



# Umlaut

Newsletter of the Southwest Center for German Studies • Texas Tech University • Lubbock, Texas

Umlaut

Southwest Center for German Studies

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## Tech-German Exchange Opportunities

### Sommerschule in Wust, Germany

After the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989, three women in Wolfenbüttel, Germany, evolved the idea of a summer school for English to be offered in the tiny farming village deep in the former East German zone. East Germans had been required to study Russian as a second language for almost 40 years and with the collapse of Russian influence, these citizens of the *neue Bundesländer* have a positive fascination with Americans and a strong desire to learn English.

#### The Setting

Dr. Maria von Katte was thinking of the charming village of Wust, located on the scenic route the German state of Saxony-Anhalt now proudly calls the "Romanesque Road." The two American friends who visited Wust with her were Dr. Kay Goodmann and Dr. Harriett Watts, both graduates of the Ph.D. program in German at the University of Texas, Austin. The von Katte estate house in Wust was not destroyed by the East German government because it had been turned into an elementary school immediately following the war. In previous summers this once grand building stood empty. In addition, there were many empty bedrooms in the spacious, red brick farmhouses lining the two streets in Wust. Thus, in the summer of 1991 the doors of the *Sommerschule Wust* opened.

1240 - 1990



750 Jahre Wust

AG Philatelie im KB der DDR

Joining her two former classmates from UT-Austin, Dr. McClain volunteered to oversee parts of the curriculum, organize the TOEFL testing (Teaching of English as a Foreign Language), teach some advanced classes and organize chamber music events.

An overwhelming and unexpected 400 students showed up that first summer. They were all eagerly awaiting their first contact with the organizers from England and Texas, and with the twenty-three young teaching assistants that had been recruited from a wide range of schools including Oberlin, Oxford, Cambridge, U. of Minnesota, U. of Michigan, Harvard, Tufts, Bristol, U. of Virginia, Reed College, and U. of Missouri.

#### The Tech Connection

The very next year, students from Texas Tech University joined the ranks of these young teachers. Tina Letkemann and Shellie Scott went in 1992, Lisa Allen and Paul Byrne in 1993, Leo Gruber and Jennifer Martin (plus Kathy Moore, Houston, and Ingeborg Volpi, Las Cruces, NM, formerly with Texas Tech) in 1994, and Stefanie Borst, Dr. Lari Young, Susan Grisanti and Phillip Owen went in 1995.

#### Summer Study Abroad

The Texas Tech connection was strengthened in 1993 when the German Summer Study Abroad program from Tech was housed in Wust preceding the *Sommerschule*. In May of that year, 18 Tech students were greeted at the nearby train station in Genthin by host families, who spoke virtually no English, but who gently encouraged their American charges to use only German



Wust 1995 program participants pictured here at Burg Falkenstein are (l-r, back row): Kenton Grupe, Meredith McClain, Grant Wimmer, and Kameron Romines; (middle row) Kelly Hare, Sharon Fuller, Christy Reid, Kristal Swearengen, Dee Ann Blackburn, and Melina Wilkins; (front row) Erica Erdman, Emily Blosser, Lara Aubin, Lynette Kilgore, Alyson Franklin, and Raven Simpson.

during the next five weeks. The new program was given such high marks by host families and Tech students alike that the second group was organized for May of 1995.

Expansion of this unique program, housed in Wust and utilizing the beautiful towns and villages along the "Romanesque Road" for study tours, is planned through advertisement in the fall to other German programs within Texas to send their students with us.

#### The Musical Connection

As a personal thank you to Dr. von Katte and to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the *Sommerschule Wust*, Dr. McClain planned a two week musical tour along the *Straße der Romanik* for Lubbock classical guitarist, Ms. Susan Grisanti. After an orientation in Berlin, the tour progressed by rental car to Wust, where she was housed with the Director of the Wust school, Frau Reuman. Ms. Grisanti taught a guitar workshop at the *Sommerschule* during her first week. This culminated in a concert of her students in the Wust chapel. Other venues for her solo concerts during the second week were arranged in the romanesque cathedrals of Jerichow and

[See *Sommerschule*, p. 6]



# Exchange Opportunities (Continued)

**Sommerschule** (from p. 5)  
Havelberg, the ancient town hall in Tangermünde, the chapel of Bad Suderode, and the castle, Burg Falkenstein. A final performance at the Basthorst Palace was at the invitation of the American Ambassador to Germany as part of a private Fourth of July celebration honoring the Governor and other officials of the state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern.



Ms. Susan Grisanti performing in the gothic town hall in Tangermünde

May Texans from Tech long continue to explore German culture and discover the beauty along the "Romanesque Road" in Saxony-Anhalt and share their own gifts along the route!

## Texas Tech Plus

*Help spread the word!*

Qualified students from other colleges and universities are invited to participate in the various exchange opportunities available at TTU. In-state tuition makes this particularly interesting for Texas residents.

For details and applications call Dr. Ingrid Fry at (806) 742-3207, FAX (806) 742-3306. Messages may be left with the department secretary. Or write to Dr. Fry at the address on page 12.

## FACHHOCHSCHULE WILHELMSHAVEN and TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

On February 20, 1995, the two above institutions signed the official agreement for an exchange program. Two German professors, Dr. Germer and Dr. Schmidt, were in Lubbock for the occasion. This document is a salute to almost 10 years of work which have resulted in ongoing multilevel academic and professional contacts and much mutual benefit to faculty and students on both sides.

As early as 1985, the West German state of Lower Saxony targeted Texas as a potential "sister state" and sent an education official, Mr. Peter Hoffmann, to traverse the lone star terrain in search of exchange program possibilities. A 1987 *Umlaut* article, condensed here for historical review, documented the origins of the exchange programs between Texas Tech and Lower Saxony.

*The Southwest Center for German Studies has been designated by Dr. Donald Haragan, Vice President for Academic Affairs, as the coordinating agency for exchange programs with Lower Saxony at the high school, college and university levels.*

*Two completed projects have involved the College of Business and the College of Engineering. A third project has been initiated for next spring (1988) with students from the University of Oldenburg.*



*Eleven German students visited Lubbock High School in 1986, and ten more went to Slaton in 1987. The first exchange cycle will be completed when 14 TTU electrical engineering students go to Germany in May (1988).*



In 1995 the Southwest Center for German Studies continues to be a part of the movement to deepen the meaning of the ongoing exchange between Tech students and faculty with their

German partner institution. Pictured here are (left) Dr. Kirsch, Rektor (Dean) of the German Fachhochschule, with his wife, and (right) Professors Heichelheim and Vines of the College of Engineering at TTU, as they enjoy the atmosphere in Blanco Canyon. Besides annually hosting the German and Tech participants, the Southwest Center helps identify students in the Tech German program who can benefit from the exchange opportunities in Wilhelmshaven. The students who went in the summer of 1994, with financial support from the German Study Abroad Scholarship, were: Will Cooper, Rebecca Diers, David Dolcater, Erica Erdman and Jennifer Martin.

**Warmest congratulations and thanks to the College of Engineering and the College of Business at Texas Tech** for strengthening this official avenue to strengthen the educational and professional careers of their students through the study of German language and culture. We expect to see an increase in the number of TTU business and engineering students in our German classes as we pledge ongoing support of this maturing international exchange program!