



# tête à tête

Published periodically by the York Twinning Association, Inc.  
P.O. Box 21318 York, Pennsylvania 17402

June 2026

Yorktwinning.com Doug & Betty Stein j1j2j31@comcast.net

## A Message from your Co-Presidents



**BONJOUR! GUTEN TAG!**



2026 has been busy year so far for York Twinning Association! The weather was perfect for our annual 12th Night Holiday tour held on January 4, 2026!

Our first YTA meeting of the year was held February 18th. Thanks to the generosity of York YMCA of the Roses we can continue holding our meetings both in-person and via Zoom in the Loucks conference room.

On March 30th, Betty and Doug met with Interim director of Public Works for York City, Jim Gross, to discuss replacing old signage at five possible locations to promote York Twinning Association and York City as a Twin City. We hope to meet with Mayor Walker to discuss additional plans and grants to help fund this project.

Student exchanges to both France and Germany have been planned. One student, Audrianna Dusseau, will travel to Arles in July and was awarded a YTA scholarship to help fund her trip at our April 15th meeting. 14 YTA students will travel to Germany in June. Additionally, three adults and one student from Arles will visit York in August, then twelve German students will visit York during an October exchange.

On April 18th, a group of YTA members and friends gathered at Lavender Acres for our annual wine tasting event. May 1st, Doug and Betty participated in a live stream event promoting YTA as part of Give Local York. Then on May 12th, Betty, Doug, and Amy Matthews set up a table during the YMCA Volunteer and Job fair to hand out information encouraging people to join YTA.

Our next in-person and zoom meeting will be held at the York YMCA on Wednesday, June 17th starting at 6:30 PM. Come to hear updates about upcoming summer events! Looking forward to seeing you then!



Betty & Doug

## SAVE THE DATE -- AUGUST 8, 2026!

**It's time to get together for summer fun, connect with friends, celebrate summer and meet exchange visitors from Arles, France!**



This fun summer celebration and farewell dinner for our French visitors will be held from 6 PM to 9 PM at Lake Meade Community Center in East Berlin, PA. A catered meal will be served. A DJ will play dance music and teach three types of line dances. The center is handicap accessible. **Cost is \$25 per person.**



Event will be held rain or shine! This is a great opportunity to socialize and share memories, about travels adventures. Family and friends welcomed!



**Contact Diane Reimert at 403-394-9997 or [dianereimert@yahoo.com](mailto:dianereimert@yahoo.com) to confirm your reservation ASAP. Reservation checks should be mailed to YTA c/o Diane Reimert, 10 Reynolds, Drive, East Berlin, PA 17316.**



Twinned with:  
Arles, France  
(Since 1954)



### OUR MISSION:

**To create opportunities for personal contacts while gaining mutual respect and international friendship through organized exchange programs with our twin cities.**

Leinfelden-  
Echterdingen,  
Germany  
(Since 1981)



**YTA Board Officers & Chairpersons**

**BOARD OFFICERS**

- Co-Presidents:** Doug & Betty Stein
- Vice President:** **POSITION OPEN**
- Secretary:** Michele Groat
- Treasurer:** JaNeene Powell
- Asst. Treasurer:** Kyle Groft
- French Adult Exchange:**  
Jennifer Grim & Diane Reimert
- French Student Exchange:**  
Kristin Witmer, Kristi Spies
- German Adult Exchange:**  
Hank & Michele Groat
- German Student Exchange:** Molly Wiles
- 12th Night Home Tour Co-chairs:**  
Jessie Henning\* & Amy Matthews\*
- Webmaster:** Ken Krause\*
- Membership Chair:** **POSITION OPEN**
- General Fundraising:** **POSITION OPEN**
- Marketing / PR:** **POSITION OPEN**
- Compliance Officer:** **POSITION OPEN**

\* Denotes Board Directors

**COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

- Newsletter:** Betty Stein
- Spring Wine Tasting Social:** JaNeene Powell
- Summer Social:** Jennifer Grim & Diane Reimert
- Fall Oktoberfest:** Hank & Michele Groat
- Hospitality for In Person Meetings:** Kristi Spies

**CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2026 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS!**



Audrianna Dusseau  
French Exchange  
Scholarship Recipient

Karly Gerow, Olivia Gooche, Greta Laratonda, Grayson Miller, Ellie Sparks, Lucy Tawney  
German Exchange  
Scholarship Recipients



**YTA Calendar of Meetings & Social Events**

**MEETING DATES**

Thank you to the York YMCA for allowing us to continue using their Loucks Room for YTA meetings at no charge. Unless otherwise noted, future Board and membership meetings will be held on the third Wednesday of months listed below from 6:30—8:30 P.M., both in-person and via ZOOM. All meetings are open to both Board and General Membership. Meetings will be followed by a short social time. Agendas, in-person and ZOOM links will be sent out one week prior to meetings.

**2026 MEETING DATES**

- January**—No formal meeting due to January 4th, 12th Night Tour.
- February 18th** —Regular Board meeting
- March** — No formal meeting
- April 15th**—Regular Board meeting
- April 30th—May 1st—Give Local York,**  
24 hour fundraiser, from 9 PM to 9 PM
- June 17th**— Regular Board meeting.
- August 8th**— Summer celebration & farewell dinner for French Student and Adult visitors at Lake Meade Community Center.
- August 19th** — Regular Board meeting *\*Change of location for this meeting. Due to a scheduling conflict it will be held in the Tech Rev building beside the YMCA of York.*

- October 4th** —Oktoberfest Celebration
- October 21th** —Short Board meeting - with a reception following the meeting with visiting LE students, their host families, and YTA students who traveled to Arles during the summer.
- November 18th** - Board/budget meeting
- December**—No formal meeting.

**SOCIAL EVENTS**

- Summer 2026:** Summer Social/Farewell dinner, August 8th, Lake Meade Community Center
- Fall 2026:** Oktoberfest celebration, Sunday, October 4th
- Winter 2027:** 12th Night Holiday Home Tour, January 3, 2027 - 1 PM to 5 PM
- Spring 2026:** Wine Tasting Social and Give Local York (dates TBD)

**THANK YOU!**



Thank you to everyone who donated to York Twinning Association during the Give Local York event. With your help we raised over \$3,500.00 for our organization!

**A special thank you to our matching sponsors J. Miller, \$1,000; and Krouse Travel, \$250. Thanks also to John Sanstead & Marta Smith Foundation for their large, off-line donation.**

Betty and Doug were chosen to be part of a live feed event held for Give Local York at Keystone Kidspace. After being interviewed they won an extra \$100 from The York Water Company's Ripple Effect punch board! Thank you JT Hand for that opportunity!

Money raised during Give Local York will be used to continue providing cultural events for our members and friends. Money will also be used to help fund scholarships for students who travel as ambassadors for YTA during exchanges to Arles, France and Leinfelden-Echterdingen, Germany.



\* \* \* \* \*

Former York Twinning Association president Stu Cluck and wife Gayle traveled with family members to France in May of 2026. During their visit they were able to stop in Arles and and enjoy refreshments with Arlesian friends at Hotel Jules Cesar! What a great opportunity to renew long-time friendships made through the York-Arles Twinning connection!

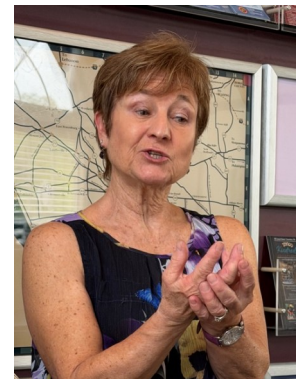


Pictured left - Therese, Gayle's daughter, and 2 children Seated—Evelyne Laurent Standing—Gayle Cluck, Marie-France Espinat, Michele Laffe, Stu Cluck, Julien Faure\* Seated—Father of Julien Faure

\* Julien is a former exchange student who completed a three month internship in York

**WINE TASTING FUN!**

York Twinning Association held their annual wine tasting event on April 18, 2026 from 2 to 5 PM at Lavender Acres Winery & Bistro, 445 Linden Street, Columbia, PA 17512. Participants enjoyed four different wines in honor of our Twin cities, Arles and Leinfelden-Echterdingen. Information was shared by a sommelier about delicious food made and served to compliment each wine. Thank you to Lavender Acres for a wonderful afternoon!



## WHAT'S YOUR STORY ???

How have you been involved with YTA? Did you travel to Arles or Leinfelden-Echterdingen? Were you a host for visitors during one of our exchanges? Maybe you attended or volunteered during one of our events. Maybe you still maintain close relationships with friends you met through YTA. By sharing photos and stories we hope to rebuild relationships, reconnect with friends with whom we may have lost contact, and encourage others to join our association. Please consider sending us your photos and memories to share in future issues of Tete. Send information to:

[jlj2j31@comcast.net](mailto:jlj2j31@comcast.net)

Subject line: YTA Memories

### Remembering York-Arles Friendships from 50 years ago By Pattie & Jack Stentz

In 1976 the Stentz family hosted 15 year old Silvia Testaert from Arles, France as part of the York-Arles Twinning exchange program, a great introduction to a long international relationship and friendship with our Arlesian Testaert family who later hosted us at their home. Silvia and our daughter, Cheryl, became close friends, and that led not only to Cheryl's trip to Arles, but also Silvie's parents' trip to our home, and our trip to their home as part of York-Arles Twinning exchange.

On July 4, 1976 we took Silvia with us to Philadelphia for the festivities. We watched the fireworks, saluted our flag, sang our national anthem, and much to our surprise, met Charleston Heston at the Philadelphia Library!



On our Arlesian family's second visit to York, all the Arlesians arrived via bus to Washington, DC. We met them there. I (Jack Stentz) am proudly holding the American flag at the far right, and at the opposite end the two ladies standing at the other end are Lulu Testaert and her sister (their second visit to the U.S.). Gilbert Testaert is standing at the top row (3rd from the right) with his camera. It was an exciting event for all the participants. The flag had flown over our nation's capitol, and was given as a gift to Arles from the U.S.

In addition to the usual sights of Washington, D.C., all were greeted at the famous "Capitol Hill Club" for a formal lunch hosted by PA Congressman William Goodling. It was with reluctance that the Arlesian guests returned to York—but their host families awaited with open arms for a special dinner.



*(From left in above photo, Patricia Stentz, who fashioned white roses for the Arlesians, pins one of York's symbols on Annie Watrin of Arles. Judge John Rauhauser and Arlesian Helene Coulou smile at the welcoming reception.)*

The Queen of Arles is elected every three years during the Fetes des Gardian on May 1st and crowned during the Bal de la Reine. The tradition of electing a Queen of Arles began in 1930 on the 100th anniversary of the birth of Frederic Mistral, a Nobel Prize-winning poet and champion of Provençal culture.

This is a rigorous competition! Finalists take written and oral exams conducted by a jury of seven judges. Ladies must demonstrate an extensive knowledge of Provençal history, literature, arts, traditions, and the "lengo nostro" which is the Provençal language.

Candidates must be skilled in wearing the Arlesian costume, a dress style from the 18th century, including a delicate lace bodice, fancy ribbons, and shawl. She must be able to do her hair in the proper style and dress in costume by herself. The Queen acts as an Ambassador and has many responsibilities.

Meeting the Queen of Arles in York, PA was a delight. May many of our York Twinning members have the opportunity to meet the current Queen of Arles on upcoming visits.



## The York-Arles Teacher Exchange Experience By Edward K. Campbell

During the Eisenhower administration, the President wanted to create and encourage bonds of friendship and understanding among people and cities throughout the world with a goal of strengthening world peace. Under his leadership, the government created a program, then called People-to-People. Clearly, he had in mind the world war that had ended less than a decade before and the resulting aftermath of the Cold War. The term "People-to-People" faded away, later replaced by "Twinning" or "Sister cities."

Meanwhile, already in York, the indomitable, pioneering force of two York women, Dr. Victoria Lyles, Superintendent of Elementary Instruction of the City's schools, and Miss Marguerite Eriksson, a French teacher, established teaching French in elementary schools using an elementary school French curriculum developed by Miss Eriksson. Soon, afterward, this curriculum was implemented in many elementary schools throughout the country since at that time foreign language being taught at that level was rare, if not unheard of.

The Lyles/Eriksson program attracted the attention of the U.S. Commissioner of Education who was trying to launch the People-to-People program. The commissioner recommended the York City School District for America's first experimental "twinning" to implement Eisenhower's concept. What followed in 1954 was the creation of the York-Arles Twinning Association (YTA) to promote teacher exchanges and also visits between the people of the two cities.

The teacher exchange aspect of the program first began with the exchange of one teacher from each city for an academic year. The Arlesian taught French in various York public elementary schools; likewise, the York teacher taught English in the elementary public schools of Arles. The two cities followed that model uninterrupted until 1975 when the teacher exchange program ended because of the termination of the French program in the York elementary schools.

Nevertheless, other aspects of the twinning of these two cities continue, and this twinning is recognized as the longest continuous such relationship between a French and American city. The French *Jumelages* (twinning) committee and YTA are proud of their 70+ years of participating in the twinning experience. Mention is necessary of Jean Laurain, an early exchange teacher to York, and who for many years was the backbone and heart of the *Jumelages* of Arles.

I participated as the teacher from York in the exchange of 1971-1972. I was interviewed by Miss Eriksson who I respected enormously because of her work for elementary French education in York. She hesitated appointing me since my teaching experience came from the secondary level, rather than the primary level. Despite her initial reservation she chose me as the next teacher from York. Alas, her fear came to pass. The *Bureau d'Enseignement* placed me at the *Collège d'Enseignement Secondaire* (CES), equivalent to our junior/senior high level. She expressed her displeasure to her connections in Arles, but my placement at the CES remained unchanged.

Any doubt that strong, people-to-people relations do not result from such exchange can be easily dispelled. The first exchange teacher from York, Margaret Boltz, married the Mayor of Arles, Charles Privat! In my case, Arles brought about a marital relationship, too, with a different twist. An American woman I had been dating for a few years arrived to visit me in the spring of 1972. At that time we became engaged under the rain in the Place de la République in front of *Le Club des Jumelages*. This woman, Benita, and I are still married after 52 years, showing that this jewel of a Provençal town has special powers, And of course, Arles still remains, "our city"

Ah, the rooms in *Le Club de Jumelages*! They served multiple purposes. Many people, mostly young, met there in the *bar* for afternoon *apéro* where a grumpy, loveable barman held sway. At the beginning of the academic year in October, while sipping pastis, young male Arlésiens, suffused with hope and possibility, scoped out the new batch of *les assistantes* from German, Australia, and the UK. The charm of these Fallic rooster filled the room and led to several *liaisons romantiques*, some lasting the entire year. I know of none that year resulting in marriage.

Many other activities happened in the *Club des Jumelages*, more of the academic nature. It was a reading room for the multinational newspapers available from the exchange cities, and there were rehearsals and performances of skits by the young tykes. My foggy memory brings back visions of my youngest students putting on an English version of the escapades of the comic book characters in *Astérix le Gaulois*. The opening line of the play, all that I remember, was the clear, engaging, "Oh! What a beautiful day!" Lots of parties and general social activities occurred regularly throughout the year. As the exchange teacher from York, I held a higher

## The York-Arles Teacher Exchange Experience (continued)

status than the others. It also meant I taught the supplemental adult English conversations group. We read and discussed newspapers, read and reacted to poetry, (Frost was a favorite), talked about daily life and generally about whatever crossed our minds. The highlight came in the Spring when la Reine Elizabeth II came to visit the town, and we decided to write to her in advance to extend an invitation to tea. We labored long and lovingly over the invitation and sent it off. We never heard back. I don't think I'll ever get over the royal snub. However, leaning out the window that opened onto the Place de la République, we did see her pass. . . well, at least her hat.

I respected and liked the English teachers whose classes I taught by invitation, doing *explications de textes* with the older ones and simple conversation and games such as "Simon dit" with the younger ones. I lived in a studio-type apartment where the rent was paid by the *Jumelages* group, and food from the schools' cafeteria cost very little.

The city of Arles provides its citizens and visitors a vast, living museum starting with les Arènes dating from Roman times, still in use for outdoor events such as French-style (bloodless) bull fights. A stroll through the town reveals other Roman remnants and scenes painted by Van Gogh, who lived and painted in Arles and thereabouts at the end of the 19th century. I found this ancient Provençal city vibrant with 20th century activity, its night life, Romani presence ("Romani" rather than "Gypsy" is the preferred term today since the latter is considered derogatory), Saturday market, easily a mile long on Boulevard des Lices and my go-to for olives and local cheese, museums, cafes, and so much more. I took excursions to Camargue leading to the heavily Roma-influenced seaside town, Les Saintes-Maries de la Mer named after the three Marys, Marie Madeleine, Marie Salomé, and Marie de Cléophas, reported witnesses to the Resurrection and whose small boat adrift in the sea brought the three of them and their servant Sara safely to the location of the current village. Here a small church displays a statue of the Roma's patron saint, the dark-skinned Sainte Sara who accompanied the three Marys. Every year the Romani remove her from the church and parade her reverently through the crowd-filled streets leading to the sea. In the sea she receives a type of baptismal dunking amid loud cheering.

All around the rest of Provence, artist villages dot the geography and provide hikes, local art, and colorful

markets to visit. My favorite, the tiny, nearby town of Les Baux de Provence, sits protected at the top of a cliff, and despite its difficult access, attracts hogs of tourists wanting to feel its ancient quaintness.

Lest I forget the glorious weather that Provence enjoys, I need to mention that the sunshine delivers day after day a warmth and clarity of light found nowhere else. The sunshine, along with a touch of his madness, provided Van Gogh his view of sunflowers, wheat fields and landscapes. Winter is balmy, snow falls only rarely, The mistral, a strong cold northwesterly wind, can be an unpleasant intrusion blowing full force down the Rhone Valley. It is said to blow for three, six, or nine days, always in clusters of three, a rhythm somewhat mystical, but I found it to be close to the truth.

In mutual tribute, both cities named a neighborhood park in honor of its sister city. In York, Arles Park and in Arles, York Park. Additionally, Arles named a separate location in honor of Miss Eriksson following her tragic passing.

For me, the Twinning experience more than kept its promise of international friendships and language promotion. My chances to speak French were everywhere, with friends, colleagues, students, and friendly strangers. I loved the southern Provençal accent including the local version of the nasal vowels. Many days I spoke no English at all. My best, day-to-day friends came from France, UK, Australia, and Germany. I was able to maintain contact with several of them for over thirty years, sometimes through in person visits, in Arles, UK and Denver where I now live. *Hélas*, I've lost all of them now to time and geography. One bright note, I recently connected with Christian Sorand, my counterpart sent to York to teach French. We recently exchanged emails, a practice I hope we continue. We are hoping to greet each other again, this time in York, in October 2026.

From all evidence, this seventy-two year old twinning program is alive and vibrant today. The cities are proud of their people-to-people accomplishments and have great expectations of continued success.



Edward and Benita Campbell



Join the **YORK TWINNING ASSOCIATION** *experience*

## 2026 Membership Application

Mission Statement . . .

*“To create opportunities for personal contacts while gaining mutual respect and international friendship through organized exchange programs with our twin cities.”*

\* Due to rising costs, our membership fees increased in 2025 by \$10 - the first raise since 2016! Printing costs, postage, and handling for YTA Tete newsletters have also risen so there will be an additional yearly fee of \$20.00 for those wishing to receive hard copies of Tete mailed to them in 2026. We will continue to email copies of the Tete newsletter to all members at no charge. Thank you for your understanding and support!

**\* I am pleased to support York Twinning Association through December 2026!**

**Please check all that apply:**

- Single \$30 \$ \_\_\_\_\_
  - Couple/2 people household \$40 \$ \_\_\_\_\_
  - Family/3+people household \$50 \$ \_\_\_\_\_
  - Fee for printed copies of Tete \$20 \$ \_\_\_\_\_
  - Additional donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Total due for 2026 \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

*A percentage of membership fees supports the Marguerite Eriksson Scholarship Fund. York Twinning Association is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Donations are appreciated. Please complete all information so our records can be updated.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City / State \_\_\_\_\_ Zipcode \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Other phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Please check box if you **DO NOT** want to be included in the YTA membership directory.

*I am interested in helping the organization with the following:*

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Membership      | <input type="checkbox"/> FUNdraising activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Hospitality            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter      | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media           | <input type="checkbox"/> Publicity/Marketing    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Programming     | <input type="checkbox"/> Finance                | <input type="checkbox"/> Student Exchanges      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adult Exchanges | <input type="checkbox"/> YTA Officer            | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) |

Return this membership form and payment made out to York Twinning Association to:

**York Twinning Association  
P.O. Box 21318  
York, PA 17402**



P.O.Box 21318  
York, Pennsylvania 17402

