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## Letter from the Editor



Dear readers,

Post-truth, an adjective that relates to circumstances in which "objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief" has been named the international word of the year by Oxford Dictionaries in 2016. With Great Britain leaving the European Union and Donald Trump winning the American presidential election, facts seem to become less and less relevant factors in defining public discourse. Emotions such as fear, distrust, and suspicion give rise to populist movements, and result in nationalist tendencies all over the globe.

The 2017 edition of the FRANKly explores the meaning of exchange programs such as Fulbright in an age of 'alternative facts' and authoritarian predispositions. Promoting the transnational exchange of knowledge and culture, Fulbright assumes an ever more important role in forming young minds to take an active part in our democracies. US. Representative for Maryland's congressional district and former Fulbright scholar John Sarbanes stresses that "[o]ne of the important ways of exercising soft power is public diplomacy. Within the public diplomacy realm, you can't find a program that is more critical, more successful or more respected than the Fulbright Program." Sarbanes thus rightly points out the crucial role exchange programs such as Fulbright play in shaping public discourse.

With existential budget cuts facing the Fulbright program, it becomes ever more important to reflect on the meaning of Fulbright and our Alumni Association. I am proud to present the articles in this year's edition of the FRANKly,

which engage this topic from multiple perspectives. Tim Verheyden, Fulbright alumnus and senior reporter and anchor with a public broadcaster in Belgium, impressively shows how fake news come into existence, and who profits from spreading them. In "Don't Throw Stones If You Live In a Bubble," TIME magazine correspondent Simon Shuster points to the danger of dismissing Trump voters while living in a bubble ourselves. Maxim A. Suchkov, political analyst and expert of the Valdai Discussion Club and Russian International Affairs Council, shares a personal account of the meaning of Fulbright for the German-Russian relations. Finally, Wiltrud Hammelstein and Ines Winkler show how Fulbrighters take an active part in the celebration of our European values in "Pulse of Europe: The Success Story of a Citizens' Movement in Times of Alternative Facts."

I would like to use the remaining lines to thank Astrid Weingarten, our graphic designer, Martin Kohler, who never fails to support in times of need, as well as our proofreaders Andreas Schoberth and Hans-Christian von Steuber, and, of course, all contributors to this year's edition.

That said, I hope that the FRANKly serves to induce discussions, and to keep us connected through accounts of events and the activities of our regional chapters. Enjoy

7. Schmid Franziska Schmid Frankfurt, August 2017

#### Imprint

FRANKly No. 28 ISSN 1865-5645 October 2017

Fulbright Alumni e.V. Sandweg 81 60316 Frankfurt am Main Germany

Editor: Franziska Schmid

Proofreaders: Andreas Schoberth Hans-Christian von Steuber Design: Astrid Weingarten astrid(at)weingarten-art.de

Cover Photography: Florian Grigoleit

Winter Ball Announcement: Sabine Brambach

Printing and Lettershop: www.weimarlanddruck.de

## Greetings from the President



Dear Fulbrighters and Friends,

It is my pleasure to introduce our annual 28<sup>th</sup> FRANKly magazine 2017. First, I want to honor the great editorial work of our editor Franziska Schmid, and thank her for her engagement with last year's as well as this year's FRANKly. Furthermore, I would like to thank the authors for their contributions to this somewhat political FRANKly issue.

This is the first time that my thoughts and feelings about the topic of our magazine do not increase my excitement about writing greetings for it. However, the topic of our magazine has probably hardly ever been as important as "Fulbright in a Post-Truth age." I believe that the title of this year's FRANKly has been chosen very wisely, and that it is time to talk about the Fulbright program and the current US government.

We were looking back at more than 70 years of worldwide transatlantic exchange and 65 years of German-American partnership through the Fulbright program when the US government proposed a 47% budget cut to the Fulbright program in 2017. To me, this statement symbolizes not only a lack of interest in transatlantic relations and mutual understanding, but also in other nations and global issues in general.

After World War II, Senator J. William Fulbright had the idea of sending young students and researchers abroad to promote worldwide peace through mutual understanding. When he signed the Fulbright Act in 1946, his words were: "In the long course of history, having people who understand your thought is much greater security than another submarine." The current global developments may therefore not exactly be the outcome of what he expected for the 2010s. Although we have been facing budget cut proposals in the past already, it somehow seems to be more threatening and severe this time, not least due to other political decisions that were made and implemented by the US government so far.

Nevertheless, I also believe that just complaining about decisions and turning one's back against the United States, as many Europeans do now, is very easy – far easier than taking action. I can therefore only encourage you to make best use of this situation, and more than ever engage in arguments and protests against the budget cuts, and against any form of anti-cultural and populist politics. We all made great experiences during our Fulbright, and understand more about American culture and transatlantic partnership than many others. I believe that it is our duty to stand not only for Fulbright, but also for the idea of transatlantic and global friendship, proposed by Senator Fulbright in 1946. This starts through simple conversations with fellow German citizens, and ends in political debates between nations. It has to be part of our daily lives no matter who we talk to or at what level we interact. It is more important now than ever to talk about America and Germany, to share our experiences, and to foster mutual appreciation, comprehension, and intercultural exchange. This is the least we can do to prevent political populists, who have gained power in many countries during the last years, from dividing our nations and breaking the intercultural bonds that have been built during the last decades.

Although times as Fulbright scholars have been easier, I hope you enjoy reading our 28<sup>th</sup> FRANKly and get involved in as many conversations, discussions, and debates as possible in order to fight intercultural division, and protect the Fulbright program, as well as Senator Fulbright's idea of a peaceful world.

Vanessa Wergin



Fabienne Rudolph



Bernd Riedel



Florian Grigoleit



Martin Kohle



Vanessa Wergin

## Meet the Board

## Fabienne Rudolph Vice President Events

Fabienne Rudolph graduated with a BA from Hochschule Darmstadt, majoring in Digital Media/Sound before receiving a Fulbright stipend and moving to Boston, MA in 2013. Whilst there she attended Northeastern University and successfully graduated with a M.Sc. in Music Industry Leadership in May 2014. Upon returning to Germany, Fabienne has continually been active in the Fulbright Alumni Association, attending regional events of the Frankfurt, Mannheim-Heidelberg and Berlin regional chapters. She currently works at Boosey and Hawkes Music Publishing as a Copyright and Creative Services Administrator.

## Bernd Riedel Vice President Members

Bernd spent two years as a Fulbrighter in New York at the Parsons School for Design (2011 - 2013). As a Parsons Dean's Scholar, he completed an MFA in Transdisciplinary Design and was a DARPA-funded researcher at the Parsons Institute for Information Mapping. His focus lies on the use of design to navigate complex systems and speculate on possible futures. He co-founded the Ellery Studio for Creative Strategy and is a faculty member at the Design Academy Berlin.

Bernd was elected Vice President Members in March 2017. He welcomes new Fulbright grantees and is eager to promote collaboration and creativity within the Fulbright alumni network for an even more inspiring and valuable experience.

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#### The Board

## Florian Grigoleit

Florian Grigoleit is a Ph.D. student in computer science at the Technische Universität München.

He spent his Fulbright year 2010-11 in Pullman, Washington. After returning from the USA, he participated in various Fulbright Alumni events and, in 2015, he was elected as treasurer.

## Martin Kohler Vice President Communications

Martin Kohler majored in History and Cultural Anthropology at Goethe University Frankfurt where he earned a Master's degree. From 2011 to 2012, he studied at Marquette University in Milwaukee, WI. After having returned from his Fulbright year, Martin joined the German Fulbright Alumni Association and held the position of the FRANKly Editor for two years.

Since 2015, Martin has been directing all internal/external communication of the association.

## Vanessa Wergin President

Vanessa studied Psychology at Goethe-University Frankfurt and spent the academic year 2012/13 at the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee. She holds a M.Sc. in Psychology and is currently working as a PhD student and research associate at the chair of Sportpsychology at Technische Universität München, where she focuses on the topics of sport team performance and choking under pressure.

Vanessa joined the German Fulbright Alumni Association after returning from her Fulbright year in 2013 and held the position of the Vice President Members from 2014 to 2015. Due to the great experiences she shared with other Alumni while being part of the Fulbright Alumni board, she decided to extend her involvement in the association in 2015. As president her focus lies on the enhanced integration of diversity and short time scholars into the Alumni Association as well as on extending the number of regional chapters in Germany.

#### The Extended Board





#### Franziska Schmid FRANKly Editor

Franziska defended her Ph.D. thesis in American Studies in December 2016, and has been working ever since as a project coordinator at Johannes-Gutenberg-University, Mainz. She spent her Fulbright year in 2010-2011 at Hood College in Maryland. Since then, she had the opportunity to return to the U.S. on a research grant from DAAD and a fellowship from Houghton Library, Harvard University. Since 2016, Franziska is in charge of editing the FRANKly.

#### Dunja Nofal Diversity Initiative

Dunja Nofal is currently a student of Politics and Economics at the University of Potsdam. In 2014, she was granted a Fulbright Diversity Scholarship, and studied for one month at the University of Kentucky in Lexington. During her stay, she pursued various academic courses focusing on persuasive speaking and entrepreneurship. After returning from the U.S., she worked in the European Volunteer Service (EVS) in London and in a small human rights organization called CADFA (Camden Abu Dis Friendship Association).

Dunja has been serving as the Fulbright Diversity Chair in the extended board since January 2016. She feels committed to supporting the idea of diversity especially in the alumni group. Events like the Fulbright Diversity Weekend aim to discuss the importance and meaning of diversity.





from left to right: Franziska Schmid, Dunja Nofal, Holger Schöner, Henning Blunck, Felix Wehinger; Simon Wimmer

#### Safar Sarif Outreach

Safar Sarif was a Fulbright grantee in 2008 at California State University, East Bay. Since then, he studied General Management as well as International Relations and continued to work in various finance and strategy positions in Germany and the US. Today, he is working at a Single Family Office of a German entrepreneurial family, conducting long-term and sustainable direct investments into small and medium-sized companies and providing Venture Capital for startups. Together with Ning and Dunja, he organized the Diversity Weekend in Frankfurt and wants to continue supporting the Alumni Association as an Extended Board Member Outreach. His goal is to build and strengthen relationships to supporters and sponsors of the association, as well as build a portfolio of attractive events available to our fellow members.

#### Holger Schöner

#### Mailing Lists

From 1997-98, Holger enjoyed his stay in Boulder, Colorado, while working towards a Master of Science degree in Computer Science. In the meantime, he finished his PhD at the Technical University of Berlin, gained experience in industrial data analysis in Austria, and is currently working in Germany. He started his Fulbright Alumni career as head of the Regional Chapter Berlin, then became Vice President for Communications from 2001-2003, followed by a now long history as mailing list manager.

#### Henning Blunck Online Editor

Henning Blunck obtained a Diplom in Logistics from TU Dortmund. He spent his Fulbright year (2010-2011) at Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta studying Industrial Engineering. Today, Henning works as a scientific assistant in the field of production logistics in Bremen. As online editor he manages the Association's website.

#### Felix Wehinger Mulert Award

Felix received his B.A. in English and Gender Studies at Humboldt Universität zu Berlin and his M.A. in North American Studies at the John-F.-Kennedy Institute at Freie Universität Berlin. His studies focused on race and gender relations in the United States. As a Fulbright grantee he was enrolled in the African American studies program at UCLA in 2011/2012. Currently he is working as a PR-consultant at neues handeln GmbH in Cologne. In spring 2017, Felix joined the Extended Board as the coordinator for the Mulert Award.

#### Simon Wimmer

#### Webmaster

Simon majored in Computer Science at the Technical University of Munich before moving to Philadelphia for his Fulbright year. He completed a Masters in Computer Science at the University of Pennsylvania, and thereafter joined Facebook in California for an internship. Afterwards he returned to Munich to pursue a PhD in Computer Science. Simon got fond of the Association at the regional chapter in Munich and various events, particularly the Fulbright Young Leaders Meeting. In early 2017, he provisionally took over the post of the webmaster and has stuck with it since then.

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#### The Extended Board









From left to right: Elke Handschug-Brosin, Eugen Litwinow, Dagmar Schreiber, Christian Peters

#### Elke Handschug-Brosin

#### Family Weekend

Elke founded the Fulbright Family Weekend because she wanted to stay active in the FAeV as a mother of three boys. Her twins were born in 2000, and the tradition of the Fulbright Family Weekend started in 2001. It is meant to target everyone who feels part of the Fulbright Family – not only those who have turned into parents. The event takes place on an annual basis in Königstein near Dresden (Saxon Switzerland). The next Family Weekend is scheduled for May 10-13, 2018. Elke spent three years (1992-1995) as a Fulbright Scholar in Michigan and Alaska. She graduated from MSU with a Master's Degree in Park and Recreation Resource Management and headed the Visitor Industry Program at the University of Alaska Southeast in Juneau. Her heart has never really left Alaska, thus, she has turned her dedication to this beautiful state into a career, currently as the European representative of Explore Fairbanks Alaska. Elke lives in Radebeul near Dresden with her family.

#### Eugen Litwinow

#### Mentoring

During his Fulbright year 2011-2012, Eugen roamed the streets of New York and attended the Photography Program at the Parsons School for Design. He is co-founder of the Ellery Studio for Creative Strategy, a Berlin-based design agency and home to several other Fulbright Alumni. This year, Eugen took over the challenge to implement a FAeV mentorship program. To that end, he explores new integrative structures to tap into the interdisciplinary and intergenerational knowledge and network potential of our great Fulbright Alumni community.

#### Dagmar Schreiber

#### Sailing Trip

The coordinator of the biannual FAeV's sailing trip organizes the trip with operator Clipper – Deutsches Jugendwerk zur See e.V. This involves finding the right ship and determining the route, destination, time, crew, etc. From the invitation to all FAeV members, sending packing lists, and managing last-minute changes, the position entails 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.

#### Christian Peters

#### Sponsoring

Christian spent two years (2013-2015) as a Fulbright Scholar in Chicago. He obtained a Master's degree in Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering from the Illinois Institute of Technology. During that time Christian fell in love with the city of Chicago, despite its harsh winters. Back in Germany he started an MBA program at the Collège des Ingénieurs in Paris, Munich and Turin, which he finished in July 2016. Currently, Christian is working as a Corporate Planner for an Automotive Supplier near Dortmund. He joined the German Fulbright Alumni Association in October 2016. Since March 2017, he seeks for new sponsorship opportunities in order to financially support the association for its events and activities.

### Marion Schweighart Social Media

After her Bachelor in American Studies and Geography, Marion Schweighart went abroad as a Fulbright scholar to pursue her studies at University of Chicago, IL in 2012/13. After this experience, she started her Master of Science Program in "Geography of Global Change" at the University of Freiburg. She gained practical experience within the fields of Communications, Media, Public Relations, (Scientific) Journalism and (Online-) Marketing and Management with internships at "DIE ZEIT", DNV GL and the Helmholtz Association e.V. Since November 2016, Marion has been working as a project manager and consultant for regional, urban and communal development, participation and governance support. Marion is highly motivated to contribute to the Fulbright Alumni e.V. in her position as the Social Media board member. Supporting our Vice President for Communications and enhancing the Association's Social Media appearance on platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and our blog are the main tasks for the upcoming years.

### Jürgen Simon Archive

At the age of above 30, the German Fulbright Alumni Association has accumulated documents, publications and notes, which reflect the spirit of the past decades as well as the ongoing activities. To develop the structure for preserving the Association's documents for future generations of Fulbright alumni, this Extended Board position was created in 2015

With a Fulbright travel grant plus a direct exchange fellow-ship of Christian-Albrechts-University at Kiel, Jürgen continued his student life at the Kelley School of Business at Indiana University, Bloomington, IN. Years later he returned to Germany with an MBA and a Ph.D. in Business. He worked in various positions in banking and finance, followed by jobs as administrator and instructor for universities of applied sciences.

#### Lisa Schmitz

#### International Alumni Relations:

After studying History, English, and Communication as an undergrad, Lisa moved to Boston on a Fulbright scholarship in 2014 to obtain a Master's degree in Global Studies and International Relations with a concentration in conflict resolution from Northeastern University. She also received a DAAD scholarship in 2015. Currently, Lisa is a PhD candidate at Lüneburg University investigating identity-based conflict and its impact on democracy. Her previous work experience includes a position in the Cultural Affairs section at the German Consulate General in Boston. Lisa joined the German Fulbright Alumni Association earlier this year as a member of the extended board. In her capacity as the International Coordinator Lisa is responsible for reaching out to and keeping in contact with other Fulbright Alumni communities around the world and exploring potential collaboration opportunities.

#### N.N. Welcome Meeting

The member of the Extended Board not featured here is **Hermes Winands**, data management.





From left to right: Marion Schweighart, Jürgen Simon, Lisa Schmitz

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## How Macedonian Teenagers Live the American Dream by Producing Fake News.

## And How We Should Stop Them. by Tim Verheyden

Boris is not at ease. That is the least you could say. With tight pinched eyes he looks around with quick, short moves while biting his nails.

He hardly slept a few hours the last past days. His eyes are red, his skin pale. Boris is 19, he shuffles indifferently towards me in his teenage outfit: sports jacket, sweatpants and so up to date expensive sport shoes.

In some parts of Europe, Boris would be an inconspicuous teenager, but here in Veles, a small town in Macedonia, he is a well respected business man. He can only afford the clothes he is wearing by the booming business he is running. The same business that keeps him awake at night: creating and spreading clickbait and fake news on websites as 'trumpmovements.com'

"I wrote a fake story about Kim Kardashian supporting Trump, but suddenly that became a real story when Kanye (Kim Kardashian's partner) met with Trump. That story was shared a lot: 17.000 times in 5 or 6 hours. It really went viral and I made a lot of money out of it. I make a lot of money each month, I am talking about 5 figures. A range between 10.000 euros and 90.000 euros a month."

#### Stories have power, politicians don't

When you think about it, it is almost so hard to believe that a bunch of teenagers like Boris played an essential role in the process of fake news becoming a worldwide term, trend, and eventually a problem and a phrase for everybody in the political spectrum to use and abuse every time the so called 'mainstream' media reports on topics some politicians dislike. It became a term to discredit journalists in a way that they hardly can counter. 'You are fake news'. There you are, as a journalist, standing with arguments to counter an emotional outburst. You have no way to go.

As said, these youngster in Veles played a key role in producing and spreading fake news during the US presidential elections. From this small town, where I am talking with Boris and other boys, every day hundreds of stories get spread on specialized sites and in Facebook groups to feed the hunger for stories on Mr. Trump, true or not. You might remember a story about Pope Frances supporting Donald Trump as -then- candidate for the Office of The President of the United States. It was totally made up, but despite that it got shared more than a million times on Facebook.

At a certain moment during the campaign, fake news stories got more engagement in terms of commenting, sharing and liking than real news stories. In the end, the influence might not be crucial as some studies showed, but these fake news stories definitely influence a big group of voters.

"In the end it is not about power or influence, it is about money" Boris tells me in Veles. "We don't care about that. We don't want enlightening, inspirational conversations and discussions on Facebook. We want to live the American Dream, here in Macedonia. If people want stories about Trump, we'll give them those stories. And they give us money."

Boris earns his money trough GoogleAds and Facebook. The Teenager runs more than 700 fake Facebook profiles. Each time he writes a fake news story on one of his websites, he uses his mass accounts to publish these stories in Facebook groups on, for example, Donald Trump. Hoping that they click, read and share these stories, in this way Boris can reach thousands of people with a simple mouse click and earn money: "Compare it with a store," he continues, "the more customers we get, the more they look around and click on ads, the more money we earn trough GoogleAds." GoogleAds is an online advertising algorithm that helps owners of sites make money with targeted advertising.

"In a few years, I want to have earned a million dollars, and it is possible because fake news is still a booming business. The average monthly wage here in Veles is 300 Euros a month. That's what I earn every day now. The unemployment rate goes trough the roof, poverty is high. Why on earth should I stop producing fake news?"

#### Dangerous point of no return

Boris has a point. Why should he? Because it is unethical? But it is not forbidden.

So how can we, as part of the 'mainstream' (ugh, what a word) take up the battle against this kind of fake news? This battle is so crucial because if people stop believing the real news, we reach a dangerous point of no return.

Can we take on that battle? Yes. But we may not only rely on tech companies to do so. Facebook, for example, still says it is a tech company, but reality has proven that the platform is way beyond that point. It has become a media company and platform. It does not only connect people, for millennials it has become the main news source so it has to take its responsibility seriously.

In thousands of Facebook groups, news and fake news stories are still being spread. People still live in filter bubbles where they get served an unbalanced world view caused by these stories. And like Boris said, people are making money out of it. And so does Facebook. Let's hope Mr. Zuckerberg finds that credibility is even more important than revenue.

For us, journalists, the only way to beat fake news is to deliver amazing journalism. Beyond the clicks & likes, because like Prof. Jeff Jarvis once said, they only lead to more cats and Kardashians. I realize that, especially for commercial media companies that is not obvious. There is nothing wrong with frivolous-easy-to-read-popcorn-forthe-brain-articles and stories with catchy headlines. For many decades, that was and still is part of journalism.

But even these stories have to strive for balanced journalism and truth. And there is still a lot of work to do when you scan these kind of stories on tabloids and more moderate websites. We must have the courage to do some more self reflection, and start the debates on what journalism should be in this post-truth era: it starts with reporting and ends with amazing storytelling on so much that is going on in the world.

#### Trust is key

But first of all, it is time to restore that all time low trust in journalism. We should consider new models of journalism in which we, for example, involve our readers, listeners

and viewers. New forms of journalism where we use the internet not only as a platform, but as a conversation tool to encourage public empowered journalism. It is one of the things to do in order to restore trust in journalism because trust is our unique selling point. As a journalist of a public broadcaster I do not only make stories, I sell trust trough good journalism. Like many of my colleagues in all kind of outlets all over the world.

It is also time to overcome the so called media gap. There is this huge distance between middle class journalists and the rest of the world. We need to share more on how we think, how we produces stories, explain the choices we make and how media works in order to connect again with our audience

Journalism is about people and we still neglect them more

In a world where facts aren't always considered as facts anymore, 'mainstream' media outlets have a tremendous responsibility when it comes to our world view and the intensifying debates in and on our society, how we live and with whom.

So we also need more than ever respect for facts, tone of voice and context on what is going on in the world. We owe that to society.

Guys like Boris will not stop producing fake news. He tells me: "You should come back in a few years, just before the next US Presidential Elections. Then our business will be booming. We are just getting ready."

**Tim Verheyden** is senior reporter and anchor with the public broadcaster VRT in Belgium. He hosted several current affair shows and was Chief Storyteller with the broadcast news. Previously, he worked for vtm as a senior and international reporter, covering stories from Chernobyl, Haiti, Pakistan, Norway, and the Arab spring in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya. He was also based in New York City as a correspondent where he was awarded a Fulbright scholarship to study at the City Universi-

ty of New York, taking classes in Entrepreneurial Journalism and Video Storvtelling, Tim wrote a book on storytelling: 'How To Story'. He lives in Brussels.



## Don't Throw Stones If You Live In a Bubble

by Simon Shuster

Earlier this year, when a lot of my colleagues in the media were still dazed from the outcome of the U.S. elections, I met up with a few of them while passing through New York City. A strange sort of numbness or grogginess is how I would describe their mood at the time, and probably also my own. We were already sick of discussing the elections but didn't yet have much else to talk about. There were a lot of sighs and silences.

Kellyanne Conway, the adviser to Donald Trump, would unwittingly coin the term "alternative facts" a couple of weeks later, after the Inauguration. But the idea was wafting around before she said it. Phrases like post-truth, fake news and filter bubbles were already in fashion in early January, primarily as a means of explaining the election without thinking about it too deeply. They all implied that Trump's voters had either to be pitied, educated or dismissed.

Rather than basing their votes on solid facts and reasoning, they must have been caught up in some kind of deception, unable to grasp the truth about the candidates or to see through the delirium of their campaigns. At least among the colleagues I met in New York, the going consensus was that a lot of Trump's electorate must live in a world of confusion and ignorance, and it was our job as journalists to pry them out of there.

This theory was comforting, even empowering, until one editor punched a hole in it. All it took was a few questions that she asked while looking around the newsroom where she works: How many people in these offices have ever lived on a farm? How many have served in the military? How many have miners for parents, or factory workers? If not zero, the answer was damn close to it, and the editor let that sink in before pointing out another filter bubble, the one we were standing in.

Her point was simple. No matter how much we try to broaden our audience in Trump's America, reporters won't have much chance of reaching anyone on that side of post-truth divide as long as the country's dominant news outlets are based in New York City and staffed with people who have never experienced life in the rust belt, the bible belt or, for that matter, anywhere else outside their social habitat.

This reality is tough to acknowledge. It's much tougher than simply dismissing a very large portion of Americans as post-truthers or bubble people. It means accepting that we can't address the crisis of confidence in journalism by simply sending reporters on safaris into coal country once in a while. It means we have to mix things up, which isn't easy. We're not much inclined as a nation or a species to mingle with those we don't understand.

I remembered that awkward moment in the newsroom when I saw the call for submissions to this edition of FRANKly. One of the questions it asked was how Fulbright contributes to the process of finding and telling truth. It's a tough one, in part because truth is a very hard thing to define. Scholars of epistemology, to say nothing of journalists, haven't provided any answer that would put the question to rest. But one thing Fulbright does well is mix things up among communities that might otherwise keep to themselves. That probably won't get us much closer to consensus on the nature of Truth. But at least it livens up the debate.

**Simon Shuster** is a reporter based in Berlin. After graduating from Stanford with a bachelor's degree

in philosophy, he lived in Berlin on a Fulbright grant in 2005-2006 before moving to Moscow to work as a journalist for various publications. He moved back to Berlin in 2013 as a correspondent for TIME Magazine covering Central and Eastern Europe.



## Reflections from a Russian Alumnus

by Maxim Suchkov

"Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house." (Matthew 5:15)

It gives me pleasure to share a few thoughts on how I believe the Fulbright experience is important in a Post-Truth Age, and in which way it functions as a counterpoise to current developments in international relations. Born in 1986 – a year of tremendous significance to Germany – in the city of Volgograd (formerly Stalingrad) that is just as historically important to Russia, I've always had a sense of responsibility in learning and accurately applying lessons of the past to the developments of the present. The more I dived into the professional depth of international relations, the more I realized how important it was to carry through with this mission.

Growing up in the North Caucasus, which was rattled in the 1990s by ethnic tensions and wars, I witnessed my country go through one of the most dramatic periods in its contemporary history, while yours was going through one of the most critical moments in its own history. Although the courses of those histories were different, the very people of our generation had similar aspirations and dreams. In fact, I believe it was in large part due to those dreams that back in the day moved all of us to apply for the Fulbright program. As a Fulbrighter at Georgetown University, I met my first German Fulbright peer – Franziska Schmid – at a Fulbright get-together in Washington D.C. I've been meeting many German and international Fulbrighters ever since, and all of them proved what I learned when I met Franzi – we have a lot more in common than previous generations might have had, and our joint creative potential is much higher and more promising than our conflict potential. This is the principle that guides me up to the current day.

Sadly, nowadays Russia and Germany – as much as the rest of the West – are finding themselves on opposite sides of virtually any big international conflict with each party promoting its own narrative and further alienating respective peoples from one another. This is dangerous and

wrong. It certainly is tempting to pin the blame for the crisis in the relationship to the politicians – which ultimately wouldn't be too far from the truth – but we, the people, bear a special responsibility to bridge the growing chasm. As those born and raised in the "new era" with a mentality different from our forefathers, but equally committed to the prosperity of our nations and democratic development of our societies, can and should act on this opportunity.

This is especially important in the so called "post-truth" age in which speculations supersede knowledge, and falsehoods blur the lines between "good" and "bad," between "accurate" and "incorrect". We, however, are empowered by the broader horizons we gained during our Fulbright years. We are empowered by the knowledge we accumulated each in our own field. We are empowered by the critical thinking we sharpened while living abroad. Thus, in many ways, we are prepared to stand up to "the post-truth age" a lot better than many others. However, we also have the responsibility to share our experience with others to not fall prey to that "age".

I do not have a silver bullet, and to a great extent I am still learning myself on how to better implement everything I gained as a Fulbrighter. But I know for sure that once you embraced the Fulbright experience, it stays with you forever. It's our duty to work it properly, including for those who may have been less lucky in not having such an experience. That's what in my view helps keep the "virtuous circle" of Fulbright spinning.

Maxim A. Suchkov, PhD, political analyst, currently Editor of Al-Monitor's coverage of Russia's foreign policy in the Middle East. He also is expert of the Valdai Discussion Club and Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC) based in Moscow.

He was a Fulbright Visiting Researcher at Georgetown University's Center for Eurasian, Russian and East European Studies-CERES (2010-2011).





## The Success Story of a Citizens' Movement in Times of Alternative Facts

May  $7^{th}$  2017, PoE in Cologne, the day of the second tou of the French Presidential election: yes, we care!

by Wiltrud Hammelstein and Ines Winkler

2016 was a year of unexpected political events both in Europe and the USA: first, the British people voted to leave the European Union in June, better known as Brexit. Second, the presidential election in the USA brought a person to power who calls the media 'fake news,' and sends out alternative facts in messages of 140 characters. At first, the results of both elections

left a lot of people in shock, but soon took people to the streets standing up against the attempts of populists who twist facts. In the US (and around the world) people marched for women's rights just one day after the inauguration. Other marches followed, e.g. for science.

In Europe, a couple from Frankfurt, Germany, did not want to be passive bystanders, but thought it was time to speak up FOR Europe – its diversity,

fundamental freedoms, and values. The goal was to prevent anti-European populists from dominating public opinion about the EU, and destroy Europe. They called the movement "Pulse of Europe". For the first gathering in Frankfurt in November 2016, a few hundred people

showed up to be the first "pulse givers for Europe." The goal was to let PRO-Europeans be loud and visible in a politically neutral and positive way. The Pulse of Europe gatherings follow a certain format: the participants discuss what happened in European countries in the past week in order to subsequently share their experiences with Europe through an "open microphone." At the end of each meeting, everyone is invited to form a human chain, and sing together the European by Ludwig van Beethoven.

anthem "Ode an die Freude"

"Pulse of Eu<mark>rope" be</mark>came a regular event as it started to take place every Sunday. The idea was spread via word-of-mouth, social media, personal engagement, and direct communication. Quickly, other cities in Germany started their own "Pulse of Europe." In Cologne, for example, the first PoE event was organized early February on the Bahnhofsvorplatz with a few hundred people. The location was chosen deliberately to give back the dignity to this square in front of the central train station where the 2015 Silvester events had taken place. Pulse of Europe in Cologne quickly outgrew the location with sometimes up to

4,000 participants, and moved to the Roncalliplatz, right next to the Cathedral and the Roman-German museum. The rising number of people was also visible in other cities; while we are writing this article in early June 2017, Pulse of Europe counts 114 cities in 18 countries in Europe with more than 50.000 participants. Within a short time, PoE has become loud and visible. Soon, media started to cover the Sunday events, and were fascinated by the positive atmosphere and energy of PoE.

One of the success factors of Pulse of Europe is that PoE does not allow politicians to speak on stage (except for the mayor of the respective city,) and puts great emphasis on party-neutrality and on not being used as a platform for political statements. The goal is to send out the clear

responsibility as citizens to actively engage in protecting our fundamental rights, peace, freedom. Furthermore, it tells us to make use of the most basic right in a democracy: to vote! That message was first sent to the Netherlands where the general elections took place mid-March of 2017. With the message "Blijv bij ons" (Stay with us), Pulse of Europe tried to convince the Dutch people to vote for the pro-European parties. Pictures of Pulse of Europe events from all over Germany and other countries

and democracy in Europe, to take seriously our

message to stand up for peace

April 2nd, 2017, PoE in Cologne,

were posted on social media and were received and seen in the Netherlands with a million clicks. It seems that Pulse of Europe had an effect: an unexpected high 88% participation rate at the election resulted in a victory of

All photos by Wiltrud Hammelstein unless otherwise noted



the pro-European parties. This success motivated Pulse of Europe to continue with a weekly rhythm until the French presidential elections early May. We were happy to see that also in France the Pro-European candidate won.

Pulse of Europe is a grassroots organization that grew with the support of volunteers. It is not surprising to learn that various Fulbrighters participate regularly, or are active in the organization teams, like us, the two authors. Why engage? As a participant, you feel the positive spirit, listen to the stories of people sharing their experiences of Europe from the past 70 years. Speakers come from different cultural backgrounds, age-groups, gender, and everyone's voice is heard. A lot of them have never participated in a demonstration before, let alone spoke to hundreds or even thousands of people. And it is a very emotional moment when you sing together with everyone the "Ode an die Freude" under an ocean of blue flags with the 12 yellow stars, and hold hands with your neighbors in a "Menschenkette" (human chain) knowing that another 50.000 or so do just the same in more than 100 cities around Europe at that very moment.

Organizing a Pulse of Europe event, especially when it takes place every Sunday, is a lot of work: preparing the event every week, daily communication among the orga-

nization team, coming up with new ideas, organizing the logistics, as well as the press and social media coverage, coordinating activities with the other Pulse of Europe locations in Europe, and of course managing the event itself on Sundays. For the latter, the core team is supported by ad-hoc volunteers who give out PoE merchandise, hand out European balloons, flags, song texts, material for special activities, and collect donations. It's hard work but it is so much fun to work with likeminded people for a greater good, have a positive impact both on individuals' lives and society as a whole. The testimonials and the feedback of participants gives you so much energy and keeps you going. You meet people from different backgrounds and countries with different interests and political opinions. We all share the longing for an open, democratic, stable and peaceful Europe in which human rights, rule of law, freedom of thought, tolerance, and respect are the foundations of our societies.

At the time when this article was written (early June 2017), Pulse of Europe has switched to a monthly schedule, and now meets every first Sunday of the month. Pulse of Europe will most likely return to the weekly rhythm in September before the general election in Germany. Over the summer, PoE wants to keep the momentum, take up current developments in Europe, and prepare for the German election in late September.

Although being a local grassroots movements, a small office in Frankfurt was established, solely supported by donations. The office is the first point of contact for all PoE local organization teams, and for people interested in starting a PoE event in a new city: when a certain amount of people in any city express an interest to organize a PoE in their town, the Frankfurt team connects those locally, and supports them with a starter kit. The Frankfurt team is the first point of contact for the media, and they maintain the website, as well as the Facebook account.

When you read this article in fall 2017, the German elections are being held and the Brexit negotiations have started. No matter how the outcomes will be, there is an immense need for people to stand strong, to speak up for our common values, to unite against the populists who want to divide us, and to listen to each other in mutual respect. We as Fulbrighters can play a very active part no matter who we are or where we live. The time we spent in a different culture has prepared us to see the world through the eyes of others, respect diversity and engage for an open, tolerant, and democratic society. Let's be pulsegivers and support initiatives like Pulse of Europe!



**Ines Winkler** holds a M.Sc. in International Business. She was a Fulbright grantee at Rochester Institute of Technology in 2004/2005. Since 2015 she is the regional coordinator for FAeV Rhein-Ruhr. Ines works for Indeed Deutschland as Marketing Manager.

Wiltrud Hammelstein spent her Fulbright year in Charleston/Illinois and obtained an MBA. After completing her German business studies at the University of Cologne with a diploma, she has worked for American multinational and a transatlatic association in Germany, France and Sweden. She has served on the board of the FAeV from 1994 through 2003, and again in 2010 and 2011, including 4 years as President and several years as advisor International Relations. While living in Paris, she served on the board of France Fulbright Alumni for several years. Engaging for democratic, free, open, tolerant and peaceful socities on both sides of the Atlantics have been her passion for the past 30 years.



Pulse of Europe • FRANKly 28 • Pulse of Europe 17



#### FULBRIGHT ALUMNI E.V.

#### PowWows / Focus Conferences

Different regional chapters of our Association organize several national conferences and seminars every year, usually covering a specific topic.

#### A selection of past events:

- 2014 International Fulbright Conference "Entrepreneurs in a Borderless World", Berlin
- 2011 The German Fulbright Alumni Association at 25: Shaping a Changing World, Berlin
- 2009 change@crisis, Munich
- 2007 Climate Change, Erlangen
- 2005 J. William Fulbright Centennial, Frankfurt
- 2004 EU Enlargement, Berlin
- 2002 Quo vadis USA, Berlin
- 2001 Nutrition, Calw
- 1999 Biotechnology, Frauenchiemsee
- 1998 Intercultural Communications,
  Frankfurt
- 1997 Managing Public Organizations, Frankfurt
- 1996 A Chance for Global Understanding, Berlin
- 1995 Environmental Strategy, Heidenheim
- 1994 Where is our New Frontier? Stuttgart
- 1993 Market Leadership and Brand Names, Böblingen
- 1992 Health, Cologne
- 1991 German Reunification and the Future of German-American Relations, Berlin
- 1990 Signs for Tomorrow's Architecture, Landscape, and Urban Development, Darmstadt
- 1989 The French Revolution in American and German Perspectives, Regensburg
- 1988 The United States and Germany:
  Corporate Cultures in Comparison,
  Mannheim

#### History and Purpose

The German Fulbright Alumni e.V. was founded in Frankfurt in 1986 by former Fulbrighters and now has over 1,200 members. The Association is guided by the ideas of the program's founder, Senator J. William Fulbright, to bring together people of different nations to contribute to world peace through better international understanding.

The Association gathers globally minded students, scholars, and practitioners of a wide range of academic fields and professional expertise. Most of our members have spent a Fulbright year in the United States, and the Fulbright Alumni e.V. serves as the platform for which former grantees can continue to promote and work toward global understanding. We are committed to diversity, acceptance, and true internationality and perpetually strive to encourage further education regarding others' customs, histories, and challenges.

Based on personal and academic experiences and insights gained through participation in an international exchange program, the fundamental tenets of the mission of German Fulbright Alumni e.V. members are the following:

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

In promoting its political support for the Fulbright program, our Association maintains close but independent contact with the Fulbright Commission in Berlin to support the German-American Fulbright program.

The Fulbright Alumni e.V. is supported solely by its members. Grants and contributions from foundations, corporations, and individuals are welcomed.

#### Activities

Based on a young, lively, and broad-based membership, our Association organizes a diverse range of regional and nation-wide events. Admission is reduced for members of the Association, but all events are open to guests and members of partner organizations.

#### National Events

The Fulbright Alumni e.V. organizes a series of national events every year in order to realize the goals mentioned above. Equally important are the exchanges fostered among our members and interdisciplinary discussions on current issues.

#### General Assembly & Winter Ball

Every year, all members are invited to the 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. After the General Assembly, the Winter Ball takes place to mark another year in celebration.

#### Welcome Meeting

Each Fall, the Welcome Meeting offers an exciting opportunity for contacts and networking. Our main goal is to welcome back German returnees as well as get to know American Fulbrighters just embarking on their Fulbright experience in Germany. The meetings foster discussion forums to address issues relevant to those newly returned from a year abroad and jointly serve as an introduction to the Fulbright family beyond the exchange year.

#### Strategy Meeting

At the Strategy Meeting, the most devoted core of our members gather to discuss the present and future of the Association we all hold so dear.

#### Sailing Trip

"Bright People under Full Sail": International sailing trips on the Baltic Sea have been organized every two years since 1991.

#### Family Weekend

Our yearly summer event, which has been held in Saxony since 2000, is primarily geared towards families with children – however, anyone is welcome to join as a member of the Fulbright family!

#### **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 coordinators listed to the right. Other typical events open to everyone include movies, outdoor activities, and cultural events. Of course, we also celebrate American holidays, such as Independence Day and Thanksgiving.

#### **International Activities**

Our Association places emphasis on strengthening personal contacts among Fulbright alumni from around the world. Some core activities are listed here:

- 2016 ENAM Conference "Energy, Renewables & Sustainability" in Baku, Azerbaijan
- 2016 Water Act! Heritage and Innovation Symposium, Ifrane/Morocco
- 2016 Fulbright Association 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in Washington, D.C.
- 2015 International Fulbright Conference "Water Act", Paris
- Fulbright Association 38<sup>th</sup> Annual
   Conference in Atlanta
   Fulbright Association 37<sup>th</sup> Annual
- Conference in Washington, D.C. 2013 Fulbright Association 36<sup>th</sup> Annual
- Conference in Washington, D.C.
  2012 Fulbright Association 35<sup>th</sup> Annual
- Conference in London
- 2012 1st ENAM Annual Conference in Rome
- 2010 Fulbright Association 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference, Buenos Aires
- 2008 Fulbright Association 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference, Beijing
- 2006 Fulbright Association 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, Marrakesh
- 2004 The International Interdisciplinary Fulbright Conference, Olympism and the Fulbright Spirit: Humanism in Action, Athens
- 2000 3<sup>rd</sup> European Fulbright Alumni Workshop, Toledo

#### Our Services

The Association publishes the national journal, the FRANKly, every fall, as well as an Alumni Membership Directory. As a service to the general public, the national office provides information and assistance to any private person, university, or institution on questions of cultural and academic exchange with the United States. Each regional chapter contacts and assists American Fulbright visiting scholars in its local area. For further information, please contact our national office in Frankfurt or one of our officers listed here.

#### **Advisory Board**

Dr. Georg Schütte Hans-Burkhardt Steck Karsten Voigt Prof. Dr. Jürgen Kocka Ingo Zamperoni

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## 6<sup>th</sup> Global Diplomacy Lab in Buenos Aires, Argentina: June 18 – 21, 2017

by David Patrician

This past June I had the honor to represent the Fulbright Commission in Berlin and attend the 6<sup>th</sup> Global Diplomacy Lab (GDL) in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The GDL was established back in 2014 by the German Federal Foreign Ministry, which is also a key contributor to the Fulbright program, with the goal of shaping a new kind of diplomacy for the future. Diplomacy is no longer limited to national governments and international organizations. This calls for a new way of communicating and bringing together creative and influential actors to discuss the challenges facing our world today. Supported by the German Federal Foreign Ministry, and in partnership with the BMW Foundation Herbert Quandt, the Global Leadership Academy of the GIZ, the Stiftung Mercator and the international alumni center of the Robert Bosch Stiftung, the GDL strives to bring together participants from all continents to discuss a variety of issues facing us in the 21st century. Having participated in the Fulbright Young Journalist program here in Germany more than 10 years ago, it was a great chance to represent Fulbright as an alumnus and collaborator and learn more about this relatively new program.

In front of the ESMA – former detention center



In the past, GDL Labs have dealt with complex issues such as balancing power through information technology or designing migration policies for the future. This Lab, the first ever in South America, dealt with interweaving regional capacities for mass atrocity prevention at the local level. A group of over 30 diplomats, academics, journalists, activists, entrepreneurs and artists gathered to discuss the difficult issue of mass atrocities in the world and various ways of preventing these crimes in the 21st century. Our group visited the ESMA memorial site in Buenos Aires (originally an education facility for the Argentinian Navy) where almost 5,000 people were abducted, tortured and killed between 1976-1983. We learned about the 30,000 Argentinians that disappeared during the dictatorship period and visited Remembrance Park, a memorial to the victims of the National Reorganization Process, a period of unprecedented state-sponsored violence in Argentina. In addition, we were able to have group discussions with representatives from the Latin American Network for Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention, the African Network for Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention and the Auschwitz Institute for Peace and Reconciliation. The discussions were passionate and left us with many new ideas and impressions.





The Global Diplomacy Lab has around 150 members from over 60 countries. It is a member driven organization, and meeting members from around the world was certainly one of the highlights of attending my first Global Diplomacy Lab in Buenos Aires. Making friends from Cameroon and Pakistan, discussing current affairs with South Africans and sharing a beer with new friends from Serbia were also some personal GDL highlights. The Lab provided opportunities for informal cross-sectoral and cross-regional peer to peer knowledge and skill sharing. It also speaks to the core of the GDL: having a mindset of mutual respect and openness. The Global Diplomacy Lab strives to identify experimental approaches focusing on cross-sectoral knowledge exchange and on the drawing of a common language.

Beside the Labs, the Global Diplomacy Lab members and partners initiate, implement and participate in GDL activities all over the world. One example was back in 2016 at the HABITAT in Quito (Ecuador), where a Turkish GDL member organized the event "Cities – Combating Urban Poverty". Another was recently this past June, when several GDL members spoke about "Managing Diversity in a Time of Turmoil" at the Global Media Forum in Bonn, Germany. Both are examples of synergy, collaboration and finally reaching out for the goal of change.

It was a great honor to participate in the 6th Global Diplomacy Lab in Buenos Aires and I wanted to thank the Berlin Fulbright Commission for their support and a generous travel grant. The GDL mission resembles the philosophy



Tour of Remembrance Park

of the global Fulbright program and I encourage Fulbright Fellows become more involved in this exciting and dynamic new project. If you would like to learn more about the GDL, take a look at www.global-diplomacy-lab.org. Plans have already started for the 7<sup>th</sup> Global Diplomacy Impact Lab, taking place this upcoming November in Berlin.



Inside the FSMA – former detention center

**David Patrician** is a freelance journalist and event moderator based in Hamburg, Germany. Prior to that, he hosted a weekly show, in German, for Delta Radio. In addition, he has filed stories for the WDR, Radio Bremen, Voice of America, Deutsche Welle and Newsweek (including being embedded with the German Bundeswehr in Afghanistan). He worked for the Voice of America, Washington DC, for several years and filed stories for both the Eng-

lish and Korean language services. David graduated from the University of Maryland with a double degree in Government & Politics and German Language & Literature. He is currently the Fulbright alumni coordinator for the Hamburg regional chapter.



All photos by Global Diplomacy Lab



## Welcome Meeting 2016

by Lauren Haberstock

My Welcome Meeting experience began the day before events were scheduled to start. I found myself on the evening of October 20th seated in a red Audi cruising down the Autobahn with two German Fulbright Alumni. As a current American Fulbrighter, I had never met these two individuals before, but still there was something about them that made me feel welcome. Four and a half hours later, we exchanged hugs as they dropped me off at the train station with promises that we would see each other the next day.

The first official event of the weekend was a wine reception at the US Consulate General of Hamburg on Friday evening. It was a beautiful location for what would turn out to be a splendid evening. After making it through security, we were ushered inside. Warm voices and the sounds of laughter rang down the hall as we approached the rooms where the reception was underway. Familiar faces from the American Fulbrighter's Orientation a few weeks prior were mixed with unfamiliar faces. English and German conversations intermingled to create a pleasant hum. That night we were fortunate enough to hear from the current US Consulate General, Rick Yoneoka, as well as other distinguished guests of the Fulbright Alumni Welcome Meeting.

All photos by Wiltrud Hammelstein, unless otherwise indicated

The evening continued with the sharing of a meal and drinks at a Bavarian Brewhouse, because where else could accommodate such a large and vibrant group of Fulbrighters? As I looked around the dining room, my stomach full of Käsespätzle, I found myself smiling at the many conversations and colorful exchanges occurring around me between German and American Fulbrighters, past and present.

Saturday's events kicked off with a bountiful breakfast spread and plenty of coffee at the HAW Hamburg campus. The highlight of the morning for me was hearing again

shaped his thinking. I appreciated his desire to incorporate everyone in the room as he stopped himself short in order to provide ample time for Q&A.

from Rick Yoneoka about how his experiences have

After a lunch of delicious sandwiches and a rousing ice breaker of what I can only describe as extreme rock/paper/ scissors, the large mass divided into workshop groups. I attended a workshop geared towards English Teaching Assistants, led by a former German ETA and a former American ETA. I appreciated the Alumni Association's incorporation of this workshop into the weekend as it provided a great opportunity for the current American ETA Fulbrighters to gain some insights, advice, and helpful tips to apply during the rest of our year here in Germany.

That evening found us in another brewery full of warm chatter and smiling faces. With full stomachs we hit the town, Hamburg style. We danced the night away on the Reeperbahn and I have to say, Fulbrighters have got some great dance moves!

Sunday morning found us, slightly depleted in numbers after the Saturday night's adventures (or misadventures?), once again at the HAW Hamburg campus ready for coffee and mentoring. To my surprise, we were not being mentored, but rather were encouraged to think about what being a mentor looks like as well as to brainstorm the future of a German Fulbright Alumni mentoring program. My initial shock at not being the mentee dissolved into problem solving joy as the group broke into working groups to tackle and discuss the meaning and application of mentorship.

While the weekend as a whole was a wonderful experience that I will look back on fondly, my favorite moments came in the moments between programming where authentic conversations occurred. Everyone I met at the Welcome Meeting was excited to share how their Fulbright experience impacted and continues to impact them. No one Fulbright experience is the same. Each individual is uniquely shaped by the experiences and circumstances of





their Fulbright year. What we hold in common is a desire to let our Fulbright year shape us and to share what we have experienced and learned with others. I left Hamburg feeling inspired, ready to experience my Fulbright year in Germany to the fullest and looking forward to the ways that my year with Fulbright will change me for the better.

The initial warmth and welcome I felt meeting my carpool companions Thursday evening continued throughout the entirety of the weekend. I cannot think of a better way to welcome new Fulbright returnees to the Fulbright Alumni family and I only hope that such a wonderful and welcoming community awaits me upon my return to the US.





## Winter Ball and General Assembly in Mainz

by Ursula Mich





"Love and Be Loved" - these words of Frankfurt's Consul General James W. Herman's account of a meeting with Mother Teresa could well have been the motto for this weekend from March 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>, which was all about keeping, strengthening and tightening the long-standing ties between Germany, Europe and the USA.

For the first time, the annual General Assembly of the German Fulbright Alumni Association (FAeV) took place in the beautiful city of Mainz, the capital of Rhineland Palatinate. The city is well known for its carnival, wine, Gutenberg and the invention of the printing press, Chagall windows and, of course, as the place where the river Main joins the river Rhine.

#### Introduction

The event started on Friday late afternoon with a guided tour of the public television broadcaster Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen (ZDF) in Mainz/Lerchenberg. Participants were

impressed by the insights gained into the work of such a large broadcasting company and enjoyed walking through studios that would be used for live productions later

#### Get Together

Later that day, the 60 tour-goers arrived at the restaurant Heilig Geist, a restaurant set up inside a building with a beautiful vaulted hall, which used to be an infirmary. They were joined by almost forty more members, who were eager to refresh old friendships and find new ones.

#### General Assembly

Full of stories, people went to their accommodation to rest and gather strength for the serious part of this event, namely the FAeV General Assembly, which was scheduled for the following day at the Novotel near the famous Kupferberg champagne cellars.





Our experienced moderators Jürgen Simon and Wiltrud Hammelstein efficiently guided those present through the well-prepared meeting. The members of the incumbent board presented their reports, answered questions and were finally exonerated. This was followed by the election of the new board.

After the excellent lunch, the recently appointed Executive Director of the German-American Fulbright Commission, Dr. Oliver Schmidt, who had just returned from Washington, D. C., talked about his experiences and his feelings regarding the new administration. One way to deal with the new situation will be to go forward and to build communities. The offer to build a new data basis was welcomed by the members, as well as the idea to work closer with U.S. business related associations

#### Winter Ball

Full of inspirations, the participants retired to their respective accommodations to get in shape for the glamourous part of the event: the ball in beautiful Forster hall at Electoral Palace.

The evening got off to a good start with a refreshing glass of champagne for everyone. Our merry crowd moved to the beautifully decorated Forster hall where dinner was served.

While the delicious soup was served, Susanne Döring, chief organizer of the weekend, welcomed our guests of honor, Consul General James W. Herman Scott Robinson, Deputy Cultural Attaché at the U.S. Embassy in Berlin, Daniela Schilling-Mühl, Coordinator Alumni Network and Programs with the U.S. Embassy in Berlin, and Dr. Oliver Schmidt. All speakers emphasized how important it was to stick together, exchange ideas and experiences, to build communities and to make events happen.

During the first and second course, this year's recipient of the Jürgen Mulert Award, Pedro Marcial Cerrato and his program were introduced: Mr. Cerrato gave an interesting overview of the origin of CEMPRENDE, a collaboration and networking community for entrepreneurs in Tegucigalpa, Honduras and its goals – a truly worthy award winner.

Then, the board members were introduced – the incumbents were thanked for their work during the last year and those newly elected were welcomed on board.

While we enjoyed the marvelous food, our DJ played background music and then finally the dance floor was opened with a waltz, and in no time at all, the dance floor was packed with dancers. And the dancing wouldn't stop until 2 a.m. in the morning. And even after that, a bunch of people went to have another drink or two.

#### Brunch / Guided tours

Many Fulbrighters met at 10 a.m. on Sunday morning at pretty Café Dell Arte in the picturesque old town of Mainz, to enjoy one of the best buffets the author remembers and talk about the weekend. At a 12:45 p.m., the tour guides arrived. There were two tours on offer: "Mainz for beginners" and "Mogontiacum – A Roman city". The participants of both tours found them enjoyable, informative and a great way to complete the weekend.

And so at the end we said farewell to a wonderful weekend in Mainz. Many thanks to Susanne Döring and her "Mainzelmännchen" team for organizing this event so well.

We are looking forward to next year's Winter Ball, maybe in a few years in Mainz again...?

## The Smell of Oil in the Wind of Change

ENAM Conference "Energy, Renewables & Sustainability" in Baku, Azerbaijan

by Thomas Kraubitz - Fulbrighter '07-'09 to Harvard University

Sustainability has been one of the most used words at any conference that deals with the future, and is already considered by many a worn-out term that has been replaced by others like resilience. Combining sustainability with the crude energy industry, academia, governance and our diverse State Alumni group has been a thrilling setup from the beginning.

The overarching goal was to have a vibrant discussion between a diverse group of stakeholders – and in the energy discussion every individual is a stakeholder. The 8th ENAM (European Network of Alumni Associations) meeting was made possible by the US Department of State and the US Embassy Baku in honor of Earth Day and the Paris Agreement of April 22, 2016. The conference was organized in cooperation with the American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham) in Azerbaijan, ADA University, the State Agency on Alternative and Renewable Energy Sources, the European Network of American Alumni Associations, and the U.S. Educated Azerbaijani Alumni Association (AAA). As part of this group of 20 delegates from 15 nations, I was honored to represent the German Programs and Fulbright Alumni Germany.



The organizers did a tremendous job bringing together educators, practitioners, innovators and business owners – all State Alumni leaders from diverse programs and age groups – to engage with senior representatives of the local oil and gas industry and its associated universities. The mix of presentations, roundtables and get-togethers allowed for unbiased formal and informal debates on best practice, research and participation concepts. The day was fueled by innovative ideas and a unique interest in each other – that is what we all had in common. Rather than imposing concepts from around the world on Baku, the focus was set on how energy transition can even happen in a country that is built on fossil fuels and continues to prosper from them.

The smell of gas is what one notices immediately when arriving in this city that celebrates its success, identity and heritage. I am lucky to get to travel to many exotic places and often one is tempted, especially as an Urbanist, to compare cities. But there seems to be no place like Baku. An incredibly strong wind of change and the patriotically illuminated flame tower skyline set the stage for the day to come.

The conference topic was spot on in the cradle of the oil industry – the first oil extracted was in Azerbaijan – understanding that an energy transition is progress rather than a solution. The energy-rich country, whose economy has been hit hard by falling oil prices, is facing an increase in a geopolitical influence in which their gas is given special preference in the diversification of energy supplies to Europe. The reduction of Europe's dependence on Russian gas is a strategic asset for Azerbaijan. It is easy to talk about renewables when oil prices are high and this conference comes at the right time when oil costs are low and oil is therefore more attractive to many. U.S. Ambassador to Azerbaijan Robert Cekuta mentioned in his opening remarks: "Face it, the world needs energy, the question is what kind of energy and how clean it is."

From left to right: Marwan Chamakhi (Youth Ambassadors Program France), Thomas Kraubitz (Fulbright Alumni Germany) and Julien Vick (Fulbright Alumni France); photo: Thomas Kraubitz.



Delegates at the conference with Massimo Cugusi (ENAM); photo: AmCham in Baku, Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan is blessed not only with oil, but it has also a strong potential for wind and a good amount of solar energy, but is currently not capturing energy from these sources.

Obviously the EU Energy Policy was a key aspect of the discussions and how to get the market to pay for renewable energy infrastructure – which in contrast to the oil pipelines does not require tremendous efforts over several thousands of kilometers, but a decentralized and locally oriented system instead.

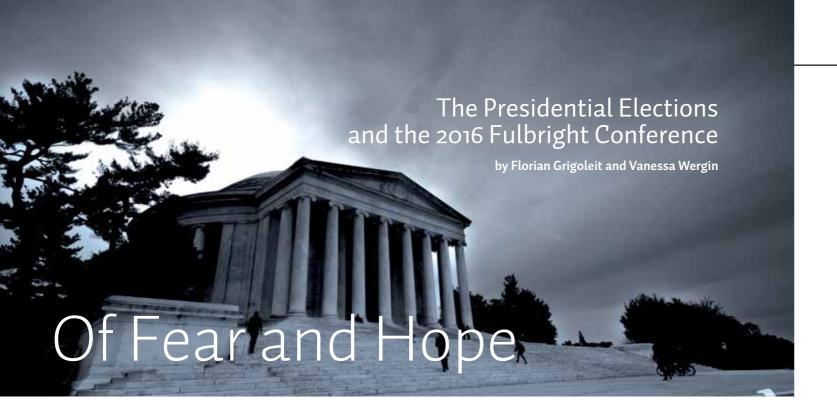
I will remember the hospitality, openness and the great efforts of ENAM and the local State Alumni for a long time. I will also keep an eye on Azerbaijan, as it might teach us all a lesson on changing from a fossil based economy to one shaped by knowledge, innovation and international cooperation.

At the final reception the head of PWC in Azerbaijan presented us with this quote to sum up the conference: "The stone age did not end because we were running out of stones – and the oil age will not end because we are

running out of oil". We have left Baku with the confidence that we can energize a change towards a post-oil society we might one day call normal even though we can only imagine it today. We have the abilities to make a change, and conferences like ENAM allow open-minded individuals that otherwise would never meet to imagine paths forward together. Energy is a long term project, and if there ever was a time to help steer Europe and the world towards a path of sustainable energy, now is that time.

The message I took from the conference and its delegates is not one of doom and gloom, but of optimism and opportunity. I am convinced that the conference made a lasting impact on all that had a chance to be there, however I wished we had one more day to discuss the topics. It has been a great honor to represent Fulbright Alumni Germany, the Harvard Club of Berlin and the Green Ambassador Program of Berlin at an event that has a lasting impact on my view on oil and its future.

http://amchamaz.org/conference-on-energy-renewables-sustainability/



The annual conference of the Fulbright Association 2016 started two days after the U.S. presidential election. We had arrived in time to enjoy election night in the capital of the United States. Vanessa joined the election night event of the D.C. chapter of the Fulbright association, while Florian spent the night with friends in a sports bar. D.C. voted almost unanimously for Hillary Clinton – 94% for Mrs. Clinton and 4% for Mr. Trump. The election results appropriately describe our experiences during election night.



#### A very American Night – Florian

Watching the election in a sports bar was as American as 4<sup>th</sup> of July fireworks or a Thanksgiving dinner. Most screens were showing ice hockey games, while a few were presenting the results and rumors from the elections. The atmosphere in the bar resembled the one at a soccer or football game in which everyone expects their team to win. By the time we started watching, the TV hosts were discussing

an analysis by the New York Times which predicted the chances of Hillary winning at almost 90%. Everyone was excited and, after one and half years of primaries and election campaigns – intense even for American standards – I felt that everyone was relieved that it was almost over, to result in something like a happy ending. Equipped with Buffalo wings, fries, and beer, we cheered at the results of the first New England and East Coast states. But, with the incoming results from the first Rust Belt states, the mood changed quickly from excited to fearful. People started calculating how many swing states Mrs. Clinton would need to secure to still win the presidency. After the next unexpected Republican victories, people started leaving. Once the results for Ohio and Florida were presented, we left a quiet and almost empty bar. A few people were still there - watching ice hockey. Outside a young man greeted us "Happy Armageddon!".

#### Fulbright Election night and protests at the White House – Vanessa

Arriving at election night in Washington D.C. was a life experience I will probably never forget. After rushing from the airport to the home of my wonderful host for the D.C. conference, a Fulbrighter from Pakistan, I made it there just in time for the first projections of election night. Trump won Indiana and Kentucky; Clinton took Vermont. "Not a big deal, Hillary's states are coming up soon" were the words of the Uber driver, taking us to the election event of the D.C. Fulbright chapter. By the time we arrived, the atmosphere was at its peak. Everyone was dressed up, enjoying the night and looking forward to the obvious success of the Democrats. It was not until Mr. Trump won Ohio and Florida that the whole room suddenly went quiet.

Excitement turned into disbelief and first discussions about the results started. More results were broadcasted and members of the D.C. chapter started apologizing to me, explaining that this "was not what the U.S. was like." After some more discussions and drinks, the first call to join ongoing protests at the White House resulted in high approval. Thousands of citizens were on the streets already, expressing their anger and disagreement with what they had seen on TV. Reporters from all over the world stood in front of the White House commenting on the results and filming the peacefully protesting crowd. It seemed like the D.C. bubble had unexpectedly burst that night and left its citizens with the touch of an idea about what was going on in the rest of America.

#### The 2016 Fulbright Conference: A sense of an uncertain future

It is hard to describe the atmosphere at the Fulbright conference two days later. The president-elect's planned foreign policy was vague and he had not addressed exchange programs like the Fulbright program. Nevertheless, fears and concerns about the future or the program and its values were tangible and newly elected Fulbright chapter presidents refused to wear the official "president-elect"tag, provided by the organizers.

Fulbright alumnus and former Representative Max Burns (R-GA) put this in a nutshell: "We all heard the presidentelect's speeches and he did not mention "cultural exchange" or "mutual understanding." Now, eight months later, we know this to be an understatement.



The conference began with introduction of the 2016's Fulbright prize winner, former Senator of Indiana Richard Luger (R-IN). In his speech, Sen. Lugar, a Rhodes Scholar like Sen. Fulbright, emphasized the importance of international exchange and cultural understanding. Without directly criticizing or mentioning the president-elect, he voiced his view that ideas of isolationism and a neglect of

international norms and institutions, as the presidentelect had expressed, are the opposite of the values the United States, and specifically what the Fulbright program, stand for.



Later, at the Fulbright Prize ceremony at the World Bank, we had the chance to meet Harriet Fulbright, the second wife of Sen. Fulbright. Despite of her age of 83 years, Mrs. Fulbright is an active member of the American Fulbright community and very interested in international Fulbright activities. We therefore spent some time with her, explaining recent developments and projects of the German Fulbright Alumni Association.

The following days were filled with various presentations, panel discussions, and workshops, some being more organized than others. One of the highlights was the presentation of Nobel Prize laureate Peter Agre. He recounted a talk with his mother when he told her that he had been awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry. Her answer was: "That's good. Now see that you do something useful with your life." Afterwards, he started his work to fight malaria in Africa. Another part of the conference worth mentioning was a short film contest presenting social projects made by Fulbrighters during or after their time abroad.

Amid the post-election atmosphere, we still felt the Fulbright spirit, this wonderful connection we all share. During the days in D.C., we met Fulbrighters from at least a dozen countries and all were shocked by the prospect of an end or drastic reduction of the Fulbright program, while at the same time motivated to support the program. Together with the rest of the board, we decided to step up our international effort to strengthen the global Fulbright community and to promote the program and its values. Together with members from the Fulbright Association and the German-American Fulbright Commission we started planning an international conference in Germany aimed at creating lasting bonds between Fulbrighters from around the world. While writing these lines, we learned that the motto of the 2017 Fulbright Conference is "Fulbright: Now More Than Ever." We couldn't phrase it any better.

## Fulbright Alumni Diversity Weekend in Frankfurt

by Gabriel Rivas

On the weekend of the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of January 2017, around 50 Fulbrighters and esteemed guest speakers converged in the bustling financial metropolis of Frankfurt for the Fulbright Diversity Weekend. The event gathered a number of industry leaders in their respective fields, whose speeches highlighted the ever-increasing importance of the integration of diverse communities in the work force and society – as well as the many hurdles diverse communities currently face reaching these realms. After a relaxing get-together at a traditional Hesse restaurant Friday night, the participants all gathered on Saturday morning at the law offices of Latham & Watkins LLP for a full day of speeches, networking, and captivating discussions.

The day was started by speaker and Latham lawyer Gregory C. Walker, whose presentation was titled "Affirmative Action in the U.S. – Latham's role in the latest US Supreme Court Cases". It delved into the "Fischer vs. University of Texas" Supreme Court case, where he provided an insightful view into the considerations of the university's race-conscious admissions program, which was argued to be unconstitutional under the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment of the U.S. constitution.

Walker's opening presentation was followed by experiences of fellow Fulbrighters and their own personal encounters surrounding the topic of diversity. University of Miami Fulbright Alumni Christoph Althoff spoke about his numerous encounters as an international consultant, where diversity played integral roles in the Telecommuni-



cations and IT industries. Next, Sanaa Laabich, a Fulbright Diversity Initiative alumni of the University of Kentucky, gave a presentation titled "Careers Between Fulbright, Stereotypes, and Being #Nafri." She highlighted the many positive – as well as negative – encounters she has experienced as a Muslim woman of North African descent. Laabich has dedicated herself to over 10 years of intercultural and interreligious youth work. The third Fulbright Alumni to speak was Felix Wehinger, who explored African-American studies during his grant period at UCLA. His presentation, titled "Diveristy and Beyond – Experiences in a So-Called 'Post-Racial' America," highlighted the continuing discrimination and systemic oppression minorities face in the US. As the final Fulbright grantee speaker, Anja Kuttenkueler, who completed her Fulbright year at Adelphi University, gave a presentation titled, "Ideal Mother-Ideal Worker? Bridging the Gap – Conditions of an Inclusive Work Environment". Kuttenkeuler elaborated on the numerous struggles women face in the workforce, especially when it comes to balancing motherhood and a professional career.

After the experiences of the Fulbrighters, the program continued with informative and stimulating presentations from two keynote speakers. The first keynote speaker was Aliyeh Yegane Arani, a political scientist who specializes on issues surrounding cultural and religious diversity as well as human rights and anti-discrimination. Throughout her presentation titled, "Diversity and Anti-Discrimination: Basic Approaches for the Implementation of Human Rights Culture in Society," she elaborated upon the many

complicated instances and factors surrounding discrimination. She touched upon topics such as micro-aggressions, where discrimination is faced in subtle and indirect ways as well as providing ways to become more aware of these hidden forms of discrimination. Throughout her illustrious career experience, she has developed anti-discrimination programs at major German institutions. Towards the end of Arani's presentation, she intellectually displayed a comprehensive table showing the



Dr. Oliver Schmidt, executive director of the German-American Fulbright Commission welcomes speakers and guests

different primary, secondary, and institutional dimensions of discrimination. Through this specialized breakdown and

identification of multiple forms of discrimination, Arani demonstrated steps towards the proper awareness and establishment of antidiscrimination trends and policies.

The second keynote speaker was Leysan Keller, an HR Development Manager for a subsidiary company of Deutsche Bahn AG, where she has been responsible for creating vocational training programs for disadvantaged immigrants and refugees. In her presentation titled, "Career with a Headscarf", she highlighted the initiative she co-founded under the same name of professionally successful headscarf-wearing Muslim women. In one of the most eye-opening moments of the weekend, Keller provided detailed statistics of the institutional discrimination that headscarf-wearing women face during the hiring processes at German companies. One startling fact from this presentation was seeing that only 4.7% of headscarf-women get called back for jobs during the interview pro-

cess. In the end, her presentation helped foster empathy for the background and realities of Muslim women with headscarves in Germany.

Lastly, the event was concluded with a panel discussion containing earlier speakers from the day. They gathered to take questions from panel moderator and Fulbright Diversity Initiative alumni Safar Sarif as well as questions from the audience. There were a number of stimulating topics discussed, but it appeared as though headscarfwearing women in the workforce was the hottest topic that dominated the deliberations of the afternoon and the subsequent question and answer session. Overall, it was a captivating session that addressed and questioned many challenges faced by diverse communities in society and the work force.

Amidst all the tension of the 2016 US Election, upcoming European elections, and the growth of populist movements across the world, this conference was a warm and welcome reminder that the world truly is a diverse place, and that there are people out there actively campaigning for empathy, compassion, and inclusion in an ever-diversifying society.

All images by Wiltrud Hammelstein

WATER ACT 2 Heritage and Innovation

October 31 - November 1, 2016, Ifrane/Morocco

by Martin Kohler and Julien Vick

#### Background

Following the success of the international Water Act symposium – building consensus through awareness – that took place in Paris in November 2015, the German Fulbright Alumni Association was glad to participate again in the second installment of the Water Act conference, and to continue the cooperation with French Alumni from US Government Exchange Program (Fulbrighters and Youth Ambassadors).

Inspired by the dynamics of the international climate change conventions, the conference location and date were chosen in reference to COP22 in Marrakesh – just like the year before with Water Act and COP21 taking place almost simultaneously in Paris. It even became an official COP 22-labelled event.

The conference was structured around a symposium with presentations, lectures, and a concluding field trip to water related sites. Again, it was the goal to assemble international participants, and to talk about climate and water challenges and approaches, and to exchange ideas on how to cope with current climate issues.

Morocco, itself being a country facing climate problems and providing solutions, offered a unique and interesting setting. On the one hand, the country has many arid regions and has to deal with droughts and lack of water. On the other hand, Morocco is very active and promotes climate action, for instance by supporting innovative solar energy and reducing plastic bag waste.



#### Administration

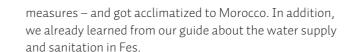
An initial phone conference call in May 2016 between all three parties involved – France, Germany, and Morocco - laid the foundation of this event. We set a common basis, talked about expectations and ideas, discussed the schedule, and assigned tasks and duties.

While France and Germany tried to acquire speakers and sponsors in their respective countries and within their Fulbright networks, Morocco took care of the organization and logistics on site. France coordinated all three countries in the Water Act Association which was launched at the US Embassy in Paris through Julien Vick's leadership.

The German Fulbright Alumni Association agreed to serve as the main point of contact for international participants. We administered the incoming email registrations and requests, answered questions and gave advice, and eventually compiled a list of participants.

#### **Implementation**

After arriving in Fès, I got in touch with the main organizing team from France. During a guided tour of the city, we reviewed the agenda, discussed some late organizational



The following day, we travelled together to the conference location, the high-altitude (1,665 m) mountain village Ifrane. The local Al-Akhawayn University generously offered the venue for the symposium.

On the first evening, Al-Akhawayn University hosted a reception to network and getting to know the other conference participants. I made new contacts and renewed existing ones with members of France Fulbright Alumni and Morocco Fulbright Alumni, delegates from the US Embassy Morocco, and other participants, for instance alumni from other Morocco-US programs or Bernard Lama, former French national goalkeeper who is now involved with the topic of water supply in his home state French Guyana.

The next day, at the main day of the conference, various presentations were given, for example addressing issues of regulation of water or water distribution in distinct parts of Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria and how these communities deal with it. Generally, the topic of water as a crucial resource and key part of life was examined

from many different angles. One researcher described the link between poverty and access to water. Another study presented the importance of working on smart water solutions for smart cities.

After the symposium, I was on a panel with the representatives and organizers from the French and Moroccan alumni associations to sum up the contributed papers and to say some concluding words. I emphasized the importance of international cooperation: as water is a crucial resource for all of us, a joint effort is highly important.

#### Conclusion

The symposium addressed various challenges in terms of water and climate but also showed opportunities and possible solutions. The topic of this conference shows how important international partnership and cooperation are. Dealing with a global problem like water and climate requires global teamwork and exchange.

The German Fulbright Alumni Association is looking forward to continue the cooperation with France Fulbright Alumni and other alumni groups worldwide.

We thank the US Embassies in Morocco, France and Germany for their generous support.



Members of the French-Moroccan organizing team with Nicole Theriot, U.S. Consul General in Casablanca



Martin Kohler and Julien Vick on the concluding panel



lack of access to water have an effect on poverty?"



Group photo after the symposium



national goalkeeper



## The Truth is Out There –

### Impressions from the Fulbright Family Weekend

by Philipp Hövel

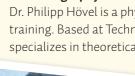
Times are as hectic as ever. The treadmill of everyday life operates at an overwhelming speed. The whole world spins faster and faster. These are perceptions quite familiar to many of us, I suppose. To escape the stress of daily routines, the Fulbright family weekend offers a refreshing getaway to the countryside. Initiated and coordinated for many years by the regional chapter in Dresden, Königstein on the Elbe provided – literally – a family oasis for hiking expeditions to Saxon Switzerland.

As novices in terms of this annual event, my little family was very much looking forward to the long Ascension Day weekend. Anticipation is half the pleasure, and our anticipation was boosted when we looked at the list of fellow Fullies who had signed up. Some names were very familiar and brought back nice memories of powwows, winter balls and countless other occasions. As it turned out, we should not be disappointed. By the way, Fullies without extended family were part of the crowd, too.



From the start of the four days, there was a cheerful and adventuresome atmosphere, and we felt very much welcomed among experienced family-weekenders. In telegraphic style: food great and plenty +++ weather conditions perfect +++ maps of the region detailed +++ great suggestions for different hikes and trails +++

steine". The pace was enjoyable and the breaks frequent to admire spectacular views from the top of the rocks and cliffs. One of the many highlights was certainly the climb through (in full gear and helmet) or around the "Häntzschel Stiege," and the reunion of the different climber, hiker, and walker groups on top of the rocks. Although tired from the days' work, dinner helped everyone to gather strength again to be spent at the trampoline, sandpit, or discuss around the campfire until all marshmallows had been barbecued.



out there...

Short biography Dr. Philipp Hövel is a physicist and mathematician by training. Based at Technische Universität Berlin, he specializes in theoretical and computational studies of

other issues of both local and global scale or personal,

parenting, and political topics. It was a wonderful ex-

ample for the importance of face-to-face encounters as

they opened my eyes to new perspectives ... the truth is

complex systems and networks

in physics, biology, and social sciences. The start of his fascination dates back to his Fulbright scholarship 2002-2003 at Duke University in Durham, NC. Between 2011 and 2013, he enjoyed a second stay in the U.S. as postdoctoral researcher in Boston, MA.





Fulbright Family Weekend FRANKly 28 | 35 34 FRANKly 28 · Fulbright Family Weekend



[This is a shortened version of Gil's report. For Gil's full account of the Berlin Seminar and more interviews please visit our blog newfain.wordpress.com.]

Returning to the Berlin Seminar is a homecoming. It is a return to the energy and excitement of my first seminar years ago when the wall still grimly divided the city and the Cold War was at its most gelid. Thanks to involvement in alumni activities. I have returned to several Seminars and have seen how it has evolved. The program of my first Seminar stretched out over a week and was largely made up of conferences by experts on the intricacies of the Cold War, NATO, and the Warsaw Pact. Nowadays, the Seminar runs just four days and there is a lot more active participation by grantees and alumni resulting in dynamic and engaging interaction.

Over the years, the Berlin Seminar has developed a varied format: guided tours and a welcome reception on Sunday; workshops and panels throughout the week; on Monday evening, the Annual Fulbright Ceremony including the Cottrell Award for excellence in research and teaching; an encounter with a city official at the Berlin Town Hall; finally, a Farewell dinner and disco dance on the last night.

"What a Journey!" was the theme of the 63rd Berlin Seminar held from March 26 through 30. Although the Seminar is the annual midterm retreat for grantees of the German-American Fulbright Program, it has always been open to

other programs in Europe; this year Fulbrighters attended from 20 other countries. Around 50 American grantees came from Spain alone. Current fellows, alumni, English Teaching Assistants (ETA's), researchers, professors and professionals met to share insights about living abroad and to celebrate the Fulbright Program's contributions to international peace through mutual understanding among people of different nations. German millenials, recently chosen to spend a Fulbright year in the U.S. starting in the fall, added their enthusiastic energy to the gathering for the first two days.

After an afternoon of touring Berlin, over 500 Fulbrighters gathered for a welcome ceremony and reception at the Urania Center on Sunday evening. Serving as host and moderator was Dr. Oliver Schmidt, the new Executive Director of the Fulbright Commission. It was his first Berlin Seminar since he had taken up his post just five months before. Nonetheless, he performed his role as if he had been at it for years. He was well briefed and backed up by an efficient Commission staff coordinated by Rainer Rohr, Activities and Events Director. It was Mr. Rohr's last seminar to organize since, after 38 years of service at the Commission, he was just a few months away from retirement. So in effect the torch of the Seminar was being passed on. Also offering words of welcome and representing the greater Fulbright Community in Germany were Florian Grigoleit of the Alumni Association and Rolf-Dieter Schnelle of the Association of Friends and Sponsors of the German-American Fulbright Program.

Setting the tone for the Seminar, Dr. Schmidt encouraged everyone to "listen, speak up and trust" as they discussed the ideas and issues presented over the next few days. Addressing the grantees as future alumni, he pointed to the need to support the continuance of the Fulbright Program because "never before was its mission more pertinet or more cutting edge." He said it was the job of all alumni as "transatlantic ambassadors to advocate for a strong program" and that "advocacy will be a part of our journey for years to come." "More than a CV optimizer," he said, "Fulbright should continue to stand for a broad educational experience that involves the development of personality, empathy, and cultural immersion." He urged alumni to be the core and center of efforts to sustain and grow the program. And toward that end he said he was "committed to make alumni work a prioirity." [...] Afterwards, with the live music of the Brazilian ensemble Coisa Linda playing in the background, hundreds Fulbrighters continued to meet, greet and network, a primary reason for their assembling in Berlin. When the Urania Center closed down many continued their conversations in neighboring bars and cafés.

Besides focusing on the major issues of the day, the Seminar is a showcase of the achievements, talents, and research of grantees and alumni. On Monday morning, American alumnus Brent Goff, chief News Anchor at Deutche Welle in Berlin, gave the "kick off" presentation in which he highlighted the importance of news media as a "public good" rather than a commodity to be bought and sold. He pointed out that social media on the Internet can often serve as "echo chambers" that reinforce mindsets or ways of thinking rather than promote empathy for others of differing opinions and ideas.

Animated by that keynote presentation, everyone broke up into workshops organized by the Seminar participants themselves. The workshop titles offer an idea of the breadth and depth of Fulbrighter interests such as "Migration-Refugees," "Politics-Post-U.S. Election/Pre European Elections," or "Environment and Sustainability." Moderating the workshops were students, ETA's and alumni not only from Germany but from Italy, Austria, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Luxembourg, Andorra, Sweden, Greece, Poland, Spain and Portugal as well. [...]

The Annual Fulbright Ceremony, a centerpiece of the Seminar and an occasion for recalling the Fulbright mission and values, was held Monday evening in the concert hall of the Universität der Künste. It featured several highly interesting presentations by speakers such as the Chair and

<u>Tulia Modes interviewed</u>

Vice Chair of the German-American Fulbright Commission, David Michael Reinert of the U.S. Embassy in Berlin and Heidrun Tempel of the Federal Foreign Office, respectively. They spoke of their first experiences in the other's country when they were about the same age of most of the audience. Ms. Heidrun, who after studying in the U.S. got an internship in the German embassy in Washington, said her stint there brought about two life-changing experiences: "I decided I wanted to become a diplomat, and I met my husband." She offered a special greeting to the Fulbrighters from Spain because her husband is German Ambassador to that country. [...]

#### SO MANY FULBRIGHTERS, SO LITTLE TIME: THE CHALLENGES OF LIVING AND WORKING ABROAD

Every person attending the Seminar represented an individual journey; every journey had its story. And every story had a common thread: meeting the challenge of spending an academic year in a foreign country. I set about getting as many stories as I could, beginning with the Germans on their way to the U.S.

Eight years ago an important innovation was added to the Seminar program. Germans selected for Fulbright Grants were included for the first two days. It offered a splendid opportunity for them to meet Americans from the universities and cities they would be living in. At the welcome reception and in following events, they set about getting suggestion and tips. [...]

Julia Modes' destination was New York City in the fall to study American art history right after World War II. "Everyone is so friendly and open minded," she said. "Whenever you just stand next to someone, you start a conversation." She met an American art history major studying in Vienna and suggested places to visit in Berlin. She also met other Germans who will be heading for New York so they made plans to explore the city together. She also benefitted from the "Art and Identity" workshop to network with both German and American Fulbrighters interested in artistic topics.





German alumni were at the Seminar ready to offer advice to those getting ready for their journeys to the U.S. There was an alumni panel discussion for the Fulbright novices. One of the panelists, Julia Nolte, studied at Cornell and Harvard Universities. Her message was to have the courage to look into the range of options available once in the U.S. "Before I started studying abroad as a Fulbright scholar," she said, "I would never have had dared to apply for an internship at Harvard, and now I'm going back to do my Ph.D. It's about knowing you have the potential to do it." [...]

American Fulbrighters came from all over Germany and various parts of Europe. [...] Canan Asbury, an ETA who thoroughly immersed himself in German life and culture, taught in the small, coal-mining town of Ahlen near Münster. He has a B.A. in History from the University of Missouri. So he was delighted to be assigned to teaching a bilingual history class. "My mentor is a very amazing man," he said. "He's helped me in a lotta ways. He's the head of the English department but since Germans have to have two degrees when they teach, he has English and history. He wanted to utilize me in the class. We just got done with the Weimar Republic and we're moving into Nazism. He wanted my perspective when teaching such a difficult topic, an American perspective. They really appreciate and are receptive to it. It's really awesome." Canan explained that there were large Turkish and Polish communities in Ahlen. They had come to work in the coal

mine. His students were of diverse ethnic backgrounds. "It's interesting to see their perspective on national identity in Germany," he said. "It's a question we talk about a lot in my history courses; It's interesting to see the children's perspective on where they fit in the nation. Some of them consider themselves Turkish-German, some

consider themselves just to be German." Canan grew up in an integrated community back in his hometown of Fayette, Missouri. His experience in Germany strengthened his conviction that the interaction of people of different views, ethnicities and nationalities from an early age has proved nothing but beneficial. [...]

#### **FULBRIGHT FAMILIES**

A few Fulbright grantees crossed the Atlantic with a spouse and children, which made the task of integrating into the life and culture of the host country even more challenging. In most cases, the partner has left a job to make the year abroad possible. Fortunately, the Fulbright Program is family friendly and provides an extra stipend. The host countries can also be very accommodating by providing extra funding and facilities. Tom and Betsy came from Madison, Wisconsin, with their baby daughter Millie. They settled down in Freiburg, Germany, where he was doing research in comparative literature. When asked about the pros and cons of traveling with a family, Tom answered, "One advantage is that it means a year away from work for Betsy. Last year when the baby was very little, she still worked a lot after a short maternity leave. So this has been a little bit of a breath of fresh air. We have more time together. The disadvantage is that it's harder to travel." Betsy agreed saying, "What's been great about being here is we've had full weekends to ourselves with no other obligations or commitments, so we get to enjoy being a family, and for me I get to spend all day with Millie." Playgrounds are plentiful in Freiburg. She said the extra Fulbright stipend was helpful and that they were also eligible for the "kindergeld," the German government's funding for children, as well. [...]

Having been to scores of Fulbright events in Spain, Germany and the U.S., I left this year's Berlin Seminar convinced more than ever that nowhere else is there a better display of the values and ideals that the Program was meant to promote throughout the world.



Dr. Oliver Schmidt flanked by Fulbrighters

## **New Members**

Welcome to the Fulbright Alumni e.V.! As a member, you become part of a unique network of change makers.

Participate in our national and regional activities, meet inspiring people and contribute new ideas!

Aleksandr Kiessling München Bielefeld Alexander Drößler Alexander Jahn Berlin Andreas Dewald Mainz Anja Meir Rennertshofen Anna-Elisabeth (Lisa) Schmitz Lüneburg Arne Stöcker Heidenheim Beate Koch Göttingen Ben Turner Buxtehude Bruno Preilowski Ravensburg Cameron Sweeney Düsseldorf Catherine McCarter Aachen Christian Peters Lüdenscheid Clemens Wetcholowsky Göttingen Daniel Schmuck Netphen David Hoffmann Berlin Dormagen Eileen Raßlenberg Emilia Koch Vogtsburg Fabienne Schwaegermann Köln Frederik Franz Berlin Grischa Gottschalg Darmstadt Helena Sophie Wittlich Berlin Ingmar Jakob Stuttgart Jan Moellmann Braunschweig Jana-Verena Gerhart Alzenau-Albstadt Jens Frische Bochum Johannes Böckenhoff, Dr. München Jonas Ibel Berlin Iulian Mandel Ettlingen Katharina Vöhler Berlin Kilian Zuchan Forst Kim Kohmann München Laura Döring Bergneustadt Louisa Gurgel Berlin Lukas Schwemer München Lukas Diederich Ebergötzen

Matthias Kargl Rohr Matthias Tippe Bad Bevensen Matthias Kiesel Adelmannsfelden Maximilian Zahn Frankfurt Merle Elisabeth van Berkum Rommerskirchen Michael Mutzbauer München Oberhausen Minh-Tuan Vuong Mohamed Kari Essen Muriel Max Bremen N. L. Henriette Greischel Jena Villingen-Schwenningen Nina Steinhäuser Noemi Schweikle Darmstadt Ludwigshafen Olga Gotsulyak Peter Becker Aachen Philipp Schneider Hamburg Philipp Irmscher Bayreuth Pia Dick Koblenz Roman Kritsberh Dortmund Ronny Westerman, Dr. Wiesbaden Ronny Gündel Glauchau Sarah Martin Dortmund Saskia Krafft Ausbüttel Sebastian Reh Naumburg Sebastian Schaal München Simon Landherr Türkheim Simon Wimmer München Sonja Alexandra Mausen Aachen Sophie Nehrer Stefan Brüning Berlin Stefan Ernst Stefanie Kulpe Essen Steven Groß Thanh Ngo Chi Berlin

Schwäbisch Gmünd

Murnau am Staffelsee Meckenheim Tobias Hartl Krefeld Tobias Blickhan München Udo Bonorden Hamburg Urs Buegger Braunschweig

Viola Ackfeld Köln

Yvonne Brieger Gelsenkirchen Zeno Fickenscher Obersalm

## Remembered

Lukas Richter

Marcel Albers

Matthew Hurley

Manuel Bewarder

By chance, we realized shortly after the General Assembly in 2016 that one of our members had passed away a few years ago. To communicate sad information more steadily,

Würzburg

Hamburg

Düsseldorf

Berlin

Celebrating the Lives of Alumni and Friends

we established this permanent column for remembering Fulbright Alumni and their lives. We hope that we will not have to print an entry in every future FRANKly edition.

Marten Buettner

02.09.1963

## Regional Chapter Stuttgart

by Fabian Oliver Flohr



Meeting with Junge DGAP; photo: Fabian Flohr

We continued our traditional Skyline Chili Dinner on March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017, and our Independence Day BBQ on July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2017, organized by Jan Makowski and Andreas Eisele. Thank you, again, for remaining the backbone of our activities in Stuttgart and hosting these beautiful events.

Approaches to engage with non-active alumni and new members remain high on the agenda. A Facebook group (Fulbright South West Germany, Stuttgart) serves as a hub to easily get in touch with each other.

In order to expand our program locally, we have increased our cooperation with the local chapters of the PPP Alumni e.V. and Junge DGAP by opening some of our event formats for their member base and vice versa. So on April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017 we hosted a joint meetup with Junge DGAP to discuss U.S. politics and joint event formats and invited the PPP Alumni e.V. to our Independence Day BBQ. Additional events are currently in the planning process. The prospects for both cooperations are great thanks to interest and openness of both coordinators.

We will host our annual Thanksgiving Potluck in Stuttgart-Haigst again, and would certainly be very happy to see many of you on November 26<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

## Regional Chapter Leipzig

#### by Sebastian Reh

What a year it has been! Not long after a successful Alumni Welcome Meeting in Hamburg, our Leipzig Regional Chapter once again had monthly Stammtisch meetings. It's my great pleasure to briefly describe the fantastic events that our regional chapter put on this year, as well as to spread the word to anyone who might wish to attend our meetings this coming September 2017.

First of all, I as well as my fellow chapter meeting helpers, Siobhan O'Brien and Graham Beck, would like to show our gratitude by saying "Thank you!" to Tilman Schenk, who had coordinated the gatherings of the Fulbright alumni in Leipzig until this past fall. Tilman has not missed a single opportunity to express his support and be part of the Stammtisch meetings. His personally guided tour through Leipzig is just one of numerous instances representing his magnificent commitment.

In many ways, our chapter meetings have kept in mind the Fulbright spirit: Bring people together, engage in political and cultural exchange, and make those moments everlasting. In the same way that I experienced the welcoming atmosphere of the Fulbright meetings in Boston when I was in the United States, so too was it my goal to provide our visiting American friends with a regional network to enrich their lives overseas.







Our meeting days each month changed based on when people were free. However, Saturdays often allowed us to have successful full day events, allowing us to combine a little culture with food and drink. Successful outings included a visit to the "Zeitgeschichtliches Forum" covering GDR history, the mind-blowing 360° images of the Azizi Panometer exhibitions "Great Barrier Reef" and "Titanic", sampling the Gose beer produced inside Leipzig's former Bavarian Railway Station, or a trip

back in time to one of Europe's oldest coffee shops, "Zum Arabischen Coffe Baum".

Spring, and importantly, warm weather, allowed us to plan less traditional meetings. We had a lot of fun on a bike tour through the beautiful town of Naumburg, as well as through the picturesque wine region of the Saale-Unstrut Valley. Our tour along the Unstrut River took us to the medieval castle



"Neuenburg", a gem in the Burgenlandkreis, as well as to the original factory of the renowned sparkling wine "Rotkäppchen" in the small town of Freyburg (Unstrut). Longer days and sunshine allowed us to really set up a Stammtisch during the week in the Reudnitzer beer garden "Substanz", which became one of our favorite meeting spots in Leipzig.

Furthermore, every single attendee enriched our meetings. American ETAs from Thüringen, Sachsen-Anhalt, and from all over Sachsen made an effort to attend our meetings. In addition, our meetings included fellow teaching assistants from New Zealand, France, and Great Britain as well as friends from Germany. It was a great team effort to increase the amount of participants to more than 12 people from our original December meeting of just four. While only Tilman and myself represented the German alumni, it's our goal that fellow Germangrantees from Leipzig and the region might have time to join us in the future.

In the academic year 2017/2018, Daniel Franch, an ETA in Dessau living in Leipzig, will altruistically support our

organizing team to help coordinate our monthly and extracurricular Stammtisch gatherings for the Leipzig region. The Fulbright Chapter Leipzig encourages more Fulbrighters to join in and experience the Fulbright spirit amongst like-minded people. As mentioned above, "Substanz" in Leipzig has become our favorite place to meet for burgers, beer and good conversation. Stay tuned and send us an email to rc.leipzig(at)fulbright-alumni.de.



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## Regional Chapter Mannheim-Heidelberg

## Greetings from Mannheim-Heidelberg!

#### by Anna Nishen

Our chapter consists of the larger region of Mannheim and Heidelberg – two cities different in lifestyle, but similar in their openness and top-ranked universities. Here, you can hike the Philosopher's path, along the Neckar and Rhine, or in the Palatinate Forest. You can stroll the old town of Heidelberg or visit the Mannheim castle (you may even study in it). Whoever stops by Heidelberg-Mannheim will not easily let go of the magic that embraces the two cities.

This small, but friendly chapter is lucky to always have a couple of US-American Fulbrighters visiting, as well as German returnees joining it. Fulbrighters from all programs and various places in the US are part of our group, so our "Stammtisch" meetings are always lively and interesting. Of course, talking about the differences and similarities of American communities from Washington D.C. to Portland, OR, is always a favorite. We alternate our meetings between Heidelberg and Mannheim to make it as easy as possible for everyone to join!

and Heidelberg, we had a year filled with two of the things we Fulbrighters like most: talking and eating together. Sometimes even both at the same time! Either way, our small group of Fulbrighters had a wonderful time discussing life abroad and in Germany, politics, and the finesse of the Thanksgiving dinner. This year, we celebrated Thanksgiving in a restaurant that used to be a church where the conversation was as entertaining as the turkey, stuffing, and cranberry sauce were tasty. Maybe you'll see for yourself next year?

Looking back to all the great events we shared in the regional chapter, we are looking forward to the next year with old, as well as new Fulbrighters! If you want to join our activities or for information regarding future events, please send an email to rc.mannheim-heidelberg(at) fulbright-alumni.de or visit the calendar on fulbrightalumni.de.





## Moin aus Hamburg!

#### by David Patrician

It has been an exciting year for both the city of Hamburg as well as our regional alumni group. Last summer a group of us met up with Enrico Belz, regional coordinator for the Parlamentarische Patenschafts-Program (PPP) in Hamburg, and went canoeing in the Alster. We were on the water for over six hours and experienced Hamburg in a new and unique way. At the end of the day we drifted up to a restaurant, tied up our boats, and had a great dinner. Everyone was tired, but agreed it was a special day and we hope to do more events together with Enrico and the PPP group in the near future.

In October we hosted the Fulbright Welcome Meeting for a third time! We had over 150 Fulbrighters (most just returning from their time abroad in the US) meet for a weekend of workshops, social events and some city sightseeing. We were honored to have US Consul General Rick Yoneoka come speak for over an hour. He talked to us about everything from the (then) upcoming US Presidential elections, the transatlantic relationship and a few of his

personal stories about being a career diplomat on four different continents. A big thank you goes out to Jan Schacht for his help in planning and organizing the event.

In November, we had our 5<sup>th</sup> annual Thanksgiving Bowling Night! Once again, a big success with over 30 Fulbrighters trying to bowl a decent game and enjoying a drink afterwards. In January the Elbphiharmonie finally opened its doors to the world. It has become a landmark of Hamburg which can been seen from all around the city. Tickets are hard to come by, but we hope to have a Fulbright event at the "Elphi" in the near future.

In March, a group from our regional chapter went down to Mainz to celebrate the annual Fulbright Winter Ball. Congratulations to Susanne Döring and the Frankfurt regional chapter for planning and hosting a fantastic event! We were so inspired that we put in our bid to host the next Winter Ball.

In June, several Fulbrighters attended the annual 4th of July party at the US Consulate (it was a few weeks earlier this year because of the G20). The US Consulate is supposed to be moving soon to an office space in the Hafen City, so this may have been the last 4<sup>th</sup> of July Party at the "little White House on the Alster".

Finally, we are happy to announce that Hamburg will indeed be hosting the next Fulbright Alumni Winter Ball ... more details on that coming soon!

RC Hamburg · FRANKly 28 43 42 | FRANKly 28 · RC Mannheim-Heidelberg



## Regional Chapter Munich

## The Sky is the Limit

#### by Andreas Schoberth

You can reach the Alps in roughly an hour's drive from Munich, so mountaineering trips are a natural activity for our regional chapter. Bring in half a dozen American grantees from the Midwest, who joined in all of our local events last fall, and their idea of a "real mountain" was put to the test. We started out easy with a Sunday afternoon classic, a trip across the three mini-peaks of Hörnle near Bad Kohlgrub. Those who proved fit enough joined us for the Herzogstand-Heimgarten roundtrip a few weeks later. The additional challenge was a half-mile stretch of a narrow ridge, offering dizzying views to both sides of the trail. Early this summer, we finally tackled another classic, the Kampenwand near Hohenaschau up to the Steinling Alm, from where you are rewarded with a beautiful view overlooking the Chiemsee. If you continue past the alm and make it to the very top of the rocky summit, you can even enjoy a panoramic view across all of the northern Alps, with Großglockner and Großvenediger as the most remarkable peaks on the horizon.

Besides these workouts, we also attended several purely cultural events. In July, we watched the hilarious back and forth of "Der zerbrochene Krug" unfold in the historic Mohr Villa. The following weekend we were mad enough to meet at 6 a.m. on Sunday morning dressed up in Dirndl or Lederhosen to dance together with thousands of likeminded people at the famous Kocherlball, which traces its origins to early morning balls for domestic servants in the late 19th century. Some weeks later, taking advantage of a beautiful summer evening, we enjoyed a captivating performance of Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night, or What You Will", in the English original, produced by the Entity Theater Group.

Of course, these were just the highlights of our year-round busy calendar. As usual, our regular activities included several movie nights, the Fourth of July potluck BBQ, the Thanksgiving Dinner, our local Welcome Meeting, and the Secret Santa Stammtisch.

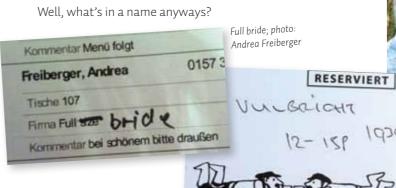




the way home. ;-)

Speaking of which: Have you ever been in charge of organizing the monthly Stammtisch? Then you know for sure how difficult it is to get the name of "Fulbright" correctly across during the reservation call. As if the background noise would not be prohibitive enough for precise communications, the foreign surname regularly develops a life of its own. Among our favorite deviations from the standard spelling are: Full Pride, Full Bride, Full Size, Fullbrite, Vollbreit - though the latter, meaning "under the influence,"

does once in a while aptly describe your state of mind on



Best wishes from your Regional Chapter! Andrea Freiberger, Desirée Barao Garcia,

Maren Stein, Andreas Schoberth

What You Will at the amphitheater

Tending the BBQ

Unless otherwise stated, all photos by Andreas Schoberth

RC Munich · FRANKly 28 45 44 | FRANKly 28 · RC Munich

## Regional Chapter Rhein-Ruhr

#### by Michael Vetter and Ines Winkler

Being the largest regional group area-wise, the activities of the Rhein-Ruhr chapter stretch from Duesseldorf to Bochum. There are bi-monthly Stammtisch events that take place in Duesseldorf, Essen or Bochum. That way we can cater to the members from all regions. These Stammtisches are usually attended by a small core group of that chapter. The more we are happy to welcome Newcomers to the group and to the events!

In order to reactivate our more passive members and offer a forum that has a more thematic focus than a Stammtisch we organized our first "Reality Bites"-event on education in the age of digitalization. Held in the "Haus der Universität" of Heinrich Heine University Duesseldorf

Reality Bytes – Herbert Hollmann; photo: Michael Vetter



right in the center of the city we had around 15 attendees and very inspiring impulse speeches by Walter Grünzweig, Professor of American Literature and Culture at the University of Duisburg-Essen, Axel Schölmerich, president of the Ruhr University Bochum, Herbert Holl-mann, Professor of Business at the FOM and Jens Frische, student of mechanical engineering at the FH Bochum. Looking at possibilities modern technology offers and weighing in "old-fashioned" real-life experience a lively discussion about our Fulbright experience emerged. A big focus lay also on the question what can be done to make the program more attractive and encourage students to apply. Even though it was a small circle everybody enjoyed the

event and accompanying discussion. At the end of the month should have been the annual Turkey feast. However, we decided to try something new and join an American and a German tradition and met for goose dinner in Hattingen, preceded by a visit of the nice traditional Christmas market there.

photo: Michael Vetter

4<sup>th</sup> of July BBQ at Kemnader See;

photo: Helge Bohlmann





The new year started off a bit slow and then there was a catastrophe – at least for those who attended the guided tour through the exhibition on catastrophes and what can be learned from them at DASA in Darmstadt. In July, we had our July 4th BBQ at the Kemnader See near Bochum where we not only had the best weather but also our own BBQ-house in the middle of the park and close to the lake. The Kubb game and a slack line helped get rid of the delicious calories just acquired.

We look forward to another year of inspiring conversations, interesting events and sharing the Fulbright culture.



## Regional Chapter Franken



### Thanksgiving Dinner at Arizona Restaurant in Erlangen

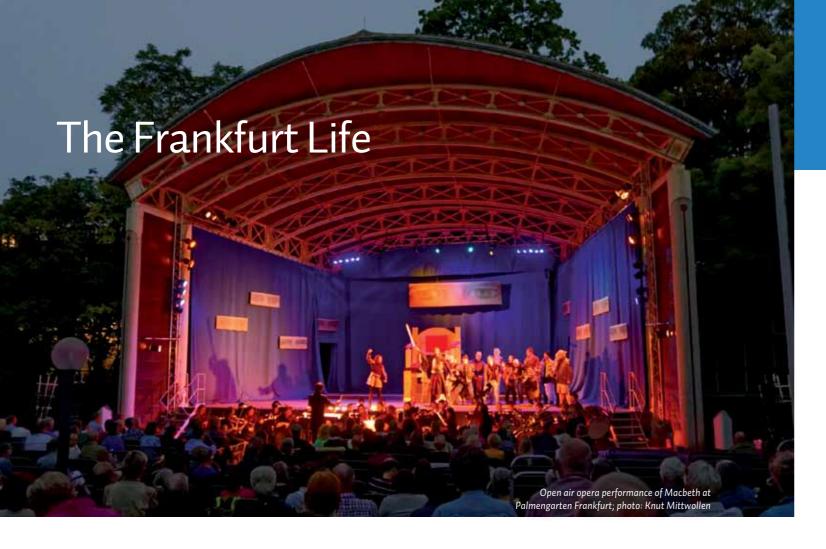
#### by Désiree Doyle

As there were only three of us this year to celebrate Thanksgiving in Franconia, I decided not to prepare a turkey. In my mind, I associate preparing a turkey with eating left-overs for the next three weeks and I didn't fancy that.

A new tex-mex restaurant called "Arizona" has opened in Erlangen and we decided to try it out for our Thanksgiving Dinner. I emailed the restaurant to book a table for three to four people as I thought someone else might show up spontaneously. We met there at half past seven and it turned out that reserving a table had been a good idea. The restaurant was jammed with people and anyone without a reservation had no chance of getting a table.

First, we ordered some cocktails as it was happy hour. Boy were they delicious. I can really recommend all the drinks there! Then we ordered our main courses. Burger, steak with fries and spare ribs with potato wedges. Of course, we were curious to see what the food was like, so we shared the dishes. All of them were absolutely excellent. We spent about three hours there and enjoyed the evening.

See you on July 22<sup>nd</sup> for Independence Day potluck BBQ at my place. Yours Dési



#### by Thomas Flanagan

As many people across Germany enjoy their summer holidays, the Frankfurt Chapter reflects back on quite an eventful year with our engaged members. Whether an invitation from the American Consulate to an interesting event or just one of our monthly Stammtisch meetings at a favorite restaurant, you can be sure that there is always something happening in the Frankfurt Chapter.

It has been an honor for our chapter to be organized this year by our Regional Chapter Coordinator, Mr. Maximilian Zahn. Thanks to him the members remained informed, and the pipelines of communication remained open. So before we begin our review, a big thanks to Max.



We were fortunate this year to be able to attend several special events. Most recently, we had the opportunity at the invitation of the American Consulate to take part in the CSD festivities in the area, beginning with a breakfast at the Consulate. It was important for us to show support for this celebration in Frankfurt, and we were honored to be a part of it. Additionally, in July, several members attended a lunch, again with our friends at the Consulate, on Trade and Investment mainly focusing on the financial relationship between the city of Houston, TX, and Germany.

What would July be without the traditional invitation to the beloved Independence Day BBQ hosted by Knut and Christa Mitwollen. Every year, they invite members to celebrate the 4th of July out in Offenbach (a gem on the Main!). And, as we all know, the 4th does not always align with a "day off" for the rest of the world to celebrate, so the BBQ took place on a weekend and was very well attended by our members.

Last winter, we also seized the opportunity to celebrate another American tradition, Thanksgiving! In keeping with Frankfurter Fulbright tradition, we gathered for a three-course Turkey dinner complete with apple pie and

## Frankfurt

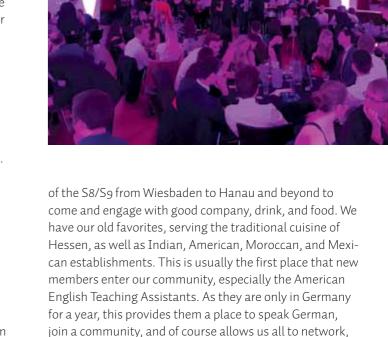
a carrot pumpkin orange crème soup to start. This event always proves to be a great connector of Americans in the area and Germans, and can provide a wonderful venue for cultural exchange.

As we ALL know, 2016 marked a historic year for the United States, namely the election. Of course, being the enthusiasts we are here in Frankfurt, many of our members graciously accepted an invitation of the Consulate to watch the Election Night coverage live at Gibson on the Zeil. The night was electric and anticipation was high. What we did not know then was that the results of that night would set the foundation for conversation at our monthly Stammtisch for the rest of the year, and maybe forever! The event will not go forgotten, especially as several members stayed until the club closed in the early morning hours, waiting for the final results, only to be sent home to watch the final moments there.

To close off 2016, many of us attended a screening of the movie "Hidden Figures" with a follow-up panel discussion about themes brought up in the movie. Well-attended by many different organizations, the night proved to be emotional as well as educational.

Our favorite, most consistent, and best-tasting event however is our monthly Stammtisch. Here, we are offered an opportunity for German enthusiasts of America and

American enthusiasts of Germany alike to come together and explore the finest of the Frankfurt's culinary scene while exchanging stories from Fulbright experiences gone past and yet to come. Each month, we attract



Frankfurt chapter at Winter Ball Mainz

Here in Frankfurt, we look forward to another fully packed and educational year ahead. If you are ever in the Rhein/

whether it be a potential job opportunity or a search for an

apartment. This year, the Stammtisch served as a conve-

nient meeting point for several of our members who were

involved in the planning of this past year's Winter Ball.

Main area, give us a shout! We'd love to have you at our monthly Stammtisch.

4th of July Party in Offenbach;



Regional Chapter



This year's recipient of the Jürgen Mulert Memorial Award on Mutual Understanding is Pedro Marcial Cerrato for his project

## CEMPRENDE -

# The Genner August Alumni Land

### **Community of Entrepreneurs**

Honduras is the second largest country in Central America, both in terms of population and land mass. It has plenty of natural resources, pristine beaches, coral reefs, national parks, and an impressive Mayan cultural heritage. In recent years, it has enjoyed a positive economic growth (3.6 % and 3.5% for 2015 and 2016, respectively).

Unfortunately, its GINI index score (measure of the degree of inequality in the distribution of family income) is the eighth highest in the world with the top fifth of the population earning 18 times more than the bottom fifth, and 1.3 times more than the rest of the total population combined. An estimated 63% of its population lives below the poverty line, and its GDP per capita is the third lowest in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The above economic challenges are further compounded by an economy that is largely agriculture-based (coffee, bananas, palm oil), and the fact that Honduras has



been the most affected country in the world by extreme weather events in the 20-year period between 1994 and 2013 according to the 2015 Germanwatch's Global Climate Risk Index, thus making it very vulnerable to international price fluctuations and adverse natural disasters.

In 1998, hurricane Mitch not only destroyed half of the country's infrastructure but also greatly influenced the country's demographics and economic outlook due to a rise in its migration. In 2008, the Centre for Latin American Monetary Studies reported that out of the total of Honduran households with international migrating relatives in the U.S.A., 86.6% departed between 1998 and 2007, compared to 13.4% that migrated before that period. Today, it is estimated that more than 1 million Hondurans live abroad, out of a total population of 8.5 million.

Aware of the above macroeconomic situation, in 2016, I decided to initiate efforts to improve the outlook of local entrepreneurs by developing a collaborative community, which has now become an NGO called CEMPRENDE in order to offer peer-to-peer support, share news on consulting and job opportunities, create synergies among our members, and train younger generations of entrepreneurs.

Despite the country's non-existent (or weak, at best) entrepreneurial ecosystem, our team of collaborators has developed an ambitious plan that includes the opening of a physical space to encourage collaboration and the creation of innovative programs that link technological ventures with local community needs. Our initiative is a paradigm shifter that offers a collaborative approach that millennials can relate with.



VP Finances Florian Grigoleit with Mulert Award Winner Pedro Cerrato; photo: Wiltrud Hammelstein



Cemprende Collaborators Community Session (December 2016); Pedro Cerrato, standing, presenting Cemprende to new collaborators; photo: Adam Fivenson

Although sometimes this all feels like a Groundhog Day marathon where circumstances force us to take a step back after moving two steps forward, our vision is clear and we intend to hold a steady course.

Receiving the 2017 Jürgen Mulert Award has been an honor and a welcomed reminder that there are supporting groups overseas that want us to succeed. So rather than being a "story from far away," CEMPRENDE extends an invitation to all who want to join our journey, one way or another.

Become one of our international collaborators by connecting us with other like-minded organizations and individuals, offering webinars on agreed-upon subjects, serving as a mentor to one of our entrepreneurs, having your student association run a fund-raising campaign for our project, taking a sabbatical and joining us in Tegucigalpa (also as a graduate fellow), helping our entrepreneurs sell their products or services in your home market, or by contacting us to share other ideas.

Let this article be the start of a worthwhile relationship. We are reachable via email at cemprendetegus(at)gmail. com, or through a private message on our Facebook page: Cemprendehn.

Pedro Marcial Cerrato, Cofounder and Executive Director of Cemprende, focused on: strengthening Honduras' entrepreneurship ecosystem, fostering innovation and contributing to the development of individuals as entrepreneurs



#### Pedro Marcial Cerrato

holds a Master of International Business Studies from the University of South Carolina. He worked for 14 years in the telecommunications equipment industry in Germany, Switzerland, Mexico and the USA, holding different financial and commercial positions. Pedro currently offers consulting support in the areas of financial controlling, organizational development and commercial representation services in Honduras.

## Mulert Award 2018 – Call for Nominations

Since 2010, the German Fulbright Alumni Association grants the "Jürgen Mulert Award on Mutual Understanding", in memory of the association's initiator and founder, Dr. Jürgen Mulert (1938-2008). The Mulert Award is bestowed annually to researchers, artists, professionals, and volunteers across disciplines whose work reflects and advances discourse and peace through mutual understanding.

It is our pleasure to invite friends and members of the Fulbright family worldwide to submit online nominations for candidates for the 2018 Mulert Award. Nominees must be former participants of one of the many Fulbright programs. Nominated projects may be professional or volunteer, and may have an artistic, social or economic character.

### The prize package for the Mulert Award winner includes the following:

- recognition during the award ceremony at the Association's annual Winterball in January/ February 2018, in Hamburg
- project summary and author biography in the 2018 issue of the FRANKly magazine as well as on the Association's website
- 500 EUR monetary support for the awarded project
- Networking opportunities within the Fulbright Alumni community
- full travel support

The Call for Nominations will be accessible online until November 27, 2017.

For further information, please refer to www.fulbright-alumni.de

#### Contact:

Felix Wehinger

mulert.award(at)fulbright-alumni.de

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