



A EUROPEAN MUMU

Each year, Phyllis Schneider hosts a get-together for Papua New Guineans living in Europe. They swap stories and prepare a *mumu* (feast) in the shadow of the Bavarian Alps. *Kevin McQuillan* reports.

Papua New Guinea-born Phyllis Schneider and her German-born husband Michael have been hosting PNG get-togethers for 16 years. This year, 42 participants from PNG, Germany, Nigeria and West Papua joined the party.

The get-togethers, called *bungs*, take place at the Schneider family hotel, *Pfeiffermuehle*, in Wertach, a small town in the Bavarian Alps, about 170 kilometres from Munich in Germany.

"There are only a few Papua New Guineans scattered across Europe. That's why we had the idea to meet regularly," Schneider tells *Paradise*.



Friends of PNG ... a *mumu* celebration in Germany.

"We always have between 30 and 45 participants," she says. The gathering is open not

just to Papua New Guineans, but anyone with an interest in PNG, including former development workers, missionaries, government officials and people who have worked in PNG.

The concept is reflected in Schneider's own experience in adapting to Germany, when she and Michael moved there in 1999, after his contract with the German Development Services in PNG ended.

The transition to German society was difficult, she says, primarily because she didn't know any German language. ➤

One-stop-shop solution for all your freight requirements!



Our service portfolio:

- Shipping & Port Agency
- Customs Brokering
- Sea Freight Forwarding
- Transport Services
- Air Freight Forwarding – EXPRESS AIR CARGO (Fedex reps)
- Storage, Logistics & Distribution Terminals



www.expressfreight.com

LIKE US ON FACEBOOK!



Lae (head office): Tel 675-472 3822 Fax 675-472 5193 Branches at: Port Moresby – Honiara – Brisbane



Now she is very proficient – not surprising for Papua New Guineans, most of whom speak at least three languages.

“Besides German, I speak my mother tongue *Wedau*, neo-Melanesian tok pisin, English and some Portuguese. I learnt Portuguese when we lived in Mozambique, from 2001 to 2004, where Michael taught wildlife and conservation area management at Eduardo Mondlane University.”

Schneider says she was excited to see snow for the first time when she moved to Germany. “Here in the Alps, it snows every winter and it looks so beautiful. At times it can be very cold, but I’ve got used to it.”

Born in Wamira village near Dogura, Rabaraba District in Milne Bay Province, Schneider trained as a nurse after finishing Holy Name Girls High School at Dogura.

She was working at Bulolo Hospital, when she met Michael, then a lecturer in wildlife at Bololo University College.



Phyllis and Michael Schneider ... welcome Papua New Guineans with open arms to their family hotel in Germany.

Not a lot of Germans know that parts of PNG were once a German colony, Schneider says.

“Most don’t know where PNG is unless you say it’s in the north of Australia, because they know where Australia is.”

Schneider is no longer a full-time nurse, but those skills have come in handy as she helps run the family hotel, along with Michael, his sister, Christina, and her husband, Marco Kleemann.

The Bavarian Alps are a major tourist attraction in this part of Germany and the small town of Wertach dates back to 955.

Time away from the hotel usually means holidaying in Austria or Switzerland. Schneider also goes back to PNG every two years.

“There’s a saying that ‘home is where the heart is’ and that’s where my heart is and will always be,” she says.

But the annual *bung* helps make up for what she misses in PNG. ■

Budget
Car and Truck Rental

Bringing Budget International Standards to Papua New Guinea

We Care About Your Safety:

- **Chauffeur Drive options**
- **Reliable, Safe meticulously maintained Brand New Vehicles**
- **Security Monitoring on all Vehicles**

Ph: (675) 323 6244 | Fax: (675) 323 1390 | Email: reservations@budget.com.pg

MP_17716598

