2009 Lawrence-Eutin High School Exchange

On the 20th exchange of the Eutin, Germany and Lawrence, Kansas there were a total of thirteen students from Lawrence High School and Lawrence Free State High School. The students spent five and a half weeks in Eutin living with their German exchange families. The first few weeks of which Thomas Lipp was with the group, and I, Elissa Schlumpf spent the remaining weeks with the American students.

The students had to attend monthly meetings in preparation for the trip. During these monthly meetings, the students were given an orientation about Eutin, proper behavior and various customs were discussed, as well as rules and policies for the group. Other topics include financial matters for the trip and discussions about exchange partners and families.

The Lawrence-Eutin 2009 exchange was organized by Friedemann Eisert, as well as Stuart Strecker. I arrived on Wednesday, June 10th, where we had a very warm welcome at the Eutin City Hall. This was followed by a boat ride for all participants involved on the Eutin Lake.

On Friday, June 12th, Thomas Lipp and I took the students on a 5-day trip to Berlin. We stayed at a Pension with easy access to the center of the city. During our stay we visited the Potsdamer Platz, Alexanderplatz, the Fernsehturm, the Brandenburger Tor, the East Side Gallery, Checkpoint Charlie Museum, the Museum Insel, and the Reichstag. Also, the Arkaden shopping mall, the KaDeWe shopping center, the Kaiser Wilhelm Gedächtnis Kirche, the Berliner Dom, as well as other sites. The students thoroughly enjoyed their Berlin trip from the various feedback we received. They certainly learned how to read subway and city maps for Berlin by the end of the trip, as well as experience a metropolitan Germany.

Upon our return to Eutin, Thomas left and I fully took over the exchange on the American side. The students began attending homeroom with me at the Voss High School, instead of their regular homeroom meetings at the Weber High School. A few days after our return from Berlin, I took the students on a day trip to Hamburg.

While in Hamburg, we visited the harbor and took a boot tour. The students had a wonderful view and good introduction to the city, beginning the day with the Hafenrundfahrt. We also visited the Rathaus, the Miniature World, the Universitätsviertel, and the Schanzenviertel, where we enjoyed an array of foods for lunch.

Frau Steingräber-Klinke accompanied us to Kiel and Laboe, right before the Kieler Wochenende took place. We took a boat ride over to Laboe and saw the Marine Ehrendenkmal and the U-Boot Museum. In the afternoon we toured the city of Kiel and were able to experience the outdoor festivities of the Kieler Weekend. We were also lucky enough to tour the government building of Schleswig-Holstein and have a personal tour from one of the politicians, Renate Poersch.
The following week of our stay in Eutin, the students visited the Eutin castle. We also enjoyed having a group breakfast and lunch together in the local restaurants. Additionally, we received a tour from the local Sparkasse, visiting one of the oldest buildings in the city of Eutin. The Sparkasse staff gave us a generous gift of free tickets to the local art exhibition in the Ostholstein Museum, the Friedensreich Hundertwasser architectural exhibition. The American students also continued with their studies at the Voss Schule, as some of their partners at the Weber Schule were attending school internships during the school day. Another highlight of the week was our visit to Schleswig-Holstein Police Headquarters. The students were informed on various aspects of police training, equipment, and duties in the state of Schleswig-Holstein. We were even able to participate in a small aspect of the police training! It was a terrific experience for the students, as they were even able to discuss the differences between the American police force.

In our last week of the Exchange program, the students and I traveled to Lübeck together for the day. They could therefore finalize all their shopping needs and desires before heading home at the end of the week. We also had the pleasure of watching 2 British plays put on at the Voss Schule with the rest of the student body. Our students sat in the front row and felt privileged that the British actors personally introduced themselves to them. On the following night the American students could bring their German partners to the local movie theater, where we all watched a popular film that was being played in Eutin.

The next day the Voss Schule had their annual Field Day event. The American students were invited to participate in the events, and some did successfully. The last 2 events of our stay in Eutin included a day trip to Hansa Park, an amusement park about 40 minutes from Eutin, and our goodbye party in Bosau. It was a potluck dinner mixed in with swimming, volleyball and some tears. With the exception of two students, who were extending their stay in Europe, the rest of us returned home on July 4th. We were welcomed by our families at the Kansas City airport many hours later.

Elissa Schlumpf