Mission Excellence
Sommerausgabe der Astronaut Memorial Foundation (AMF)2005
Cape Canaveral

"Kondolenz" for Columbia Astronauts

Left to Right: Ralf Heckel, Stephen Feldman, Yvonne Blaese

In May of this year, representatives from Leben im All – Life in Space – of Leipzig, Germany visited the AMF. **Ralf Heckel** and **Yvonne Blaese** presented a book of condolences to Stephen Feldman, AMF president, honoring all the crew of the Space Shuttle Columbia.

The *Kondolenz* book, initiated by Heckel and Blaese, contains the signatures of many Germans who support the American space program. Also included are copies of letters and news articles dating back to February 1, 2003 – the date of Columbia's tragedy. "It is a pleasure to visit the AMF. You can be sure that the AMF, the astronauts, and their families have strong friends in Germany who hold your heroes in their memories. [We] bring back some parts of [their] souls," said Heckel.

Heckel is a marketing manager in Germany who is dedicated to the development of space exploration. He has been involved with several parascience experiments on the International Space Station that research the possibilities for non-space industries, private spaceflight and space education.

Blaese is a communications educator and is in training to fly in space. In 2003 she was appointed as a Space Ambassador of the Moscow Aviation Institute. In this role she serves as a representative between astronauts/cosmonauts and business partners, sponsors and students.

Both Heckel and Blaese are coaches and educators for international students who are preparing for cosmonaut training in Star City, Russia in the fall of 2005. Their goal is to begin an independent international student exchange program in 2006 in support of the United States' goals to reach the Moon and Mars. They are co-founders of SAXCESS, SPACEPASS.DE and SPACETOURIST.DE, organizations whose missions are to develop space tourism and promote space education.