



JABS-Magazine SS 08

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Chinese partner school: When in China do as the Chinese do

(by Christiane Schmidt & Maria Nischan)

Georgia Hartmann, teacher at the Herder-Gymnasium in Pirna, has travelled together with some of her colleagues and pupils to China twice. They visited in 2005 and 2007 their twin school in Hefei, a mega city to the west of Shanghai. This interview gives you an idea about a school partnership between Germany and China.

What was the reason for going to China?

Since 2005 we have been cultivating a familiar friendship with our twin school in China and we have been visiting each other every year in turn. Up to now I could take part in two journeys to China.

Who did you travel with?

We are always three teachers and ten pupils from grade 10 to 12. We choose on purpose older pupils because the flight is very long and this journey is a real challenge as it is a completely different continent.

How did you prepare for the journey?

The preparation lasts a long time. The journey only starts in October but already at the end of January the decision is made about which pupils will join. One main criterion is a good command of English. Furthermore, the pupils are supposed to be open-minded and dedicated to this adventure. They represent Germany and therefore, they should be some kind of “socially acceptable”, too.

When the passenger list is completed, we usually arrange three or four meetings to get to know each other better. This is very important when you plan to go on such an extreme trip, where you really should trust each other.

In those meetings we cook together (for example Chinese food) or if it is possible, we visit an exhibition about a Chinese topic.

What expectation did you have?

At the beginning, when we flew to China the first time, everything was, of course, completely new for us and we were a bit nervous. We were really curious about this different cultural area, its people and its school system. When I came to China the second time in 2007, I first thought that within two years there would not be such a great change and therefore I was not so excited. But when I realised that whole streets, buildings and schools had been knocked down for completely new buildings, I was really surprised and impressed about the growth of this country.

Where did you stay?

The teachers lived at the home of the twin school teachers and the pupils in host families. I stayed with a young teacher, aged 24 and married without children. Her flat was quite big in a very attractive residential area. However, I think the host teachers are well chosen, so that we – the guests – are kept away from dirt and poverty which might refer to the reality there, too.

What does a normal school day look like in China?

School starts at 7.30 and for thirty minutes, the pupils learn via reading aloud. Every child reads out aloud, what he or she is supposed to practice. This, of course, creates

a noise all over the school. Then, at 8 o' clock, the real lesson starts with 70 pupils per class. After the second lesson, the children go out to the schoolyard to do their daily gymnastics. This is actually really necessary as the pupils sit a very long time during the day, so they need sports to become active and move around.

For lunch, most children go home and then school goes until 5 p.m. Afterwards, many kids use the schoolyard to play tennis, football or badminton. At home, after supper with the family, they start doing their homework, which might last until 11 p.m. The school system in China is based on the pressure to perform, school plays a big role and there are even schools with different ranks from 1 (=best) to I do not know exactly which number. The status of a school has a big influence on your future career in China. A "number 1" school (our twin school is one of them) helps you to study later on at the best universities.

What did you find most / least impressive?

As a teacher of geography I was impressed by the urban development of Shanghai. The city has grown so much during the last two years and it was interesting to see that the process of growing never seems to stop in China.

When I saw the great difference between rich and poor I was very shocked but also scared because of the extremes which collide with each other.

The pupils themselves experienced the life of the Chinese pupils very unlike to their school situation in Germany because a Chinese school day consists of studying almost the whole day and being at school all the time.

What stereotypes proved to be true?

During the first journey it was quite shocking to watch Chinese table manners, a cliché proved to be true. There you can hear a lot of burping and gobbling. The second time we went to China the situation was slightly different. I had the feeling it was more civilized and maybe done in a more European way. This change could have happened presumably because of the upcoming Olympics in China.

Would you recommend such an exchange between two twin schools? What are the advantages?

Yes, I would definitely recommend such exchanges because there are a lot of advantages about it. You get to know other cultural areas and realize the varieties of life. You become more aware of your own living conditions in Germany and that we have other measures in our daily lives.

One disadvantage is that such journeys are very expensive and the costs have to be paid by the pupils and their parents themselves.

Nevertheless it is a great opportunity for the children to widen their horizons and absolutely recommendable.

What conclusion would you draw?

I would not want to immigrate to China but I would still like to discover a lot more interesting places in China. The development of China is definitely a force to be reckoned with in the future.

Going abroad, going to Ecuador

(by Evs Birke)

This is an ode to a country where you can almost touch the sky from the top of a 6310 m high volcano, where you can explore the wilderness by diving into the jungle and encounter the rarest species of animals and plants. A place, where you can have three seasons in one day and where you will never get tired of taking up the impressions which distinguish this place from where you come from.

This is about the Republic of Ecuador. Ecuador is one of the smallest countries of South America. It shares borders with Colombia to the north and with Peru to the south and its coast line kisses the Pacific Ocean. The population consists of over thirty different ethnic groups, a circumstance that contributes to the enriching diversity in terms of costumes and habits.

By now, you might have started wondering, how this description goes together with the valid perception of Ecuador as a developing country. In fact, Ecuador belongs to the poorest nations of the American continent. 50 per cent of the children suffer from deficiency symptoms because of insufficient nutrition, 1.5 million children don't go to school at all, and 60 per cent of the population have no access to a water supply. Often, heaven and hell exist very close together.

My relationship with Ecuador started in November 2006. I had decided to spend six months there, working voluntarily as an assistant teacher in a school for the poor in the outskirts of Quito, the capital of Ecuador. The idea of the whole project is to work actively and personally instead of donating money anonymously. My task was to teach English and computer science to twenty-seven children at the age of five to twelve years. Taming the tiger would also be a suitable image. There were only two classrooms for seven different forms and two teachers giving their lectures in sort of a rotating system, keeping all the little ones busy at the same time. When I took up my job at the "Escuela Fiscal Mixta Ambato" in Fajardo, my Spanish was still far from being good, though, I had studied it at university for some years. But, then there you are. You try to be an authoritarian person, you venture to explain English grammar rules in Spanish, and you try to develop creative ways for capturing the attention of pupils of whom some very frankly tell you: "I don't need what you teach me, 'cause I will never be able to attend college anyway." Living and working in the Ecuadorian community, I learned what it means to be living in grinding poverty. Most of the children left their homes without breakfast and had to get up very early to arrive at school on time. You never get used to the obvious indications of destitution. We tried to improve the starting position for the children by teaching them and organising some food supply. The longer I stayed, the more integrated into the community I got, and the relationship with "my" 27 Ecuadorian children became more and more intense. The best way of improving my language skills was to work with those children. They would not let go of me until they had made understood what they wanted to tell me. Apart from the improvements in Spanish, I learned a lot about the others and about myself. My idealism, enthusiasm, and openness were put to the test and my attitude towards many aspects of life has changed since then.

For detailed information on the programme: www.aprende espanol.eu

“It’s impossible to understand people speaking Sächsisch”

(by Franziska Höhne & Henriette Kuch)

JABS met four young Erasmus-students from all over Europe and asked them about their experiences at the TU and in the beautiful city of Dresden. Meet Frederica and Emanuel from Italy, seducing Jan from Prague and lovely Pierre from France and learn more about their life as exchange students and the endless struggle with the Saxon dialect.

Frederica and Emanuel, both 23 years old, came over in September last year to follow their studies of (Landscape) Architecture. Twenty-five year old Jan is enjoying the last months of relaxed student-life before graduating in law and Pierre, 20, left his French university to add a practical aspect to his German Studies.

Why did you choose to come to Germany?

- Jan: The main reason was to learn German; otherwise I would rather choose something closer to the Mediterranean Sea.
- Pierre: Because I study German Studies, I wanted to improve my German language skills.
- Friky: Because I studied German in High School and as a student of Landscape Architecture I didn’t have many choices in Europe.
- Ema: To learn German.

What was your first impression of Dresden/Germany?

- Jan: I was really excited about Dresden, I did not expect such a friendly city with a relaxing atmosphere. I realized that it was a little slower than Prague and I liked it. I was also surprised that I felt no culture barrier between me and the German people.
- Pierre: My first impression of Dresden was that it is a large city and there is a lot to discover here.
- Friky: My first impression of Germany was that it's a free land where anybody can do what they want and where appearance is not as important as in other countries. My impression of Dresden was that it's a quite small city with a lot of green spaces.
- Ema: That Germany is a land full of work opportunities.

How are you experiencing Dresden as a university town?

- Jan: Through living in the Neustadt I can feel it every day. On the Campus and also in the Neustadt you can see so many young people, it is refreshing.
- Pierre: There are young people everywhere.
- Ema: German students have a lot of opportunities and have a lot of discounts and support, so that they have greater motivation to study.

What did you expect of your stay? Have your expectations been met?

- Jan: My expectations were to learn German and to seduce foreign girls and both have been met.

- Pierre: I wanted to meet many Germans and drink a lot of Bier. Partly, yes.
- Friky: My expectations were to find a new motivation to keep on studying, and I must say I have found motivation to finish my studies. Other expectations were to meet many foreign people and Germans, too. With Erasmus students it has been easy to build relationships, but with native speakers it has been a little more difficult. I also expected to improve my language skills and I think I did, even if not as much as I had expected.
- Ema: I expected to meet German people and to develop deep relationships with them. This expectation has not been fulfilled, but I had the chance to meet new foreign people and make new friends.

Are there any differences between university-life in your home country and Germany?

- Jan: There are, all the courses which I attended are smaller and I would say more interactive. At home we are mostly expected to only listen, not to participate in the debate intensively. Relationships with teachers are much friendlier, too.
- Friky & Ema: University is better organized here concerning lessons, exams, professors, school rooms, "Arbeitsräume" and open spaces. But there are fewer chances to meet people and there are fewer meeting spaces than in Italy.

Have you experienced any problems/difficulties/obstacles concerning your studies (in Dresden)?

- Jan: Not anything particular, just my poor language abilities were a problem at the beginning.
- Pierre: Just problems with understanding, I found it especially difficult to take notes during my classes due to the crazy composition of German sentences with the verb at the end.
- Friky: I couldn't find all the subjects I was looking for, because every year the faculty of architecture has a different programme of lessons. I found it hard to ask for help and get help from other students.
- Ema: First of all language problems, but the professors are quite supportive.

What do you like most about studying in Germany? Why? What do you like least?

- Jan: The relaxed atmosphere. People in school offices are sometimes little too bureaucratic, but this is everywhere.
- Pierre: I like the German-French translation classes, because I can meet people there who study my language and they want to discuss many things that we have in common.
- Friky: I find the co-operations between the different faculties interesting. Arts, engineering...lessons are held by professors of various faculties.
- Ema: I find that there are too many weekly exercises, presentations and too much assignments.

How was your start here? Did you feel integrated right from the start?

Jan: Yes, the start was quite fast. Through the Erasmus parties and common worries I found my place among other Erasmus students in Dresden quite well. The only problem was my non-existent German.

Friky &

Ema: It has been easy to meet other people thanks to campus tours and Erasmus initiatives. Relationships to others have been good right from the start.

How did you cope with Sächsisch?

Jan: Not a chance.

Pierre: At the beginning I understood not a word. At the moment, it is a lot better, but still when my elderly Saxon neighbour tries to tell me a story, it is like Chinese to me.

Friky &

Ema: It's impossible to understand people speaking Sächsisch ;)

What is a "Hitsche" and a "Bemme", and what is "bebbeln"? Any suggestions?

Jan: Not an idea, something dirty? Food?

Ema: Not a clue!

Pierre: How do you write it? No.

Do you have any recommendations for foreign students to gain as much positive experiences and make the most of their stay?

Jan: I have two. Firstly, do not live in a Studentenwohnheim, find a WG. It's one of the few opportunities to meet German people; through school it's not so easy. And secondly, do not stick with the people of your nationality only. It is the way to hell, staying in Germany and not meeting any Germans or foreigners makes no sense.

Pierre: It is better to live in a WG with Germans, in Neustadt if possible. And to use the Erasmus Initiative programs, they are useful.

Friky: To join the Erasmus initiatives at the beginning: they are a good opportunity to meet people. Live in Neustadt and buy a bike!

What are your plans for the near future?

Jan: It is my last year of university, so in summer I am going to do some travelling and then work awaits.

Friky: To go on holiday and finish my studies as soon as possible. And maybe gain other experience abroad.

Ema: Holidays.

Thank you very much and take care!

There isn't just one way of doing it – How to organize your internship

Lisa Göldner and Aline Niesel

There comes a time in the life of a student studying English or American Studies, when he or she has to make a major decision: Where and how do I wish to spend my time abroad? A very obvious solution would be to consult the 'Akademische Auslandsamt' at the Dresden University of Technology. Nevertheless, there is always more than one way to skin a cat. In the following article, we would like to introduce two alternate options to you: Firstly, internships which are arranged by the 'Bundesagentur für Arbeit' and, secondly, the individual search and application at various companies in foreign countries.

The agony of choice...

The department 'Zentrale Auslands- und Fachvermittlung (ZAV)' of the 'Bundesagentur für Arbeit' offers several interesting jobs and practical training positions in English-speaking countries. The first interesting section that is listed in their program includes volunteer work in schools in Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain and Canada. They range from 4 to 12 months and include free board and lodging as well as an expense allowance in the majority of cases. Unfortunately, these volunteer programs are accompanied by an agency fee of 1,650 Euros plus visa, insurance and travel costs, which makes them quite expensive.

A very attractive offer for students who would like to work with critically ill children is the child care institution of the Barretstown Gang Camp in Ireland. In this case, the applicant does not have to pay a program fee for the three-month care program, and meals and accommodation are provided as well. If you wish to take on a position as an activity leader, who helps to create and perform programs for the children, you are paid 430 Euros per week. The only costs thereby incurred for the applicant are for the flights and insurance.

Additionally, I wish to recommend the internship program at Crotched Mountain in Greenfield, New Hampshire, due to personal experience. This is a great institution which offers students of education or social pedagogy the possibility to work with handicapped children. You may choose to stay for 3 to 12 months, and you have the option to work in the school and/or in the residential area. The intern is paid \$150 per week, which generally speaking covers the expenses during the stay, because the board is free during working hours. Unfortunately, the costs for visa and insurance range from approximately 800 to 1,600 Euros depending on the time of the internship, in addition to the travel costs.

The ZAV, of course, offers an even greater variety like working on a farm in Iceland, at Walt Disney World Co in Florida, or in the Nelson internship program in New Zealand. However, to describe all of them in more detail would occupy too much time and space; therefore, for more information check out the internet page: www.ba-auslandsvermittlung.de/lang_de/nn_22086/DE/Home/homepage__node.html__nnn=t rue

Do It yourself!

Gaining practical experience while studying is at least as important as taking your academic degree. In fact the most decisive argument for any employer will be how much job experience you have gained throughout your studies and what specific kind.

As described, there are dozens of organizations assisting students and graduates with finding an adequate internship.

If you don't want to take up one of these, there is still the possibility of applying proactively as I did to get my internships. That might be a good solution if you know exactly what you want to do during your practical period and if you know which company offers internships in the requested area of studies.

For me it didn't prove advantageous to apply blindly for an internship abroad. Due to a former passiveness in organizing this period, I was short of time regarding the desired starting date of the internship. I got to know that a lot of time, research, knowledge of the potential employer's field of activity and not at least money is needed when applying for a company situated in a foreign country. After applying blindly for more than 20 internships across the United Kingdom didn't lead to the desired results, I chose to take my chance on site and went to Wales where I was finally living in a flatsharing community while working in a typical Welsh pub.

Though I didn't regret the unintentional course of my journey, I learned to take direct control of my extra-curricula activities by wisely planning beforehand.

It is important to have concrete ideas about how things ought to be: What are your goals concerning the internship? What skills are relevant for the enterprise you are wishing to work for? Try to convince others by arranging your advantages in a decent letter of application.

In the end it appeared much easier to find a suitable internship within Germany. Several databases on the internet, former interns, study mates, announcements on boards at the university or even relatives working in the desired career field can help you finding a proper place to gain pre-professional work experience.

You should always be aware of the fact that the earlier you start the more experience you can gain before you finish your studies - this will benefit you in the long-run, i.e. you will become more attractive to potential employers. So keep your eyes open while browsing around the unimagined field of possibilities.

The Department's very (in)official List of Favourite Books (by Claudia Rossin & Wieland Schmid)

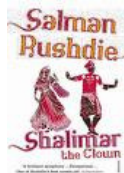
Are there too many books out there for you?

The sorting system of the SLUB is not really helpful at all in picking a good read? And the last time you asked your local book-seller for a good recommendation, they sent you to the cookbook-section?

Thou shalt not fear, dear reader, for we have invested time and effort, interviewing both eleven students and eleven lecturers from the departments of American Studies and British Studies in Dresden, in order to find out about their personal recommendations when it comes to literature, i.e. the English department's List of Favourite Books.

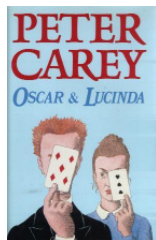
LECTURERS

Naturally, books are the #1 tool when it comes to working in the humanities, so we were not very much suprised that some of our lecturers found it hard to limit themselves to just one book:



Professor Stefan Horlacher (Chair of English Literature) named three and would not comment on them, “in order to let the students read and find out for themselves: Vladimir Nabokov’s *Pale Fire*, Salman Rushdie’s *Shalimar the Clown*, and Antonio Tabucchi’s *Indian Nocturne*.”

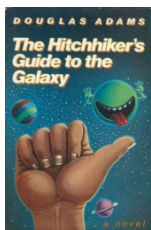
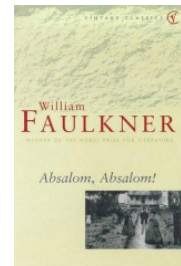
Similarly, **Peter Stear** (from the same chair) preferred to name a variety of books, “assuming that the Bible and the complete works of Shakespeare are already part of the deal”. The books that he would opt for when it came to a “*Desert Island* situation” include Thomas Mann’s *The Magic Mountain*, W. G. Sebald’s *Austerlitz*, Martin Amis’s novel *Money*, Kazuo Ishiguro’s *The Unconsoled*, Salman Rushdie’s *Shalimar the Clown* (which makes two nods for Rushdie already), and the *Collected Poems* by Paul Muldoon.



One might get the impression that all people in literary studies are unable to pick merely one favourite read, yet we were proven wrong: **Dr. Sigrun Meinig** took ‘favourite’ “to refer to one of the books that I go back to at regular intervals and always feel enriched after having reread it”, and consequently opted for Peter Carey’s *Oscar and Lucinda*: “a very good read of a journey from England to Australia in the nineteenth century, centred on two somewhat unusual individuals with an infuriating ending, written in wonderful language”, and “a book that not as many people

have read as I would wish.”

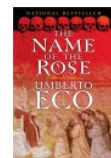
The same goes for **Professor Hans-Ulrich Mohr** (Chair of American Literature), who picked William Faulkner's novel *Absalom! Absalom!* He connects his favourite book of choice to constant re-reading since his youth, too: "To me, each sentence opens up deeper structures of knowledge and experience, though it is hard to talk about sentences, since you may as well consider the whole book as just one large sentence", which makes for the novel's complexity, "both in terms of content and narrative, yet still a good, fluent read." Professor Mohr also quotes Salman Rushdie (there we go again!), who once pointed out to him "that Faulkner may be the writer who had the strongest impact on 20th century fiction worldwide (especially on emerging 3rd-world nations)."



Hristina Patceva, who only recently graduated from Dresden University with a master's degree in literary studies, gives a student-friendly recommendation in Douglas Adams's much-adored *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, which she read "three times ten years ago because I found it hilarious and it made me laugh each time I read it." She assumes that "Dostoyevsky, Hugo, Marques might be more appropriate for a student of literature. But then, they are beyond such categories as favorite, you don't judge them in that way."

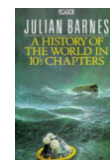
Thinking outside literary studies, we also consulted the other chairs of our department. Here, a lot of the selections were very straightforward picks with very specific explanations:

Professor Ursula Schaefer (Chair of Linguistics) took the semiotic route and named Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*, for being "intricately multilayered: a thrilling detective story, a well-informed sketch of 14th century theological and philosophical disputes and - last but not least - a semiotic masterpiece."

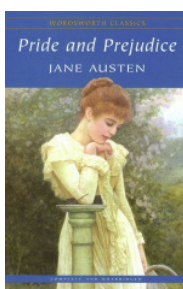


Professor Andreas Marschollek (Chair of Foreign Language Teaching), on the other hand, links *The Big Sleep* by Raymond Chandler to memories of his student days, and still adores "the brilliant dialogue, not to mention the two very successful film adaptations."

In other cases, a book may arouse interest merely for its unusual perspective: In Julian Barnes's *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters*, named by **Professor Thomas Kühn** (Chair of British Cultural Studies), the point-of-view of a woodworm simply does the trick.

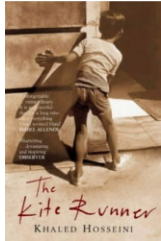


Apparently, 20th century literature offers everything a reader would wish for,



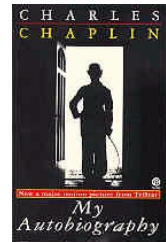
but **Sylvia Schulze**, assistant to Professor Kühn, opted for the early 19th century when asked about her favourite read. Despite having recently been left "breathless" by Ian McEwan's *The Cement Garden* and José Saramago's *The Cave* (thus usually "preferring the book I am reading at the moment"), she regularly goes back to her all-time favourite, *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen: "easy to read, excellent entertainment, and very relaxing – plus it always excites me just like the first time to find out whether or not Darcy and Elizabeth ..."

Generally speaking, all the lecturers whom we asked turned out to be avid readers, which made the choice of just one book quite a challenge.



The department's language teachers made no exception here: **Laura Park** says she has "read, enjoyed and forgotten too many books to have a favourite", so Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* may be profiting from mere coincidence here, being "just the latest book to make a powerful impression on me. I'm always fascinated by humankind's basest and loftiest instincts, and the book deals with them extensively. And I can't remember the last time I was moved to shedding so many bucketloads of tears by a book."

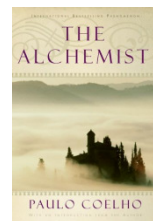
Keith Hollingsworth, on the other hand, explained his root canals as a reader and as a student for whom it was obligatory to carry a novel at all times ("The only school habit that has stuck!") when picking Charles Chaplin's *My Autobiography*. To him, the book is linked to the memoir of an RE teacher in school, who, "instead of studying the Bible, simply read a section of Chaplin's autobiography in each lesson, perhaps hoping that some of Chaplin's spirit might rub off on his tender flock", which was happily embraced by "the 14-year-old schoolboy when lessons demanded little exercising of grey matter. It's a marvellously adventurous read, both articulate and gratifying – what more could a student of English want?"



STUDENTS

As well as their lecturers, students found it challenging to confine their answers to one book only (with the highest score of five books that were outsold as one) but as we forced them to, we got what we wanted. Nevertheless, Austen and Gaskell did not appear as much as we expected.

Sylvia Grunert's favourite is Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist*, one of the – if not *the* – most-read novels by a Brazilian author. Adoring the story of the shepherd boy Santiago, whose dream it is to search for treasures around the world, Sylvia has read it two or three times already, finding it "very spiritual, full of magic and simply beautiful" at the same time. However, for all of our appreciated readers seeking to experience something unconventionally new, Scottish authoress Val MacDermid could be what you are looking for.

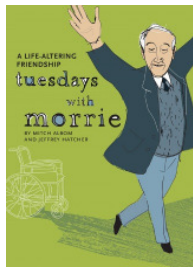


Talking about spiritual books, one cannot be omitted: *The Holy Bible*. In many households, it's there to catch dust on the book shelf, but **Ina Schliebner** wishes it wasn't like that, as for her "it is just so much more than merely a book. Among many other things, it's a guide, consolation and the Word of God" that make it so valuable.

Referring to valuable and precious books, Elizabeth Shaw's *Die Schildkröte hat Geburtstag* is **Rita Schwanebeck's** decision. She named the Irish writer (yes, but indeed a German book!) because it was "the first book I have ever loved, and the experience of being so

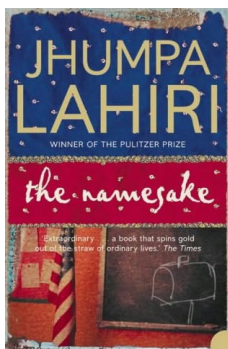


affectionate about a book probably made me the voracious reader I am today.”



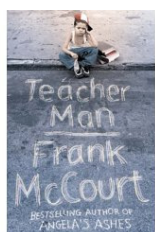
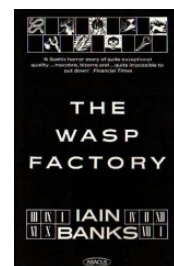
No matter what her first beloved book was, **Raja Schinke** followed a teacher’s recommendation about five years ago. Attaching little notes to several pages when she read Mitch Albom’s *Tuesdays with Morrie* herself for the first time, Raja said she read these special bits over and over again when she felt the need of doing so. “I love that book because Morrie, despite facing physical deterioration and getting more and more dependent on other people each day, still shows that incredible lust for life. It just makes your own (small) problems seem ridiculous, even futile. No matter how often you read it, it just makes you feel much better.”

Feeling better when thinking about a special book is something that **Andrea Jahn** also experienced. She chose Oscar Wilde’s *The Importance of Being Earnest* as her favourite, having very fond memories of it as it is and will always be connected with her time back in school, when they put on a production of the play.



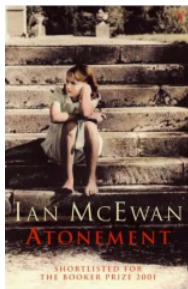
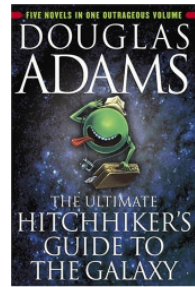
Moving from earnest to even serious matters, **Simone Reiss** recommends a witty, yet grave novel about an Indian family in the USA: *The Namesake* by Jhumpa Lahiri. For those who haven’t heard about it by now, Simone gave us a short overview. *The Namesake* is a campus novel (who missed that class in the introduction course??), recounting the years between 1968 and 2000 but first focusing on the pregnant wife. “As years go by, the eldest child, Gogol, is focused on as the main character. He struggles to find a balance between tradition and the modern times, for his name always ties him to his family and their values, and he just cannot escape them” (hence the book’s title).

Jana Oelkers’ pick – Iain Banks’ *The Wasp Factory* – is not only another form of earnestness but nothing for the faint-hearted. “When I was travelling through Scotland, someone recommended Iain Banks to me as *the* Scottish author. Then I read the *Wasp Factory* and couldn’t really bring the dark, bizarre world of 16-year-old Frank, who murders three of his family members for reasons beyond our imagination, in line with the Scottish life I encountered. But there is a dark side in everything and everybody and Banks takes you right into it – brilliant!”



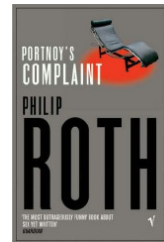
On the contrary, but not less vivid, we find Frank McCourt’s *Teacher Man* on our list of favourites. For **Robert Troschitz**, “it’s not only an easy and funny read but also an answer the one question that probably all *Lehramt* students ask themselves but nobody was able to answer so far: Why the hell do I want to become a teacher?” Robert also adds a little P.S.: “*A Monk Swimming* by Malachy McCourt – Frank’s brother – answers questions that go deeper, i.e. why do I live, why am I still here, isn’t every story true ...”

Last but not least, we finally found a congruence in the lists of students' and lecturers' favourite books. As Hristina Patceva recommended before, **Nicole Otte's** preferred piece of literature is Douglas Adams's *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* including all five volumes (*The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*; *The Restaurant at the End of the Universe*; *Life, the Universe and Everything*; *So Long, and Thanks for All the Fish*; *Mostly Harmless*). For Nicole, who cracked up all the time while reading the books, "it's very funny and ironic, with strange characters and typically British humour. If you've ever wondered if there is more in space than our little planet and if you want to have the answer to the ultimate questions of the meaning of life, you should read and enjoy it!"



To really *catch (those) 22*, the two persons in charge of this collection feel impelled to publish their own statements. Accounting for the (so far) missing part of *Girls' books*, I (**the female part of the team**) go for Ian McEwan's *Atonement*. No, not only because of James McAvoy. From the very beginning, I was and still am fascinated by McEwan's descriptions. Without just simply naming the plain fact, he portrays events in such a moving, heart-rendering, affectionate and detailed manner that I cannot put the book away once I have started reading (at least up to when I fall asleep around 3 a.m.).

Finally, **the male part of the team** gave in as well and, in the context of the last answer, felt obliged to name a disillusioned, lewd, and misogynist title – yet also one of the best novels of the 20th century, written by the greatest living American writer, Philip Roth: *Portnoy's Complaint*. It offers all the ingredients of Roth's greatest books, plus it is also the longest joke that I know of, with an unforgettable punchline.



The Major Indie Label

(by Dominic Schiedl)

Rap music is in a major crisis. Since the music labels are folding due to declining record sales, the times in which every rap artist who could rhyme “you” with “do” was given a record deal are over once and for all. This development, however, is not necessarily bad at all. Since the late 1990s, rap music has been in artistic decline, with semi-talented MCs such as 50 Cent setting the tone and drowning the profile of the art in obscure scenarios of violence, bling-bling and pornographic images. The “black CNN”, as Public Enemy's Chuck D called the music in the late 1980s, has become irrelevant for the culture and a cash cow instead.

This cash cow, however, is not giving that much milk anymore. With fame being out of the picture, many rappers have shifted to independent labels instead. The front-runner in that development has to be Stones Throw Records. Founded in 1996 by DJ/ Producer Peanut Butter Wolf, the label has consistently expanded its roster and is nowadays home to some the most innovative artists of the genre. That Chris Manak, so the real name of Peanut Butter Wolf, keeps it real, goes without saying. He has only put out what he would buy for himself. He only signs artists to the label in whom he personally believes in. This is a credo which already made him miss out on some big paychecks by ignoring financially promising MCs.

Nevertheless, he remains optimistic: “I may be wealthy someday, but only as an indirect consequence of putting out what I believe to be good music.” And there is absolutely no reason to be pessimistic: in the course of time, the label has acquired a reputation of putting out only high-quality releases and of treating its artists and fans well. Financially, the label neither seems to be in the red anytime soon with record distributions all over the globe.

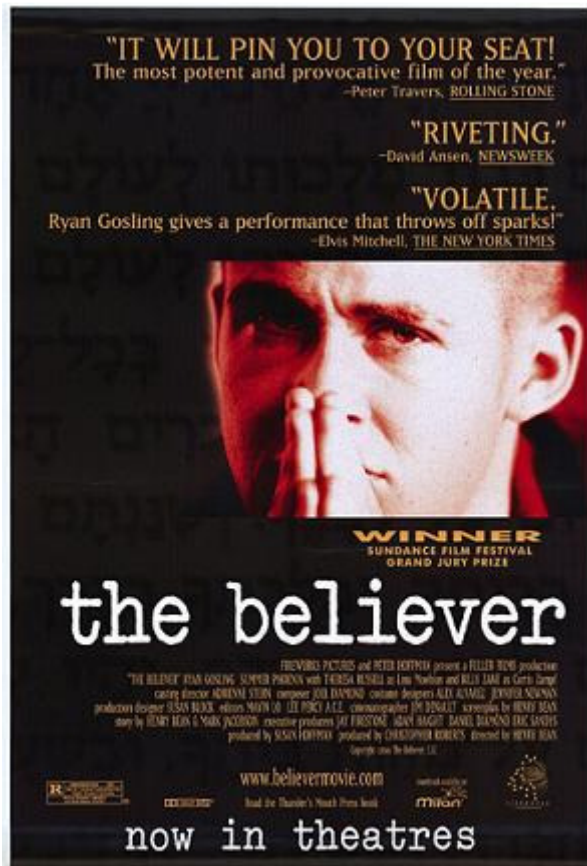
The Los Angeles based company is in the fortunate position of having loyal fans. This is achieved in three ways. First of all, the artists regularly tour the States, Asia and Europe. Often, various groups and rappers of the label perform at the same show. This way, they help each other get their name known. As a fan you get the feeling that you could hang out with these guys. They are not aloof superstars. Neither do they pretend to be. Secondly, through the careful selection of artists and the artistic freedom they are given, every release so far has been showered with positive reviews by critics and fans alike. This recognition already goes beyond the boundaries of the genre: Producer Madlib receives warm words for his production work from jazz and soul critics likewise (he also was the main contributor to the latest release of soul superstar Erykah Badu). Furthermore, small gifts preserve friendships. Stones Throw gives treats to the fans in between new CD releases. Regularly, the label puts free mixtapes on its homepage for download. This makes fans happy and is also a means of presenting the stylistic diversity of the labels roster which goes beyond rap music: from instrumental hip hop to modern funk experiments to retro soul – the message is clear: if you want to get quality black American music, you will get it right there.

There is no doubt that Stones Throw's artists keep on releasing music by MCs that order “a rapper for lunch and spit out the chain” (Madvillain on “Figaro”) and

contribute to the further development of the music by blending rare soul samples with futuristic sounds, clever wordplay and the right attitude. Listen for yourself at <http://www.stonethrow.com/jukebox>.

The Believer – A Film Review

(by the person who forgot to send her/his name)



Danny Balint, played by Ryan Gosling, is a 22 –year-old skinhead. He wears black army boots and a t-shirt with a swastika on it and provokes fights with minorities. His current goal in life is terrifying: he wants to kill Jews. The paradox is that Balint himself is Jewish. This controversial film, directed by Henry Bean won the Grand Jury Prize for the Best Drama at the Sundance Film Festival in 2001. Based on actual events, it shows the young Jewish neo-nazi at war with himself as a romantic, tragic character. For this reason it was mistaken for neo-nazi, anti-Semitic propaganda and prohibited in many countries. For the same reason, it unfortunately cannot be found on the German market.

The real trial for Danny's views begins when he meets Lina Moebius (Theresa Russel) and Curtis Zampf (Billy Zane). They are leaders of an underground neo-fascist organization and want to use Balint

as an intelligent person and passionate, skilled public speaker to raise their popularity. They also introduce Balint to other skinheads, who show him how to use explosives...

However, in spite of the fact that he wants to kill Jews, Danny keeps praying and wearing a Jewish belt. In spite of all risks, he protects the Torah, even when he and his friends desecrate a synagogue. The explanation of such actions is implicitly given in flashbacks to when Danny was a schoolboy and argued with his rabbi about the essence of belief and the traditional Jewish "turn the other cheek".

Balint's desire to kill Jews is more of a hatred towards himself and the impossibility of a changing conservative Jewish society and reforming some silly, from his point of view, orthodox traditions.

The keys to comprehending the idea of this film are also given in some other scenes, for instance, in love scenes with Carla, Moebius' daughter (Summer Phoenix) or in the final scene, where he alarms people about a bomb in the synagogue. Therefore the accusations of anti-Semitism are absolutely groundless. Moreover, all controversies about this film merely prove the great mastery of Bean, who does not thrust his opinion on us, but gives us food for thought.

It is a fresh, intellectual, exciting movie.

Reading Recipes in the English Lesson – A Book Review

(by Juliane Fürll & Stefanie Hoffmann)

The third part of Frank Mc Court's memoirs called *Teacher Man* completes his autobiographic trilogy which started with his Pulitzer Prize-winning Irish childhood story *Angela's Ashes* and was followed by *'Tis*, the recollection of his early years in New York.

Of course, *Teacher Man* invites the reader to learn about Mc Court's life as a teacher in New York. He has been teaching for 30 years, held 33,000 lessons and stood in front of 12,000 students. He only describes a handful of his pupils but their stories are vivid, sometimes dramatic and so full of irony that they will stay in the reader's mind. The book is not aimed at giving the perfect model of a good teacher, but it shows what it means to teach and that it takes a lot of time for a teacher to develop. Frank Mc Court constantly tries to position himself as a teacher and to find a way that encourages the students' willingness to learn. Thereby he figures out the difficulties of being somebody who is hardly at ease with himself and at the same time responsible for a whole lot of teenagers. His most remarkable insight in this book is probably the following: "I didn't call myself anything. I was more than a teacher. And less. In the high school classroom you are a drill sergeant, a rabbi, a shoulder to cry on, a disciplinarian, a singer, a low level scholar, a clerk, a referee, a clown, a counsellor, a dress-code enforcer, a conductor, an apologist, a philosopher, a collaborator, a tap dancer, a traffic cop, a priest, a mother-father-brother-sister-uncle-aunt, a bookkeeper, a critic, a psychologist, the last straw."

The author does not hide the fact that a teacher is also a person with a past and a present. Often he fills the lessons with stories from his miserable childhood, his arrival in America and the hard work at the docks. Due to his heartbreaking honesty the reader also finds out about the trials, errors and failures of his life. He struggles from high school to high school, fails to write his Ph.D. thesis at Trinity College and has to face the failure of his marriage. Moreover he spends his evenings drinking with other writers and dreams of becoming a writer one day himself.

While teaching his methods are anything but conventional. Mc Court tries to get his students' attention by giving them imaginative tasks such as assignments with the title: "An Excuse Note from Adam or Eve to God". He takes his students on field trips to Time Square or Central Park but what seems most striking is his idea of letting them read out recipes like poetry accompanied by whatever instruments they are able to play. Having finally found a post at New York's most prestigious school, Stuyvesant High School, he is able to position himself in the classroom and settle down.

What we learn from the book is that teaching is more than achieving high test scores or wielding the red pen. It is an exciting adventure through the various classrooms and is not only mandatory to read for American high school teachers but recommendable for teachers all over the world.

JABS Interviews with GLC teachers

(by Marie-Christine Götz, Christin Gerbeth & Annekathrin Gotsch)

They know all your grammar mistakes, all your mispronounced and wrongly spelled words, but what do we know about them? Let's have a look behind the GLC teacher's curtains!

Where do you originally come from?

Eva Stahlheber: Originally, I come from Eisenhower land. Where all the crow bar lifters ("Stahlhebers") hail from & where they ply their trade.

James McCullum: I originally come from Glasgow, Scotland.

Keith Hollingsworth: I come from Hertford, 25 miles north of London.

Laura Park: I am from the south of England, from Hampshire.

Elizabeth Orrison: I was born in Görlitz on 11 June 1937, but we had to flee and so I grew up in Baden-Württemberg. I lived in the States from 1960 to 1988.

David Hintz: Burlington, Wisconsin.

When and why did you come to Dresden?

Eva Stahlheber: My first encounter with Dresden happened in 1987. How did this come about? Read on under the following question...

James McCullum: I came to Dresden in October 2007 to take up a post at the TU.

Keith Hollingsworth: After the wall came down, I came with my wife to Dresden because I was offered a job here and my wife's mother lived here.

Laura Park: I came to TUD in 1992. I actually wanted to see the "GDR" after the wall came down.

Elizabeth Orrison: I worked in Sebnitz from 1992-95 and afterwards at the TU I started working for the Department. But I also work for Dresden International University, for the FSZ and Tudias. I'd have loved to work for the American Culture Studies Department as well, but that might have to remain a wish.

David Hintz: Because got married in August 1989.

What did you do in your pre-TU Dresden life?

Eva Stahlheber: Well, I do not want to bore you, but since you are asking...:-) and partially for my own memoirs... here goes: for my 1983 M.A. / State Exam thesis on the "Language of Inorganic Chemistry", I had mainly used secondary literature from Leipzig, Dresden, and Halle. This had come as a surprise, since up to that point, I had never had any contact with East German research or people

before. A year later, this thesis and my graduate work on both chemistry and English got me the offer for a job as a lecturer in English composition at the UoM, i.e. the University of Michigan, which, at the time, had started a new philosophy of “Reading and Writing across the Curriculum” and therefore wanted people like me who were qualified in science and the humanities at the same time.

In 1986, I was all of a sudden confronted with a visiting professor from East Germany, and from Dresden to boot. Moreover, when I learned that his name was “Manfred Gerbert” and that he was the author of the Dissertation B entitled “Die Syntax des technischen Englisch”, I almost fainted. His opus magnum had been the main underpinnings of my thesis! This turned out to be the beginning of a great friendship. Amongst other things, I asked him to give me private lectures in ESP (English for Specific Purposes=“Fach-Englisch” - neither “extrasensory perception” ;-), nor “English for Spaniards”), and we went on a weekend vacation to Chicago. He eventually instigated me to try and get a 3-week grant from the “Liga für Völkerfreundschaft” at the GDR Embassy for a place in one of the GDR's annual “Hochschulsummerkurse für internationale HochschullehrerInnen”. I needed a grant for Karl-Marx-Stadt because a grant from the Goethe-Institut for a Cultural Studies Seminar in Freiburg conflicted with the time frame for Dresden. Thus, in the summer of 1987, I spent 3 Goethe weeks in Freiburg and then 3 Fachsprachen weeks in Karl-Marx-Stadt, during which time I also took a day trip to Dresden to meet up with Manfred Gerbert. He showed me around, and I vividly remember the ice cream at the parlor next to the Goldener Reiter :-).

In the following year, i.e. in 1988, another grant application got me a 3-week place for Dresden's “Internationaler Hochschulkurs” – finally I came to Dresden for a longer stay and fell in love in 3 ways: with the city, with the professional university context (ESP/LSP), and privately. What followed were two suspenseful intercontinental years between Ann Arbor, Michigan, and Dresden, East Germany, which found their beautiful resolution in the Peaceful Revolution. In June 1989, I got my first job offer from Prof. Dr. Gläser at Leipzig University (one of the celebrities in ESP), and started my work there on September 1, 1990. Between 1990 and 1992, I had two one-year contracts as a lecturer there. It was an exciting time because I was right where the Peaceful Revolution had sprung up.

Imagine, the apartment the university had afforded me was located on Nicolai Square near Nicolaikirche, the place where everything began and brought about the “Wende”! At Karl-Marx University Leipzig, I taught lectures on “Landeskunde USA”, classes in “American English”, classes on “Fachübersetzung Chemie vom Deutschen ins Englische” as well as conversation

classes. On the weekends, I commuted home to Dresden by train on the so-called “Arbeiter-Rückfahrkarte”, a monthly ticket for employees, which ran to 11.00 Deutschmarks (per month, mind you!).

When the English Department (“Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik”) at TU Dresden was officially founded in 1992, I applied, and ever since then (since Sept. 1, 1992), I have been one of the lecturers (L.f.b.A.=Lehrkräfte für besondere Aufgaben) at our department, trying my best to expose students to natural English in all its contexts and to train students in its most accurate usage.

James McCullum: Before Dresden I was a teacher at Leipzig University.

Keith Hollingsworth: I worked as a teacher.

Laura Park: I was at the University of Innsbruck. I worked there as a teacher for English and did plays and drama classes.

Elizabeth Orrison: I grew up in Baden-Württemberg and married a man from the Military. I have 8 children and 17 Grandchildren by now. We moved to Florida. After my divorce I went to university and studied Humanities, English and French as Majors and German as a Minor. One of my Grandsons is currently at UCF as well. Afterwards I returned to Germany. I have been teaching singing and the piano and I’ve been singing myself.

David Hintz: How far back should I go? Up to 1981, I was a Gradstudent and TA for German at the University of Wisconsin; been a bus driver once; been a teacher at an academy for English teachers in Leipzig.

What do you find the most rewarding and the most frustrating thing about being a teacher?

Eva Stahlheber: The most tedious part about being a teacher, at least for me, is the stacks of never-ending grading work (“grating grading” – my coinage, as in “grating on someone’s nerves”). What usually makes matters (even) worse than is seeing the same errors being committed again that had been marked and discussed time and again before (with the same student(s)).

The good news is (what Laura Park described about me as “Eva, you’re on a mission!”) that my hobby, the teaching of grammar and word formation, has become my work. I consider myself very lucky and blessed that way in this day and age... And the most titillating thing about teaching grammar (and/or about teaching in general, for that matter) is seeing the sparkle of understanding and comprehension (“eureka!”) in my students’ eyes ensuing any explanation I have provided them with. Gives me goose bumps all over... What’s also right up there with that is the glee I feel when the occasional student reports back to me that my

reference letter has gained them the fellowship, internship, grant, traineeship, or scholarship they had applied for. A third item on this list of rewarding features of my job is the mutual trust that students grant each other and me in the Creative Writing course when we share experiences that inspired certain texts and often lent them a superb quality. Things like that really keep me overjoyed.

James McCullum: The most rewarding thing about being a teacher is when students pass their exams and I've played a part in that achievement. Also very rewarding is the look on students' faces when they learn something new from me. The most frustrating thing is the bureaucracy.

Keith Hollingsworth: In general, the most rewarding things are the personal contacts and to see the student's progress. Frustrating is the bureaucracy with its paper work, the examination conditions and students giving up their studies so quickly.

Laura Park: There are lots of rewarding things, let me think, to watch people becoming good is maybe the most rewarding thing. Seeing good people wasting their times is the most frustrating thing.

Elizabeth Orrison: The most rewarding is that I can share my knowledge and that I can acquaint students with everything that this knowledge has to offer. Frustrating is, that sometimes students seem to have a lack of interest or that they have such a hard time to adjust to university and that they fail to notice that this isn't high school anymore.

David Hintz: Frustrating: You can't get a good suntan as its so much in-door-work; rewarding: Teaching provides a good base for comedy as you can make fun of the students. They are such good spots, which again is kind of frustrating (laughs).

What is the best way to relax after correcting a heap of badly written student's essays?

Eva Stahlheber: Hmm... an hour of successive JABS into a punching bag maybe...? No, I'm kidding. My decision usually depends on what I've got on my plate afterwards. A nice long walk and talk with a friend (where I can rant and rave) or a few good Shandies might do the trick. Other options are an hour of iron pumping at the TU's workout room or a fifteen-minute jog in my neighborhood sports field.

James McCullum: The best way to relax after marking a heap of badly written essays is to drink a couple of beers and listen to some good music.

Keith Hollingsworth: I like working in the garden and reading.

Laura Park: Doing nothing! Just staring into space.

Elizabeth Orrison: I like to put up my feet and listen to good music.

David Hintz: I'm member of the Steigenberger Hotel Sports club and work out and swim a lot, but I push correcting work as far away as I can and like to go for a hike in the woods beforehand. I can't go afterwards as I have to constantly imagine all the future tests those poor trees might once become. And I like to cut the lawn as it's really relaxing. I love being out of doors.

What's on your breakfast table on Sundays?

Eva Stahlheber: A yellow china pot of steaming Earl Grey, milk, honey, toasted English muffins, margarine, butter, scrambled eggs, bacon, heated peeled tomatoes, fried Nuremberg sausages, lemon curd, raspberry jam, and chocolate spread. A nice long lit candle might top things off.

James McCullum: On my Sunday breakfast table would ideally be a full English breakfast. However, as I live in Germany, I have to make do with eggs, toast and a big pot of English tea.

Keith Hollingsworth: It is not much different from the other mornings. I have some muesli and a boiled egg. The egg may change.

Laura Park: (Laughs)...as much as possible! Could be anything, but I really love cake in the morning.

Elizabeth Orrison: Sometimes bacon and eggs, toast and coffee usually... an American breakfast.

David Hintz: My breakfast table is the same as my desk. I turn on TV. I sometimes have Pancakes and maple syrup, fried eggs and bacon, canned tomatoes and coffee.

What do you miss most about your (adopted) home country/town?

Eva Stahlheber: What do I miss most about my US stomping grounds? Oh, there's a list of items, and they're all pretty much of similar rank. First and foremost, I miss my San Francisco and Ann Arbor friends, some of whom have already passed away and whom I cannot visit anymore.

I also miss Ann Arbor's international campus with its intellectual atmosphere and its vast offer and accessibility of guest lectures and readings. What was another great thing about the U of M was its flat hierarchy and its policy of funding any of our trips to conferences where we were supposed to give a paper. I appreciate the honor of working for Larry Selinker (Interlanguage) and John Swales, ESP big shot at the E.L.I. (English Language Institute at UofM, Ann Arbor). Alas, I also miss my work in Technical Communication, where I helped,

tutored, and advised graduate students in the writing of their M.S. and PhD theses, which kept me learning and continuing to understand so much about engineering, about the sciences, and about ways of impinging upon human conceptualization and language production processes.

What I like to remember, too, about Ann Arbor is the Saturday brunch with its bagels, cream cheese, coffee, and good chat & cheer at Susan and Lars's house, Ann Arbor's magnolia springs and Indian Summer falls, Ann Arbor's sports facilities, Ann Arbor's Michigan Theater, its movie scene, "The Ark", the "Bird of Paradise" and the other jazz joints, Ann Arbor's theater and music productions, not to mention the May Festival, where I got to see and listen to Kurt Masur in 1989 for the first time. On that note, I miss being able to be a seasonal usher at Hill Auditorium, where I got to see and listen to all of the most renowned orchestras and musicians of the world for free.

My other home, San Francisco: well, its weather and its cultural events are unsurpassed. And so is its ethnic, culinary, intellectual, political, and sexual diversity. Special mention goes to Berkeley, the Haight, the Ferry Building, and Lick-Wilmerding High School.

James McCullum: The things I miss most about my home country are the food (eg, Cadbury's chocolate, haggis and full breakfasts), good customer service and good manners.

Keith Hollingsworth: I'll miss the initial friendliness to strangers or the smiles and small talk when people meet for the first time. And I miss a bit of English humour and sarcasm.

Laura Park: I have to think....can we move on to the next question?
Later: its nice here, actually I don't miss anything particularly. You can write down Marmite (laughs). But it's a lie.

Elizabeth Orrison: When I'm in Germany I miss my family and friends, my children and grandchildren, and I miss some of the food, when I'm in America it's basically the other way round. So, I'm sitting between two chairs, but I'm trying to have the best of both worlds.

David Hintz: My friends and family, the outdoors, thousands of lakes and forests, the architecture of a small town, the flat open spaces where I'm from, the wideness

Imagine you were granted three wishes – what would they be?

Eva Stahlheber: One, peace on Earth – and no sorrow anymore.
Two, best of health for my family and friends.
Three, a unified education system in Germany (similar to that of the GDR, but without its heavy ideological strand), incl. an abolition of the new Bachelor and Master degrees and an

abolition of the Kulturhoheit of the Bundeslaender. (I know some of my professorial colleagues might wish to put me on the rack for this or abandon me in nowhere land for this thought - as they have put a lot of effort into setting up the new courses of study. I would like to assure them, though, that I will continue to render my support and help with the proper organization and implementation of the new statutes and requirements, so that things may run smoothly in the future. We all know we can't turn back time...)

James McCullum: My three wishes would be: A full-time, permanent university contract (so I don't have to keep moving city), that Scotland had the best football team in the world, and that people would be nicer to each other.

Keith Hollingsworth: I would like to have the same holiday dates as my wife (because she works as a teacher as hasn't the same free days as I have in university), I wish that my son and my daughter will prosper and at last that me and my wife will live together happily for a long time.

Laura Park: Oh that's difficult...people should learn from past experience. A second one would be that life should be fair. And the last one, I think I save the last one for a rainy day...

Elizabeth Orrison: I'd like to find the piano I'm looking for (I was a singer once) it should be a BB Grand or a Stutzflügel, I want to have the actual furniture and not such a tabletop thing that you can put away after you are done, it just isn't the same. I hope that I can continue working a long time (I turned 70 last week.) and I hope that me and my family can continue to be as close as we are used to be and meet at least once a year.

David Hintz: More money to collect coins, I wish I could afford a 1879-flowing-hair-Stella \$4 gold piece in unused condition; a Porsche Carrera; a butler; sorry for being so materialistic (grins).

And last but not least, can you think of some final words of wisdom to share with your students?

Eva Stahlheber: Only 10% of it is inspiration; 90% of it is hard work. Thus, practice, practice, practice! As they say: Rome wasn't built in one day, but many paths lead to Rome: language classes at our department as well as a stay abroad ;-).

James McCullum: Don't worry or panic if you fail an exam or get a bad grade as there will always be another chance. I failed my first year at university, but I started again and still graduated.

Keith Hollingsworth: Happiness and affluence are two entirely different entities! Don't compare yourself to other people. In my opinion, comparison makes people unhappy. There is a Chinese story of a farmer

who used an old horse to till his fields. One day, the horse escaped into the hills and when the farmer's neighbours sympathized with the old man over his bad luck, the farmer replied, "Bad luck? Good luck? Who knows?" A week later, the horse returned with a herd of horses from the hills and this time the neighbours congratulated the farmer on his good luck. His reply was, "Good luck? Bad luck? Who knows?"

Then, when the farmer's son was attempting to tame one of the wild horses, he fell off its back and broke his leg. Everyone thought this very bad luck. Not the farmer, whose only reaction was, "Bad luck? Good luck? Who knows?"

Some weeks later, the army marched into the village and conscripted every able-bodied youth they found there. When they saw the farmer's son with his broken leg, they let him off. Now was that good luck or bad luck? Who knows?

Laura Park: I give you my favourite quote from Seneca, but it is quoted very loosely.

It is not because a thing is difficult that we don't do it but because we don't do it it's difficult.

Elisabeth Orrison: Always be interested, learn all you possibly can, because at some time in your life you will need it. Whatever you do, first remember and keep in mind that you are a human being after all.

David Hintz: Be nice to me, I'll be nice to you!

Looking for a summer job?

by Sandra Schulze

Have you ever wondered how to spend your time during the summer break? Of course, traveling to foreign places is an excellent idea, but how can you do this being more or less broke?!

Well, have you ever considered working in a place where others spend their holidays?! If you tend to answer this question with yes, then I have a suggestion for your next summer break.

What is Ruf Jugendreisen?

Ruf Jugendreisen is a tour operator specializes in supervised trips for young people who are looked after. So it is not like Rainbow Tours, for example, where young adults are left to take care of themselves. Ruf Jugendreisen follows a different concept. According to their wishes and also their money situation, teenagers and their parents can choose the perfect trip for their summer. No matter if they prefer a camping atmosphere, party nightlife or just chilling at the beach, every one is able to find something. During the last 26 years (that is for how long Ruf has existed) great changes have been made. Since 2005 Ruf has continuously been expanding its offers and travel destinations. The sector of children spending their holidays alone away from home is a rather new concept, which was added only in 2005, and has grown enormously since then. But it's not just a normal trip that stands behind it. Children from the ages 8-12 can choose between TOGGO Camps (like the series on Super RTL), Wendy and Bibi Blocksberg Camps (obviously mostly for girls), the Mickey Maus Camp, soccer or handball schools with famous players, or maybe feel how the detectives of TKKG spend their time.

The older children between 13 and 19 have the chance to travel to Spain, Italy, Sweden, Croatia, France, and so on. Destinations differ in various aspects. Rimini and Lloret de Mar are obviously more party orientated and offer more hotel accommodation. In contrast, Sweden, Sardinia or France are for those who prefer hanging out at camping grounds, playing the guitar and just having a more relaxing holiday.

All destinations offer special concepts regarding food and the program for the teenagers. During the day the adolescents have the possibility of being active in various ways, such as playing beach volleyball, soccer, going on a bike tour, etc. For the more creative people creative workshops are part of the program, too. The young people can make, for instance, their own wallets out of milk tetra packs, little animals made of beads, bracelets made with cord and beads, pieces of the coconut shell for a necklace, and so on. Working for Ruf means that creativity has no boundaries and is necessary because out of nothing has to be done everything.

In the evenings shows and discotheques are part of the entertainment program. If you are in a camp you are part of creating those shows, such as karaoke contests, quiz shows, the Ruf Musical and the big show on their last evening where the teenagers themselves go on stage and show their talents.

Let's have a look at the **job profiles**, since this is the most important thing when you are thinking about working for Ruf. Well, the classical and most common way of getting a foot into the world of Ruf, people start being a so-called 'Teamer'. As a

'Teamer' you are responsible for a group up to 20-25 teenagers or children. They are all clustered in 'Villaggios' or 'Meetings'. Therefore, those 25 kids are the ones you should spend most of your time with. During the day you do some workshops or sports with them and in the evening you might go out together. Usually, after three days the group dynamic is amazing and you, as their 'Teamer', are in the middle of everything being their 'star'. I can promise you that it is unbelievable how attached everyone gets to one another. I have never seen anyone parting at the end of their trip without having at least on little tear running down their faces. At this point, I would like to give a short example of how important and wonderful the job as a 'Teamer' can be. Last summer, I was working in Rimini/Italy, and we had three 17-year olds who came from a foster home and were already known to the police in Germany. Anyway, the state had decided to pay for their journey and thus, they spent two weeks in Rimini with Ruf. While traveling with the bus to Italy they already spent all their pocket money (35 €) on cigarettes and food. Once they arrived at the hotel there was no money left, but two weeks to go. The result was that they started stealing not only within their group but also in shops. Obviously they were caught and got into serious trouble with the police. Since they also displayed severe alcohol problems we were considering sending them home. But somehow we decided against that and involved them a little more because we told them if they wanted to stay they would have to support us in clearing the tables and bringing the others something to drink at the dinner table. It was surprising to us that they actually enjoyed their special tasks. After the two weeks were over it was time to say goodbye. I would be lying if I didn't admit that we were truly longing for their bus to leave. Anyway, the most surprising thing happened when it was time to go to the busses. Two of those 'cool gangster rappers' started crying crocodile tears and left us speechless. They thanked our team, and especially their 'Teamer' for a great time and got into the bus with red eyes. I swear this is the best acknowledgement you can get for that job.

Well, this is only one short episode that can happen during a summer season with Ruf. When you know think, well I don't know if working as a 'Teamer' is the perfect job for me, don't worry. There are more ways of having a great summer somewhere near the sea. Maybe you are a good cook, so why not become a 'Cookie'. Ruf has it's own catering in many regions and needs good cooks, as well as a chef. People who are good at entertaining or organizing can consider the job as coordinator or animator. Usually, those jobs can be chosen after having completed a good first season. If you have one of the two jobs you are in the 'Leitungsteam' and responsible for the organization of the program, trips to places nearby, discounts for discotheques, etc. Something you might want to do after having experienced a first year with Ruf.

I know that this was only a short introduction to the job profiles and what Ruf Jugendreisen offers. But if you are curious, have a look at their webpage www.ruf.de or contact me for more information.

With this in mind, enjoy your summer. And as Ruf Jugendreisen claims: Enjoy the summer of your life!

PS: If you should be wondering about terms as 'Teamer', 'Cookie', etc., you have to know that they have in Ruf their own kind of vocabulary. But it's easy, and soon you'll be talking the same way.

What are we go to do tonight? A guide to our student clubs

(by Katja Böhme and Julia Hoffmann)

This question can be heard in our flat at least once a week. We all like to go out but often we cannot until the last moment. Does that sound familiar to you? Especially the students that have just moved to Dresden might need some help in finding the right place to spend their free nights. Dresden is a city of many options but, apart from cost-free alternatives such as lying by the Elbe or on the lawn in one of the numerous parks, there are many pubs, clubs and bars that are worth visiting. In the following, we will stick to the several student clubs.

On the one hand, there are the student clubs which can normally be found in the cellar or the lowest floor of the students' hostels; on the other hand we have refectories which are sometimes converted into clubs at night. We recently discovered these on the pub crawl "Nachtwanderung". All of the clubs participate in this festival and, included in the 7-euro-entrance, a shuttle bus takes you from one club to the other. For new students, this is probably the best way to get an overview over each kind of club. The special highlight of this festival is the free drink you get in every fourth club you buy one.

There are various clubs that are very small, like Club 11(Hochschulstraße) or HängeMathe (Zeunerstraße), but all of them have a particular charm. Club 11 has just been rebuilt but it is actually one of the most traditional student clubs which organises theme nights and cultural events quite often. The height of the semester is the legendary "Bockbier-Anstich" (tapping the barrel) at the start of the semester. Club HängeMathe normally opens Mondays and Thursdays, besides sports festivals you can find karaoke nights on its schedule. This year there will be an additional event called "HängeMathsche Sommerspiele" including several fun games.

Some of the clubs are only used for dancing parties, especially the refectories, as you can already see by looking at their names, like Klub Neue Mensa or Club Mensa. Klub Neue Mensa can be found in the refectory building in Bergstraße which consists of 3 large party rooms and one concert hall. The club organises diverse cultural events including parties, concerts, comedy, presentations and cinema. The "Bierstube" pub is a part of Klub Neue Mensa and offers good meals at low prices every day until 1 am. Club Mensa can be found in the refectory in Reichenbachstraße on the 3rd floor. Here you can party and 'shake your booty' every Saturday and last Friday each month. Special parties are organised on Wednesdays, such as the TU or HTW Tequila Party at the beginning of every semester.

Not so far away from Club Mensa are situated two more clubs, right next to each other. Novitatis is the club in the cellar of Fritz-Löffler-Straße 12. This club is the result of the union of the former clubs M14 and Club 10. It was opened after the rebuilding of the student's hostel. This club offers dark music every Friday. Another, even more gothical, club is Gag 18. This club has been located right under the student services since 1974. The name derives from the former name of the street "Juri-Gagarin-Straße". Besides the regular parties on Fridays, where you can dance to Wave/Gothic in one week and to Alternative/Indie in the other, the club offers a lot more. Every year it organises the "Wiesenfest" for families with children, often you can listen to bands or participate at poker nights.

When you follow Reichenbachstraße further into the direction August-Bebel-Straße (faculty of pedagogy) you will definitely have to stop by the Tusculum club. It reminds

one rather of a Greek temple than of a club but is worth going in. The club WU5 (Wundtstraße), probably one of the oldest student clubs in Dresden, is close to the Tusculum. It is known for its imitation couple "Asterix and Obelix". Spending a night in WU5 you will also be pleased with anecdotes by the regular's table about highly scientific discussions.

A bit further away from our campus students can drop by Borsi 34 (Borsbergstraße) to have some drinks and nice conversations. Located in the cellar of the student hostel the club leaves a positive impression with its comfortable and relaxing bar area which offers many chats among friends and students. Borsi 34 attracts people by their different events such as Volleyball competitions, short trips, hiking tours and many more.

Another club which needs to be mentioned here, is the club Count Down, situated in between the campus and Dresden-Neustadt in Güntzstraße, it can be found as well as many of the other clubs in the cellar of a students' hostels. With its wide range of activities and events you can be sure to find something that fits your interests, be it a game night, playing 'Risk', an evening getting to know students from other countries by their regularly held Erasmus parties or relaxing with a talking book about a fascinating story, it will never get boring!

The club Bärenzwinger (the bear cage) is one that attracts people by its unique façade and ancient walls. For 20 years, the club has been presenting the Santa Clause's sack race and on November 11th the yearly barrel-tapping of bock beer has been celebrated. One of the main big events in the summer is the Dixie festival where you can hear some musicians also in the Bärenzwinger. The club can be found in a nice setting below the 'Brühlschen Terrassen'.

Club Aquarium und Club New Feeling are a bit bigger and located at the edge of the campus. Club Aquarium (St. Petersburger Straße) has a fixed schedule every week. Therefore, Monday stands for a tombola at midnight, Tuesdays offers surprises such as music, games or culture. On Wednesday you can participate in parlour games. Live bands (newcomers) are welcomed every Thursday and Fridays you have some cocktails before heading out to the discotheque. Club New Feeling – Budapester Straße, the extension of house 24 - cannot be left out of consideration as they describe themselves as "the other kind of club". With its two floors you have enough variety of international music to dance off your daily student's routine. Every Wednesday you can discover many cocktails for half the price.

Got interested in any of these pubs and clubs? Go and find out yourself! It is going to be a blast! Promise!



Mormons – Who? What? Where?

(Ina Lenzer & Janina Schäfer)

What comes to your mind when you hear the word “Mormons”? First of all, probably the notion of polygamy and then maybe American sect. Well, these stereotypes are to the most extent completely wrong. Polygamy is only partly tolerated in some US states, but Mormons or to be more precise, the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, themselves are currently encouraging laws against this tradition.

The issue of the sect is of course questionable since every religious group different from the big world religions (Christianity, Buddhism, Islam...) is considered a sect.

A sect in West Texas with awkward, if not inhuman, customs which has been in the media recently, because of child abuse and polygamy, has shed a bad light on the Mormon church. The sect’s leader, Warren Jeffs, who was one of US’ most wanted criminals, is often referred to as being a Mormon. This is a rather incorrect assumption, since Jeffs has been expelled from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and founded his own, far more radical ‘church’. Therefore it can be claimed that the West Texan sect has almost nothing in common with the original Mormons. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, with its headquarters in Provo, Utah, is first and foremost a splinter group of the Christian Church and its members are in fact normal, but very pious people.

The conjecture that Mormons only live in the USA is not quite correct either. They actually live just around the corner. Berlin, Munich and Hamburg, but also Meißen are only a few places where Mormons and their churches can be found.

So, we asked ourselves: Who are these people? What are they doing here? Thus we met up with a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Elder Viktor Vasiley is German but is originally from Macedonia and currently on his mission in Meißen. He was so kind as to answer some of our questions.

Does every member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints have to go on a mission in his or her life?

No, this is totally voluntary. Whether to apply for a mission or not is everyone’s own decision. In fact, people’s request to go on a mission can even be denied by the church due to inappropriate behaviour or, as they call it, “unworthiness”.

Mainly people that are deeply spiritually involved with our faith and strictly follow the rules, take them very seriously, are the ones that feel the need to go on a mission and serve God. That is our motivation. Serving a mission means spending one and a half to two years away from home, serving God, so the motivation has to be high.

Are there any other requirements that need to be fulfilled before you are allowed to go on a mission?

Of course there are! First and foremost, regarding European and American rules for the missionary work, boys are not allowed to go on a mission before they turn 19, girls until they are 21. Before we can start serving a mission in a foreign country, we need to spend two to three months in the MTC, the Missionary Training Center, where we study the language, mainly the church language, of the other country and guidelines that are essential for our work. The MTC in the USA is in Provo/ Utah, the MTC for Europe is in Preston/United Kingdom.

What about the financial situation?

Before we go on a mission, we give a certain amount of money to the church. The Church takes this money and provides us with apartments on our mission and some kind of “pocket money” that we can spend on personal things for every new month. The members of the church in my parish even spent money for me so that I was able to go on a mission since my parents are both unemployed and I was still a student by the time I left home. Parents often support their children financially so that they can go on a mission, many young people have also earned all the money they need on their missions themselves in order to be able to go on a mission later in their lives.

You talked about guidelines you need to follow when serving a mission. What are these guidelines?

Well, there are definitely too many so that it is impossible to talk about all of them right now.

Rules like no drinking, no smoking, no caffeine and no sex before marriage, for example, are guidelines that are supposed to always lead us through a good life. On a mission it is even stricter, of course: we are not allowed to touch sisters (Anm. d Red: female missionaries are called “sisters”, male are called “elders”) or women in general. There are dress-codes that need to be followed by all the missionaries. For women that means, a decent skirt that goes over three-quarters of their legs, no cleavage, no sleeveless shirts, not even in summer and of course, decent colors, like a dark blue, grey, brown or black. Men are supposed to wear dark suits, decent shoes and all of them of course have to wear their name tags when they leave the house. The hair has to be a normal length, no long hair, missionaries generally have to look decent, serious and rather formal since they have the serious task to serve God and show him their respect which is expressed in their behaviour and their outward appearance. Well, we are not allowed to watch TV, listen to the radio or to read books, magazines or newspapers with worldly contents since it would distract us too much from our spiritual assignments.

So, what does a normal day on your mission look like?

We all have strict schedules for each day. We have to get up at 6.30am and do some sports activities till 7am. From 7 till 8am we do things around the apartment, like getting dressed, doing the ironing, taking a shower, having breakfast.

From 8 till 9am we have “personal time for self-studying” which basically means that we read passages from the Book of Mormon (Interviewer’s note: The Mormon Bible) in order to find out more about Jesus Christ and also to get personal questions about our religion answered by studying the scriptures. From 9 to 10am we have the so-called “Companionship-studies”, which means we talk about our testimonies to our companion and have a discussion.

From 10 till 11am we have time to study the language of the country we are in. Since I am German and serve my mission in Germany, I study the English language instead, having my companion, who is American, helping me out while I help him learn our language.

From 11am to 9pm we have appointments with people we have met or members of the church that want to talk about the church with us. During this time we also have an hour for lunch, and one for dinner.

From 9pm to 10.30pm we have private time to write journals or take a shower, one

shower a day is mandatory for us by the way, since we as missionaries want to be as clean as possible when we serve God. Bedtime is 10.30pm, and then we really are supposed to go to bed.

Wow, that really sounds quite stressful to me. Do you never really have a break from doing your missionary work?

Of course we have. Every mission-zone has its own day on which the missionaries are allowed to wear their normal clothes and do the things they want, well, at least to some extent as the guidelines show. This day is called Preparation-Day and goes from 10am till 6pm. After that we have to go back to our missionary work. Our preparation day is on Monday and my companion and I love to go to IKEA, relax, go shopping and check my emails.

What makes going on a mission so special, in your opinion.

Well, at first, we all would of course answer, that, what is tough about a mission, is the strict rules and a certain pressure you feel as a missionary everyday, since your boss is not a worldly one, but God himself. You can't just be lazy sometimes or break the rules because God sees everything and watches every step you take; he probably is the strictest of all employers in the world. Then there are people who offend us or yell at us, some guys just recently spit on our seats, which is of course really upsetting for us. But most of the time we experience only positive things, we meet new people, get to know new cultures and mentalities, have nice companions on our missions that might become really good friends for us, meet families that are like families for us and invite us to share time with them.

And we must not forget the spiritual fulfilment we acquire from studying every day, getting closer to god enlightens us und makes us incredibly happy, giving us a positive attitude we always carry around with us. That's why missionaries always seem so satisfied and glowing from the inside. The "mighty change of heart" is what makes a mission worth while in every way.

Thank you very much for this informative and interesting interview! We wish you good luck for the future and still a lot of fun on your mission!

Agoraphobia

(by Josephine Bock)

Psychological disorders nowadays seem like a trend upward. Most of us think of this stereotypical American image of a psychiatrist in an armchair with his patient on the couch facing the ceiling. You can see it in many Hollywood productions and it seems to be some kind of a status symbol for members of the American middle class. But it is getting more and more common in Germany as well. Not because Germans never had psychological problems, remember Freud's research, but while our society is the first to complain about misery, it is also the last to accept anything deviating from the common norm.

According to the German health report 2006, 15% of German women and 8 % of German men live through a time of depression each year. The number of anxiety disorders is rising too. Each year 1 out of 5 women and 1 out of 10 men experience severe panic attacks or phases of anxiety. The number of unrecorded cases is probably even higher.

Not only do those patients have the problem of accepting their disorder, but they also have to come to terms with the never ceasing stigma of being stupid or unable to cope with their lives.

There are a lot of books and websites which try to open up narrow minds, but people suffering from psychological disorders still don't feel safe talking openly about their problems. Some even wish to be physically sick instead, because that would be something most people can grasp.

I am writing about this subject because I actually experienced it first hand. I used to live a normal life until I developed agoraphobia. Have you ever seen the movie Copycat Killer? It stars Sigourney Weaver as a psychologist who gets attacked and overwhelmed by the trauma. I remember watching it ten years ago and wondering how it is possible to be afraid of going outside. How can shopping, going to school, being among people become problem?

The mean thing about agoraphobia actually is its development. You start having a panic attack every now and then. Since sweating, being hot and cold, having troubles breathing and feeling dizzy is not one of the better experiences, and since it stops as soon as you are leaving the 'scene of the crime' one starts to connect that feeling to the place. And that's actually the beginning of the end. At first it might only be restricted to overcrowded busses or trains, but then – if you don't get immediate help – it spreads further and further until the person concerned experiences all the symptoms of a panic attack when leaving his or her safe place. That would be the worst case. And that's what I lived through. It started in the movie theater, then continued in classes and seminars, spread over to overcrowded busses and all places with many people. The term 'agoraphobia' actually refers to two Greek words. Phobia – which means fear. And 'Agora' – which means market. So in the narrow sense it expresses the fear of market places.

By the way, agoraphobia should not be confused with angoraphobia. It's probably harder to be scared of fluffy little bunnies. I couldn't imagine it. ;)

Most agoraphobics, if not all, are afraid of dying from panic attacks or being helpless.

Though they know that theoretically nothing can happen, because it's just a simple case of overreaction, they can't calm down. So, imagine how they must feel among a crowd of people, pushing, pulling. It's overwhelming. There is this very real fear of not being able to leave if panic arises, so the mind of an agoraphobic argues: "Well, if I avoid the situation, I won't feel panic."

It makes sense, of course it does. If you have had a bad experience at night in the park, you probably won't get into the same situation again, making detours or just avoid going there. It's a logical reaction. BUT, while a park at night IS a dangerous place and a real possibility of getting into trouble, a grocery store is not. But your body cannot distinguish between them and reacts the same way.

If you now think "Oh come on, it's just fear and not real." I can only tell you: "Yeah, of course." And here comes another mean aspect of panic attacks: They appear out of nowhere.

So I would sit at home, watch TV at one moment and get struck by panic the next. And in the beginning you don't know it's just fear. As mentioned before, the symptoms are severe and seem very real. I experienced breathing troubles. I couldn't get any air into my lungs. Now I know it's merely hyperventilation and a paperbag will do it's work. Back then my body would tingle and I would lose the feeling in my hands, face and toes. I got hot and cold at the same time, sweating like there was no tomorrow and then started feeling dizzy. I thought I would faint any minute. There was this big cloud in my head, which seemed to distort reality.

If you wonder, what I did to calm myself down: Well, at first you should know that a human body is not capable of handling a situation like that for more than 30 minutes. Afterwards you will calm down by yourself. I went to two different psychologists and learned autogenous training. It helped me relax a lot, but it wouldn't help me cope with situations outside my apartment. To sum up: My panic went on for 2 years. I refused other help than going to a psychologist, because I wanted to manage on my own. There were ups and downs and in the end I realized that I wouldn't be strong enough to do it alone. And with that realization I gave up my life in Cologne. I had lived there for 6 years, I had very good friends who were all a huge help through that time. But I couldn't connect to the city anymore. There had been bad experiences everywhere. So I moved back to my parents and my doctor sent me to the 'Tagesklinik'. That would be a day time psychiatry.

On the one hand I was so happy to be finally taken real care of; on the other hand I hated the fact that I went to psychiatry. Oh my God, I only had agoraphobia and not some severe case of psychic damage. But soon I came to terms with the stigma *psychiatry*. The people there were not that different. Many of them had severe depressions, panic attacks, alcohol problems, some had schizophrenia. But it's not as dramatic or crazy as you might think. They were normal people. Teachers, students, nurses, chemists and post employees. And we were all connected by the fact that at one point in our lives we were thrown out of normality.

So I'd like to tell you more about the 'Tagesklinik'. I don't think a lot of you have ever experienced it. I went there Monday to Friday from 8am to 4pm. There were group sessions almost each day. The patients were sorted into 3 different groups, depending on how well they could cope with their life. Amazingly, I was sent to

Group A, which was the most independent group. In the group sessions we analyzed the problems, helping each other. And for the first time it felt okay to have a panic. It was not embarrassing anymore. Everybody somehow understood and the other patients helped me, comforted me when I had a bad day and I comforted them in every possible way. There were also other sessions, like painting and doing crafts. At first I thought it was silly, but I came to realize that working on projects gives the best insight into the way you handle things. I realized that I was too much of a perfectionist and worked on it.

And then of course there was also the training at home. I made a plan for each week. In the beginning I was literally stuck to my parents' house and each day I tried to get farther away from there. Only a few streets at the beginning. The point was of course, to go through the situation, to accept the panic, to face it and not to run away. By the end of my time at the clinic, after 8 weeks, I was able to go out alone again, without being afraid of fainting or dying. What a success!

So I wanted to continue college, of course. And after 2 years I finally felt ready for it again. It was hard moving to Dresden, going to classes, being among strange people. And I had panic attacks in my seminars, but I didn't give in. I didn't run away anymore. I still have to battle with myself each day and imagine how hard it was for me to give my first presentation in class. But it went well. And I am so proud of myself.

So, why am I writing this article? I am not ashamed of talking openly about my anxiety disorder. I realized that you can only embrace life if you embrace yourself. I also wrote it, because I wanted to emphasize the importance of tolerance and understanding. Every individual has his or her own problems. Some more, some less severe. We have to accept each other without prejudices. And if any of you has psychological problems...be open about them. Get help. Nobody is strong enough to handle everything on their own. Sometimes you have to let people in, to let yourself out. That's not a phrase from a Hallmark card, it's just one of my experiences.

The Kick¹ – juvenile crime as an acute problem of society

(by Inga Stephan)

6th of January 2008: Seven 17 and 21-year-old boys beat the living daylight out of the driver of a subway train. At the same time, several teenagers knocked down two passengers in Munich's subway. On January 14th, 2007, together with a fellow, 17-years-old Felix D. killed a married couple in Tessin by ramming a knife 62 times into their bodies.

25th of January 2007: The "Tagesspiegel Berlin" published a shocking article on violence at Berlin's schools, playgrounds and in public means of transport. According to this article, primarily adolescents from foreign countries such as Turkey or Arabia commit such crimes.

Juvenile crime seems to be a problem affecting everyone. Almost every day articles on youngsters committing terrible crimes appear. Unfortunately, violence plays a very substantial role in our society. Yet, is it really true that there is nothing we can do? What are the reasons for young people using violence and why does it appear to become worse?

On Mai 22nd, 2008, the police published the current statistics on delinquency. While juvenile crime decreased slightly in general, the number of violent offenses increased by a significant number. In 2007, clearly more violent offenses were recorded – the number rose by 4.9 percent towards 2006. The numbers of crimes involving grievous bodily harm even increased by 6.3 percent. The number of girls between 14 and 18 years who committed violence rose by almost 5 percent in comparison to 2006.

Surprisingly for many, the numbers also show that violence is not only a matter of foreign young persons. On the contrary, the numbers of foreign suspects decreased by 2.5 percent, while the number of German suspects increased by 1.4 percent. The numbers clearly show that violence is not only a problem of origin. The Federal Minister of Interior, Wolfgang Schäuble, thinks that committing violent crime depends rather on the integration of teenagers into society than their ancestry.

The statistics deliver a damning indictment of young persons in Germany. Wolfgang Schäuble said that we must not accept the conditions, but we have to fight them. "The development prove that many kids have an increased readiness to use violence, while their inhibition level has diminished," said Schäuble. He also ordered another survey, from which the results are expected for late summer this year.

The brutal attacks of two adolescents who beat up a pensioner in one of Munich's subway stations at Christmas of 2007 have set in motion a national debate on stronger crackdowns on juvenile violent criminals. Yet, many social education workers, as for example Lars-Oliver Lück, head of the "Anti-Gewalt-Zentrum" Berlin, have not noticed any improvements in imprisonment or hours of community service. Quite the opposite reaction of the accused can be noticed: most adolescents appreciate sentences of imprisonment as an honor and mock community service. But for all that, what else can be done to stop violence?

¹ "The Kick" is the title of a book by Andres Veiel. The book describes the true story of three drunk boys, who killed a friend by curb stomping in Potzlow, Brandenburg in 2002.

Firstly, it is essential to find out what makes so many adolescents commit a crime. Wolfgang Schäuble named many reasons for the growth of violence among juveniles. One of the most obvious ones is the abuse of alcohol. In times of flat-rate-drinking many kids approach alcohol at a very young age. For many it is very important to be able to hold one's drink. Hence, alcohol becomes not only tolerated, but overwhelmingly accepted among adolescents. When drunk, many young people completely lose control over themselves, which often leads to vulgar behavior, brawls and sometimes even to grievous bodily harm. In addition, surveys show that alcohol is increasingly served to underage youngsters, so children start drinking very early. Society seems to tolerate this behavior; moreover, it praises alcohol in advertisements, which gives the youngsters the feeling of being in the right. However, Alcohol is not only a problem which the younger generation is facing: 5.6 million Germans consume alcoholic beverages on a dangerous level, and about 1.9 million are alcoholic.

Yet, there are more reasons for violence than just the abuse of alcohol: situations can escalate, such as in Potzlow, Brandenburg, where three drunk boys bludgeoned a friend to death. The perpetrators reported later that they felt a "kick" when jumping on the head of their victim. This terrifying act of violence showed the whole world that there was more behind the brutal violence than just the abuse of alcohol.

The "kick" which was experienced by the boys in that night is a phenomenon about which many criminals report. It has become cool to beat up weaker fellow citizens. This appearance is probably the most significant development in our society: the ethical values are becoming lost. As a program in Brandenburg against delinquency showed, many adolescents do not realize the full consequences of the damage they commit. It seems as if core values such as companionship or cooperativeness are lost.

All this leads to one of the most serious problems: bullying in schools, youth clubs or bigger groups. Many children are confronted with harassment in schools and seem to see no other way than using violence to protect themselves. Very often abusers have been victims before. Psychologists explain that many perpetrators experience the action of violence as a kind of change: when committers have been victims themselves, and when they are offered a situation in which they might change this position in life, they will automatically grasp the chance. When changing roles, the abuser suddenly has the feeling of creating a new identity, leaving behind the role as a victim. In these cases, the power of physical violence can reach immense brutal dimensions. Through mobbing, most children are confronted with violence almost every day, and most of them have been victims in their lives. Violence sometimes seems for them the only way out of their everyday life. This perception causes our youngsters to be lost in the whirlpool of violence.

Many more reasons can be discovered, but it seems more important to highlight that each perpetrator has its own reasons. Behind each act of violence is another story. Many believe the deterioration of our youngsters is the parents' fault, however, to generalize this also is a complete misguidance. It is true that many parents are overtaxed with their adolescents. However, it is not the appropriate strategy to reprimand the parents, but to offer help. Society has to realize that it really can be, and even has to be a role model to our children. We need a comprehensive policy for the youth service.

So it is not true that there is nothing we can do for now. There are ways of showing our youngsters that they have gone too far. Each and every one of us can do so by trying to stop mobbing, cursing and taking other people's name in vain. We cannot expect our children to do any better if we ourselves are not aware of our actions. Also, one can try and work with children, help them to understand the consequences violence can have – not only for them as the perpetrator, but primarily for the victims. Despite the fact that many might criticize this for being only a drop in the ocean; still, if many of us start, we might make a slight difference.

Yet, there is no doubt that not only each and every one of us, but the whole of society and government policy have to change. Unless politicians, advertising companies and the people realize that change is essential, we might soon face even higher numbers in the statistics of juvenile crime. Training our youngsters in special training camps, as many social pedagogues suggest, can only be a start in the right direction. But for all that, as long as it is still more expensive to prevent crime, than to shut away the culprit after committing a crime, our youngsters might long go on chasing the award for the most-often-imprisoned-rowdy.

America in Obamania – a look from across the ocean

(by Alexander Kasten)

“Over the years, I’ve been deeply moved by the people who’ve told me they wished they could feel inspired and hopeful about America the way people did when my father (John F. Kennedy) was president. This sense is even more profound today. That is why I am supporting a presidential candidate in the Democratic primaries, Barack Obama “(Caroline Kennedy)

Only a few days ago, Hillary Rodham Clinton – former First Lady and probably the most ambitious and powerful woman in American politics till present – put an end to the seemingly endless fight for the democratic presidential ticket between her and the new superstar of American politics, Barack Obama, by accepting her loss and fully endorsing him to her loyal crowd of supporters. After 19 months of campaigning, thousands of speeches and millions of dollars spent, Democrats have eventually found their leading horse in the race for the presidency. Obama is now widely expected to do nothing less than save the world and change it for the better, it seems.

But while his ability to inspire and motivate the disillusioned American public must be considered an impressive and desirable feature of a great leading figure, one might wonder what lies behind this soothing layer of words and phrases about “change” and his trademark mantra “yes we can”? Looking at it from a rather less inspired perspective a few thousand miles further east where politicians appear far less appealing and politics do not seem as spectacular as in the United States, I find myself wishing for a candidate like him. A candidate who would wake up Germans out of their self-pitying hibernation and ignite the fire of “yes we can” in us; a German Obama. Then again I wonder whether in order to be efficient, governing a country might not need less show and more understatement and pragmatism? Is the great saviour Obama actually going to be able to change his country for the better by giving sermons and speeches that are all but specific? Can words really change things?

While the majority of German voters do not seem to expect much more from their elected representatives than doing a job that needs to be done without letting things get worse than they are today, Americans appear desperate for a new source of inspiration and guidance in their politicians. A new way of doing politics is being sought after, which means that twenty-first century Americans not only want to get rid of the long years of misery, setback and misleading under George W. Bush, they also seem to want it to happen in a joyful and stylish fashion. Nothing less than a revolution of universal improvement is being prayed for, it appears.

All of the above are job description requirements that Mr. Obama seems to match perfectly, especially if put into perspective with both still-president Bush and the presumptive Republican presidential nominee John Mc Cain. But even if Obama and his team of supporters and strategists manage to win the election in November and move into the White House, his visions of changing Washington and the forces that rule America will be hard to achieve. A century-old system of give and take, favours and duties and behind closed doors negotiations is a nut that seems too hard to crack. Even for a saviour. Still, I cannot help but follow his way up to the top with great affection and excitement.

And everyone shall be suspected

(by Annett Rottluff)

Lately, scientists have come up with surveillance cameras able to film straight through your clothes. Apart from some of the exciting possibilities that spontaneously come to mind - they certainly did to the scientists involved - why should you care, right?

To be perfectly honest, I'm trying to build a metaphor. Somehow, I'd like to identify the notion of being semi-physically stripped naked (by the camera, mind you!) with the nakedness that comes with an adversary's control over your personal data. "Aha!", I hear you cry, "beating 'round the bush, are we? It's the Data Retention Law you're after, isn't it?" Well, yes, actually, it is. I'm afraid you have got me there.

First of all, what is data retention? Data retention in terms of telecommunication refers to the storage of telephone calls, emails and visited websites. It's practically another social bookmarking network - except, of course, that you don't actually get to pick your friends. Data retention - or data collection - does not require the individual's consent and is done on a large scale with the whole population. Just as a precaution, as a matter of course.

The data retained is then analysed and, eventually, stored for six months and can be used to assess an individual's business connections, political interactions, private lifestyle, etc., before it might be handed over to foreign states for the benefit of an expedited crime prosecution.

"Why would anyone, namely CDU and CSU, introduce such a law?", you might ask. It's the terrorists! Or, more subtle, in a FOX-News sort of expression: TERRORISTS! And now, quick, name three terrorists whose terrible crimes we could have prevented by being able to spy on their unprotected communications to our hearts' content! One distinguished expert on terrorist threats has already pointed out that "(a) terrorist attack with nuclear weapons is certain. The question is no longer whether such an attack could be carried out by terrorists, but when." At least, this is what Mr. Schäuble told the Frankfurter Allgemeine newspaper in September 2007.

Accordingly, it seems the best way to prevent what is about to happen is to suspect a whole population, monitor everybody, and violate personal privacy.

Many arguments demonstrate the collision of the law that came into effect on January 2008, with civil rights and, even more alarming, our constitution. Firstly, many professions rely on the principle of discretion. Doctors, priests, lawyers and journalists, for instance, have to face the possible exploitation of strictly confidential information. Secondly, the new law interferes with the civil right to "privacy and informational self-determination." By that, we understand "The right of the individual to decide what information about himself/herself should be communicated to others and under what circumstances" (Westin, 1970)(wikipedia.org). Thirdly, the new law grants the government and head officials immense power over the people. There is a considerable danger that information may be abused for various purposes. Even if you trust your current government, there are possibly others to govern in the future, whom you might not trust as easily, and they will have your data, too. Above all, it is questionable whether criminals will be convicted by the new law as they will most

likely find ways to escape surveillance with the help of internet cafes, public libraries, and other means. Thus, the negative implications of the Data Retention Law clearly outweigh the faint possibility of terrorist detection.

If that law is so despicable and outright useless, as I have been at great pains not to suggest too openly, why is there no public outcry? Well, there is to some extent - and that is the good news. Apart from politicians, like, for instance, Sabine Leutheusser-Schnarrenberger, former minister of Justice, who has announced that she would make a constitutional complaint, many public organisations, such as "Ver.di", "Der Deutsche Presserat", "VDZ", "Der Deutsche Anwaltsverein", "Der Deutsche Journalistenverband", and others have petitioned against the law. The German Working Group on Data Retention, also the basis for this article, is filing a petition against the law, which can be found under <http://www.vorratsdatenspeicherung.de>. As a matter of fact, there are so many people tearing at this poor bastard of an unfortunate law document that I sometimes feel like embracing it. As a matter of, you know, Love Thine Enemy. Anyway, please feel free to visit the page for further information. If then you should still feel uncomfortable, you can try to figure out means of avoiding the, as yet tiny, claws of governmental spies.

By the way, "The Guardian" recently came up with a very sensible strategic hint that involves employing homeless people to aid you "if you were so inclined" in the quest of circumventing the traceability of your mobile:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2007/oct/28/comment.humanrights>

US election crossword

(by Marta Cwilichowska)

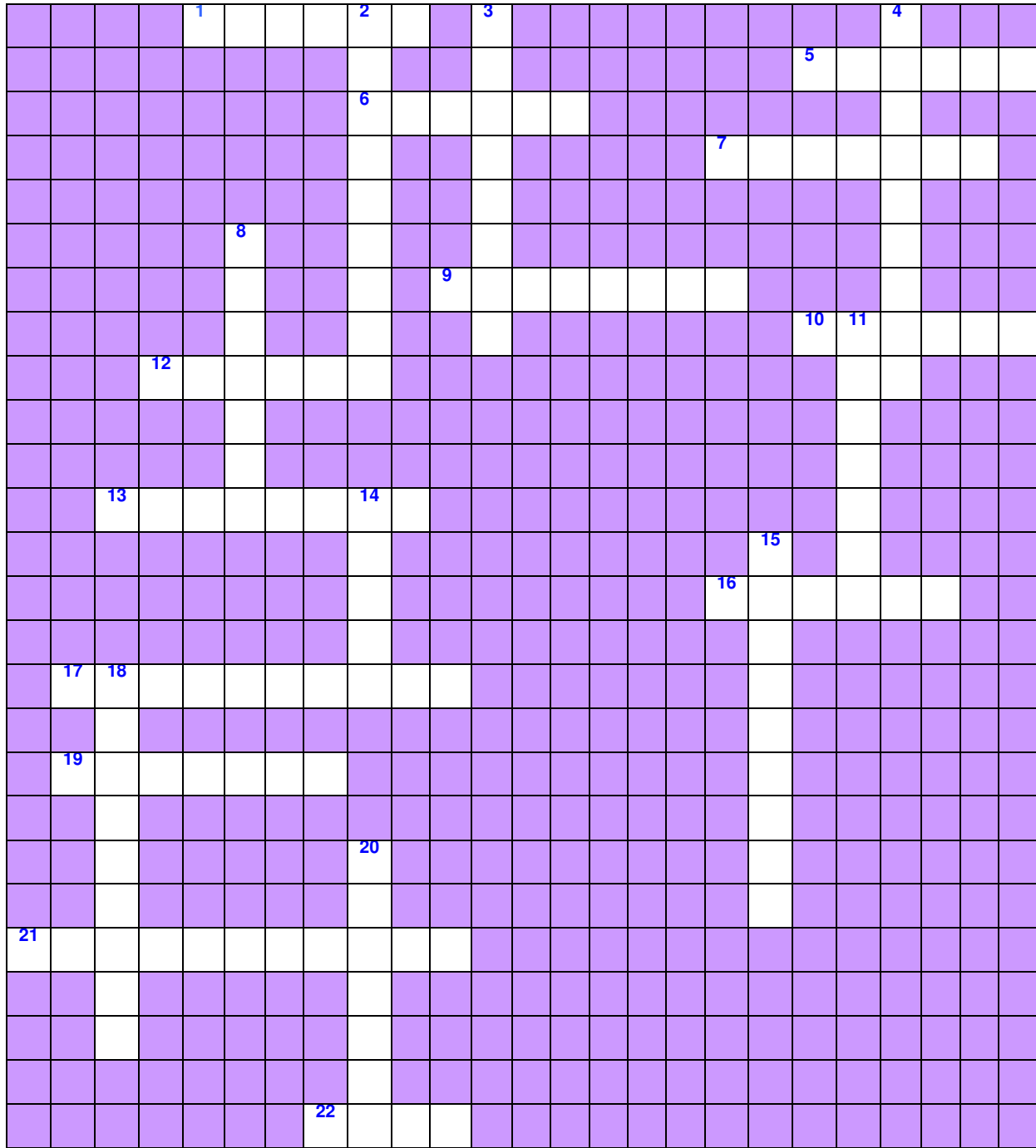
The United States is now fully occupied with the election campaign, scheduled for the autumn 2008. As we all know, the election procedures in the U.S. are a bit complicated. In order to help you brush up your knowledge on this subject and encourage you to keep abreast of the current events in America, Jabs created a crossword for you.

Across:

1. Last name of the Republican candidate: John ...
5. Meeting of supporters or members of a political party or movement
6. Last name of the current Vice President of the United States
7. Place where voters cast their ballots in elections: ... station
9. Barack Obama is U.S. Senator in the state of ...
10. Forgiveness of a crime and the penalty, granted by a monarch, chief of state or a competent church authority
12. Device used to record choices made by voters
13. The United States presidential election of 2008 is scheduled for ... (month)
16. Agreement under international law entered by states and international organizations
17. Seat of the Federal Government
19. Hillary Clinton is U.S. Senator in the state of ...
21. Candidate who has not yet received the official nomination at the party's nominating convention: ... nominee
22. American President is elected every ... years

Down:

2. In politics the current holder of a political office
3. Birthplace of Barack Obama
4. One of the three branches of the federal government
8. 538 presidential electors who meet every four years to cast the official votes for President and Vice President of the United States: The United States Electoral ...
11. John McCain is U.S. Senator in the state of ...
14. Political candidate who has been elected president but has not yet taken office
15. Head of the executive branch
18. Change made to a contract, law or bill
20. Birthplace of Hillary Clinton



Key

- | | | |
|--------------|----------------|-----------------|
| 1. McCain | 2. incumbent | 3. Honolulu |
| 4. Judiciary | 5. caucus | 6. Cheney |
| 7. polling | 8. College | 9. Illinois |
| 10. pardon | 11. Arizona | 12. ballot |
| 13. November | 14. elect | 15. president |
| 16. treaty | 17. Washington | 18. amendment |
| 19. New York | 20. Chicago | 21. presumptive |
| 22. four | | |