

XCHANGE

News and Information • West Chicago Sister Cities



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CHRISTMAS AND GERMANY

It seemed like an irresistible combination. When the opportunity presented itself, I jumped at the chance! I was lucky enough to join two other comrades of culture, Don Smith and Janet Goff, on an unofficial Sister City exchange aimed at uncovering the allure of the traditional German Christmas market.

We started our experience in our sister city of Taufkirchen with a viewing of their living advent calendar. The windows of the town castle represented the days until Christmas, and were filled with locals in beautiful costumes. The town square was also filled

with music—including Christmas carols sung in English in our honor.

Taufkirchen set the stage and warmed us up for the biggest fest of all. We headed to Nuremberg for their world famous Christkindlesmarkt. Started in 1628, this annual event runs from early December to Christmas Eve. Two million visitors descend upon this Bavarian jewel to enjoy booths of traditional crafts and food.

We marveled at the beautiful handiwork involved in the nut-crackers, ornaments and all forms of decorative delights. I had to

buy the heart-shaped gingerbread cookies (lebkuchen) which were complete with festive sayings and ribbons. To eat or display?—such a dilemma. We also enjoyed the “gebrannte mandeln”, known to American fair-goers as candied toasted almonds. And of course, no toe-numbing outdoor winter experience would be complete without steaming hot bratwurst and hot mulled wine (Glühwein).

We expected incredible sights, sounds and tastes from the legend of the Nuremberg Christkindlesmarkt, but were surprised to discover that the tradition thrives in the small towns as well. For example, Dorfen, the neighboring village to our sister city, had a wonderful festival of its own. It was complete with replicas of their downtown storefronts scaled down and lovingly painted.

Whether it draws two million or two hundred people, you can be sure that a Christmas fest is a magical experience. History and tradition never had a better ambassador than Germany. Make it a point to experience Christkindlesmarkt at least once in your lifetime. You'll be glad you did!!

*All the best wishes for 2009!
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Our 5th Annual ST. PATRICK'S DINNER

will be Saturday, March 14th.

We will serve corned beef & cabbage, boiled potatoes, carrots, bread, and dessert.

We will have a 50/50 raffle, limerick contest, and more!

Tickets will be available in February. Contact Melissa Birch at (630) 621-0128 for more information. More details will be posted on our website:

WestChicagoSisterCities.com as they are available.



Himola band is playing at “Advent in the castle” market

© Uwe Gsedl



Model of the new Taufkirchen city center with city hall, future extension of city hall, bank and catholic church.



The new office of Mayor Franz Hofstetter (It's clean because he was on vacation).



West Chicago Memorabilia in the entrance of Taufkirchen's city hall.

Impressions From The New City Hall In Taufkirchen

Photos: Uwe Gsedl



Window view from city hall.

Remember if you have any further articles you want to share let Sandy know.

Garden Club In Taufkirchen

By Don Smith

The West Chicago Garden Club had the great opportunity to go to our Sister City. On Tuesday morning, July 17, 2007, very early we arrived at Strauss International Airport in Munich. We were taken by bus, accompanied by Christoph Puschmann, to Taufkirchen. There we were met by host family members and taken to their homes for a short rest. At 9:30 am we were taken to the City Council meeting room in the Water Castle where we were served a delicious brunch. From our arrival to the day of our departure we

were treated to a tremendous array of great experiences including tours and visits to fabulous and unique gardens...

On Tuesday afternoon we traveled to gardens of local garden club members. In the evening we stayed with our host families.

On Wednesday we traveled to Freising where we had an English-language tour of the gardens of Weihenstephan, a gardening university. That evening we had dinner at the Weihenstephan Bierkeller.

On Thursday we met the Mayor, Franz Hofstetter, at the new City Hall, where he gave us a guided tour of the facilities. At 11:30 am we had lunch at the Wagnerwirt, paid for by our German Sister City friends. In the afternoon we traveled to Amerang, an outdoor museum of old farm houses and barns, some of them centuries old. The gardens there were in keeping with the age of the structure, i.e., old fashioned plants. We had a late afternoon lunch at a monastery beer garden at Au am Inn.

On Friday we traveled by bus to Munich for a tour of Nymphenburg Castle, which has beautiful formal French and English gardens. From there we were taken to downtown Munich to tour on our own. I toured the Deutsches Museum where I saw old sailing vessels and aircraft to include an F-104 Starfighter (an American fighter jet). In the evening I went with the Puschmann's to an open air concert in Dorfen. We were forced to leave early due to a thunderstorm, lightning, and heavy rain.

Saturday we spent with our host families. Edith and Johannes Puschmann took Jeff and Louise Handel and me on a wonderful sightseeing trip to a monastery that made its own bread and cheese. That was a wonderful taste delight!! We had a leisurely and completely enjoyable day. It was another plus in our Sister Cities experiences.

On Sunday we visited the open house in the new Taufkirchen bank building.

Did you know...

According to Thomas Cook (his book was one of our donations to the library) Oktober Fest is celebrated from the penultimate Sunday in September to the first Sunday in Oktober. Guess who is going to be there then.

Next Meeting...

Look who's coming to dinner at Pal Joey's. Frederika Howard has kindly consented to joining us for dinner at our February 5th meeting. She will give us a short talk on German art. ♦♦♦

Willow and Sculptur Park In Taufkirchen

Artist: Harry S. | Area: 9,568 square yards | 30 years to completion



At 11:00 am we walked to the park area of the Taufkirchen Water Castle where there was an all day music program. There we met some of the musicians who visited West Chicago with the Swing Orchestra several years ago. That evening was spent with the host families.

Monday was the departure date and we were taken by bus to Munich for the trip home.

My experiences in this week long trip were absolutely beautiful, as they always are. Gardening has proven to be another universal language of interaction and friendship with our Sister City members. Thanks to the Puschmann's, the Mayor, and all the people of our Sister City town for another successful Sister City adventure. ♦♦♦

We are busy...

Our West Chicago Sister Cities made many contributions to the community this year. In addition to our monthly meetings, we expanded our activities so that we were doing something almost every month. These activities included the following:

OCTOBER 2007

Attended Trinity Church's October Fest. Made the dessert. Showed our DVD, passed out brochures and newsletters.

DECEMBER 2007

Attended a Christmas celebration at Rudy and Anne's.

JANUARY 2008

Donated approximately \$300 worth of books about Germany and German DVD's with subtitles to the library.

MARCH 2008

Hosted St. Patrick's Day dinner and fund raiser.

Hosted two girls from Taufkirchen.

APRIL 2008

Attended Sister City Re-

gional Conference in Palatine, Illinois

MAY 2008

Manned a booth for Bloom-in' Fest.

JUNE 2008

Spoke about Sister Cities at the Peace event at the United Church of Christ.

JULY 2008

Made a Railroad Days Float. Won a prize.

AUGUST 2008

Hosted 5 Germans from Taufkirchen Garden Club.

OCTOBER 2008

Organized an Open House at the library and displayed Sister City mementos and artifacts in their case.

Attended Trinity Church October Fest. Prepared their dessert.

DECEMBER 2008

Hosted the Annual Christmas Party. Decorated a tree for Frosty Fest.

Showed four German movies to the public and printed 4 newsletters. ♦♦♦

New Officers

THIS NOVEMBER BROUGHT IN NEW OFFICERS. THEY ARE AS FOLLOWS:

PRESIDENT:	DON SMITH
VICE PRESIDENT:	SANDY BUCKLES
SECRETARY:	MELISSA BIRCH
TREASURER:	PHIL BACHELOR
HISTORIAN:	RUDY RUST
LIASON:	UWE GSEDL

THEY ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO AN EXCITING TWO YEARS. LET THEM KNOW HOW YOU CAN HELP.



At the corner of the new City Hall in Taufkirchen