SELECTED EVENTS - May to August 2006

Consul Opens Poster Show on Discovery of the Americas

August 25, 2006. Consul for Public Affairs Mark Wenig and his wife Kjärstin attended the opening of the poster show, “Seeds of Change,” held at the Creative Art Association in the city of Löbau, in upper Lusatia in eastern Saxony. Before some 75 guests, including a representative of the Landkreis Löbau-Zittau, Wenig briefly explained the Consulate’s function and commented on the exhibition’s telling of how the discovery of the American continent had both good and bad consequences for Europeans and native Americans.

Consul for Public Affairs Mark Wenig (right)

Consulate General Connects with American Kids at International Camp in Saxony-Anhalt

August 9, 2006. Consul General Mark Scheland and Public Affairs Assistant Beate Renker represented Ambassador Timken in rural Güntersberge at the closing ceremony of the 10th EuroCamp for Kids. Over 250 children from 20 countries, including an American delegation of 18, came together for 10 days to participate in creative activities, including dance, an international games evening, talks with members of the Lions Club and business representatives, visits to exhibits and trips to Magdeburg (including the State Parliament) and Wernigerode. Consul General Scheland joined diplomats from the Embassies of Israel, South Africa, Senegal, Russia, Kazakhstan, Hungary, and the Czech Republic as well as Saxony-Anhalt Chief of Protocol, Minister Rainer Robra, in conversations with the kids, aged 12-13, and with organizers. Mr. Scheland shared ideas on school exchange programs with the principal of Nativity School of Cincinnati, Ohio, which participated in EuroCamp for the third consecutive year. The school principal applauded what he learned about Mission Germany’s school outreach, support for Sister Cities, and other people-to-people programs addressing youth. The EuroCamp was repeatedly featured in the newspapers Mitteldeutsche Zeitung and Volksstimme Magdeburg during the first week of August.

Consul General Mark Scheland (center) and students both from the Nativity School and St. Ignatius School in Cincinnati, Ohio, with principal Robert Herring

Consul General Discusses with Jena Students

July 20, 2006. Consul General Mark Scheland was guest speaker in the July 20, semester-ending meeting of a seminar on “Neoconservatism” conducted in the political science department of Friedrich-Schiller University in Jena. Scheland focused his talk on how ideological inclinations are but one of several influences on a policy-maker or legislator at work in any democracy. He also drew contrasts between the German and U.S. political systems, and took questions from the students on a variety of issues, including the U.S.-German bilateral relationship, U.S. motivation for military intervention in Iraq in 2003, and the current crisis involving Israel, South Lebanon, Syria and Iran. The students and their professor expressed appreciation for Scheland’s appearance at the university and for his willingness to hold a frank discussion on, among other topics, what drives U.S. foreign policy.

Consul General Mark Scheland (left); Dr. Markus Lang, University of Jena
Consulate Leipzig’s Interns Visit Schools

July 17 - 19, 2006. American interns Scott Krause and Andrew Martinez conducted several school outreach programs, in Leipzig (7/17), Goerlitz (7/18) and Delitzsch (7/19). In Leipzig, the program was held at the Thomas Gymnasium and focused on the intern’s experiences in California. The Goerlitz program, which took place at the Europa-Library, an “America@your library” partner, included two groups of secondary school students from Nisky, and was held in cooperation with an intern from Ireland to present views of society and culture from Ireland and the United States. In Delitzsch, the American intern provided students from grade 9 to 11 a dialogue with a “typical American” on questions about U.S. foreign and domestic policies. These programs, which reached about 60 students, informed audiences about the United States, as well as giving them sources for further study. The students also received copies of the CD-ROM "About the USA" and the Goerlitz Europa-Library appreciated the donation of sports books and DVDs.

Consul General Builds Ties to Wolfen and Bitterfeld

July 18, 2006. Consul General Mark Scheland devoted most of the day to public diplomacy and official calls in the Saxony-Anhalt cities of Bitterfeld and Wolfen. At a campus of the Wolfen city Gymnasium, the Consul General heard from students about the impact of their high school exchanges in Texas and at Wolfen’s partner high school in Clemson, SC. Wolfen’s Lord Mayor and three members of the state parliament took advantage of the Consul General’s presence at the school and participated in a roundtable discussion with the students and Mark Scheland, comparing our two countries’ educational systems, and touching on other topics. After a visit to the American-subsidiary chemical company Tricat, the Consul General gave a stand-up interview to a camera team from the local access TV station, hosted several local officials at lunch, and called on Bitterfeld’s mayor.

Regional Development: Exchange of Experiences Between Appalachia and Leipzig County

July 17, 2006. Dr. Gregory Bischak, senior economist for regional planning and research at the U.S. Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), visited Borna and several sites south of the city of Leipzig. County Executive Petra Köpping and the Economic Development Corporation of ‘Leipziger Land’ County hosted about 20 local officials as well as Federal Parliament (Bundestag) Deputy Christoph Waltz for Dr. Bischak’s presentation on the economic development strategies pursued by the ARC since its inception in the mid-1960s. A lively dialogue ensued on parallels between the coal mining regions of the eastern United States and western Saxony. In turn, Ms. Köpping and local officials acquainted Dr. Bischak, Consul General Mark Scheland, US Commercial Service specialist Bettina Kutsche and Consulate interns with the “New Lakes” project to convert lignite mining craters to environmentally secure recreational and residential lakes. A half-day tour took the US delegation to Espenhain, the emerging Lake Hain, and Kahnsdorf, a village that proudly recalls its brief but pivotal role in the life of German playwright Friedrich Schiller.

Countering Book and Flag Burnings

July 13, 2006. Leipzig Consul General Mark Scheland participated in a reading from the “Diary of Anne Frank” in a school in Schönebeck, Saxony-Anhalt. Minister-President Wolfgang Böhmer had invited the Consul General, State Parliament President Dieter Steinecke, State Justice Minister Angela Kolb and actor Peter Sodann to join him in the event, which included a discussion forum with students and teachers at the county vocational high school. The school’s director said he had welcomed Böhmer’s proposal that the school community join him in demonstrating common abhorrence of the late-June public burning of a copy of the Diary and a U.S. flag in the nearby village of Pretzien. Two hundred students and teachers attended the event. In the press conference following the reading, Consul General Scheland called flag
and book burnings “a sad and disappointing form of expression and the very opposite of dialogue.” About two dozen national and regional media representatives covered the event. The Consulate used the event for school outreach, offering copies of the Mission’s “About the USA” CD-ROM and a book donation to the school.

Consul for Public Affairs Helps Open Klezmer Music Summerfest

July 11, 2006. Consul for Public Affairs Mark Wenig joined other invited guests and speakers and delivered brief remarks in support of the “Yiddish Summer Weimar” (formerly the “Weimar Klezmer Weeks”), a festival of Klezmer music, which livens the streets of Weimar each summer. This event, which attracts participants from all over Europe as well as North America, combines workshops, jam sessions, and outdoor concerts in celebration of Jewish folk music that originated in eastern Europe. About 80 persons attended the opening ceremonies, which were also punctuated by Klezmer music. U.S. Embassy Berlin supported this four-week festival, which promotes intercultural understanding. U.S. participation and support was very much noticed and highly appreciated as the mayor and other local officials praised this event, made all the more poignant for its taking place each year in the shadow of the Buchenwald camp memorial.

Conference Highlights U.S. Investment in the East

July 11, 2006. Representatives from 40 U.S. companies accepted an invitation by Federal Minister and former Leipzig Lord Mayor Wolfgang Tiefensee to a Dresden conference aimed at boosting U.S. investments in the new Länder. In his remarks, Ambassador William R. Timken Jr. referred to the over 40,000 jobs currently offered by U.S. companies in the east as an important factor in German-American relations. He also pointed out, however, that “investors do not go where the U.S. is not wanted.” In order to improve the promotion of German business locations in the future, Tiefensee announced that the German marketing companies, the “Industrial Investment Council” (IIC) and “Invest in Germany”, would be merged. The conference, which took place at AMD Corp., applauded U.S. economic engagement in Germany as a whole and the eastern states in particular.

The Fourth of July Returns to Leipzig’s Wilhelm-Seyfferth-Strasse

July 3, 2006. About 500 guests from throughout the Leipzig consular district enjoyed an Independence Day barbeque on the consulate grounds, the first U.S. national day reception conducted in Leipzig since 1999 - after years of rotation through other cities in Leipzig's three states of Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia. Following a flag presentation by U.S. Marine Corps from the U.S. Embassy Berlin color guard and a stirring a capella performance of the national anthem by the American bass vocalist James Moellenhoff, Consul General Mark Scheland greeted the guests and described the community spirit and common American experience of neighborhood “Fourth of July” parties in the United States. Saxony State Minister Hermann Winkler spoke of the decades-long American engagement for liberty and democracy in Germany and Europe. Leipzig Lord Mayor Jung illustrated how the Leipzig art, music, commercial and sport scenes were awakening Americans’ fascination with the city. Protocol guests included Thuringia’s deputy minister-president, two state secretaries of the Saxony-Anhalt government, and numerous mayors, city council members, and county executives, many of whom welcomed the Consul General’s proposal to dress casually and bring family. Many guests commented how pleasant it was to gather on consulate grounds. The July 4 edition of the regional newspaper “Leipziger Volkszeitung” carried a photo of the Lord Mayor and the Consul General pulling off their neckties alongside the regular “People in Leipzig” column, under the headline “Schlipse ab und locker Liberty gefeiert” (“Ties off! A relaxed celebration of Liberty”).
"America@Your Library" Opening in Chemnitz

June 29, 2006. Consul General Mark Scheland and Consulate General Leipzig staff held a full-day of activities in Chemnitz highlighting the U.S. The program started at the Dr. Wilhelm-André-Gymnasium, where Scheland, his wife Elizabeth and American intern Andrew Martinez met a Fulbright teacher and his family and discussed U.S. politics, history, and culture with thirty high school students. Later in the day, Scheland inaugurated the "America@your library" partnership at the Chemnitz Public Library, in the presence of Lord Mayor Seifert, city officials, students, library representatives from all over Saxony and 140 invited guests from the Chemnitz constituency. As part of the program, Mrs. Scheland and Mrs. Kjarstin Spangberg Wenig, spouse of Consul for Public Affairs Mark Wenig, conducted a children's book reading for kindergarteners and their teachers of the book, "The Very Hungry Caterpillar." The children also worked on handicrafts and received snacks. The “America Day” culminated in a discussion group led by the Consul General with 50 high school students from the Chemnitz area. In their speeches, Lord Mayor Seifert and Library Director Elke Beer underscored the longstanding good ties with the Consulate, and the resulting positive impact. The regional newspaper 'Morgenpost Chemnitz' headlined on June 30, “We are proud to have been selected for this program,” quoting Ms. Beer from her remarks.

Consul Wenig Joins Visiting American Professor in Addressing Students in Meerane

June 26, 2006. Consul for Public Affairs Mark Wenig, joined by University of California Davis Communications Professor Dr. Charles R. Berger, addressed some 30 students from the Pestalozzi Gymnasium on a visit to the city of Meerane. Berger, whose grandfather emigrated from Meerane to the U.S. in the late 1880s, was on a visit to find his roots. Also present were Birgit Kaemmer, Cultural Affairs Assistant at the Consulate General Leipzig, who addressed the students about exchange opportunities in the U.S., Prof. Michael B. Hinner of the Bergakademie in Freiberg, and Leipzig intern Andrew Martinez. Following the student meeting, the visitors were taken by the Meerane Mayor Lothar Ungerer on a city tour.

U.S. Consulate General Hosts American Students

June 20, 2006. Consul General Mark Scheland and Consul for Public Affairs Mark Wenig hosted two groups of Americans at the Consulate. Students from the University of Arizona (in Leipzig for a summer school program) and teachers who are members of the American Association of Teachers of German (on a teacher in service training program), gathered in the garden to exchange ideas. The Consulate has had longstanding close working relationships with the two host institutions, The Herder-Institute and Leipzig University.
**Ambassador Timken Visits Economic Flagship in the East**

June 19, 2006. Ambassador Timken and his wife Sue paid their first visit to Jena, an economic flagship and island of relative success, amid large areas of high unemployment in eastern Germany. At Jenoptik, a leader in the optics industry since 1846, CEO Alexander von Witzleben explained to the Ambassador how the company had successfully rationalized and remade itself after the fall of the Wall. During the Ambassador's company visit, Mrs. Timken engaged children at the Angergymnasium High School, in a dialogue on U.S. cultural, social, and political issues. Following talks with the president and department heads of the Friedrich Schiller University, Ambassador Timken made a presentation to university students on U.S. - German relations, and took their questions on political and security policy. As an afternoon cultural highlight, the Timkens and Leipzig Consul General Mark Scheland toured the garden house of Friedrich Schiller, one of Germany’s most prominent poets and authors.

**U.S. and Czech Consulates Feed “Fußball” Fever**

June 12, 2006. On June 12, about 380 guests gathered at the headquarters of Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk (MDR) in Leipzig to cheer on the U.S. and Czech national teams in their World Cup match, displayed on a giant screen. U.S. Consul General Mark Scheland had approached his Czech counterpart in Dresden and regional broadcaster MDR about co-hosting this event with guests drawn primarily from the U.S. and Czech communities in the three-state region as well as German friends from the media, business, government, and other fields. Folk musicians from the Czech Republic, students from a bilingual Czech-German high school in Pirna, and Leipzig-area kids who had represented the two countries in a recent "Mini World Cup of the Schools" all contributed to the entertainment, which included line dancing in the style of the American West.

Considering the variety of public viewing areas for World Cup broadcasts all over Leipzig, the turn-out for this gathering was an exceptional expression of friendship between Germans, Americans and Czechs. The U.S. and Czech Consulates were pleased to be able in this manner to thank so many German friends for the constructive working relationships we enjoy.

**Roebling Commemoration A "Bridge over the Atlantic"**

June 12, 2006. Consul General Mark Scheland traveled to Mühlhausen, Thuringia, to speak at a Festakt honoring that city’s most famous son, John (Johann) August Roebling, the 19th Century innovator of suspension bridges, best known for the Cincinnati bridge that now bears his name and for the Brooklyn Bridge. Scheland also encountered students at the local high school, now named for Roebling. Both his speech and conversation with students touched on the fact that his great-grandfather had attended that same school in the 1890s, shortly before emigrating. Federal Finance Ministry State Secretary Karl Diller introduced a German postage stamp commemorating Roebling’s birth 200 years ago. Diller and Thuringia’s Deputy Minister President Birgit Dietzel both emphasized the themes of freedom and the “pioneer spirit” in describing how America provided the environment in which Roebling could realize the full potential of his genius. Two dozen American members of the Roebling family, many German Roeblings, and an audience of several hundred heard the Consul General's remarks on the contribution of German immigrants to innovation and industrial growth in America, as well as Minister Dietzel’s remarks on the emotional appreciation of America’s engagement for freedom in Europe since WWII.

(Photoby Courtesy of Thüringer Allgemeine Zeitung)
Consul Wenig Guest of Honor at “Luther's Wedding,” Wittenberg English Ministry

June 10, 2006. Consul for Public Affairs Mark Wenig and his wife Kjarstin were honored guests in the city of Lutherstadt-Wittenberg, as the city took time to celebrate its annual reenactment of the “Luther Wedding.” After signing the Golden Book and lunching with the Mayor and his wife and other guests, the Wenig’s observed the wedding parade from an elevated vantage point, and participated in other festivities. The event usually attracts 100,000 visitors to the city for the weekend. Later in the day, they attended a church service for English speakers and a reception, sponsored by the Wittenberg English Ministry, which brings American pastors from around the country to the city for two-week stays from April through October.

Vice Consul Michael Rousek and His Wife Visit Halle

June 8, 2006. Vice Consul Michael Rousek and his wife Ngan visited the Felix Count von Luckner Society to honor the 125th birthday of the count. Deutsche Post was also present to unveil a commemorative envelope for the occasion and provided a small post office with von Luckner stamps at the event. The society, located in Halle, was established in Memory of Count von Luckner, who negotiated with allied forces to save the city from destruction during WWII. The society works to promote international understanding through its various projects. On this occasion, they introduced a medal commemorating von Luckner on his birthday. Vice Consul Rousek and his wife were guests of honor, and met with society members as well as the former secretary of U.S. Army Major General Terry Allen, with whom von Luckner negotiated, who returned to Germany for this event.

Consul Wenig at Freiberg’s Technical University

June 7, 2006. Consul for Public Affairs Mark Wenig explained to a group of 40 business majors at Freiberg’s Technical University the U.S. system of higher education, while the staff of consulate's Information Resource Center (IRC) introduced U.S. information resources and services, and Embassy educational advising. Professor Michael Hinner, head of the business English and intercultural communication’s department, had invited Consular staff. During the visit, the IRC Director met with the head of the Freiberg public library to discuss consulate services and joint programs. The Freiberg libraries received books from the former U.S. military base library in Fulda, a collection that is still in use.

Consul Wenig Loans Model Ship to Dresden Museum

June 2, 2006. Leipzig Consul for Public Affairs Mark Wenig officially turned over his model ship, the 17th century British “Sovereign of the Seas,” to the Dresden Transport Museum at a ceremony at the museum. Also in attendance were U.S. Naval Attaché Captain Timothy A. McCandless and a representative of the Royal Navy from the British Embassy Berlin. Consul Wenig purchased the ship while on tour in Mauritius, known for its model shipbuilding. The ship, which will remain in Dresden until the end of Wenig's tour in 2008, will be prominently displayed in the museum’s ship gallery, which will move to new quarters in 2007. Over 100 prominent invitees attended the ceremony, including Dresden Deputy Mayor Dr. Lutz Vogel.
**June 1, 2006.** On the occasion of International Children’s Day, kids from Europe, Asia, Africa, the Arab world and North America enjoyed a day of multicultural encounters, fun and games in Leipzig. The U.S. Consulate General Leipzig supported the open-air event and landed a real hit by providing instruction and baseball equipment from the Leipzig “Baseball Strikers.” This joint-venture initiative by parent organizations, volunteers and social workers was a direct result of a speaker program with Prof. Richard Alba in December 2005. Consul for Public Affairs Mark Wenig and Vice Consul Michael Rousek also met with former participant in the Embassy's exchange program, Stojan Gugutschkow, the Leipzig City Commissioner for Foreigners.

**Consul Wenig Visits Samuel-Heinicke-School for Hearing-Impaired Children**

**May 30, 2006.** Public Affairs Officer Mark Wenig joined students at Leipzig’s school for hearing-impaired children during their week-long project, “Children of the World”. The Consul who was greeted by a friendly and highly interested group of 70 students, and supported by consulate staff, gave a presentation on high-school life in the U.S. and answered numerous questions on society and culture in the U.S. The lecture was followed by a tour of the school. As the visit of Mr. Wenig fueled further interest by teachers and students from the school, the staff of U.S. Consulate General Leipzig's Information Resource Center welcomed another group of students from the school at the consulate on May 31.

**Ambassador’s Visit Blends German and American Culture**

**May 25-26, 2006.** U.S. Ambassador William R. Timken, Jr., visited Meissen-Proschwitz, Dresden and Radebeul May 25-26 and participated in the openings of two popular festivals. The Ambassador, Mrs. Timken and daughter Frances Karsh, accompanied by Consul General Mark Scheland and family, visited the “Prinz zur Lippe” winery May 25 to learn about the reestablishment of world-class viticulture in Saxony since German unification. Later that evening, the Ambassador and family joined Dresden's Acting Mayor Lutz Vogel in attending the first concert of the city's annual music festival (Dresdner Musikfestspiele). The following day the Ambassador conducted a full-day program in Radebeul as patron (Schirmherr) of this year's Karl May Festival.

Discussion with Lord Mayor Bert Wendsche, state legislator and former minister Dr. Matthias Rößler, former and current Bundestag deputies Dr.-Ing. Rainer Jork and Mr. Jan Mücke, and other local personalities focused on Radebeul's economic development, the integration of immigrants, and the advancement of people-to-people contacts through sister city and other programs. The Ambassador and his family, Consul General Scheland, and Public Affairs Officer Mark Wenig met Native Americans from the United States who were in Radebeul to perform during the weekend festival celebrating the American Wild West.
May 20, 2006. Leipzig Consul General Mark Scheland and Vice Consul Michael Rousek joined the third "Day of (Celebrating Different) Cultures" in Pirna. The consulate staffed an information booth at the event, which featured stands from more than 50 countries and was designed to promote tolerance and understanding. Consul General Scheland represented the Diplomatic Corps during a talk on stage with Pirna Lord Mayor Ulbig. Afterwards Ulbig toured the festival grounds with Saxony Interior Minister Dr. Buttolo, State Commissioner for Foreigners Ulrike de Haas, members of the State Parliament, and diplomats from different nations. During a stop at the U.S. booth, Mark Scheland introduced the group briefly to the Consulate’s services. The joint booth of Leipzig Consulate General and the Pirna public library attracted not only the general public from the region, but also many high school students and teachers with a special interest in the United States.

Leipzig Consul General Inaugurates "America@your library" in Erfurt

May 18, 2006. Consul General Mark Scheland inaugurated the America@your library partnership with the Erfurt public library in the presence of state chancery and city officials, 50 invited guests and a representative from U.S. Forces Europe, the initiator of book donations to Erfurt libraries and schools from the now closed U.S. Rhein-Main air base. As part of the program, the Consul General explained to a group of high school students the work that consulates and diplomats do, and fielded questions on U.S. policy, while the Consulate's cultural exchange assistant Birgit Kämmer outlined bilateral exchange programs with another group of about 30 students. In her speech, Library Director Monika Waldheim credited Consulate General Leipzig and U.S. Embassy Berlin for their ongoing support. Regional newspaper covered the event, quoting Mark Scheland, “We want the Germans to understand our policies.”

The Very Hungry Caterpillar Comes to Leipzig

May 17, 2006. Consul General Mark Scheland helped welcome visitors to the exhibition, “Eric Carle - Artist for Children,” at the Leipzig National Library. A household name not only in Germany and the U.S. but in most parts of the world, Eric Carle, the son of German immigrants to the U.S., has lived and worked in both countries. At the opening, Mark Scheland contributed his own personal experiences with Carle, whose artistic children’s books have played a major role in his life as the father of four. The event attracted about 70 guests from Leipzig universities, libraries, cultural organizations, as well as the general public. Carle’s life and work as demonstrated by this exhibit are a reflection of today’s diverse ties between the U.S. and Germany.

Second German "Battle of the Books"

May 5-7, 2006. Seven German schools representing the federal states of Saxony, Thuringia, Rhineland-Palatinate, Schleswig-Holstein and Hesse participated in the second annual "Battle of the Books" in Markkleeberg near Leipzig. The competition on students' familiarity with selected American youth literature was introduced to Germany in 2004-5 by four American Fulbright teaching assistants in the Leipzig Consular General district working with Ms. Kerstin Kirschke, a teacher at the Rudolf-Hildebrand-Gymnasium. This year's participating 10th and 11th graders proved to be amazingly eloquent in English when answering factual, interpretative and creative questions on the books, and they all attested to the friendly and creative character of the competition. The contest prompted the students to immerse themselves in the English language and American literature, and thus to broaden their views on U.S. society and values. The students also took pride in winning gift certificates for their schools to use in purchasing books. Several private sponsors, including the Cornelsen-Verlag and Körber-Stiftung, provided material support to the event.
Consul General Mark Scheland welcomed the students at a Consulate reception on May 5 and congratulated them at the closing award ceremony two days later, while his wife Elizabeth Scheland helped to judge the competition.

**American Day in Görlitz: Library Celebrates 10th Anniversary**

**May 5, 2006.** The “Europe-Library” in Görlitz celebrated its 10th anniversary with a traditional “America Day” and a reception for local and international guests. Information Resource Officer Holly Murten, U.S. Embassy Berlin and Vice Consul Michael Rousek, U. S. Consulate General Leipzig, as well as consulate staff actively participated in the event by addressing the guests and explaining U.S. higher education, German-American relations, and cultural differences to high school and university student groups. Founded in 1996 with a book donation from the U.S. military base in Baumholder, and support from the U.S. Embassy Berlin and the U.S. Consulate General in Leipzig, the Europe-Library Görlitz has established itself as the main English-language collection and cultural center in the German/Czech/Polish border region. In his speech, Görlitz Lord Mayor Joachim Paulick paid tribute to the longstanding U.S. engagement and support at the celebrations.