

Frankly

The Fulbright Alumni e.V. Magazine



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Dear Readers,

Welcome to 2020. What a year this is! Working on this edition in almost complete isolation due to the COVID-19 pandemic and seeing the issues confronting us, like the global protests in the wake of the murder of George Floyd, made one word jump out at me: community. How we are currently reinventing what it is, how we have reinvented what it meant for us in the past when entering new communities during our exchange years and how we need to keep reinventing in order to create a just community for everyone.

I was glad to see this idea resonate with so many people and to see the diversity of personal interpretations on what this means for us as human beings. As social beings. Communities are a place for sharing thoughts, opinions, experiences. Communities help us to feel less alone. They can be a rock. The kind that helps ground us. Or the kind that is in our way if we are not or do not look the same as the majority. Communities can accompany us in discovering the unknown while they also provide us with a sense of familiarity that makes us feel at home.

This year's FRANKly takes you on a journey. A journey to reinvent community. We take off with Yasmina Giebler's take on what this means in theory (p. 10), followed by what it means in practice: have a look at Melina Sabalioti's illustrative interpretation (p. 22). Find out more about Viktor Hübner's hitchhiking trip and the Americans he met (p. 14). Or about Dino Heinert's experiences abroad and the importance of the running community (p. 20). Read about Charles Ducey's experience at a Catholic Fraternity house in Heidelberg (p. 11).

But every journey forces us to confront challenges. Like questions of identity. On an individual level, for example when Aynur Durak describes being born into a Turkish family in Berlin and her experiences in the U.S. (p. 24). Or on a group level when Timothy P. Sensenig of Fulbright Prism talks about affinity groups within the Fulbright community. Questions of racism, especially after the gruesome murder of George Floyd and the global Black Lives Matter protests.

Listen to Fulbright Noir's Sterling De Sutter Summerville, to his experiences and call for all of us to embrace our shared humanity (p. 34). And to Abdulsettar Mahdi's and Thevagar Mohanadhasan's challenge to all of us to reinvent community in light of a global uprising of anti-racist movements (p. 30). See what Alexander Drößler has to say about his time as a German in Greensboro and his attempt to understand communities (p. 37).

After all these explorations, we are homeward bound. Having found a home in times of the COVID-19 pandemic poses its own challenges, as Susanna Dart tells us in her exploration of co-housing in Great Britain during the pandemic (p. 39). But turning our gaze back to where we came from shows us that our homes are not isolated. They need to be thought of within the context of the global world, as Eric Fraunholz from the Deutsch-Amerikanisches Institut Sachsen e.V. (DAIS) explains. And for some, homecoming is the moment in which all our experiences flow together into finally finding your community at home, as Alana Deluty did (p. 44).

I am extremely proud to present to you this year's FRANKly and I hope its stories from all our contributors, including the authors of the few possible event articles as well as from our regional groups, who keep up great work during these hard times, will entertain you, touch you and help you as they did me. At this point a big THANK YOU is in order to our graphic designer Astrid Weingarten, who reinvented this year's layout so beautifully, to our proofreader Andreas Schoberth, Martin Kohler as well as to Sarah Martin, who introduced me into the community of the German Fulbright Alumni Association and who also helped me with all the questions I had along the way. The biggest thank you goes to those of you who make the FRANKly what it is: our contributors and our readers!

Stay safe and stay brave!

Jana Frey

Greetings from the President



Dear Fulbrighters and Friends,

As president it is one of my privileges to introduce you to our newest issue of the FRANKly. I want to thank this year's contributors for their ideas, pieces and reports and congratulate our editor Jana Frey for her dedication and hard work. I hope everyone will feel the same kind of inspiration that I have felt reading this issue.

The theme of this year's issue is **Reinventing Community**. Like almost all aspects of our social life, our plans and ideas for this year came to a crashing halt when the world became engulfed in the COVID-19 pandemic. What tended to be careful, strategic planning among the board came to a mindset of "what can we do NOW". With Stammtisches and other social events cancelled, we had to resort to other means to reconnect (zoom anyone?). In a way I feel that this pandemic was an eye-opener when it comes to the Association. The ties that bind us are not only strong when we meet in person but are also sustained in times like these when we are socially distancing and are connecting only via digital media. We were in close contact with Fulbright Germany, who updated us about the status of the current U.S. and German grantees, reassuring them of our willingness to help where we could. We had several informal Jitsi-Meetings, giving community members the chance to connect with the board and several Regional-gruppen had virtual Stammtische (looking at you, Regional-gruppe Munich!)

Let's look at this new normal as a new beginning. A chance to reassess the privileges we have. To think of new ways to give back to our communities as Fulbrighters but more importantly as active citizens.

In closing, I hope reading this issue of the FRANKly inspires you to become an active part of the reinvention of this community. Feel free to reach out and share your ideas with us.

Until we meet again – stay safe and healthy!

Yours truly,
Fabienne Rudolph



Olga Gotsulyak



Johannes Schulz



Fabienne Rudolph



Sarah Martin



Andreas Dewald

Meet the Board

Olga Gotsulyak Vice President Events

Olga Gotsulyak was granted a Fulbright Scholarship in line with the Diversity Initiative and studied three weeks at Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas. During her stay, she attended various lectures and dealt with the topic of diversity from different perspectives. After her return she graduated in "International Management Eastern Europe" at the University of Applied Sciences Ludwigshafen and is currently working in the Admissions Department at the Mannheim Business School. After organizing the Winterball 2020, she wanted to become an active part of the Fulbright Alumni e.V., so she has held the position of "Vice President Events" since February 2020. An important part of her responsibilities is to organize the Welcome Meeting and the Winterball.

Johannes Schulz Vice President Finance

Following short stints in Latvia and China, Johannes spent his Fulbright year at the University of Iowa and received his Master's degree of Laws in 2009. He then returned to Germany, started his career in the commodities trading industry and currently works as senior regulatory advisor on EU electricity trading topics. In early 2012, Johannes spent time in the Philippines working for a local non-profit organization and his volunteering and traveling has yet to slow down even with two kids in tow! He was the coordinator for the Rhein Ruhr regional chapter for three years and organized the Welcome Meeting in Düsseldorf in 2013. After returning to Düsseldorf from England in 2018, he became active in FAeV at the first opportunity, joining the organizational team for the Winter Ball 2019. As VP Finances his main mission is to maintain the solid financial standing of the organization and help steer the organization through these turbulent times.

The Board

Fabienne Rudolph President

Fabienne spent her Fulbright year (2013-14) in Boston, Massachusetts graduating with a M.Sc. in Music Industry Leadership from Northeastern University. Upon returning to Germany, she started working in the German music industry and is currently working as a Licensing Manager at Concord (www.concord.com). Fabienne, or „Fabs“ as she is known to her friends both in and outside the association, joined the board in 2016 first as the Outreach Chair before being elected Vice President of Events in 2017 and finally President in 2020. As president, her initial visions were derailed by the COVID-19 pandemic and she is now focused on strengthening our ties with Fulbright Germany and other partner organizations.

Sarah Martin Vice President Communications

In 2015, Sarah graduated from the University of Oregon with a B.A. in German, with minors in Business Administration and Music. She spent her 2015-16 Fulbright year as an ETA at a Gymnasium in Herne, NRW, and completed her M.A. in Second Language Acquisition at Ludwig Maximilians University Munich in September 2019. Sarah now heads the library and department of information & research at Amerikahaus Munich, which has just moved back into its historic building on Karolinenplatz. Her hobbies include singing in a chamber choir, baking, and exploring the Alps in hiking boots or on a snowboard.

Andreas Dewald Vice President Members

Prior to going to the U.S. on a Fulbright scholarship in 2017/18, Andreas graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Engineering Management from Hochschule Darmstadt. He spent his Fulbright at Purdue University in Indiana where he pursued a M.A. in Technology, Leadership and Innovation: he received his degree at the end of 2018. His passion for Fulbright led him to participate in the Fulbright Conference three times, as well as lead the Purdue Fulbright Association for one semester. Andreas is currently serving his second term on the Fulbright board as Vice President of Members. He wants to engage all members in the workgroups around different topics and help integrate returning Fulbrighters into the association. After finishing his Master's degree in Engineering Management, he started to work as a consultant for digitalization at Deutsche Bahn. Andreas is passionate about technology, future mobility, intercultural exchange, and connecting people.

The Extended Board



Jana Frey FRANKly Editor

Jana Frey has a B.A. in History and English from Saarland University and an M.A. in Global History from Heidelberg University. Jana attended the University of Oregon on a Fulbright travel scholarship to study history. When not living in Germany or the US, she has found opportunities to spend time abroad, such as interning at the German Historical Institute in London and working at a hostel in Dublin. She is currently a project assistant for Ph.D. scholarships for candidates from Southeast Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa as well as for general research grants at the Gerda Henkel Foundation in Düsseldorf, Germany. Jana also occasionally works as a freelance editor and translator for a publishing house (which comes in handy as the new editor of the FRANKly), and is a Judo fighter as well as a Judo coach for kids in her free time.

Henning Blunck Online Editor

Henning spent his Fulbright year (2010-11) at the Georgia Institute of Technology, where he received an M.A. in Industrial Engineering. After completing his diploma studies in Dortmund, he went on to pursue a Ph.D. in production planning & control before joining Deutsche Post DHL Group as a data scientist. Henning has been associated with the German Fulbright Alumni Association since 2012, working mostly on the website.



from left to right: Jana Frey, Henning Blunck, Jürgen Simon, Elke Handschug-Brosin, Anoja Parinpanathan, Felix Wehinger

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 fellowship from 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.

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). Elke spent three years (1992-1995) as a Fulbright Scholar in Michigan and Alaska. She graduated from MSU with a M.A. 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.

Anoja Parinpanathan Diversity Alumni

In 2014, Anoja was granted a Fulbright Scholarship as part of the Diversity Initiative to study at the University of Kentucky. Following her Fulbright exchange, Anoja started pursuing her B.A. in Liberal Arts and Sciences with a focus on International Relations, Peace- and Conflict Studies and Development at the University College of Maastricht and the Universidad San Francisco de Quito. After completing her studies, Anoja worked for the National Commission of Uruguay for UNESCO and traveled through South America. Currently, she works at the Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, a service provider that supports the German government in reaching its objectives in the field of international cooperation. At GIZ, she works as a project manager for Pakistan in the area of migration and employment promotion. Anoja joined the extended board in 2020. Being a recipient of the Diversity Initiative herself, she is eager to work on the topic of diversity, e.g. by organizing (virtual) events and formats.

Felix Wehinger Jürgen-Mulert Memorial Award

Felix Wehinger received his B.A. in English and Gender Studies at Humboldt Universität Berlin and his M.A. in North American Studies at the John-F.-Kennedy Institute of 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 from 2011-12. He is currently working in the Policy Lab Digital, Work & Society at the Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs in Berlin. Felix joined the Extended Board in 2017 as the Mulert Award Chair.

The Extended Board



From left to right:
Anna-Elisabeth Schmitz
Dagmar Schreiber
Allie Drexler

Anna-Elisabeth Schmitz International Coordinator

Lisa graduated from Ruhr-Universität Bochum with a B.A. in History and English & American Studies and from Westfälische Hochschule with a B.A. in Journalism and Public Relations. She moved to Boston on a Fulbright scholarship in 2014 to obtain an M.S. in Global Studies and International Relations with a concentration in Conflict Resolution from Northeastern University. Currently, she is pursuing a Ph.D. in Political Science, studying the effect of growing inequality on democracy. Lisa lives in Berlin, where she also works at the Bundestag. She joined the German Fulbright Alumni Association as a member of the Extended Board in 2016. 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. Lisa is also a board member of the European Network of American Alumni Associations.

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.

Allie Drexler Outreach

Alexandra 'Allie' Drexler made Berlin her home after completing her B.A. in International Affairs at George Washington University. In 2016 Allie participated in the International Parliamentary Scholarship (IPS) in the German Bundestag. After IPS she was offered a position in a member of parliament's office as a policy advisor and worked there for almost two years. During this time she was also a Fulbright English teaching assistant in two Berlin schools. Inspired by her experiences teaching, Allie left the Bundestag to pursue a career in international education. In 2018 she started her own company, Adapting Internationally, through which she organizes dynamic seminars and conferences with a focus on political and intercultural education and civic engagement. This led her to her current position at the Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE), where she organizes custom exchange programs. This is her third year as Outreach Chair of the German Fulbright Alumni Association. Allie is also the vice president of the American Bundestag Network.

Sarah Abou Taka and Tristan Cristofolini Fulbright Alumni e.V. Office

Sarah Abou Taka and Tristan Cristofolini are the managers of the Fulbright Alumni e.V. office in Frankfurt am Main. Although they are not Fulbright Alumni, their devotion to the Fulbright cause is rooted in their interests as students of American Studies at Goethe-University. As Office Managers, their responsibilities include connecting members with questions to the board, upholding contacts with various partners and clients, and to keep things running smoothly. Sarah is studying to become an elementary school teacher, and Tristan will start his American Studies M.A. in the fall of 2019. They both hope that the Fulbright idea of connecting people of different cultures through scholarly exchange will persist in its current form and that the FAeV will continue to thrive, even during difficult political times.

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 M.A. 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 Ph.D. in Computer Science. Simon grew 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 ever since.

Eugen Litwinow Mentoring

Is the Co-Founder and Managing Director of Ellery Studio, a Berlin based strategic design agency focusing on sustainability, transformation, urbanism and education. Born as Evgenij Alexandrowitsch Litwinow in Kazakhstan and raised as Eugen Litwinow in Germany, he published a book about the change of forenames of Germans from the former USSR called "Mein Name ist Eugen – Gespräche über das Aufwachsen zwischen zwei Kulturen". He continues to give talks and presents exhibitions on this topic. In 2011, he was awarded a Fulbright grant to pursue an MFA at Parsons School of Design in New York City. His experiences in New York led directly to the founding of Ellery Studio and the launching of many transatlantic collaborative projects. As the Fulbright Mentoring Chair, he is looking forward to redesigning classical modes of mentoring, exploring new educational pathways, and providing people with a platform to share knowledge on issues they're passionate about.

Hermes Winands Data Management

Not featured
Genna Tesdall
Contact for American Grantees

From left to right: Sarah Abou Taka and Tristan Cristofolini, Simon Wimmer, Eugen Litwinow, Hermes Winands



Finding Community

by Yasmina Giebeler

The communities that we choose to live in are always an expression of a facet of ourselves. At times, one community might not be enough to account for all our aspirations, ideals or worries. On this account, I consider it a great personal privilege to live in a time and environment that not only enables constant shifts between different worlds, but even encourages you to reach out to other communities. In the past, I have found this to be a very enriching process both the individual and respective community can benefit from: We might connect with a certain community in the expectation to find support and endorsement of our views, but at the same time we will necessarily bring along some ideas that can challenge long held beliefs of this very group. In return, the mindset an individual has adopted and cultivated over the years in one community can reach its limitations in the next one. As much as this can be a threatening experience, it also offers a chance for us to find attitudes to be perfectly acceptable that have been handled as taboos in former communities. Of course, the sole purpose of migration between communities is not to permanently adopt and discard our convictions; on the contrary, it can also help us uphold them with higher confidence but in a way that respects adverse opinions at the same time.

Finding our place is deeply rooted in humanity. Having a strong sense of belonging to one certain group comes with a range of benefits such as social comforting and support, but also encourages stereotypes against other groups and an erroneous perception of conformity of everyone who is not part of one's own social circle. This does not only promote an 'us against them'-attitude, but at the same time also limits one's personality to the mere components encouraged by the current community, as everything that falls out of line is associated with the 'faulty' beliefs of the other. The more exclusive the group, the more pronounced the effects. Yet, no matter how proud we are to be part of our community, most of us want to be seen as an individual composed of our very own traits and not as

a sole representative of our community. However, social psychology demonstrates that we still have not overcome this way of thinking, and social biases – such as the ultimate attribution error, according to which we assume certain traits of a person based on our perception of their respective community – are an everyday appearance.

Many of us highly benefit from today's globalized world and an increasing amount of interdisciplinary work. This new intertwinability is both a chance and a challenge for how we choose to interact with each other in the future. Right now, we have arrived at a crossroad and the next years will show if we are able to use this opportunity or if we keep sowing seeds of hostility and ignorance. Right now, our main task should be establishing inter-community and inter-cultural understanding by promoting the possibility of being part of more than one community and to understand that we have the opportunity to not only have the best of both, but of all worlds. As J.W. Fulbright said: "The essence of intercultural education is the acquisition of empathy – the ability to see the world as others see it, and to allow for the possibility that others may see something we have failed to see, or may see it more accurately. The simple purpose of the exchange program ... is to erode the culturally rooted mistrust that sets nations against one another."



Yasmina Giebeler is a Psychology student based in Berlin with intermediate studies in Melbourne (Australia), Toulouse (France) and San Diego (USA), generously supported by a travel scholarship of the Fulbright Program. During these times she came

to cherish spending time with people from variable backgrounds, who greatly contributed to expanding my knowledge and ideas.



View from Heidelberg Castle;
photo: Charles Ducey

Home Communities / Host Communities:

HEIDELBERG 2016

by Charles Ducey

Factually speaking, the first time I literally set foot in Heidelberg, Germany, was nearly a decade ago, in late June of 2010. We were on a day-trip to the famed university town – a group of about 20 American high school students, supervised by a health sciences teacher and our German instructor, a native of Darmstadt in Hessen, some 40 miles directly due north of Heidelberg.

I didn't think much of Heidelberg then, to be honest. In the preceding weeks of travel, we'd seen other castles, more structurally stable and ancient, visited other beer gardens and quintessentially German jaunts such that the experience of Heidelberg on that day more or less blended into a collage of other European cityscapes. I remember that a World Cup game was in progress that afternoon (the Brazilians probably won), and that was that for first impressions.

But Heidelberg had a way of slipping back into my visor in the ensuing years. I visited a professor there during one of my first return trips to the Continent (during the next World Cup in 2014, as a matter of fact). The following summer, I sat in on a seminar on the philosophy of Hegel in the very halls of Heidelberg's Ruprecht Karl University where Hegel himself had lectured some two centuries before. The place had begun to seep into me by then. I'd traversed the long channel of the Hauptstraße – allegedly the longest, uninterrupted pedestrian street in Europe – played Fussball on the Neckarwiese, the plush meadow on the northern banks of Heidelberg's stretch of the Neckar River, and, of course, paced the Philosophenweg, the philosophers' way along the wooded hills above. None of that, I suppose, really made Heidelberg home, but the memorable features of the place,

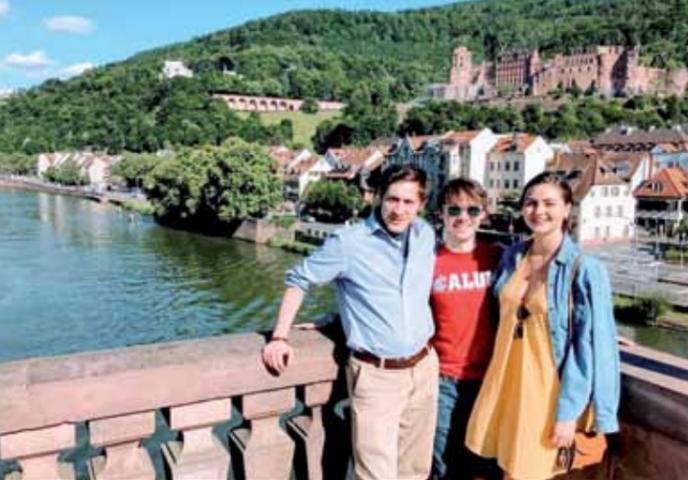
those landmarks that serve to orient the tourist and the denizen alike, had left their impressions on me and would not be easily forgotten.

So, when it came time to consider post-graduation plans, I understandably had my sights set on Heidelberg.

There is no simple way to recall what happened next, and any recollection of those subsequent events, from this privileged position of removed retrospection, would necessarily stand at a distance from what really happened back then. I suppose it wasn't really all that dramatic. But at the same time, there was something momentous about the series of rather unplanned happenings that happened to bring me to Heidelberg in September of 2016.

It came with an invitation: a professor, himself a recipient of a Fulbright scholarship to study in Tübingen, Germany, decades prior, asked if I had considered applying for a Fulbright grant. I had not. And yet, I did. And, lo and behold, my application was accepted. And perhaps a year after first setting myself down to churn out the application for a possible year-long stay, there I was standing in front of an immense hillside house near Heidelberg's ruined castle, with a suitcase in either hand.

This house would become a central facet of my Fulbright year, the year thereafter, and continues to occupy a sanctified place in my self-understanding and understanding of community both. But before I can dive into that experience of community, I must return to the foundations of my German community in the Fulbright network, beginning with our multi-day orientation in the centrally located German city of Marburg.



Fulbright recipients to Heidelberg, 2016-17 (from left to right): Charles Ducey, Justin Niedermeyer, Lindsey Walter; photo: Lindsey Walter (photo taken from Lindsey Walter's phone by a gracious passerby)



Myself, standing with (from left to right) Lindsey Walter, Christian and Moritz during the Christmas party in 2016; photo: Alexander Liberna

“The Three” – Fulbright Heidelberg 2016-17

For several years, the German Fulbright Commission (which I always feel inclined to spell “Kommission” in accordance with German standards) has made its annual orientation for students and researchers in the university city of Marburg. It was there that I first met two individuals whose names, institutional affiliations, and relevant contact information I had been internalizing from a digital spreadsheet for several weeks beforehand.

One, Justin Niedermeyer of the fine state of Washington, was my roommate for the weekend stay. He researched particle physics at the science campus on the north side of town in Neuenheimer Feld. The other (and here I am quite cognizant of having placed her name second and am fearing reprisals) was Lindsey Walter of southern California. She conducted her research in environmental science policy on the north side as well. We all met on what I believe was the first evening of the orientation in an Indian-themed restaurant and very much struck it off. That camaraderie would prove to be an enduring feature of our time as Fulbrighters in Alt Heidelberg.

Though I am sure it is not uncommon for American Fulbrighters abroad to group together, I can say from experience that our trio of geographically and academically diverse Fulbrighters in Heidelberg enjoyed a communal bond of uncommon loyalty and revelry. From a family-sized Thanksgiving celebration in Lindsey's first lodgings north of the river to a Christmas party at the hillside house to a tour of Justin's physics laboratory in the spring, the three of us kept together and came to appreciate each of our quirks, musical preferences, and varying affinities for German beer under the generous sponsorship of Senator William J. Fulbright's hallowed foundation.

As the reader will come to appreciate, my two fellow Fulbrighters may have had more to tolerate from my side of things than I from theirs, for, as they rounded a corner and climbed the stairs to attend that above-mentioned Christmas party, they were about enter a world in which I had found myself fully submerged, after entering that hillside house in September several months prior.

Vivat, Crescat: The Catholic Fraternity House

I was sitting somewhere, probably in a library, in the late spring of 2016 when I first discovered the hillside house in Heidelberg that I would soon call home. It came in the form of an innocuous housing advert on a website I had been perusing for weeks. The first question on the description asked, in German, if I was Catholic. Indeed, I was and am. The second asked whether I was a man. I certainly hope so! What followed was a description of an intentionally communal way of life, led by male students in a shared pursuit of learning, faith, friendship, and tradition. And all in German! I was all in – voll dabei!

What I didn't know and couldn't have known, not from the advert, not from the website linked in the description, nor even from my first email contact with one Maximilian Möller, was what that community really consisted of, what made its ever-loving Teutonic heartbeat. And though I was casually dissuaded from living there by an acquaintance who, through happenstance, had lived in a similar house in Frankfurt several summers before – there was talk of “weird customs” and swordsmanship – I did not hesitate to take up Maximilian's offer for a trial run, a few nights' stay that would spiral into a yearlong residence that turned into two, with several return trips carried out or forthcoming still.

For the uninitiated, the Catholic fraternity house may seem a far-cry from the hi-tech, pan-European and, yes, even multicultural milieu of the contemporary German metropolis. There are the silly hats, for one. The old fashioned songs

and formality, for another. And yet, in every German metropolis – from the Hanseatic port of Hamburg to the beer tents of Munich and the bustling capital of Berlin – one will find a local Catholic fraternity. The confusion comes in part from the conflation of Catholic fraternities with all other kinds of all-male university societies, including those whose members engage in saber duels with ironclad goggles on their otherwise exposed faces. There are plenty of those societies in Heidelberg as well, and while my interactions with their members ranged from the cordial to the abrasive, I cannot speak precisely to what they stand for.

What I can say is what my Catholic fraternity stands for, and that I felt welcome there. And if the Christmas party picture is any indication, others felt welcome there, too. The powerful thing about living in that Catholic fraternity house, and what will certainly remain with me from that community, was the communal spirit. I don't just mean that we lived in the same place, occasionally taking turns cleaning the pots and pans and scrubbing down the bathrooms – which we did! What I mean to say is that we lived for the same things, in variant degrees, and that these things had a spirit to them.

If I were to summarize that communal spirit (which we might call esprit de corps, if we were French, which we are not!), it would be with the motto of that fraternity: Fides est vita et scientiarum – faith is life and that of knowledge.

In those five Latin words I can identify the many facets of my communal experience both in that particular community and as a Fulbrighter all told. Knowledge, life, faith – these broad categories encompass the lives of students and researchers who seek to transform and, what's necessary to start, be transformed through knowledge and thereby contribute to the life of a collective human enterprise in which Senator Fulbright had faith. Entering into any human community necessitates such a faith, such a relational trust, because, just as I learned standing at the door of that fraternity house, you never quite know what you're going to get.

Fulbright's Viewpoint: Transatlantic and Beyond

As I would later discover while reading Fulbright's own thoughts on human communities in his 1966 book *The Arrogance of Power*, it was not so much the senator's trust in human goodness but his awareness of human error that led him to value an informed faith in humanity.

In his concluding remarks, he writes of “the morality of decent instincts tempered by the knowledge of human imperfection” as a guiding principle for foreign policy. While this comment is necessarily general for such a broad project as international relations, it does possess a substantial claim: our interactions with other people, especially

those unknown to us, ought to be marked by decency, yes, and this decency is marked by knowledge of those other people, of their ways of life, of their weaknesses, yes, but also what makes them distinct. We cannot, in other words, go charging into a foreign land thinking we will convert the others to our cause – be it environmental justice, world peace or what have you. Rather, our way forward must be found in learning their ways, in knowledge of human nature.

While I cannot assume to have fully learned their ways in that year, nor in the subsequent years and months I would go on to stay there, I can say that I learned to trust the people of Heidelberg – my fellow Fulbrighters, the Germans, the men I lived with at the hillside house. There are many other stories I could tell – about the boisterous chaplain at the Jesuit Church, about pan-Germanic travels to Fulbright events in Berlin and Munich, about the celebrations and defeats at the Catholic fraternity. But, for now, I hope it will suffice to say that I am grateful for the communities that would have me and have faith that, despite travel prohibitions, civil unrest, and the uncertainty of our human existence, more good times are yet to be had.



Charles Ducey was a Fulbright Study/Research recipient for 2016/17 in Heidelberg, Germany for German literature after graduating from the University of Notre Dame with a B.A. in German and English. Favorable conditions in Germany permitted him to stay a second year at the University of Heidelberg, where he completed his M.A. in German studies in cultural comparison in December of 2018. Semper apertus!

The Americans I Met

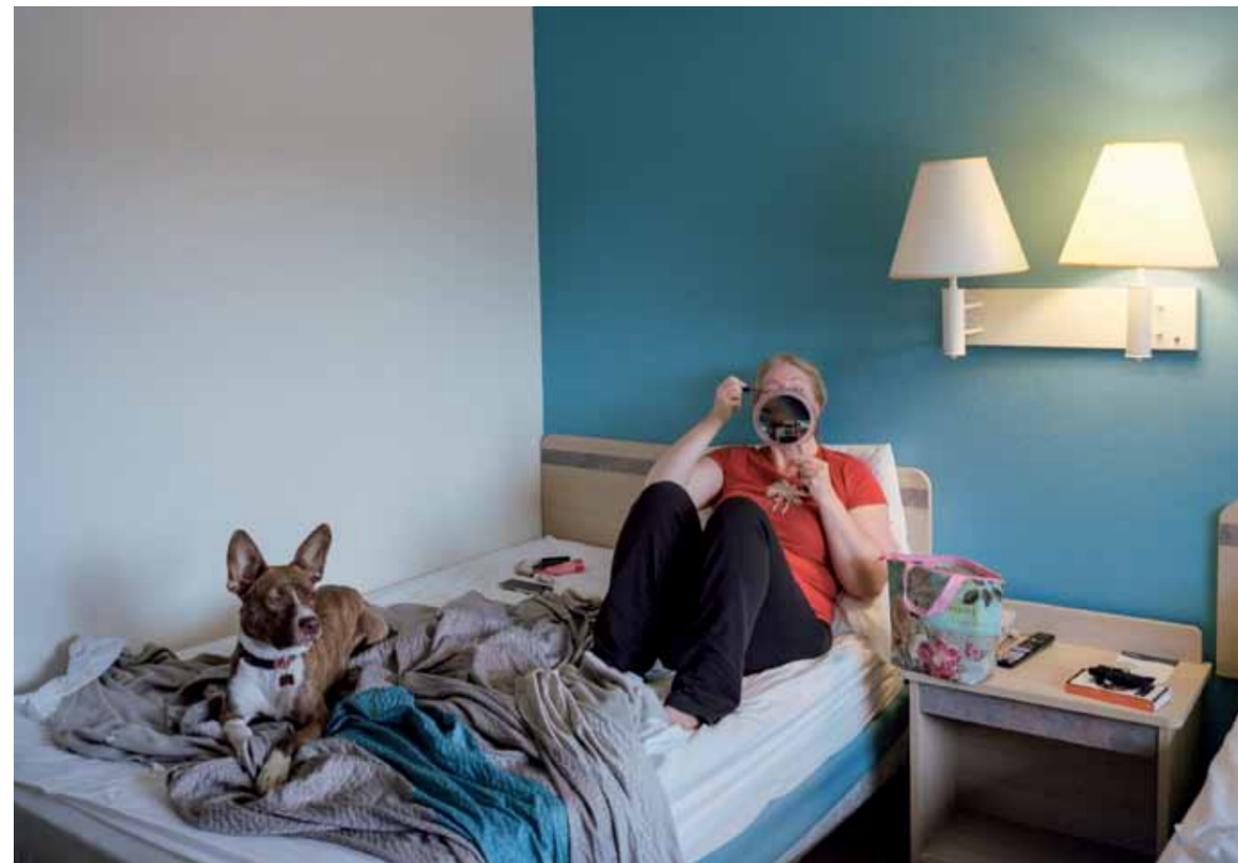
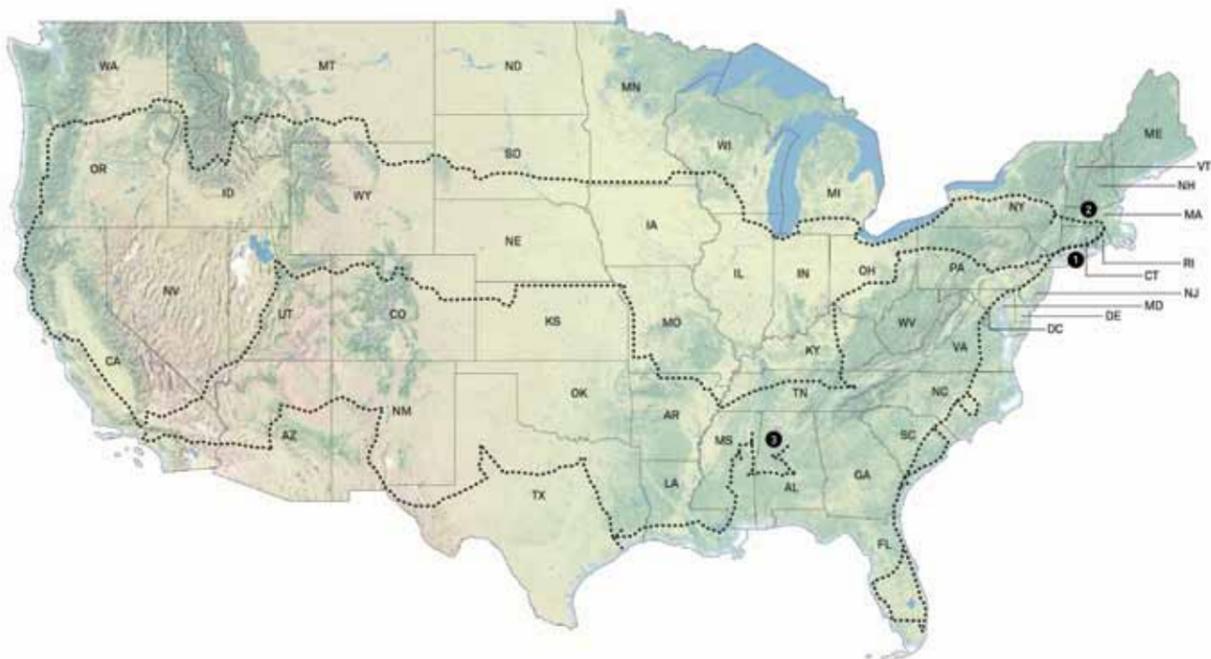
by Viktor Hübner

From my perspective as a German, the United States seems at once familiar and incomprehensible. Vast, diverse, spanning huge distances, with multiple time zones and its own understanding of nationality and community, it is a stark contrast to Europe. Every European has their own idea about America. The media in Germany makes frequent reference to the U.S., but in such general or specific ways that it is impossible to form an accurate picture of America, and easy to conjure a misleading one. I thought I had an understanding of America too, until I began my own field investigation.

I first arrived in the United States on a Fulbright Scholarship during the summer of 2017. While adjusting to the new environment, I noticed how many Americans conversationally referred to the current political environment. I heard people, regardless of their political standpoint, address the current moment as “controversial” or even “historical.” Soon after I arrived, the American Psychological Association released their annual *Stress in America* survey on November 1, 2017. It was, in my opinion, an extraordinary report. More than half of Americans surveyed, across all generations, considered the current time to be the lowest point in U.S. history. While conducted annually,

the survey revealed for the first time a growing concern for the future of the nation. A subsequent survey in 2018 showed that this outlook had even deepened. Daily media coverage also made me curious about the way Americans experienced the state of their country in the ‘Trump era’. A TIME article from October 26, 2018, for instance, proclaimed: “No Wonder America Is Divided. We Can’t Even Agree on What Our Values Mean.”

Intrigued by these observations, and motivated by my own desire to gain perspective on the current reality experienced by Americans, I began a two-year photo-journalistic study as part of my M.A. thesis at the Rhode Island School of Design. I spent six months hitchhiking three different routes across the United States. First, I traveled from Providence, Rhode Island along the East Coast to Miami, from where I circled back again. Then, from Rhode Island through the Midwest to San Francisco, and back along a different route through the northern United States. And finally, in the South, from Birmingham Alabama, westward to Los Angeles. I spent the most time in rural America, towns and cities, interstates and backroads, across 41 states. All told, I covered more than 16,000 miles on 248 rides.



Kristeen in Richmond, VA

Some might wonder why I chose hitchhiking as a way to meet Americans. I have found that hitchhiking is perhaps the most intimate way to experience a foreign culture; it forces you to interact with perfect strangers and to entirely depend on their generosity every day. It places both the host and the hitchhiker in a vulnerable position that encourages an intimate interchange of thoughts and ideas. It necessitates an almost childlike trust. Once the fear of the stranger has been overcome, people may share their deepest thoughts, feelings, concerns, maybe even secrets; they know that the chance they will meet again is extremely slight, maybe non-existent.

My journeys, photographs, and conversations represent a two year exploration of what it means to be American at this moment, and of the issues that affect Americans, both personally and politically. I searched for anecdotes. I observed living conditions and socio-economic class realities among the diverse communities and the single individuals I met. With only my camera, audio recorder, and a few provisions in a backpack, I took to the road with a simple objective: to see what I might find. I had vague

ideas about what I might experience, shaped by things I had learned or been told by people. But for the most part, my intention was to simply go to places and see what I found there.

My encounters with strangers happened while hitchhiking, or simply while walking through neighborhoods, waiting at gas stations, or visiting historical sites; I met people at supermarkets, bars, churches, restaurants, and diners. Even strip clubs. I didn’t travel with a fixed route in mind; instead, I chose key points that I wanted to visit, and left myself the option to veer off-track if an interesting opportunity arose. I sought out people and communities who would host me in their home for at least one night, although I stayed longer with some, up to seven days. In my photographs and written accounts, I have tried to convey these people’s environment, possessions, how they live, and the stories they told me. In total, I spent one or more nights in 74 different private homes, six nights in hotel rooms sponsored by strangers I met, and 18 nights outside in my tent or another shelter.



Patrick, Marc, Steve & Cornelius in Myrtle Beach, SC

Things often unfolded around me beyond my control. I immersed myself in the lives of the people who took me in, and I trusted in their good intentions. I treated everyone with disarming curiosity and openness. I learned to listen, to be patient, and to be tolerant towards opinions different from my own. The variety of people I encountered is highly fascinating; from a wealthy doctor, who considers himself to be part of the upper one percent of society, living in a dream house in the outskirts of Ann Arbor, MI. A rancher family in rural Wise River, MT who has an ongoing fight, impossible to win, against a pack of wolves recently reintroduced into nature that constantly attack their cattle. A young student who, after a two-hour conversation in the middle of the night, robbed me and stole my phone in Southside Chicago, an area which is considered one of the most dangerous places in the U.S. (I got my phone back the next day when I found his mother through a combination of unforeseen circumstances). To a crackhouse in Myrtle Beach, SC where I spent five days living together with a close-knit group of drug abusers in one tiny apartment, and many other kinds of people in between.

But even though all the Americans I met belong to the same society, their lives often enough could not be more different. Peoples' lives take place in completely separated communities, located far away from each other under vastly different circumstances and future perspectives. The distance is not only a physical range, but decisively separated by class, race, ideology and location. In this project, I found myself as a wanderer between these different communities, stepping into different realities to learn from each of them and therefore to inform myself and the project.

But as much as these communities were divided, I also found a few things they share in common: I felt a constant sense of political anxiety and a pervasive fear of others and the unknown. Many of the people I met, without my prompting, spoke about the current political situation. Regardless of their political standpoint, they shared with me their concerns about the state of the country and the future. I was deeply affected by the fear I saw expressed toward strangers, towards 'the other.' Not a day passed without an endless string of warnings about "the crazy



Jesse, Ester & Samuel in Fiedler, PA

people out here" or other perceived dangers, or without people expressing their fear of me. Because of this, I developed strategies for how to appear as non-threatening as possible when I approached people: I made an effort to look presentable and friendly, I always wore neat clothes, and tried to appear clean-cut. I tailored my introductions to the people I encountered. I might introduce myself as a foreign student, "trying to find out what it means to be American" or more simply, "exploring America." Sometimes, I added a few words about being a "PK" (preacher's kid) to gain trust.

I was amazed by the strongly pronounced "Culture of Fear" within many of the Americans I met, especially in contrast to my own country and the many other countries I have visited. The warnings, fearful reactions, and distinct cautions that I received daily shocked me. Many people blamed the media as a significant source causing anxiety in this country considering the fact that nowadays news carries even the smallest incident from one corner of the country to the other. Others blame the increase in mass

shootings, violence, or political disparity as the cause of so much worry. And still, despite this distress, the fact that many people took me into their homes, almost every single night, astonished me. Not to mention the many detours, meals, gifts, and even cash that people offered me. The trust that strangers showed me was because I was a foreigner, a German. It was undoubtedly a crucial component throughout all my encounters. It was part of the reason why people were so generous to me and able to overcome their concerns. And it was a reaction to who I am – a foreign student on the road with a mission.

Some of my encounters permanently shaped me, like Daniel (46) an adult basic education prison teacher in State College, PA. We met at a gas station during his lunch break. He asked me "Do you need a place to stay?" and took me, after I agreed, straight to his house into a small suburban neighborhood. When we arrived, he opened the front door and drove straight back to work, returning five hours later. In the meantime I had full access to every single room of his fairly large residence. During my stay, I learned over our long conversations that he was in great pain about a recent divorce. His ex-wife had an affair with



Ronald in Long Beach, CA

a theologian at a local bible college and he hasn't seen his kids for several years since their separation. As a result of this crisis, he had decided to open his house to strangers and apparently our encounter felt like a divine appointment to him when he told me: "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me ... some have entertained angels unawares ... Maybe you are an angel." He clearly needed someone to talk to and I was listening wholeheartedly. But at the same time, I was also learning a great deal about his deep level of trust and kindness that he had shown me straight from the beginning. It was in many ways the opposite of how his community and the American society around him acts. His humbleness has since shaped me in a way that I keep his attitude as my personal example in following journeys as well as in my own community back in Germany; even as a total stranger, he did not judge me straight away but showed me an abundance of trust and kindness.

I have to add that my observations may be neither unique nor new, but aim to contribute to a larger understanding about contemporary dynamics in the American society on a micro-community level to a macro, larger political scale. In the past, other non-American photographers have also focused on the American culture in prevalent times and have contributed with their foreign eye to public discourse. Artists like the Swiss photographer Robert Frank with his iconic book, 'The Americans' in the early 50s, or the Danish activist and hitchhiker, Jacob Holdt and his travel journal, 'American Pictures: A Personal Journey Through the American Underclass' during the 70s and 80s, to only name a few. Both contributed in their own ways with intriguing perspectives and have created a time stamp still relevant to this day in order to understand the different generations in America.



Jay in New Orleans, LA

While still a work-in-progress, 'The Americans I Met' is planned to be completed and published in book form in early 2021. This project focuses on the people I met on my travels, their words, their experiences, and, by extension, the 'Trump era', in which they live. I must note that I do not see the subjects in the book as a representation of Americans as a whole. Their experiences do not encompass what life is like for all people in the United States. The people I photographed and interviewed for this project reflect the encounters I made on my hitchhiking journey; they are simply a record of the Americans I met.



Viktor Hübner (*1988) is a photographer and writer. His artistic practice unites a deep natural curiosity for other human beings and their fate. He explores themes of community, ideology, class, and socio-political tensions using photography, audio-interviews, and written accounts.

His motivation to witness and record is simple: he believes in the importance of documenting the present narrative. Our history gives us a perspective of time; it allows us to understand where we are and where we are going. It lends awareness to the complexity of society, culture, and issues. Hübner received a B.A. in visual communication at the University of Applied Sciences Mainz in 2016, and a M.F.A. in photography at the Rhode Island School of Design in 2019.

Broadening Your Horizon

by Dino Heinert

The British athlete Jonny Brownlee was leading the race at the 2016 Triathlon World Series when he suddenly began to stagger 700 meters before the finish line due to heat exhaustion. He stopped running and found it difficult to stay on his feet. The spectators were shocked and Jonny's face was in pain. At that moment it was clear – the athlete will have to stop the race. He was immediately overtaken by the later winner Schoemann from South Africa. But just when Jonny had been supplied with a bottle of water by a spectator, it happened: His older brother by two years, Alistair Brownlee, who was currently in third place, grabbed his brother's arm and started running with him. Alistair threw away his chance for first place. He supported Jonny and the Brownlee brothers finished second and third together to thunderous cheers. This story inspired many people and is one reason why I am personally very enthusiastic about the running and triathlon community. Although it is a very competitive sport, there are moments when your own success fades into the background and comradeship comes to the foreground.

For me, community means having the same values and ideas as other members of a group. The example described shows that, in addition to the motivation to win in running, this includes comradeship, but also things like a common past or the same goals for the future in a group.

Since I finished school, I've traveled a lot. I spent an especially long time in three places and I would like to tell you about my experiences in all the communities I have joined in the past years. Directly after graduating from high school, I lived in Peru near the Inca city of Cusco for over half a year, where I taught English as a volunteer and coached children in soccer. Through the constant contact with the children and their parents, I was able to immerse myself well in the village community. We also ate at villagers' homes every day and bought food at the markets. I was able to experience an interesting change of perspective. Every day I had to deal with people who, for example, only had one pair of trousers and a pair of shoes. Despite or because of this, people were very joyful and apparently had more fun in life than many people living in Germany.



Fulbright Community „Leaders in Entrepreneurship“; photo: Harald Leder



Me After My First Marathon; photo: Kerstin Heinert



English Lessons for Peruvian Children; photo: Dino Heinert

Thanks to Fulbright, I had the opportunity to immerse myself in a completely new community when I participated in a three-week program entitled „Leaders in Entrepreneurship“ in Baton Rouge, Louisiana in 2018. I met highly motivated students from all over Germany and had the opportunity to go through a lot with them. In retrospect, I think that in our group of 24 students everyone had a great influence on the other participants because of our close interaction, which enabled us to learn a lot from each other. This community still exists today and we already held a first follow-up meeting last year.

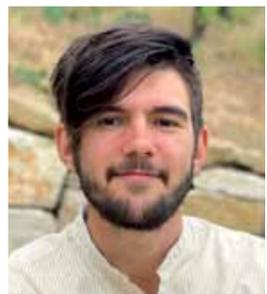
The third community I entered for a longer time was during my B.A. in industrial engineering. I spent the fifth semester in Valencia, where I could see people approach life in a much more relaxed way. I myself took part by practicing salsa dancing once or twice a week. University life was also more relaxed from what I was used to in Germany up until that time. It was also during this time that I really discovered running for myself. I ran my first marathon in Valencia in December 2018 and thus entered a new community which is not tied to a specific place.

Since then I have participated in several runs and I train almost continuously at least six days a week. The running community has given me a lot. Not only do I eat a healthier diet and feel fitter, but I also have the opportunity to take friends on my favorite routes to help them improve their endurance and general well-being.

One of the most inspiring people in the running community for me is Eliud Kipchoge. The Kenyan marathon runner is the first person in the history of mankind who managed to run a marathon in under 2 hours. With this he wanted to show that no human is limited. His wish is to motivate the world to run and then to live peacefully. I personally love this message and love to spread it as well.

If you look at how many communities I have felt I belonged to in my past up to the age of 23, you can see that today we have the possibility to choose very independently which community we want to experience. I have also noticed that the more often you change communities, the easier it is for you to find your way when entering a new one. And most importantly: Every community has its own exciting and new things to discover and learn.

I would like to encourage everyone to join as many different communities as possible and to experience how they feel around the people in them. Never should someone shut themselves off completely from another community just because it seems like they have opposite values. I am especially referring to religious or political groups for I am convinced that it would lead to greater understanding if Christians were more concerned with Islam, Judaism or the views of atheists and if opposing political actors were more open to each other. A change between communities is therefore always associated with broadening horizons and learning, and should be considered a regular practice by everyone.



Dino Heinert
Partly through his participation in the Fulbright Program „Leaders in Entrepreneurship“ Dino decided to work in a start-up in the field of block chain technology last year. Currently, he is co-authoring a book with a friend, in which

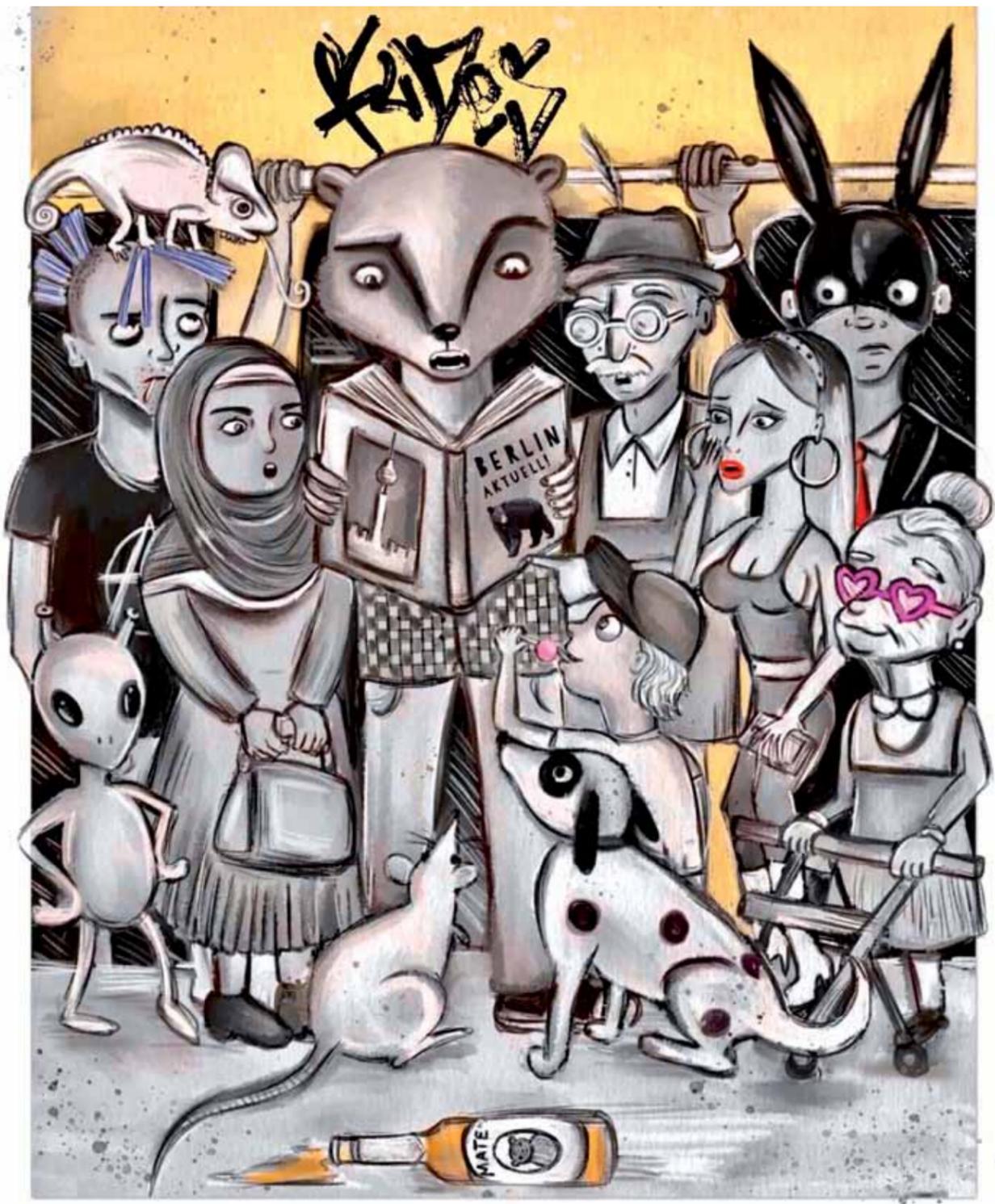
they are writing down their experiences in order to help other startups. Dino is also a passionate endurance athlete and would like to focus on triathlon in the near future in addition to running.

Community in Pictures

by Melina Sabalioti



Squad goals



Urban Jungle: Berlin in a Nutshell;

All illustrations by Melina Sabalioti



But first let us take a selfie



Slumber party



Melina Sabalioti lives and studies illustration in her hometown, Berlin. Thanks to her Greek Dad she partly grew up in Greece. She describes herself as a “total comic geek”, sometimes she even thinks in speech bubbles! Her graphic novels deal with topics like friendship, anxieties, teenage romances and talking rabbits. Melina won a couple of prizes for her comics in the past. She loves it when her art work inspires other people to do something creative as well.

A Life Between Two Worlds

by Aynur Durak

What happens when a group of total strangers comes together, to spend days and weeks working and living with one another? What do we call this gathering? A team, a club or maybe a community?

If you had asked me to define the word “community” two years ago, I would have probably said something like: A community is a group of people with the same heritage, maybe with the same interests or just a bunch of people living in the same area. Looking back two years later I realize how much this particular thought has changed since I have become a part of the Fulbright Diversity Initiative. I believe that the majority of people will sooner or later form a personal opinion of what community is all about. For the last couple of weeks and months, I have been trying to understand what “community” means to me, my personal development and when this became a huge part of my life. How did it influence the person I am today or did it affect me at all?

Being born into a Turkish family and living in the heart of Berlin, you could say that I grew up in two different worlds. One in which I was drinking Chai, dancing to Halay (Turkish folk dance) and praying in the mosque. And the second one in which I was reading Wilhelm Tell, singing Christmas Songs and listening to choirs in catholic church. The issue with growing up like this is that you either don't know where you belong, or you actually do know, but people are trying to tell you that the decision you made is wrong. That you have to be who THEY want you to be, who THEY think you should be. Either way, it's complicated and it's exhausting. On the one hand you speak the same language, watch the same movies and cry the same tears, but on the other hand your skin looks different, your meals look “exotic” and the way you dress is confusing. So why does it matter to be a part of something, to feel a sense of belonging?

August of 2019, I was able to travel to San Antonio, Texas with the Fulbright Scholarship Diversity Initiative. 19 people born and/or raised in Germany with a migration background flew to the United States of America to live on the same campus for 30 days. Of course, our main aim was to learn, to create something together, we wanted to be

inspired and to inspire our American friends who live on the other side of the world. As ambassadors for Germany we wanted to have an intercultural exchange with the students from Trinity University and share our ideas and thoughts about political and cultural topics while listening to the opinions of our American friends. But as young adults we also wanted to show those students, those strangers, who we are, as well as who we want to be.

So, there we were, 19 people who did not know each other or the country they were going to spend a month in. 19 total strangers out of their comfort zone in a foreign country. I'm not going to lie, I was frightened. The thought of feeling completely alone between hundreds of people, for the first time in my 21 years on this earth ... it made me anxious. The thought of not being accepted by any of the American students or even by my fellow Fulbrighters because of who I am or who I want to be, made me feel like the child no one wants to play with.

But the beauty of leaving your comfort zone is the excitement that follows. It's the people that you are surrounded by, those that help you learn to overcome your fears and make you understand that it's okay to feel alone from time to time. It's okay to not know what you want as long as you are still trying to figure it out.

It was the first time in my life I did not have to choose between my two worlds because everything I saw, everyone I talked to, didn't belong to either of them. And I was different too for I didn't belong in their foreign world either. None of us Fulbright students did. Yet it did not matter, we had so much to share, so many things in common and we just loved spending our days and nights talking and laughing with each other, just a bunch of kids with the same struggle of how the world is going to see us.

It amazes me how much these people, these 18 incredible people and the lovely American students, the people living, studying and working in this country had an enormous impact on me. We lived on the same campus, we studied together, we laughed and we cried together. When you are constantly together, the group starts to become more than just a bunch of individuals in the same place.



In front of the Trinity Tower with all the Interns and the whole group; photo: Trinity Photographer



Visting the Al-Madinah Mosque in San Antonio; photo: Aynur Durak

And you see, it wasn't only those good days that made us come closer. When we as human beings come together, conflicts and uncomfortable situations do too. Especially conflicts in big groups are complicated. We get stuck on the idea of seeing the problem within the other person, instead of realizing that it is us against the issue. And uncomfortable situations like that make us vulnerable and make us feel lonely. We start to get more emotional and more aggressive at the same time.

Although it is a terrible feeling and an even worse situation we think we're stuck in, this is what is helping us to strengthen our relationships, to come closer together. I think sometimes, something has to break so we can build it up again, make it stronger, fix it in a way it won't ever break as badly as it did the first time. And I also think that conflicts are an opportunity to show how much we care about each other. The reason we fight, why we have arguments, why we have misunderstandings and feel this angry is BECAUSE we care about each other, because there are these people we want to be with, we want to be seen and understood by. This is how we develop trust, how we build a better sense of support and safety within this group. And the more we strengthened this group, the louder you could hear our voices on campus through festivals we organized, through clubs we joined and through activities we were a part of. And the louder we were, the more we felt a sense of belonging. Something that we might have struggled with when growing up. Something that might have been missing when we were younger. Or maybe we were just starting to understand what belonging meant to each and every one of us. Who knows?

But we knew we were committed to care about more than just our self-interest. It wasn't just about the fun activities we joined in, it wasn't the new people we met, not only the good parts of this trip. But it was our goal to understand that our differences shouldn't make us want to have wars with one another, they should make us want to come closer, learn from each other. That our differences are not disadvantageous, no. Our differences are like a superpower that was misunderstood only yesterday, but today's generation can be the one that will use this power to build a better tomorrow.



Our last group hug



Group photo with a couple of new friends we met at one of our trips

So when I went to the United States of America to study a month at Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas, I was frightened. And those people, those 18 strangers, those American students, all these people unknowingly taught me how to let go. Let go of my comfort zone, let go of my anxiety and let go of other people's opinions of me. And instead of saying no I chose to say yes. Yes to new opportunities, yes to new adventures, to experience a new me. I said yes to everything I was afraid of and honestly? It was the best four weeks of my entire life. Not only because of how amazing these people are, but of how amazing they made me feel. I felt seen, felt heard and I felt like there are total strangers that care about my desire to change this world.

We did not only represent one culture. We 19 students with migration background represented the struggles we grew up with and the obstacles we had to overcome. We represented many cultures that made us who we are. And we decided that a community is not about where you or your parents are from or where you were born and raised. Only we, every single individual, decides where they belong, with whom they want to be and what goals they want to reach together.

So, the traditional idea of being born into a community, of having the same heritage or living in the same area, has developed into a whole new perspective of what community is all about for me. Unfortunately, not everybody will experience this change and this once in a life time opportunity. I consider myself as enormously lucky that I was surrounded by beautiful and inspiring people. And of course, not everybody was as nice as I had hoped for.

But it's not my aim to talk about what I think is right or wrong or who is good and who is not. I don't want to make anyone believe that everything went perfectly 24/7 or that it was horrible the whole time.

I want you to understand that leaving your comfort zone will change who you are today; into the person you want to be in the future. The communities we join or the ones that we build will have a lifelong impact on us and if we choose the right ones, the impact will be one of the best things that will ever happen to us. And as I now know, the right community is the one in which you will feel a sense of belonging while being together with the people that inspire you.



Having been raised in Berlin, Germany, **Aynur Durak** is a student of Business Administration, currently focusing on diversity and equality in the workplace. As one of last year's Fulbright Diversity Initiative Scholars, she now aims to further her education

in journalism and communication to provide a larger range of topics such as race and racism in the Western media.

To Throw or Lay Bricks?

Affinity Groups' Role in Reinventing the Fulbright Community

by Timothy Sensenig

June makes me think of bricks. It reminds me, as a gay man, of the bricks thrown during the 1969 Stonewall Riots in Greenwich Village, New York. Foremothers Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera threw bricks in defense against violent police attacks, and these bricks later became the foundation for a new era of queer liberation in the United States (It is actually very much disputed who threw the bricks at Stonewall, or whether bricks were literally thrown, but this lore has permeated LGBTQ culture). Considering this historic moment, bricks, then, must have two good, but conflicting, purposes: throwing and laying. To reinvent a community, one must do both. Sometimes we need to throw bricks to call attention to injustice and dismantle the system that supports it. Other times we need to lay them firmly and deliberately so that future generations have something to stand on. Fifty-one years after Stonewall, the story is the same. We in the United States wrestle with the cruel realities of racism and the uncomfortable truth that we have a lot of bricks left to throw and lay. In Germany, too, leaders sift through the bricks that Brexit left behind as they attempt to design a new European community. There is a lot of brick juggling going on around the world this June.

Given these important global reckonings, it would have been easy to overlook some brick-juggling in our own Fulbright community. As academia and the private sector finally awaken to concerns about diversity and inclusion in their communities, so too have we. The United States Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) has undergone certain efforts of its own (including the launch of the "European Fulbright Diversity Initiative," or EFDI, in 2018), but individual grantees and alumni, including yours truly, are also coming together in unprecedented ways to raise awareness about underrepresented groups in our community. These grassroots "affinity groups" include, to date, Fulbright Noir (for Black Fulbrighters); Fulbright Prism (for LGBTQ Fulbrighters); Fulbright Latinx (for Latinx Fulbrighters); Fulbright Access (for Fulbrighters with disabilities); Fulbright Salam (for Muslim Fulbrighters); Fulbright Lotus (for Asian Fulbright-

ers); and Fulbright HBCU (for Fulbrighters from Historically Black Colleges and Universities). Each of them can be found on Instagram and are well worth a follow!

The basic structure of these affinity groups is straightforward. A small group of concerned Fulbrighters gathers around a common identity and mission. From there, they use the power of social media to rally support and bring attention to their cause. In 2017, Noir became the first affinity group to launch an Instagram page for the purpose of "celebrating the accomplishments of Black Fulbrighters." Today, it has an amazing 1,566 followers and counting. Of course, there is some variation to the structure. Prism, inspired by Noir's groundbreaking work, began as an Instagram page in 2018, but later expanded into a full-blown website (www.fulbrightprism.org), which allows the group to better collect and share queer resources. It also was the first affinity group to incorporate as a U.S. non-profit organization to solicit donations and take advantage of certain charitable online resources.

Regardless of approach and structure, each group is able to lay bricks in a way best-suited to the community it serves and accomplish remarkable successes. Because they exist outside the official Fulbright structure and have little overhead, they act expeditiously and internationally. They can recruit diverse grantees, raise awareness, provide resources and mentorship, and otherwise support diversity efforts in ways that are adjacent to the Fulbright Program's main educational exchange mission.

Most notably, this June, almost all of the affinity groups released a statement regarding the tragic death of George Floyd days before the official Fulbright Program did, and also pushed out resources focused on allyship, activism, and intersectionality within their demographic. Lotus also expanded its support to include a fundraiser for the Equal Justice Initiative and hosted an online film screening and discussion of Just Mercy. Because these groups work almost exclusively online, they are also able to reach a global audience that Commissions or embassies focused



Ashleigh Brown-Grier, Founder Fulbright HBCU; photo: Paul Greene



Fulbright Noir Genesis Conference 2019 photo: Marie-Aimee Ntawukulyayo



from left to right: Timothy Sensenig, Lara Steinike, Michaela Gill, Co-Founders, Fulbright Prism; photo: Timothy Sensenig



Brittany Grady, Founder Fulbright Access; photo: Khadija Ali Amghaiab



Katie Kirk, Founder Fulbright Access; photo: Ariana Moore



Jonathan Epps, Fulbright HBCU Outreach Specialist; photo: Morehouse Communications



Zainab Ali, Fulbright HBCU Outreach Specialist; photo: Zainab Ali



Vanessa Diaz and Elena Perez, Founders Fulbright Latinx photo: Grant Stream Gonzalez



From left to right: Michaela Gill, Lara Steinike, Timothy Sensenig Co-Founders, Fulbright Prism; photo: Timothy Sensenig



Fulbright Latinx



on specific countries or regions cannot. Following the unfortunate cancellation of many grant programs because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Latinx took to Instagram Live to do regular “Tea at Three” segments, in which its team interviewed recent grantees from Ireland, Spain, Russia, and more. These broadcasts kept Latinx grantees engaged with the Fulbright community despite having to return to the United States mid-grant. Prism also maintains a robust resource library for fourteen countries, from Argentina and Azerbaijan, to South Korea and the United States.

These affinity groups, however, also face their share of challenges. First are those germane to the lean start-up model: finding followers and building brand reputation. Usually founded by small teams in a single Fulbright country, it may be challenging to grow a network to other continents. Additionally, though most social media programming requires no budget, any additional tools, such as Zoom webinars, conferences, websites, or even “swag,” comes at a financial cost that the groups cannot afford without a sponsor.

More challenging is the complex relationship with the Fulbright Program – and this is when these groups must occasionally (and diplomatically) throw a brick or two. They must walk a fine line between seeking collaboration with official Fulbright entities and providing oversight from their perches as independent organizations. The Fulbright Program and its subsidiaries maintain a vast network, sizeable resources, and impressive brain power – a mighty partner for plucky start-ups with a cause. Often these affinity groups have found truly valuable sponsors within the Program. These include Fulbright Belgium’s sponsorship of Noir’s “Black Lives Matter in the Fulbright Community” virtual session with Dr. LaNitra Burger; Fulbright Brazil’s assistance to Prism in distributing materials to LGBTQ grantees on a new continent; Fulbright Austria’s partnership with Prism for 2019 Euro Pride programming; Latinx’s inclusion in the Fulbright Alumni Ambassador Program; Fulbright Germany’s praiseworthy investment in the European Diversity Conference, which welcomed members from both Noir and Prism in 2018; and Fulbright Germany’s EFDI’s ongoing efforts to maintain communication with all affinity groups (not to mention the dozens of reposts, shares, and cross-advertising that occurs online).

However, as referenced above, such leviathans can react too deliberately to cultural, academic, or political shifts than the nimble affinity groups would prefer – or simply

respond cagily when pressed to do more. For instance, Noir, Prism, and Latinx have made attempts to ascertain in-depth demographic statistics from the Fulbright Program and encouraged it to collect more demographic data in the first place, with only negligible outcomes. In 2019, Prism also pitched to a nascent EFDI the idea of a global survey, which would collect the feedback of LGBTQ Fulbrighters and inform future programming; however, EFDI was reluctant to help with this project and requested Prism to put it on hold indefinitely. What is more, there may be growing concern in the Fulbright Program about both a “too many groups” problem and its inability to control the conduct of groups with the word “Fulbright” in their name, as evinced by ECA’s most recent non-endorsement policy (<https://us.fulbrightonline.org/about/diversity>). Affinity groups fear this new policy may discourage Fulbright entities, such as commissions, from partnering on programming in the future in the name of “equality” among affinity groups instead advancing equity within the broader Fulbright community. Many of these projects are mission-critical for these affinity groups, and give rise to tension that must be navigated.

Though the Fulbright affinity groups much prefer to lay bricks – and are doing it well – as independent organizations, their ability to throw bricks from the outside makes them key players in the Fulbright community. They are reinventing our community for the better: creating spaces for our underrepresented members to thrive, while also sparking awareness. As a community, we must encourage their growth and support their programming. Together, we can build a stronger, more vibrant Fulbright community.



Timothy Sensenig worked as an English Teaching Assistant in Hamburg, Germany from 2016-2017, after graduating from Messiah College with a B.A. in English and German education. He is a co-founder of Fulbright Prism, an independent nonprofit that empowers past and present LGBTQ Fulbrighters to be “out in the world.” Tim currently lives in Charlottesville, Virginia and completed his Juris Doctor degree at the University of Virginia in May 2020.

Reinventing Community

in Light of a Global Uprising of Anti-Racist Movements

by Abdulsettar Mahdi and Thevagar Mohanadhasan

“We cannot walk alone. And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead.”

History has moved forward ever since Martin Luther King Jr. spoke these words to a cheering crowd in front of the Lincoln Memorial on August 28 in 1963. But just as then, Black people all over the U.S. and the world march today and demand their fellow citizens to march with them in face of the injustice and violence they are still suffering up until today. Our society is failing Black people.

As a social construct, a society or a community is ought to represent a coalition of individuals who share the same values and agree on similar principles. As an ideal, it gives you a certain sense of belonging and creates a safe-space for every individual. All of this is based on shared values. Despite possible differences within their membership, a community always tries to find the best possible outcome for its members. In a very painful way, Black people in the United States and other Western societies have to experience that their sense of belonging to this community is questioned by recurring cases of blatant racism, that they cannot feel safe in the very places and communities they live in. The institutional violence that Black people, migrants, refugees and People of Color are experiencing today is driving our society apart. It destroys our sense of community by attacking the weakest parts of our society and rendering their pain invisible.

“I can’t breathe”

These were George Floyd’s last words. Words that not only describe the harsh reality in which especially Black men in the U.S. find themselves when facing law-enforcement. They have also grown to represent a general sentiment within the Black community as victims of institutionalized

racism. “I can’t breathe” were the words of Eric Garner, Christopher Lowe, Javier Ambler, Derrick Scott, Byron Williams, Manuel Ellis – all of them black men killed by direct or indirect use of force by police officers. A plea and a description of an oppressed state at the same time. Not surprisingly, these words are now used as the main slogan of the “Black Lives Matter” movement and are heard at protests all around the world.

The killing of George Floyd has unleashed a wave of protests across the U.S. Thousands and thousands of people of all races and ages are flooding the streets not only in the States but all over the world demanding justice for the Floyd Family and a change towards a more just society. A mixture of anger, desperation, resignation but also confidence, hope and a fighting spirit wafts through the United States. While many white people join the protests, non-white people of the marginalized groups affected ask themselves: Why just now? And why so late? Legitimate questions considering the many people before Floyd that have fallen victim to racially motivated violence. Questions, however, not easily answered.

A ten-minute-long video, alertly recorded by a black teenage girl and shared on Facebook, quickly sparked outrage due to its brutish and inhumane depiction of anti-black racism by the police. Although this video unfortunately was not the only video showing the killing of a non-violent and non-resisting black man and although every single second of every single video should outrage us, this time it was different. As if the ten minutes in all its brutality force all of us to not look away. There were no more excuses. Not a single shred of legitimacy of this fatal police opera-



Civil rights march on Washington, D.C. Film negative by photographer Warren K. Leffler, 1963. From the U.S. News & World Report Collection. Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Division.

tion was left. Nothing. And the question remains whether the outcry would have been just as great if this video had not existed. Probably not. With the line “This a celly/ That’s a tool” in his 2018 released song “This is America”, Childish Gambino powerfully points out the importance of electronic devices such as mobile phones and social media in the civil rights struggle. It has become of the utmost importance for minorities to document injustices against them because otherwise their complaints are often annulled and because their trust in independent state institutions, which are supposed to protect them, has been lost.

In a lot of Western countries we have seen an emergence of right-wing populism in recent years. Conservative parties and leaders have officially declared war on political correctness. Particularly the U.S. – with the election of Donald Trump in 2016 – has seen a radical political change. “America first” was the motto from now on. But which America was meant anyway? It became increasingly clear that the America Donald Trump was speaking of, was not the America of Black Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans or other minorities, but rather the America of a wealthy white elite, whose privileges had to be protected from now on. In this America there is no more room for the supposed political correctness that had advanced to be the ultimate enemy. A political correctness that was previously defined as a sensible, decent way of dealing with each other. A way of speaking that centers on respect and

the dignity of other people. In Trump’s America there was also no place for those who had striven to achieve equality. Civil rights, transgender and other minority activists are facing an increase in threats and hate-speech. Huge scale budget cuts and policies have caused massive civil and human rights rollbacks well documented by the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights.

“You’ll just have to go to the polls next time to make a difference” minorities are often told, neglecting the systemic character of the discrimination they face and the unequal distribution of power and resources. As if the systematic dehumanization by the right-wing political elites is something you just have to live with, something that could easily be reversed by a single election. The real problem of rampant racism in all these countries is that it has not been and is still not being authentically addressed. The deep political split in American society has certainly contributed to the extent of the anti-racist protest movements seen nowadays.

Furthermore, 2020 – the year of the global Covid-19 pandemic – has shown the systemic character of inequality that Communities-of-Color face in Western societies. A split in access to adequate health care and the increased exposure to this deadly disease linked to the economic exploitation of migrants. This is visible in the U.S. where the coronavirus pandemic is disproportionately affecting the African American community. While only 13% of the



Black Lives Matter protests prior to 2020; photo: Bruce Emmerling, Pixabay

U.S. population is African American, they make up one third of those hospitalized for Covid-19. In cities like Chicago, tragically, 68% of coronavirus deaths were African American even though they only make up 30% of the city's population [Source: Center for Disease Control].

In Germany, major Corona outbreaks could be linked to poor living and working conditions of migrants. The biggest outbreak that has occurred after Germany has experienced its lockdown, took place in a meat-processing plant in Gütersloh. For decades, the German meat industry has been heavily criticized for its poor working conditions. Migrants and refugees make up a huge share of the workers in Germany's meat factories. Over 1,500 people, mainly migrants, were infected by the Corona-Virus due to the low safety-standards and the lack of measures to protect them. While there is a variety of reasons for the skewed figures mentioned above, most of those reasons can be tied back to the discriminatory labor policies and exploitative economic practices that Black people and Communities of Color are enduring.

Having all these structural inequalities in mind and knowing that an encounter with the police is not necessarily beneficial but, on the contrary, may be fatal, it is not surprising that a lot of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) have lost their sense of belonging to our communities. Racist structures are so deeply rooted and firmly

established that they seem to have become an immanent part of Western States and societies. Restoring this failed believe in our communities is no simple task. It requires us to end structural inequalities and to stay true to the aspiration of protecting each and everyone's rights and dignity. A society that discriminates against their minorities fails to be a community.

What the protest movement demands is nothing less than that state institutions like the police finally stop their disparity in treating people based on race, gender or some other trivial differences. But to achieve this it is not enough to only change the training of police officers and make them more sensitive to racism. Rather, it must be an effort by society as a whole, encompassing all areas of society and politics. Economic inequalities, a racist education system, a lack in access to health care, addressing an openly racist political elite, discriminatory practices in law enforcement and so on and so forth. Reinventing Community means reinventing the institutional foundations of our society. It means reinventing our understanding of how our economy works and for whom. It means to question the way our legal system fails to protect certain community groups while it protects the privileges of others. All in all it means creating institutions that actively promote equality instead of maintaining the status quo.



Black Lives Matter protests are shaking up the world; photo: Orna Wachman, Pixabay

Each and every one of us should deal with these issues if we want to achieve an equitable coexistence and create a community in which everyone feels safe. Civil-society organizations such as the Fulbright Alumni Network and the bilateral Commissions play a major role in addressing these issues and should therefore try to promote their multiracial and multicultural understanding in an anti-racist manner. It begins with creating equal access to opportunities and reducing structural inequalities and disadvantages for marginalized groups. And this can be achieved at all levels e.g. by funding anti-racism projects, changing educational programs, increasing the visibility and involvement of persons belonging to minorities, especially through representation and self-organization. We must stop declaring people to be strangers and finally start recognizing them as equal individuals in our community – with all rights and duties.

In a time, in which it seems like we are more and more divided along differences such as partisan lines, gender, race and religion, it is of the utmost importance that we do not stop drawing a vision of a just future. The spread of hate and violence that we see today can be overcome tomorrow.

“The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members”

These were the words of Coretta Scott King in February 2000, 32 years after losing her husband Rev. King Jr. in the anti-racist struggle that still shakes up our communities today. On this note, let's start acting compassionately for the defense of the most vulnerable members of our communities – in the U.S., in Germany and everywhere. Let's reinvent – community.



Abdulsettar Mahdi currently studies Medicine, Surgery & Medical Science at the University of Southampton. He was part of Fulbright's Diversity Initiative Program in 2013 at the University of Kentucky. As a scholar of the American Institute for Contemporary German Studies at Johns Hopkins University, he participated at an exchange of young minority leaders with a special focus on “Immigration, Integration, and a New Transatlantic Generation”.

Abdulsettar currently holds scholarships of the Studienstiftung des Deutschen Volkes and Deutschlandstiftung Integration. Together with Thevagar Mohanadhasan, Abdulsettar provides workshops and trainings for local and national political organizations on “The Participation of PoC in German and European Politics”. Their goal is to sensitize the organizations for the lack of representation on all political levels and to provide an action plan on battering these shortcomings.



Thevagar Mohanadhasan has studied Philosophy and Economics at the Georg-August University of Göttingen and the Bocconi University in Milan, Italy. Thevagar holds a strong interest in institutional diversity, and equality policies, and has worked as

a parliamentary assistant for a Member of the European Parliament and as an Intern to the Member of Parliament Martin Schulz working with the Foreign and European Affairs Committee of the German Bundestag. He was part of Fulbright's Diversity Initiative Program in 2013 at the University of Kentucky and received further Scholarships by the Deutschlandstiftung Integration and the Studienstiftung des Deutschen Volkes.

A Daring Challenge and Ambition to Reinvent Community

by Sterling De Sutter Summerville

While to some the concept of reinventing community may be a lighthearted brain-teasing exercise, to me it is a matter of life and death. Despite the various privileges that I enjoy because of my occupation, ability or gender identity, I do not see my situation as one with the luxury of being anything except a matter of safety and security for myself and others. The pervasive, destructive reality and capability of racism has a very profound effect on mine and my loved ones' ability to navigate the world. Whether it be in London, Paris, New York, Los Angeles, parts of Western Asia or elsewhere, my Brown skin is always likely to draw the ire of racism. Without critical thinking and out-of-the-box ingenuity to create and/or recreate safe community spaces, danger is what awaits for myself and people like me who are targeted due to being a part of marginalized communities.

The idea of reinventing community is an important objective with real life consequences, but because of my familiarity with the subject – I do not struggle to think about what it means or how to do that. The education of community building was instilled in me at a young age. For some people, they may need to rethink or redesign what community means because of their singular or combined identities around gender, religion, socio-economic class or sexual orientation; I have done it my entire life because of my racial identity. I, like many who have their self-perception rooted in a marginalized identity, was socialized

to know that the company I would choose to keep was of paramount importance. I learned the names and stories of people who did not heed that message and I was taught that who you rely on for help can make the difference between whether or not you make it home that night.

It is because of the aforementioned that it is integral that at an early age one develops coping mechanisms and an awareness about the world around them. An example is how one learns to code-switch (alternating between multiple languages or dialects of language in conversation) as a child. You learn to curtail your emotions in subordination for the comfort of others and all the while you learn to be hyper aware of your surroundings; most importantly so that you can quickly learn to identify the people and places that you can find safe refuge and relationships with.

Growing up as a Black person in 'America' means to constantly be in a state of 're-something'. Whether it be reminding, re-inventing, reconstructing, or re-educating, there is always some work to do in the aspiration towards feeling whole. Black people are consistently re-inventing what it means to be connected to our heritage. On both macro and micro levels we are finding new ways to reconcile with histories of separation. Current generations of Black and other People of Color as well as Indigenous, First Nations, and Native American people are survivors of genocidal atrocities. As a result, we are reconstructing



Sterling shaking hands with Ambassador Stephen Mull; photo: Karolina Sobieraj, Polish Fulbright Commission



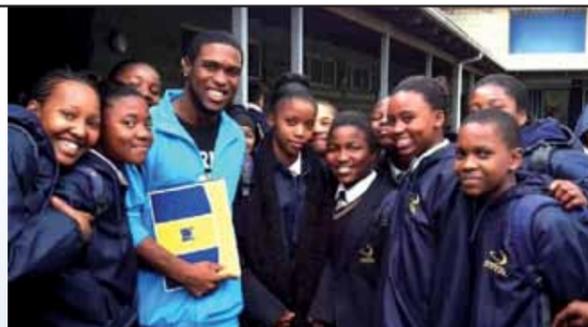
Sterling giving Presentation to High School Students at II Liceum LO in Sopot, Poland; photo: Anna Misiek

what it means to seek equality and to be provided fair opportunity at the pursuit of happiness. Black people and their history are still being mis- and underrepresented in the entertainment industry. In response, we are re-educating ourselves on what our stories are.

Consequentially, it is never lost on me that the United States is still dealing with the adverse consequences of hundreds of years of chattel slavery. I am reminded of the downstream effects of that daily with rampant inequalities in a biased criminal justice system, in which as a Black man I have a more than 1 in 4 chance of being incarcerated in my lifetime. According to the Pew Research Institute, "In 2017, there were 1,549 black prisoners for every 100,000 black adults – nearly six times the imprisonment rate for whites (272 per 100,000) and nearly double the rate for Hispanics (823 per 100,000)"¹. I am also reminded of the injudicious system through statistics denoting the household wealth gaps, and disproportionate access to healthcare. The Brookings Institution notes that in the United States, "At \$171,000, the net worth of a typical white family is nearly ten times greater than that of a Black family (\$17,150) in 2016"². Furthermore, "Prior to implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), nearly one in three Hispanic Americans and one in five Black Americans were uninsured, compared to about one in eight white Americans"³, these stats again provided by the Brookings Institute. Beyond these studies are real lives and ramifications. These and many other contemporary and historical traumas are part of the legacy Black and African American people endeavor against in the United States.

I acknowledge that I am only where I am today because of the lessons that being a part of Black communities taught me. In the years to follow my youth, I would travel all over the world and need to draw on every bit of the strength and training that I learned to not only survive, but thrive. I have now worked and lived on four continents and have traveled to more than 25 countries and I relied on the skills of discernment and recognition of microaggressions everywhere I have gone. Notably as a Fulbright scholar in Poland, without a significant broadening and reinvention of what cultural exchange and community connecting was, I would have not been found by or been open to the communities that embraced me. The wonderful staff and children at a local group home, some incredibly kind professors and students in the university that I taught in, as well as a number of local semi-professional athletes all became highlights of my experience there. I would have faced quite the difficult challenge to survive the isolation otherwise. My grant placed me in a small city in a remote town where maneuvering was not without its difficulties. Though I met far more nice people and hospitality than negativity, there were times where I did face challenges that one may perceive were racially based. Being prohibited from accessing my seat on a train, individuals refusing to sit next to me on crowded city busses, being met with scowls and racial slurs in supermarkets are just to name a few. However, again, the support of various communities of allies I developed lifelong bonds and community ties with made it possible for me to succeed.

The civil rights champion Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once said that "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere". Most of us can empathize with the kind of pain one can feel because of injustice. As it pertains to race in the United States, George Floyd, Alton Sterling, Philando Castille, Breonna Taylor, Atatiana Jefferson,



Sterling Summerville with students at Christel House School in Capetown South Africa; photo: Carla Stewart



Sterling giving a speech in Gdansk at Gdańskie Szkoły Autonomiczne, April 2014, American Corner Gdansk; photo: Anna Misiek

¹ <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/04/30/shrinking-gap-between-number-of-blacks-and-whites-in-prison/>

² <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/02/27/examining-the-black-white-wealth-gap/>

³ <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/usc-brookings-schaeffer-on-health-policy/2020/02/19/there-are-clear-race-based-inequalities-in-health-insurance-and-health-outcomes/>



Sterling giving Presentation to teachers at the American Corner in Gdansk, Poland; photo: Anna Misiek



Practical Lesson on American Football for Students at Gdanskie Autonomiczne Gimnazjum, June 2014; photo: Malgorzata Sasinowska-Walczak

Botham Jean, Michael Brown, Tamir Rice and many more highlight stories of how Black and African American people who have been unarmed and murdered at the hands of an institution of the state (the police) can all see their slayers walk free. To make matters worse, these are all stories in which the tragedies occurred within people's homes, cars, or neighborhoods. These examples show that death can come find you; albeit with your hands up, as you sleep, while on a walk, or with family. Living in fear of this happening is a harsh reality for many but is no way to live, which is why I reiterate that the necessity for linking the bonds of various communities is integral to building coalitions for change.

Furthermore, I also pay homage in recognizing that this is not just the experience of Black people in the United States. All Black lives matter, everywhere. Black Trans lives, Black women's lives, Black youth's lives. Colorism/shadeism exists everywhere as do the conscious and unconscious biases that make for the underlying roots of discrimination. The ruinous roots of discrimination that attack on the basis of gender, ethnicity, body type, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, (dis)ability, age, cognitive difference and religion all can and do have adverse impacts anywhere in the world; always the effects being compounded when the intersections of our identities double down on their impacts. If we are ever to move forward in producing a more equitable society, it will depend on us changing the way we talk, think and interact with one another.

It is now more important than ever for all of us to rethink what it means to be a part of the global community and how we can broaden our spheres of influence. Until all people's existences are valued we are bound to be

interlocked in chains of halted progress. Being a part of protests condemning discrimination is great, supporting public, highly visible issues aimed at stopping racism is important; and I challenge us all to think about how we can continue to keep this same energy in support of and advocacy for systemic change wherever and whenever we see inequity. Progress is predicated on how well we can embrace our shared humanity. I simply hope that we can live in a world where we each use our power to welcome diversity and promote inclusivity and empower others. As it has been said before, not anyone is everything and not anyone can do everything, but we all can do something, and we can all contribute to making a safe and collaborative world.



After living and working in Africa, Asia and Europe, **Sterling** currently resides in Southern California in the United States and works in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at Snap Inc. (Snapchat); Previous to his current position he spent time at Google

Inc. and copious nonprofits whose missions centered around LGBTIQAA advocacy as well as Education. Notably his enjoyable professional experience as a Fulbright Scholar in Poland (2013) inspired his aspirations to mentor teens and young adults. Sterling received his M.A. in Education from the University of Cincinnati. Amongst finishing his first book he also does consultancy work with educational professionals and is a traveling speaker to student groups at high schools and colleges to the United States.

Fulbright's Role in Understanding Community

by Alexander Drößler

What's going on in the U.S.? Many Germans have probably asked themselves this question while watching the news in June. They saw how the killing of George Floyd during an arrest led to a global civil rights movement. People raised their voices against racism, making clear that black lives matter not only in the U.S., but also in other countries, like Germany. The killing of George Floyd and the ensuing protests have uncovered an underlying problem: they exposed long-standing racial inequities in every aspect of American life. As a white man from Germany, I had no idea about these inequities when I came to the U.S. for the first time in 2011.

During the four weeks I spent at the University of North Carolina – Greensboro (UNCG) for a summer school organized and sponsored by Fulbright, that changed. I remember how I, as a 21-year-old, was struck by the eventful past of Greensboro, North Carolina with relation to racial issues: in 1960, four African-American students hosted the first sit-in to protest racial discrimination in a restaurant that was reserved for whites. Later, in 1979, a massacre occurred in Greensboro when members of the American Nazi Party and the Ku Klux Klan murdered five demonstrators. The perpetrators were acquitted by a white jury. But I also learned that, in 2011, Greensboro was still a segregated city, with a richer western part mostly inhabited by white people and a poorer eastern part, where mostly black people lived and, at the time, there was an unemployment rate of about 40%. How did these communities coexist?

In addition to the impressive visit to the Civil Rights Museum, the program helped me gain a better understanding of living and studying in the U.S., an experience I would have never imagined even months prior. I am still grateful that I saw the announcement for the Fulbright Summer Institute on the intranet at my alma mater, where I studied journalism. As the son of a craftsman and saleswoman, going to university already seemed unusual. I had never even thought of going abroad – until I came to know Fulbright.

During my time in Greensboro, I learned how enriching it is to discover new communities. By communities, I mean groups of people with similarities in values, goals, challenges or hobbies. Some things remained puzzling to me, like what exactly attracts so many Americans to a baseball game. More importantly, I have learned to look at something first without judging it. I enjoyed getting involved in different ways of living and seeing how life works elsewhere. The safe space I had within a group of 25 German FH students, as well as the intensive support by the UNCG International Center helped with a comfortably paced acclimation. We were able to reflect on our impressions together, so no one was left alone with his or her feelings. Because of this experience, I became curious to discover more of the U.S. and gained the confidence to do it for a longer period and on my own.

Furthermore, I questioned where I wanted to go professionally. Since graduating from high school, I wanted to be a journalist. But as soon as 2011, it became clear to me that traditional journalism business models were under pressure. Newspapers were losing circulation and advertising revenues while new emerging platforms were starting to serve certain needs better than newspapers. The advantages of these products: platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Reddit, Twitter or Google help users to reach their goals more individually and efficiently. On the one hand, they help under-represented communities to be heard and better organize themselves, and on the other hand, they allow businesses to advertise much more cheaply and effectively. While the public discussion in Germany, as I remember it, was mainly dominated by the question of whether we really need Facebook or not, I was curious for at least three reasons: why were all these products made by companies founded in the U.S.? What led to their invention? And what effect would these new platforms have on traditional journalism and its business models? It therefore became clear from a professional point of view as well that I had to return to the U.S. – which led to my application for a Fulbright academic year scholarship. Two years later, I found myself in Columbia, Missouri to study at one of the best journalism schools in the country.

At Mizzou, as the university is called, I was drawn into a strong culture of innovation, where I learned to focus on the opportunities that emerging technologies provide and how to take advantage of them.

At the same time, I came to know a part of the U.S. that I would probably not have otherwise explored. Living in Missouri is completely different when compared to life in the big cities on the coasts. Living in Missouri meant constantly going out of my own comfort zone. In Columbia, I was not one among many other German students: I was the German student, which forced me to become involved in both the domestic and international communities, and their various subcommunities. To be in touch with such a variety of people with different backgrounds helped me to grow a lot as a person, moving beyond the rather introverted young man I had been.

Without the safe space I had in 2011 to explore Greensboro during the summer school, I would not have applied for an academic year abroad. First, I gained a sense of whether I would feel comfortable in the U.S., on campus and beyond, in different areas of American life. Second, I realized it is possible for anyone, regardless of his or her background, to receive a scholarship. As a 21-year-old, I thought going to the U.S. was a dream far away from reality, especially given my background. That is not true. In fact, one only needs to try and remember there is nothing to lose – but indeed a lot to win. I cannot express how grateful I am that I tried: my U.S. journeys with Fulbright have been life-changing experiences. I have met so many fantastic people from all over the world, established lasting friendships and explored so many beautiful places all over the country. Professionally, I gained other perspectives on the media business, its challenges and opportunities, and learned how to navigate them. Most importantly, I learned how to understand different communities – a skill that I find valuable in so many aspects of life.



To his own surprise, **Alexander Dröbner** was one of the participants at the first Fulbright Summer Institute for Fachhochschule (FH) students in 2011. His month in Greensboro, N.C. encouraged him to apply for an academic year scholarship. His experience in Missouri in 2013-14 helped him to grow as a person and prepare for a professional career in developing digital products for local news outlets. As a current participant in the Executive Program in News Innovation and Leadership at the City University of New York, the 30-year-old still has a strong connection to the United States.



Part of the summer school was a visit to the Greensboro Civil Rights Museum; photo: Alexander Dröbner



Alexander Dröbner (2013) in front of The Columns, the most recognized landmark of the University of Missouri in Columbia, Missouri; photo: Alexander Dröbner



Alexander Dröbner in front of the White House in 2011; photo: Alexander Dröbner



The Greensboro Four Monument commemorates the sit-in at Woolworth's department store in 1960; photo: Isabelle Hoppe

REINVENTING COMMUNITY

Cohousing meets Covid-19:

Collaborative Living in a Time of Collective Uncertainty

by Susanna Dart



Cohousing kids playing on the banks of the River Lune across from Lancaster Cohousing. Cohousing is an intentional community concept of living in private, self-contained homes while benefiting from community facilities and spaces. Cohousing communities are designed and run by those who live in them. Photo: Kathy Bashford

Two weeks into working from home following the United Kingdom's Covid-19 lockdown, I found myself unexpectedly unemployed and living abroad in the middle of a global pandemic. I have to admit that I panicked, considered an emergency flight to the United States, had a good cry, went for a run, ate some chocolate, and then called a neighbor to ask for some advice.

Within hours I had a temporary job in my sector, an offer for dinner, a food parcel on my doorstep, a share of a garden plot and a selection of seed bank seeds to plant there, and several supportive calls and messages from neighbors. I am not the only neighbor who was in a similar situation nor was I the only neighbor for whom community networks and support were critical during lockdown.

Six years ago, I left the U.S. to embark on a Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship in Germany. At the Fulbright orientation they played a video which had a take home message that the time spent with the Fulbright Program would be one of our most life changing years. The year did indeed prove to be one of immense personal growth. During my time with Fulbright, I honed my abilities to work with and learn from people from all different walks of life. I settled into being comfortable with being uncomfortable. I was inspired by the long-term relationships, and networks that I saw that had been formed by Fulbrighters across the decades and, critically, how shared experience enhances the possibility for collaboration. In 2017, I moved to England to pursue a M.A. in Environment and Development.

By chance, I rented a small terrace home at Lancaster Cohousing. The skills that grew during my year with Fulbright, now really had a chance to thrive. Originally intending to be in the UK for the duration of my degree, I decided to stay on after graduation and explore the potential of cohousing as a way of living with a lower environmental impact.

Today, as I write this article, I am one of six Directors at Lancaster Cohousing: a multi award winning, intergenerational, eco-cohousing community of some 70 members in the Northwest of England. Formed of a mix of owned and rented private Passivhaus homes and shared community spaces, it sits along the River Lune not far outside of Lancaster. We don't just live here: many of us work from a hub of community supported office, studio and workshop spaces, and we also run our own small grocery store, car club and bicycle repair shack. We often eat community meals together and have a vibrant and varied community social life. Because of collective action, we are able to benefit from owned and shared solar and hydroelectricity as well as district heating with a biomass boiler. It also means that when the pandemic hit the UK, we were already practiced in working together and supporting each other and were able to spring into action. We quickly set up an emergency Covid-19 Team to handle our community response. Because of prior networking, we were also able to reach out to other regional and international cohousing groups to share best practices and challenges as we adapted our way of living.



Members of three different households gather after a Common House meal. Before lockdown, members of the community had the option to eat together most evenings of the week. This focal point of community life has been one of the hardest to reimagine in light of the need to physically distance. Photo: Adele Ivy Harris



View over Ingleborough; photo: Jo Lyon



Many Lancaster Cohousing members have shared garden plots. Here, in a photo from last fall, members of two households admire potatoes harvested by three households and which were then enjoyed by many more. We still continue to garden together, but physically distanced. Photo: Susanna Dart



Two shoppers in our community grocery store. We have over 300 product lines of ethically sourced, organic foods and home products as well as deliveries from local suppliers of fruits, vegetables, eggs and dairy products. The entire store is operated on the honor system. Photo: Adele Ivy Harris



A cohousing resident and the cohousing cat planting seedlings in a terrace garden during lockdown. Photo: Susanna Dart

Since our initial collective action, when lockdown started, community members still today do not need to regularly leave their homes. Most importantly, because of our previous relationships with each other, we were able to create sustained action to continue to take care of one another into this longer-term unknown. We have some neighbors who pick up prescriptions, teams regularly disinfecting our shared facilities such as the laundry, neighbors making masks, and neighbors assisting others to get their medical power of attorneys and wills settled in case the worst of Covid-19 were to hit. Some of us go gleaning to bring back fresh vegetables, while others who work at bakeries bring us bread, and yet others who organize regular grocery store runs and wholesale food deliveries open to the community to reduce the number of people in outside stores.

In this pandemic, we not only were able to respond to satisfy our physical needs but also worked to make sure community members were socially and emotionally supported as well. We have groups doing community art projects and “Zoom Drink-n-Draw” evenings, neighbors gardening on their respective terraces together apart, others swapping seeds and seedlings, and neighbors organizing regular “Zoom Coffee Hour.” We also have neighbors calling every solo living community member to just lend a listening ear, as well as having a group facilitating regular empathy circles on Zoom based on Nonviolent Communication methods. Additionally, we are able to collectively respond to needs outside Lancaster Cohousing. We have members sewing scrubs for local hospitals, doing a houseplant and flower drive to bring to those in the wider community who are shielding – the term used in the UK for adults and children who are not leaving their homes due to being at very high risk of developing a severe case of Covid-19 – and homebound, and taking regular donations to the food bank. Having old rhythms together allowed us to create new ones and have the processes in place to change them as they needed to be adapted.

This is not to say that life is necessarily idyllic. Our community is, thankfully, one where we are able to challenge each other. While conflict can be uncomfortable, the words of Margaret Heffernan fit my experience: “conflict is frequent because candor is safe.” The community has some deep rifts and there are many differences of opinion about how collective living should look and especially ecologically focused community life. Lockdown is tearing open the differences in our community even further. We struggle with what it looks like in practice to keep the community Covid-19-free and also respect our vision of being “a community built on ecological values.” It is making us have conversations about power, wealth inequity, intergenerational inequality, risk taking, and about health-privilege and eco-privilege.

These discussions around privilege and inequity are not just abstractions. In cohousing, these are conversations we have with our neighbors and then we work together as a community and as individuals to start righting them today. During this pandemic we are facing the stark financial impacts of the lockdown head on. We have started the foundation of a long-term resilience fund, created an anonymous subsidized food purchase fund for our grocery store, and prepared to support our neighbors who need rent leniency and also those who rely on rent income for their living.

Living in a community is an active, hands-on investment which is incredibly empowering as we are part of creating the space in which we live. A conversation around the need for a subsidized food purchase fund in our community store has outcomes that directly impact us. It is not the question of whether we fit the criteria others have created to access a healthy meal or whether we donate to organizations which support food security. Instead these are systems we create that will directly impact our own lives. Often it

means learning to compromise, it means hurt when discussions tear open places in people, including myself, that we didn’t want to know about, and it brings intense personal and community growth. It is a raw and rich, though sometimes brutally painful, experience. In the words of my next-door neighbor, “if you join [cohousing] it will be the longest, most exhausting therapy session that you have ever had.”

Within our global community there has been intense loss and this is not about to end anytime soon. We are, as David Kessler puts it, “grieving the world we have now lost.” It is important to acknowledge the privilege that we have as a cohousing community in the UK. We have individual family homes, our shared services are a choice not a necessity, and our homes are well built and safe to stay in during a lockdown. We also benefit from extra community held space for those who are no longer going to their place of work and for people who need some distance from those with whom they live. Unlike many who are in cities, we live in a rural area with the great outdoors on our doorsteps which greatly eases lockdown stress. We also have the financial capital to make large purchases and financial decisions without financial strain on the community as a whole or its individual members.

Cohousing and other forms of community living are on the rise in the UK and across the ‘Global North’. People who live in community report better health, less loneliness and feel more embedded in society. Even for those not in intentional community living, more emphasis is being placed on building connections and sharing resources as can be seen with the increase in initiatives such as Mutual Aid groups and neighborhood social media like Nextdoor.

In the words of J. W. Fulbright, “We must dare to think ‘unthinkable’ thoughts. We must learn to explore all the options and possibilities that confront us in a complex and

rapidly changing world.” As we find ourselves in the midst of a pandemic and with an uncertain climate and ecological future, we are presented with the opportunity to turn to each other. Living collectively lowers environmental impact through shared resources and provides relationships for sustainable resilience in the face of crisis. What we practice in building strongly knit communities creates resourcefulness and an increased sense of belonging, things we could never achieve on our own. In this way, we become aware and understand, as individuals and as a collective, that we are a part of a wider global network. While this article is my own personal story, I write it as a celebration of community and as an invitation to reimagine what our world would look like if we choose to live more intentionally together.



Susanna Dart holds a B.S. in Biology, B.A. in Modern Languages with Honors from Northern Arizona University, and an M.Sc. in Environment and Development from Lancaster University. She was 2014-15 Fulbright ETA to Germany. Her passion is the intersection between society and the environment which led her to become one of the Directors at Lancaster Cohousing. The opinions in this article are her own and do not necessarily represent those of Lancaster Cohousing Company Ltd. or its membership body.

Thinking Globally about Saxony

Strengthening Transatlantic Communities through Talent Development

by Eric Fraunholz



Eric Fraunholz (l.), Director at the Deutsch-Amerikanisches Institut Sachsen e.V. and Daniel H. Wagner (r.), responsible for network development and alumni at the Deutsch-Amerikanische Fulbright Kommission.



The 30th anniversary of German reunification again provides the opportunity to further a transatlantic discussion about the East-West divide. Geographic, economic, and political evidence of a divided Germany still remains but has diminished during the past decades. Such discussions often focus on existing challenges yet overlook the potential within the eastern states and their people.

Discussion on German reunification and its challenges often resorts to appeals for compassion and aid to eastern Germany, a notion that all too often may come across as patronizing. Saxony's Minister of Equality and Integration, Petra Köpping in her 2018 book *Integriert doch erstmal uns!* points out that the feeling of economic uncertainty has eroded trust in liberal democracy and caused deep resentment about "Saxon problems." What Köpping proposes is east German self-determination and a well-deserved seat at the table on a national and international stage.

In a similar vein, I propose recognizing Saxony's potential and thinking globally about Saxony. Considering what the region has historically achieved in terms of transnational commerce, education and culture, Saxony boasts a promising foundation on which to build meaningful partnerships by investing in young talent, nurturing relationships with international communities, and cultivating future leaders. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, eastern Germany experienced increasing socio-cultural and economic heterogeneity and an overwhelming flight of expertise and leadership.

Stopping the analysis there, however, would overlook Saxony's international, dynamic, and future-oriented attributes. The Dresden and Leipzig metropolitan areas, in particular, have developed sustainable infrastructures that are at the most efficient and modern economic crossroads

in Europe. According to a comparative study of each federal state's initiatives for young entrepreneurs by the Deutsche Wissenschaft e.V., Saxony provides the best support for graduates who aspire to start a business.

Another promising factor for Saxony's sustainable growth is education and development. According to the EU's "2019 Regional Innovation Scoreboard," Saxony is a so-called "strong innovator" and leading competitor in Europe. A well-functioning educational sector and investment in international research centers have proven to be key initiators of socio-economic development.

Taking these elements into consideration, Saxony's potential easily outweighs its aforementioned challenges. Capitalizing on these existing advantages with international scope, building upon them, and scaling them throughout the entire state is a reasonable strategy for further "integrating" Saxony into a larger conversation. But who will be able to accomplish such a task? Saxony's potential lies in those who will indeed lead tomorrow's conversation. Thus it is crucial to identify and support young leaders in Saxony, and further develop their talent. They will build and animate Saxony's international communities of the future.

Historically, Saxons have been comfortable in their role as intercultural interlocutors. Like all neue Bundesländer, they have cultivated strong ties to the east, be it in the Czech Republic, Poland or Russia. The Nachwende generations (generations born after the fall of the Berlin Wall), however, are increasingly turning their interests and sympathies to the west, and specifically to the United States. Saxony

would do well to follow the economic trends arising from this tendency on a socio-political level as well as to invest in transatlantic exchange, which had been neglected in eastern Germany for too long. The U.S. government has also recognized the decades-long underrepresentation of the transatlantic partnership in the eastern states. The U.S. Consulate General in Leipzig has worked tirelessly to establish bridges between the neue Bundesländer and the U.S. The future international community of Saxony will be by and large transatlantic.

DAIS and Fulbright: global relevance and local impact

The Deutsch-Amerikanische Institut Sachsen (DAIS) is one of the key players to facilitate such international growth and transatlantic community building in Saxony. DAIS was officially opened in February 2020 as the first German-American institution in eastern Germany. Its mission is to build and strengthen transatlantic relations. DAIS functions as a transatlantic interlocutor to deconstruct stereotypes, showcase America's cultural and political diversity, and promote liberal and democratic ideals in Saxony. DAIS works with relevant stakeholders in the region to make use of and advance existing transatlantic infrastructure, organize collaborative events and promote other innovative formats in regional communities. It is one of twelve such German-American cultural institutions in Germany.

In addition to stimulating language and cultural exchange between the U.S. and Germany, and providing opportunities to learn more about each other's political systems, DAIS works closely with schools and universities across Saxony and actively promotes transnational talent development and exchange in higher education. Existing research strongly indicates that internationally mobile students and researchers generate benefits in both their home and host countries.

This work has both conceptual and material dimensions. While helping young talent to create awareness, build networks and foster community is a crucial element, scholarships, like the DAIS's Crister Stephen Garret Scholarship, play a decisive role in enabling access to higher education and international experience. Collaboration between DAIS and the Fulbright Commission is a natural fit. The scale and complexity of international talent mobility are increasing. Programs like Fulbright are central in guiding growing demand and necessity for transatlantic community building in Saxony in a meaningful and sustainable way. Above all, Fulbright's strong alumni development narrative of a life-long experience of mutual and international understanding would greatly enhance progress within Saxony.

DAIS and Fulbright are planning various collaborative programs to harness Saxony's dynamic potential and further develop transatlantic relationships in Saxony. In the near future, DAIS and Fulbright will offer two workshops aimed at capacity building by highlighting skills gained during Fulbright and CBYX alumni's exchange experiences and thereafter. The workshops will bring together young talent from different programs to build a sustainable cross-platform network in Saxony and thereby fill a knowledge gap between participants' individual experiences and different exchange programs: the CBYX and Fulbright communities in Saxony will learn from each other.

What we propose with these workshops is a change in perspective: let's think globally about Saxony!

Finding Community at Home

by Alana Deluty



Photo: Alana Deluty



Photo: Alana Deluty

I've always known I was an extrovert, but here's something I just figured out this year: I love communities. I love them. For many years, I fancied myself a stoic – intellectual, academically driven, always placing pursuit of knowledge above “lesser” pursuits (like love and friendship). Perhaps I, as a philosophy major, simply spent too much time reading Marcus Aurelius and Nietzsche and letting that turn me into a cynic. Love and friendship felt like a distraction from the higher demands of intellectual pursuits.

Despite my internal belief system, I've always been part of many communities; my hometown, the Jewish community, the swing dance community, and when I did my Fulbright in Malaysia in 2016, a rural, small-town community in Dungun, Terengganu. After moving away from my hometown at 18, I imagined that I'd never be living back in the U.S. I wanted to work in international development and stay abroad forever – only ever visiting the U.S. occasionally. Due to a confluence of factors, I ended up moving back to my hometown after my Fulbright, started working locally (not in development), and recently bought a house 10 minutes away from where I grew up. Emotionally, it was hard to feel like I was successfully moving forward in life while I was moving back. Doesn't success mean moving far away from where you grew up? Doesn't success mean living in New York, London, or Tokyo? I very much bought into the idea that living far from home was a prerequisite for being successful, but recently, I've started to question that.

Eventually, I realized that Providence, Rhode Island is maybe the most perfect place on earth for community building (I know, I'm biased!). It's small, it's walkable, it's full of fantastic universities, and since it's a small city, I had the chance to be a big fish in a small pond. When I moved back from Malaysia, I quickly joined my local chapter of the Fulbright Association, and ran for president the following year. When I started off here, the chapter didn't plan many activities; we now do 10-15 events a year (when there's not a pandemic), get funding from the Fulbright Association, and send at least one person to the conference every year. I also got involved with Couchsurfing, a hospitality-exchange program, and now I'm the local organizer for that, too. After years away, I discovered that building community at home was pretty easy, and because I was living in a small city, it was even easier. Being in a small place like Providence, Rhode Island, allows me to use my political energy in a really impactful way. I reach out to local politicians, and they actually come to our Fulbright programming. If I do an event for our local chapter, all/most Fulbrighters in the state will be there. Rhode Island is the smallest state in the U.S., which is sometimes a curse, but most of the time, it's a blessing.

When I lived in Malaysia, I was really proud of myself for getting embedded in the local community. I put a lot of effort into learning Malay, and made local Malaysian friends. (Last year I backpacked from Lithuania to Finland with one of them!) For me, making local friends was

an important part of my Fulbright. Fulbright is all about public diplomacy; I didn't want to be one of the grantees who isolated in a bubble, and didn't dig into their local community. Here's the truth though; it was a lot of effort, and it was hard. I loved life in my conservative village, but it was challenging to know that people who called themselves my friends might think otherwise if they knew about certain parts of my identity, especially the fact that I was Jewish. I was lucky to be able to hide that part of my identity – not all of us could, and some Fulbrighters were openly discriminated against or treated badly in their communities. Terengganu, Malaysia, is a rural, ethnically homogeneous place, where most residents have had little or no exposure to people from other cultures. I hope that exposure to our diverse Fulbright community went at least a small way in changing the minds and hearts of people who might have felt close-minded towards some of us. Unfortunately, that doesn't change the fact that it was challenging to not be able to fully express many aspects of our identities.

Fulbrighters from other countries that have placements in Providence, Rhode Island, don't face quite the same challenges I did on my grant in Malaysia. In general, they don't need to worry about hiding their religious, sexual, or cultural identity. However, especially for Fulbrighters who are leaving their home countries for the first time, finding a nurturing community is challenging. I do my best to not just plan events, but to create a network of local Ful-

brighters who know and care about each other, and who can rely on each other for support and mutual aid. Being able to build community for others has been immensely satisfying, and I'm so pleased to be able to give back to the Fulbright community in this way. As someone who is recently unemployed due to the pandemic, I have also started volunteering with many other local organizations focused on mutual-aid, which is all about community. Especially in the wake of a pandemic, fights for civil rights, and ongoing protests, as communities across the U.S. are feeling strained and uprooted, it is more important than ever that we lean on each other for support and focus on community-building.

Being back home felt like a failure at first, but now every day feels like a win. By being back here, I've been able to build real, substantive communities that I interact with every day. Communities are important, and our friends are the people we lean on when things get tough. I am so glad I have a million people to call when I need help translating something or moving a couch, and I am glad to offer a listening ear, a helping hand, connections, and other acts of service to members of my community. I can't believe it took me this long to figure it out; emotions and relationships are, in fact, the only thing that matters. I think Aristotle had it right all along; the real essence of humanity is the way we relate to other people, and that's really the only thing that matters.



Photo: Bob Show



Photo: Alana Deluty

All photos: Rhode Island Fulbrighters enjoying a day of snow tubing at Yawgoo



Alana Deluty is a 2016 Fulbright alumna who completed her grant in Terengganu, Malaysia. She is originally from Rhode Island, U.S., and lives there currently, having spent the last 3 years working in clinical research. In her free time, she loves to swing dance, go bicycling, read new books, and throw parties. She is currently planning to move to Tel Aviv, Israel, in September 2020.

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:

- 2019 Fulbright Association 42nd Annual Conference in Washington, D.C., USA
- 2019 ENAM Conference "Disinformation: Fake News of New Trolls" in Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria
- 2018 ENAM Conference "One Europe – One Transatlantic Partnership" in Cologne, Germany
- 2018 Fulbright Association 41st Annual Conference in Puebla, Mexico
- 2018 "Alumni-Focused Strategy Seminar: Best Practices, Success Stories and Alumni Associations" in Yerevan, Armenia
- 2017 Fulbright Association 40th Annual Conference in Washington, D.C.
- 2016 ENAM Conference "Energy, Renewables & Sustainability" in Baku, Azerbaijan
- 2016 Water Act! Heritage and Innovation Symposium, Ifrane/Morocco
- 2016 Fulbright Association 39th Annual Conference in Washington, D.C.
- 2015 International Fulbright Conference "Water Act", Paris
- 2015 Fulbright Association 38th Annual Conference in Atlanta
- 2014 Fulbright Association 37th Annual Conference in Washington, D.C.
- 2013 Fulbright Association 36th Annual Conference in Washington, D.C.
- 2012 Fulbright Association 35th Annual Conference in London
- 2012 1st ENAM Annual Conference in Rome
- 2010 Fulbright Association 33rd Annual Conference, Buenos Aires
- 2008 Fulbright Association 31st Annual Conference, Beijing

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.

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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(a)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



In another Unconference session, participants discuss the negative effects of a sugar-laden diet.



The Animal Cultures group collects their ideas on the whiteboard.



A participant shares her sketch for the Animal Cultures session.

A Welcome Meeting to Remember:

October 11-13, 2019

by Kassi Burnett

This year, Darmstadt, the “Wissenschaftsstadt” or “City of Science,” was chosen as the location for the annual German Fulbright Alumni Welcome Meeting. A quaint, lovely city with a medieval origin, Darmstadt became a center for Art Nouveau in the early 20th Century and eventually, over the years, earned its official title as the City of Science. Despite its small population of around 160,000 inhabitants, the city is home to a technical university, two colleges and many public and private scientific and research institutions and has produced a number of famous scientists over the past two centuries including Justus von Liebig, often regarded as the father of organic chemistry.

As the sun set in the Wissenschaftsstadt, we meandered toward our first meeting place on the western side of the city at the Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences. We mingled, drank wine, and enjoyed some small snacks in the form of buttery pretzel bites and roasted peanuts. We were

then welcomed by Fabienne Rudolph, then Vice President of Events for Fulbright Alumni, and lead organizer of the Welcome Meeting. She introduced our honored guest of the evening, Vizepräsident für Studium, Lehre und studentische Angelegenheiten at the Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences, Prof. Dr.-Ing. Manfred Loch, who gave us a brief history lesson in German and graciously welcomed us to the university. As the first night came to a close, we bid farewell to our friends and acquaintances with much anticipation for the full day ahead of us.

Saturday morning brought some welcome sunshine on the way into our morning registration meeting. After collecting our nametags and some Fulbright “swag,” we came together for our official Saturday morning welcome. Fabienne Rudolph gave a brief introduction and then we heard from Sarah Moore, professional associate in Public Affairs at the Consulate General in Frankfurt, who was

accompanied by her husband, Justin Halpern, who works in the political and economic section of the Consulate. Shortly afterwards, we welcomed Fulbright’s own Daniel H. Wagner, who is in charge of Network Development and Alumni, and Renee Burke, Fulbright Program Officer. Then came the keynote: Diversity Alumni and Fulbright Alumni Board Member, Kateryna Mishina interviewed Arwa Elabd. Arwa, born in Austria, was granted a Fulbright fellowship from 2017 to 2018 to teach at Bowling Green State University in Ohio. Since then, she has done extensive research on Vienna and its status as the “cultural capital of Europe” – “for whom?” she asks. A fierce advocate for inclusion and diversity, especially in the Fulbright world, Arwa shared her personal experiences as a Muslim visiting the United States through the Fulbright program. We learned of the extreme underrepresentation within Fulbright of Muslim students and students with “Migrationshintergrund” or students with a migratory background. We talked about some of the ways we might address this underrepresentation and why doing so is so important. At the conclusion of the interview, Arwa effortlessly fielded questions, and we ended with the seemingly collective understanding that a small portion of populations around the world – who are deemed somehow “different” – are burdened with the responsibility of cultural communication. As an educational exchange program, Fulbright (and Fulbrighters) can and should address this by being more aware, culturally competent and inclusive through all decision-making processes and actions.

After this moving discussion, we convened in the main hall for lunch: a variety of sandwiches and substantial cuts of cake for dessert. We then gathered for an explanation of the elusive, long-anticipated “Unconference.” Because of the riveting success of last year’s Unconference, the Welcome Meeting organizers decided for another iteration. To recap the rules briefly

1. **Whoever comes are the right people**
2. **Whatever happens is the only thing that could have happened**
3. **When it starts is the right time to start**
4. **When it is over, it is over**

In other words: rules, shmules. There are none! The attendees themselves are the organizers, which while completely unpredictable, has proven itself a catalyst for incredibly creative and thought-provoking sessions. The first step of the Unconference is a drafting period. Attendees are given some time to put their ideas together for a pitch. Following shortly afterwards, all ideas are pitched, written down on pink sticky notes, and attached to the wall for voting. Once the voting is complete, thirty-minute sessions take place three-at-a-time for a total of three rounds (with five-minute breaks in between the rounds of course). There were productivity sessions including one about digitalization in the work force and one about beginning your own startup. There was a session about sugar and its deleterious effects

All photos by Ellery Studio



Arwa Elabd fields questions about the importance of diversity and inclusion following her interview.



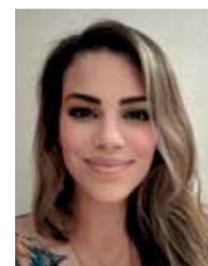
Everyone gathers together for a final group photo.

on the human body and a session about artificial intelligence. There was a session that had participants drawing graphs of their Fulbright experience and talking about the emotional throes of their exchange years and another that had participants drawing animals and talking about culture and disability. There was even a session focused on the discussion of existential fears and how to manage them. Because multiple sessions took place at the same time, it was impossible to attend all of the sessions, which is why we were all grateful when the session leaders recapped the groups' experiences afterwards!

Following the Unconference, we all got together to take a group photo before heading across town for dinner; we were undoubtedly hungry from all the intellectual discussion and engagement. It was a beautiful walk through the city despite the slight drizzle, and when we finally reached Sausalitos, we were ready for our burgers, burritos and salads! We spent a couple of hours enjoying each other's company and reflecting on the day before embarking on an exploration of the city's night life. We reconvened later to end the night at the Schloßkeller, the basement bar of a reconstructed palace and the former home of early European royalty.

Sunday morning brunch at Café Extrablatt gave early risers a chance to enjoy an all-you-can-eat buffet in the beautiful palace courtyard before saying farewells. Some went on

to spend the day exploring the rest of the beautiful city of Darmstadt, and some caught early trains out of the city to return to their homes all over Germany. By the end of the weekend, we were all convinced that if the goal of the Welcome Meeting was intellectual exchange in a friendly and social atmosphere, it was undoubtedly a success!



Kassi Burnett Born and raised in the Appalachian Mountains of West Virginia and eastern Ohio, Kassi Burnett has always been fascinated in the ways that nature and culture converge. Recently, Kassi completed a Fulbright research year at the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society at Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich. During her time there, she participated in the center's international, interdisciplinary environmental humanities network and worked on her dissertation, which is currently titled *Differently Abled Natures*. Her research examines the critical intersections of Western cultural perceptions of environment, nature, gender, and the body. Having received her Master's in German Studies in 2016, she is currently a Ph. D. Candidate at The Ohio State University.

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!

Jessica Hupka	Mannheim	Karen Valentin	Carlsberg
Inga Steinbach	Marburg	Philipp Schirmer	Böblingen
Fabienne Ruppen	Offenbach	Genna Tesdall	Berlin
Tim Alpers	Hagenburg	Tobias Tietze	München
Ayca Akcakoca	Netphen	Sebastian Stölting	Bielefeld
Viorel Borgovan	Berlin	Marius Brinkmann	München
Georg Peter	Würzburg	Regina Eckardt	Stelle
Anne Scheffels	Mainz	Daniel Hofmann	Fürth
Philippos Kanellos	Hamburg	Fabian Jungbluth	Dörrebach
Michèle Fein	Viernheim	Viktor Hübner	Elsenroth
Daniel Simmons	Berlin	Christian Siebert	Kassel
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Bettina Kaltenhäuser	Köln	Alia Benedict	Freising
Konrad Dittrich	Karlsruhe	Marie Quellhast	Warmseen
Janine Pröll	Gärtringen	Lasse Steffens	Braunschweig
Ayush Khajuria	Berlin	Antonio Mori Monteiro	Berlin
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Going While the Going is Good: Winterball February 2020

by Hye Sim Chung

This year, the Fulbright Winterball took place in Mannheim. The official weekend plan began with a casual get-together on Friday night, 14th of February, followed by a general assembly the next morning and then by the ball itself, and ended with a breakfast and tour of the city on Sunday morning.

The get-together was a great way to start off the weekend because it gave everyone a chance to learn people's names and also connect or reconnect prior to the "main event". It took place in the L3 Lounge across from the university. The bar itself was nice and casual, an ideal environment for meeting new people.

As more people arrived and began mingling, I pretty quickly learned that there were very few current Fulbright grantees in attendance, but it was still an interesting place to meet Fulbright alumni. Many of them were older, which was also rather different from the demographics of the current ETAs I had met at the start of the grant period. Regardless, everyone there was incredibly friendly and open to meeting strangers and I had a really good time getting to learn about other people's experiences in both the U.S. and Germany.

Before the official Winterball could start, a bunch of members of the German Fulbright Alumni Association got together for the annual General Assembly on Saturday

morning. After a couple of hours of discussion on different topics relating to the association's work, the election of the Board and the Extended Board as well as, all importantly, the consumption of snacks, everyone could finally focus on getting ready for the ball.

The official Winterball kicked off with a wine reception at 18:30 and everyone was dressed to the nines. After several months of wearing nothing but jeans and T-shirts, it was a lot of fun to dress up and to drink and chat with other people who had been and continued to be excited about the kinds of opportunities that are created through the Fulbright grant. It was also a time of discussion about what people really liked or found odd in their host countries; for example, there was an extensive conversation about the Pfand System amongst a few of the American grantees.

The room, in which the ball took place was beautifully decorated with large round tables that were definitely not intended to be used for having conversations with anyone not immediately sitting next to you, but the people who were there weren't going to let that stop them from doing so: you could join in any conversation at any point in time and people were always happy to have you there.

All photos by Jana Frey



Newly Elected Board

A Fulbright Roundtable



From left to right: President Fabienne Rudolph, VP Communications Sarah Martin and Guest of Honor Andrew Halus with Nancy Wassner



We ate a lot of food that I honestly can't remember well enough to describe, other than the fact that it was tasty, and we sat and talked for a while before the program continued. After eating, there was a lot of talking, thanking the hard work of those in charge of planning the event, introducing the new Board and Extended Board who had been elected at the General Assembly and welcoming the guests of honor of the day: Peter Burba, Deputy Cultural Attache at the U.S. Embassy in Berlin, Andrew Halus, Public Affairs Officer at the U.S. Consulate in Frankfurt, Daniel H. Wagner of the Fulbright Commission in Germany as well as Bettina Wallbrecht of the Mannheim Business School. After the presentation of the 2020 Mulert Award in absence of its winner Kimberlyn Bailey who had won conducting interviews with females in STEMM academia, there were displays of dancing to get people ready to show their moves on the dance floor.

Dancing is infinitely more fun when the music is too loud to hear yourself think and you can laugh at yourself for trying your best, but not quite succeeding. I typically do not dance, because I am not a coordinated person when walking, let alone dancing, but I was convinced to join in and I did not regret it at all. I had a lot of fun, I laughed a lot, and I liked the music that was played! I ended up leaving before it got too late, but there were still plenty of people dancing and chatting when I left.

The breakfast the next morning was just as cheerful and fun as the rest of the weekend had been and provided an excellent opportunity to catch up with people one last time before either heading home or joining for the city tour.

Every moment of the weekend involved getting to know new people; from the initial get-together to the breakfast, I got to meet new people and learn about their experiences. The Winterball is definitely the place to go to connect with other Fulbrighters from both Germany and the U.S. and hear their unique stories – I hope in the future more current grantees will consider attending!



Hye Sim Chung was a Fulbright ETA in Germany based in Kusel, Rhineland-Palatinate during 2019-2020, who studied Psychology and German during university.

Taking a break at the Gr. Polshorn viewpoint



Being part of the Fulbright Family (weekend) Community

by Elke Handschug-Brosin

This year was a very special year for planning the Fulbright Family Weekend. In preparation of this event I received calls from interested participants from as far away as South Carolina. Other long time participants, who could not attend this year, sent their greetings from Michigan. By the end of February, we had about 30 participants registered. I was very much looking forward to welcoming Fulbright Alumni from across the ocean to this year's family weekend in Königstein Saxon Switzerland. Being connected to Michigan, where I spent two of my Fulbright scholarship years, and making a phone call to South Carolina in conjunction with this year's Fulbright Family Weekend gave me a wonderful sense of being part of the international Fulbright (family) community. My joyful anticipation was beyond description.

That was in January. By mid-March things had suddenly changed – not just for our small Fulbright Family Weekend community but for all of us globally. No matter where on earth we were at the time or which activity we were engaged in. The Corona virus effected and still effects everyone of us. From then on, I communicated regularly with the Natur- & Familienoase as well as with the participants to keep the information flowing about status updates, travel procedures and other rules and regulations. Eventually, five people ended up attending instead of our normal 35-40 participants. It was pure luck that the Natur- & Familienoase was allowed to officially open up again one day prior to our scheduled arrival day, which was May 21, 2020. We had made the reservation one year in advance. Throughout this time, I personally developed a much better understanding of the hospitality community in general and the specific situation of our long-time host the Natur- & Familienoase Königstein by learning about what it took to reopen again. When we finally arrived, it felt like we had weathered the

first part of a big storm together – a storm that won't be over for a long while yet. I am personally very thankful that our little delegation of five was able to keep the meanwhile 19-year old tradition of the Fulbright Family Weekend alive under these very trying conditions, which in return gives an even stronger sense of community to those who have participated in the past and to everyone who will join us in the future.

It is my sincere hope that the Natur- & Familienoase will survive not just for the continuation of our Fulbright Family Weekend gatherings but for all other families who are looking for relaxation in the midst of beautiful nature, for school classes and for the community of travelers as a whole looking for a friendly and comfortable place to stay in the Sandstone Mountains of Saxon Switzerland. There is much to discover in this part of Saxony.

This year, we went hiking by following parts of the famous "Malerweg" (Painter's Way), which is aptly named for its beauty and the inspirations it has given to Romantic painters such as Caspar David Friedrich. We travelled by various means of transportation utilizing small river ferries, hiker's busses and the scenic tram Kirnitzalbahn (to some possibly known from the movie "Der Vorleser") – to mention just a few. Overall, the system of public transportation is well designed to make it easy for outdoor enthusiasts to get around in the area. We had one rainy day which we spent exploring the Stolpen Castle and its history. In the afternoon, we had the chance to marvel at the sophisticated art of creating hand-made flowers from very fine materials in the show room of the Sebnitz Kunstblumenwerkstatt (workshop of the artificial flower production in Sebnitz).

Please mark your calendar for next year's Fulbright Family Weekend, which will take place from Thursday, May 13th through Sunday, May 16th, 2021. Registration procedures will be communicated mid-December. Feel free to contact me for further information in advance at [rc.dresden\(a\)fulbright-alumni.de](mailto:rc.dresden(a)fulbright-alumni.de)



Stop for ice cream in Stolpen



Day Hike in the Sandstone Mountains



Crossing the river in Königstein wearing the mandatory mask



Elke Handschug-Brosin has initiated the Fulbright Family Weekend tradition in 2001 and has been organizing this event for the Fulbright community ever since. She spent the years of 1992-1995 in Michigan and Alaska as a Fulbright scholar and now lives in Radebeul near Dresden.

All photos by Elke Handschug-Brosin

Hamburg

Moin aus Hamburg

by David Patrician

On behalf of the Hamburg Chapter, I would like to begin by saying that we hope everyone is healthy and doing alright during the Coronavirus pandemic. The past few months have been challenging, but we are adapting and hoping that things will continue to improve.

The Hamburg Chapter enjoyed several events earlier this year. In October we met for a Stammtisch in Hamburg's famed Schanzenviertel. It was great catching up with everyone, hearing about summer adventures and also meeting some of the new Fulbright English Teaching Assistants (ETAs). For the past few years we have tried to reach out to the new ETAs and invite them to our events. We can pass on some of our experiences living in Germany, and they can share with us, first hand, what is going on in the U.S. It is beneficial for everyone, and we look forward to meeting the new ETAs soon.

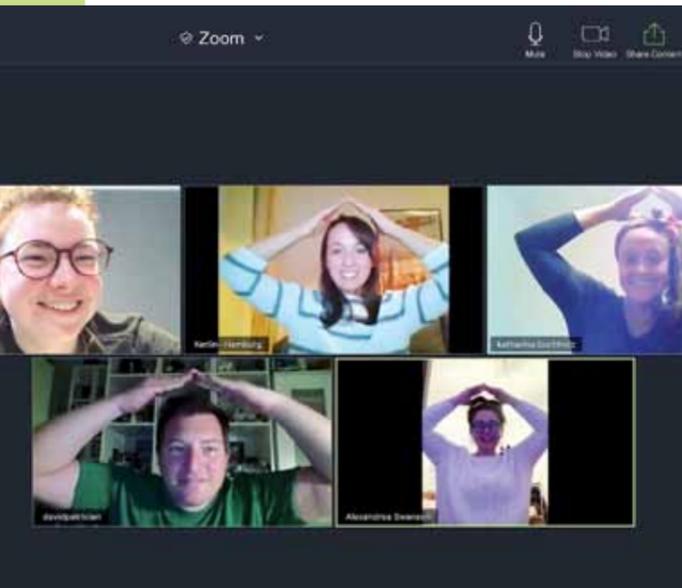


In November we met up with the Hamburg chapter of the Congress Bundestag Youth Exchange Program to celebrate Thanksgiving. We had a full house and enjoyed a delicious turkey dinner with our transatlantic friends. We also planned on doing a social project together in spring. Unfortunately, that was not possible this year, but we hope to make it happen in the near future.

A few other highlights included meeting Hamburg's new U.S. Consul General, Darion Akins, sharing a Glühwein at the Weihnachtsmarkt, attending a theater play (where a Fulbrighter was a member of the stage crew) and meeting up for coffee to discuss the upcoming U.S. Presidential Elections.

In March Germany went on lockdown. The focus moved to stopping the spread of the Coronavirus and countries around the world began to look for the best way to move forward. The Hamburg Chapter had our first digital Stammtisch and we are still trying to navigate the new world we are living in today.

As I write this article, many restrictions in Germany and around the world are starting to be lifted. The search is on for a vaccine, people are required to wear masks in public places and international travel is slowly beginning to return. What will life look like after the Coronavirus? How will lives, both work and private, change from this experience? These are just some of the questions we plan to discuss at our next Stammtisch. Until then... Bleibt gesund!



All photos by David Patrician

Frankfurt

Unity Frankfurt

by Martin Kohler

In this article, I could emphasize the events in spring and early summer that had to be postponed or cancelled (a museum visit, a hiking tour, a wine tasting). However, I prefer to focus on the activities that we have actually done here in the RG Frankfurt, in my 3rd year as Regional Coordinator.

For all of us, the situation in March was extremely strange and unfamiliar. Our monthly gathering in a restaurant had to be cancelled, for the first time in decades. However, quite soon we adjusted to the new situation. We switched to a virtual remote Stammtisch and met while sitting in front of our web cams, equipped with our favorite drink. Besides, this Stammtisch format came in useful for Fulbrighters who live well away from Frankfurt but are still strongly linked to our regional chapter. We had people attending from other parts of Germany, and even from Texas and Honduras.

Now as the restrictions are loosening a bit, we are planning for an outdoor gathering in a public park. And we are still hopeful that we can make the traditional 4th July Barbecue happen, even with a limited number of participants and a little bit different than the way it used to be for many years. And of course, we are looking forward to again going back to the regular regional chapter life as it used to be. Until March, we had been eagerly exploring the culinary scene of Frankfurt and indulged in wide-ranging cuisines from Italy to India.

Living in a city that hosts the world's largest U.S. Consulate General once more proved to be favorable when we were again invited to participate at the annual German-American Friendship Day reception in Frankfurt City Hall in October. Thanks again for having us!

The annual Thanksgiving Dinner in November is another event that attracts Fulbrighters from near and far. This time, though, we modified the traditional feast a little bit as we replaced the American turkey with German goose.

If you're interested in joining us, just drop a message to [rc.frankfurt\(a\)fulbright-alumni.de](mailto:rc.frankfurt(a)fulbright-alumni.de)
See you soon!



Martin with Consul General Patricia Lacina; photo: U.S. Consulate General Frankfurt



Zoom Stammtisch



Fulbrighters at the German-American Friendship Day Celebration; photo: Arlinda Ramaj

Franken

Homemade parties are the best

by Désirée Doyle

It has been a tradition for more than ten years that the Regional Chapter Franconia celebrates its Thanksgiving BBQ Event as a potluck dinner party at my flat. The side dishes provided by the guests always give this dinner a surprising and interesting touch. You can bet that there are always new aspects and nuances in taste every single year. After a welcome cocktail we sat down at a nicely decorated table for some starters. The Turkey was gone soon and we could go on to discover the desserts our guests had brought along. We had not only delicious dishes but also inspiring conversations all during the evening which were also meaningful and enlightening. The time to leave came too soon as all of us as could have celebrated much longer, what a pity!

Unfortunately the Corona crisis started soon after the Winterball in Mannheim so for a long time it was not clear whether an Independence Day BBQ could be celebrated or not. Fortunately, contact restrictions had been eased for outdoor events by the time of our potluck, so that the invitation to a garden grill party could be sent out on time.



Luckily the weather was on our side too: The BBQ was set up and we had a great time in the garden behind the house where I live. All kinds of meat were delicious, the salads were tasty and the conversation was meaningful and rambling.

Hopefully the Corona crisis will be over soon that we can welcome American Grantees again next year.

Dresden



Regional Chapter Dresden Thanksgiving Dinner November 23rd, 2019; photo: Elke Handschug-Brosin

Mannheim-Heidelberg



4th of July Picnic 2010



Fulbright presents at Thanksgiving Dinner 2019



Traditional Thanksgiving Dinner 2019

by Benjamin Pflieger

Initially, the regional chapter Mannheim-Heidelberg wanted to celebrate its 10th anniversary in 2020. It was ten years ago, in March 2010, when a small group of Fulbrighters of all ages met for the first time in Mannheim of what was to become the regional chapter "Mannheim-Heidelberg" of our Fulbright Alumni Association (credit where credit is due: there were earlier meetings of Fulbrighters in our beautiful region, but those activities stopped for a period before the founding of the current regional chapter).

In view of the troubling COVID-19 times, we stopped all face-to-face activities and called off our anniversary festivities planned for March 2020. Luckily, we were able to host our traditional Thanksgiving dinner in November 2019, marking our annual highlight. It seems so long ago now, a strange past time – a time where we were able to meet with likeminded fans of the best U.S. holiday in Mannheim-Sandhofen. We yearn for the feeling of community, the stories of our shared U.S. experiences and the feeling of gratefulness. With the current uncertain outlook, we pretty much doubt that we will be able to celebrate this very important dinner this year. As always, we hope for the best.

Thanks to Olga and Fabienne, who both did an outstanding job, Mannheim was able to welcome you all to this year's Winterball in February 2020. Again, thank you both and all others involved for your time and commitment.

You have probably heard and read this multiple times, but it could not be more important: please stay safe! We wish you, us and all that we come through this safe and sound and that we will be able to resume our face-to-face activities, meet up in bigger (or smaller) cities for our annual highlights and see one other again.



Pre-Corona Thanksgiving Dinner in Mannheim 2019

All photos by Benjamin Pflieger

Munich

From Munich with Love

by Barbara Weiten

“We cannot live only for ourselves.
A thousand fibers connect us
with our fellow men.”

– Herman Melville

“If you want to go quickly,
go alone.
If you want to go far, go together.”

– African Proverb

Supporting a sense of community and connection among Fulbright grantees and alumni – that’s one endeavor we aim to contribute to with the Munich regional chapter.

In “normal times”, we enjoy the personal connections with old friends and new acquaintances at our Stammtische, American holiday celebrations, cultural events, nature or sports activities.



Lineup of our first virtual Stammtisch

Facing a global pandemic, we have been exploring avenues of virtual connection. In April, we tried our first “100% virtual” Stammtisch with a video-conferencing platform: Eleven Fulbrighters, including an American grantee back home, joined to chat. Topics ranged from different local and national experiences with public health policies to comparing recent – or more distant – recollections of what surprised us during our exchange experiences – no matter all the “interconnectedness” via (social) media.

Enjoying a heartfelt of snow



With April’s positive resonance, we repeated our virtual Stammtisch in May and added a new – playful and interactive – dimension: an online player drawing and guessing game similar to the traditional German TV show “Montagsmaler”: When it is your turn, you choose a word from three options and draw a visual representation in 80 seconds. When it’s not your turn, you guess what a fellow player is drawing and type the guess into the chat – the quicker you guess, the more points you get. While some players were facing minor technical difficulties, the game made for an entertaining socially distant late evening – and a lot of laughter at our artistic endeavors.

End of June, with somewhat relaxed social distancing guidelines, we reconvened for a monthly Stammtisch in the traditional beer garden of the “Königliche Hirschgarten” (Royal Deer Park), enjoying a beautiful summer evening among chestnut trees – and some face-to-face conversation.

Looking back to the time before the pandemic, let’s recap a few other highlights beyond the traditional but always popular Thanksgiving, Secret Santa and 4th of July celebrations:

On occasion of the 100th birthday of Christoph Probst, a member of the student resistance group Weiße Rose, and in remembrance to the group, we attended an immersive concert experience enhanced with light installations in the “Lichthof” of Ludwig Maximilian University, the historic location of the arrest of the Scholl siblings, also members of the Weiße Rose group.

For the culture enthusiasts, in addition to regular visits to the cinema, we also attended an amateur theater performance of “Eine Familie” by Tracy Letts, 2008 winner of the Pulitzer Prize for theater. And early in the year, some of us participated in the traditional Magnolienball, a charity ballroom dancing event organized by the German-American Women’s Club in Munich.



Impressive immersive choir performance in honor of Weiße Rose



Who killed the turkey?



Muffins for mutual understanding

Finally, as for the great outdoors, we met for a wakeboarding adventure in nearby Aschheim in the late summer of 2019, a bicycle trip in the outskirts of Munich in the fall and a skiing excursion to the snow-covered mountains of the Bavarian Alps in the winter.

And now, in the early summer of 2020, we are all looking forward to again safely meeting in person for a wider range of activities, to enjoy food and drink, sports, nature and culture – as well as each other’s company and the Fulbright spirit of community!

All photos by Andreas Schoberth

Rhein-Ruhr

by Maximilian Haberer

As the rest of the world, last year’s activities of the Regional Chapter Rhein-Ruhr have been overshadowed by the Corona Virus pandemic. Unfortunately, most of our planned activities for 2020, such as a visit to the Zeche Zollverein in Essen or a night at the opera house in Duisburg, as well as all of our “Stammtische” had to be cancelled due to the decreed social distancing rules. Thanks to the relaxing of regulations in NRW at the end of June, however, we were able to host our traditional 4th of July BBQ at the Kemnader See in Bochum. The BBQ hut at the Kemnader See proved to be an ideal place for our event, since it offers enough space to adhere to the current distance requirements. Under these very special circumstances we were all very happy to finally meet again in person and are looking forward to slowly increasing the amount of activities.



The Regional Chapter Rhein-Ruhr obliging to the distance requirements at their 4th of July BBQ at Kemnader See Bochum; photo: Maximilian Haberer.

Mulert Award



This year's recipient of the Jürgen Mulert Award on Mutual Understanding is Kimberlyn Bailey

Germany, the U.S. and many other countries have low rates of women in the senior-most career milestones in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine (STEMM) academia. Underrepresentation is undoubtedly an international issue. Nonetheless, there has been relatively little international conversation on the topic. One Fulbright alumna's ongoing project tries to fix that.

The 2020 Mulert Award was given to Kimberlyn Bailey – a 2018-2019 U.S. Student Fulbright grantee – for a series of interviews she conducted with females in STEMM academia currently working in Germany. Bailey's several dozen interviewees hailed from a variety of countries and academic STEMM fields.

Bailey's interviews traced what started each women's interest in STEMM and how that interest became a STEMM career. From these career profiles, Bailey is writing, illustrating and producing a children's book. Bailey explained, "We're hoping that this book will help kids discover or nourish their own STEMM interests by reading about how active women in STEMM discovered and nourished their own STEMM interests." This is Bailey's second book she has created in

Mock-up of the upcoming book, featuring two pages depicting childhood memories of two scientists included in the book; photo: Kimberlyn Bailey



concert with cuSTEMized, a non-profit devoted to fostering STEMM interests in young girls. The book will be released in English and German, free for download or available for purchase in print sometime in 2020. The Mulert Award money will cover the costs of professional translation into German.

With each woman, Bailey also asked about their experiences as women in STEMM, their views on gender diversity initiatives and policies in STEMM and relayed how their fellow interviewees answered, without revealing which woman gave a particular answer. Bailey explained the rationale for these conversations. "I wanted to give these women – quite often the subject of public debate – a chance to weigh in for themselves and discuss what is ordinarily too heated a topic for open conversation. By not revealing which woman gave a particular answer, these women got to, for once, hear and react to the plethora of different viewpoints of their colleagues."



Logo of the non-profit with which Bailey works to produce the book, Jean Fan

Bailey said what came through strongest from all these interviews was the critical role culture played in shaping each women's experiences in STEMM and opinions about gender representation in STEMM. Bailey, herself a woman in STEMM who does sociology of STEMM research, hopes these conversations will fruitfully inform her future volunteer work and scholarship. Bailey commented, "The Fulbright/Mulert mission for 'mutual understanding' between countries is undeniably important. What it means to be a woman in STEMM drastically varies from one country to the next. I hope my future work and the children's book will serve to support women in STEMM around the globe."



Kimberlyn Bailey was a 2018-2019 study/research Fulbright grantee. She is now a biostatistics graduate student at Harvard University.

Mulert Award 2021 – Call for Nominations

Since 2010, the German Fulbright Alumni Association has granted 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 2020 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 2021
- project summary and author biography in the 2021 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 Sunday, **November 29, 2020**.

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

Contact:
Felix Wehinger
[mulert.award\(a\)fulbright-alumni.de](mailto:mulert.award(a)fulbright-alumni.de)

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