

J. Elke Ertle was born and raised in West Berlin following World War II, a time when the city was the focus of an escalating Cold War between East and West. During the first twenty-one years of her life, she lived with her mother and father in the British sector of the city and was known by her first name, Jutta. In the late 1940s, her family braved the Berlin Blockade, surviving by and large on account of the American-conceived Berlin Airlift. More than a decade later, when Elke was a teenager, her family endured many hours, days, and weeks of petrifying uncertainty in the wake of the construction of the Berlin Wall. Overnight, the city had been split into two and rumors ran amok. Elke, along with the rest of the population of West Berlin, feared for her future and her freedom.

Her interest in exploring the United States was first awakened when she befriended an American military service family, stationed in Germany. It intensified when the boyish US president, John F. Kennedy, proclaimed, "Ich bin ein Berliner," in front of Berlin's city hall in 1963. And it became a reality when her girlfriend invited her to spend one year in San Diego. Finding the walls her parents had erected around her as impenetrable as the brick-and-mortar monstrosity that divided her city, she immigrated to the United States shortly after her twenty-first birthday. When her first name proves too difficult for American tongues, she begins using her middle name, Elke.

Retired from employment in the public sector, Elke now lives in San Diego with Burch, her husband of four decades. She holds a masters degree in Industrial-Organizational Psychology from San Diego State University and a Certificate in Fitness and Exercise Science from the University of California, San Diego. She teaches group exercise classes and enjoys reading, writing, dancing, hiking, tennis, gardening, cooking, and crafts. Elke is a contributing author to "The Real F.M. Urban," published in the Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences, and to two anthologies.