

## HAUS - SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

January 16, 2010

The sun was shining, dolphins were playing in the surf, and the temperature was in the sixties as a group of Heidelberg University alumni gathered for the constitutive meeting of the Southern California Heidelberg University Alumni Club. January in Southern California is not too hard to take, and the mood was congenial on the terrace of Hotel Laguna, which affords a picture-book view of the Pacific Ocean.

Sixteen alumni and assorted spouses, guests, and friends gathered to get to know each other and reminisce about their time at Universitaet Heidelberg. Those memories of Heidelberg covered several decades – from 1961 to 2005, and it was great fun to listen to the stories that were being told around the table. Ray Ramage (' YEAR) brought his original *Studienbuch*, complete with a photograph and official *Universitaetsstempel*, and a stack of slightly yellowed photographs that documented student demonstrations and police cordons ringing the Bismarckplatz during the radical Seventies. Alumni traded stories of riverboat excursions along the Neckar Valley and extended lunches at Essighaus. Joe Wu showed off his Heidelberg diary, which he kept in seven languages (including Hungarian, Chinese, Swedish, Japanese, French, and Esperanto!) throughout his stay in Heidelberg, and alumna Marnie Klein (YEAR) later showed off her language skills of another kind when she prefaced her departure with a spontaneous Kurpfaelzer "Alla!"

There was general agreement that founding a Southern California Alumni Club was an excellent idea, and as far as desirable activities went, wine tastings and seasonal celebrations were high on the list. There was also great interest in hosting speakers from Heidelberg University, and in alumni travel to the alma mater. Conversation over coffee, cake, and hamburgers remained lively and broke up only when the sun began to set and the sea wind picked up.

The newly minted HAUS Southern California Regional Chapter dispersed with the conviction that a very positive beginning had been made. The next meeting has been tentatively scheduled for mid-May at the San Antonio Winery in downtown Los Angeles.