

Brainstorming with George, aka Kurti



*Hello Friends,
I don't remember having ever written to you about my new feature here at Esplanade, where we live now. I volunteered back in May to make a 30 min. presentation every Wednesday a.m. under the generic title "Brainstorming With George", some interesting subjects that come in my mind or to my way, including also some wisecracks by famous personalities (Churchill, Einstein, G.B. Shaw, Woody*

Allen, etc.) as well as other miscellania. I have always a good attendance and am getting nice assortment of claps.

Here below is my feature of last week.

Kurti

NÖRDLINGEN, A TOWN BUILT OF DIAMONDS

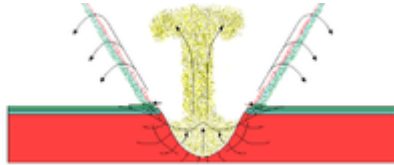
Nördlingen, is a small town in Bavaria, Germany.

Bavaria is by area the largest state of the 16 states of the Federal Republic of Germany, having approx. 20% of the land area of the entire country. It had for long the one of the largest and healthiest economies of any region of Germany, or of entire Europe for that matter. Some of the largest German companies are headquartered in Bavaria: BMW, Siemens, Audi, Grundig, Puma, Adidas. Nördlingen with a population of approximately 24,000, is located at 80 miles NW from Munich. It was first mentioned in recorded history already in 898 AD, and in 1998 the town celebrated its 1100th Anniversary. Today it is one of only three towns in Germany that still has a completely established city wall. The remains of a Roman castellum, built in the year 85 AD, have been found under the city.

Nördlingen was one of the first Protestant cities, in 1529. The Protestant Reformation was started by the German theologian Martin Luther who wrote his Ninety-Five Theses on the sale of indulgences in 1517. Parallel to events in Germany, a similar movement began in Switzerland under the leadership of Ulrich Zwingli, which was soon followed by the political separation of the Church

of England from Rome under Henry VIII, beginning in 1529 and completed in 1536.

In 1604, a shortened and simplified version of William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* was performed here in Nördlingen - this was one of the first performances of any Shakespearean play outside England. That play was first published only in 1597, seven years earlier.



And now, let's **go back** 14 million years. About that time a meteorite crashed here creating a huge impact crater about 14.3 million-14.5 million years ago. The original crater rim had an estimated diameter of 15 mi, but the present floor of the depression is only about 330 to 490 ft below the eroded remains of the rim. Recent computer modeling of the impact event indicates that the impactor probably had a diameter of about 4,900 ft. The impact velocity is thought to have been about 45,000 mph. The resulting explosion had the power of 1.8 million Hiroshima bombs.

The key evidence was the presence of shocked quartz, a rock which can only be formed by the shock pressures associated with meteorite impact. The impact that caused the Nördlinger crater created an estimated 779,000 tons of these rocks when it impacted a huge local graphite deposit. Graphite is the highest grade of coal, just above anthracite in purity. The huge pressure and the extreme temperature created by the impact on the graphite deposit resulted in the formation of micro-diamond containing rocks.

Stone from this area was then quarried in the Middle Ages and used to build all local stone buildings. And these are what we call now the buildings made of diamonds of Nördlingen, even if these diamonds are so small that nobody can see them.