he is a large strong man, formed by the atmosphere of a daily hard working guy ... there has to be an end to this concealment ... closing this letter, I ask you to allow me to call you brother and to give me a chance to be your sister.
> Yours, Gilda

You can imagine my shock to find out I had another brother whom my mother chose not to mention. To this day, I don't know her reasons for telling me about two children but not three. I know for her, it must be humiliating to have to relive her past—four children, four fathers and never married. I can't help but wonder if, in this day and age, she would not have opted for an abortion. In that day, it was taboo. I thank God she did not, and that I have enjoyed a very wonderful life.

I have come to learn that my oldest brother, Jochen, is in very poor health. He is married with no children. Kurt has no children as well, although they badly want children. It was not too long after that I received my first letter from Kurt. He also expressed his delight in knowing about me, but also shared his sadness in not having grown up with me. He said he had always wanted another brother closer in age that he could pal around with.

Another fascinating aspect to this story is that I have since learned that Kurt was in the orphanage with me for two years. Luise was later able to take him back home. In Gilda's first letter to me, she asked me, "Scott, did you ever have a problem growing up? ... Kurt had a problem shaking his head back and forth for years and years. ..." When I read this, it absolutely sent chills up and down my spine! For years, I too shared this same problem. I constantly shook my head back and forth in order to get to sleep. It was a way of relaxing, but now I realize it was a way of coping with the environment. Interestingly, I recently talked with a school teacher who told me she learned in one of her college classes that this was a very common problem for children in orphanages in other countries. It was due to the lack of affection and attention they received—it was a coping mechanism.

Well, you would think that would be enough excitement in one life, but just as all this was sinking in, I got another letter from Gilda. In this letter, she told me she had just learned that her father was also an American citizen stationed in Germany at the time of her birth. Apparently, Luise had never told her about the circumstances leading to her birth. The last Luise knew of her father was that he lived in Sylvester, GA! Of all places—Georgia, my state! Gilda wanted to know if I would be willing to look into it. Part of her reason for wanting to know more was because she and her son have a rare bone disease which they know little about. Since there was apparently no history of this on her mother's side, she thought her father would be the carrier.

I was more than happy to go on another investigation! Sylvester is a small community in south Georgia. Her father's was an unusual name, so I didn't think he would be hard to find. I called directory assistance and, sure enough, there were two families listed with her father's last name. Instead of calling and possibly running into a dead end, however, I decided to travel to Sylvester to see what I could find out. Fortunately, I have a volunteer friend who lives close to Sylvester who was more than eager to join me in my mission. He had been fascinated with my story ever since I had shared it with him months ago.

I met up with my friend in Albany, GA—half an hour's drive from Sylvester. The first thing he said was, "You're not gonna believe this, but we have a Boynton on our books here in Albany. He bough a car from us six months ago!" What a small world! My friend had sold a car to what turned out to be Gilda's half-brother. We came to learn that Gilda's father had moved with his wife to California two months before, but that one of his sons still lives in Sylvester. We were finally able to track down this son, whose name is Lester.

You can imagine the startled look on Lester's face when he drove up to his house to find two men waiting to talk with him. Lester is about 35 years old and drives a truck for a living. I asked him if we could go inside: I had some interesting news for him. He seemed like an easygoing guy, with a big smile on his face as he said, "Sure, come on in." We sat down and I pretty much spilled the beans, not knowing how he would react. I told him I was born in Germany and was adopted. I had been in contact with my birth mother and sister, and had learned, among other things, that my mother had had a child by a man who was a sergeant in the U.S. Army at the time.

Lester looked right at me with a grin on his face and said, "You're right. My dad's the father." He went on to say that, two years ago, his wife had had an affair and left him. At the time, his mother told him, "Lester, you never knew this, but your dad had an affair as well and, as a matter of fact, you have a half-sister in Germany." His mother apparently told him to bring him some comfort at the time. Lester said to me, "Your know, for two years, I have wondered about my sister." To which I replied with a grin on my face, "Would you like to see a picture of her?" He was thrilled to see a picture of his sister in Germany, and I was thrilled to have the opportunity to be part of his "reunion." We had fun talking and Lester gave me pictures of his brothers and sisters (five in all) to pass on to Gilda. He called his mother that night to pass on the news. At the time, she decided not to tell her husband about Gilda. He is in poor health, and she was not sure how well he would handle it. — *Scott Singletary*
Lithonia, GA

Briefe (Letters From Readers)

February 7, 1996

Dear Leonie,

Just before the weekend I received the two latest issues of *Geborener Deutscher*. I was surprised that my letter already was published in the Winter 1996 number [*" 'Liberation Children' Seek Authorities' Cooperation in Locating their Fathers" — Ed.*]. Thank you very much on behalf of all that have an interest in this. Publicity is something that really can help us forward. I think my letter is also going to be published in *The American Legion Magazine* soon.

We recently had a publicity campaign in England. Articles in several newspapers! In result of that a journalist asked the British government for a reaction. A spokesman said that the British government is willing to discuss the matter now, but on an intergovernmental level. The Dutch Department of Foreign Affairs already has promised their help here. I'm sure that an intergovernmental level will mean that things are going slow, but at least we make progress!

We also seem to make progress in Canada. We are in touch with a group of British "children" in search for their Canadian fathers. Carol Wilson is the founder of the group, and she is going to Canada April 1st to hand over a petition for her and our searchers to the Canadian government. Support is found in a member of Parliament, and CBC television is going to cover this all. The TV station also wants to help get a *pro bono* lawyer if necessary.

— Hank op de Dyk
Groningen, The Netherlands

January 18, 1996

Dear Mr. Gage,

Thank you so much for your speedy reply to my phone call of November 24, 1995. I've truly enjoyed reading the back issues of *Geborener Deutscher*. Though I am not an adoptee, I do share a somewhat similar background with the many people featured in your newsletter. I am the daughter of a German woman and an American soldier who is unaware of my existence. My mother and I lived with my grandmother until I was almost six years old. In 1952, my mother married an American serviceman, and the three of us came to the United States in November of that year.

My step-father died in 1990, and my interest in finding my birth father has hit an all-time high since then. I have met with little or no success in my attempts, so have finally resorted to contacting Leonie Boehmer for advice, thanks mainly to the stories in your newsletter. I had read and heard of her before, but never considered her approachable until reading about her in your publication.

I would be greatly interested in hearing of any attempts, successes, or advice in birth-father searches. Please keep me on your mailing list. I look forward to any and all future editions of your publication. *— Gabriele Boys*
Fayetteville, AR

The International Scene

Discovering the Way Back to Mother

by Joe Smalley

From *The Times* (London), January 31, 1996
© 1996 Joe Smalley / Reprinted with permission

Last year Elizabeth Collins joined millions of young professionals in America by plugging into the Internet. Not for her work or to surf, but to find the woman who had given her up for adoption in 1971.

She had no adoption decree or lawyer's records, not even her mother's name. Three months after starting her net search, with a little luck and a lot of on-line help from a group known as the Adoptees Mailing List, she found her natural mother.

"There's no way I would have found her without the net," she says. "People went out of their way to help."

There are more than 800,000 adoptees living in Britain, according to the National Organisation for Counselling Adoptees and Parents (NORCAP). If Liz Collins had been born in the UK, she would have had the legal right to find her birth certificate, which provides an adopted person with their date and place of birth; birth mother's name, address and occupation at that time; and in some cases, the name of the birth father. Even armed with this information, an adoptee may still face considerable difficulties. An adoptee may need to gather clues from a variety of sources.

Kate Adie, the BBC reporter, probably used all her journalistic skills to find her natural family in 1992, using her birth certificate as a starting point. Some adoptees even hire a private investigator to locate their birth mother, as former England rugby international Brian Moore did.

However, not even journalists and private detectives have access to secret information. Alan Burnell, director of the London-based Post-Adoption Centre (PAC), says they gather information that is, in theory, open to the public, such as databases showing financial activity, electoral registers or phone directories.

Not everyone, however, can easily access these sources. It's only natural, then, to think of the potential of the net to bring these disparate elements together, says Burnell.

There are already hundreds of WWW, FTP, Telnet and Gopher sites related to adoption searches, guidelines and support groups around the world. There are many on-line forums, too (some via commercial providers such as CompuServe and AOL), Usenet groups such as alt.adoption, on-line contact registries, e-mail lists, genealogy groups and so on.

One organisation that aims to provide a broader service is NORCAP. Eventually, it hopes to provide a computerised "search room," with on-line access to UK electoral registers and telephone directories as well as more specialised data from public records.

However, while the net may make some searches easier, NORCAP strongly recommends that the first contact should be made by a trained intermediary.

A private detective traced Brian Moore's natural mother in two days, but Moore still chose to let a social worker make the first contact for him.

Anybody whose life has been affected by adoption can still directly seek support from several organisations in Britain. However, the net provides another resource that offers one advantage: it never closes. **Ende**

The adoptees' mailing list home page is on:
http://psy.ucsd.edu/~jhartung/adoptees.html
Alt.adoption FAQ is at:
http://www.webcom.com/~kmc/adoption/faqs.html
NORCAP telephone: 01865 875000
PAC telephone: 0171-284 0555

January 22, 1995

Dear Mr. Gage,

I have received *Geborener Deutscher* twice so far (thanks for the back issues), and I am still amazed that this newsletter even exists. This is a great source of strength for those of us who are still searching.

Your newsletter gives me hope that I will eventually find my siblings. I only hope that my search will turn out as good as some of your published stories. Whatever the outcome, I will write my story for possible publication in your newsletter. *— Patricia Mitchell*
St. Ann, MO

Leonie D. Boehmer
Independent Search Consultant
(505) 268-1310
Specialization: Germany
805 Alvarado Drive N.E.
Albuquerque, N.M. 87108

Taco Deutsch

Copyright 1996 Newsweek, Inc. All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission.

How many East Germans does it take to roll a tortilla? Texas entrepreneur Eckhart Wieske figured he'd make big bucks introducing the former East Germany to fajitas and refried beans. So he signed a licensing agreement to open a parrot-festooned, fiesta-style replica of his favorite Tex-Mex eatery, Ninfa's, near the church where Bach once worked in Leipzig. Problem: east-German cooks had never seen a beef skirt before. They didn't know a chile from a pepper. "They kept rolling [the tortillas] out square," says the company's purchasing director. He's now helping train them—in Texas.

From NEWSWEEK, *February 19, 1996*
by LUCY HOWARD *and* CARLA KOEHL
with bureau reports