

The Society for New Zealand-German Student Exchange (Inc.)

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Dear Friends and Members of the Society

Welcome to the second newsletter of 2004. It has been such a busy year so far, and the time just seems to be flying by. We have had a number of new members join the society recently, so we would like to extend a warm welcome to you all, and thank you for your generous support. You will remember the trip report of Karen van Halderen and Sarah Thompson in the last issue following their trip to Europe over Christmas 2003, and now the report of one of the other students, Emma Woodall, is included in this newsletter.

Three Students from Germany have been and gone!

On the 18th of June 2004, three exchange students from Germany arrived in New Zealand for their chance to experience three months of life in New Zealand. Each of the three students was a host sister or brother for our New Zealand students whom we sent up in November 2003, and all were really looking forward to catching up with their host sisters and brothers again. The students were:

- Juliane Joneleit who stayed with van Halderen family in Dunedin
- Anika Regett who stayed with the Woodall family in Timaru.
- Birthe-Elisabeth Houdelet who stayed with the Thompson family in Auckland.

Our very special thanks to the van Halderen, Woodall and Thompson families who hosted the two students during their stay in New Zealand. The three students left our shores for Germany on the 31st of August 2004.



Anika, Birthe-Elisabeth, Juliane and Sarah Thompson at Auckland Airport

2004 Subscriptions

A very big thanks you to all those members who have paid their subscriptions for 2004. The society relies heavily on the membership fees and donations from you to fund the exchange students from Germany to New Zealand and vice versa. Please remember that any money you pay in fees goes directly to the students, as all administration and fees are covered by the volunteer work of the members of the society.

There are many of you who have still not paid their subscriptions for 2004, and as a society we incur costs i.e. newsletters and postage to retain you as members. If you receive a subscription notice included with this newsletter, it means that your subscriptions have not been paid for 2004 according to our records. Please pay as soon as possible, so that we can continue our good work. Thanks for your generous assistance.

If you wish to be removed from our mailing list, please let us know.

Student Interviews Finals

We would like to inform you about the procedure for student interviews, which have been introduced 2 years ago to improve the selection of candidates who we send to Germany in our NZ summer. Werner Nowitzki, the National Advisor in German for The Association of Colleges of Education in New Zealand carries out the interviews on behalf of our society.

The previous interview process, which was based around the six University towns, has been expanded to include Tauranga, Rotorua, Napier, New Plymouth, Wanganui, Palmerston North, Nelson, Christchurch, Wellington, Invercargill, Dunedin, Oamaru, Timaru, Ashburton, Whangarei, Auckland and Hamilton.

After visiting all of these towns, 10 candidates are selected to be flown to Wellington in September for the national final interviews. The cost of these flights etc is kindly donated by the Association of Colleges of Education in New Zealand.

We have also taken the opportunity to merge our selection procedure with that of the "Padagogischer Austauschdienst" who will also offer 2 scholarships to Germany, but for a shorter time of 4 weeks visit. This means there will be 4-5 scholarships on offer each year.

The final interviews will take place on September 13th 2004 with 10 students trying to win a scholarship. This is a picture of all the finalists.

Each of the students are interviewed in German by a panel made up of Judith Geare from the Goethe Institute, Frank Bernhardt from the German Embassy, Werner Nowitzki from ACE NZ and Grant Smith from NZGSE. The interview consisted of discussions regarding them, their families, their interests and hobbies. They are then given specific situations that might happen in Germany and asked to explain what they would do. In addition they are also quizzed on their knowledge about New Zealand and also Germany.

The three students will be departing in late November 2004 and returning early in February 2005. Thanks to Helen and Michael Wiedemann, Lufthansa, and a.hardrodt and co for their sponsorship this year and ongoing support, but we are still looking for another sponsor. If there are any companies or individuals that would like to offer a scholarship or part scholarship we would be eternally grateful.



Emma Woodall – Trip to Germany Report

On the 26th of November 2003 I departed from Timaru airport, the first of many flight's on my way to Germany. After two months of excitement and preparation, it was hard to believe that the day had actually arrived. I had only ever flown to Australia, a short trip in comparison to this mighty flight, but that in itself was an experience to remember. The flight to Singapore was definitely a highlight- getting to know Karen and Sarah, and together watching the wide variety of movies provided on our own T.V. sets.

In Singapore we then met up with the other scholarship recipients from Australia- all 20 something of them. They all seemed as excited and nervous as we were, and it was great to put a face to those we had talked to on the 'stipis' website. On our way to Frankfurt we were separated through seat allocation from the Australian stipis, which in hindsight was all right as it allowed us to get a few hours much needed sleep.

After a delay in Frankfurt due to a missing boarding pass I finally disembarked in Hamburg where I was greeted by my host family the Regett's. After meeting the family we hopped in the car to travel home to Luebeck. I had to familiarise myself to the surroundings - for a start the steering wheel was on the left hand side and we drove on the opposite side of the road. All of the houses appeared very similar with pointed triangle roofs, red in color and the same size. Quite spectacular, with the gray backdrop of the cloudy skies.



My first two weeks, despite being jetlagged, were full of new and exciting things. Biking to the supermarket- only two minutes away, going to a Christmas festival at my host sister, Ani's School and experiencing the Christmas celebrations throughout Luebeck. In the midst of these festivities came the event that I enjoyed the most, the Weinachtsmacht. This I visited every day as I loved the atmosphere, the music and of course the stalls. At this venue I also got to taste the traditional German delicacies that I had heard so much about – German sausages, of every shape and flavour. I love them all. I could write a book about my adventures but I will try to condense this by using a format with some headings.

FOOD

This was definitely something I loved in Germany. First of all, my host mum Annette was a fantastic cook, so it was always great to come home from school to a delicious home-cooked meal. I especially enjoyed the variety of sauces in which the meat was prepared that accompanied each meal. I loved the meals so much I made my host mum write out many of the recipes for me to take home.

Chocolate! I think I ate more chocolate in Germany than I have ever eaten in my life. On the morning of the 6th December, Saint Nicholas, I was inundated with chocolate which lasted me until the end of my trip. In fact I had to give a lot away, as it would not fit in my suitcase.

I would definitely recommend all the food and tried absolutely everything, which I was offered. The only problem was that I brought home the evidence- an extra six kilograms placed strategically on my body!!

SCHOOL

My school was about twenty minutes away by bus, from my home in Gross Gronau, in Luebeck. This meant an early start, around six each morning. We would quickly get dressed, sit down to a buffet breakfast all together, before rushing out the door to catch the bus –which we always had to run to. My host sister and I were always running late and only ever arrived at the bus station as the bus was ready to leave.

When we arrived at school the other students always warmly greeted us. This surprised me as on my first day I had people I had never met or talked to before, hugging and kissing me- of both sexes. I really enjoyed the good relationship between the boys and girls in my class and also socially- it is very different to home where the sexes tend to stay in their groups unless they are dating.

I found school tiring at the beginning. The days were very long and I didn't understand much of the lessons; however as time passed my German comprehension and vocabulary improved and I adjusted more to the timing and procedure of the German school system. It also made school more exciting as each day I was introduced to new people and I developed many great friendships. Towards the end of my stay I helped with the junior musical production which I thoroughly enjoyed.

INDEPENDENT TRAVEL AND PADDEBORN

Just after New Year, Ani and I left for our first stipis camp in Paderborn. We traveled for 5-6 hours by train to reach our destination. There, 91 past and present Gassies greeted us and together we stayed in a youth hostel –our home for the week. This week was really action packed. We were taken on a guided tour of the city and it was great to learn all about the history of the old buildings and Paderborn. Afterwards the leaders organised a town rally, where we were all put into small groups and given tasks to complete in town. One of my tasks consisted of me trying to get a stranger to write their phone number on my head without talking to them. It was so funny and rather embarrassing, but somehow I managed to do it.



Each morning I was woken up early for breakfast, but one morning I woke to something special- SNOW. This was the first snowfall that I had seen since arriving in Germany and definitely made the day more exciting. We were taken to a computer museum- 'the largest in the world', which involved a half-hour walk to get there. No one seemed to mind as for many of us, especially those from Australia, it was their first snow experience. We had snow wars between the different countries, which everyone enjoyed thoroughly.

On our last day the stipis all farewelled their host siblings and we headed off in our different groups to explore Germany on our independent travel.

There were three in our group, including me and we headed to Stuttgart. Here we stayed with a lovely couple who welcomed us warmly and looked after us really well. Our two days there were full of exploring, shopping and also a definite highlight, being taken to the 'Fernsehturm', a building similar to the Sky Tower in Auckland. Much to our disappointment it was cloudy when we reached the top, so that we didn't exactly get a "perfect" view, however, once in a while the clouds would break and we could see the city.



From here we headed on to Munich, where we had organized a comfortable youth hostel to stay in. We settled in and then went exploring the Marienplatz (market place) with its famous landmarks. The first thing I saw on entering the square was the Rathaus. I was so excited to be there as we had spent weeks learning about Munich at school in New Zealand. The buildings and atmosphere were far more beautiful and spectacular than I had seen or read about in any book. Two of our days in Munich were spent there, visiting all of the landmarks including the Residenz Museum, which was full of beautiful treasures from the former Royal family. Naturally, souvenir shopping was high on the agenda, as I wanted to bring back remembrances from all these places.

A day was spent at Dachau, a haunting day which I will never forget but I am pleased I did. I learnt a lot by stepping back into the history of the camp and it also made me think more about what had taken place there, changing from just reading about the events of the war to feeling the reality.

Before our Munich experience ended, we had been joined, purely by chance, by about fifteen other Gassies, which made the last days really entertaining. We explored both the day and nightlife together.

Independent travel has changed me as a person. I would never have thought that I would be able to plan and organise all my travel independently in a foreign country and I would now not be scared to travel overseas again. In fact I am already planning my return to Germany in February next year.





MY CONCLUSION.

This trip was made possible by this wonderful organisation and I am deeply grateful to my sponsors **Michael and Helen Wiedemann** for giving me this opportunity and changing my life for the better.

The most important thing, which I have saved till last is my fantastic, loving host family who accepted me and embraced me as a true member of the Regett household. Where do I start??? From the beginning, we were a unit. Homesickness was not an issue because they were so good to me and were “my family”. To write all the good things would take another twenty pages and I can only thank them and their extended family, for making this opportunity so wonderful. They showed me the day to day living in Germany and made each experience fun (even grocery shopping). I am looking forward to Ani, my little sister and good friend, coming to New Zealand so that we as a family can reciprocate the welcome.

Thank you Grant Smith for all your time and effort in making this happen and all the people who contribute to this worthwhile cause. I will cherish my memories forever.

Emma Woodall

SUMMARY

Isn't it great to read of the wonderful experiences of our exchange students? These are experiences that will shape them for their future lives, and you have all contributed to making this happen.

So don't forget to send in your subscriptions to enable us to fund our students this year.

Until next time.

Grant Smith
PRESIDENT