

AATG San Diego Chapter – Southern California

The year 2004 has been a year of renewal for the AATG San Diego Chapter. The March 13th Spring Meeting literally ‘pulled together’ an energetic and electrifying group of 30 German teachers to restart and renew our combined mission of teaching German with the mantra of ‘cooperation, coordination, commitment and planning together’. We elected an almost completely new board, with exciting new volunteers for some of the positions, listened to, compared and discussed the German programs represented, formed level specific groups for more getting-to-know-each-other time, discussions and problem solving and collected data for the development of a ‘resource guide’ for German in San Diego County, as well as soliciting ideas and wish-lists for future planning.

Hermann-Josef Wagner, a Fulbright Exchange teacher from Germany in our midst, gave an insightful report about his time at an American high school, and Mary Dukas-Waterman, long-time testing chair of our chapter, reported in a whirlwind about the many adventures and experiences she encountered in Germany on a trip given to her by the AATG as a reward for fulfilling the testing chair job. After a typical German Mittagessen of Rotkohl, Schnitzel, Bratwurst, Nudeln, Kartoffelsalat und grünem Salat, the large majority of the participants chose to stay way beyond the announced time, to participate in a well-worth-staying-for Sharathon, which had participants not only leaving with stacks of valuable books, posters and games, donated by the Goethe Institut and a generous retired teacher, but a stash of new ideas and tricks ‘to get them to learn German and have fun at the same time’. Everyone went home with new German wind beneath their wings!

With the help of AATG headquarters, Angela Shaw, treasurer and membership chair, has also been able to establish a growing German database of teachers in the area and our own listserv with the available emails, which has made it a lot easier to stay in touch with the members, pass on information and inquiries that find their way into our inbox - and a website for the chapter is under construction.

Astrid Ronke, who is now our president, has been participating in the Netzwerk training sessions sponsored by the Goethe Institut, and she presented the developed material with her partner Liz Kaulard (Vice-president L.A. Chapter) at this year’s ACTFL conference and our second meeting on September 25, at Grossmont College. This meeting saw another strong participation of local German teachers, with a humorous and counter balancing report from Judy Stout, upon returning from her Fulbright exchange year in a German Gymnasium in Michelstadt, in the Black Forest. Doris Demmel from the Goethe Institut in San Francisco, led the group in formulating ideas for contributions to the Year of Languages. We learned from Liz Kaulard, Ms Soccer, about the merits of Fußballbrücke, stretched the delights of a voluminous German breakfast over the whole morning and way into lunch, closing out again with delightful and very helpful ideas from another Sharathon session, taking home again books and goodies from the Goethe Institut and other German-friendly organizations.

While the board members got together several more times to flesh out ideas for Year of the Languages projects, a larger group met Dec. 5, after the annual conference of the Foreign Language Council of San Diego to further discuss the projects and plan activities for the upcoming year. We have been very lucky, after our newly crowned testing chair surprisingly moved out of the area, that Beatrice Theiß, transplant from Munich, Germany, and teaching for a local private high school, has joined the board as our new testing chair with plans to generate new interest in that area.

We congratulate our president, Astrid Ronke, who was presented, at the FLCSD conference, with the 2004 Outstanding Service Award based on a long list of accomplishments that most people were unaware of and duly impressed about.

Our new board consists of: Astrid Ronke, president aronke@csusm.edu, Gabi Zois, Vice-president gabizois@hotmail.com, Karin Epperly, Secretary braukuiche@aol.com, Angela Shaw, Treasurer and Membership chair angela.shaw@gcccd.net, Michael Hughes, University representative mhughes@csusm.edu, Beatrice Theiß, Testing Chair, beatricetheiss@yahoo.co.uk

Submitted by: Angela Shaw, Treasurer and Membership Chair. Email: angela.shaw@gcccd.net or aatgsd@yahoo.com