



From the Executive Director

Dear Humboldtians and Friends:

In these difficult times, many Americans are being forced to make tough choices, including about whether they can continue to support the charitable organizations and causes near and dear to their hearts. We are therefore deeply grateful to our donors for their steadfast support of American Friends and of the mission of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. A full list of our supporters in 2008 will be included in our annual report, which will be released later this year. We will also give special recognition at that time to all Lifetime Members of the Alexander von Humboldt Association of America (AvHAA), who supported the organization loyally over the years.

Through your donations and the continued support of the Humboldt Foundation, American Friends is now poised to play a stronger role in strengthening academic and research ties between the United States and Germany at a pivotal point in our history. Together, the United States and Germany are confronting critical issues at the nexus of science, policy, and politics including, most notably, climate change and energy. As world leaders in environmental sciences and technologies, both countries are essential partners in global efforts to surmount these daunting challenges. Their research exchange in this growing field also underscores the undiminished relevance and vitality of German-American research exchange. Younger, top-notch American scientists may be tempted to look to other parts of the world for inspiration; we at American Friends are here to remind them that Germany remains a top research destination.

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2009 German Chancellor Fellowship Alumni Meeting to be Held in Chicago

The 2009 U.S. Annual Alumni Meeting for the German Chancellor Fellowship will be held in Chicago, Illinois from Friday, April 24 until Sunday, April 26.

The meeting, organized by John Maciuika (1998-1999), will focus on the theme “Architecture and Cities.” Speakers will discuss various dimensions of “Theory” and “Practice” in city planning and architecture, including the “greening” of the urban environment.

In preparation for the meeting, we ask each Buku to review his/her profile online at www.americanfriends-of-avh.org/programs_and_services/scholars/alpha.html. Please send any changes to virginia.barth@americanfriends-of-avh.org.

Detailed program and registration materials are available on our website at www.americanfriends-of-avh.org/programs_and_services/germanchancellor.html.

Humboldtian Appointed as U.S. Secretary of Energy

Humboldt Research Award winner Steven Chu has been appointed as U.S. Secretary of Energy by President Barack Obama. Dr. Chu is a distinguished expert in climate change and a driving force in the use of renewable energies.

Winner of the Nobel Prize for physics in 1997, Dr. Chu received a Humboldt Research Award in 1994



and spent several months in 1996 at the Max Planck Institute (MPI) of Quantum Optics in Garching. His host at MPI was Dr. Theodor Hänsch, a Humboldt Foundation Research Award winner and Nobel laureate (2005).

Since 2004, Chu has been director of the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory in Berkeley, California. He has a B.S. in physics from the University of Rochester and a Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley.

American Friends Alumni Council: Looking for a Few Good Ideas...

The Alumni Council of American Friends of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation is looking for ideas from U.S. Humboldtians for ways to strengthen ties among U.S. alumni. The Alumni Council, which was created as part of the amalgamation of American Friends and the Alexander von Humboldt Association of America (AvHAA), will begin considering proposals for alumni activities in July 2009. Limited funding to support the activities of U.S. Humboldtians is available for small or modest sized meetings. The support comes from a special fund established by the AvHAA to honor Hellmut Hanle, who served at the Humboldt Foundation for almost thirty years, including as head of the Selection Department. If you have ideas or proposals for alumni activities, please contact American Friends at alumni@americanfriends-of-avh.org.



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American Friends also is beginning a new phase in its history. The amalgamation with the Alexander von Humboldt Association of America has been successfully completed. An expanded Board of Directors is now undertaking a strategic planning process that will help American Friends to better serve US alumni and expand the pool of potential Humboldtians in the United States. Specifically, our plans for 2009 include:

- **A New Look for the "Humboldtians on Campus" (HoC) Program.** In our survey of the program last summer, many HoCs asked us to make the program more flexible, and to consider supporting outreach at conferences and meetings. We think these are excellent ideas and are now working on plans to revamp and improve the HoC program.
- **Calling all Alumni!** The Alumni Council and American Friends are committed to developing a new program of alumni activities. If you have ideas on how to strengthen the ties among Humboldtians in the United States through alumni activities or events, please contact alumni@americanfriends-of-avh.org.
- **Cooperation with German Partner Organizations.** American Friends is intensifying its cooperation with the German Research Foundation (DFG), the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), and the German Academic International Network (GAIN) to inform our target audiences about exciting changes in the German research landscape and the opportunities offered by the Humboldt Foundation.

As we move forward, we are grateful for your ideas, your engagement, and your continued financial support in these times of economic uncertainty.

Cathleen Fisher
Executive Director

Events and Conferences

American Friends represents the Humboldt Foundation in a variety of scientific conferences, career fairs, and academic meetings in the United States. Activities include:

American University Career Fair
March 26, 2009 – Washington, DC

NIH International Opportunities Expo
April 2, 2009 - Bethesda, MD

German American International Network (GAIN) Workshop
April 4, 2009 – New York, NY

Virginia Polytechnic University
Presentation on AvH Fellowships & Awards
May 5, 2009 – Blacksburg, VA

33rd Annual Meeting of the German Studies Association
October 8-11, 2009 – Washington, DC

NEWS FROM THE FOUNDATION

Humboldt Kollegs Support Regional Conferences

Funding for meetings organized by Humboldtians is available by submitting an application for a Humboldt Kolleg. Details and applications are located at www.humboldt-foundation.de/web/32478.html.

New Humboldt Alumni Award

The new Humboldt Alumni Award is intended to promote innovative networking initiatives that are not covered by AvH sponsorship programs. The award aims to recognize projects which have the potential to strengthen alumni networks and create or extend sustainable academic and cultural relations between Germany and the home countries of Humboldtians.

The award is a partnership with the German Foreign Office and the *Stifterverband für die deutsche Wissenschaft* and is one of the ways in which the Humboldt Foundation is contributing to the Foreign Office's 2009 research and academic relations policy initiative. Up to three awards will be granted per year, each valued at up to 25,000 EUR. The award ceremony will be held in Berlin during the AvH's Annual Meeting in June. **The application deadline is April 20, 2009.** For additional details and applications see www.humboldt-foundation.de/web/alumnipreis.html.

Humboldt Foundation Partners in 2009 Year of Research and Academic Relations Policy

The Alexander von Humboldt Foundation is partnering with the German Foreign Office, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), and the German Archeological Institute to make 2009 the year of research and academic relations policy (*Aussenwissenschaftspolitik*). The initiative is intended to further strengthen international academic and scientific exchange with Germany. The initiative includes additional support for existing scholarship programs and alumni relations as well new programs, including the opening of four new "German Science and Innovation Houses" in Moscow, Tokyo, New Delhi, and São Paulo. For more information on the initiative (in German) see www.auswaertiges-amt.de/diplo/de/Aussenpolitik/KulturDialog/Aussenwissenschaftsinitiative2009/UebersichtAWP.html.

Sofja Kovalevskaja Award

Preparations for the next selection round for the Sofja Kovalevskaja Award are now underway. The award provides exceptionally talented young researchers up to 1.65 million EUR to pursue innovative projects at an early point in their careers.

The next announcement for applications is planned for May 2009. The deadline for applications will be October 15, 2009, and the selection meeting in spring 2010.

Submit an application if you are a highly successful junior researcher from abroad, have **only completed your doctorate with distinction in the last six years**, and have published work in prestigious international journals or publishing houses. The Sofja Kovalevskaja Award allows you to spend five years building up working groups and implementing a high-profile, innovative research project of your own choice at a research institution of your own choice in Germany. For more information, please see www.humboldt-foundation.de/web/7360.html.

About Strata

Strata is the newsletter of American Friends of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, an organization established in the United States in 1999 to promote scholarship and cross-cultural understanding by supporting the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. The logo of American Friends is based on Humboldt's scientific representation of the mountain Chimborazo in Ecuador, which he climbed in 1802.

About American Friends

American Friends of the AvH Foundation is a tax-exempt charity within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code. American Friends appreciates gifts of any amount and can receive contributions by check, credit or debit card (see our website), or in appreciated property (stocks, bonds, mutual funds, or real estate). American Friends accepts bequests and is honored to receive memorial gifts. For further information, please contact Cathleen Fisher, Executive Director, at cathleen.fisher@americanfriends-of-avh.org.