



"Sister City Friends" is the member newsletter for Friends of Friedrichshafen, official partner of the city of Peoria's Sister City Commission

Partnerstadtfreunde



Friedrichshafen mayor Buchelmeier (center) jokes with our students at city hall. He graciously gave much of his time to our group, indicative of the tremendous hospitality anyone who visits Friedrichshafen will always receive! See more photos on page 2.

"I'm very glad I did the FOF exchange"

- Dominik Buck, an Oberteuringen native currently attending Indiana University. More details on page 3.



Two students mug for a photo at Schloss Nymphenburg during the youth exchange's day-trip to Munich. The Bavarian capital is always a hit with the students.

Many friends made in Friedrichshafen!

When this summer's youth exchange contingent landed in Germany, the faces of the students belied their nervousness. Their anxiety was fueled by thoughts such as, "What will my host brother or sister be like?," "Will we get along?," and "I hope they speak good English because I don't speak ANY German!"

Compare those images to the faces of these same students at the farewell party three weeks later. Broad smiles and lots of laughter! Strangers three weeks ago are now planning to see each other every year for the rest of their lives! A sing-along ... sometimes in English, sometimes in German ... can be heard from time to time. My how things change!

That's the Friends of Friedrichshafen Youth Exchange in a nutshell. A "foreign" experience that puts butterflies in the stomach of some, then nearly always turns into a memorable, uplifting, even life-changing event. The guests wish they lived in the land just visited. Their hosts envy their guests' return to a place they long to experience (or return to).

And everyone reading this should understand that we again received great hospitality from our host families and

the Peoria Club. Not only was each student adopted into a real family, but the depth of the caring, engagement and connection of our hosts with and for our group was truly palpable.

And in the end, when our stay was extended by five days due to a Lufthansa strike, many of our host families and all of the Peoria Club went above and beyond the call of duty to ensure that we were still well cared for. All of us truly made ... or deepened our relationships with our ... friends in Friedrichshafen!

2009 Youth Exchange Applications Now Online

Member families can now apply to host a teen from Friedrichshafen this summer. If you have a teen, this is a perfect opportunity to bring another culture into your home in the friendliest way possible! Your application will receive priority treatment if received by the end of January.

Visit our website, click on the Youth Exchange section and look for the "fill out your application" link on left. No deposit is required, as there is no fee for hosting students.

A photographic recap of the 2008 Friends of Friedrichshafen Youth Exchange



Clockwise from top: Departing from Peoria; watching the Seehasenfest parade; Ulm Muenster, the tallest church in the world; finding clues on a scavenger hunt; at the Peoria Club summer party; canoeing the Schussen; preparing and serving food at Friedrichshafen's youth exchange exhibit; and (center) zip lines at the climbing park. For more, look under Youth Exchange on our website.





Dominik Buck (center), who was in Peoria during the 2003 youth exchange and visited again during Thanksgiving, met Denny and Pat Schwartzenraub, his former host family, completely by chance during recent Yule Like Peoria festivities.

FOF experience brings German students to study in America

In the closing days of every youth exchange, the visitors always wish they could live in their host country. This year, we know of two German students who are doing just that, by studying abroad in the U.S.

Christiane Knoblauch of Hagnau, aged 18, took part in the 2007 and 2008 exchanges and is currently attending U.S. high school in Colorado. Dominik Buck of Obertueringen, aged 22, took part in the 2003 and 2004 exchanges and is currently taking graduate level courses in chemistry and teaching lab classes at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana.

While visiting Peoria during the Thanksgiving break from IU, Buck credited his FOF experience with helping him choose the U.S. for his study abroad

program. "The biggest fear I had before the youth exchange was that I would not get along with the people here. But I learned that Americans are very friendly, so I knew when I returned I'd make friends and not just be studying alone," he said .

American openness is something he enjoys every day, even in unlikely places. "When I have to have photocopies made at IU, I enjoy visiting with the lady in the basement print office. We talk about many things. For instance, we shared about our Thanksgiving plans. This kind of conversation I am not likely to have with a stranger back home."

Being familiar with the US helped him choose this country when seeking education in an English-speaking country. The improved language skills he hopes to obtain will greatly help his future aspirations, wherever they may take him.

Still, his time here has presented challenges. Distance is one example. While he recalled that everyday needs such as groceries are not always right next door in the U.S., the actual effort required to meet this need ... without a car ... was a surprise.

"It takes me about 20 minutes to get to the closest store on my bike. And, of course, there are not as many bike paths here" said Buck. "And the people also look at me funny when I say I need no bags, but ask them to pack my groceries in my backpack instead!"

The other major difference has been in how the education systems work. In Germany, university students study one subject. Most general education classes are covered during the German equivalent of high school. This difference means some U.S. college students "take classes that are required to graduate, but they are not really interested in what the class is teaching them. They just want to get it done," said Buck.

The greatest benefit he expects to get from his U.S. studies is an expanded world view. "IU has students from all over the world. So I learn many different points of view ... from China, from India, from many places. It's been wonderful and I'm very glad I did the FOF exchange because it brought me here."



Help us send holiday greetings to Germany

If you're a member, your copy of this newsletter included a special invitation by FOF President Karen Robb to live up to our club's name.

Each FOF member is being sent the name and address of a member of our sister group, the Peoria Club. You're being asked to be a real

friend of Friedrichshafen by sending that Peoria Club member holiday greetings as a surprise!

Even if you already have friends in our sister city, please make an effort to include the name you've been sent. We're even including postage, so all you need to supply is the greeting card and your signature!

We hope you'll help us send holiday greeting to our friends in Friedrichshafen!

Friends of Friedrichshafen

Contact Information

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**Promoting friendship
and understanding
between Peoria and
Friedrichshafen**

January 28: Come to the annual meeting

All members (and interested guests) are invited to attend the Friends of Friedrichshafen annual meeting.

Peoria Avanti's Restaurant

8517 N. Knoxville Avenue

6:30 p.m. Dinner

7:15 p.m. Meeting

After a meal (all will order from the menu at your own expense), we'll hold a brief election of officers and committee chairs. Then we'll review the 2008 youth exchange and discuss the next exchange.

If you are asked by a fellow FOF member to become more involved, please consider it. We can use your help!

German movie available to FOF members

Last April, FOF partnered with the Apollo Theater to arrange special pricing for our members to see the movie, *Das Leben der Anderen* (The Lives of Others). We hope those who were able to take advantage of this opportunity enjoyed the show!

FOF has now obtained a few DVD copies of this movie and will loan them free to current members. It won an Oscar for best foreign language film in 2007. The dialogue is in German, but it's subtitled in English.

Here's a synopsis: The thriller/drama involves the monitoring of the cultural scene of East Berlin by agents of the Stasi, the GDR's secret police. Set in 1984, the agent conducting surveillance on a writer and his lover, finds himself becoming increasingly absorbed by their lives.

The organizers of the Berlin Film Festival refused to accept it as an official entry in 2006. The film succeeded in Germany despite a widespread contemporary reluctance in the country,



particularly in its films, to confront the totalitarian excesses of the East German state.

If you are interested in borrowing this movie for free, contact VP Programs, Kathy Dougherty at 693-1374 or at k4dordy@comcast.net.

Friedrichshafen Culture Kits: Ready to teach about our sister city, but looking for a home

Those of us who have been fortunate enough to visit our sister city, or host residents from that region, know it to be a beautiful place full of warm, inviting people. But most Peoria area residents only hear this story occasionally — at the Peoria Oktoberfest or during sister city events.

So to help spread the good word about Friedrichshafen, FOF decided to bring this information to Peoria classrooms!

Over the past several months, a team of dedicated members have tapped a wide variety of information sources to create Friedrichshafen Culture Kits. These self-contained bundles are bursting with knowledge and will be made available to area

teachers willing to incorporate this information into their curriculum.

Each Culture Kit contains:

- A map of the Bodensee area
- Tourism books/magazines
- Friedrichshafen's official DVD
- The History Channel's Modern Marvels: Airships on DVD
- A brief teacher's resource guide
- German recipes

Do you know of a Peoria-area teacher who might be interested in reviewing a Friedrichshafen Culture Kit? Please contact FOF President Karen Robb at 691-5754.