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40 year IFYE Alumni Europe,

For sure, a long time and those under us, who were present in Dinant and Brussel, Belgium, probably never thought, they should meet to day, here, in Klagenfurt, Austria.

Many out of the time in the beginning of the 50ty's, have heard the story already. Those of the last ten - twenty years however, might have asked how this started. Therefore Alois Wolf gave me the possibility to tell you this. First of all I have to repeat myself for those who have seen the short story in the IFYE-Newsletter published in Autumn 1996.

For those who did not see it or forgot the story:

I myself, an exchangee in 1956, prepared by Henny Oosterhuis, now living in Britt. Columbia, to Wyoming and Indiana, had to inform Marianne Geluk on the I.F.Y.E. program for 1957.

After she returned, we had together a meeting with those, who went before us, in order to discuss the experiences, possibilities and the needed improvement and changes for the benefit of the program.

In these days, the Worldexhibition in Brussels, Belgium was also planned.

We got the idea, since we did know, what it means to a person, when meeting other people and the knowledge that when you travelled once, you want to go again, So we decided to contact all those, who visited the U.S.A. since 1949. The good organisation in the 4H's Centre provided us the names.

Marianne Geluk had contacts to the European Organisation, in special to Mrs Irene Seizier in Paris, France and the ball could role.

On the 50 letters, we sended out, we had from 13 people all over Europe an answer that they would attend. As guest were two delegates from the U.S.A. to the Netherlands present.

Located in an empty N A T O schoolbuilding, we had our first days and the second part of the week we spend together somewhere in a location in Brussels in order to visit all the national paviljons at the world fair.

Tired, but pleased on what we did, we returned home after we decided to meet next year again. While the Netherlands were rather central, and many of the parcipants wanted to see Amsterdam, Marianne and myself were asked to organise an other week in 1959.

Here was also decided, since the representative of Italy, Mauro Chiabrando said that the 2 part of May was not suitable, because he had to harvest his winterwheat and Johannis Sollid said he had to make hay, that the hosting country should fix the meeting-time. Later on it turned out, this was mostly during the summervacation of any agricultural educational center when we did not make a trip through the country and spend the night in a tent. A base that works out well.

Besides the fact, that the crowd, taking part in the yearly conferences has been grown, it is to mention, that the base of the programs during the week, we meet, did not show a basicly change.

All of you have seen our constitution. Here upon I can tell you, that it tooks approximately about ten years, untill we did find the final wording. I do remember me Trever Neill from No.-Ireland, sitting in bed in de middle of the night, holding a flashlight, in order not to disturb his roommates and a pencil, to control the proposed text for the next morning planned General Meeting.

So as it goes in every group, it does go here also:
we loose good friends for the reason they pass away.

It is to much to mention them all, in case I do know about every body. A few, I try to bring you in mind as Jim Emmet from Ireland, Arto Heikkila from Finland, Lennart Ohlsson from Sweden, Marie-Pierre Combot from France and of course countryfellow Derk Noordhuis. From a few countries I got a list of names in which is shown who completes this roundup. See at the front-table.

Therefore I will ask you to stand up and try to get that person or those people in mind you should like to have her or him here.

Thank you.

But life goes on, fortunately!

Looking around I see many young faces. May be there were people who wanted to attend this annyversary, but were not able to do so. When you are home again, later, please do share them your experiences here!

The aim of the I F Y E program is "To make the best better"

This is what the organisers of the 39 previous meetings did also. Those people we have to thank for the enthousiasm brought up, much time in the sparetime, besides job, work, household or other private activities.

Not only that, also the finantial part must be done. Hardly any statesubsidies are given to us. Here I want to say: Thank you!

It is done and those who this have done, have the joy from seeing happy faces and friends all over.

So it does go in life, it does go here:
you are back from your trip. Feel a certain unsurety, by going to your first alumni-

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meeting. Do see friends, get in contact with other people and it turns out : The same experiences. Try to come next year again.

Your personal circumstances do change. Some years you are not able to attend. Later on, the mailman drops an announcement for another meeting. You think: Do I like to go?, Will I go? Can I go?

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You ~~survive~~ yourself and make reservations. Coming close to the place of the conference, get a little nervous, meets the first people and then...., your comrade from somany years ago is also there!

You conclude: time came to a standstill. Where you did stop, years ago, you go on further now.

I do think this is the force of this type of gathering, besides the fact, you see places where you never should go, when you were traveling on your own.

Therefore I hope, that those who are coming after us, are able to continue the atmosphere in which we are now here.

Before I come to an end of my written thoughts, I will thank Aloïs, Andreas and Ilse, as well as them behind and aside them for the works brought up, in order to give us the possibility for this weekend will ask those of you, who travel to Washington D.C. in september next to hand our congratulations in the 50th anniversary of the I.F.Y.E.-program. Here I hope the organisation hold the activities another 50 years.

I thank you.

P.R. Dijkhuis, 6 juli 1998