

StFX hosts German Day

By Lindsay O'Reilly

The Reporter

ANTIGONISH- StFX celebrated German language and culture last Friday, emphasizing the benefits of German bilingualism for business, travel, and personal development.

More than 100 students and professors— and many from the local business community— attended the “German Day” event, taking the opportunity to share experiences and knowledge.

StFX German professor Marlis Lade noted that this event concentrated more on business opportunities associated with German language ability than the previous German Day, which was held back in 2004.

“On our first German Day, we were emphasizing more the culture and the connection to all the subjects here in the university. Since we also have a lot of business students, we thought it

would be beneficial to emphasize the business connection,” she explained.

German-born real estate developer Rolf Bouman, founder and president of *Canadian Pioneer Estates*, sponsored and attended the event. The businessman arrived in Nova Scotia as an immigrant at age 20 and worked at several jobs, including mine work and tree trimming, before entering the business world as a German-English interpreter and finally founding his own business.

Bouman noted that many of his clients have been German and credited his German language abilities for his present success. He noted that for young people entering the business world now, the language is becoming increasingly important as more German immigrants arrive in the province, ready to do business.

“We have 14 to 15 people to staff who are bilingual. I

hired them because they are bilingual,” he said.

Bouman hinted that perhaps StFX should consider hiring more full-time German professors. Currently, only one part-time professor is employed at the university.

Lade noted that, in addition to helping in the business world, learning a second language can also help in personal development.

“Learning a language is not only grammar and vocabulary, because you learn about the culture and you learn about the people that enrich the language,” she said. “I think that’s very important today.”

Several students from Lade’s German classes took to the stage during the German Day presentations, explaining why they had chosen to study the subject.

“My grandparents, my dad’s parents came over from Germany after the war. They came here to raise their



Photo by Jack Ronalds

Among those at German Day were (from the left): Anja Mengewein, Press and Cultural Affairs, Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Germany, Montreal; Dr. Sean E. Riley, President and Vice-Chancellor, StFX; and Rolf Bouman, Founder, *Canadian Pioneer Estates Ltd.*, Cleveland.

children and have a new life. My dad spoke German when he was young, but our family has lost the language pretty much,” explained German 300 student Anna Krentz. “I thought I should learn it. It’s important.”

Anna noted that she got a chance to use her German language skills recently, when she travelled to Berlin with other German studies students.

Ieronim Oltean, also a German 300 student, said

he’d originally begun taking German classes because he’d heard learning a second language can help improve scores on standardized testing.

Continued on page 12

page 12

• German Day at StFX

From page 10

I guess it is true...it helps you to understand language. I recently took the LSAT and I found it was helpful, to know the sentence structure and what they're asking," he said. "I think it will help in my future, because I plan to go overseas to teach English, maybe in Germany, so it will be helpful to know some German."

Other speakers at the event included Port Hawkesbury lawyer Patrick Lamey and the Port Hawkesbury Royal Bank's Julie Marchand, who noted the increasing number of German clients in the area and the increased employability of candidates with German language skills.

StFX president Dr. Sean Riley added there were ample benefits for German-speaking students outside the province, as well.

"I think the most important thing is the tremendous number of opportunities that are opening up to students.

"It's becoming a more and more mobile world. I think the message from the German consulate and from the Goethe Institute [who had representatives present to speak] is that there are tremendous opportunities for exchanges, travel in Germany, work opportunities."

In terms of possible German program growth, Riley said it was a possibility.

"The program has been growing, and of course, we are trying to cover off a number of languages. Of course, French is the main one. We're trying to cover the modern languages of French, German and Spanish, as well as Gaelic," he said.

"We're trying to find a way to develop depth in each of those programs. The trend in German enrollment is very positive, so we'll look forward to more in that program."