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FRANK^{ly} ☹️

The Fulbright Alumni e.V. Magazine

Contents

Introductions

Letter from the Editor	1
Greetings from the President	2
Meet the Board	3
The Extended Board	6

Time

The Speed of Time	8
“Timely” Books	9
Digital Communication: Bridging Distance in Intercultural Communication or Virtual Illusion?	10
How does New Information Technology Change our Perception of Immediacy?	11
Weaving Time Tracks as an Aspect of Sustainable Development	14
Into the Twilight Zone	16
The Value of Time	18
Take your Time, Girl!	20

Association Information

22

National and International Events

Welcome Meeting, Frankfurt	24
Winter Ball, Berlin	25
Berlin Seminar 2009	26
The Fulbright Association’s 31 st Annual Conference in Beijing	30
PowWow 2009, Munich	32

Membership Application

33

Regional Chapters

Stuttgart / Southwest: A Snowshoe Hike in Tirol	35
Dresden: Time Well Spent	36
Leipzig: New Beginnings	37
Frankfurt: Fullies in the City of Finance	38
Berlin: A Capital Chapter	39
Munich / Southern Bavaria: Welcome to Munich!	40
Rhein-Ruhr: Summer Season	42
Cologne-Bonn: New Networks	42

Potpourri

Video Project	45
A Different View of America...	46
Diversity Initiative	48

Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers,

If we've met and talked for more than five minutes you may find it ironic that someone with as strained a relationship with time (deadlines in particular) would pick this very subject to work on. But, they do say that the things that attract us most are those we understand least...

You'll notice a couple of changes around here: first and foremost, the *FRANKly* is now officially a magazine. Accordingly, we have changed its look and feel a little bit.

However, as is customary we'll do introductions first. You'll hear from Barbara (directly overleaf) what's been going on in the association in the past year; then you'll meet the board. We have chosen to introduce them to you in a slightly different fashion by having them answer some of my (and, hopefully, your) burning questions on all things Fulbright.

Next, we'll get into our topic: time. Among the many interesting articles awaiting you are Dagmar Hovestädt reflecting on the changing perceptions of the speed of the clock and members Semira Soraya-Kandan and Volker Bastert contemplating the impact new information technologies have had on our understanding of time and communication. American Fulbrighter to Germany Brenna Moore reflects on her experience of time and punctuality in Munich and finally Ida Storm Jansen gives us girls some helpful tips on how to properly use our time to get ahead. Don't forget to check out the books on the subject that Ursula Mich has chosen for you.

In the second part of the magazine you'll find reports on our staple events: Welcome Meeting, Winter Ball and PowWow as well as on the International Fulbright Association's annual conference in Beijing. Following is an unprecedented number



of articles on and from the regional chapters. We close with a Potpourri of things we love: among others Fulbrighter Lukas Smirek giving you a different perspective on a stay in the U.S.

Before I go, let me say thank you. First, Astrid Weingarten, our designer, went above and beyond to make sure this magazine reached the printer in time. Speaking of printers, thank you to Liebeskind in Apolda for making time (ha!) for us on their machines. Then, thank you to Barbara for her very careful proofreading; to Stephan for his tireless helping out where it was needed; and thank you to Wiltrud Hammelstein and Gil Carbajal, who have contributed to this publication for several years in a row. Thank you to the many contributors of text and images. I was stunned by the quality of material I received and the generosity with which it was shared. Finally, from me personally, thank you to my family, who made sure I didn't forget to eat in the final stages of this. And thank you to my friends, in particular Uta Böhme, Romy Kurth and Karsten Nigbur, and colleagues, Dominique Brühl especially. Without their gentle prodding and tireless encouragement you might not be holding a publication in your hands right now.

For all of their sakes I hope you enjoy reading this edition of the *FRANKly*.

All the best,

Julia Mews
Jena, October 2009

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Greetings from the President



**Dear Members and Friends
of the German Fulbright
Alumni Association,**

It is my great pleasure to introduce to you the 20th edition of our association's annual journal, the *FRANKly*.

As always, these pages reflect the efforts of authors, editors and photographers, but they also pay tribute to the commitment of many Fulbrighters who have participated in organizing activities on a regional and national level.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all *FRANKly* contributors and especially *FRANKly* editor Julia Mews for their hard work in making this publication possible. At the same time, in the name of the board and the entire association, I would also like to express our appreciation and thanks to all the dedicated members who contribute to making the Fulbright Alumni e.V. a great platform for exchange between nationalities, generations and professions.

The German Fulbright alumni community can look back on very active and successful twelve months since the previous edition of the *FRANKly*. Four national events, which are featured in the following pages, offered an opportunity for our members to renew old friendships and establish new ones: the Welcome Meeting in Frankfurt dedicated to welcoming American grantees and returning German Fulbrighters (back) to Germany, the general assembly and Winter Ball in Berlin, the Family Weekend in Königstein and the PowWow "change@crisis" in Munich.

In our regional chapters, Fulbrighters came together for a wide variety of activities as well, be it snowshoeing in the Austrian Alps, sailing on Lake Constance, enjoying a culture weekend in Thuringia or celebrating the traditional 4th of July and Thanksgiving parties.

In addition, thanks to many active members, various projects and initiatives to strengthen the German Fulbright community have been ongoing or are currently under way, such as the following:

- This year, many regional chapters combined 4th of July celebrations with "Farewell-Parties" for German grantees in order to introduce the Fulbright Alumni Association to future alumni even before their departure to the U.S.
- At the Winter Ball, the Fulbright Alumni Video Project, a documentary project designed to showcase the profound impact of the Fulbright experience and supported by the U.S. Embassy, celebrated its premiere.
- A Fulbright Alumni working group has kicked off a community project to facilitate better networking online between our members (while at the same time ensuring data privacy).
- A new Fulbright Alumni flyer to present our association to members, potential members and sponsors is currently in the works.
- The Fulbright Alumni office in Frankfurt has been renovated and refurnished, and a project aiming at better documentation and knowledge transfer is ongoing.
- As in previous years, the Fulbright Alumni e.V. has made a substantial donation to finance several additional grants in the Fulbright Diversity Initiative, which enables students with a migration background to attend summer school programs in the United States.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition of the *FRANKly*!

Barbara Weiten
Munich, September 2009

Meet the Board

When and where did you spend your Fulbright year(s)?

Barbara Weiten: I studied American Civilization at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, in 2002/03 and completed a master's degree.

Benjamin Becker: I was a Teaching Assistant (FLTA) at Emory University in Atlanta, GA, during the academic year 2007/2008.

Stephan Meyer-Brehm: I spent my academic year (1985/86) at the University of Texas at Austin, followed by another year (1986/87) working – officially as an “intern” under Fulbright auspices – in Chicago.

Sabine Pallas: I was an exchange student at the University of Virginia in 2005/2006.

Claus Vollrath-Rödiger: From 1983-85 at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, MI.

When and how did you learn about the Fulbright Alumni Association? When did you join?

Sabine: I learned about the Fulbright Alumni Association even before I applied for the grant. I joined the Munich regional chapter for their Stammtisch and tried to gather inside information about the selection process. After returning from the U.S. it felt kind of natural to join the Alumni Association.

Barbara: I learned about the Fulbright Alumni Association at the preparatory meeting organized by the Fulbright Commission in Bremen, and I joined pretty soon after returning to Germany, maybe at “my” Welcome Meeting in Düsseldorf.

Stephan: I was a late bloomer in respect to the Fulbright Alumni: After some 20 years, I went back to Texas as a tourist, where I became intrigued with the whole alumni concept. Then I learned about the Fulbright Alumni Association through the German Fulbright Commission and joined in 2005.

Claus: I asked the Commission if an alumni association existed. When did I join? That was so many years ago I don't even remember.

Benjamin: Shortly before my return to Germany, I received emails announcing the Welcome Meeting. When I went to attend in November, I had already joined the association. During my stay in the U.S. I was so impressed with the “Alumni Spirit” that I decided to join the German Alumni upon my return home.

Have you served other functions? How long have you been a member of the board?

Barbara: This is my third year as a member of the Fulbright Alumni board; in 2007 and 2008 I served as Vice President for Communications.

Claus: I served as member of the extended board for sponsoring. Now is my second year as treasurer.

Sabine: I have been on the board only since January 2009, but I have been responsible for outdoor events in the Munich regional chapter since January 2007.

What made you say “yes” when they called your name at the general assembly (thereby committing to a lot of work in the coming 12 months)?

Barbara: Thanks to the Fulbright program I spent a great year in the U.S., and I think being involved in the Fulbright Alumni Association is a good way of giving something back to the program and contributing to the Fulbright community.

Stephan: I would say I was still drunk from the Get-Together the previous night. At least drunk with excitement over the perspective to contribute something meaningful to the association's goals.



Barbara Weiten
President, Munich

Sabine: I'm trying to return some of the benefits I received through the Fulbright grant. However I didn't expect it to be this much work :-)

Benjamin: Apart from the aforementioned "alumni spirit", I had the feeling that I wanted to "give something back" because of an outstanding and, really, lifechanging experience in the U.S.

Claus: After having organized the Winter Ball 2008 with the Chapter Ruhrgebiet/Westfalen I wanted to get more involved.

Why do you think returning Fulbrighters should join the association?

Barbara: ... to keep their Fulbright experience alive, to actively participate in the Fulbright community and to contribute to realizing the ideals of the Fulbright program.

Claus: Fulbrighters are exceptionally interested in all things around them and in the world. No other (professional) organization offers the opportunity to meet friends of such diverse interests and open minds. The events are always worth attending. Organizing events or serving on the board gives a lot of experience in a variety of fields.

Benjamin: Have I mentioned the "alumni spirit" yet? (Never mind, can't do that too often.) But pragmatically speaking: You might have noticed what the name "Fulbright" means in the U.S. By joining the Alumni network, you once again confirm your affiliation with the Fulbright program and enter an exclusive network that might bring you in contact with a lot of interesting – and often – high-ranking people. Not to mention the fun it brings to organize all those great events that you are invited to attend (no, seriously!).

Sabine: Because of the very cool events of course :-). No kidding: we are a very active and dedicated group and provide especially young members with the chance to shape the club. Moreover, we provide a forum for exchange on the U.S. experience. Where else do you find so many people who have experienced the same difficulties and benefits from a stay in the U.S.? Let's reminisce about the time of our lives together!



Claus Vollrath-Rödiger
Treasurer, Bochum



Stephan Meyer-Brehm
Vice President Communications, Berlin



Sabine Pallas
Vice President Events, Munich



Benjamin Becker
Vice President Members, Cologne

Stephan: Apart from obvious advantages such as networking and career advancement, I would always cite the rewarding experience to enjoy the company of so many diverse and immensely interesting people at one of the many regional or national events.

What do you think are the main tasks of an association such as this?

Stephan: We can hope to promote Senator Fulbright's ideas beyond the participants' grant period itself: The concept of the world as a human community. Sharing our common experience of a Fulbright program, we can permanently support this concept within our membership and among our friends – starting at a local Stammtisch and extending to our national conferences.

Barbara: ... to offer a platform for dialogue and exchange for Fulbright alumni and friends, to support the Fulbright program and its objectives and to contribute, in a small way, to better global understanding.

Benjamin: Back in the days when the association was founded, people really needed it to "survive" reverse culture shock. In today's fast-moving world this aspect might still be important but – in my opinion – isn't necessarily the main argument for joining the association. I rather see networking and the benefits that it brings about (both in a personal and in a professional way, i.e.: intercultural exchange and job opportunities) as the association's main benefit.

Sabine: Providing a forum for exchange of experience (as explained above), bringing alumni together for various events, cultivating the German-American friendship.

Let's be nostalgic for a second: can you name an event or situation that has made your work for the association special?

Barbara: Since I experienced much of the joined work and effort put into overhauling our website as board member for communications, I was excited about seeing the launch of the

new site, which hopefully will strengthen our association in the coming years.

Sabine: As I am writing this, our PowWow "change@crisis" hasn't taken place yet. However I'm convinced that this event's success will outweigh all our efforts.

Claus: For me personally it was the organizing of events. As an attendant: there were too many to mention.

Stephan: Well, in my case the term "nostalgic" merely applies to the last 6 months. But I have been very impressed by the excellent candidates we have seen in the selection process for the Fulbright Diversity Program, which the Fulbright Alumni Association supports.

Benjamin: Nostalgia after just a couple months? But I of course vividly remember the minutes after my election to the board. While some people might have thought of all the work that was about to result from their election, I was just happy and – once outside the building – called my parents. To me, the whole process that resulted in my election came as a complete surprise and, ahem, made me happy.

What do you do in real life?

Barbara: I am working towards a Ph.D. in Political Science, focusing on U.S. politics and policy.

Stephan: During my career I have held positions in Communications and Marketing for several companies. Today I am a freelance consultant in the same field.

Sabine: I graduated from the Technische Universität Munich with a degree in Mathematics in 2008 and am now enrolled in a Ph.D. program in Business (Management Accounting) at the same institution.

Claus: I am self-employed.

Benjamin: I am currently pursuing my teacher's degree in English and History and will be finished by end of the year.



Claudia Detje: **Online Editor**

The online editor manages the content of the Fulbright Alumni Website, making sure all information is up-to-date and truly represents the current activities of the Association. In order to achieve this, she cooperates with regional groups and other board members, as well as other contributors to the site.

Claudia studied Chemistry at the Technical University Darmstadt before she switched to the Biochemistry program at the Goethe University Frankfurt. She spent her Fulbright year at the University of Kansas, and she has previously served on the board of the Alumni association as Vice President Events.

Astrid Fontius: **International Relations**

The international coordinator both facilitates international cooperation and reaches out to Fulbrighters and Fulbright organizations worldwide. Answering questions from alumni and their associations in other countries is just as important as staying on good terms with our our American partner organization or mediating in case of different expectations with regard to international events.

Astrid spent her Fulbright year (1998/99) in New Wilmington, PA, as TA for German at Westminster College. She thanks the members who elected her for their trust, is deeply indebted to the president for all her support, and very grateful to innumerable Fulbright Association members, who helped her along in the beginning.

Uwe Koch: **Webmaster**

The Webmaster is looking after all technical issues concerning our online presence: email addresses, editor accounts, content management system and other IT related questions. He reports to the board and liaises with designers, editors, regional chapters and event organizers.

Uwe spent his Fulbright Year (1988/89) in Corvallis, OR. After returning to Germany he completed his degree in physics at Eberhard-Karls-Universität Tübingen where he became the first webmaster in 1993.

Julia Mews: **Editor FRANKly**

The *FRANKly*'s editor is in charge of all the things that go into the creation of the alumni association's magazine from finding (and convincing) authors to write articles to editing all the pieces that go into the publication and hunting for pictures. She reports to the board and liaises with the designer, proof-readers and printers.

Julia spent her Fulbright year (2007/08) in Boston, MA, obtaining a master's degree in Publishing and Writing from Emerson College. She is glad to have had the opportunity to work on the *FRANKly* and gladder still about the help she had doing it.

Ursula Mich: **Processes**

This position was created to help harmonize the tasks of the members of the board with those of the FAeV office assistant. It entails detailing the tasks of the assistant and those of the members of the board, which will end up in a manual. It also entails maintaining the office's digital database, the FAeV board website and the paper archives.

The Extended Board



From left to right:

Claudia Detje, Astrid Fontius, Uwe Koch, Julia Mews, Ursula Mich, Holger Schöner, Dagmar Schreiber, Hermes Winands

Ursula, having received her diploma in Library Science, studied mainly juvenile and children's literature at the University of North Carolina from 1982 to 1984. She served as Vice President for Events and Communications from 2004 to 2006. In this period she began the archiving and description of processes, which she now hopes to finish ensuring a smooth collaboration between board and office and to guarantee a trouble free handover in case board members or assistants change.

Holger Schöner: **Mailing Lists**

The task of caring for the email lists has settled to be a rather easy one, after the lists are in place and have been working well for several years. What makes it interesting is the opportunity to stay in touch with members of the board and sometimes other association members or related people, when helping to sort out issues with posts or list membership.

From 1997 to 1998, Holger very much enjoyed his stay in Boulder, CO, while working on an M.S. in Computer Science. Since then, he finished his Ph.D. at the Technical University of Berlin, and is currently working on data analysis in Austria. He started his Fulbright alumni career as head of the regional chapter Berlin. He was Vice President for Communications for two years, and is now glad about the opportunity to participate in the association's affairs even from abroad as mailing list manager.

Dagmar Schreiber: **Sailing Trip**

The coordinator of the bi-annual Fulbright Alumni Association's sailing trip organizes the trip with operator Clipper – Deutsches Jugendwerk zur See e.V. This entails finding the right ship, route, destination, time, crew, etc. From the invitation to all FAeV members, sending packing lists up to last minute changes, it is doing sweet work while looking forward to a relaxing and inspiring week on the Baltic Sea with fellow Fulbrighters every other summer.

Dagmar spent her Fulbright year (1991/92) in Washington, D.C., obtaining a Master of Laws degree in International & Comparative Law from George Washington University Law School. She has enjoyed sailing on old wooden ships ever since her first FAeV sailing trip in 1993 and tries very hard to get other Fulbrighters hooked on the same sea adventure.

Hermes Winands: **Member Database**

Hermes is responsible for the development and maintenance of our member database. This task includes office support (especially during the time of the "Lastschriftinzug" and "Spendenquittungen") and the creation of the yearly member directory. Our member database was custom developed and is now relatively stable.

Hermes recently turned 40 and lives in beautiful Munich. After his Fulbright years as a computer science major at North Dakota State University in Fargo he started to work for Accenture in 1997. Today, he is a senior executive and is mainly responsible for managing large scale IT implementation projects. He has been responsible for our member database since 1998.

Other members of the Extended Board are **Oliver Steinmetz**, who is in charge of the newly created **Jürgen Mulert Stipend**, and **Mario Reichel**, who heads the regional organizing committee for the annual **Welcome Meeting** in Frankfurt (M.).



The Speed of Time

By Dagmar Hovestädt

I have been living away from my parents for pretty much my whole adult life, with the exception of visits once or twice a year. I like my parents, but I seem to like them better at a distance, or at least being distant from them was never a deciding factor in where I chose to live. For the past ten years this “where” has been California. As a result I talk to my father and mother almost only on the phone. We chat about what happens in Westphalia: it’s been raining, dad has a clean bill of health from the doctor, the neighbor has a new baby... We talk about what happens in California: it’s sunny, I have had a busy week working on a story for German TV, I went to the beach. Sometimes our family chatter stumbles across the greatest mystery of all: time. Nothing prepares us for the turn from the banal into this deeply philosophical matter but a deep sigh on my mother’s end. “It is already August... I don’t know where time went; it seems to race ever faster with every year...” And, as if on cue, a Pavlovian response all my own, I retort to this lament that always infuriates me: “That is absolutely not true. Time is completely incorruptible. It is always and forever the same. The same 24 hours to the day, the same 60 minutes to an hour, the same 365 days to the year. So don’t say that.”

Not surprisingly, my rationality is no consolation for the uncomfortable feeling my mother knows to be true. “That may be, but when you get to be my age, you will understand. Time has a way of accelerating and no scientist can tell me any different.” By this point I usually fold and keep my attempts at rationalizing the experience of time to myself. “Well you’ll just have to make the best of every day.” And on we go. When I hang up, there is a little sadness in the air because I can feel that my mother truly laments the melancholy that accompanies the stage of life she is in, the “golden years”. Time races because there is an end in sight. With every day she has made it past her 70th birthday, with every cousin that dies and every neighbor that passes on there is clear evidence of the end of her life as well. Time becomes a very precious commodity when you are no longer afforded the luxury of believing in its infinity. That is the prerogative of the

young. Alas, as Mark Twain so keenly observed, youth is wasted on them. The irony of life: when you know it all and you are finally wise enough to live your life better, the clock is ticking, and you have to face the fact that there is an end to your time. And so the feeling of time racing sets in.

I can see that, but still I am infuriated all the same. Why? For once I do not like to be powerless and helpless over a phenomenon that cannot be changed. No one can stop time, no one knows when his or her time is up, and so you may as well ignore it and not be chased by it. And yet I am not immune to moments where I myself look at my life, time spent, and chances taken or lost. I also have feelings of missed opportunities and of time wasted, where it rushed by meaninglessly. Still I get annoyed at that dreaded sentence because I do not want to succumb to the thought of time racing by ever faster. I want to relate to time in an objective manner. I don’t want to feel like it is out of control. Am I just playing an intellectual game to avoid looking at the absurdity of life, the fact that we are all here to vanish again? The time we got has the biggest power over our existence, who am I to fight that?

Time never raced when I was a child. Christmas seemed to take forever to come, those 24 days from December 1 stretched on like an eternity. On Christmas’ Eve it felt like days until I finally got to open my gifts. Those were the same weeks and days and minutes as they are today. But I cannot remember many moments in my adult life where the endlessness of time was as intense, superfluous and burdensome as it was then. A year was an incomprehensible tangle of never before seen and experienced moments. In January I never thought about what July would bring. I lived every day as it came. My seventh birthday was nothing like the sixth or the tenth, every time it was brand-new, because the previous one was so long ago and I had not learned to relate them to each other. Everything was a singular event. I believed in the surprise of every day as a new day and I never stuck my head far above the river of time that was carrying my youth.



“Timely” Books

By Ursula Mich

Once you’ve celebrated 40 birthdays and 40 Christmases, once you’ve lived through 40 springs, summers, falls and winters, once you’ve woken up 365 times next to the person you love and repeated that another 365 times, the human ability to adapt triumphs over the blissful state of surprise I had been in as a child. The longer you live, the larger your reservoir of experiences grows and the less intense the ever recurring events of your life become. Hence your relationship with time changes, the way you feel about it, the way you experience it. Time itself stays the same, you however change. And with the loss of intensity over the moment you no longer experience it as brand-new. You lose your oblivion over time that this moment takes. You are aware, you know the end, you calculate its course versus the course it took 3 years ago or last week, you become a master of timing, a manager of time.

So how can you stay alive and in the moment when all your life is about repetition? You can take it one day at a time. You can allow yourself the luxury of a child and don’t measure the time in the rules and routines of your adult life. You can allow yourself that vacation, that new job, that move to a new city to experience the same in a new way. You can allow yourself to live every day as if it was the last because when you near the end all you really have are the memories of life lived to the fullest. Every time my mother says that dreaded sentence I am reminded of this and I feel a little guilty for choosing a life far away from them, since the golden years of their life make me want to enjoy more time together with them.



Dagmar Hovestädt, Fulbright 1986/87 (CU Boulder), lives in Los Angeles, CA. This is her second year contributing to the FRANKly

In Search of Lost Time

(À la Recherche du Temps Perdu)

by Michel Proust

This is the most opulent work of fiction of the 20th century and a myth already. For readers of German we recommend the 2009 Suhrkamp edition, revised by Luzius Keller. His insightful notes make this a congenial addition to any Proust collection.

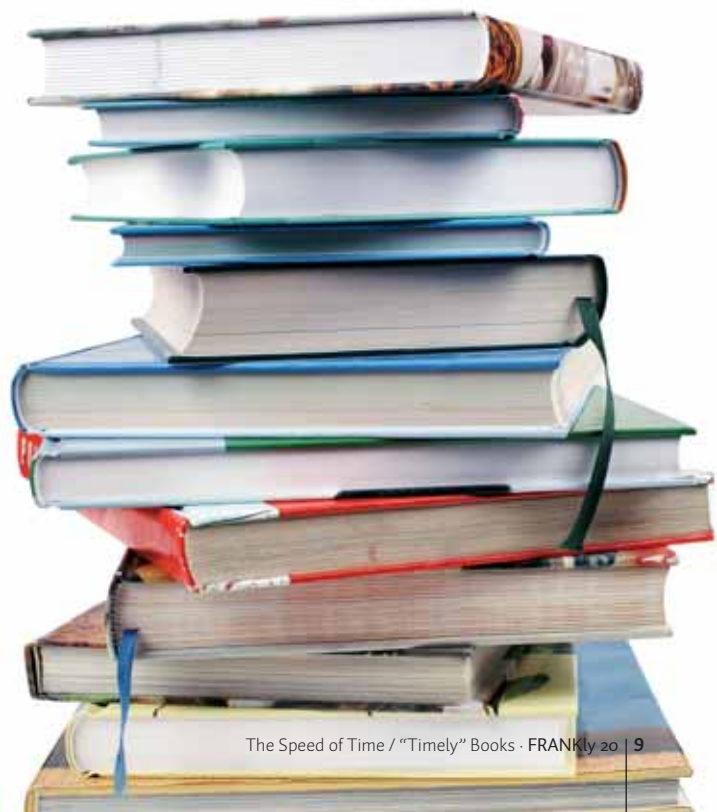
The Time Thieves

(Diebe der Zeit)

by Monika Pelz

Oliver, Dietrich and Simon are not happy: their vacation is over and they must return to boring school. But all of a sudden Sir Douglas, a time traveller, appears in front of them. He takes them on a journey to the England and Scotland of the 16th century. A wonderfully profound novel for both kids and adults.

Continued on Page 15



Digital Communication: Bridging Distance in Intercultural Communication or Virtual Illusion?

By Semira Soraya-Kandan

When asked for contributions to the *FRANKly* to proposed topics like “How does new information technology change our perception of immediacy?” – I immediately volunteered. And there is a story to it. My Fulbright year was in 1989/90 at the University of Washington in Seattle. In 1995 I was asked to speak at a local Fulbright event, looking back at the 5 years after returning from the U.S. The working title I had prepared was “Trotz Email bleibt der Ozean” (“The ocean remains, email notwithstanding.”). Unfortunately, I was not able to actually give the speech. I guess it needed the couple more years for me to get back to it. Now, almost 20 years after my return, the world and our way of communicating across the Atlantic have changed tremendously. So has my view on keeping in touch.

The Happy Birthday Em@il!

Our growing worldwide digital communication amazes me day by day. It has been changing my life continuously since the late eighties when I started preparing for my Fulbright applications through email. (My German professors needed explanations at the time about what it was I was asking their signature for.)

Having studied Rhetoric, Intercultural Communication, and Organizational Psychology and growing up as an early email and internet adopter, I have gone through various phases of excitement and disappointment over new technologies. In the early nineties, I often had the feeling that in spite of the increased immediacy in communicating via email the geographical distance still kept a big ocean of differences between the two continents.

Everything that excited me about multicultural societies and multicultural management in the United States was quite foreign to the German society at the time of my return. I will never forget how I met some U.S. HR professionals in a conference hotel in the mid-nineties. They came originally from Morgan Grenfell participating in the global HR Meeting of the Deutsche Bank. They desperately asked me for advice on how to make the German colleagues understand what they mean by diversity. I shared their despair in research as well as in consulting and training business leaders.

My professional work has since been in the area of leadership development and organizational consulting, focusing on intercultural communication and virtual cooperation. And today, of course, things have evened out quite a bit. The globalization of the economies, the many M&As, and, of course, the internationalization of the work force have contributed to a more globally shared understanding of today’s and tomorrow’s challenges for talent management and business innovations. Recently the FAZ covered Sotomayor’s appointment with an insightful comment on the intricacies of diversity and the relativity of relevant social identities depending on the eye of the beholder.

So where are we today, at the 25th birthday of the world’s first email crossing the Atlantic? Are we still oceans apart? What kind of immediacy do we create and experience through digital communication? What impact does this have on our intercultural communication and relationships?

New Information Technology has brought Unknown Qualities to Digital Communication

Consulting and teaching digital communication for remote teams, “virtual” collaborations or distant leadership, we normally say, emotions are hard to convey and conflicts hard to deal with via email or any other digital communication media. So we recommend that teams have at least their face-to-face kick-offs as a basis for high-performance.

At the same time, we know from internet forums how well people can give each other emotional support in situations of crisis.

Continued on Page 12

How does New Information Technology Change our Perception of Immediacy?

By Volker Bastert

While being a business student at The University of Texas at Austin in 1979/80, opening my mailbox gave me a kick each and every day. I am, of course, talking about the physical mailbox, the one fastened to the wall of my apartment complex. I would open the lid with a key and find letters from home. I would walk upstairs, sit down, carefully cut the envelopes open and sit down to read the letters. I'd then get some stationery to send a reply, mostly on the same day, because it would take a week for the letter or aerogram to cross the Atlantic. I wouldn't want to get my pen friendships endangered by too long a gap between letter and response. It was so painful to open the mailbox lid to see just a gaping void with nothing but a dead cockroach in it.

But as form follows function, so will communication channels have their impact on content. The answering process for letters is all but immediate. Even in the old times when our postal service was reliable I had half a day to write my reply, think it over once or twice – thanks to the slowness of writing by hand.

Still, a bad passage can ruin an entire letter unless you don't mind tearing it up and starting anew. With the advent of email I felt relief. Now I could let my thoughts flow freely and erase whatever did not seem worth sending off before I pressed the "Send" button.

It was some day in the early nineties when an old friend sent me an email starting with "We had an earthquake in Cape Town this morning but don't be alarmed, nothing happened to us." This was the first time I perceived email not just as a tool to save me the walk to the mailbox. It was faster than the news.

It was also a good tool to get transatlantic projects of any kind going, not just businesswise. It helped me during the preparation of a group visit to Faith UCC, the partner church of our congregation in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The process of exchanging views and information on the trip with the responsible person on the other side turned this loose, formal relationship into a closer, personal one. Before the actual trip I counted the emails we had exchanged: there were more than three hundred.

What an effect on the life of a person like me with a passion for information that comes in writing. But as this way of communicating became widespread it also revealed its nightmarish side to me.

Continued on Page 13



Continued from Page 10

The immediacy of social support in political turmoil, in consumer or health care forums e.g., where people anonymously share their worries, questions, sufferings, and hopes, and last but not least their knowledge of events, products or services, is quite remarkable.

The so-called immediacy that allows for quality in communication has traditionally been attributed to aspects such as eye contact, touch, relaxed postures, smiling or personal address, emotional disclosure and acknowledgement, all of which contribute to a perception of increased closeness.

Many of these aspects of face-to-face communication found their correspondence in computer mediated communication: e.g. using smiley and icons to show emotions, employing informal language and “digital codes”, and finally sharing personal information beyond what the situation affords, thus creating trust.

Experts and communication scholars still struggle to find an appropriate terminology for these new hybrid forms of talking to each other in writing. Walter Ong once spoke of “secondary literacy”: “In nontechnologized oral interchange ... there is no perceptible interval between the utterance of the speaker and the hearer’s reception of what is uttered. Oral communication is all immediate, in the present. Writing comes out of the past ...

But in a computer network, the recipient can receive what is communicated with no such interval. Although it is not exactly the same as oral communication, the network message from one person to another or others is very rapid and can in effect be in the present. Computerized communication can thus suggest the immediate experience of direct sound. I believe that is why computerized verbalization has been assimilated to secondary “orality”, even when it comes not in oral-aural format but through the eye, and thus is not directly oral at all. Here textualized verbal exchange registers psychologically as having the temporal immediacy of oral exchange. To handle such technologizing of the textualized word, I have tried occasionally to introduce the term ‘secondary literacy.’”

It remains exciting and challenging to place the emerging forms of digital communication on the oral/literate continuum of human communication. But for now we can surely say that the new information technology has brought new qualities to digital communication, we experience and create an unknown digital immediacy across the globe.

The Virtual is Real.

What is real? What is virtual? Virtuality is unfortunately often associated with the assumption of a reality outside of digital communication. Apart from the epistemological character of this question, I believe, we cannot comprehend the web

with concepts like “second lives”, virtual worlds or cyber realities given the growing volume and relevance digital communication has in our private and professional lives. After all, it needs a “real” corporal presence and the material equipment of having an internet access to participate in the internet. This points at the rather material basis of computer-mediated communication. Therefore, in my opinion, there is no virtual world; there is no reality outside of digital communication. The virtual is real.

Digital Immediacy is Changing our Intercultural Lives

Keeping in touch over distance is also today not always easy; it has always required some effort. But the effort it takes today with email, chat, voip, and social networks to have family, old friends and colleagues participate in your life and the respective changes is much different and less. Getting back in touch has also become so much easier, after all “connectors” are easily accessible (cf. the famous six degrees of the small world phenomenon in Malcom Gladwell’s *Tippint Point*). Apart from reconnecting with old contacts, the internet even allows for radical new forms of communicating with strangers who simply share the same digital contexts (facebook, LinkedIn, myspace, twitter, Xing, you name them). Digital immediacy changes our intercultural lives and our way of dealing with international relationships dramatically. Here I see a potentially great influence on the sustainability of Senator Fulbright’s goals of international experience and friendship.

Twenty five years after the first email crossed the Atlantic, and 20 years after my Fulbright year had started, the Atlantic seems much smaller. I mourn the loss of contact much less and I am indeed looking forward to bridging distance in intercultural communication even further in “the next future”.



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after the beep on the answering machine. You suddenly mispronounce a word in English and it is already followed by a heart-warming “Oh, sh*t!” before you realize that it all gets taped and can be replayed a million times.

You cannot prevent Jeff in California from cutting and pasting some of your instant messages into regular emails which would then be used as a solutions approach to a problem. Most tax consultants have a warning displayed on their stationary like “Oral answers are not legally binding”. Instant messaging answers, I think, should be included here.

*Continued
from Page 11*

I started
developing
adverse feelings
against going on long trips;
too many unread emails would turn
my screen into an embarrassing red light district after
I returned. Sure, you could have the machine send absence
notes like “I am travelling and will not return until [insert date
at least three days after first day back at work]. In urgent
cases, please contact [insert name of colleague in department
who shows excellent performance in coming late and leaving
early]”. But can I afford to leave a simple though urgent tax
question unanswered? And in addition, can I fight back my
curiosity for things that might go wrong while I take my
summer break?

Negative, on both counts! So I finally got one of those news
irons with a fruity name. Obama is supposed to use two of
them simultaneously. I am just becoming familiar with my first
one. What a technical miracle: I can be reached through email
at almost any time unless I am asleep, on a transatlantic flight
or in a movie theater. But I’m sure you’ve heard it all before.
While it is an advantage that anyone can send you an email at
any time, it’s definitely a problem that, well, anyone can send
you an email at any time. And as soon as they know you can
be reached they will want their answers. So don’t hold your
brand new black Appleberry under everybody’s nose, but keep
it well hidden in your pocket.

Sometimes it happened that my clients forced me into new
means of communication of which I had thought of as just a
playground for my children. “Volker,” they would say, “During
the final stage of the asset deal, I want you to be accessible
through instant messaging.”

Instant messaging, used in a business environment, is a light
form of torture. You just can’t take your time to think anything
over, to check with Sybille next door who knows all about the
inverse charge method in value added tax systems within the
European Community. Instant messaging is like the moment

You can have the software send an alert for incoming emails
or decide to just check your mailbox for incoming stuff when-
ever you like. It’s your way of dealing with an overflow, your
job to erect enough firewalls and levees to keep the spill off
your screen, your choice to be LinkedIn to communities which
may serve to find fellow alumni or new business opportunities,
but may sneak away with ever more of your precious off-
screen time.

One of my U.S. clients happens to be a young artist, a nice and
gifted young lady, who apparently has just started an interesting
career. The other month her manager informed me that her
Twitter newsbiz had won over 900,000 readers. Amazing!

I asked my 18-year-old son to tune into this thing I had not
experienced before and he confirmed he had successfully
established this new kind of contact.

“And,” I said, “What’s up with this Twitter thing?” “Oh,” he
said, “She wrote that there had been a skunk in her garden
this morning and she had decided to call him ‘Flower.’” Nine
hundred thousand readers! Gee, what an important skunk,
I thought.

Well, some advancements of information technology that
infringe on our personal lives may look like a cute little animal.
But beware of getting too close. Some of them may stink. I
suggest keeping your distance.



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Weaving Time Tracks as an Aspect of Sustainable Development

By Juliane Dross

Sustainable development as defined by the Brundlandt Commission in 1987 is a development “that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.

Nowadays there seems to be almost no point in discussing why we need sustainable development. It has become a buzz term, one that neatly decorates nearly every second company home page, and a

term that is used in every other speech given by politicians around the world. So you might wonder: what is the problem then, if everyone thinks that a development in which everyone can sustain is a good idea? What’s the big deal with the Copenhagen conference in December 2009 that brings together all major global decision makers in an attempt to agree on binding goals regarding reduction of CO₂ emissions? Why are so many expert observers in the scientific community so pessimistic about its outcome?

Leaving global governance aspects aside, the answer is difficult and simple at the same time, and you have already, maybe unnoticed, read it in the first paragraph of this essay. It’s in the definition of sustainable development, which demands there be justice between the human beings living on planet earth today (intra-generational justice) and justice between young and old, respectively those people alive today and those yet to be born (inter-generational justice).

It is simple to answer the question why it is so hard to reach sustainable development. But it is extremely difficult to translate this answer into practical action, into a solution, because practical actions are embedded into systems. Two of these (overlapping and interacting) systems in Germany are parliamentary democracy and the market economy. Unfortunately both systems aren’t exactly the most suitable ones for yielding to future generation’s interests. If you look critically, a newly elected administration works within a time frame of four years. And if you are 30 years old at the time you’re reading this essay, your “time horizon” is 54 years if you are female, 48 if you are male. The market economy has brought about stock corporations that literally operate within a span of three months. But even if that’s not the case and you’re talking about the more common case in Germany, small and medium sized enterprises, which are not listed at the stock exchange, the term “strategy” seldom implies a time period exceeding five years.

Different solutions have been proposed to extend the time frame of politicians who set the rules in society, which affect today and tomorrow’s generations. One is to lower the age at which a person has the right to vote to the age of zero which in practice means parents would no longer only vote for themselves but also in the name of their children. Another idea is to widen the entrance to political decision-making for career changers who enter the system as, let’s say scientists or business managers for, let’s say reasons of prestige and who are not locked-into a “four year thought modus”. It goes without saying that especially the former proposal brings



about problems, because it violates the basic democratic principle “one person, one vote”.

So on the one hand resistance against sustainable development results from the difficulty to take into account issues, which will come up further down the road. On the other hand antagonism also results from how the economical and the political systems interact.

German sociologist Hartmut Rosa broaches this issue in his study “Beschleunigung. Die Veränderung der Zeitstrukturen in der Moderne” (“Acceleration. Changing Structures of Time in Modernity.”). In it he argues that acceleration is structural-ly and culturally inherent to modern (western) societies.

As long as the different sub-systems accelerate at a similar pace, there will be stability. Or to put it less abstractly: as long as there is an adequate judicial, social, political frame-work accompanying our (economic) actions, everything is fine. But if they happen to desynchronize, a crash is bound to take place, as can currently be observed in the financial crisis.

This problem of de-synchronization implies a far more serious problem than one might think at first: in a world in which economic actions and political decision-making are globalized, complexity increases. But as complexity increases, political decision making, especially in democratic systems, decelerates. Why? Because in pluralistic societies, interests of different groups have to be determined first, then formulated, then be brought into balance with colliding interests. And still – at this point parliament has not decided upon regulations that give a new framework of action for circumstances which societies have not dealt with before.

If you recall the amount of resources that currently flow into backing the financial system and think a minute about how many opportunities for wise future investments are lost, it is almost needless to say that economic and political crashes are certainly not in tune with sustainable development. All of the previously outlined “time-problems” lead to, among others, two big questions that I would like to leave you with: is economic growth inevitable and if not, what kind of growth are we willing to foster today?



Guest author Juliane Dross is working on a master's degree in Energy & Finance at the University of Duisburg-Essen.

“Timely” Books

A Wrinkle in Time

by Madeleine L'Engle

Meg and her brother are very concerned, because their father, a gifted scientist, has disappeared. Luckily they get to know the strange Missis Whatsit, who accompanies them during their search. Through magic wrinkles in time, they arrive at the planet Camazotz, a cold, black world ruled by evil. A desperate fight to free their father begins.

Fallen Out Of Time

(Aus der Zeit Gefallen: Biographische Betrachtungen zum Thema Zeit und Erinnerungen)

by Karin Jaques

This book turns the reader's attention to the question, if the time, in which one lives, is really the one that best corresponds to one's expectations of life. Or is it the human being who should adapt to time?

Confessiones XI: What is Time?

by Aurelius Augustinus

The eleventh book of Augustinus' *Confessiones* is the most discussed text of the late antique philosophy and is described as the classical philosophical document on time.

Mr. Tompkins in Paperback

by George Gamov

Known to and loved by many readers this volume combines George Gamov's wonderful popular science books *Mr. Tompkins in Wonderland* and *Mr. Tompkins Explores the Atom*. They lead a bank clerk into the inner world of an atom. Easy to read even for non-physicists these books explain the central concepts of modern physics, relativity and quantum theory.



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Into the Twilight Zone

Time Travel in Popular Culture

By Stephan Meyer-Brehm

On July 3, 1985, the movie “Back to the Future” premiered in the United States, quickly garnering the number one position at the box office and staying there for eleven consecutive weeks. The film features Michael J. Fox as Marty McFly, a teenager who is accidentally catapulted back in time to 1955, where he meets his own parents in high school. Up against various odds, he must maneuver them into falling in love with each other (otherwise he will not be born in the future) while struggling to make his journey back to the year 1985.

In that same summer of 1985, the author of this story prepared for his own journey, heading off to his Fulbright experience which seemed as much uncharted territory as Marty McFly’s time travel. “Back to the Future” was neither the first, nor the last Hollywood creation dealing with journeys through time. But it was possibly one of the most successful ones spawning two sequels. Why have audiences been so intrigued by the concept of going back, or leaping forward, in time?

This article will attempt to explore our fascination with the idea of time travel. When did literature, and later film and television, start to embrace this unique subject, and what remarkable works of fiction have been created on it? Selecting only a few highlights, I may disappoint literary critics and physicists alike, as I will only briefly touch on the scientific aspects, the technical intricacies and potential snags involved with time travel.

Memoirs of the Twentieth Century, written in 1733 by Irish author Samuel Madden, is widely regarded as one of the first works in western literature covering the subject. The book revolves around letters sent back from 1997 and 1998 by English ambassadors in various countries to the present-day British *Lord High Treasurer* through the hands of a time-traveler.

In the *Christmas Carol* (1843) by Charles Dickens, the Ghost of Christmas Past takes main character Scrooge on a journey to

some of his previous Christmases, while the Ghost of Christmases Yet to Come accompanies him into the future to demonstrate the consequences of his heartlessness.

Enter Mark Twain, an unlikely candidate to miss out on such a gratifying subject. In 1889, his *Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court* was published. The novel tells the tale of Hank Morgan, a 19th-century citizen of Hartford, Connecticut, who awakens to find himself inexplicably transported back in time to England in the year 528. In one of his adventures, the hero tries in vain to apply his alleged magical powers – by uttering some prolonged phrases in German.

The Time Machine by H. G. Wells, first published in 1895, has shaped our concept of time travel considerably by introducing a technical device that allows a person to travel purposefully and selectively. The term “time machine”, coined by Wells, is now universally applied to any such vehicle. His novel has sparked numerous adaptations for film and television, as well as a recent BBC Radio broadcast production.

As this subject proves to be of timeless (no pun intended!) validity, we may briefly sidestep into scientific territory. By definition, time travel describes events either in an altered past, the transformed present, or the possible future, transporting the reader or viewer to another age, place, dimension or world.

Scientists avoid the commonplace language of “moving”, “transporting” or “traveling” through time. Instead, they jostle terms like “closed timelike curves” or “worldlines that form closed loops in spacetime” – as if that would help the general audience to get a better grasp of the whole concept. An awe-inspiring device, throbbing with electric discharges and sending out puffs of green smoke, would be a much more obvious choice for the task.

Apart from the question how we choose to be physically transported into the past or the future, science confronts us

with an assortment of phenomena along the way. Take the “grandfather paradox”, asking the legitimate question of “What if you were able to go back in time and would kill your own grandfather before your father was conceived”? Would you instantly cease to exist because you were never made?

While we are at it, let us quickly deal with two more paradoxes which inevitably get in your way when you are planning your own time travel for the upcoming holiday season. In case you travel back in time, hoping to improve your university grades in retrospect, be aware of the “predestination paradox” and the closely related “ontological paradox”. They basically state that any time traveler who would attempt to alter the past, intentionally or not, would only be fulfilling his role in creating history, not changing it. Any traveler would merely help the future to occur in exactly the same way that it has already happened where he or she came from. So no matter how hard you try, your grades would still come out the same. We will later see how fiction has dealt with these inconvenient scientific obstacles – often by frivolously ignoring them.

Is time travel feasible in reality? Steven Hawking (and he seems to have some authority on the matter) has suggested that the absence of tourists from the future in our own time serves as an obvious argument against the existence of time travel. But simply because we cannot observe any such phenomenon, this doesn’t preclude its existence. Time travel may be physically possible, but just hasn’t been developed yet. Or maybe it is never used because of some nasty side effects like serious motion sickness.

According to author Carl Sagan, time travel may be perfectly possible and time travelers from the future are living with us right now. He suggests that if they have such highly developed technology at their disposal, they may also have perfect invisibility cloaks or something along those lines, and we are just calling them UFOs or hobgoblins or fairies. So time travellers are actually hiding, more or less perfectly, among us, which may explain your mailman’s odd behaviour.

Incidentally, Carl Sagan also wrote the novel *Contact*, which isn’t strictly about time travel, but is touching on some aspects of movement through space and time. The novel was made into a movie in 1995, directed by Robert Zemeckis – of “Back to the Future” fame. Apparently Zemeckis has developed a certain fondness for this genre: he is also the director of the recent film adaptation of Charles Dickens’ “A Christmas Carol”, scheduled for release in the U.S. on November 6 this fall.

So when did Hollywood dig into the subject of time travel? Fairly early, if you consider the all-time Christmas classic “It’s a Wonderful Life” (1946) as part of the category. Strictly

speaking, the plot is a variation of the “Christmas Carol”, with the guardian angel Clarence taking main character George Bailey (James Stewart) to an imaginary future and showing him how much worse off his home town would have been if he had never existed, thereby averting his imminent suicide.

Television quickly embraced the subject of time travel, beginning in the 1950s and 1960s, with classics like “Captain Z-Ro”, “Doctor Who” and the “Time Tunnel”. They usually featured a scientist in command of some sophisticated contraption to safeguard mankind, typical of that technology-happy age.

My personal favourite, however, is “The Twilight Zone”, which first went on air in the U.S. in 1959 with each episode a unique mixture of fantasy, science fiction, suspense, or horror, often concluding with a macabre or unexpected twist. The series had its first revival on U.S. television in the mid 1980s. Time travel serves as a recurrent storyline, as in the 1963 episode “No Time Like the Past”, in which the hero travels into history in a futile attempt to alter the present: He equally fails to warn a Hiroshima police captain about the atomic bomb, to assassinate Adolf Hitler, and to change the course of the Lusitania to avoid being torpedoed by a submarine. But despite all his efforts, history takes its course exactly as he knows it.

And no list like this would be complete without “Star Trek”, where time travel is as commonplace as beaming someone up from a dangerous place. Strictly speaking, the whole series was brought to us from the future anyway, but it involved the occasional side-trip back to a different age. Most memorably so in the 1986 feature film “The Voyage Home”, in which the crew engages in a rescue operation for the humpback whales, which have become extinct in the future.

Meanwhile, the time travel motif was explored further on the big screen, for example in “Planet of the Apes” from 1968, starring Charlton Heston alias George Taylor (just back from the past as Jesus Christ’s contemporary Judah Ben Hur) who travels to a future earth inhabited by intelligent talking primates. Ten years later, Christopher Reeves in “Superman” happily ignores all those funky paradoxes and stout warnings not to interfere with human destiny, traveling back in time and altering the historical timeline, all with the justification of saving Lois Lane.

A very endearing form of time travel occurs in “Groundhog Day” (1993), as lead character Phil Connors finds himself repeating the same day over and over while everyone else around him seems perfectly unaware of the time loop. At first, he intends to take advantage of the situation by indulging in all sorts of forbidden pleasures without fear of long-term consequences, but slowly grows more and more

sarcastic about his experience. His perspective changes when he falls in love with his colleague Rita, trying to impress her in different ways each “new” day. He begins to use his growing experience to become a better person, and eventually lives his “perfect day”.

The most recent addition to the collection is this year’s movie “The Time Traveler’s Wife”, based on the 2003 novel by Audrey Niffenegger. It is a love story about a man with a genetic disorder that causes him to time-travel unpredictably while his wife has to cope with his frequent absences and dangerous experiences. The story serves as a metaphor for complicated and failing relationships, exploring issues of love, loss, distance and miscommunication.

Time travel may prove to be the ultimate love trap, or, on the contrary, the perfect explanation why men and women just can’t get along. It has found its place in popular culture, with the time travel motif serving an ideological and moral function. Even if not always the entire planet’s fate is at stake, time travel confronts us with the most pressing issues that concern people in the present. If we feel powerless in the face of our daily lives, time travel provides a “loophole” through which we can hope to reshape history, and making a difference in today’s world. And in some cases, time travel renders our own time not quite as bad as we thought it was. After all, the past, and the future, aren’t what they used to be.

Some questions remain. Will time travel eventually become a mass tourism phenomenon? This seems as unlikely to us as today’s airline business would have to Wilbur und Orville Wright. And will the smoke-puffing time machines from old movies evolve into zero-emission vehicles? Most likely some bureaucrats in Brussels are already brooding over regulations that will limit carbon levels on your average family time-machine by the year 2025.

Until then, there is another practical way to travel to your own past. Joining the Fulbright Alumni Association provides a way to connect with a very special and defining time in your own previous life. And you find plenty of shipmates who are only too familiar with traveling back and forth in time and space.



Stephan Meyer-Brehm has done the time warp again and again, facing the time barrier as his “final frontier” – where he baldly goes after his hair has gone before.



When I first arrived in Munich at the beginning of September, I remember a time where I was waiting for the S-Bahn along with a myriad of other travelers – locals as well as tourists – and I remember that the S-Bahn was late.

The sign suspended above the platform informed the waiting passengers that their train would be arriving in 2 minutes, now 1 minute, now 0 minutes. Still no train.

Anyone standing in that underground station as this particular S-Bahn turned out to be tardy could have immediately identified the German locals from the temporary visitors. As an American who is accustomed to changes in schedules, system breakdowns and lapses in punctuality, I just stood patiently for the few extra minutes it took for the train to arrive. But my patient silence stood out in the crowd of exasperated Germans, who could be heard sighing with impatience and tapping their feet on the ground and could be seen checking their watches every few seconds, as if calculating just how late this error was going to cause them to be.

This type of situation is rarely seen in Germany. One thing I have come to adore about this country is its remarkably efficient and, with the exception of a few instances, punctual transit system. In fact, I have become so used to the train schedule that I have my watch set to the exact second I know my train will arrive at the Lehel U-Bahn stop. And, if my train is late, you would now find me amongst the crowd of toe-tappers and watch-checkers.

The German transportation system and how Germans relate to it is not the only lesson in time with which I will leave this country. From the moment I arrived, and the realization that I was going to be a resident of this country for 10 months settled in, I started to observe vast differences in the way that Germans value their time.

It’s not a groundbreaking observation that people in America are living in a kind of fast-forward mode. Everything is centered

The Value of Time

By Brenna Moore

on doing things faster, getting there faster, always rushing toward the next task. Funnily enough, people in a rush are also often late.

The American “fashionably late” concept is something that will never be a German custom. They find lateness rude and unnecessary. Needless to say, I learned this the hard way. As one who was always ten or fifteen minutes late for everything, I quickly learned that this was unacceptable in this country, and I’m glad I did. I hate waiting for people, so why make people wait for me? Still, although I have conquered punctuality, I can’t seem to achieve it without being in a hurry.

Even 4,000 miles away from the country in which I grew up, I can’t seem to rid my routine of this incessant need to rush, to cram everything I can into a day, or into an hour even. It seems as though I measure my success on how many things I can accomplish in one day.

The people I have met during my time in Munich seem to have noticed this. “It seems like you are always worrying about something. Do you ever truly relax?” they have said. And they’re right. I make to-do lists probably as often as I brush my teeth.

Not to say that Germans do not have goals to accomplish, they just accomplish them with an entirely different approach. The German couple I live with wakes up early in the morning, eats a nice breakfast together, reads the newspaper, and then heads off to work. In the morning, you can catch me scrambling out of bed, hastily getting ready for the day and then grabbing a granola bar as I dash out the door. It’s not even 9 a.m., and the way we have spent our morning differs greatly. Even on the commute to work, Germans use their time well. On my 50-minute train ride to work, I never seem to miss the sign onboard that reads “Endlich Zeit zum Lesen” (finally time to read). To me, this is just another way the German people really take advantage of the free time they are given, and it seems like they don’t waste one second. Similarly, when my host parents return home from work, they sit down for a dinner

that almost always lasts longer than an hour, and then they relax by reading or watching their favorite television show, while I can usually be found in my room, sending E-mails or updating my blog.

It’s been said to me more than once here that Germans work hard, but they also play hard. While interning for *Focus Magazin*, it became apparent to me that while at work, Germans use their time to really work. They don’t dilly-dally on the Internet, they don’t take personal calls, they don’t chat incessantly to coworkers. And, they don’t bring their work home with them either. It seems as if they have figured out the ideal way to balance their professional life with their personal life, and this is an achievement I am eager to employ.

So many lessons have been learned during my time here that will stay with me forever. Even as I sit and write this article, I somehow cannot fathom how it is almost the end of my grant period, and that I will be leaving this wonderful country in one month. No matter how tightly one tries to hold on to something, the passing of time brings all things to an end. Yet if there is one overall lesson I have learned during my Fulbright year, it is to spend time like a German would: cherish every second of each opportunity, indulge in your free time and use your time wisely, not taking one moment for granted.

If I can’t bring all of Germany back with me, at least I can bring back a part of it within myself.



Brenna Moore received the Young Journalism Award for the 2008-2009 Fulbright year, and is currently working for the Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico.

Time and space are precious resources and symbols of a privileged lifestyle, so having lots of them is a sign of distinction: the man of leisure must take great pains to convert all that beautiful spare time on his hands into something worthwhile – hardly a working-class problem. And the same goes for space: Surrounding oneself with big buildings or fat furniture with ample space between them is a sign of grandeur. Which explains why minimalistic aesthetics reigns in the glossy magazines and apartments of the super-rich, whereas cramped middle-class homes are made homier (and even more cramped) with pillows and other decorations in floral patterns. Both minimalists and “floralists” are right about space, but draw different conclusions because of differing ambitions: Empty space is luxurious (and distancing); avoiding the void is cozy (and humble).

Two to tango: Making the best of a difficult situation

But what does all this have to do with communication skills? And why do some men and a lot of women have to worry about time and space? I am not out to bad-mouth floral patterns; I am out to make you aware of a certain kind of restraint that could prevent you from getting what is rightfully yours. In any interaction between human beings, both parties take part in shaping the interaction. So even the “boss from hell” must be accepted by his or her employees, at least to the extent where they accept working for him or her. I am not claiming that employees have no reason for or right to complain about an unpleasant working environment; It does indeed take two to tango and your superiors or peers may be abusing their power. So if you do get stepped all over your toes all the time, you may be better off leaving than trying in vain to change these insane circumstances. But the vast amount of human interaction is normally insane and can to some extent be influenced by you. Even in the epitomical machismo of Argentine tango, the woman decides whether the dance partner is kept at arm’s length or chest-to-chest and she can choose to follow or not accept his suggestions. In other words: Even if you are not in a position to change the game entirely, you can get better at maneuvering within those rules.

A losing game: My Fair Lady vs. Mr. Big Mouth

School’s out. Which is a pity since this was the place where those who could spell got good grades in spelling, and those who couldn’t didn’t. Academic environments may seem fiercely goal-oriented, but even in academia, factors other than the quality of your academic work influence whether you get that tenure-track job or not. Outside the ivory tower, in the world of glass facades and business, phrases such as “best practice” and “benchmark” are commonplace and seem to signal “management by objectives”, but the objective quality of your work is not the only thing that qualifies you for getting ahead. This can be difficult for many straight A students to grasp, so they end up diligently going about their business whilst big-mouthed colleagues who perform worse get promoted. Quite understandably, you assume that those who promoted them

Take Your Time, Girl!

Why respecting other people’s time too much could be detrimental to being taken seriously

By Ida Storm Jansen



instead of you must be insane. This is a natural reaction. But your second, more productive reaction should be to assume that they are not insane; they are just playing a different game. And your colleague who got promoted was better at this game than you were. In all likelihood, they were busy scoring status points whereas you were trying to get good grades.

Miss Behaving in the status game

Women are, unfortunately, still raised and expected to behave in certain ways counterproductive to getting recognition in status-oriented groups. Studies comparing men's and women's language show that – contrary to common belief – men speak at far more length than women, whereas women speak faster, use more listening signs (nodding, saying “Yes” when someone else is speaking), swear less, speak less dialect. In other words: Women behave themselves; they are more correct, more considerate, more eager to please. In a private conversation between two friends, this is a great way to communicate. In a status-oriented professional context where your opponent could be testing you to find out what your relative power positions are, however, this is lethal – it is pretty much like saying “I am a doormat – go ahead and step on me.”

Win/Win is the best of all worlds, but not the only one

This does not mean, of course, that the last 30 years of literature on communication is wrong – the problem with the vast majority of practical “How To Communicate Better” literature is that it was written by men, for men, addressing their issues and helping them improve their most common weak points – and playing status games usually isn't one of them. This explains why women sometimes feel annoyed when reading communication literature teaching them how to empathize, display interest, etc: This is what they've been doing all along. So why do they still not get promoted? And what about that paycheck? Women could take this as a compliment: For the last quarter of a century, communication experts have been recognizing the merits of female communication skills, eagerly working at teaching the predominantly male business masses how to create win/win situations. But if you happen to be in a lose/win environment and you can't change it, but you don't want to leave it, try to see it as a challenge (I personally don't see anything lovable about it). Or, to put it more bluntly, make sure you are not the one to lose. Below are some things to keep in mind when competing in a status culture.

Time is a status symbol – so flash it!

Don't rush. Speaking quickly signals “What I am saying is not worthwhile so let's get it over with fast.” First step to being heard is speaking up: take your time and do it well; you have every right to take up airtime.

Don't let anyone interrupt you. Either ignore the interruption and simply go on, or tell the person “You are interrupting me,” and then speak on. Or, in case the situation calls for an

emotional response (to be used sparingly!), say, “You are interrupting me again. I hate being interrupted.”

Practice speaking even if you are not being helped with smiles, nods, and other friendly listening signs. Be a big girl. (Or boy.) Have faith that what you are saying makes sense. It probably does.

Get used to liking the void. Feeling comfortable with silence is the ultimate display of time status. Don't expect others to react at all when you speak. And don't feel obliged to react when they speak, either. It may not be your job to be pleasant right now. Silence is powerful and feeling comfortable in the presence of it is cool. Make silence work for you.

Remember that claiming the time that is rightfully yours is the most effective way of signaling, “Yes, I am somebody.” So even if the meeting is getting too long because everyone felt obliged to give off lengthy commentaries void of meaning, you should take as much time as everyone else on your level. In all likelihood, your contribution will still make more sense than that of Mr. Bigmouth, so don't hold back.

Can't we just be nice to each other?

The good news is: You can still be considerate and popular among all the nice guys and girls out there. You do not – indeed: you shouldn't – play unpleasant status games if you are in a friendly win/win environment. These people will like and respect you for not doing so and will consider your needs simply because you ask them to.

Mixed news is that if you choose to play the status game when the situation calls for it, the consequences could be mixed: you will no longer come out the loser of a win/lose game, others fond of that game may respect you more, but they may well like you less.

To sum it up: your interaction with nice people will differ from your interaction with the status crowd and you will have to accept that you may not always be liked by everyone. That goes against a lot of female lore – Cinderella did not fight back; instead she demurely accepted being maltreated by her stepmother and was rewarded with a prince. If you think you deserve princely treatment without being mistreated first however, go get 'em!



Ida Storm Jansen (Fulbright 1995-1997, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, IL) lives and works in Berlin. She has taught communications in the U.S. and Denmark since 1996 and worked in PR, advertising and marketing in Germany since 2001.

PowWows / Focus Conferences

Different regional chapters of our association regularly organize national conferences and seminars, usually covering a specific topic.

1988	Minorities, Conservatism and Design, Frankfurt
1988	The United States and Germany Corporate Cultures in Comparison, Mannheim
1989	Playground Future, Stuttgart
1989	The French Revolution in American and German Perspectives, Regensburg
1990	The Future of the Information Society – Personal Communication in a Crisis? Hamburg
1990	Signs for Tomorrow's Architecture, Landscape and Urban Development, Darmstadt
1991	Traffic Concepts for the Future - How Mobile will our Society be in the Year 2000? München
1991	German Reunification and the Future of German-American Relations, Berlin
1991	Living and Working in Changing Structures, Todtmoos
1992	Health, Köln
1993	Market Leadership and Brand Names, Böblingen
1993	Ecology and Structural Change, Essen
1994	Where is our New Frontier? Stuttgart
1994	Organizational Development and International Competitiveness, Frankfurt
1995	First Fulbright Fun & Future Camp, Lenggries
1995	Environmental Strategy, Heidenheim
1996	A Chance for Global Understanding, Berlin
1996	Multimedia, Stuttgart
1997	Managing Public Organizations, Frankfurt
1998	Intercultural Communications, Frankfurt
1999	Biotechnology, Frauenchiemsee
1999	Educational Systems, Frankfurt
2001	Nutrition, Calw
2002	Quo Vadis USA?, Berlin
2004	EU Enlargement, Berlin
2005	J. William Fulbright Centennial, Frankfurt am Main
2007	Sustainability/ Right Livelihood Award, Bonn
2007	Climate Change, Erlangen
2009	Mastering the Financial Crisis, Munich



FULBRIGHT ALUMNI E.V.

History and Purpose

The German Fulbright Alumni e.V. was founded in Frankfurt in 1986 by former Fulbrighters. By 2009, our membership has increased to over 1200. The association brings together internationally-oriented students, scholars, and practitioners from a wide range of academic fields and areas of professional expertise. Most of our members have spent a Fulbright year in the United States. Fulbright Alumni e.V. is the platform for former grantees with a special affiliation to the U.S., who want to promote global understanding. As we are committed to tolerance and true internationality, we are striving to learn more about other peoples' customs, surroundings and histories.

Based on the personal and educational experience and insights gained as participants in an international exchange program, it is the overriding mission of German Fulbright Alumni e.V. members to

- strengthen and support cross-cultural contacts and exchange between Fulbrighters from all around the world;
- encourage dialogue and interaction between international scholars, experts, and activists on topics important to the political, social, and cultural life of nations.

The German Fulbright Alumni e.V. is guided by the idea of the program's founder, Senator J. William Fulbright, to bring together people of different nations and contribute to world peace through better international understanding.

In promoting its political support for the Fulbright program, our association stays in close but independent contact with the Fulbright Commission in Berlin.

Fulbright Alumni e.V. is supported by its members only. Grants and contributions from foundations, corporations and individuals are welcome.

Activities

Based on a young, lively and broad-based membership, our association organizes a diverse range of regional and nation-wide events.

General Assembly & Winter Ball

Once each year all members are invited to our General Assembly. At the Assembly, each board member reports on his or her activities during the year, followed by the election of a new board. The Assembly is also the forum for members to make movements for decisions by the attendees, which are then binding for the association.

After the General Assembly, the annual Winter Ball is celebrated.

Welcome Meetings

Each fall our Welcome Meeting offers the opportunity for contacts and networking between former and new German returnees as well as American Fulbrighters currently in Germany. The meetings also serve as forums for the discussion of any issues relevant to people after a year abroad.

Arranged by the regional groups the Welcome Meeting has taken place each year since 1986 in many different cities in Germany.

Strategy Meeting

At the Strategy Meeting, the most devoted core of the members come together to discuss the present and future of the association we all hold so dear. Strategy Meetings have so far been held in 1997, 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006 and 2008.

Regional Chapter Activities

Regional chapters organize more informal cultural and social events on a monthly basis, including lectures, discussions, and "Stammtische". To find out about the next "Stammtisch" in your area, contact the regional coordinator listed on the next page.

International Activities

Our association has put an emphasis on strengthening personal contacts among Fulbright alumni all around the world. Some core activities have been:

- 1993 European Fulbright Alumni Convention, Brussels
- 1996 World Fulbright Alumni Conference, The Spirit of Global Understanding, Budapest
- 1998 European Fulbright Alumni Workshop, Strasbourg
- 2000 3rd European Fulbright Alumni Workshop, Toledo
- 2004 The International Interdisciplinary Fulbright Conference, Olympism and the Fulbright Spirit: Humanism in Action, Athens
- 2006 2nd International Fulbright Alumni Conference, Morocco
- 2008 3rd International Fulbright Alumni Conference, Beijing

Other Activities

"Bright People under Full Sail". International sailing trips on the Baltic Sea, every two years since 1991.

Family Weekend, yearly event for singles, couples and families, since 2000.

Our Services

The association publishes a national journal *FRANKly*, an internal newsletter *FAIN*, and an alumni membership directory.

Each regional chapter contacts and assists American Fulbright visiting scholars in its local area. A host program for American Fulbrighters in Germany was successfully established in 1993.

For further information, please contact our national office in Frankfurt or one of our officers listed on the right.

To find out more about the Fulbright Alumni e.V., please visit our website at www.fulbright-alumni.de.

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Welcome Meeting

By Julia Mews

Statement: The Welcome Meeting is a marvelous idea. Rationale: regardless of whether you are a new returnee or a long-term member of the Fulbright Alumni Association, let's face it: by November you have officially run out of people who want to hear about your time in the U.S.

On Friday, November 7, 2008 I was a new returnee and very nervous about the event, not least because it came wrapped in a perfect package with the second Fulbright Career Day organized by the Association of Friends and Sponsors of the German-

and proper name hides a fairly "cool" restaurant decked out in red velvet and serving some of the finest little foods you would not expect anywhere near an Oma Rink.

The next day saw participants get up (more or less) early to meet up at Frankfurt's Goethe University to hear introductions by the who is who of the association and a special keynote speech by Dr. Helmut Schäfer, minister of state in the German foreign ministry.

Afterward it was time to relocate to the offices of the Boston Consulting Group, at the "Frankfurter Welle" ("Wave"), where lunch was had and workshops were held. Subjects included instructions on how to deal with reverse culture shock (for the Germans) or how to survive Germany (for American Fulbrighters). Ample opportunity to reminisce together and meet fellow alumni was given. The day ended with dinner and a party at the "Zoo Gesellschaftshaus" or, for some, in Frankfurt's (late-) nightlife.

Brunch and city tours the next day, for those who were still up to it, concluded a fabulous "Welcome back!" to Germany as well as a great "Welcome!" into the Fulbright Alumni Association.

Thank you to Mario Reichel for his meticulous organization, Aline Klingberg, who was in charge of accounts, Ursula Mich, Reinhard Koch, the many diligent helpers of Frankfurt's regional chapter and then-Fulbright office fairy Julia Irsch.



Organizer Mario Reichel with Kathrin Klein, BCG Recruiting Coordinator. Photo: Wiltrud Hammelstein

Guest speaker Dr. Schäfer. Photo: Wiltrud Hammelstein

American Fulbright Program (VFF). It was a day packed with informational talks and workshops and offered the opportunity to meet up with representatives of companies and initiatives such as Bosch, KPMG, and Teach First Germany to name just a few.

In the evening the Welcome Meeting officially began with a get-together at "Oma Rink's Sterntaler". This might very well be the most awesomely misnamed location of all time: behind the prim



Winter Ball

By Stephan Meyer-Brehm

The 2009 Winter Ball took place from January 30 to February 1 in Berlin, where the city's regional committee had created a full weekend program, ranging from the informal get-together on Friday night to a choice of three cultural excursions on Sunday afternoon. The festive highlight, of course, was the ball itself at the Steigenberger Hotel on Saturday night, generously sponsored by the Embassy of the United States of America in Germany. Almost 180 guests attended, and the Alumni Association was delighted to welcome a very large group of young returnees to Germany, as well as many American guests. Animated conversation accompanied the delicious four-course dinner, and later the dance floor was populated enthusiastically. Our fellow alumna JoAnne Ford joined the band spontaneously, spoiling the crowd with her singing talent. The celebration continued into the wee hours of the morning, but the members reported nearly in full to the Sunday Brunch despite the short night.

This year's Fulbright Alumni Winter Ball also set the stage for the official premiere of the Alumni Video Project. This documentary project, headed by alumnus Jörg Wolf and supported



The Organizing Team: Daniela Muck, Sabine Brambach, Irene Eiermann, and Thomas Isele; Photo: Irene Eiermann



Alumni Anne Schmidt and Marc Otten hunting for clues around the capital;
Photos: Anne Schmidt

by the Embassy of the United States of America in Germany, is designed to showcase the profound and lasting impact of the Fulbright experience. Alumni of various backgrounds and ages have already been interviewed. They talked about their cultural impressions, their academic achievements, their lasting personal friendships as well as the career benefits associated with their time abroad. The video interviews will be continued and soon published online, with the goal to raise public awareness of the Fulbright Program and encourage applicants, while also convincing lawmakers on both sides of the Atlantic that further funding of the program is vital. Last but not least the project is meant to encourage all returnees to join the Alumni Association where they can continue to nurture the Fulbright idea among like-minded people. As is tradition, the annual meeting of the German Fulbright Alumni Association was also held on the weekend of the Winter Ball. Outgoing board members' reports on their work in 2008 as well as the election of a new board were on the agenda. The members also discussed appropriate ways to honor the memory of the Association's founder and former German Program Unit Director of the Fulbright Commission, Dr. Jürgen Mulert, who had passed away after a long illness in December 2008.



Berlin Seminar 2009

Reichstags building, Photo: Thomas Weißschnur

Or: So Many Fulbrighters So Little Time!

By Gil Carbajal

Like vintage wine the Berlin Seminar gets better with every year. Time and creative organization have made it into a veritable festival of Fulbright fellowship, a gathering of the Fulbright clan or a big Fulbright family reunion.

Since its inception fifty-five years ago the Seminar has brought together American Fulbrighters from Germany and other European countries for several days of intellectual and social encounters. Although the format has evolved over the years (in 1975 it lasted a full 7 days), it has now settled into four days which include various theme tours of the city, workshops, panels, a reception hosted by the Town Hall, a Music Gala given by Fulbright musicians and a discotheque night. This year's edition took place on the anniversary year of the fall of the Berlin Wall and had for its theme "New Hopes – New Challenges".

As in any big family a variety of ages are represented ranging from senior scholars to the small children accompanying some of the Fulbrighters and their spouses. In recent years the family feeling has been enhanced by a growing participation by German alumni, and a welcome address by the Alumni Association's President has now become a standard feature of the opening ceremonies. Another alumni contribution added this year was a panel titled "Fulbrighter for Life: Thriving on your Fulbright Experience".

The Fulbright family circle was widened in this year's edition of the Berlin Seminar by a bold innovation: the newly selected German Fulbrighters due to spend the coming academic year in the U.S were invited to the Seminar to meet their American colleagues. From Sunday through Tuesday Americans and Germans mingled, met, networked and partied at night. And to say the very least, the mixture was electric, as testified by a number of Fulbrighters I interviewed in preparation for this article.

But before getting to their comments let me share what Dr. Rolf Hoffman, the Executive Director of the Fulbright Commission, had to say about this experiment. I interviewed him briefly during the Town Hall Reception and asked him how the idea of mixing Fulbrighters from the U.S. and Germany had come up. He said that there had been lacking "a special connection between the German and American groups. They are pretty much the same size, and they have the same goals. They go abroad for similar reasons but they never had an occasion to meet although they are funded by the same organization. We thought it might be a good idea to simply bring them together and the Berlin Seminar was the best venue to do that." He pointed out that the Commission office had immediately begun to get feedback by email from the Germans and that they really enjoyed the meeting and appreciated the opportunity to meet their American counter-

parts. “The experience gave them an idea of what the Fulbright Program is all about,” Dr. Hoffman said, “It’s not only support, it’s an idea and it’s a network. I think they got this feeling much better than they could have gotten it from a regular orientation meeting where they’re just closed up among themselves and get filled with information. Here the information is live, it’s first hand from Americans. And that’s quite different.” Given the obvious success of this pilot experience, Dr. Hoffman said he thought it would be repeated in the future in one form or another.

In the two days they were with us I talked to a number of German Fulbrighters. Enthusiasm and excitement were keynotes of their comments and they especially appreciated the opportunity of gleaning information from the Americans about their destinations in the U.S. But they also took advantage of the opportunity to network among themselves. On the bus on the way to an event, I met Ulf Hlobil, a philosophy student from Trier University heading for the University of Pittsburgh. He had met some American art students and found them interesting and stimulating. One was a girl from Pittsburgh who had given him some tips on housing. But he also met some fellow German philosophers, a girl in peace studies and two fellows specializing in philosophy of science. He was short of sleep because he had spent hours the night before discussing theories of physics with one of the new friends he had made at the Seminar.

Niko Anklam, a student of art history at Humboldt University, on his way to New York University, said it was a “great idea to put all these different people together especially since the term ‘Fulbright Family’ had been mentioned a number of times over the weekend.” He pointed out that after “the process of applying, filling out millions of forms, taking tests and so forth, it was good to have this personal experience and to see something evolving out of all those documents.” Since he worked at the Guggenheim Museum in Berlin, one evening he was able to invite a number of Americans for his tour of an exhibit of American photo-realism in the 1970’s.

Melanie Fischer from the University of Braunschweig was on her way to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to study political psychology. She told me that she had met lots of Americans and that they had some good times. She said the Seminar had been a great opportunity to start an exchange, get to know each other and maybe stay in contact. She also met German alumni who had been to Chapel Hill and got useful information about what to do once on campus. She plans to join the German Alumni Association when she returns because she likes the idea of getting together and helping the new grantees.



The author interviewing Dr. Rolf Hoffman, Photo: Wiltrud Hammelstein



Fulbrighters who had come in from Spain to contribute some musical entertainment, Photo: Wiltrud Hammelstein

There was no less enthusiasm and excitement over this Fulbright family gathering on the American side. Dr. Sue Tretter, a senior scholar from St. Louis Missouri, was teaching graduate students from the Distinguished Chair of American Studies at Leipzig University and was thrilled to see so many young, involved people. She was also impressed to see young couples with their children and regretted that it had never occurred to her to apply for a Fulbright Fellowship while she was still raising her own family. As for the German Fulbrighters, she said, “When I go to the various meetings I will sit in the middle of the students, and they all talk to me and I talk to them. I try to give them an idea of what it’s going to be like living in a dormitory. I give them little hints about how to survive. They have been very open to me, and we’ve talked a lot; and I’ve been handing out my card because if they want to come by St. Louis, I would prefer they come to me because there are some places in the city where they should not go.”

I met Nicholas Sullivan on the U-Bahn on the way to my lodging Monday evening. He was with a group of American and German Fulbrighters on their way to explore the nightlife of Prenzlauer Berg led by a local Berliner who would be studying at NYU in the fall. It had been a long day and I was tired or



Offering a worthy background to the event: "poor, but sexy" Berlin (World time clock in Berlin Alexanderplatz, East-Side Gallery and Berlin Chathedral), Photos: Julia Mews

else I would have joined them, but I did run into Nicholas the next day. He's from Medford, Massachusetts, and was teaching English through American Pop Culture in Kemberg. He said that the Germans had lots of questions for him and were a little bit nervous about what to expect. He helped orientate a girl on her way to Boston College and introduced a German Fulbrighter on his way to Nebraska to an American friend from that state.

But sometimes these Fulbright encounters were just one on one, as in the case of Ben Shivers from Georgia, a teaching assistant in Stenberg. He met a German the first night while waiting in line for the buffet, which, with the crush of nearly six hundred Fulbrighters, was in his words "eternally long." They basically hung out together for the next two days, exchanged addresses before parting, and expressed the hope to visit one another both in Germany and in the U.S.

And speaking of the crush in the buffet line the first evening, Katherine Lawson, from Arlington, Texas, compared it to a "massive buffalo herd" but she was impressed by how well everything was coordinated. She thought the opportunity to brief the Germans on the U.S. was a great idea and said, "There were a lot of things when I first came to Germany that I wish somebody would have told me! Some were going to my hometown. I talked to them about what to anticipate. And also it was just sort of nice to meet Fulbrighters who live in Germany and practice my German. And when I get back I might meet up with them."

On Tuesday a panel on special projects featured a presentation about the "Photo ionization of Highly-charged Ions in an Electron Beam Ion Trap utilizing Advanced Synchrotron Radiation Sources". I was not the only one in the audience who didn't have a clue what the presenter was talking about. But chemistry student Charity Flener would have, had she been there. Instead, she told me, "I was actually networking with another Fulbrighter who studies globalization and its effect on science education. That's what this conference is about to a great extent: experience with German Fulbrighters.

I really enjoyed the time I got to spend with them. It gave me the opportunity to extend a greeting to towns that I know. I actually started passing out cards to places where I had contacts or friends. It was sort of a selfish thing because I want to be able to practice my German whenever I go back. But one of the things that helped me here in Germany was that I knew other Germans who could help me assimilate into the culture; and so if I can help provide that same ability to German Fulbrighters in the U.S., it's a very neat opportunity". Charity went on to tell me how her Fulbright Grant was the final link in a network chain that began at a party at her house where a colleague had encouraged her to apply for a National Science Foundation Summer Institute Fellowship. That first brought her to Marburg. The resulting experience and contacts that came from that grant led her to apply for a Fulbright grant.

There was at least one American Fulbright Fellow who was unable to meet many Germans, David Levin, a guitarist spending the year in Madrid was nervously rehearsing the world premieres of two pieces prepared for him by Spanish composers for the Music Gala on Tuesday night. "You just feel like you have to practice and secure everything the final moments prior to walking out on to the stage," he said. "I wish the concert had been in the beginning because frankly I don't know whether my performance would have been any better toward the end compared to the beginning.

The next day the Germans were gone, but he did bond with the other 12 musicians. "It was a pleasure meeting all of them, he said, "We're all laid back. No matter where musicians come from we can all relate to one another. It's very tribal. We were friends with one another, joking, giggling and having a fun time. We all had a common cause trying to bring forward a fun and interesting interpretation." David was one of several Fulbrighters who came from Spain, most of them bearing bright red t-shirts with a black bull imprinted on them. His concert behind him, he was able to party with everyone else in the Franz Club in the Kulturbrauerei on the closing night of the Seminar.

Fulbright Alumni Workshop

at the Berlin Seminar, March 18, 2009

By Wiltrud Hammelstein

“Fulbrighter for Life: Thriving on your Fulbright Experience” – this was the title of a workshop which the Fulbright Alumni e.V. was asked to organize as part of the Fulbright Commission’s annual Berlin Seminar. The target audience of this workshop were current U.S. Fulbrighters in Germany and other European countries, its goal to give examples of what to do with your Fulbright experience and how to get involved in the Fulbright network once your Fulbright year is over.

Two German and two American Fulbright alumni accepted the invitation to participate in the panel: Petra Göbel, German Fulbright alumna from Berlin who works for Siemens as an HR manager; Gil Carbajal, an American alumnus who spent his Fulbright year in Spain and is now a freelance journalist who divides his time between Madrid and the U.S.; Stefan Sirucek, a U.S. Fulbright alumnus, has stayed on in Berlin after his year in Germany and works as a translator, documentary-film researcher and freelance writer (e.g. for the Huffington Post); and myself, Wiltrud Hammelstein. I am a German Fulbright alumna who now lives and works in Paris. I also had the honour to moderate the panel.

Petra kicked off the presentations by giving an overview of her bio and current job responsibilities as VP Human Resources for a global business. She had also worked in other European countries and the U.S. She stressed that international working experience and fluency in several languages were very beneficial to an international career. But the competition was huge as more and more students studied abroad.

In his presentation Gil talked about how the Fulbright ideal of promoting mutual understanding among people of different cultures had become part of his identity. For more than twenty years as a journalist for Spanish National Radio he had specialized in interviews and reports on the cultural contrasts and similarities between Spain and the U.S. A founding member of the Spanish Fulbright Alumni Association, Gil confessed to being a Fulbright “junkie”: he had attended numerous alumni events not only in Spain, but also in Morocco, Greece, Germany and the U.S. He pointed out that the Berlin Seminar was unique for its mix of activities. And because of the wide range in ages of those who participate, it best reflected the notion of a Fulbright family. He encouraged those in the audience to join their local alumni associations and to become active and engaged in promoting the ideals of the Fulbright Program.

Stefan as the youngest panellist with the most recent Fulbright exchange experience (Germany 2007) gave the participants an honest account of his life in Berlin. He had decided to stay in Germany after his year and sustained himself with translations, documentary-film research and writing for the Huffington Post. Some of the jobs were obtained thanks to Fulbright connections. Being in Berlin at the time when Barack Obama visited the city got him the opportunity to write contributions for the Huffington Post. In his opinion, Berlin had provided him with challenges and opportunities which he might not have had without a Fulbright scholarship.



The panellists: author Wiltrud Hammelstein, Petra Göbel, Stefan Sirucek and Gil Carbajal, Photo: Fulbright Commission

As the last presenter I had chosen to present the U.S. Fulbright Association to the workshop participants as a great opportunity to engage after their return home. I became a lifetime member some years ago as for me the Fulbright Association is unique: while all other countries send their Fulbright scholars to the U.S., the American Fulbrighters can go nearly anywhere in the world. Thus, the participants of their conferences contribute with experience in numerous countries. This exchange has always been very inspiring and motivating to participate in. I have attended many meetings of the U.S. Fulbright Association, be it in Washington, Budapest, Athens, Marrakech, or Beijing last year. Besides the annual meeting the Fulbright Association has local chapters all over the country which organize activities year-around. They are always happy to welcome new members with creative ideas for activities.

After our presentations we opened the floor to questions and discussion. Despite our initial fear that we would only attract few participants on the last day of the seminar, our conference room turned out to be packed with only standing room left for some listeners. A lively conversation developed covering a wide range of questions for all panellists. I hope to see all participants back one day as part of the worldwide Fulbright network.

The Interconnected World

The Fulbright Association's 31st Annual Conference in Beijing, People's Republic of China

By Barbara Weiten

The Fulbright Association's 31st annual conference took place from October 20 to October 22, 2008, in Beijing. Titled "The Interconnected World", it was organized in cooperation with the China Education Association for International Exchange and was designated as one of the official activities marking the 30th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations between China and the United States.

Chinese-American exchange has strong roots in the Fulbright tradition. In November 1947, the first executive agreement under the Fulbright Program was concluded with China. During the 1948-49 academic year, Derk Bodde, an American sinologist and historian of China, became the first U.S. scholar to receive a Fulbright award and served in Beijing as a Fulbright research fellow.

Held each fall, the Fulbright Association's annual conferences attract Fulbright alumni from throughout the U.S. and around the world as well as public officials, members of the private sector and representatives of the higher education and foreign affairs communities. The conferences aim at providing a multi-disciplinary forum for the discussion of international issues and developments in the field of international educational and cultural exchange. They also offer a platform for Fulbright alumni from around the world, many of whom are very involved in Fulbright associations in their respective countries, to reflect on how to promote the Fulbright program and strengthen the alumni community. After Athens in 2004, Beijing 2008

marked the second time the conference took place in the city hosting the Summer Olympics. In 2012, the Fulbright Association expects to hold the conference in London with the cooperation of the British Fulbright Scholars Association and the Fulbright Commission of the United Kingdom.

In Beijing, nearly 200 Fulbright alumni and program staff from Australia, China, Egypt, France, Germany, Japan, Korea, Nepal, Pakistan, Poland, Qatar, Romania, Serbia, Singapore, Spain, United Kingdom, United States, and Vietnam attended the three-day conference. The program offered a plethora of presentations, panels and roundtable-discussions on a wide variety of topics elucidating the conference's theme of the interconnected world, focusing on music, visual arts, science and the environment, business and finance, journalism, communications and (international) education. Among the highlights:

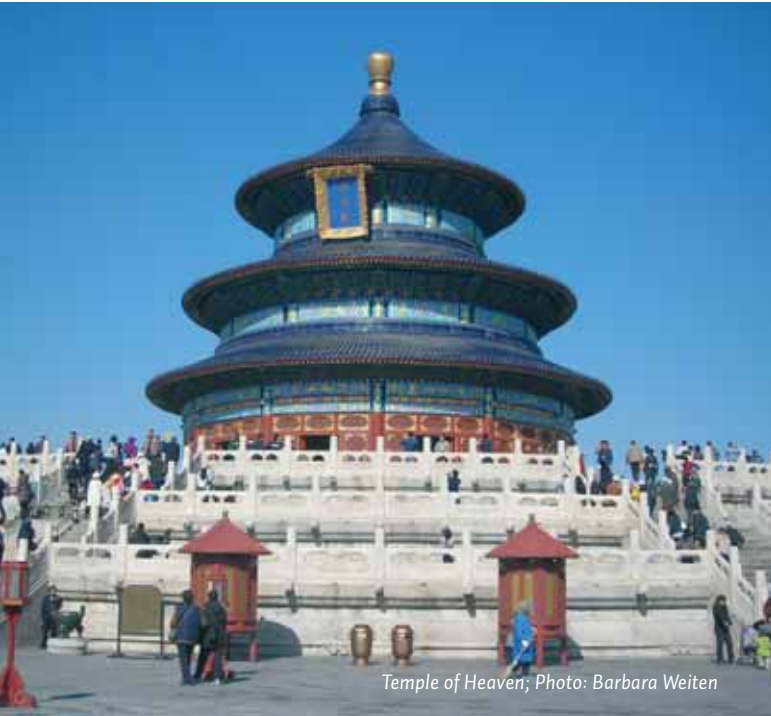
- The 2008 Selma Jeanne Cohen Fund Lecture on International Dance Scholarship, held by Alison Friedman, a 2002 Fulbright grantee to China, focusing on the challenges confronting Chinese modern dance
- A luncheon address by James Fallows, China correspondent for the U.S. magazine *The Atlantic Monthly*, addressing current political, economic and social developments in China, its role in the world, and the U.S.-China relationship



U.S. Fulbright Association Executive Director Jane Anderson and Selma Jeanne Cohen Fund Lecturer Alison Friedman; Photo: Wiltrud Hammelstein



Performance of traditional Chinese music at the cultural reception in Chang Pu Hu Park; Photo: U.S. Fulbright Association



Temple of Heaven; Photo: Barbara Weiten



Inside a traditional Hutong; Photo: Barbara Weiten



Not so traditional Beijing; Photo: Barbara Weiten

In addition, the agenda also included sessions focused on Fulbright alumni associations and their activities, such as the annual business meeting of the U.S. Fulbright Association, various alumni-led roundtable discussions and an alumni panel discussing best practices and challenges in alumni affairs. The latter brought together leaders from various U.S. local and statewide chapters and national alumni associations and offered me, as representative for the German Fulbright Alumni Association, the opportunity to contribute to the conference by presenting activities, successes and challenges of the Fulbright alumni community in Germany.

Moreover, the conference offered cultural and social events, such as a performance showcasing traditional Chinese music, an evening banquet and a reception hosted by His Excellency Carlo Krieger, a Fulbright scholar to the United States in 1982, at the Embassy of Luxembourg, located in a traditional Beijing hutong, a narrow alley featuring historic Chinese architecture.

Demonstrating the conference participants' commitment to the Fulbright idea, a new initiative focused on connecting Fulbrighters around the world has grown out of the Beijing conference: the Interconnected Fulbright Task Force, organized by Keisuke Nakagawa, now immediate past president of the National Capital Area Chapter of the U.S. Fulbright Association, which is being organized and formalized as an official task force of the U.S. Fulbright Association. The task force will address three primary goals: to grow the Fulbright alumni membership to its full potential, to support the growth and start-up of Fulbright Association chapters and national alumni associations, and to connect Fulbrighters around the world. As soon as the task force has been activated, details on how to get involved will be published on the German Fulbright Association's mailing list and website.

In conclusion, I'd like to thank both the U.S. Fulbright Association, especially Executive Director Jane Anderson and her team, and the China Education Association for International Exchange for their dedication and creativity in organising such a memorable event. The Fulbright Association's 32nd Annual Conference will be held in Washington, D.C., from October 29 to November 1, 2009.

More information on the conference can be found at <http://www.fulbright.org/conference/2008/program.htm> and <http://www.fulbright.org/conference/2008/media.html>.

PowWow 2009 change@crisis

By Sabine Pallas

Touring Munich, Photo: Wiltrud Hammelstein

In the beginning of 2009, at the time Barack Obama was inaugurated as 44th President of the U.S., the entire world was in economic turmoil. Reason enough for the Munich Fulbright chapter to organize a PowWow with the objective to analyze the changes necessary due to the crisis and to provide Fulbrighters with a forum to exchange knowledge and ideas. This year's PowWow "change@crisis" took place in Munich from September 11 to 13. For the first time, international Fulbrighters were invited to join the PowWow which resulted in participants coming in from the U.S., Hungary, Moldavia, Sweden and France.



Keynote speaker Conrad Tribble (l.), Jackson Janes (r.)
Photos: Wiltrud Hammelstein

The weekend started with an informal get-together on Friday night in the Augustinerkeller, then on Saturday morning the group gathered in the Amerika Haus for the actual symposium. After opening remarks, newly-assigned Munich Consul General Conrad Tribble welcomed the participants. Tina Huesing prefaced the keynote speech given by Dr. Jackson Janes. He is the executive director of the American Institute for Contemporary German Studies at Johns Hopkins University in Washington, D.C. In his keynote speech, Dr. Jackson Janes provided a broad overview over the German-American and European-American relationship from the 19th century until today and the implications from the current economic crisis on them.

In the afternoon, the group split up into five breakout sessions in which specific changes due to the crisis were analyzed in more detail.

- Dr. Markus Hess the director of "Think Beyond" and founder of "Schoggimail" approached the topic "change@crisis" by sharing his experiences and insights as entrepreneur.
- Prof. Warren Hofstra, historian from Shenandoah University in Virginia, compared Franklin Delano Roosevelt's "New Deal" with Barack Obama's attempts to overcome the current crisis.
- Dr. Markus Hünemörder, a lecturer in American Studies at Ludwigs-Maximilians-University Munich, talked about the impact of the crisis on the U.S. domestic policy level. Looking at the respective domestic political environment, he gave an historical review of President Obama's election campaign in comparison with some campaigns of former U.S. presidents.
- New York Times journalist Nicholas Kulish encouraged a lively debate about the duration and severity of the crisis through vivid personal anecdotes from the streets of Budapest and the German province and background information from his interviews with politicians and business people.

In order to bring the different perspectives together and to round out the program, all the speakers finally convened in a panel discussion, where again a lot of Fulbrighters contributed their questions, ideas and opinions.

The PowWow dinner was held in the atrium of the Boston Consulting Group offices in Munich, where the participants used the different areas for eating, chatting, dancing, networking and relaxing. On Sunday, the remains of the PowWow weekend were spent with a brunch, a city tour and a meeting with all the international participants.

To summarize, it was a successful symposium where everybody left with a positive feeling about the changes necessary to overcome the crisis.

Fulbright Alumni e.V.

Membership Application

AUFNAHMEANTRAG – Entscheidend für den Aufnahmeantrag sind die Kerndaten (ohne*).

Die Angabe der Zusatzdaten (mit*) ist freiwillig. Über die Aufnahme entscheidet der Vorstand.

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Name:

Telefon privat:

Geburtsdatum:

Telefon geschäftlich*:

Straße/Postfach:

E-Mail:

Ich möchte folgender Regionalgruppe angehören:

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|---|--|---|--|---------------------------------|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Aachen | <input type="radio"/> Berlin | <input type="radio"/> Franken (Nürnberg/Erlangen) | <input type="radio"/> Frankfurt/Main | <input type="radio"/> Köln/Bonn | <input type="radio"/> Leipzig |
| <input type="radio"/> München/
Südbayern | <input type="radio"/> Nord (Bremen/Hamburg/
Schleswig Holstein) | <input type="radio"/> Niedersachsen | <input type="radio"/> Ruhrgebiet/
Westfalen | <input type="radio"/> Dresden | <input type="radio"/> Südwest
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U.S.-Studienabschluss:

U.S.-Studienfach:

U.S.-Jahrgang:

Finanzierung:

☐ Fulbright- ☐ Vollstipendium ☐ Teilstipendium ☐ Reisestipendium
☐ DAAD ☐ Direktaustausch ☐ selbst ☐ andere:

*Studienfach/Uni in Deutschland:

*Tätigkeit zur Zeit (Beruf/Arbeitgeber):

*Ideen und Wünsche für den Verein:

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Fulbright Alumni e.V.

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an den Fulbright Alumni e.V., 60008 Frankfurt/Main.

Hiermit ermächtige ich Sie widerruflich, die von mir zu entrichtenden Zahlungen bei Fälligkeit zu Lasten meines Girokontos durch Lastschrift einzuziehen.

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	Spende	_____	€	(jährlich, freiwillig)
	Betrag:	_____	€	

Konto-Nummer	_____	BLZ	_____
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An den
Fulbright Alumni e.V.
Postfach 100 865
60008 Frankfurt



*Ploughing our path
through white splendor.
Photo: Andreas Schoberth*



*"At times the snow got a little more than waist-deep..."
Photo: Andreas Schoberth*

Regional Chapter Stuttgart / Southwest

A Snowshoe Hike in Tirol

By Dirk Lindenau and Andrew Johnson

A group of 13 Fulbright alumni from Stuttgart, Munich and other regional chapters came together in the middle of winter for an adventure, a snowshoe hike in Tirol. The idea for this trip had been developing for a long time when Martin Kruse finally took the initiative to make it a reality. The only things required were snowshoes, snowshoe poles and lots of energy.

We arrived in heavy snowfall at the Bed & Breakfast in Weissenbach. It took only a short time for everyone to get acquainted with each other before the cooking and eating began. The first evening ended very quickly since we had to be out the door very early in the morning. After a short drive to a parking lot, we started the snowshoe hike by first walking along the street into the river valley to the beginning of the trail. At this point everyone strapped the snow shoes onto their hiking boots and we were off up the mountain. The narrow trail snaked through woods and snow-covered mountain fields as we ascended the mountain. The snowshoes gave the user a secure footing and hindered one from sinking into the snow too deep. The sky was cloudy and it snowed without end. Almost one meter of new snow fell that day. Luckily the path to the cabin had already been cleared by snowmobiles so we didn't have to make a new one ourselves.

The group very quickly spread out along the trail. In the front were semi-professional athletes that scaled the mountain slope like chamoises, while those in the rear that did not do such strenuous sports often took a little longer. We met at the Ehenbichler "Alm", the Austrian German word for mountain cabin, and took a break. All of us were tired and hungry, but a small group of diehards still set off for the mountain summit. Afterwards came the much easier descent down the mountain. Everyone had a blast hopping through the deep snow on the way down.

In the evening we came together to cook and try not to fall asleep during dinner. Everyone was exhausted from the long day. The next morning the heavens opened to reveal a snow-covered landscape straight from the picture book. This provided the perfect motivation for those who had the time for a short hike to the Schönkahler. During a stop we could feel the radiant warmth of the sun while sitting on a terrace, before beginning the return trip through a winter wonderland.

On behalf of the participants, I would like to express my thanks and gratitude to Martin Kruse for organizing this event. It was a wonderful weekend and everyone had loads of fun.

Regional Chapter Dresden

Time Well Spent Eight Years of Fulbright Family Weekends

By Elke Handschug-Brosin

*I wish you time
to enjoy,
to give,
to forgive, and
to share beautiful moments with
the ones you love...*

This is an abbreviated rendering of a German poem entitled “Zeit haben zum Leben” (“Taking your time to live”) which decorates my wall. In our busy daily routines, it is important to take a moment to slow down and smell the roses along the way. Therefore, I decided to take the time to reflect back on eight years of Fulbright Family Weekends in Königstein, Saxony.

Once a year, Fulbrighters gather in Königstein for an extended weekend in what is referred to as the Saxon Switzerland. These Family Weekends were established in 2001 and have become a Fulbright (Alumni) tradition. This weekend is different from many of our other events in the sense that there is hardly anything planned ahead. We come together in a breathtaking landscape of sand stone mountains with biking and hiking trails in abundance and a scenic river flowing through.

Each year we take four precious days or 96 hours out of our otherwise busy schedules. Participants come from near and far – some with the expectation to find some peace and tranquillity; others are more ambitious and bike all the way to Meissen for a wine tasting tour (Matthias and Dagmar), canoe down the Elbe or, watch the “Freischütz” in Rathen on one of Europe’s most stunning natural stages (Martin, Johanna and Katharina) to come back through the woods in the middle of the night without even the help of torches. Christine Tröger recently celebrated a “milestone” birthday and guess what I discovered in the slide show about her life: a photo taken on a

steep slope in the Saxon Switzerland on one of our first Fulbright Family Weekends, if not THE first one. The photo shows her with others hauling babies (Fin and Florian) and a stroller uphill. This shared hardship was probably the seed of a great friendship between Christine and the Handschug-Brosin family. Last year, Paul Youngman from the U.S. joined us with his wife and three children. When I ran into him about a year later at Berlin’s main train station, Paul just said that this weekend in Königstein was something else. It helped him recruit the speakers (Ines and Uwe) for his annual field trip to Germany to teach American students about Germany’s past. Those extended hikes and meditative stops along the way made for a productive atmosphere to even get work done effortlessly.

Königstein would not be what it is without the children we bring. They are our greatest teachers of time management. By climbing in the rocky labyrinth forgetting about it altogether they show us how to spend our time wisely. If it had not been for Alba, Adrian, Alex, Andreas, Eik, Fin, Florian, Giske, Hannes, Heiko, Jette, Johanna, Jacob, Jannis, Johannes, Jonah, Jonathan, Keira, Kalle, Linnea, Lily, Madeleine, Paul, Silas, Tamino, Till, Tobias and many others, this event would never have been established.

Thank you to all the children who teach us the long lost trait of treasuring the moment!

The “miracle” of Königstein continues May 13–16, 2010 and June 2–5, 2011 and you are more than welcome to join in. Contact Elke Handschug-Brosin at [rc.dresden\(at\)fulbright-alumni.de](mailto:rc.dresden(at)fulbright-alumni.de) for more information.



View of the river Elbe photographed from Königstein castle.
Photo: Elke Handschug-Brosin

Regional Chapter Leipzig

New Beginnings

By Doreen Schlöffel



Fulbright kids enjoying a fairytale track through the mountains of Saxon's Switzerland, flowers in hair. Photo: Elke Handschug-Brosin

The regional Fulbright chapter in Leipzig has been revived. Currently we are a rather small but fine group. Our Stammtisch takes place every third Tuesday of the month at 8 pm in varying pubs and restaurants. When we meet we decide on the location for the next Stammtisch. The current location can be found in the Fulbright Alumni calendar on the associations' website. (<http://archiv.fulbright-alumni.de/national/events/calendar/calendar.php>)

If you would like to be added to our mailing list, please send me an email. It is important for us to have current contact information, so that we can inform you regularly.

We will organize activities as a group. Such can be a bicycle tour or company visits to Amazon, DHL and others. As is the custom in other regional chapters we would like to celebrate American holidays. Besides getting to know each other, the exchange of ideas and just having a good time together are the main reasons for reviving our group. New ideas and your input are appreciated. If you have any questions or would like to learn more, please give me a call.

Doreen Schlöffel: [doreenschloeffel\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:doreenschloeffel(at)gmail.com),
Tel. 0175 - 97 05 831



Getting lost. Photo: Elke Handschug-Brosin



Frankfurt Fulbrighters at the festivities for the Presidential Inauguration 2009. Photo: Fulbright Alumni Association, Frankfurt

Regional Chapter Frankfurt

Fullies in the City of Finance

By Mario Reichel

For years the restaurant “Künstlerkeller” was a staple of our regional chapter in Frankfurt, one of the largest in our association. It was here that we would meet every first Thursday of the month for our regular Stammtisch and the restaurant hosted many a get-together Friday before the different events of the association, for example the big centennial in 2005 to mention but one. Then, in March 2007, that restaurant went bankrupt, a blow that had such a strong impact on our chapter you may remember us mourning it in last year’s *FRANKly*.

Thus we had to begin choosing a new location for the Stammtisch every month. But as Fullies we do the best we can with a situation and try some “restaurant hopping”. Of course we have tried those traditionally Hessian “ablewoi”, we have also tried American burger restaurants and many international cuisines. At our monthly gatherings we not only eat and drink but also discuss and plan what else to do: cinema, theater, musical, museums and much more. So, if you happen to be in Frankfurt on any first Thursday of a month, check out the FAeV website calendar. Here you will find the location of our next meeting. Fifteen to twenty people from Frankfurt and around meet, some longtime members, some new, some German, some American, and sometimes some international Fulbright family members. And even prospective new grantees get in contact to pick up some final tips and tricks before their interviews.

This year Isabelle Boeddinghaus (outdoor activities), Carsten Kuschnerus (Stammtisch restaurants) and myself were chosen again to head the regional chapter, as were information

expert Reinhard Koch and treasurer Aline Klingberg. Together we are in charge of realizing some of the chapter’s program: our December Stammtisch traditionally starts with a short visit to the famous Christmas Market at the Frankfurt Römer. In January we organized a crash course in ballroom dancing to prepare for the national FAeV Winter Ball and had a chance to introduce this European tradition to participating American students. Last September Reinhard Koch organized a wonderful weekend tour to the neighboring state of Thuringia, into the medieval towns of Mühlhausen and Bad Langensalza as well as into the National Park Hainich. This trip was such a big success that we’ve already planned an encore for this year. In addition to our monthly activities there are annual events, such as the celebration of U.S. holidays Independence Day and Thanksgiving. Another highlight this year was the Presidential Inauguration Celebration at the English Theater. And last but not least I would like to mention our collaboration with the Alumni Association Studienstiftung des Deutschen Volkes has led to some very interesting events. Finally, as I am writing this we are preparing for this year’s Welcome Meeting in November – which will, once again, take place in Frankfurt. We are hard at work to make it a memorable introduction into the association for the latest returnees as well as a highlight for Americans during their stay in Germany.

We are always happy to see new (and “old”) faces, and are definitely open to new ideas to improve our activities, so please show up and speak up! We’d love to hear from you!

Regional Chapter Berlin

A Capital Chapter

By Johannes Wiedemann

About a year ago, our chapter had a reputation for offering its members little to get excited about, besides our time-honored Stammtisch. Organizing this year's Winterball marked a fresh start for us. With our new regional chapter coordinator, Sabine Brambach, leading the way, a handful of dedicated volunteers put together a three-day bash to remember (you can read more about this elegant affair in the *FRANKly's* "Events" section).

Since then, we have further reinvigorated the Berlin chapter by appealing to the different tastes of our members and friends. We went on hikes in the green spaces around Berlin, visited some of the city's most renowned museums and caught some pretty good movies on the screen.

Also, we still meet for our Stammtisch on the first Monday of each month. Usually, when we try out yet another of the capital's culinary hot spots, 20 to 25 people, both regulars and newcomers, show up. Maybe it's because we're quite the diverse bunch these days. Notably, about half of our attendees are usually Fulbright scholars or alumni from the United States. So the Stammtisch has become a great opportunity to socialize with interesting individuals from both sides of the Atlantic.

Still, we feel that we can have a lot more fun together than we already do. That's why we invite all Fulbrighters in the Berlin area to not only attend our get-togethers, but contribute ideas for new, exciting activities. After all, just like the city we live in, we thrive on creativity.



Regional Chapter Munich/Southern Bavaria



Welcome to Munich!

By Florian Kühnel and Sabine Pallas

It just takes a couple of steps for any newly-arrived visitor to Munich to discover that this unique city is full of surprises any way you look and that there is something exciting for everyone. This is also true for the activities organized by the Regional Chapter Munich. We offer something for each and everybody!

Each month, we have our Stammtisch at one of various locations across the city. Depending on the season, we meet at popular cafes, cozy restaurants or at one of Munich's famous beer gardens. Several times a year, there are special themes like the Thanksgiving Stammtisch in November or the Christmas one in December. We also throw a rockin' 4th-of-July-Party with barbecue and pot luck dinner (unfortunately though without the fireworks).

Our very active movie group attends the grand illusion that is an (original version) movie shown on the big screen almost every week. Theater is also on our list of activities: this year we went to a performance of the Lampenfieber-Theater. A major event in the past year was the Presidential Election in the United States and several Fulbright Alumni made it to the 2008 Election Night at the Amerika Haus in Munich. Over the course of the night, everyone cheered for one (or the other?) candidate and waited till the early hours for the projections to come in.

A lot of our events are outdoor ones like the trip we took to a high-ropes course last summer. It takes a lot of courage to balance over a narrow beam more than 60 feet above the ground, jump from one platform to the next or swing from rope to rope, gorilla-style. In the end, every Fulbrighter made it safely back to the ground by means of a giant swing. However, there was still one test of courage left: climbing a huge pole and standing up on top of it. This is quite easily said, but not as easily managed by everybody. Some wimps didn't even try! (We kid about the "wimp" part, of course.) In the fall, a large group of Fulbrighters traveled to Berchtesgaden, crossed the Königssee with the aid of a ferry boat and finally escaped the masses of tourists by taking a hike on the dangerously-exposed Rinnkendlsteig high above the lake. While they made their way up the mountain, the hills vibrated with traditional music as the natives were celebrating a holiday. Over the course of the hike, some shoes were badly torn, but finally everybody made it back into the valley.

Of course, there are winter activities, too! Organized by the Stuttgart Regional Chapter, roughly a dozen Fulbrighters including a group from Munich set out to tackle the slopes of the Lech valley in northwestern Tyrol by means of snowshoes (read more on this in Stuttgart's own article).



Magnificent view across St. Bartholomä and Königssee (to the Steinernes Meer). Photo: Andreas Schoberth



*The obligatory group photo. At Kühroint alp.
Photo: Andreas Schoberth*



*The steep Rinnkendlsteig (leading from St. Bartholomä up to the alp pastures) required some degree of surefootedness.
Photo: Andreas Schoberth*

For those who think that climbing a mountain is way too exhausting (especially in winter), we had a sledding trip a few weeks later. Up the mountain by cable car and down on a sled. Could life get any better? No, but unfortunately, the snow was so wet that we weren't speeding down the track, but rather got stuck every few feet. What fun anyway!

Now, it's already the second half of the year, but we still have some things planned. Activities to come (even if some will already be in the past when this article is published) include a wild canyoning tour through a deep gorge in August and climbing the roof of the famous 1972 Olympic Stadium a few weeks later followed by the PowWow 2009 "change@crisis" September 11 to 13. Hope to see you all in Munich, so you can discover what this exciting city and its active Fulbrighters have in store for you!

Regional Chapter Rhein-Ruhr

Summer Season

By Karin Bohlmann and Doris Wehlau

It was a busy year for Rhein-Ruhr: apart from the monthly meetings in Bochum we focused on activating the Düsseldorf Alumni.

Two events this year stuck out as especially fun: The first took place on June 27 when we were invited to a picnic in the gardens of the residency of U.S. Consul General Boyse in Düsseldorf. For the second time the Consul opened his nice house and gardens to us and gave us a chance to meet Fulbright Alumni of all ages as well as the new ones ready to leave for the U.S. We knew that the Consul's time in Germany was coming to an end and were surprised to hear that he was getting ready to leave for Kabul... No need to say that we spent a few quite enjoyable hours in these gorgeous surroundings, which were completed by interesting conversation and delicious food.

Our second big event was the Fourth of July Barbecue of the chapter, which, this year, took place in Essen. A hungry crowd provided and enjoyed fresh hamburgers, good conversation and all that came along with them. Many had brought their families. The children enjoyed themselves and quickly made new friends. We all enjoyed a sunny afternoon spent together in a relaxed atmosphere with inspiring and interesting talks with old and new friends.

In short: it was a summer filled with fun, sun and some very enjoyable hours of leisure in Rhein-Ruhr and we are looking forward to many more – maybe with you as our newest addition?



Regional Chapter

New Networks

By Ulrich Schlecht

In 2008/09 old cooperations could be renewed, while new partnerships were established.

In the summer of 2008 the regional chapters Cologne-Bonn and Rhein-Ruhr had been invited by Consul General Matthew G. Boyse from Düsseldorf. Together, we enjoyed a nice barbecue at his house. The event had originally been planned as a garden party, but rainy weather gave us a welcome excuse to have a closer look at his mansion. This event was repeated in June 2009 under the same weather conditions.

Old ties were renewed with the Deutsch-Amerikanische Gesellschaft Köln and the Freundeskreis Köln-Indianapolis. A joint Thanksgiving Dinner took place at the Monheimer Hof in Cologne and about 40 guests enjoyed the marvelous turkey. As a special guest, Fulbright Professor Timothy B. Noone presented his skills with the harmonica. He played a wide range of music: Dixie, Jazz, and Bluegrass.

The Amerika Haus Köln was transformed through a private-public partnership into a nonprofit association. The newly founded Amerikahaus e.V. (www.amerikahaus-nrw.de)



*At the Consul General's in Düsseldorf.
Photo: Ulrich Paar*

Cologne-Bonn

became operational in 2008 and offers a wide range of talks and events related to German-American issues. Public events are announced via our e-mail list to offer a new source of information for Fulbright Alumni. As a highlight, the Amerika-haus, the American Consulate, and the Landtag Düsseldorf invited us to celebrate the Inauguration of Barack Obama in the parliament buildings of Düsseldorf.

In January 2009 we changed the concept of the Stammtisch. The distance between Cologne and Bonn was too large to just "come over" for a beer. Instead of these round-table gatherings, we now have special events every second month. In January we visited a museum, in March we met for a Bowling night and for May a football-game was planned.

In July we celebrated the American Independence day with a nice barbecue. Together with the Deutsch-Amerikanische Gesellschaft Köln and the Akademie für Internationale Bildung Bonn, we met on July 10 for an American Garden Party. Both this year's event with Matthew G. Boyse and the Independence Day barbecue were used as Farewell Parties to send future grantees off to what will, we hope, be a great Fulbright year 2009/10.

Now, you've read what they have done this past year. To find out what's in store for the next and to participate, contact your nearest regional chapter.

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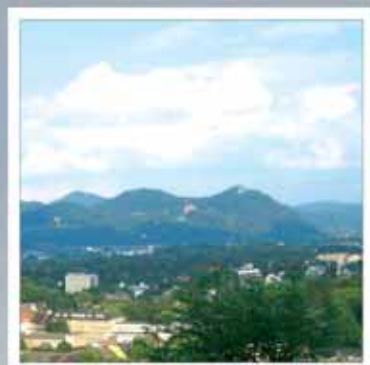
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Bonn, 15.-17. Januar

Winterball 2010





Video Project

By Stephan Meyer-Brehm

As briefly mentioned in this *FRANKly*'s article covering the 2009 Winterball, alumnus Jörg Wolf has completed the first milestones of the Alumni Video Project.



Jörg Wolf interviewing alumnus Steffen Schmuck-Soldan, Photo: Wiltrud Hammelstein

With generous support from the Embassy of the United States of America in Germany, the association is pursuing this documentary project to further raise public awareness of the Fulbright Program and encourage prospective applicants. At the same time, the project serves as a reminder to lawmakers on both sides of the Atlantic that funding of the program is serving essential goals of foreign policy.

One person who certainly doesn't require further convincing is Phil Murphy, the new Ambassador of the United States to Germany. In his first speech to the German press on October 5, 2009 in Berlin, he included Senator Fulbright in his personal list of heroes and emphasized the importance of exchange between Germany and the United States. But in order to better communicate the personal success stories connected with the long-standing German-American Fulbright Program, the project is to interview former grantees of various age groups, professions and backgrounds.



About 30 interviews have been conducted by Jörg Wolf at various locations, focusing on questions such as the influence of a Fulbright year for a later career, the effect of this experience on transatlantic relations, or any personal memories connected with the

exchange. Out of the material that was gathered, the interviews have been edited to highlight characteristic and recurring issues.

The presentation at the Winter Ball was met with great approval by the audience, resulting in many alumni being willing to participate after initial hesitations about privacy.

The edited videos are published online, but the project doesn't stop there. The interviews will be continued, including more prominent Fulbrighters as well as anyone who wishes to share their experience. Jörg Wolf can be contacted at [wolf\(at\)atlanticreview.org](mailto:wolf(at)atlanticreview.org) and is happy to include your alumni viewpoint in this growing documentary.

A Different View of America...

...but still a colourful one.

Text and Images by Lukas Smirek

November 2003 marked a tremendous change in my life. Due to serious problems with my macula I lost the vision of my left and only functioning eye. Nevertheless, I was able to finish school in 2004 and after one year spent on learning blind working and living skills I was able to start my studies as a Business engineer at the Technische Universität Karlsruhe in October 2005. The beginning of my studies marked an important step back to normality and it was also time when my wish to study abroad for a while started to grow. I just wanted to do the same as a lot of my fellow students wanted or still want to do.

But such a plan should be well conceived and so it took another two years before I started to work on it more intensely. At the end of 2006 I talked to the managing director of the Centre for Visually Impaired students of the Universität Karlsruhe about possibilities for studying abroad. After some discussions we decided to contact Professor Arthur Karshmer, teaching at the University of San Francisco (USF) and whose research field is, among others, in the area of assistive technologies and mathematics for visually impaired people.

After some emails and phone calls we were able to make the deal that I was allowed to come to USF in September 2008 and so I started to apply for a Fulbright travel grant, which I was confirmed for in March 2007. So I was able to prepare the final usual steps for my trip. In June I was informed that I was one of the lucky Fulbrighters being allowed to participate in the four-week-long Pre-Academic Program at the University of Connecticut.

July 11, 2009 was the big day. In the morning I took off from Stuttgart Airport to Frankfurt, Washington, and finally Hartford. Since all airlines provide assistance at the airports for handicapped people, travelling by plane wasn't a problem for me. Maybe it was even more relaxed than it is for sighted people.

Relying on personal assistants, knowing the airport like the back of their hands I never had to search for the next gate in a rush and usually the assistant also had time for a quick chat which was nice after the long flights on my own.

In Hartford I was picked up by a student of the University of Connecticut who drove me over to the Campus of UConn located in Storrs. Here I had to spend the first two nights in a hotel before I was able to move into the dorm. I remember pretty well and also still a little bit proudly the moment when



In New York City's Chinatown.

I arrived after a 21-hour journey in my hotel room and I was able to say that I had come as a blind person and almost on my own all the way from Germany to America.

At the beginning I wasn't worried but of course interested and also a little bit curious how the other international students would accept a blind student. Fortunately all of them were open-minded and pretty soon first friendships started to develop.

At the beginning of August it was the first time of the year to say goodbye to some new but already pretty nice friends and I moved on to San Francisco.



San Francisco snow men are a little different



The author in front of the University of San Francisco.

At the San Francisco Airport I was picked up by my guest professor Art Karshmer and his wife Judy.

In San Francisco I stayed in a student's dormitory. I was taught all the ways to and around campus by a professional mobility trainer enabling me to organize life on my own.

In terms of textbooks I had two main sources: the university's e-library and e-learning system and the Students Disability Service (SDS).



The author at a conference in Philadelphia.



I am reading all my literature with my laptop via a voice output or a refreshable Braille display which is connected to the Laptop and can show one line of the screen in Braille letters. The texts from the e-learning systems were directly readable and books were either scanned by the SDS or ordered from the printing houses in a digital version.

The different way of teaching at American Universities was sometimes a bit of a challenge for me. Written homework every week, participation in class discussion and the tremendous amounts of readings were requirements with which I had to deal with for the first time since I went blind. Thanks to the

good cooperation with the SDS, teachers and other students I was able to handle all challenges successfully. Therefore my stay at American universities widened not only my academic perspective but also my working skills and experiences.

Due the closeness to the IIE which is located in San Francisco I got to know a lot of other Fulbrighters which gave me the chance to get a lot of insight into different cultures and again new international friendships started to evolve. Together we began to explore the Bay Area. I can tell you, if you go for a walk in the hills of San Francisco your legs will tell you much more about the steepness of the ascends than your eyes could ever imagine...

Going for a run in Golden Gate Park on a sunny Sunday morning or at Ocean Beach on a sunny November day is also quiet grandiose even without all the visual impressions and of course not to forget the international Christmas day I had with some Fulbrighters and also the wine tasting in Napa valley...

Further impressions I got thanks to my supervisor and guest professor Art Karshmer and his wife. They gave me fantastic insights into the American way of live. They have become fantastic friends during my one year long stay in San Francisco and I want to give special thanks to them for a great year.

After all it was an intense and impressive year and even without any visual impressions it still was a pretty colourful picture of America...

Diversity Initiative

By Stephan Meyer-Brehm

Since 2006 the German Fulbright Alumni Association has given a substantial annual donation to the Association of Friends and Sponsors of the German-American Fulbright Program (VFF). This donation is dedicated to finance several additional grants in the Diversity Initiative administered by the German Fulbright Commission.

This initiative is targeted at highschool graduates (Abiturienten) with a migration background. Thanks to the program they attend summer school at an American university in order to improve their English language skills and to enhance their academic and intercultural competences.

Here are excerpts from first-hand reports by participants of the Diversity Summer Institute 2008 at the California State University at East Bay.

Ms. Zoulikha Outaggarts, Tübingen:

Even after I have been back to Germany for over two weeks, I have to think about my time in the U.S. every single day. It is just unforgettable: the people, the climate (both weather and social climate), the landscape, the ocean, my fellow students, the classes, our discussion with the president of CSUEB, our meeting with German Federal Minister of Justice Brigitte Zypries, our visit to the Federal Bank of America, the trip to Muir Woods, our excursion to Santa Cruz Beach, ...

I, the German: I noticed one thing about me in the USA. I believe I have never before identified with Germany as much as when I was abroad. Asked where I was from, I always answered I came from Germany, but originally from Algeria.

In Germany I never felt as much a German as I did during my stay in the USA. Even when I felt German to a certain extent, other people's behavior always reminded me that I was not really. But I don't mind. First and foremost, I think of myself as a human being.

The question of who I am (in terms of nationality) is not simply answered. My answer has always been: "Well, I am an Algerian blend. My mother is Arab and my father is Berber, but I grew up in Germany."

I am proud to have "intermingled" so much within myself. In my eyes, it is a great asset. In this respect I found something in common with the Americans.

Whenever German history was the subject, I used the term "we". I repeatedly felt compelled to stand up for Germany and our generation, because we have nothing in common with the Nazi regime.

On my student exchanges to England and France I did not have as strong a sense of identification with Germany as I did in the USA. Maybe that is because I was younger then, and didn't stay abroad as long.

I wrote in my application that this stay would be a step toward adulthood. I have always been educated with the aim of becoming self-reliant and self-confident. In Germany, I already was that way. But in the USA, I could take it to a higher level. It was a good preparation for living with roommates, which will mark the beginning of my student life.

I met the most diverse and amazing people: international students, Fulbright scholars and Americans, from whom I learned a lot. I was part of the “melting pot”, instead of just reading about it in books. It was practically impossible to ask the question: “Where are you from?” because it resulted in a lot of vague answers, because only few knew their true ancestry. There, it is exactly as I had envisioned it: you are simply a human being, no matter where you are from, because everyone has diverse origins – like me. I have also learned that the prejudice that Americans are arrogant and rude, is simply not true. One prejudice does apply though: they do eat a lot of greasy food ;-)

Ms. Alexandra Surdina, Düsseldorf:

The first feeling we had as we stepped off the plane at San Francisco airport was quite mundane: hunger. Because of a strike at Lufthansa, we had been served only a single meager meal during the entire 11-hour flight from Frankfurt. We all felt a bit queasy as we passed the American immigration checkpoints with their employees quizzing us to a greater or lesser extent. It seemed the more foreign a person looked, the more questions were asked, and they appeared to relish our apprehension like most bureaucrats. The officer who was responsible for the line that I stood in, gruffly interrogated me for five minutes about the data I provided and the purpose of my visit in a barking voice, then handed me back my passport with a fake smile and the words „Welcome to the USA“ and let me pass. Pure adrenaline.

We had already found out during the preparatory meeting for our trip that the name is the motto for the “Diversity” Initiative. The greatest variety of origins was represented, and there were no two participants present who would have similar interests, lifestyles or personal goals. On the one hand, it contributed to an interesting journey, because learning from each other every day is a unique experience. On the other hand, there were very different requirements regarding our itinerary.

For example, it would be taboo for a devout female Muslim to visit a typical German or American discotheque, where scantily clad women are writhing on the dance floor and alcohol is consumed. Obviously, I respect such a decision, but it didn’t mean I wouldn’t have wanted to see an American disco from the inside.

Those differences and a varying degree of tolerance led to the formation of groups within our group. The entire group could only engage in activities that everyone found interesting, and which none of us would have rejected for reasons of their own schedule, personal interests or religious beliefs. Accordingly, there were probably only three events in which the Fulbright group was present in its entirety: the city tour of San Francisco offered by CSUEB, the visit with the president of the university, and finally the graduation ceremony. Our least common multiple did indeed not leave us with a lot of commonalities.

Still, summer school in California has been the best trip of my life so far, and is beyond any doubt precisely the kind of experience any teenager would want to have between graduation from high school and studying. As we sat in our plane leaving San Francisco, we realized that we had seen very much, but that there was very much we hadn’t. We had fallen in love with sunny California, at least by the time we travelled to Los Angeles. Now every time a magazine reports on new research from Stanford, or a fashion label launches a line of clothing called “Welcome to Yosemite”, or a conference takes place in the Bay Area, I feel those butterflies in my tummy... I can’t wait for the opportunity to spend some of my time as a university student on the other side of the Atlantic.



*The grantees of the German Fulbright Diversity Initiative at their host institution
Photo: Fulbright Commission*

The British composer Benjamin Britten said that “learning is like rowing. Once you stop, you drift back.” I thank all of you for sitting in the same boat with us and helping us row against the current. We have learned a lot! Thank you all for this great opportunity!



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