

# Christmas is German to members of club

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By Mario Bartoletti (staff writer)

Ist das nicht ein Weihnachtsfest? Ja das ist ein Weihnachtsfest, at least for the German Club at Hoffman Estates High School.

"This is the 29th year we've had the Christmas party in German Club," German-language teacher Jeanine Brew said. "A lot of alumni come back from different years. We usually get more than 100 people including students and their families."

Students and families sing songs such as "Schnitzelbank" (Ist das nicht eine Schnitzelbank?), bring desserts and eat German food from the Edelweiss Delicatessen in Palatine, Brew said.

"We don't have a large German community per se, but there is a lot of interest in it," Assistant Principal Tim Little said. "We have one of the strongest German-language sections in District 211." Little said there is a strong network of students who have gone on foreign exchanges.

## Pretty cool night

"They've been going for almost 30 years, and on their Website past students can keep track of what's going on and current students can relate to past graduates," Little said. "They've gone to Munich, Berlin and have had similar experiences. It's a pretty cool night."

Club Vice President Andrea DaSilva went to Munich last summer.

"We went for three weeks on an exchange with an all-girls school," she said. "And we went during the World Cup, which made it cool."

DaSilva said Brew was the new school sponsor of Weihnachtsfest.

"As I understand it, we're the last class to have (former teacher) Herr Taylor as our sponsor," she said. "He was a stickler for tradition. And a lot of students came back to catch up with him. We love having Frau Brew, and she'll be making it different. So we'll have traditions and do new stuff too."

One of the traditions of Weihnachtsfest goes back to the German custom of having a Christmas fair or market. The gifts at German fairs are not mass produced but unique quality craft work such as wood carvings, crib figurines or lambskin shoes.

## Too young for wine

German Club students are too young to enjoy mulled wine, but they were able to auction off items to raise money for the club.

"It's mostly things that our old German teacher (Taylor) had in his basement," club President Billy Vanderford said. "But it's pretty cool stuff from Germany like travel maps and coffee mugs. And parents can buy German Club T-shirts or chocolates."

Senior Aaron Kotz, who is activity director for the club, said he likes singing "Schnitzelbank."

"Last year I was one of the elves and got to hold up items people auctioned off," he said. "The club is a lot of fun related to German. I like the field trips to German restaurants."

In addition to auctioning off German memorabilia, DaSilva said, the club sells bratwurst at all home football games.

"We have the best bratwurst ever," she said. "Our wurst is best."