

2005 Newsletter



The Society for Australian- German Student Exchange

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Happy New Year to all our members, sponsors, corporate supporters, scholarship winners and their families.

The 2004/05 Stipis are having an exciting time in Germany. The group has just finished the traditional '**Wintercamp**' – a week-long get-together of new and old scholarship winners. Group Leader Jason Bond reports:



One of the highlights of the Australian Stipis time in Germany is always the GASS Wintercamp. This year the camp was held in the Sachsen-Anhalt town of Lutherstadt Wittenberg, from January 3-7. On Monday 97 Gassies, Stipis and hosties converged on the castle youth hostel and spent the first night catching up with old friends and meeting new people. For the Stipis it was a much enjoyed opportunity to speak about all of their experiences in English.

The following days were spent taking in the sites of Wittenberg. We visited the birthplace of Luther's reformed church, Luther's house and museum, and the colourfully decorated Hundertwassergymnasium. On Thursday we visited the Bürgermeister and learnt about the history of the town and its current political and economical situation. The Bürgermeister was also entertained and enthralled by presentations from a few Stipis.

The evenings were spent in the majestic castle youth hostel, indulging in a mixture of German and Australian culture. Highlights included Australian photo sessions, theatre sports and dancing competitions.

As Friday approached, the Gassies were sad to be going home, many of them not to see each other until the next camp. The stipis however were all excited to be heading off on their independant travel. A lot of time on the camp was spent organising this, and over the following five days they will have travelled to all corners of Germany. After their free travel they head back to their host families for just a few short weeks before the final week camp in Berlin.

I would personally like to thank Gass President Andreas Lippert and camp organisers Lukas and Ali for putting on such a fantastic camp. I look forward to seeing the current hosties in Australia in winter of this year!

The Goethe Institut has confirmed Thursday April 7, 2005 as the date for the Welcome Home function, could you please mark your diaries accordingly. Also, the time would be 18:00 arrival for 18:30 start.

Dr Guenter Gruber, the new German Consul-General in Sydney has invited the NSW scholarship winners to a pool party at his residence, in February. Dr Gruber says he strongly supports SAGSE and wants to hear first-hand what the NSW Stipis have to say about their stay in Germany. Before his appointment to his new post, Dr Gruber was head of Division in the Foreign Office in Berlin and has spent several years working in New York. He is married with 3 children and his leisure interests include music, golf and tennis.

Graham Faraday, Head Teacher Secondary Studies/Languages, Merewether High School, has sent this letter of recognition to NSW & ACT SAGSE President Andreas Dammann. Merewether HS student **Kate Leahy** is one of the 2004/05 scholarship winners.

“Thank you for your invitation to the SAGSE Annual Ball that unfortunately I had not been able to attend due to family problems and tyranny of distance. However, I did want to thank your organization for the excellent contribution it makes in promoting the teaching and learning of German. I cannot tell you adequately how such a wonderful opportunity assists young students and I hope that you will remain in a position to continue sponsoring the scholarships in the future.”

Kate Leahy is in the picture below, on the right. Together with three other Stipis at a reception by the Mayor of the Ruhr Valley town of Dinslaken.

Neue Rhein Zeitung, 23.12.04

Sauerbraten und Schnee

AUSTAUSCH / Vier junge Australier leben derzeit bei ihren deutschen Gastfamilien und finden es prima hier. Vor allem das viele Essen hat es ihnen angetan und die Hoffnung auf mehr weiße Pracht.

DINSLAKEN. Seit Ende November sind die australischen Austauschschüler Andrew Teese, Claire Hunting, Kaitlin McGinness und Kate Leahy bereits in Dinslaken. Hier gehen sie zusammen mit ihren Gastgeschwistern zur Schule, verbringen gemeinsam mit ihnen ihre Freizeit und lernen so das Leben auf der anderen Seite des Erdteils kennen. Und es gefällt ihnen recht gut hier in der kleinen Stadt. „Bei uns ist alles viel größer“, erzählen sie. Klar, die vier kommen ja aus Perth, Sydney und Melbourne. Die deutsche Sprache haben sie bereits an ihren heimatischen Schulen gelernt. „In den Privatschulen in Perth wird es angeboten“, so Kaitlin. Doch auch in anderen Schulen haben die Kinder die Auswahl zwischen mehreren Fremdsprachen.

30 Grad ist es zur Zeit in Australien, Weihnachten feiert man dort meist am Strand und vor allem erst am 25. Und der Nikolaus? „Der war für uns ein Erlebnis, den kennen wir nicht“, lachen die Schüler. „Und heute Mittag, der Schnee.“



Bürgermeisterin Sabine Weiss begrüßte die Gäste aus Australien: Kaitlin McGinness, Andrew Teese, Claire Hunting und Kate Leahy. Mit dabei Christopher Hügen als Organisator des Schüleraustausches. „Schade“ und „ups“ sind übrigens die Lieblingswörter der Australier. (Foto: E. Behrendt)

What happened to all the former Stipis...where did they go?

Since the start of the student exchange, more than 30 years ago, hundreds of NSW scholarship winners have visited Germany. Some have stayed in touch with their host families, some have used the German experience in their later careers, some have become members of SAGSE - but many have just drifted out of sight. We would like to reconnect with the 'Old Stipis' and benefit from their experience for our work with a younger generation of scholarship winners. Please get in touch again!

National President, Detlef Kramer, received this surprise email from Robert Shaw:
“It is almost 8 years since I returned from Germany with my cricket bat and vegemite sandwiches. Since then I have made it back to Germany in 2002 with the DAAD and now professionally with KPMG. It seems that I cannot get this German monkey off my back! My GASS experience will go full circle when I return to Luebeck to have Christmas with my host family. Working in Germany is certainly different to Oz - Kneipe der Woche is an institution back home but is yet to take off here. Had some great experiences - it is not just working in Germany but working in Europe - Athens last week, Berlin the week before! I do have a picture - me at the Oktoberfest ”

