

# Frankly

The Fulbright Alumni e.V. Magazine



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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers,

After a year of inward reflection and standing still, in 2021 we slowly dared to dream again about life after the pandemic. Daring (New) Beginnings seemed an appropriate theme. And despite the pandemic still being with us, it remains fitting, as we can still think about beginnings – past, present and future. I was happy to see that many people saw their own experiences reflected in this idea and sent in beautiful, diverse, creative and truly brave articles.

With 2021 being the year the FAeV’s 35-year anniversary, we start off with a celebration of its inception and the many beginnings it has witnessed.<sup>1</sup> Former presidents Oliver Steinmetz and Wiltrud Hammelstein reflect on their years in office and current president Andreas Dewald shares with us his plans for the association especially with regards to questions of sustainability and climate change (p. 10). We stay with this theme in the following article by Janani Ravi about climate change and the new beginning that climate policy needs (p. 16).

Entrepreneurial beginnings are reflected in the articles of Julian Mandel and Florian Grigoleit and their daring new beginnings of founding their own startups: learn more about memperience and the VideoBook (p. 20) as well as Model-wise and founding a business for a technology that digitizes safety engineering (p. 24). Amy Cougehenour on the other hand lets us in on her work at Cadasta Foundation focused on “strengthening global land and resource rights through technology, services, and data empowerment” (p. 26).

Patience Williams brings us into a more personal section through her meditations on wealth in a spiritual emergency (p. 30). Carina Ho shares with us her personal story and shows us how beginnings are not always a choice, but adaptations to new circumstances. Read her inspiring article about being an artist with a disability (p. 32). Sarah Evans reflects on her Fulbright year and the beginnings we seek with moving and the personal relationships that accompany us (p. 34).

We’re happy to include articles in this year’s editions from members of the affinity groups Fulbright Lotus and Fulbright Salam. As the previous article, Mark Liang of Fulbright Lotus also shares with us his reflections on his Fulbright experience, but also shows us how close begin-



nings and endings are by telling us of being one of the last members to participate in the China-US Fulbright exchange program before it was discontinued in 2020 (p. 38). Thahn Mai shares with us the importance of Fulbright Lotus and of re-imagining Asian stories – in particular in light of the rise in hate crimes especially since the start of the pandemic (p. 40). And Isra Hussain, Zuka’a Joudeh and Arua Juanita introduce us to Fulbright Salam which was founded as an “avenue for awareness of the multitudes of identities (...) held within the global Muslim population” (p. 42).

We especially thank Zamira Saidi for daring to contribute to our final section with an honest article about what it means to be an Afghan (Fulbrighter) at the current moment (p. 44). New beginnings are not always a choice, but sometimes a forceful reinterpretation of new circumstances we find ourselves in. Last, but most definitely not least we welcome you to let Tyler J. Hughley-McKinney make you think about what “Daring” really means. “It’s you. It’s me. It’s all that we’re daring to be” (p. 47).

I am extremely proud to present to you this year’s Frankly and hope that the different interpretations of new beginnings bring you joy and inspire you where they can. At this point I want to especially raise your awareness of all the FAeV activities that have happened during this year despite the pandemic. Have a look at how active our regional chapters were on- and offline and see which various events – again on- and offline – the association was able to host or partake in.

I want to thank everyone who helped make this Frankly happen – all authors, photographers and of course everyone else behind the scenes: a shout out to Astrid Weingarten for her beautiful graphic design and to our proofreader Andreas Schoberth. And of course THANK YOU to our readers!

Let’s begin!

Jana Frey

1. Unfortunately, though planned, we were ultimately not able to include an interview with Dr Cathleen Fisher, new executive director of the Fulbright Commission and Fulbright alumna herself. Nonetheless, we would like to welcome her and also wish the Fulbright Association a happy 75-year anniversary!



# Greetings from the President



Dear Fulbrighters and Friends,

I am very pleased to introduce to you the 2021 issue of the FRANKly magazine. I want to thank all contributors and authors for their wonderful work and give a special shout-out to our editor Jana Frey for her engagement with last year's as well as this year's FRANKly.

The pandemic posed many challenges for us as an association. Our very core of engagement through personal interactions got taken away and our traditional events had to be cancelled. Despite the challenges, we as an association tried our best to adapt to the current situation. For the first time in the association's history, we had a virtual general assembly and virtual regional Stammtische.

2021 gave us hope to embrace the new normal. This meant daring (new) beginnings for our association and our members, inspiring this year's FRANKly topic. As you will discover, many of our alumni have faced many challenges head on and dared to master new beginnings demonstrating the relentless tenacity of our community.

Alongside our members, the extended board also dared to explore new possibilities with new initiatives like the pilot mentoring program we launched in October. Special thanks to Daniel Gossen, our mentoring chair and Alex Rose, our VP members. We also had our first in-person event since the start of the COVID-19 Pandemic with our welcome meeting in Bonn, which was masterfully organized by Marina Kohl and Michael Vetter. We also took on the challenge of revamping our digital presence on Instagram und LinkedIn. This effort was propelled by Amanda Gläser-Bligh.

This year also marks a new start for our valued partner, the Fulbright Commission, as they welcomed their new director, Dr. Cathleen Fisher. We look forward to expanding our well-established cooperation in digital and in-person formats.

We took extra initiative in starting new beginnings by engaging with other alumni organizations through the German American alumni network to bring in more variety to our event offerings and alumni connections. This was also reflected at the ENAM conference in Budapest, where we exchanged best practices and established concrete plans for Fulbright events throughout Europe.

This year's FRANKly is full of brave, exciting and daring stories. I hope that they inspire you to dare new beginnings as well. As part of this phase of new beginnings we welcome all alumni to engage with our current initiatives and to continue to inspire us.

Yours truly,  
Andreas Dewald



Michael Vetter



Johannes Schulz



Sarah Martin



Andreas Dewald



Alexander Rose

# Meet the Board

## Michael Vetter Vice President Events

Michael spent his Fulbright year (2007-08) at the University of Miami School of Law after finishing his law studies in Germany, and graduated with a Master of Laws (LL.M.) degree in 2008. He is currently working as an antitrust and state lawyer at a large German law firm in Düsseldorf. He joined the board this year as VP Events after being responsible for the regional chapter Düsseldorf/Rhein-Ruhr a few years ago. Although it has been more than 10 years since his Fulbright experience, he is still passionate about international understanding and the goals of the German Fulbright Alumni Association. Michael loves to bring people together – virtually and in person – to meet and discuss various issues. Although he regards meetings in person as absolute necessary, he sees virtual get-togethers as a good supplement to reach a bigger audience and to keep in touch even in times of a pandemic.

## Johannes Schulz Vice President Finance

Following short stints in Latvia and China, Johannes spent his Fulbright year 2008-09 at the University of Iowa and received his Masters of Laws in 2009. He then returned to Germany, started his career in the energy industry and currently works as senior regulatory advisor on EU electricity trading and decarbonization 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 the FAeV at the first opportunity, joining the organizational team for the Winter Ball 2019. As VP Finances his mission continues by maintaining the solid financial standing of the organization and helping to steer the FAeV through these turbulent times.

## The Board

### 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

#### President

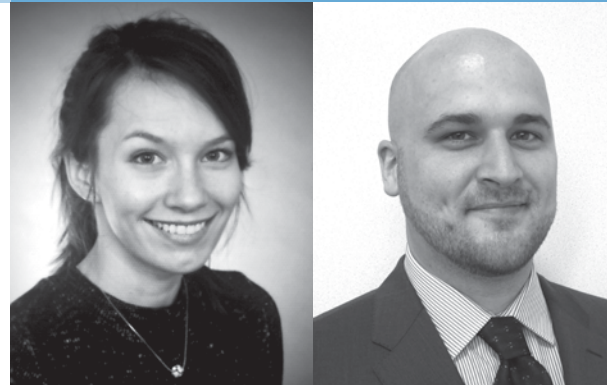
Prior to going to the US on a Fulbright scholarship in 2017-18 Andreas graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Engineering Management from Hochschule Darmstadt. He spent his Fulbright at Purdue University in Indiana where he pursued a Master's degree in Technology, Leadership, and Innovation. His passion for Fulbright led him to joining the board as Vice President of Members upon his return to Germany in 2019. After he finished his Master's degree in Engineering Management, he started working as a consultant for digitalization and agility master at DB Systel. Andreas, who also goes by "Andi", was elected president this year and wants to strengthen the cooperation with the Fulbright Commission and other Alumni Associations, as well as to start new initiatives to activate our wonderful Fulbright alumni community. He loves sports, especially bouldering and ice hockey, and spending time at his Kleingarten.

### Alexander Rose

#### Vice President Members

Alex spent his Fulbright year at Purdue University, Indiana in 2019-20, majoring in Industrial Engineering. He enjoyed being part of several student organizations and the Fulbright community at Purdue and is excited to continue fostering the German-American friendship as VP members, his first position in the Fulbright Alumni e.V. board. After his time at Purdue, Alex joined an electric mobility pioneer in the San Francisco Bay Area for an internship and recently started writing his master's thesis in Digital Production and Simulation at Karlsruhe Institute of Technology in Germany. As VP members, Alex is looking forward to supporting our regional chapters, to the return of local in-person events and to strengthening the connection between incoming US Grantees, recent returnees and the local alumni community.

## 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 in 2014-15. She is currently a project manager for Ph.D. scholarships for candidates from Southeast Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa as well as general research grants and accompanying social measures at the Gerda Henkel Foundation in Düsseldorf, Germany. Jana occasionally works as a freelance editor and translator and is a Judo fighter as well as a Judo coach in her free time. She joined the extended board as the FRANKly editor in 2020 and hopes to create magazine issues full of relevant and creative content that will connect us not just as Fulbrighters but as people.

### Dan Simmons Online Editor

Dan joined the extended board in April 2021 and is the new Online Editor for the German Fulbright Alumni Association where his primary focus is on the website. He spent his Fulbright year in 2011/2012 as an English Teacher's Assistant (ETA) at the Integrierte Gesamtschule (IGS) Borwin in Rostock, Germany. Before Fulbright, Dan earned a B.A. in German and Spanish Language and Literature from Nazareth College of Rochester, New York. In 2012 he was an orientation leader for new ETAs coming to Germany from the US and participated in the 2013 Fulbright Conference in Berlin. He went on to earn a Master's Degree in Business Administration at the Hochschule Mainz, interned at Software AG, and is now working in marketing operations at data security firm comfote AG. He is a proud husband and father and enjoys biking, swimming, running, and playing guitar.



from left to right: Jana Frey, Dan Simmons, Elke Handschug-Brosin, Jürgen Simon, Marina Kohl, Thomas Weißschnur

### 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 (1992-95) 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.

### Jürgen Simon Archive

More than 35 years after its foundation, 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.

### Marina Kohl Welcome Meeting

Marina started her academic career in Lüneburg with a B.A. in Applied Cultural Studies and then moved on to Fulda for the bilingual M.A. program, "Intercultural Communication and European Studies." During that time she spent her Fulbright year at Arizona State University in the Communication Studies Department, focusing on interpersonal communication and mediation. Marina now works as a refugee advisor at University of Bonn, supporting higher-educated refugees to get a good start in the German academic world.

### Thomas Weißschnur Jürgen-Mulert Memorial Award

Thomas received his "Diplom" in the Performing Arts program (Clarinet) at the Freiburg University of Music, during which he also spent an exchange year in Finland/Helsinki at the Sibelius Academy. In 2007-08, he continued his studies on a Fulbright Scholarship at the University of Southern California, Los Angeles before returning to Germany and finishing his musical education at the Berlin University of the Arts with an Artist Diploma. Since then, he's held several positions in Orchestras like The Macau Orchestra in China or the Düsseldorfer Symphoniker and continues to work as a freelance clarinetist. Parallel to his music career, Thomas studied Business Administration at the University of Hagen and started working as a freelance consultant with several boutique firms, following his time as a Visiting Associate at the Boston Consulting Group. Being a long-time member of the FAeV and supporting several local events, he joined the extended board in 2021.



# The Extended Board



From left to right:  
Markus Mock  
Dagmar Schreiber  
Caroline Gunderson  
Tristan Cristofolini

## Markus Mock International Coordinator

1990-91 Markus, while pursuing a Diploma in Computer Science in Karlsruhe, spent his Fulbright year as a graduate exchange student at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. He returned to the US for a Ph.D. in Computer Science at the University of Washington Seattle, taking a position at the University of Pittsburgh in 2002 upon graduation. In 2005 he and his wife Patricia, a native of Peru, decided to escape the harsh East Coast winters and moved west to sunny California with their two children. After ten years working for Silicon Valley power houses, the Mock family moved to Germany in 2014. Markus re-joined academia as a professor at the University of Applied Sciences, Landshut. Markus is passionate about international understanding, curious about many things, and loves baking and playing chess. As an extended board member, he wants to strengthen our collaboration with other Fulbright alumni associations. In addition, he will support our webmaster in the technical aspects of our web presence.

## 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.

## Caroline Gunderson Contact for American Grantees

Caroline is a current ETA Fulbright Grantee working at the UniverSaale Gesamtschule in Jena, Thuringia. She graduated in May from Southern Methodist University, in Dallas, Texas, with majors in Accounting and German. Throughout undergrad, she worked as an accounting TA and a student tutor for written composition and literary analysis. During her final semester at SMU, she interned in the National Federal Tax Services branch of Deloitte and Touche, LLP. with the intention of returning to SMU after her Fulbright year to earn a M.Sc. in Accounting and sit for the CPA exam. Despite having gained most of her professional experience during undergrad in accounting and financial roles, her German studies and work as a tutor motivated her to apply to Fulbright and have inspired deeper engagement with the Fulbright network and international community in general. She is excited to take over the role as the representative of current US Grantees and hopes to help foster meaningful ties among the current grantee and alumni communities.

## Tristan Cristofolini Fulbright Alumni e.V. Office

Tristan Cristofolini is the manager of the Fulbright Alumni e.V. office in Frankfurt am Main. Although he is not a Fulbright Alumn, his devotion to the Fulbright cause is rooted in his interests as a student of American Studies at Goethe-University. As Office Manager, his responsibilities include connecting members with questions to the board, upholding contacts with various partners and clients, and to keep things running smoothly. Tristan started his American Studies M.A. in the fall of 2019. He hopes 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.

## Amanda Gläser-Bligh Webmaster

Since her Fulbright year 2005-06 as a Fulbright Enterprise Scholar at the University of Bremen, Amanda has worked for E.ON SE in a number of roles, including in the operations & communications departments. She is passionate about the energy transition & climate from a transatlantic perspective. As such, she is a member of many groups that look at these topics. She joined the extended board of the Fulbright Alumni Association as new Webmaster and Social Media editor in April 2021. In addition to running the social media channels for the FAeV she also maintains a Twitter page for young leaders in energy, called ELEEP. Amanda hopes to increase followers and engagement on our own social channels & welcomes you to follow along on Instagram, LinkedIn and Facebook. In her spare time, she puts on her Pikachu hat & plays Pokémon Go.

## Daniel Gossen Mentoring

Daniel is our new member responsible for mentoring. He joined the extended board in 2021. He did his Bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering and his Master's degree in Robotics in Hannover at the LUH. As a Fulbright scholar, he pursued a second Master's degree in Mechanical Engineering at Purdue University in 2019. Since September 2021, he is working on a Ph.D. in Mechanical Engineering at RWTH Aachen. Besides his commitment within the Fulbright Alumni Association, he dances Popping and Breakdance and also dedicates his time as a volunteer in this scene on different occasions. Through his position in the extended board, he would like to help new members experience the same open-mindedness he was able to enjoy in the US.

## Daniel Hofmann Outreach

Before embarking on his Fulbright journey, Daniel graduated with a Bachelor's degree in International Retail Management from Technische Hochschule Ingolstadt in 2017. He then spent his Fulbright at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge to pursue his M.BA and received his degree in 2019. During his time at LSU, he was actively involved in campus life as Vice President of the LSU Men's Soccer Club and International Chair of the M.BA. Association. Since then, he has returned to his hometown, Fürth, and currently works for the Human Resources Strategy department of Schaeffler. This is Daniel's first year as the Outreach Chair of the German Fulbright Alumni Association. In his role he aims to continue connecting our association with other German-American alumni associations, institutions and businesses alike, in order to offer our members various ways to meet like-minded and inspiring people. Daniel is passionate about sports, entrepreneurship and specialty coffee.

## Hermes Winands Data Management

Not featured  
**Mila Gao-Ahlner**  
Diversity Alumni

## Genna Tesdall Former contact for US Grantees



From left to right: Amanda Gläser-Bligh,  
Daniel Gossen, Daniel Hofmann, Hermes Winands



# 35 Years!

The 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the German Fulbright Alumni Association! 35 years! What does this mean? Well, for one it means that there was a 30-year, a 25-year, a 20-year, a 15-year and even a 10-year anniversary. Who would have thought! Not all, but most of these were featured in past FRANKly editions through beautiful contributions on the association's history as well as the events organized to celebrate these association landmarks. No need to repeat what others have already eloquently written and due to the pandemic, we were unable to celebrate in true FAeV fashion.<sup>1</sup>

So instead of looking at the past and recapturing the last 35 years in detail, we would like to focus on this year's theme of new beginnings and look at the future – as well

academic fields, eager to shape the future.” At the beginning, it was not only the organization itself that was new. It was the idea, the whole concept behind it that was unusual for Germany at the time. As such, the mere inception of the FAeV was a daring new beginning. 16 alumni came together at the calling of Jürgen Mulert with the desire to help foster transatlantic mutual understanding in the Fulbright spirit and to give back after the generous gift they had received in form of a Fulbright scholarship. As founding president, Oliver Steinmetz gave voice to the ideas and the hopes of the young organization. Faced by the challenges – although perhaps not perceived as such at the time – of a pre-digital world, this group of people creatively came together to set up the structures, the by-laws and the spirit of the associa-

In the following years, the structures and practices became more firmly established, and FAeV events built a reputation for being great places for making lifelong friends – or even more, as demonstrated by the love story of Jürgen and Nicole Guldner published on CNN Travel, who met on the FAeV 1999 sailing trip.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps it was the fact that the association stood on more solid ground now that helped meet the challenges of the 90's and early 2000's head-on. With German reunification being a true beginning and giving way to a new hopeful era at the turn of the decade, the FAeV expanded as the Fulbright Program admitted East Germans into their scholarships and Americans were sent to the 5 new Länder. Wiltrud Hammelstein served as one of the advisors to the board for the 5 New Länder and soon new



Oliver Steinmetz and Antje Hildebrandt 1989; photo: Oliver Steinmetz



Berlin board meeting 1994. Oliver and daughter at work



President and Treasurer Jürgen Simon at work at the Berlin 1996 Decennial „PowWow“



Wiltrud and Senator Fulbright in Washington DC at the 1998 US Fulbright Association Annual Meeting



Winterball 1996 Frankfurt



Paris 1996. First European FA Meeting, German and Belgium presidents Wiltrud and Eliane van Stichel with „La Presidente“ (the wine bottle)



Board Meeting in Frankfurt



Jürgen and Nicole Guldner met on the FAeV Sailing Trip in 1999 and are still happily married.



A Fulbright Wedding; photo: Olaf Kolk

by Andreas Dewald, Jana Frey, Wiltrud Hammelstein and Oliver Steinmetz

as at the past looking at the future and the inevitable new beginnings that the progression of time entails. In order to do so, a trio of FAeV presidents from year 1 to year 35, Oliver Steinmetz, Wiltrud Hammelstein and Andreas Dewald met via Zoom with editor Jana Frey to chat about past ideas, challenges and impulses as well as about the impulses and plans for the next – at least – 35 years. This is what they came up with.

In his opening speech of the first FAeV “PowWow”<sup>\*</sup> in October 1986, in the Frankfurt town hall “Römer”, Oliver Steinmetz said: “Don’t get us wrong: This association is not about being a ‘former’ or ‘ex-’something. We have a whole lot of future gathered here: Young and bright people from all

tion we have the privilege of being a part of today by collecting and re-typing the Fulbright Commission’s manually typed annual grantee lists, printing and copying invitations, putting them into hundreds of envelopes, printing, solving the lack-of-a-computer problem, printing, trying to reach people – without social media! – and printing some more. From nothing but a few young and determined Fulbrighters, an association was founded that grew in numbers with each year and that did not let itself be scared off by the fact it was new, small, and did not have high-level “connections”. Instead, it took on the challenge of organizing big national events with renowned guest speakers on various important issues, as well as sending delegations to international Fulbright and alumni events. Not a bad start!

regional groups started forming. But starting a new era is not always the result of happy circumstances. This became apparent in many fateful events to which the association was witness. One of these big changes came with the passing of Senator Fulbright in 1995 which happened just weeks after Wiltrud Hammelstein was elected to the board. Our concurrent obituaries in Frankfurter Allgemeine and Washington Post were unique in the Fulbright world and highly appreciated on the other side of the Atlantic.

Going out and giving back was the theme of the following years. “Don’t ask what the association can do for you, ask what you can do for the association” was the slogan of her board work, says Wiltrud Hammelstein who served more

All photos by Wiltrud Hammelstein unless otherwise noted



than 10 years on our board with four years as president. Member numbers were growing above 1,000 and regional chapters were thriving with creative activities for regional and national events. “If every member were to spend 1 hour per month for FAeV activities, we would have 1,000 hours per month. Imagine what the FAeV could do.” After the first 10 years, when the association became a teenager, there were a lot of “firsts” in the second decade: The FRANKly was published in English so it could be sent to all international FAs. The “Returnee” meeting was renamed to “Welcome” meeting as we were welcoming back all Germans AND welcoming all US Fulbrighters to Germany. The FAeV also started to attend the annual meeting of the US Fulbright Association in Washington D.C. to present the

Wiltrud recalled, being the president in 2001, being on the phone the entire afternoon of the day of the attacks with the organizers, our office, members, the Fulbright Commission. The unanimous view was to not cancel the event but to keep on organizing it. In addition, there was the Fulbright Program introduction for newly arrived American Fulbrighters to Germany. Wiltrud was asked to introduce the association. Coming together was deemed especially important under the circumstances, to offer alumni and especially US grantees in Germany a forum to start dealing with what had happened. But the attacks also meant that the FAeV had to come into its role as cultural mediator even more than anyone had thought necessary before. Prior to 2001, it was relatively easy to know what it meant

for her to deliver her keynote on “propaganda” directly from Los Angeles, decades before digital and hybrid events were all the rage.

Over the years the association arrived at its current form. National events (such as major events called “PowWows” at the time, special focus conferences, Winter Balls, Welcome Meetings, the bi-annual Sailing Trip and Family Weekend) and participation in international events (such as the annual meeting of the US Fulbright Association and events of different alumni groups), the FRANKly, our website and e-mail distribution lists, the Jürgen Mulert Award, all the regional chapter events and activities, the involvement in the Diversity Initiative and membership in the

fostering understanding through exchange has become more difficult. Like the whole world, the association had to adapt. Going digital was the only way for the association to keep up its work and led to the first big digital association events, like the Welcome Meeting and the General Assembly. While posing the best possible alternative, these formats in and of themselves are difficult. Even before the pandemic, volunteer organizations of any kind were already facing the competition of the digital age and more comfortable formats compared to organizing and getting together after a long work day or for an entire weekend. This new, digital era we find ourselves in requires a different kind of motivation – from each person, but also from organizations to keep peoples’ interest. This makes it necessary



Wiltrud with Harriet Fulbright in Athens 2004



„PowWow“ Berlin 2002, Oliver kneeling in front of Nancy Snow on screen



Meeting of the European Fulbright Alumni Associations in Strasburg



Fun at the Family Weekend 2006; photo: Elke Handschug-Brosin



Group from the Diversity Initiative gathers for a rare moment of quiet during Orientation Week at the University of Kentucky, 2012; photo: Shamaila Ghaffar



ENAM Conference 2015, Rome

German FA activities. This has been a tradition ever since. Our international activities helped us lay the foundation of strong relations with our US Fulbright friends and around the world.

THE event that had an extremely deep impact on the activities of the FAeV and transatlantic groups around the world was, of course, 9/11. At the beginning of the new millennium the terrorist attacks shocked the world and shook the transatlantic community at its core, including the FAeV who later learned that it had lost one of its members in the attacks. For the FAeV this tragedy had many implications. Some of them were very immediate, as in September 2001 a national event, our “PowWow” on nutrition was coming up just the weekend after 9/11.

to be a Fulbrighter, and German-American friendship and mutual understanding were essentially no-brainers. Understanding became a lot harder in the aftermath of 9/11 and the political and military decisions of the US made at the time, the ramifications of which we still feel today. It meant redefining our role and finding a new language for Germans and Americans to communicate, to again foster understanding in a world in which the worldviews sometimes differed to the point that countries could have been on different planets. The FAeV managed to fill this role as it proved with our “PowWow” event “Quo vadis USA” in Berlin in June 2002 – which set new standards in several ways. For example, it was the first time we had a speaker presentation via videoconference: Nancy Snow considered flying too risky, so the organization team made it possible

VFF (in which FAeV is the biggest donor to the Fulbright Commission!) became a solid basis on which the FAeV stands. The turbulent times also helped German alumni and Fulbrighters in general to be prepared for finding a common language and fostering understanding as well as possible in tough times, as yet again had to be proven in the four years of the Trump Presidency.

Shortly after the inauguration of President Biden, the FAeV also welcomed its new president, Andreas Dewald. Starting the FAeV presidency in the midst of a pandemic already emphasizes one of the major challenges of the time. The impossibility to meet in person takes away one of the main elements and strengths of the association. We now find ourselves in the situation that coming together,

for us to learn from this period in which we were forced to go digital without much preparation and to broaden our digital horizon: Not just go with what is available and have yet another Zoom meeting just passively facing the screen for the most part. Instead, the association is seeking new tools and new ways of setting up its digital infrastructure in order to be ready to offer more exciting online and hybrid events that will really catch our members’ interest. In order to go with time, plans are in the making by our member Mo Kari for a potential FAeV podcast in order to use this public medium to reach people.

Being able to navigate the digital world more smoothly and elegantly is an important skill to have nowadays. But after almost two years of living in a pandemic, what we



really want and need is to be able to get together again in person, to network, to really exchange our ideas. One new beginning the association has made in this regard this year is setting up a mentoring program, which can play a huge role in revitalizing some of the association's local structures. Working more closely with other German alumni organizations can help in this regard as well, which is why the FAeV initiated and joined the newly established "German-American Alumni Network" this year.

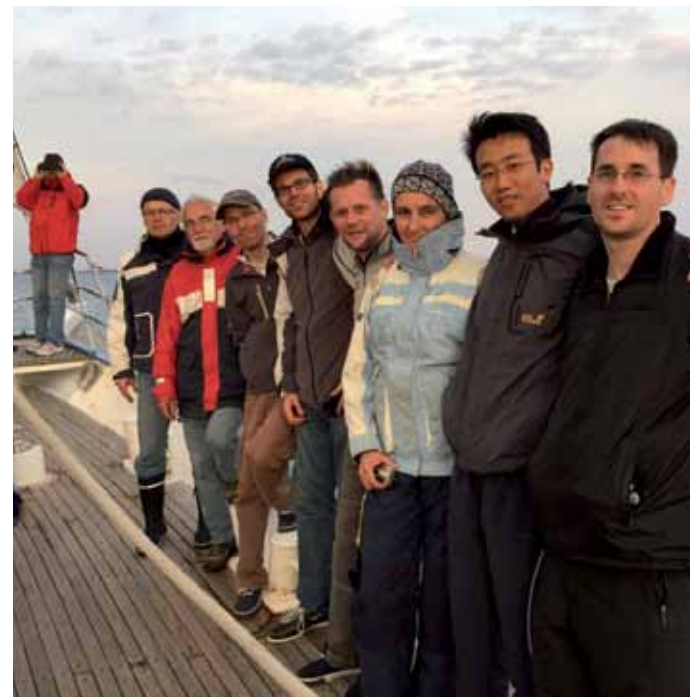
Looking into the future also brings another factor front and center: Climate Change and sustainability. "We can only reach our goals of mutual understanding and peace if we still have a planet to live on", says Andreas. As such,

also follow this impulse whenever possible. We are you. You are the FAeV. As such, we reach out to all members: Share with us your thoughts, your ideas on how to effect change, on what you expect from the association as a member and what your wishes are for a, perhaps even daring, new beginning after the pandemic. Take your time off during the winter break and let's be hopeful and motivated for the new year to come – together.

To share your thoughts and ideas, please contact us at one of our various channels. We will be happy to get back to each and every one of you and we are looking forward to welcoming everyone who wishes to become more



Let's Party at the Welcome Meeting 2013!; photo: Daniel Ziegert



Sailing Trip on the Baltic Sea 2015; photo: Ning Wang

one of his main agenda points is making the association more sustainable. Some steps in this direction will be to create a new extended board member for this purpose, to work on organizing an event around the issue with the US Embassy, as well as to directly take action in the form of compensating CO2 emissions and to put the question of sustainability front and center at every step the association takes.

Andreas Dewald is motivated to make the most of his presidency. He and the current board want to use the impulse of wanting to take action, to get out there, to meet people and be part of an exchange again in order to effect change. And we want all of our members to join us, to

active in the association. Let us not allow the pandemic to disconnect us, but let us make sure that we will come back stronger than before. Let's put ourselves into the association and give back. Let's make a daring new beginning – together!

\* The name for these national events was decided on shortly after the founding of the association. In awareness of cases of modern usage issues in the realm of Native appropriation, we would like to contextualize this term in the future and are using it only when referring to past events that were nationally publicized as such.

1. We thus encourage all readers to visit our website and check out our past FRANKly editions, especially detailing the association's history and development in issues 10 (1997), 13 (2001), 19 (2006), 22 (2011) and 27 (2016).

2. "Boy meets girl. Girl goes traveling for 2 years." In: CNN Travel, <https://edition.cnn.com/travel/article/baltic-sea-couple-chance-encounters-cmd/index.html>, access: 15 Nov 2021.



Welcome Meeting 2016; photo: Ellery Studio



Three Presidents at the Washington DC conference 2019



Wiltrud Hammelstein and Jürgen Simon at the Welcome Meeting 2016



Representing the FAeV at the Fulbright Conference in Puebla, Mexico – 2018



Advocating for the Fulbright Program on Capitol Hill in 2019; photo: Andreas Dewald



Our wonderful board at the Winterball 2020 in Mannheim; photo: Andreas Dewald



Collectively picking up trash on World Cleanup Day – 2021; photo: Andreas Dewald

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# Combating Climate Inaction

by Janani Ravi

When you stop to ponder climate change and its causes and effects, are you faced with existential anxiety about environmental destruction or do you remain skeptical, questioning the human impact of climate change? The talking heads on the media represent the deafening noise out there about global warming as they argue with one another if it's our problem to fix – maybe it's the government's fault ... maybe it's China's ... or maybe it doesn't even exist! When the loudest in the room argue over climate action, it may look like we cannot all get along. Many of us are already aware that the noise focuses on extreme, politicized sides of the argument because this piques our interest and garners votes.

In truth, despite the outward division, we may all be experiencing similar feelings of existential threat by the environment. We may hear the statistics, and we feel the effects of climate change in our own backyard – the harsher temperatures, the forest fires burning in California, and the devastating floods in Western Germany. As a collective, many of us are faced with the burden of inaction. Like Hamlet, to be or not to be ... green and environmentally conscious. I am here to reassure you that this anxiety and dread is normal, and there is something that we can do about it – together.

Between 2019 and 2020, the Pew Research Center surveyed over 3,000 American adults on their perception of the environment. The results indicated that two-thirds of the polled adults believed the government was not doing enough to address climate change. More surprisingly, concerns about climate change seem to overrule partisan politics for young Republicans and Democrats. Close to 80% of millennial Republicans and 90% of Democrats emphasize prioritizing advancements in alternative and renewable energy sources.<sup>1</sup> The Pew study quantifies what many of us already feel – climate change is a growing problem that is here to stay and affects all of us, regardless of political beliefs.

If the majority of us feel a degree of anxiousness and concern about the effects of climate change, why is it then so difficult for us to take concrete actions? The source of our inaction must be more than simply partisan politics.

The theories on climate action range from philosophical, political, and economic, but I believe that there are two overarching factors that influence our action or inaction: strategy and psychology.

With countless international organizations, governments, and citizens focusing on expanding the research into sustainable innovation and solutions, the technology and proposals *already* exist in laying out the framework for improving our global environmental footprint. Therefore, our capabilities for problem-solving are not at issue, but our problem lies with our strategy. Part of the strategic challenge with acting on climate change requires us to make infrastructural and economic changes on both domestic and international levels, while also keeping inequality and discrimination in mind.<sup>2</sup>

Climate justice and inequality focus on those most affected by environmental changes: those living in low-income communities, our youngest generations, and our future progeny.<sup>3</sup> Based on data collected by the EPA, minority demographics make up over half of the US population that live within half a mile of a Brownfield<sup>4</sup>, which are areas that contain life-threatening or hazardous pollutants.<sup>5</sup> These fine, toxic particulates lead to serious health consequences with increased probability of cancer as one of the top health risks.<sup>6</sup> These statistics represent the regional inequalities with living in a polluted world, but we cannot also ignore the international scale of climate injustice.



Air pollution as a contributing factor to global warming; photo: Chris LeBoutillier on Pixabay



Wildfires captured by: Mike Newbry on Unsplash

What we see on a regional level is also clearly represented on an international level. Many developing countries are located in regions that will be most affected by the changing climate's restrictions on natural resources. These regions still rely on fossil fuels to thrive, a process that developed countries have already achieved through their own rapid industrialization. Therefore, the inequalities of climate change are not just based on inequity of resources but also on the ability to industrialize.<sup>7</sup> One challenge that we will have to face is how to allow for economic growth while also promoting sustainable consumption.

Just as we must address these strategic hurdles, we must also address our psychological response to climate change. Based on psychologist Robert Gifford's theory on climate inaction, there are seven overarching categories of psychological barriers to climate action:

1. our limited understanding of climate change,
2. ideologies and world views,
3. social norms,
4. value conflict,
5. mistrust,
6. risk perception, and
7. acting minimally.

To summarize, many of us collectively possess a limited understanding of climate change as a global phenomenon that crosses borders or natural boundaries (Barrier 1). When we finally do realize the severity of the problem, we are then faced with a variety of psychological barriers (Barriers 2-6) such as our belief that technology can fix all of our

problems, our mistrust in the government, or even our own fear of losing our valued material wealth. However, when we finally do take action, it is often not enough; we may hesitate to do more due to feeling that we do not make a difference or feeling numb to the statistics (Barrier 7).<sup>8</sup>

Many of the strategic and psychological barriers share the same foundation. Our inaction can be caused by four concrete issues that limit our ability to combat climate change:

1. climate change is complicated;
2. it is not limited by sovereign boundaries and responsibilities;
3. it requires a trust in collective action; and
4. we have not used our most creative methods to inspire action.

Climate change is a complicated process that is not promptly visible. We cannot immediately see the effects of global warming in the same way that we can see the consequences of a toxic oil spill. The effects of our emissions take place over hundreds of years. Furthermore, no one country has jurisdiction over climate change, and no one country can claim sole responsibility. Mitigation not only requires all of us to claim some responsibility, it also asks us to leave our mistrust of the government behind. The scope of global warming is far too large for only individuals to take into their own hands. It requires both national and international governments to act on our behalf. Lastly, current mitigation efforts lack a strong focus on imagination. One of our greatest strengths as a human collective

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Consequences of the July floodings in Western Germany; photo: Anno Weingarten, 2021



lies in our ability to weave stories. Without powerful stories, how do we ignite our passion for action?<sup>9</sup> Improving our structural approaches to climate change simply will not be enough unless we improve how we motivate both individuals and collectives to take action.

In discussing what strategic and psychological barriers exist in acting on climate change, I have also provided some guidance on which direction our solutions need to go. Therefore, our first task focuses on how we can address the structural and systemic issues of climate justice and policy. We must be able to address the resource and social inequalities faced by those who will suffer the most from the changing climate. Overcoming these structural barriers would require increased cooperation between governments and multinational corporations to provide consumers with affordable and sustainable goods and services. Corporations heavily influence our daily lives by affecting our product choices and impacting what innovations lie at our fingertips. One way to increase cooperation between these firms and governments is to massively invest in green technologies both in the public and private sectors.<sup>10</sup> However, we cannot rely on technology alone. Shifting our carbon-based economy towards a greener economy may also address social inequalities in climate change as well as incentivize corporations to develop sustainable products.

A green economy has the potential of improving the quality of life for the victims of climate injustice by providing more sustainable infrastructure and reducing pollution.<sup>11</sup> We need not look far to see what policy for a greener economy could look like. In response to catastrophes, countries have enacted emergency policies to prevent a further collapse of the economy. For example, The New Deal was the US response to The Great Depression in order to jumpstart the US economy. This historic policy placed certain

restrictions on the inequality-causing factors of capitalism and enhanced workers' rights by improving wages, hours, and product prices. Investments in the public sphere rapidly fueled new infrastructure, creating jobs in a jobless economy.<sup>12</sup>

We have seen similar proposals like "The Green New Deal" introduced (although it failed to pass) in the US in 2019. These kinds of ideas can help lay the groundwork for solutions. Such policies could address inequality by providing greater access to public transportation and sustainable housing – while also reducing toxic pollutants in our communities. Climate change proves that our global market is not necessarily efficient and requires a limitation of corporate power over our civic life, requiring a "New Deal-like" limitation on corporate capitalism. Environmental policy can learn from The New Deal by combining economic growth with sustainable innovation to promote job growth and access to resources. However, at the same time, these pro-environment policies have difficulty garnering support because it requires citizens to trust the government to act on behalf of the collective interest.<sup>13</sup>

Addressing the psychological reasons behind our inaction can help garner public support and create a more united front. To address our limited understanding, we need to increase our basic scientific comprehension and STEM education.<sup>14</sup> If we continue to see public denial on the causes, effects, or severity of global warming, we cannot effectively encourage behavioral changes. We must create a better medium to inform consumers on green policies and technologies.<sup>15</sup> One way to do this is to use our capacity for storytelling. We need to promote a greater variety of approaches, and sometimes, the creative methods are what best communicate complex issues to the public. The thematic presence of climate change is lacking in fictional works when compared to other societal concerns. Just as



Firefighters on their way to stop the Calwood Fire from spreading; photo: Malachi Brooks on Unsplash

we can no longer maintain this ignorance of our actions. So, what can we do together?

We have a chance at a new beginning. Let us leave our inaction behind in 2021 and start with something as simple as telling a story. We have the power to reignite our passion for the environment through photography, novels, screenplays, and films. We need imagination to understand the problem and to take action. If we take a moment to change our approach – to offer more empowering messages instead of assigning blame – we can create a new era of change. Yes, there is a lot that we must expect from our governments to tackle this issue, but what we can do together, right now, is use our creativity to improve our overall grasp of the problem. Through storytelling and imagination, we can inspire one another to protect those most vulnerable to the changing climate, including our children and grandchildren.



**Janani Ravi** is a Fulbright alum and former US grantee. After completing two Bachelor's programs in English literature and in International Studies, she received a Fulbright Scholarship to assist in English language learning in Germany. She completed her Fulbright grant in Hagen, Germany as a

Teaching Assistant between 2015 and 2017. Janani completed her Master's degree through the EELP program at the Ruhr University of Bochum in 2020 with a specialization in climate ethics. She currently resides and works in the renewable energy sector in Maryland and is the co-chair of the Climate Reality Project in Baltimore.

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# Never Judge a Book by its Cover

by Julian Mandel

## Prologue – The Opportunity in Crisis

During the past year, a wide range of industries and social life in our world stood still. Many things have changed and some of us have been forced to completely start over. However, this pandemic also offers everyone a chance to embark on a new journey, as each chapter in the books of history is in and of itself a new beginning. Much like the Chinese word for crisis, which is composed of two characters – one representing danger, and one symbolizing opportunity. It is always uncomfortable to try out something truly new. And it can be very daring, especially if the stakes are high.

The Fulbright Commission, as we know it today, emerged from such a daring beginning exactly 75 years ago. Also, our Fulbright Alumni Association is celebrating its 35-year anniversary, marking the start of its journey over three decades ago. This issue of the FRANKly therefore truly stands in the light of new beginnings. For my brothers and I, the global pandemic gave us the chance to set out on our new journey as well, starting a company, which continues to grow and bring joy to the people around it.



The VideoBook – invented and distributed by memperience GmbH



The three co-founders and brothers. From left: Cedric Mandel (Development & Production), Manuel Mandel (Finance & Legal Affairs), Julian Mandel (Marketing & Sales)

## How it All Began

We went on to develop the VideoBook, a high-end photo book with integrated videos. It all started out as a project. Manuel, one of our co-founders, went to travel the world, one and a half years before the pandemic hit. Full of impressions and with a lot of pictures and videos, he returned home. Many create photo books about their experiences abroad. However, having captured most of his special moments on video, a classic book simply wasn't an option for Manuel. That got him thinking: How come we can display pictures so easily on our walls and in photo books, but the same isn't true for our videos? Shouldn't have technology advanced far enough to create videos to put on your fridge, on postcards, into books? The idea for memperience was born.

Yet, it took another two years until we had the opportunity to embark on this challenging journey. In fact, if it hadn't been for the pandemic, things wouldn't be the way they are today. Especially being able to allocate our time more freely in suddenly flexible work days, freeing up time due to the lack of commuting and connecting long distances via increasingly established online meetings helped out a lot to get our company started in the early days.



Video playing in a VideoBook (in the lower left corner). There can be up to four videos in any VideoBook, each on a different page

## The Fascination for the Child in Each of Us

Since then, we have been working to successfully create what is now known as the VideoBook. The VideoBook heralds a new era of photo books. With its ultra-thin displays embedded into turning pages, it harnesses the power of moving pictures to create moving moments and, ultimately, moving people. Built-in speakers create matching sound, and together with the elegant book in your hands, it gifts you an experience that is second to none.

Our aspiration is to combine the endless possibilities of technology with the sentiment of heartfelt products. The wow effect when opening a VideoBook lights up the eyes of each of its readers and leaves them stunned. It unites multiple senses to fully dive into the moment. Thereby it not only revolutionizes the art of printed media, but makes digitalization itself tangible. And the best part about it: The VideoBook works just like any other book! Simply take it, open it, and start turning the pages. Moving pictures and sound will come alive on their own. It's as easy as that.

## New Dawn of an Industry

And not only the story around it, but even the VideoBook as a product itself ties in quite well with the topic of new beginnings, as it seeks to revolutionize an entire branch of industry. Personal memories get captured on camera and preserved physically to share and be cherished with others. However, the truly special moments like the wedding dance, the first steps of a child or, with respect to products, the feeling of what it's like to drive a super sports car are likely to be captured on video.

Videos allow us to convey not just an image, but enrich the experience of each story told by complementing pictures and texts with movement and sound to display change over time and the acoustic atmosphere around it. It lets you dive into the feeling and makes the experience come alive. With videos being left out, the experience would be rendered incomplete. This is why we are convinced that, once this technology is made available, there will be a new dawn in photo books. The love for physical companions paired with the videos' liveliness will usher in a new beginning, as it is the natural step forward for this industry.



A customer browsing a VideoBook to explore a jeweler's collection

## Unexpected Paths

Our initial idea was to bring memories to life, serving the market of private customers. Yet, we quickly discovered that the pandemic would stick around longer than anticipated, forcing holidays, weddings and other personal events to be postponed. These and other circumstances, however, allowed us to open up a completely new target market: corporate customers. By using our VideoBook to demonstrate the experience a product entails for their customers, it can be portrayed in showrooms around the world, handed out as a living memory at important events, or sent home as gift to loyal customers.



We also know that sustainability is a topic of importance for many and something most wouldn't expect in a technological product. Unfortunately, it isn't uncommon to be forced by profitability to neglect this part of CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility), especially when just starting out as a company. Therefore, we are proud to work with resource efficient production processes, to ensure maximum longevity of our products and to reuse the parts, which are still in excellent shape. We are currently even capable of producing locally, here in beautiful Baden-Württemberg, Germany, to also provide a socially sustainable product. This also ties into the topic, as sustainability and recycling in a way represent new beginnings themselves.

A Journey of Emotions

Much like reading a VideoBook is a journey of emotions, starting off a young company can let you journey through various emotions in a heartbeat as well. The same is true for any new beginning, really. You start out with many assumptions, mainly because you have to start somewhere, and need to discover along the way which ones were illusions and which turn out to be true, possibly even to your own surprise. Thereby early feedback is worth a mint. With the Fulbright Entrepreneur Event, we were given a valuable chance to gather feedback shortly after officially founding the venture and were moreover offered support on certain topics, which we are very grateful for.

We are also immensely thankful for the support we have been given by our team of highly motivated people, who are passionate about the product and full of drive to move the company forward. They share this emotional journey with us and adapt to the many changes needed to uncover the potential to create something new.

The key to success is to stay strong in the vision and be flexible in the details. Because there will be things you won't be able to foresee, like this pandemic. And it's worth to keep one's eyes open for opportunities to use them to your advantage.

The Dares of New Beginnings

Unfortunately, while providing some opportunities, the pandemic didn't solely have positive effects upon which we were able to build our new business. The downfall of the entire global economy had severe consequences, not just on us, but on global business as a whole. Deliveries stopped short due to global nationwide shutdowns, suppliers aren't able to keep up with demand because of the accumulated lack of resources, and financial expenditures of whole industries dropped to an unparalleled low all over the world. All of this doesn't make it easy to gather all the resources for product development, find fitting partners that are willing to take the risk of an unprecedented project amidst this time of uncertainty, and convince financially battered entities to fund the project or buy the product.

Nonetheless, this embodies exactly what new beginnings are inherently about: Welcoming several daring challenges at once with open arms while staring in the face of nerve-racking uncertainty. And exactly then, when you open yourself up to this level of discomfort, you create the space for new experiences that not only have the power to transform you, but possibly everyone around you as well. Moving to another city, dropping out of your job or shutting down efforts at university, signing high-priced contracts to pick up development and rent an office. All of these are decisions to be made while it remains unclear whether the endeavor will be of success or fail gloriously.

Prospects for the Future

However, even in case of the latter it is usually more than worth it to take the risk and dive into new waters. For you are gathering invaluable experiences and skills in new fields most may never dip into, expanding your network to connect with highly capable people beyond your bubble, and personally grow by rising up to the challenges and responsibilities that come along with the project. And its not just the decision of marking a beginning, but the process that is the very nature of this journey.

The beginnings are endless and always contain the elements of change, creativity and courage to various degrees. If you are interested to join us on our journey as well, we would be more than glad to welcome you on our webpage **www.memperience.com**, where you can sign up for our newsletter that comes out as a brief email about the status quo of our journey every other month. You are also invited to follow us on LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook and Xing. Every time someone takes our VideoBook in their hands, we are delighted to see their eyes flare up and grateful for being able to bring this childlike joy to grown women and men alike. And we'd love to share it with you.



Bringing a new product to life isn't an easy challenge. Thus, we are even more proud to have successfully planted the seed for future nerations of photo to emerge from it



A VideoBook can bring many different stories to life. Which one is yours going to tell?



**Julian Mandel** is one of the co-founders of memperience GmbH. Together with his two brothers, Cedric and Manuel, he created the VideoBook, a high-end photo book with moving pictures, to bring personal memories and product experiences to life. He studied

psychology, did his Fulbright in 2017-18 at CSU Chico and extended his stay as a guest researcher at NYU.

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All images: memperience GmbH



# From Science to Entrepreneurship – the Upside Down

by Florian Grigoleit

## From Research to Entrepreneurship

Over the last 3.5 years, I made the transition from researcher to entrepreneur by starting a business based on my research in applied artificial intelligence. This journey was unexpected, unplanned, and proved to be more challenging than anything I had ever done before. Nonetheless, this daring new beginning was and is a thrilling and fulfilling experience. Part of that experience was to understand that many rules and learnings from academia and science don't apply in the business world and can often even be counterproductive. Here, I want to offer a glimpse into the challenges I encountered over the last few years.

## Modelwise – An Elevator Pitch

As this article is about a daring new beginning, I will omit technology. But for a better understanding, here is an elevator pitch: Modelwise digitizes safety engineering. Safety engineering ensures that technical systems, such as planes or cars, are safe for humans and the environment. Originating from aerospace engineering, nowadays it is applied in almost all technical disciplines. One crucial part of safety engineering is assessing whether an engineering design complies with safety standards, meaning it is safe even when foreseeable malfunctions, such as short circuits occur. Today, safety assessment is done manually with great effort. Modelwise offers a software that applies artificial intelligence to analyze engineering designs on their safety compliance, reliability, and fault-tolerance. Our software requires minutes or hours of computation compared to weeks or months of manual engineering work. In sum, Modelwise enables customers to build safe products faster, cheaper, and at a higher quality.

## An Unexpected Meeting

In early 2018, my academic advisor asked me to join a discussion with him and Iliya, a researcher from our group. This came as a rather unpleasant surprise because I wasn't involved in their work and assumed that the meeting would concern administration. So, I joined without much enthusiasm or attention. But a few minutes into the meeting, I realized they weren't discussing research or administrative work at all, but entrepreneurship and fundraising. Apparently, they had assumed I knew what was going on and that I would be part of the future company. Back then, I was close

to submitting my dissertation and had started considering career options. Given this new option, I made the decision to go with the flow and embarked on this new venture without preparation or deeper consideration.

## Into the Unknown

At that point, my knowledge of entrepreneurship came from a few months working for a startup and what friends had told me from their companies. But I knew TU Munich (TUM – aka “the entrepreneurial university”) as a great place for entrepreneurs and assumed that they would easily fix that. Together with my co-founders – in the meantime, Arnold, another member of our research group, had joined the team – we cobbled together a rough business idea and approached TUM's startup coaches. In hindsight, the following meeting was a disaster. First, the startup coaches had no idea what our technology was, why and for whom it could be interesting, or how to grow a business with it. Their conclusion was that we were as clueless as we appeared and sent us to an entrepreneurship seminar for scientists. During this seminar, we built, among other equally unhelpful things, our business idea with Lego. After the seminar, we concluded that the coaches were trying to sell their seminar because we had a clear idea about our future business (or so we thought) and saw zero benefit in playing with Legos. Left without any useful guidance, we decided to proceed alone.

## Quick Wins

The first problem we faced was deciding what kind of business we wanted to create. We had a technology, which was commercially interesting, but didn't have a viable business model yet. The second problem was obtaining funding. In Germany, the first option for many students and researchers is EXIST. With EXIST, in short, the federal government supports teams to turn research into business. Even though EXIST suffers from an abundance of bureaucracy, it is, in my experience, a great option for students and researchers inexperienced in the entrepreneurial world. The program gives students and researchers time to develop a product and to create a business around it. With the help of another EXIST-team funded by a Fulbright alumnus, we were able to write a business plan and successfully apply. This quick success drove us to directly participate in a business plan competition, where we ended up among the winners.

Bundeswettbewerb Digitale Innovationen 2018;  
photo: unknown



modelwise 2021  
photo: Sebastian Lehner



## Expected and Unexpected Challenges

Equipped with funding and (premature) praise, we started to work enthusiastically on our business idea and our technology. That was when the first – of many – down-cycles started with a great deal of new challenges. One recurring critique by advisors and coaches was our lack in business skills.

To counter this critique and to cover this open flank, we found a fourth founder to cover finance and business development. Looking back, it is hard to say what the main mistake was: hiring too quickly, not having a clear understanding of what kind of skills we were looking for, or simply picking someone who didn't fit into the team. Whichever it was, the decision turned out to be a major setback, cost us months in arguments and in-team fighting while distracting from the real challenges. When we finally decided to go our separate ways, we directly ran into the next team disagreement: the working relationship with my academic advisor. I had worked with him since my master's thesis, and we used to have a good working relationship up until that point. But in the initial excitement to start a business, I hadn't considered the impact of our new roles. Instead of a professor-student scenario, it was now a de-facto CEO-consultant hierarchy, which required many discussions and adjustments before it worked. In general, it turned out that the working methods we used in our research group proved to be incompatible with work in an agile, fast-paced company. But, despite these challenges, we were able to form a highly productive team.

The greatest and most important task and challenge for any venture is creating revenue. As this is the core of any business, one cannot overstate the importance. For

modelwise Founding Team;  
photo: Ralph Suda



Modelwise, acquiring pilot customers was easy. Through our network, we had established contact with engineers at several engineering companies where we knew that our software would be beneficial. What turned out to be more difficult was convincing them to actually buy our software. The problem we determined was not that they didn't see the benefit of our tool, but that they were content with the current way of working and lacked the motivation to change anything. So, at this point, we started presenting our software not only to engineers, but to managers, who might not understand its functionality, but who would realize the impact on productivity and costs.

## Daring New Beginnings

All in all, in my experience, starting a business consists of an endless chain of challenges and problems to be solved, which can lead to a constant feeling of being overwhelmed. Although this may sound discouraging, I and most entrepreneurs I have met so far find this state of constantly being challenged thrilling.

Now, almost four years after the initial meeting, Modelwise has raised the first private investment, hired two employees, and is preparing to launch its first product next month. But we reached “valley of death,” the point between starting and scaling up. That's also the point after which 80-90% of startups still fail. While writing this article, we are debating the next big step, namely moving the company (partially) to Silicon Valley. So, the excitement and stream of daring steps is only increasing.

For me, this new beginning was definitely among the best decisions of my life.



**Florian** is CEO and co-founder of Modelwise. He spent his Fulbright year (2010-11) in Pullman, WA, where he fell in love with the Pacific Northwest. Before starting Modelwise, Florian explored artificial intelligence in engineering at TU Munich.





“The beginning is  
the most important  
part of the work.”

– Plato

Local community members and Jaga Mission project staff explain to Cadasta's Amy Coughenour and Frank Pichel how participatory community mapping led to legal land rights and upgrading of their fishing village in Konark, District Puri, Odisha State, India using data on Cadasta's platform; photo: Biswajit Mishra

## Self-empowerment, Data, and Learning: The Currency of Bold New Beginnings

by Amy Coughenour  
Betancourt

In a world in which we idolize outcomes, results, and accomplishments, the quote from Plato seems a bit out of place. Yet, without the beginning, there is no work. The genesis of transformation always lies in the first step. Although many beginnings come from deliberate choices we make, others are not chosen – they are a result of circumstances that pushed us into something unexpected and unwelcome.

As the world looked on in collective horror at the advent of the 2020 coronavirus pandemic, we all experienced unwelcome change. This beginning was one that we didn't understand, didn't want, and didn't choose. And yet, one-and-a-half years later, we have started to understand how this time changed us, shaping our thinking, habits, and our daily life. And we've begun to see how it set a course to create new beginnings that we had never even imagined.

Three years ago, I joined Cadasta Foundation as CEO. Cadasta is an early stage technology-based nonprofit focused on mapping and strengthening global land and

resource rights through technology, services, and data empowerment. Cadasta was created to be a positive disrupter in the land sector – working from the bottom up to empower the over one billion people who do not have legal rights to the land on which they live and work. At the time, it felt like a professional risk to make the leap from a larger, established international development organization to a startup focused on two sectors that were relatively new for me: land and technology.

For centuries, land and property rights have been the privilege of the very few – those with the power and resources to pay for legal documents, keep people off land by force, or to compel their government to turn a blind eye to land grabs. In contrast, Cadasta focuses on land held by vulnerable smallholder farmers, forest dwellers, and informal urban settlements; female landholders, too, are a particular focus, as they hold land at lower rates than their male counterparts and are at higher risk of losing it. When women do own and control land, their whole family benefits socially and economically.

Through equipping local civil society and governments with technology, training, and technical assistance to train local community mappers, including women and youth, Cadasta enables local actors to capture, manage, and share data on geospatial parcels, land and resource boundaries, and information on the people holding or using the land. This provides much-needed data for securing legal tenure and empowers communities to understand and use that data to improve the lives of their members.

Although my new beginning happened before the pandemic, taking this risk empowered me to lead Cadasta's team toward their own learning and transformation and to confidently take on the new challenges during 2020. The outcome of the team's success is evident. This year, Cadasta celebrated the strengthening of land rights of over five million people on our Platform, a 1,600% increase since 2017, even while navigating a strategy pivot, a pandemic, and the launch of a new technology Platform. The same can be said of the over 100 local and national partner organizations in 38 countries, who stepped out of their comfort zones and took their own risks to help landholders in over 1,500 vulnerable communities document and secure their land rights.

Through this work, some truths were highlighted during the pandemic that will shape the future of how we think about international development:

**1.** Self-empowerment is the new “development”: We quickly learned that much of what we did in person – training, technical assistance, relationship building – can be done remotely, more cost-effectively, and in less time.

While face-to-face connection can never fully be replaced, we got smarter about how to facilitate local partners' leadership and skills. As an organization, Cadasta already operates on a “light-touch” service provider model, rather than a traditional assistance model, but we pushed it even further: communities already have everything they need – motivation, capacity, and will to succeed. Our role is to enhance that through new tools and training that unlocks their own self-empowerment, and should they need some technical support, we are here. We never aim for them to need us forever; instead, they set out on their own path and we get out of the way.

**2.** Data is the new currency: There are few aspects of our lives that are not touched by algorithms, data science, location data, and technology. Data is power – whether used for good or for profit – and a resource that gives the owner and user of it a distinct advantage. During COVID, for example, geospatial maps helped show the world where and how the virus was spreading, who it affected, and what the impacts were, which informed the decision-making of local authorities, health officials, and citizens across the globe. Data helps us understand our world, make decisions, and use information for planning and implementing change. This is true for communities in the Global South or North, regardless of technology access, resources, or capacity.

In vulnerable communities, data is a scarce resource. Without it, rights are disrespected, communities are left out, and efforts to effect positive change aren't seen or measured. Efforts need to ensure that community-level data is created by local people, not extracted by others, and that these data are managed and controlled by com-





Local vendor shows Amy Coughenour her official land right documents resulting from data collected on Cadasta's Platform. Location: Nolia Sahi, Konark, District Puri in Odisha State, India; photo: Suchi Sahoo

munity members in ways that empower good decisions and necessary improvements. In Odisha State, India, for example, community mappers, NGOs, and local government bodies worked together using the Cadasta Platform to map and document informal slums. They collected data on the places, the people, the homes and infrastructure and worked with community leaders to issue land rights, upgrade roads, water, and sanitation, and improve housing for over one million people. Without these data, these efforts would not have been possible at this scale. The historically marginalized community members saw themselves become the drivers of their own development as they used data and information in new ways.

3. Learning and evidence are a daily practice: No model, approach, or program is ever perfect or completely effective. We need to constantly assess what is working, what is not, and make adjustments accordingly. We also need to measure, gather client feedback, and get others to evaluate our impact. Doing what has always been done is not an option when you are pioneering new approaches and changing existing systems. It requires humility, reflection, encouragement, and pragmatism to keep learning at the center while still moving forward.

## Bringing Lessons Home

In the midst of navigating the leadership of Cadasta last year, I received the call for applicants to the Global Diplomacy Lab (GDL) put out by the Fulbright Commission in Germany. I saw the GDL as an opportunity to connect the dots between my current work and my Fulbright experience teaching English in Gernersheim straight out of college. Even though I did not ultimately become an educator, the experience set me on a course of international engagement and service.

As I engaged with GDL, colleagues from around the world, it was heartening to find a multidisciplinary, multisectoral “tribe” who shares the vision of a sustainable future that can only be created through focus, action, and collaboration to tackle the world’s most pressing issues. GDL members are learning similar lessons to those we have learned at Cadasta and are bringing these and other insights to develop creative solutions. I look forward to continuing to build relationships, projects, and opportunities for continued impact with the unparalleled group of changemakers in GDL and the Fulbright Alumni Association.

Closer to home, watching the effects of the pandemic in my local community in Maryland was also a personal driver of change. Seeing previously economically secure families lining up for food distribution and those already insecure unable to pay rent and feed their families was alarming. Already a volunteer for the mobile food pantry, I decided to join the board of directors of Manna Food Center, an innovative local food bank focused on ending food insecurity in our region.

Manna Food Center staff and volunteers prepare for drive-through food distribution in Maryland during the pandemic; photo: Kea Taylor (at)Imagine Photography



Through the lens of lessons learned in my international work, I saw Manna leading with approaches that encourage self-empowerment and dignity even in crisis; the use of data to understand trends and to make decisions; and an attitude of constant learning and adaptation to address needs. The team doubled its service delivery, even in lockdown, to reach the skyrocketing surge in local families suffering from food insecurity, loss of work, discrimination, and precarious housing. This work shone a spotlight on the “hidden” poverty and marginalization of people in our neighborhoods, something that must no longer be tolerated, whether we are in Maryland, Washington DC, Berlin, Nairobi, or Delhi.

So, here we stand, individually and collectively, at a crossroad of choices for potential new beginnings, this time seeing more clearly than ever the harsh realities of inequality, discrimination, and exclusion at home and abroad. For some, new beginnings will not be a choice, as they face the long-term effects of COVID-19 on their livelihoods, food supply, health, and opportunities. And for others, this marks a turning point to make different choices – to take a different path and to set new priorities that move ourselves, our communities, nations, and world forward.

I encourage all Fulbrighters, from every walk of life, corner of the world, and set of life experiences to find your new beginning. This new beginning should be one that is built on the lessons you learned, and one which emboldens you on your journey into the unknown. My hope is that your

new beginning brings you and the world that we share a refreshed sense of purpose and an embodiment of the spirit of Fulbright: “to bring a little more knowledge, a little more reason, and a little more compassion into world affairs and thereby increase the chance that nations will learn at last to live in peace and friendship.”



**Amy Coughenour Betancourt** is CEO of Cadasta, which advances global land and resource rights through innovative technology and services. Amy is a transformational leader in the global social sector, with previous executive roles at National Cooperative Business Association-CLUSA International (NCBA CLUSA); Pan American Development Foundation; and Center for Strategic and International Studies. She serves on the boards of Interaction and Manna Food Center. Amy has led efforts in tech for good; sustainable food and land systems; resilience; and cooperative development. She is a frequent global speaker on development and sustainability topics; holds an M.A in International Policy Studies, Middlebury Institute of International Studies; a B.A. in German, Central College; and credits her Fulbright Teaching Assistant in Gernersheim, Germany in 1987-88 as the launchpad for her career.



# Meditations on Wealth in a Spiritual Emergency

by Patience Williams

“Talk about wealth, and everyone expects to hear about money. No one speaks about the wealth of the soul – and its desire to be fed properly, righteously, and with justice.”

## We are living in the midst of a spiritual crisis.

Some demonstrations are reflected within Mother Nature, and others within people’s actions, but I am talking most about people’s hearts. In developed countries, there is more wealth than ever before – but people are also sicker than ever. There is virtual outrage, violent outrage, and divisions between people who might not understand the source of their disagreements. No matter what is said about progression of technology, there is something serious causing the detriment of our world.

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*Between you and between me – I feel America much more tenderly, much more invasively than ever before. I feel like I’ve stood in front of a projection of her flag for so long that I’ve inhaled it ... it became real in my mouth and I swallowed it down. Its blood seeped into my own, but I am America’s child. I try to down that thought but the coffee’s a little different here in the Netherlands than how it was brewed in diners back home, and served up with cherry pie ... and yeah, I miss a bit of the American Midwest sometimes, but only my revised versions of it; never the ways it actually was.*

– 16 March 2021, written in North Brabant (NL)  
as a Fulbright scholar

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## Come with me to my childhood.

We’re all riding bikes through Oklahoma suburbs and it’s hot but there’s a goth kid who’s riding with the neighborhood slow kid balanced on his handlebars. He loves Lady Gaga’s LOVEGAME and we play it at least once each time we pick him up. We’re heading to the mall, so that the goth kid can beat his high score on Dance Dance Revolution and so that our other friend, who’s black and has a round face, can buy pretzel nuggets from Auntie Anne’s. He’s got the blue piggy bank in his bike basket and people pitch in humble donations for a large blue Icee.

Your older sister is at her friend’s house with a big plate of food in front of her face; she had told her friend’s abuela that she had just eaten, which probably sounded like a polite

decline for eating right then, but the plate is here and it is big and so are her eyes. “You can’t say no,” her friend tells her, amused. “She’ll feed you no matter what.”

On our bikes we wave to our neighbor’s uncle who’s visiting the city for a little while but hasn’t left in a couple of years. He listens to Tibetan meditation tapes and spritzes lavender on the couch cushions in the garage. He bought cookie dough from your school fundraiser and asks how come no one is playing any music. The goth kid plays LOVEGAME and our slow kid starts dancing and we all follow suit, including the uncle. He moves his hips and spills out quarters from his pocket, pushing a few into the piggy bank. He asks us if any of us have a lighter. We remind him that none of us are above the age of ten.

You look at all of your friends and think the world of them, never thinking they’ll leave or that you’ll change. Your belly is full of sugar and you’ve hugged your mom before you left. She has told you to be home for dinner, which will be cooked by the time you arrive, and when your crush asks you to clasp the 50 cent necklace from the arcade dispensary around her neck, you remember. You remember that her arms are really hairy and soft, and that her ponytails are always really thick. Her skin is smooth and dark, and you grow up to learn that people won’t like her for this. The reason feels cheap and you can’t comprehend it; it doesn’t make sense. Your friends from Mexico are suddenly getting pulled over in droves and your sister cries in her room clutching a rosary her friend gave her from a trip. She hasn’t heard from her in a while and you round the corner to see the television screen advertising racial injustices right after a fast food commercial displaying a two-for-one deal, and a LIMITED EDITION MENU FOR UNDER \$4. Suddenly, classical music starts playing and a young person is firing shots at Brown People while running up a mountain. Suddenly, the young person is streaked with blood and bleeding from their thighs. They take the red white blue flag from the top and an arena of people clap. The stadium’s full. “Congratulations – you are officially an American!” an announcer calls.

You stop watching the television because it doesn’t make sense and you don’t know what’s real. You think of your crush, who’s older now, but a different girl, and you’re

watching from a plane window that’s overlooking the Atlantic ocean. Your friends were rich but not with money and you never knew it and you’re leaving now. You are leaving because something seems lost within you and your world but not the world you used to know. With your friends, everyone made space for each other. Everything worked out just fine. You are leaving because you have forgotten to make that same space for yourself and will attempt to find it elsewhere.

You don’t understand why the world hates the people who make it grand. You used to believe that there’s a fair shot but that’s long gone because it was never true. Your eyes are clearer now. A couple days before this plane ride, you sat down to share your frustrations with a friend but she asked if you could hold on a second because there’s a war in her country and she needs to check on her mother. She needs to check on her mother and her mother needs to check on her son. You think quietly to yourself and accept that this lot of life you were born with is your lot to live. It’s all yours and the spirit is wrecked upon this Native American burial ground. You don’t understand why. Your sister messages you to ask to see you but you are on a plane and don’t know that she misses you. Leaving can work but there are people who are discriminated against and killed because the world determined who they were and they could not leave that. You are avoiding something – you are avoiding the you who is not me and who is not them. You are here and you are sad and frustrated because you have no understanding of what is sacred to you. You are disconnected from this connection and this power.

This dawns on you right now as you think of your upbringing and the misfits of our friend group when we were younger. From the plane, you realize that pretty much everyone came from a dual culture; many of our friends were first-generation Americans, and many of our American friends were gay or lesbian. You saw how their multifaceted selves created crystals dimensions to their existence. The world told them they were bad or lesser but they defeated those notions with their ambiances and dared anyone to question them. They had the answers because they knew

their riches could not be taken or exploited or condemned; not these kinds.

Talk about wealth, and everyone expects to hear about money. No one speaks about the wealth of the soul – and its desire to be fed properly, righteously, and with justice.

We have arrived. I am proud of you for coming here to visit me so that we can talk, almost confidentially, about how we feel and what we wish for the world. I tell you quietly that I don’t care to hear about the bad, that I know of it and I experience it but I have some things coming up and I want you to tell me about your trip. And I want us to talk about our childhoods.

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*I’ve developed faith in not knowing what’s going to come out of my outcomes, out of my hard work, out of my mistakes, but I know that when I look back, all of the pieces glitter in retrospect of supporting who I most needed to become. Not to miss any of the signs as they are presented ahead of my growth is so essential; there is no loss. There never has been.*

– 12 May 2021, written in North Brabant (NL)  
as a Fulbright scholar

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**Patience Williams** graduated from Rutgers University with an MFA in fiction writing. She was a Fulbright recipient to the Netherlands in 2021 and just started as a lecturer of English at the University of Groningen (NL). Her works have been published in the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands. When she isn’t teaching, she is typically working on creative pieces where justice reigns and the world heals.



# Paralysis, Fulbright, and Finding my Voice as an Artist

by Carina Ho

“What do you want to be when you grow up?” is a question that was so simple to answer as children – a policeman, an astronaut, or in my case, an artist. And by adulthood, the twists and turns of life shroud that answer in a mystery that the best of us spend years attempting to crack.

My childhood aspiration to be an artist was one that was never taken seriously by my mother. As an immigrant from Taiwan and a single parent, she held onto steadfast beliefs that her children should pursue secure career paths like medicine or law to escape the financial hardship that she struggled for decades to overcome. My love for the arts began when she enrolled me in ballet and piano classes as a young child, activities she intended purely as afterschool enrichment. The thrill of performing a dance combination, or pouring my heart into a piano piece was intoxicating, and by age eight I had proclaimed that I had found my life’s calling. To my disappointment, my mother warned me that if I pursued the path of an artist, I’d be poor for the rest of my life, and advised me to abandon the dream. I dutifully obeyed and graduated college into a career in finance, continuing to dance and play music in bands as hobbies on the side. Life was unfolding smoothly and predictably – until 2014.



Carina performing at a Sofar Sounds show in Montevideo during her Fulbright; photo: Sachiko Ragosta

On the last day of a family road trip in California, our car was hit by a semi-truck on the highway. My mother passed away instantly and I woke up days later in a hospital, where my sister (who had not been in the car) tearfully told me that I had sustained a spinal cord injury. I would be permanently paralyzed from the chest down. The ensuing months were like a nightmare, I could barely absorb the weight of reality. How had my life been turned upside down in a moment? I felt numb as therapists and doctors in the hospital helped me relearn every basic function – how to move around in a wheelchair and dress and bathe myself.

After I left the hospital, I returned to an unrecognizable life. The grief of simultaneously losing my mother and my old life felt overwhelming and impossible to express in words. I clearly remember the first time I rolled up to my piano, still in a neck brace, and began to play. The first songs I wrote were simple but perhaps the most honest pieces of music I had ever created. What began as a way to mourn evolved into a full-fledged music project as the months progressed. No longer being able to pursue my “secure career path”, I poured myself into developing my songwriting, though not once at that point did I consider myself an artist.

Around the same time, a dancer friend introduced me to the artistic director of a professional dance company called AXIS Dance Company based in Oakland, CA, which casts dancers both with and without disabilities to revolutionize dance as a more inclusive art form. The director invited me to start as an apprentice. The first day I rolled into a dance studio to meet the other dancers, I caught a glimpse of myself in the mirror. Uncoordinated and barely able to push my own wheelchair, I rejected the whole idea. How could anyone see me, in my paralyzed body, as a beautiful dancer? But as I returned to the studio day after day and thought of creative new ways to move with the other dancers who each had different body types – some who were missing limbs, using canes, or not disabled at all – I began to realize



Carina as dancer with  
AXIS Dance Company;  
photo: David De Silva

the power of artistic expression. Each time we, a wildly diverse group of people, took the stage in theaters around the United States, we were demonstrating to audiences that beautiful dancers can come in all shapes and sizes. However, even after two years of dancing with the company I still did not consider myself an artist.

After leaving the company I decided to pursue a Fulbright Fellowship in Montevideo, Uruguay to deepen my practice in inclusive dance. As I navigated my way through an unfamiliar city trying to make new connections in the local community, I began to realize how much knowledge I had gained over the past years on what it meant to promote inclusion through my art. During the numerous workshops that I taught at the national university and dance conservatory, I met new students eager and curious to learn what I, a foreigner that they had never heard of before, had to share. I didn’t have a degree in dance nor did I spend years training at a conservatory, but what I did have was a unique lived experience that introduced me to a side of dance that I would have otherwise never have encountered. Although I lost my ability to move as a traditionally able-bodied dancer, I had retrained my body and mind to consider movement in new and original ways. Not only that, I was writing new music and performing around the city with local musicians. Many of the people who came to my classes or saw me perform had little exposure to disabled artists, yet they engaged with me nonetheless. Clearly something that I was offering resonated – if they

could see the value in my art, why hadn’t I?

By the time I left Uruguay, I was beginning to see myself through a new lens. My Fulbright experience was a turning point in my understanding of what it meant to identify as an artist – I was culminating the wisdom and insight I had gained from overcoming adversity into music and dance work that resonated with people, whether they were disabled or not. Educating and performing, even as an artist with a disability, gave me the same immense joy that I had experienced as a child. Today I perform music under the moniker ONIKHO and direct music videos that feature dancers with disabilities, and I hope to have more opportunities to show my work around the world. The journey to arrive at the ‘life calling’ I had chosen as a much younger person was a winding road and a far cry from the prescribed path of security my mother wanted for me. But I am proud of what I’ve accomplished so far, and I feel pretty certain my mom would be proud too.

To see Carina’s work you can visit: [www.onikhomusic.com](http://www.onikhomusic.com) or follow her on Instagram at **(at)onikhomusic**.



**Carina Ho** is an artist who creates music and dance work under the moniker ONIKHO. After sustaining a life-altering injury in an auto accident, she became a professional dancer with AXIS Dance Company, a company that casts dancers with and without physical disabilities. This experi-

ence inspired her to later pursue a Fulbright Fellowship in Montevideo, Uruguay where she taught workshops on inclusive dance at the national university and dance conservatory.



# Reflections on a Fulbright Year: On Moving and Finding a Home

by Sarah Evans

I've moved 10 times in my life, five of which occurred in the last five years. Every move, except one, started with a tantalizing, "What if!" A chance to dream of the new kind of person I would be or could be.

I moved to Germany in 2016 with hope and a broken heart. I would finally become fluent in German. I would bike everywhere. I would travel. I would be anyone I wanted to be. But my college boyfriend – no, soulmate – hadn't wanted to do distance, and we broke up a month before I left. I gave him back my set of keys, chopped my hair off, and arrived at the Hamburg airport with nothing but one checked bag, a suitcase, and a carry-on.

It felt easier to leave it all behind.

My new Wohnung was on the fifth floor of a cement block, part of the former USSR, which had been converted into student housing. The English teachers at school later told me – in impeccable English – they hadn't been allowed to study English until their 20s; they had learned Russian. I could only imagine the rest, having watched *The Lives of Others* for a German film class, but here I was.

While my apartment complex had been remodeled, all I had to do was stare out my window at the identical, unremodeled building across the courtyard to know what had been, like a mirror into the past. When my British flatmates and I sat on our balcony, we'd joke about knocking down a wall and finding old wire tapings in them. I didn't need to visit the DDR museum in Berlin – I was living in it.

We'd joke about these things, but to me, this sad, decrepit building was magical, even if I had to climb five floors each day after returning from teaching at the Gymnasium. I loved my huge window that opened; I bought flowers for my room each week.

Even each trip to Rewe (which burned down the year after I left due to a fireworks mishap) was an adventure, however absurd. I swore to my mom that no matter what time of day I went to get groceries, the employees at Rewe tried to chase me down and run me over with their monstrous floor vacuums. And no matter how prepared and fast I was at the checkout, I was never quick enough. The cashier and line of people behind me would stare daggers into my back as I tried to pack my groceries and run out the store.

On the weekends, I'd bike up north to the Ostsee and hang out at the FKK beach (before I knew it was a nude beach). Some days the wind would pummel you to pieces, and I'd stare into the distance, wondering if you could see Sweden (you could not).

But it didn't matter if they tried to chase me out of the store or if the bus driver would yell at me for having the wrong change. The people were cold, but I barely noticed. There was so much potential, and I had no expectations.

Inevitably people would ask, "Why did you come here? Why here? Do you like it?"

Somedays I knew how to answer their questions like a polished diplomat. Other days their questions would hit me as hard as the Ostsee wind, and I'd be knocked breathless, unsure what to say.

I suspect most of my students dreamed of leaving Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, just as I'd dreamed of leaving the Midwest. Not in a conscious way at first, but in the way something toxic seeps into your bones and you wake up coughing one day, finally knowing you don't belong there. I knew the conservatism in the Midwest air would suffocate me; I knew I couldn't stay. Learning a foreign language let me breathe in a different life, allowed me to imagine being whisked away from the small town where people whispered about what I wore or who I talked to and if I'd gone to church or not.



Apartments getting remodeled in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern; photo: Sarah Evans

I just didn't fit, almost like a whole place was dangling on me like an oversized sweater. It had been easier to leave it behind and try on something new, rather than stay and nurse something that hurt.

My German was good enough that most people, while they could tell I was foreign, did not suspect I was American. Some even thought I was Swedish, which I took as an immense compliment. But the truth would eventually come out, and it wouldn't matter if we were at the library or drunk at the club at 3am: there was no space sacred enough to avoid the T word.

"Americans must be so stupid." They would laugh. "But Hilary isn't any better," they'd drone on before the election. Every class and teacher asked me about it. "What will happen?" as if I could see the future. I wanted to tell them that Trump wouldn't win, but deep down I had my doubts.

And then it happened. I cried in the bathroom at the school that morning, feeling sick. I turned to my ex for comfort, but in one of the last times we talked, he told me the election was proof that our relationship had always been doomed. Your family will never accept me just like your country will never accept me, can't you see? It's always been that way.

I told him none of that was true. Didn't love conquer all? But I was a white girl from the Midwest suburbs, and he was a boy from war-torn Sri Lanka. Before the election, we'd never had to discuss this difference. Now there was a rumbling, cracks in the ground, and a chasm forming. He'd always seen this divide, and I was starting to see it, like everyone else in the States. I didn't support Trump, but I knew people who did.

We didn't know how to talk about it, and the trauma of 2016 pushed us apart rather than together, to the point where the divide seemed irreparable. He had no patience for the kind of religious people I'd grown up around; I couldn't be so judgmental of the world. He talked about a darkness he'd seen; power, money, and corrupt governments. I couldn't accept such a dim outlook of humanity. He told me I just hadn't seen enough of the world. And so our relationship ripped in half, just like our country ripped in half.

Germany was dealing with its own divide in 2016. Merkel spoke of integration and welcome, and yet, the AfD (Germany's right wing party) was growing. I wanted to believe in this dream of overcoming differences and building a future together, but I felt disillusioned. If there was no hope for love to save my cross-cultural relationship, what hope was there for the rest of us?

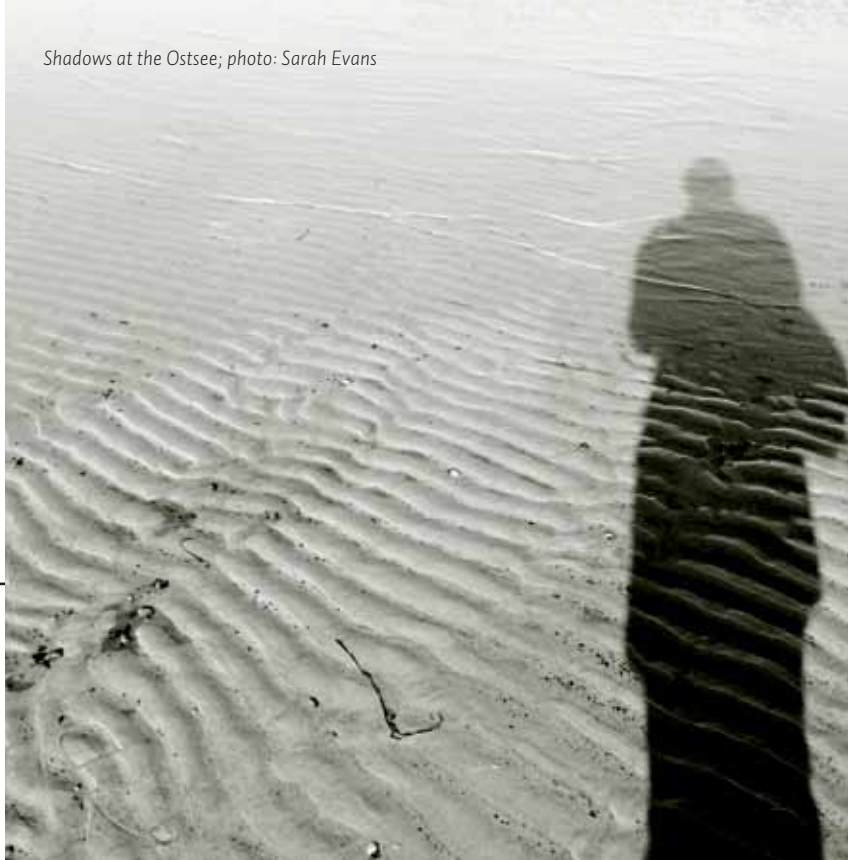
At my school, the teachers would shake their heads to me in the teacher's lounge and express a similar worry of how Germany would cope long term. Of course they wanted to help, but it was an impossible situation. Their classes were already too large, and now they were supposed to include refugee children who couldn't even speak the language? They knew it would take a miracle for most of these children to ever catch up, even as they tried their best to do what they could.



At the Ostsee in the winter;  
photo: Sarah Evans



Shadows at the Ostsee; photo: Sarah Evans



In Athens, exploring ruins;  
photo: Unknown tourist

One teacher – the one who looked like Helen Mirren’s twin and had grown up speaking Russian – invited me to join the German immersion class for the fifteen or so refugee children at our school. They were bright, full of hope, brave. They’d come with older siblings or uncles and often without their parents. Language class was a chance for them to tell someone about their lives, a safe space to be heard, more than anything. I felt ill-equipped to do much besides listen, and I could only pray that Germany would be kind to them once they’d turned eighteen and no longer had the support of the school system. Would they be alright? I wished I could see the future.

In the afternoons I’d sometimes walk down the cobblestone streets to a rundown house which converted into a club on the weekends. Some university students hosted a “Sprachcafe” there – a place for conversation, coffee, and language exchange. Most of the people who came were foreign university students and men from Syria, who had left everything to come to Germany. They showed me pictures of their homes in Aleppo or Damascus – rubble and dust.

After only a year in Germany, their German was better than mine, and they were doing their best to adjust. “Do you like Germany?” I asked, like people asked me. They missed home, unlike me. “Will you stay?” I asked again. Some said yes. Others reminded me that they hadn’t wanted to move; they were just making the most of it.

I admired their resiliency. It’s one thing to dream of moving somewhere new and finally achieve it; it’s another to

lose everything and move because you have no choice. I had turned my back on the Midwest, but in the end, I still had something to go back to – a privilege I no longer took for granted.

While it was another three years before I returned to the States, I eventually returned and moved to Seattle. When I finally came back, people told me I’d been brave to leave everything and move overseas. But the truth is, moving to Germany was easy. Coming back to the States and moving to Seattle was ten times harder.

I tried to remember the sparkle and adventure I had when I moved to Greifswald, and how I’d held the experience with open hands and zero expectations. In Seattle, busses never came; drivers honked at me while I biked. The gray hung heavy in the air. A date ended things with me because my “food politics” didn’t align with his.

Worst of all: I couldn’t blame mishaps and rudeness on “cultural misunderstandings.” People were just cold and rude.

The city did not welcome me with open arms, and it didn’t feel like home.

I considered throwing in the towel. Maybe Seattle was not the place for me. Maybe I had too much Midwest in me to fit anywhere else. Maybe I’d moved so many times in my life no place would ever truly feel like home. I fantasized about leaving, and then in March 2020, everything shut down.

Suddenly the city could not spit me out and I was forced to stay. I sat cross-legged in my room staring out my window at the city, like we were a resentful couple forced into a therapist’s office together.

I love new beginnings because they are full of opportunity and hope. Leaving has its own sets of emotions and challenges: the worry, the unknown, and the disappointment of what was not.

But staying is something new for me.

During lockdown, I was forced to take a close look at the place I’d come from. There’s a courage involved in staying put, about loving a place that is difficult to love, of finding the good in it, of making space for yourself. I would not describe it as love yet, but I notice each time I return home to the Midwest, I understand a little more where I’ve come from and have a little more compassion and a little less judgement.

When my Fulbright year came to an end and I packed my apartment to leave Germany, I had hoped the month would come with a pretty ribbon to tie it all up with. I wish I could tell you I found one, but even five years later, the ribbon eludes me. I didn’t have any answers to the questions of integration, and for years, it was too painful to write about my breakup. The truth is, my ex and I never spoke again, and I lost contact with a lot of people I met.

I remember the spring when things completely dissolved with my ex, and how I booked a flight to Athens on a whim – the first solo trip I’d ever taken. I arrived without a plan, stayed in a hostel, made friends with some cats, and sat in the ruins for hours. There was something comforting about the thousands of years of rubble, and some remnants still standing, and a whole city reborn.

There is still a divide, of course. I worry about the political fractures in the States. The US is not the country I once thought it was. Seattle is not the city I’d hoped it would be.

And there will always be some sort of divide, I think, just like I could still see the remnants of the Iron Curtain every day out my window. Integration and change doesn’t happen in a day. But flowers can bloom through cement, and life goes on, and little by little, places transform and can grow into something new. I still have hope that one day, new places will feel like home.



**Sarah Evans** is a Fulbright Alumna who taught English in Greifswald, Germany in 2016-17. Currently, she lives in Seattle, WA and is a writer, skier, and outdoor enthusiast.



# Finding Beginnings (and Purpose) at the End

by Mark Liang

It's easy to talk about beginnings. I remember how excited I was at the start of my Fulbright, clutching my international boarding pass like it was a golden ticket. In many ways, it was – a chance for adventures, for travel, for bright new connections in a foreign place. But for me and hundreds of others, we would also be reaching another, more difficult milestone: our Fulbright Program would be the last.

2019-20, for lack of a better word, was a unique time to be in China. The Hong Kong English Teaching Assistants left the program as city protests swelled to towering heights just months after they arrived. Shortly after, every Fulbrighter in the mainland People's Republic of China (PRC) was instructed to evacuate back to the United States as a then-unknown coronavirus made its way through Wuhan, the country, and soon the rest of the world. People scrambled to return home, most so quickly that they missed the goodbyes and farewells that often accompany grantees finishing their time abroad. And finally, in July of 2020, the US federal government made an unprecedented choice to indefinitely cancel the Fulbright Program in the PRC, Hong Kong, and Macau altogether. For me, it is a maddening fact that the people of China were the first to sign a Fulbright agreement with the United States on November 10, 1947, but as of this writing, there is no more Fulbright in the country.

I worry a lot about the decay of institutional memory. That my old Fulbright office, which was once filled lovingly with years of past mementos, guides, games, and written testimonials, is cleared out and barren. That my students, interested in the American perspective, must now search (and often fail) to find the international exposure they took for granted. That I must even now publish this article outside of our typical Fulbright Alumni Association, as our own annual reports are no more. The same kind of loss is playing out in schools and scholarly sites all over both countries, plagued by the absent-minded belief that unbiased exchange is no longer feasible.

The US government, in two separate administrations, has cited the deteriorating relationship between the United States and the PRC in their decision to end the program. The 2020 retaliatory closing of consulates in Houston and Chengdu, for example, is another example of the narrowing political avenues between both countries. But any Fulbright alumni reading knows that the mission of the program was built for this kind of political dance. Fulbrighters traveled between America and the Soviet Union (and even now, with modern-day Russia), in Afghanistan, Belarus, and beyond. Who better to spark critical discussions between citizens of each country, especially as both governments continue to end possible channels of conversation? We are not deterred by transnational barriers, by cross-cultural differences, or even by souring political winds, because we know that the program was envisioned precisely to overcome those challenges.

I know I am not the only one who believes in the power of Fulbright for mutual understanding. In the year since the ban was announced, op-eds and social media groups have sprung up in collective action, fueled by decades of China-US alumni. Seeing scholars of all ages campaign on the Hill and publish public narratives has filled me with pride, and I am privileged that I can count myself amongst their ranks. We are holding on by a thread: the Institute of International Education, funded by private funders and friends of Fulbright, has sponsored a stopgap funding program to continue exchange between people of both countries for another year. It's not enough.



The Last Hong Kong/Macau Fulbright Cohort, 2019; photo: Fulbright Association



Skyline of Macau; photo: Mark Liang



Leading Cultural Activities in China; photo: Mark Liang



Protests Walls in Hong Kong. A new National Security Law now forbids these across the city; photo: Anonymous



Old newspaper clippings of Former Fulbrighters; photo: Mark Liang

My own life trajectory was changed because of the Fulbright Program. The values of mutual understanding are central to what I want to do with my career and how I see myself positing change in the world. Within the next year, I will be leaving the comforts of home again to help immigrants from the Asia-Pacific region in Europe, those who are choosing, for a plethora of reasons, to begin again in new and unfamiliar places. I see facets of myself, my own family's narrative, and the spirit of Fulbright in these emigres. I hope to have hard conversations about mental health and migration with those with different lived experiences than mine, an opportunity that was first provided to me by my initial exchange in Asia.

I continue to campaign for the reinstatement of the China-US Fulbright exchange program in the hope for new beginnings, and for the same reason that many of us were drawn to the program: not because it is difficult, but in spite of it. I hope you can join me in this endeavor.



Masked but not deterred; photo: Holly Deng



**Mark Liang** is a graduate of Brown University and a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant in Macau, China from 2019-20. He is currently pursuing an M.Phil. in Health, Medicine, and Society at the University of Cambridge on a Rotary International Global Grant.



# Starting Over through Re-imagining Asian Stories

by Thanh Mai

Around the time of the Atlanta Shooting in March 2021, STOP AAPI Hate published a report on the steady rise of hate crimes against members of the Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) community, tracking over 6,000 cases of discrimination since the start of the pandemic. As of June 2021, the number of racist incidents has risen to over 9,000 reported cases. What stood out in these mass instances of violence was the targeting of Asian women.\*

Violence against AAPIs and Asian people is part of a more extensive history of violence against minorities and marginalized groups in the United States. Attacks against people of color and other oppressed groups have always been common; however, this past year, reports of violence and hate crimes toward vulnerable communities have worsened – in part due to the pandemic.

Behind the numbers of those attacked by systemic violence are individuals with lives and dreams often misrepresented and left untold. As the number of violent crimes increases against members of my community and others, I wonder if we'll just remain faceless and nameless statistics rather than as individuals, without some profound cultural change. Currently, Asian representation is rarely well-documented or presented in the cultural zeitgeist. For so long, the act of imagining was up to the people in power to dictate and create the world as they see fit, dismissing the stories and input of those oppressed.

Narratives from news articles to mass media have depicted AAPI members less like a fully fleshed out group and more as "model minorities," and currently, the scapegoat for the pandemic. Depictions of Asian people in films have routinely relegated members of my commu-

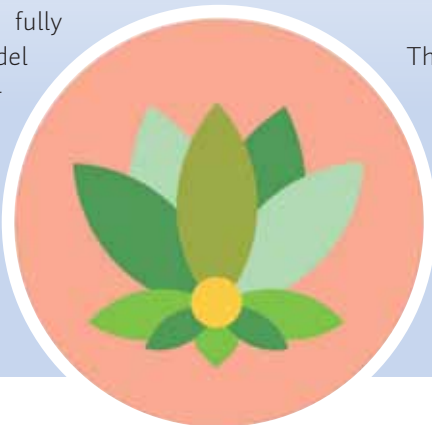
nity into outdated, racist, orientalist tropes for a Western audience. It leaves out the important contextual and historical fact – the AAPI diaspora constitutes a multitude of diverse lived experiences far richer than what is offered in our media landscape.

As an organization that advocates and represents the interest of AAPI Fulbrighters and the AAPI community at large, the question that lingers on my mind tends to be: Where do we go in the midst of so much collective tragedy and loss? Where do we even begin to right these historical wrongs?

Perhaps we start small. We work towards building a future and culture that incorporates our communities through stories and advocacy. In the early days of Fulbright Lotus (an Asian affinity group), and many other Fulbright affinity groups, our organization focused on highlighting the advancements and journeys of Fulbrighters that were rarely acknowledged or represented. These highlights showcased Asian students and scholars that defied stereotypes. Upon closer examination, you'll find stories of complicated individuals struggling to grapple with their identities as immigrants, second-generation Americans, adoptees, and first-generation college students, on top of being a foreigner in a new country. Telling stories of those largely ignored, whether in our Fulbright community or our enclaves, challenges preconceived and historically racist narratives. It acts as an entry point into the real-life, lived experience of AAPIs.

Thus, a demand for our stories is a demand for our recognition.

A part of Fulbright's mission is to advance human recognition through



Fulbright Lotus Featured Highlight Brian Tsui; photo: Brian Tsui



Fulbright Lotus E-board Photo; photo: Rachel Wong



Thanh sharing her family's migration story with students in Belgium; photo: Thanh Mai

cultural exchange. Lotus' work along with that of other affinity groups: Fulbright Noir, Fulbright Prism, Fulbright Access, Fulbright HBCU, Fulbright Latinx, Fulbright Salam, aligns with that mission. With AAPI members becoming authors of their own narratives, we can begin to re-imagine Asian communities beyond reductionist myths. Hopefully, the communities we build today will someday become a communal space that allows individuals to be seen – a seemingly innocuous act that feels transgressive when the world denies you the dignity of human recognition.



**Thanh Mai** was a 2018-19 Fulbright ETA in Hasselt, Belgium. She is a co-founder of Fulbright Lotus, a DEI initiative that advocates on behalf of Asian Fulbrighters. Currently, she lives in NYC and works at an educational non-profit.

\* STOP AAPI Hate. (2021, June). Stop AAPI Hate National Report June 2021. <https://stopaapihate.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Stop-AAPI-Hate-Report-National-v2-210830.pdf>



# A New, Yet Familiar, Beginning: The Origin of Fulbright Salam

by Isra Hussain,  
in collaboration with Zuka'a Joudeh and Arua Juanita



Fulbright screams “new beginnings” – it is an opportunity to start fresh in a new place. For those of us who have received a Fulbright scholarship, the prospect of pursuing a passion/interest is compounded by the excitement of being able to explore a new (or somewhat familiar) city abroad. For me, moving to a new city has always been an opportunity for introspection – who do I want to be? What do I want to stand for? How can I make this experience unlike any other? And I tackled this on my Fulbright Combined Research grant in many new ways – taking ballroom dance classes, conducting interviews in multiple languages, teaching in a secondary school – all opportunities to sculpt my new beginning in Vienna, Austria.

Though a new beginning, for many of us, a common thread ties every experience together, enveloping our experiences like a shadow – a part of our identity that shapes our worldview, how others perceive us, and how we exist in the world. For me, my existence as a 21<sup>st</sup> century Muslim American, in an increasingly Islamophobic world, has been my shadow, something I both chose to wear proudly while remaining cognizant of its implications in my daily life.

On Fulbright, this identity was both a blessing and a challenge. It enabled me to connect to my colleagues and students in Vienna in a special way – so many people around the world who are Muslim hold celebrations similar to one another – the excitement of a new Eid outfit, the early morning Iftars with your community, Sunday school she-nanigans. My neighborhood in Vienna, largely filled with Muslim first- and second-generation immigrants, boasted a collection of cuisines typical in Muslim households. I rarely felt threatened or uncomfortable – everyone on the street was an “aunty” or “uncle”. Everyone’s eyes told a story that I could at least somewhat understand and empathize with.



Isra visiting the Belvedere Palace in Vienna, Austria



Isra visiting the European Court of Justice during the EU-NATO Fulbright Conference, Luxembourg; photo: Stephan Rowe

Yet stepping away from that neighborhood, from this comfort, was a more sinister acceptance. I was connected to my colleagues and students in another way – we understood each other’s plight, of feeling unlike others in the city, and understood the hatred that existed in many people’s hearts towards us simply because of our identity. Publicly, Anti-Muslim rhetoric flooded the classrooms, the streets, the government. Though a new beginning, my Fulbright experience was a continuation of the anti-Muslim sentiment that I had felt and fought for much of my life.

And so comes into play: Fulbright Salam. The origin of Fulbright Salam is a simple tale – in Arua, a Muslim Austrian who had travelled to the US on a Fulbright grant, I discovered a level of understanding I had been yearning for within the Fulbright community specifically. As we got to know each other, we realized the isolation and resistance we often felt during our Fulbright experiences were similar. We decided to create a space to broadcast and attempt to connect others who shared this similar level of defiance, courage, and moreover, isolation. Arua and I, Co-Founders to this initiative, have worked in collaboration with our other board member, Zuka’a, who has been essential to our growth as a platform. Fulbright Salam has grown from a simple Instagram page, to a member of a community of other affinity groups that have taken it upon themselves to create space in a program that, while prestigious, could be especially isolating when the experience of traveling somewhere new is compounded with intersectional identities. Following the leadership of Fulbright Noir, Fulbright Latinx, Fulbright Prism, and others, the goal of Fulbright Salam has been to cultivate a space of mutual understanding and act as a symbol of resistance.

In Fulbright Salam, we hope to create an avenue for awareness of the multitudes of identities – academic backgrounds, professional pursuits, hobbies, cultures, foods, etc. – held within the global Muslim population. Our hope is to push the fact that our interests and identities do not exist separately – instead, they define each other and create the unique individuals that Fulbright has chosen to award. As Fulbright Salam continues to grow, we plan to continue to advocate for the humanity of Muslim Fulbrighters as they embark on their own grant years and ultimately become alumni of the program. And our growth as a group is not isolated – instead, we view our growth as running in conjunction with greater support and acceptance in the Fulbright Program as a whole, especially as we collaborate with the other affinity groups through our grassroots partnership, The Fulbright Diversity Collective\*, and in partnership with Fulbright Commissions, the Fulbright Association, and the Fulbright Program, the Institute of Internal Education and the US State Department Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

As Fulbrighters embark on their own new beginnings – whether just beginning the application process or searching for their first apartment in their host country – we hope that they feel heard, accepted, and supported by the work and time that the Affinity groups volunteer to the cause.

If you would like to learn more about Fulbright Salam, please contact us on our Instagram page [\(at\)fulbright.salam](#) or email: [salamfulbright\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:salamfulbright(at)gmail.com).\*\*

\* The Fulbright Diversity Collective is a partnership between the independent, grassroots Affinity Groups:

- Fulbright Noir
- Fulbright Prism
- Fulbright Lotus
- Fulbright HBCU
- Fulbright Latinx
- Fulbright Access
- Fulbright Families
- Fulbright Salam



**Isra Hussain**, Co-Founder and Director of Institutional Partnerships: Isra completed a Fulbright Combined Research Award in Vienna, Austria where she conducted research on the social and labor integration of refugees and was a part-time teaching assistant in two secondary schools. A 2017 graduate of Boston College, Isra conducted global health policy research at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) before embarking on her Fulbright scholarship. Isra now works at Keystone Strategy, an economics and strategy consulting firm in Boston, MA.



Arua during her Fulbright scholarship at Bowling Green State University

**Arua Juanita**, Co-Founder, External Partnerships and Events Chair: As a German and Spanish teacher, Arua completed her FLTA journey at Bowling Green State University in 2017-18. Currently she is enrolled at the University of Innsbruck as a Ph.D. student and does her research on inclusive children’s and young adult’s literature.



Zuka'a visiting the Baltic Sea during her Fulbright in Lübeck

**Zuka'a Joudeh**, Social Media Chair, Events Ambassador: Zuka'a is a 2019 Fulbright Germany grantee and taught English in Northern Germany. She has a B.A. in Political Science and Germanic Studies from the University of Illinois at Chicago, and is currently a CBYX young professional in Köln/Erlangen, Germany.



# DARING (NEW) BEGINNING

An Afghan Fulbrighter's Perspective

by Zamira Saidi

When I was asked to write about “new beginnings” after a global pandemic followed by a terrifying terrorist group’s take-over in Afghanistan; I took days, thinking what should I write about ... the broken dreams, plans, and future that are shattered; or the universe’s heart-breaking silence when they watched Afghans being ripped apart and they did not say a word ... or maybe the optimism when Afghans still try to keep the hope alive that maybe things will get better.

What happened in Afghanistan was not just a transition of power ... it’s a hostage situation ... a world known terrorist taking our country and people as hostages. It also broke every Afghan family. Some lost their beloved ones, some live in hiding, and some had to break up and run away to different countries, with no prediction of when they are going to see each other again, maybe never; and some of us still live in denial thinking that this is just a bad dream and I am going to wake up, sooner or later.

I was born and raised in Afghanistan – I lived there 24 years of my life until three years ago. Like most other Afghans, my life was full of ups and downs. Let me define Afghans ... we lived in a war-zone country, yet our hearts were grateful and peaceful; we were not free, yet we developed free souls and spirits; we did not have food on the table yet we filled it with laughter; we were disadvantaged and under-developed, yet we were appreciating the little opportunities that come around and we make the most of them ... My generation of Afghans was born into and lived their entire life in conflict, yet we were faithful and hopeful that tomorrow will be better; but some of us did not get the chance to see that tomorrow. I guess there won’t be a better tomorrow anyways.

I think the scariest modern human tragedy was when Afghans were falling down the plane, the evacuation

process, families separating and spending nights at the airport with no food or drink, new born babies being separated from their parents that still have not found each other ... it is the scenario that film-makers show in their trailer movies, but it was happening in real life. Unlike when people react to these types of movies, they all kept silent when it was happening in real life. It was only Afghans who went through that, felt it, suffered it, made it out of it or are still stuck in and fighting with it.

Now that I am thinking about how a new beginning would look, I cannot wrap my head around it. New beginning, subjectively, means something different for every Afghan now. For those who are in Afghanistan, I do not think there is any new beginning. Everything they can and are doing is to file forms, or submit applications and wait to hear the good news that they will be rescued because they cannot live under a suppressing terrorist government. That includes most Afghans who are living in a very unpredictable state.

For the people who sought refuge in other countries during this time, and they had to leave their life-time investments, companies, businesses, practice, which they spent a life-time building, a new beginning is painful. They have to go back to school at the age of 50 or 60 ... to try to take tests and exams to be able to have the same things as they already had. It will take another 10-20 years to be at the same stage they were at before. My father is a dentist and he says he feels too old to go back to school or to take tests to be able to practice in his host country. All of this while learning the language, new culture and skills, getting used to the feeling that they are “immigrants,” be okay with being mistreated by some of the host country’s citizens, or be treated less by the host country ... are other challenges on their way. You might think this is not happening, but believe me, it is happening. Some countries

How can we think of a new beginning  
while the night’s darkness is still here;

And we all live in fear;

The sun is not rising today,  
maybe someone stole it,  
or it just disappeared

No matter if we made it to safety,  
or if we are stuck or free,  
the challenge is always there

Coz the future is unclear,  
and our loved ones are not near,

There is no good news to hear,  
or a magic to appear

Easy or not, close or far,  
new beginnings are, a dare.

have different schools, or child-care centers or hospitals for their own citizens which are different from those for foreigners, with lesser facilities or care. Of course, at the same time, they are grateful to the host country, for opening their borders, for sheltering and feeding them.

For me, a new beginning is beginning alone, and that is scarier because I do not have my family around. However, I do say that I am a little bit in a better situation because I left Afghanistan in 2018 to study abroad. I completed three degrees in different countries, I always had the dream of working internationally, I have experience in traveling to different countries, exploring different cultures and being open and flexible to see changes in my life, above all, I have supportive people in my school and work ... This makes it easier for me, while it is different for someone who was recently evacuated after the Taliban took the country. But, it does not make it less scary for me either. I live in the USA, while my family lives in Europe ... we are too far apart that neither of us can move to the other’s place. Beginning alone is full of fears, insecurities, and compromises, especially the heart-breaking feeling that my parents are getting older and I am not there to share those moments.

I say that living in small cities will make you feel big, dream big, and you dare to act big and go after your dream ... but when you are in a big city, it makes you feel small so you won’t even dare to think or dream big, and eventually it takes your imagination away. That also scares me because

being able to imagine the best scenario in my bad situation, is what kept me alive and helped me survive through ups and downs in my life.

For all Afghans, a new beginning would be going back to 1996 when the Taliban took Afghanistan for the first time, losing everything we built between 2001-2021. Not only 20 years of our lives and investments are gone for nothing ... unlike the previous time, this time we do not know how to save our country and people. It is horrible to watch the news everyday about how people are living in fear, how women are being prevented from school or work, that they cannot choose what color to wear or how to smell. It is horrible to see the UN predict a terrifying starvation in Afghanistan in six months, or the WHO speak about a health crisis that Afghans will face soon. Or how suicide attacks and bomb-explosions are still happening but this time they say it was ISIS-K, while all of them are the same terrorists no matter if they call themselves Al-Qaida, Taliban, or ISIS. Such news of insecurities, starvation, health crises ... they haunt every Afghans’ mind and peace every day, regardless of where they live now.

We will not have a new beginning, we do not know how to save our country or people, we cannot save everything we built in the past 20 years, we cannot save our children from starvation and disease that are approaching us, we cannot maintain the same advancements we had in the field of social life/studies, or gender equality, or rule of law ... It breaks my heart to see the terrifying pictures that Taliban elements sit on the Parliament seats with zero knowledge and capability to be there. It breaks my heart each time I get a message from someone asking to help them get out of the country, and I am helpless to do so. It breaks my heart to see that our children will never have a childhood because they have to work to feed their families; that our elders will never rest in peace knowing that their loved ones are not save out there ... I cannot think of a new beginning now.



To learn more about  
**Zamira Saidi**, check out  
the following links:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gqok3go5Rjk>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OEiXG1Y2Vkg>



# AFFINITY GROUP STATEMENT

In light of recent developments,  
the German Fulbright Alumni Association  
would like to share the following statement by  
different Fulbright Affinity groups in support  
of all Afghan Fulbrighters and all Afghans:

## Fulbright Alumni Affinity Groups Joint Statement on Afghanistan

A large number of Afghan scholars have come to the US to further their academic studies. As Afghanistan continues to suffer, Afghan Fulbrighters are faced with family separation, significant financial strain, and uncertainty regarding their future academic studies.

We, a coalition of Fulbright alumni affinity groups and organizations, are committed to upholding the values of academic exchange and diversity. We believe academic freedom and a wide spectrum of perspectives are vital to intercultural understanding and broader peace and security in the world.

We stand in solidarity with Afghan Fulbrighters and the wider Afghan scholar community and hope to alleviate their difficulty in ways that, while limited, will be useful to them. We ask you join us in helping Afghan Fulbrighters through the following ways:

1. Donate to IIE's Afghanistan Crisis Response, a specific emergency fund for Afghan scholars whose livelihoods are imperiled. IIE has the logistical means to deliver the money quickly and effectively during this critical time.
2. Aside from donating money, you can donate your time and skills to services listed in our compilation of resources.
3. Email or call your local Representative and Senator. Urge them to support the livelihoods of Afghan scholars currently in the United States\* and continue evacuation efforts for populations at risk of perse-

cution in Afghanistan, especially female scholars and activists. Ask your representatives to cosign and support two pieces of legislation that will prioritize the evacuation of Afghan allies and provide Afghans access to the US refugee system once resettled: H.R. 4736, Improving Access for Afghan Refugees Act, and H.R. 3985, Averting Loss of Life and Injury by Expediting SIVs Act.

4. Ask a college or university where you have an affiliation if they are coordinating and relief efforts or support for Afghan visitors and then help them as you can.
5. If you are willing to host for 1-6 months the family of an Afghan Fulbright alumna, we encourage you to contact the Fulbright Association at [info\(at\)fulbright.org](mailto:info(at)fulbright.org) with the Subject "Fulbright Afghan Assistance." The Fulbright Association has no indication of need yet, but it wants to be prepared with volunteers should an organization approach it.
6. If you know any Afghan Fulbrighters who are willing to share their difficulties anonymously with a broader audience, please contact [fulbrightlotus\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:fulbrightlotus(at)gmail.com). We hope to bring attention to the issue through social media as a form of raising donations to IIE's Emergency Student Fund.

Signed,  
Fulbright Lotus, Fulbright Prism, Fulbright Access, Fulbright HBCU, Fulbright Noir, Fulbright Salam, Fulbright Families, Fulbridge, Fulbright Latinx

\* and Germany

# Daring

by Tyler J. Hughley-McKinney

Daring ...  
Me?  
What do I owe such liberty?  
Being young, gifted, and Black –

Life's too short to appease  
Like Hughes, "I laugh and eat well"  
Feeding the hungry flames raging inside of me

Daring ...

Above the doubt that was cast  
and the realms built on fallacies  
To them I say, "Daring."  
For this is no longer how it's going to be

What is freedom, but a paradise lost?  
The reality of my world is not without its costs  
And yet I still proclaim ...

Daring ...

This is me.  
The reflection I choose to see  
When she gazes back at me, I'm left wondering:  
Am I watching her,  
Or is she watching me?

To the obstacles before me and the ones that lay ahead  
You will no longer phase me  
You will no longer plague my inner child with dread  
For you do not exist  
Because when I say daring, I mean this:

It's you.  
It's me.  
It's all that we're daring to be.



**Tyler McKinney's** pronouns are she/her/. She is the current Event Planning Coordinator for Fulbright Noir. Tyler is a native of New York City and attended St. Francis College, where she obtained a B.A. in Adolescent Education and Communication Arts with a concentration in English. She was awarded and completed a Fulbright grant as an English Teaching Assistant in the Netherlands from 2018-20. Tyler is an English teacher and lives in Den Haag, Netherlands.



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:

- 2021 ENAM Conference & 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Hungarian Fulbright Association, Budapest
- 2019 Fulbright Association 42<sup>nd</sup> 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 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference in Puebla, Mexico
- 2018 “Alumni-Focused Strategy Seminar: Best Practices, Success Stories and Alumni Associations” in Yerevan, Armenia
- 2017 Fulbright Association 40<sup>th</sup> 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 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in Washington, D.C.
- 2015 International Fulbright Conference “Water Act”, Paris
- 2015 Fulbright Association 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in Atlanta
- 2014 Fulbright Association 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in Washington, D.C.
- 2013 Fulbright Association 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in Washington, D.C.
- 2012 Fulbright Association 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in London
- 2012 1<sup>st</sup> ENAM Annual Conference in Rome
- 2010 Fulbright Association 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference, Buenos Aires

Our Services

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

Advisory Board

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

Executive Board

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**Outreach** – Daniel Hoffmann  
outreach(at)fulbright-alumni.de  
**Welcome Meeting** – Marina Kohl  
**Fulbright Alumni e.V. Office** – Tristan Cristofolini  
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Regional Chapters

regional.chapters(at)fulbright-alumni.de

**Berlin** – Alex Rohlf  
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**Franken** – Désirée Doyle  
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**Frankfurt am Main** – Martin Kohler  
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**Rhein/Ruhr** – Maximilian Haberer  
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**Stuttgart** – Julian Burgert  
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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(at)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



# „From New Beginning ...

## Welcome Meeting 4 & 5 September 2020

Due to the pandemic, we had to host our first ever virtual welcome (back) meeting. The event was held on the weekend of September 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Overall, 40 Alumni came together for interesting talks, networking, and a Fulbright Quiz. On Saturday we had the pleasure of welcoming Christina Higgins as keynote speaker, who delivered a great speech talking about US-German relations. She stayed for our two networking sessions, in which alumni had the chance to meet one another and connect over different topics and regional connections. On Sunday the alumni heard about an interesting collaboration framework (Strategic Doing) from our VP for members Andreas before participating in an hour-long quiz about Fulbright facts. The session on Sunday ended with an open coffee hour, which gave everyone the chance to further converse and connect with one another.

## Fulbright Topic 16 September 2020

In September last year, we organized a virtual Fulbright Topic Event about entrepreneurship. Two of our alumni Julian Mandel (Co-founder of memperience) and Florian Grigoleit (Co-founder of modelwise) presented their start-ups. The presentation was followed by questions by the participants, an exchange of ideas and a discussion. We hope to be having a similar event in-person soon with more Fulbright entrepreneurs.



## FAeV Goes Online!

## Strategic Doing Workshop with the board February 2021

To tackle the challenges that the pandemic poses for our association, Andreas Dewald worked with members of the (extended) board using the framework Strategic Doing. In a workshop in February 2021, they uncovered (hidden) assets that the association has and recombined them in order to find new opportunities. As a result of the workshop, we decided to buy a Zoom license for the association to use for board meetings and virtual regional chapter meetings. We also identified opportunities to strengthen our IT-infrastructure and decided on an actionable plan to implement them.



## General Assembly 24 April 2021

Yet another first in the history of our association was our first ever virtual General Assembly that took place on April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2021. 50 of our members were present for this Zoom event. The General Assembly took its usual turn, starting with our then president Fabs greeting everyone and a short welcome message by Daniel Wagner of the Fulbright Commission. Over the course of a couple of hours the current board reported back on their activities over the last year, the old board was discharged and elections for a new board were held via the voting platform VotesUp. The General Assembly went smoothly, and we want to thank the former president Fabienne Rudolph for her years of work for our association and we want to acknowledge her excellent effort in putting this virtual assembly together.

## Wunderbar Webinars Series September & October 2020

Our alumna Allie Drexler organized the Wunderbar Webinar series with the goal to facilitate an online dialogue of transatlantic alumni leaders from a diverse group of young and mid-career professionals. The series consisted of five events in September and October 2020 with panel discussions, workshops, professional development, and networking opportunities. Experts and alumni talked about different topics like citizen diplomacy and US/German elections. At the end of this great series, a resolution was signed from all participants, promising future collaboration.



## “RBG” Film (2018) Discussion 28 October 2020

Due to the passing of Ruth Bader Ginsburg on September 18, 2020, the Fulbright Alumni Association hosted an online discussion on the Ruth Bader Ginsburg documentary, RBG, the viewing of which was made possible by partnership with the Bavarian Center for Transatlantic Relations – Amerikahaus Munich.



Strategic Doing Workshop  
German-American alumni network



## Strategic Doing Workshop with German-American alumni 10 July 2021

Following up on the resolution that was signed at the end of the Wunderbar Webinar event series, members from five different German American alumni associations (NABN, CBYXAA, PPP Alumni e.V., APPPs e.V. and FAeV) took part in a Strategic Doing Workshop. This workshop was facilitated by two Strategic Doing practitioners, including Andreas Dewald, and two additional members, Herbert Schwörer und Daniel Hofmann, who represented the FAeV. The par-

ticipants worked in two groups to discuss potential internal and external activities to achieve the goal of a united German-American alumni network. The workshop led to the commitment to three yearly meetings with members from each association to align events and to discuss further collaboration. The first German-American alumni meeting was successfully hosted by the Fulbright Alumni e.V. on November 7<sup>th</sup>. The joint meeting is planned for February 2022.



All the attendees of the Welcome Meeting;  
photo: Andreas Dewald



# Fulbright Alumni Welcome Meeting in Bonn

by Alexandra Schaller



A picture of Villa Hammerschmidt, which was taken during the tour; photo: Alexandra Schaller



A session about „Science Fiction and German Humor“ during the Unconference; photo: Marina Kohl



Dinner at the Gesindehaus;  
photo: Alexander Rose

## ... to New Beginning!“

After over a year it was finally possible to have a “Fulbright Germany – Welcome Meeting”. This year’s venue was the Friedrich-Wilhelms-University in Bonn. It was mainly for Fulbright Germany Alumni, who traveled to the US in 2019 and 2020, but also for current Fulbright Grantees in Germany. The first day was the 24<sup>th</sup> of September. At 6pm most of the Fulbrighters were welcomed on Campus Poppelsdorf at Bonn University, and at 7:30pm the Get-Together and dinner at the Gesindehaus started. The Gesindehaus offered meals like “Himmel un Äd”, which is fried black pudding and liver sausage with mashed potatoes and apple compote. After dinner, everyone split up into smaller groups and spent their evening together in Bonn.

On Saturday morning, many other Fulbrighters attended, who could not make it on Friday. Registration and a small breakfast started at around 10am on Campus Poppelsdorf. Alumni who hadn’t seen each other in years finally met again and were happy to chat. At 11am a small introduction of the German Fulbright Alumni e.V. and the Fulbright Commission started. FAeV President Andreas Dewald introduced himself and the organization team behind the Welcome Meeting. In addition to the FAeV team, Prof. Dr. Ulrich Schlie (Bonn University) held a short speech about foreign policy and Dr. Cathleen Fisher, head of the German-American Fulbright Commission sent a welcome video message to everyone. After the introduction, all Fulbrighters had a lunch break before the “Unconference” started.

An Unconference is a “community-driven event in which the attendees organize the agenda themselves. Every

participant gets the possibility to take ownership of a topic and, if voted, moderate a session.” No sooner said than done. During the first session, the Fullies decided on seven topics: “Gender non-conformity in Germany”, “Science Fiction or Cartoons/German Humor”, “Traffic and use of city space”, “German/American stereotypes”, “The value of the humanities”, “Integrating Immigrants into German Society” and “German Policy”. Every attendee had the chance to decide on one of the topics and was then allocated into different rooms, called New York or Washington Room for example.

During the thirty-minute Unconference session in every room, the Fullies tried to compare their own experiences on their respective topics. After each session, the attendees had a 5-minute break before the moderator of each group shared the findings. After the first session, everyone had a small coffee break before session 2 of the Unconference started. This time around the Fulbrighters decided on the topics: “Tell me your stuff”, “How to NOT solve public skepticism”, “I don’t want to work for a company”, “Arts in today’s world”, “US-Germany Security policy and concerns”, “Taboo topics in Germany” and “Work vs. living space”. Then the same procedure as in the first workshop session started and everyone split up into seven different groups. All attendees reflected openly on the topics and shared important ideas. As before, they got back together after the session and shared their findings. The Unconference ended with a reflection and feedback of everyone involved. After two workshop sessions, this part of the Welcome Meeting at Campus Poppelsdorf was finished.

Everyone then made their way back to the old town of Bonn because at around 6:30pm dinner at the Brauhaus Bönnsch was planned. The Brauhaus was offering very traditional food for the Bonn area, like “Halver Hahn”, which is typical Bönnsch bread with cheese and onions. Or a “Schweins-haxe”, which is actually a very Bavarian dish, but was prepared with a sauce that was typical for North Rhine-Westphalia. Everyone had great conversations and planned their evenings together in Bonn and Cologne. After dinner, most of the Fulbrighters decided to stay in Bonn and split into smaller groups. The German Alumni then suggested following a student tradition, and showed the American Fulbrighters how to play the game “Flunky Ball”. Everybody who was involved had a lot of fun. Afterward, some of the attendees made their way back to the Brauhaus Bönnsch to end the evening in a small gathering.

The next day started at 10am for brunch at Café Extrablatt. After many interesting conversations, brunch was finished and everyone split up into two groups for different city tours. One was all about getting to know the city of Bonn while the other focused on the old government district and its history. The tours were both offered in German and English. During the tour the attendees saw the information office of the federal government, the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) in the former federal chancellery, the present international congress center as well as the second official department of the federal chancellery, and the Villa Hammerschmidt, the second official residence of the Federal President.

After walking through the federal quarter, they made another stop at the Rhine. From there, the Fulbrighters had a good view on the former residence of Konrad Adenauer, who was the first German chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany. Afterward, the group visited Hubertus von Pilgrim’s monument of Adenauer, which was the last stop on the tour. At the same time, the city tour in the center of Bonn was finished. The two tour groups met again in the old town of Bonn and everybody called their goodbyes. At this point, you could tell that during this event, many new friendships were made. Also, the Unconference was a new way of working in groups, dealing with issues, and talking about them. Furthermore, it was a great opportunity to work productively on a topic and therefore find good solution approaches. The city tours were a great addition to the “Welcome Meeting”. All in all, this “Welcome Meeting” in Bonn was a great opportunity for current and former Fulbrighters from Germany and the US to connect.



photo: Madeleine Demirok

**Alexandra Schaller** was born and raised in Berlin and did her B.A. in media management. She started her Fulbright year in 2019 and studied Journalism at the California State University, Long Beach. After her time abroad she continued her graduate studies in Journalism at Hochschule Magdeburg-Stendal and will finish it next year.



# Rekindling Fulbright Friendships

## A Visit to the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of the Hungarian Fulbright Association and the ENAM General Assembly

by Markus Mock

On the occasion of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Hungarian Fulbright Association, a delegation of the German Fulbright Alumni Association Extended Board participated in the anniversary celebration as well as the co-located ENAM (European Network of American Alumni Associations) general assembly in Budapest. In the spirit of new beginnings, this was the first in-person event since the lockdown for the FAeV with a largely newly elected board in the year of its own 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary to take part in.

The overarching goals were to strengthen existing contacts with other alumni organizations and establish new connections as well as to learn about best practices followed by other alumni organizations to improve our alumni network, learn about the ENAM organization and how we might benefit from their work, and find out what contributions the German Fulbright Alumni Association could make under this organizational umbrella. The German Fulbright Alumni Association was represented by its president, Andreas Dewald, Daniel Hofmann (Outreach), Dr. Markus Mock (International Outreach) and Thomas Weißschnur (Mulert Award).

After more than a year of being unable to come into direct contact with each other, the event led to many beneficial



Attendees of the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of the Hungarian Fulbright Association in the Academy of Sciences in Budapest; photo: Péter Szalmás

exchanges, particularly with the Hungarian Fulbright Association and the Austrian Fulbright Association, with which we hope to host joint events in the future. Further interesting exchanges, especially with smaller and financially less stable associations such as those from Kosovo or Azerbaijan, introduced us to challenges these younger organizations face as well as their approaches to master these challenges. In exchange, we were also able to offer guidance through sharing our best practices and experiences.

One relevant outcome of the ENAM assembly, in particular, was the idea to strengthen ties with other organizations involved in German American exchange, for instance, the Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange program. Moving forward we plan on establishing a continuous conversation and working together with the different organizations from this varied network.

In summary, the participation in the conference and assembly has proven very fruitful, with several concrete ideas that will positively impact the German alumni work in the future. Moreover, valuable personal contacts have been established that will be used for sharing and learning best practices and cross-border joint events to strengthen American-European relations.



Representatives from different European alumni associations, who came together for the ENAM general assembly; photo: Tonia Arahova

Andreas Dewald, president of the Fulbright Alumni e.V., speaking about the establishment of the FAeV; photo: Péter Szalmás

The representatives for the Fulbright Alumni e.V.: Andreas Dewald, Markus Mock, Thomas Weißschnur, and Daniel Hofmann (from left to right) in front of the Academy of Sciences; photo: Daniel Hofmann



## Daring New Beginnings with a Personal Mentor or Mentee

### Successful launch of our new Fulbright Alumni e.V. Mentoring Program for US Grantees 2021 in Germany

by Daniel Gossen and Alexander Rose



Personal and intercultural exchange is key for promoting mutual understanding and continuously reinventing our Fulbright Alumni community here in Germany. This year, we dared new beginnings by launching an exciting Mentoring Program for all new Fulbright US Grantees in Germany. With a total of over 150 locally matched mentors and mentees across Germany, this first time ever program has been a great success so far. Our mentors come from a broad range of disciplines and backgrounds within the Fulbright Alumni e.V. community and they have already welcomed their personal mentee(s), and will continue supporting them on an individual, closely tied basis throughout their stay in Germany.

While the local, background-based matching will allow mentors and mentees to stay in regular and in-person contact, we also aim to promote cross-regional exchange within the Mentoring Program community by supporting national events throughout the year. One great example are the pictures taken at our Kick-Off Event in November, where we got to know each other and exchanged ideas and expectations on mentoring as part of the Fulbright experience.

The participants' feedback on this year's initial program will help us to learn and further improve for a potential larger-scale program in the upcoming years. If you are interested in learning more about our Mentoring Program or want to be a mentor or mentee yourself next year, then please reach out to us at [mentoring\(at\)fulbright-alumni.de](mailto:mentoring(at)fulbright-alumni.de) and we will keep you updated. Exciting times ahead!



# Remembered

by Jürgen Simon

## Christine Tröger

\* Nuremberg, January 26, 1958 – Munich, April 30, 2021

When the news appeared on my screen that Christine had passed away, my memories went back to the beginnings of the Fulbright Alumni Association (FAeV). For the past decades, Christine's life has been linked closely with the Munich Fulbright Chapter and with many national Fulbright activities, particularly during the initial decades of the Association.



– A weekend focus conference on “Traffic Concepts for the Future – How Mobile Will our Society be in the Year 2000?” in Munich in January 1991;

– The organization of the annual FAeV General Assembly in January 1994, including a marvellous Winter Ball in the Green Hall of the Augustiner-Gaststätten in downtown Munich;

Christine received her Fulbright grant for studies in “Social Work” at Ohio State University in 1981-82. As everybody who knew her would confirm, she fulfilled the two most relevant qualifications: strong social skills as well as the ability to represent Germany abroad as an “ambassador”.

In June 1988, Christine joined the FAeV which had been founded only two years earlier. In January 1991 the Munich Chapter elected her into the organizing team together with three other Fulbrighters. She was in charge for two years from 1992 to 1994, when she left Munich to pursue a Master's degree at Birmingham University, England, and again for one year in 1998-99.

During her terms, numerous events on the regional as well as the national level remain firmly in our memories. For example, in addition to the monthly regional Chapter meetings (Stammtisch), she had either initiated or was in charge of the following events:

– A “Pow Wow” weekend, which set the stage for an exchange of serious ideas as well as for fun social interaction in a relaxed atmosphere, not only for the Bavarian but for all FAeV members. It took place in the monastery on Frauenchiemsee, a small island in the largest Bavarian lake near the Alps in September 1999. The topic: “Genetics and Biotechnology”. This event became most memorable due to the beautiful and unusual conference location as well as the caring personality of Sister Scholastica.

The Fulbrighters learned to appreciate the advantages coming with Christine's job at the “Haus der Evangelischen Jugend München” (EJM) in Birkerstr. 19. Regional groups as well as Board Members congregated there frequently and free of charge for numerous purposes. Noteworthy were the regular Thanksgiving Dinners since 1993, when sizeable turkeys were sacrificed.



All photos by Wiltrud Hammelstein

Throughout the 1990s and the first decade of this century, the address Birkerstraße 19 remained an important meeting point for Fulbrighters from all over the world.

Christine's private life and her Fulbright-focused life gradually melted into one. Her favorite restaurants turned into the meeting places for the Stammtisch, such as the “Metaxa”, “Claudios Pizzeria” and the “Wassermann”, all located near her home and office in Birkerstraße 19 in Munich-Neuhausen. Rumor has it that Christine's social skills resulted in marriages within the Munich Fulbright circle.

My own years in Munich would have been less exciting without Christine. Thanks to her I got to know the majestic Nymphenburger Park near her home, and I learned to appreciate the beautiful Schliersee as well as the skiing slopes at Spitzingsee during her work at Josefstal. And, last-but-not-least, the incredibly huge buffet of creamy “Torten” in Café Winklstätterl of Fischbachau will always remain in my memory.

On April 30, 2021 Christine lost the battle against cancer after demanding and painful years. Almost three decades of a very active, colorful Fulbright life had come to an end far too early. We are thankful and will remember Christine particularly for her open heart and mind, her extensive experience, as well as her great organizational skills, which she applied in the Fulbright context so frequently.

Fond memories of a great personality will remain forever.





# Dresden

## The Spirit of Thanksgiving

by Elke Handschug-Brosin

Our Thanksgiving celebration in 2020 was very memorable for different reasons! We were trying to get together in person but to be compliant with the lockdown regulations, we decided to simultaneously cook a turkey on Saturday, November 28<sup>th</sup> and come together via zoom at 4pm for a toast before the meal. Julius, a soon-to-be Fulbright scholar from Dresden, had indicated to join our Regional Chapter's Thanksgiving dinner when he met both Bernd and I virtually at our Fulbright Alumni Germany Welcome Meeting in September. Julius was supposed to join Bernd's family in presence for the meal but due to some last-minute covid-related precautions, he could not join, but kept his promise to join us – virtually. After we had finished our zoom Thanksgiving toast and after we had eaten our meal – offline –, it dawned on me that our brief zoom meeting probably did not do much for Julius sitting somewhere by himself with no meal. I decided to call him and told him I have saved a plate for him at our house in case he is somewhere nearby and could come over to join us. It turned out he was only a brief train ride away by public transportation and soon, we greeted Julius at our home for a warmed-up Thanksgiving dinner – much to the surprise of my grown-up children that I so spontaneously dared to invite someone I had not met before to come over for a meal. But thanks to the Fulbright spirit, Julius was no stranger to me at all – he felt like family from the moment we met and we all ended up having a wonderful Thanksgiving evening chatting away about past and future experiences as Fulbright scholars.

There was even more to this year's Thanksgiving celebrations – an email from Peter Parshall reached me November 24<sup>th</sup> to tell me about how much we are in their thoughts every



Pete and Carol



Thanksgiving Zoom

year around Thanksgiving. Peter was a Fulbright scholar from Minnesota who came to Dresden in 1999 together with his dear wife Carol. They had joined our regional Thanksgiving dinner back then. It was a very memorable encounter for all of us and Peter wrote an article titled “A DARING LAST RESCUE” for our 13<sup>th</sup> FRANKLY edition of the year 2001. Peter told me that he regularly sends messages to friends and family to cheer them up in these turbulent times and that he shared his Thanksgiving article about our encounter in 1999 this year with his friends and family. The responses he received were more numerous than usual and Peter concluded that this one Thanksgiving dinner of 1999 reached the hearts of far more people than were present at the actual dinner. Our Thanksgiving communication culminated in a zoom meeting with Peter and Carol that filled our hearts and will be remembered as another special (virtual) encounter.

These two Thanksgiving experiences clearly have something in common – the spirit of daring new beginnings!

About the author: Elke Handschug-Brosin spent the years of 1992-1995 in Michigan and Alaska as a Fulbright scholar and now lives in Radebeul near Dresden with her family.



Frankly 2001, Nr. 13, S. 30/31

All photos by Elke Handschug-Brosin

# Berlin

by Alexandra Drexler and Andreas Dewald

Dear friends and fellow alumni – Greetings from Berlin!

The past months have certainly shown us how much we miss the community and how much we cherish every opportunity to meet our fellow Fulbrighters. Therefore, the summer of 2021 has truly been memorable as our events have been a welcome change in pace for all participants and incredibly lively. Our first official event was the traditional 4<sup>th</sup> of July BBQ, which we celebrated in our president's wonderful & spacious “Kleingarten”. We teamed up with the North American Bundestag Network for this event and had a long afternoon with lots of interesting conversations, great food and drinks.

After kicking off the summer with our 4<sup>th</sup> of July BBQ, the regional chapter launched regular Stammtisch meetings again and participated in cleaning up the Sprengekiez during the World Cleanup Day. Of course, we plan to again make use of the wide range of cultural activities, bars, and fascinating sightseeing locations that Berlin has to offer. This also includes bicycle tours and hikes through the beautiful Brandenburg neighborhood as well as more typical tourist venues for new-Berliners. With a large crowd of active Fulbright alumni from all over the world in town, we fill the Fulbright spirit with life and are happy to welcome new members to our regular meetings and special events.

Contact [rc.berlin\(at\)fulbright-alumni.de](mailto:rc.berlin(at)fulbright-alumni.de) if you are interested in joining our mailing list.

Regional Chapter Berlin  
Alex & Andi



4<sup>th</sup> of July BBQ



World Clean Up Day



World Clean Up Day

All photos by Alexandra Drexler and Andreas Dewald







# Hamburg

by David Patrician

Moin aus Hamburg! Let's come together, but let's also stay socially distanced. That was the challenge we faced this year. Here are some of our highlights.

Last October we took a tour of Wasserkunst Elbinsel Kaltehofe. This is a museum dedicated to the preservation of the former waterworks on the Elbe (River) island of Kaltehofe. We learned about water canalization and purification. In a city of 1.8 million people, you can only imagine how much water is moving everyday around the city!

In December, Hamburg's US Consul General Darion Akins invited us for a virtual fireside chat to discuss the recent US Elections, the transatlantic relationship and also shared several stories about his career in the foreign service. The discussion lasted almost 2 hours, and we want to thank Mr. Akins once again for this interesting discussion and for answering all of our questions.

This past spring, we decided to once again do an activity with our Hamburg Parlamentarische Patenschafts-Program (PPP) friends. Something outdoors, socially distanced and also a little adventurous ... how about standup paddleboarding (SUP) on the Alster Lake! It was a fun event, and afterwards a few of us found a place on the Alster and enjoyed a beautiful sunset. After a long winter lockdown, it was wonderful to see everyone in person again.

Finally, I wanted to take moment to thank a special member of our Hamburg Chapter. Alex Swanson has been



Standup Paddling



Firesidechat with US Consul General Akins

part of the Hamburg regional group for the past six years. She has been an active member and a great help over the years, including being a main member of our planning team for the 2018 Fulbright General Assembly and Winterball here in Hamburg. This summer she moved to Frankfurt to start her new job (specialist for membership and events) at the American Chamber of Commerce. We wish her all the best for this new position and will miss her.

David Patrician  
Hamburg Regional Coordinator

All photos by David Patrician

# Rhein-Ruhr

by Maximilian Haberer

Due to the ongoing threat of the Corona pandemic, there have been very few activities and Stammtische of the Regional Chapter Rhein-Ruhr within the last year. However, on July 11<sup>th</sup> we were very happy to have a wonderful belated 4<sup>th</sup> of July BBQ at the Kemnader See in Bochum. In September, The Rhein-Ruhr regional group planned to attend a concert at the Ruhrtriennale and hopefully we will be able to celebrate Thanksgiving together and visit the Weihnachtsmarkt in Mülheim an der Ruhr, as originally planned for 2020. We are looking forward to having more events next year.



4<sup>th</sup> of July BBQ at the Kemnader See;  
all photos Maximilian Haberer



# Munich

## Making the best of another pandemic year

by Barbara Weiten

It's the second year I am writing a FRANKly article on Fulbright activities in Munich during the Corona pandemic. As many of us are doing in our own lives, we, the Munich chapter, have been trying to make the best of it: be responsible and avoid risk to others, and ourselves, but also keep looking for positive moments, for enriching conversations, for shared experiences. We have not always found it easy to generate the same energy in virtual meetings as in real life, but mostly we've appreciated and enjoyed the opportunity to keep up some regional interaction in the Fulbright community.

Through the fall, winter and spring we met online for our monthly Stammtisch. While we could not create variety by switching the locations around as we like to do in the offline world, we tried out some online games: First, we competed against each other and other online players in the Wiki game: The objective is to "click through" from one random Wikipedia article to another via hyperlinks (e.g. from "envy"



Secret Santa by Video Conference; photo: Andreas Schoberth



4<sup>th</sup>-of-July BBQ; photos: Andreas Schoberth



to "Rock'n roll Hall of Fame".) You win by getting to the second article with the fewest clicks and shortest time – with the Fulbrighters showing various levels of ambition in coming up with the best tactics and winning the race ... Second, we also teamed up for an online Escape game and spent an entertaining evening solving a variety of puzzles and successfully breaking out of a virtual lab ...

In addition, in December, we celebrated the "virtual" premier of our popular December "Wichtel" Stammtisch (Secret Santa), with a master of ceremonies matching the participants, the gifts being exchanged by (snail) mail and then being jointly unwrapped during the video Stammtisch.

Our Thanksgiving dinner typically is the event in the calendar that attracts the most participants – but it's not easily translatable into the virtual world, so we will have to wait for next November to (hopefully) again share Turkey, stuffing and apple pie.

In July, however, we were fortunate to celebrate the 4<sup>th</sup> of July with a pot luck BBQ in person. While we often meet on the large balcony (as well as in the living room and kitchen) kindly shared by one of the local Fulbrighters, this year another Fulbrighter kindly invited us to her spacious outdoor terrace and garden – so that we could enjoy a beautiful summer evening together while also keeping our distance. The multitude of deserts, in particular, was something to enjoy – and remember.

In addition to Corona, we were also challenged by some unpredictable local weather: both the first "in person" Stammtisch in June as well as a planned July hike around some small lakes in the outskirts of the city fell victim to thunderstorms. On another hike, around Lake Ammersee, we were luckier: In spite of some light rain – and a lot of mosquitos –, we enjoyed a very pleasant late summer day while walking through the countryside and along the water's edge – before enjoying a well-deserved meal in a small beer garden while sitting next to some beautiful sun flowers.



Ammersee Hike; photo: Barbara Weiten



Ammersee Hike; photo: Andreas Schoberth



Escape Room Game „Maskenpflicht“, 4Walls Escape

Finally, some events at the Munich Amerikahaus offered the opportunity for engaging with American culture: On the occasion of Black History month, the Amerikahaus offered a virtual screening of "Willie", a documentary on Willie O'Ree, the first black player to skate in a National Hockey League Game in 1958, followed by an equally virtual panel discussion. Moreover, the Amerikahaus team kindly organized a guided tour through the exhibition "60 years of Marvel Universe" for alumni, current US grantees and recent returnees, followed by a reception on the rooftop terrace of the Amerikahaus. And while I am not a Marvel expert, I did find a (hopefully) fitting quote to conclude this article: "You never know. You hope for the best and make do with what you get" (fictional Marvel Charakter Nick Fury) – so let's make the best of the hopefully final months of the pandemic, and let's continue to make the best of the privilege of being part of the Fulbright community!



Marvels Hulk at AmerikaHaus; photo: Andreas Schoberth





Hiking tour, in Idstein; photo: Reinhard Koch



Hiking tour, in Idstein; photo: Reinhard Koch



# Frankfurt

## Off to a new start

by Martin Kohler

Like all of us, the Fulbright Alumni Frankfurt chapter was in the grip of the pandemic this past year.

We tried to meet up personally for as long as possible, for example for an outdoor Stammtisch or our autumnal hiking tour.

When contact restrictions were in place, we relocated to the digital world and had a few online Stammtisch meetings and tried a virtual museum tour.

However, for the long haul this couldn't compete against live events and meet-ups, networking and communication, seeing each other – things that are crucial to us.

So, when relaxations of restrictions allowed meetings in person by June, we were ready to start the first indoor and outdoor activities. Besides the regular Stammtisch, we explored Frankfurt's main cemetery on a guided tour (highly recommended) and enjoyed our traditional 4<sup>th</sup> of July barbecue party. Currently, plans are in the works for a hiking tour. If you are new to Frankfurt and would like to join us, visit <https://fulbright-alumni.de/regional-chapters/frankfurt-am-main/> and don't hesitate to contact me.



Main cemetery tour; photo: Martin Kohler



Main cemetery tour; photo: Martin Kohler



Hiking tour; photo: Isabelle Boeddinghaus



4<sup>th</sup> of July party; photo: Knut Mittwollen

# Cologne-Bonn

## Beyond the third wave

by Ulrich Götz

When is the right time to meet again after a long period of no events due to the global pandemic? We decided to wait after the third wave was over and the vaccination rate was going up. For the obligatory 4<sup>th</sup>-of-July BBQ it was a little bit late, but having an outdoor BBQ seemed to be a good idea. August 8<sup>th</sup> was assumed to be a safe harbor for good weather. The weather forecast gave its final green light, but turned out to be wrong: three waves of heavy rain did not only soak our cloth, but also led to the coal preventing any chance of having a warm meal. Those of us with appropriate weather gear shifted the location to an indoor gathering, while others had to return home. Despite the bad start into a new "season", the spirit was high and in summer 2021 we are looking forward to a face-to-face Thanksgiving Dinner, which is already in the planning phase. As it is custom in the Cologne-Bonn region, we will have a joint dinner of the Freundeskreis Köln-Indianapolis, the Deutsch-Amerikanische Gesellschaft Köln and the Fulbright Alumni crowd.



Attempt to BBQ; photo: Ulrich Götz





## MINTORME – discover your STEM talent!

– free mentoring, STEM workshops & trainings for teachers

MINTORME is a nonprofit organization located in beautiful Munich with a network of volunteers all over Germany. Our mission is to enable children to consciously choose a STEM subject for their university education regardless of their previous school level or gender.

During the education children receive in their school years, the basis for each child's future life path is significantly shaped. It is often these years that show which interests are of importance to a child. Subjects like mathematics, computer science, natural sciences and technology (STEM; MINT in German) very often do not come in at first place, especially for young girls. This is where MINTORME becomes active: We are constantly looking for volunteers who we can support students in a mentoring partnership and who we can thus help to get into STEM topics. In addition, we offer free workshops in schools, in which we teach students about STEM subjects in an interactive form in order to raise their interest. Simultaneously, we enable teachers to take part in trainings, which focus on informing them on current STEM discussions and in which they learn how to integrate these topics interactively in their lesson plans. All offers are free and are organized on an individual basis with the respective schools.



MINTORME's goal is especially reaching young girls. In this spirit, 50% of MINTORME's board is also represented by women; photo: Tobias Schmid

In 2022 we will start a new workshop series; the STEM Escape Games. In this format, students will receive a (fictitious) rescue mission. They will have 60-90 minutes to solve different STEM riddles in order to successfully complete the mission. The goal is to show students exciting ways of applying STEM knowledge to everyday life. The STEM Escape Game is a playful first step into these subjects in an unofficial atmosphere without the pressure of receiving school grades. We are looking for volunteers for this particular project to function as good STEM examples to the children and who will carry out the workshops with us at German schools. You can sign up as a volunteer at this website:

[www.mintorme.com/mintorwerden.html](http://www.mintorme.com/mintorwerden.html)

Contact us directly at:

[info\(at\)mintorme.com](mailto:info(at)mintorme.com) or visit [www.mintorme.com](http://www.mintorme.com)



**Annabella** founded MINTORME in December 2020. She studied computer science at TU Berlin and is currently working as a backend developer at Siemens AG in the field of cloud based web development. In early 2020 she was part of the Fulbright

Leaders in Entrepreneurship (LIE) program and spent three exciting weeks at LSU in Baton Rouge. LIE and the people she met during this time were an important catalyst for the foundation and the success of MINTORME.

MINTORME is a matter of great personal importance to Annabella and her way of trying to contribute to the gender balance in STEM careers. It is an honor for MINTORME to receive this year's Mulert Award.



The MINTORME network is made up of motivated STEM (Ph.D) students and researchers, who are working towards equality in STEM education; photo: Annabella Kadavanich



## Mulert Award 2022 – 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 reflect 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 2022 Mulert Award. Candidates 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 2022
- project summary and author biography in the 2022 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 to the award ceremony (within Europe)

The Call for Nominations will be accessible online until Sunday, **January 30, 2022.**

For further information, please refer to [www.fulbright-alumni.de](http://www.fulbright-alumni.de)

### Contact:

Thomas Weißschnur

[mulert.award\(at\)fulbright-alumni.de](mailto:mulert.award(at)fulbright-alumni.de)

## 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!**

Tobias Bopp	Braunschweig
Hevidar Jankir	Köln
Daniel Feulner	Heinersreuth
Kai Tuchmann	Berlin
Erik Horstmann	Porta Westfalica
Markus Mock	Landshut
Florian Fesch	Waldkappel
Aynur Durak	Berlin
Leonie Pilgram	Berlin
Abdullah Celik	Berlin
Johannes Geiger	Rosenberg
Vera Luise Fuller	Waiblingen
Liam Engel	Berlin
Maximilian Forster	Heidelberg
Paul Künzle	Hamburg
Silke Fimmel	Dresden
Dane Burkholder	Berlin
Daniel Gossen	Köln
Christoph Althoff	Münster
Manfred Philipp	Bronxville, NY
Antonia Mayer	Ludwigsburg
Jens Barkentien	Steinbach
Benjamin Ziech	Hamburg
Jens Bracher	Basel



# Join us in our quest to explore new and more inclusive forms of diplomacy!

Whether pandemics, climate change, poverty or cross-border conflicts: to tackle the complex issues confronting humanity in the 21st century, we need new forms of collaboration.

Global challenges need global answers for local implementation.

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