

### Berlin Brats Alumni Association Newsletter

April 2018 Volume 14, Issue 2



Berlin welcomes spring





## Why purple?

DoDEA "Purple Up! For Military Kids" event; "purple" in this case indicates that all branches of the military are supported; Air Force blue, Army green, Navy blue, Marine red, and Coast Guard blue all thought to combine together as a single color, purple.

April is designated as the Month of the Military Child; a time to honor the sacrifices made by military families worldwide, with an emphasis on the experience of the dependent children of military members serving at home and overseas.

A 2015 military demographics report listed on Defense.gov counted nearly two million "total-force dependent children," including more than 900,000 Army dependents, 400,000 Air Force dependents, nearly 300,000 Navy, and approximately 118,000 Marine dependents.

According to a report by the Department of Defense, there are 700 military child development program facilities around the world, running approximately 155,000 child-care spaces, with another 3,000 family child care homes which provide in-home care.

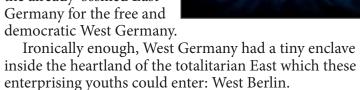
It's estimated that military child development centers welcome around 200,000 children daily. There are 300 youth and teen centers worldwide serving more than 645,000 youth through a variety of educational and recreational programs.

"Military brat" is not a negative, but rather connotes affection and respect. Children/teens of active-duty military personnel have a lifestyle of high mobility, as they follow their soldier-parent great distances to non-combat assignments during most of, or at least a significant portion, of their growing up years. It can cause a complex 'mixed' cultural identity, due to the resulting exposure to numerous national or regional cultures while growing up.

# 5 February 2018 The Berlin Wall has now been down

by Briggs Burton at Dissident "Nobody has the intention of building a wall," said Walter Ulbricht in June of

Ulbricht was the General Secretary of the Socialist Unity Party (SED) of Germany—the hardline Stalinist movement that ran communist East Germany. By 1961, Ulbricht faced a dire problem: young people were desperately fleeing the already-ossified East Germany for the free and



The attraction was irresistible. Three and a half million people—20 percent of East Germany's population—fled to the West, especially educated professionals, creating a serious brain drain. The SED dictatorship called it Republikflucht—"desertion from the republic." And it had to be stopped.

And so, two months after Walter Ulbricht announced that no one had any intention of building a wall, the Berlin Wall went up. It stood for 10,316 days, between August 13th, 1961—"barbed wire Sunday" and November 9th, 1989. Today marks the 10,317th day since its fall.

The Antifaschistischer Schutzwall, or "anti-fascist protection rampart," was billed to the East German people and the communist bloc as a way of keeping devious imperialists and fascist spies out.

"We have sealed the cracks in the fabric of our house," said Ulbricht, "and closed the holes through which the worst enemies of the German people could creep."

But it was clear to the world that the new wall was erected only to keep the people of East Germany in.

The Wall began as barbed wire sections and concrete barriers; soon, as defectors found more and more ways to go over, under, or through it, the Wall became like the barricades of a fortress. Guard towers and



barracks loomed over it. Anti-vehicle trenches were carved out next to guard dog pens. Blinding searchlights would knife through the stillness of the Berlin night. Along the entire Wall ran a belt of cleared, flat ground in which border guards would have easy shots at fleeing defectors—this was called the "death strip."

More than 140 people were killed crossing the Berlin Wall. The first casualty, Ida Siekmann, died of internal injuries after leaping from a window over the wall. Ingo Krüger drowned in the Spree River while attempting to scuba dive his way to freedom. Winfried Freudenberg died after falling from a homemade hot air balloon.

Other people died when jumpy guards misidentified them as possible escapees. Some people chose to commit suicide by walking toward the Wall and refusing to

When the Wall finally fell, the people of Berlin and Germany were elated. Late into the night of November 9th, 1989, West and East Berliners came together laughing, celebrating, hugging, and weeping. David Hasselhoff famously sang *Looking for Freedom* from atop a concrete segment of the rapidly-crumbling fortification.

The stark and brutal Wall cut like an scar through the old city and, in the eyes of the world, became a symbol for the stifling totalitarianism of East Germany. The world cheered those who escaped across it and mourned those who died at its foot. And through it all, the stentorian strongmen at the head of the GDR stiffly insisted that the Wall was a necessary defense against

# as long as it was up: 10,316 days

the insidious West.

"The Wall will still be standing in 50 and even in 100 vears," croaked the SED's near-octogenarian First Secretary Erich Honecker in January 1989, "if the reasons for it have not been removed by then."

Perhaps no speech better captured the visceral symbolic power of the Wall than the one made by President John F. Kennedy on June 26th, 1963, before an audience of 450,000 Berliners:

"There are many people in the world who really don't understand, or say they don't, what is the great issue between the free world and the communist world.

*Let them come to Berlin.* 

There are some who say that communism is the wave of the future.

Let them come to Berlin.

And there are some who say, in Europe and elsewhere, we can work with the communists.

Let them come to Berlin.

And there are even a few who say that it is true that communism is an evil system, but it permits us to make economic progress.

Lass' sie nach Berlin kommen—Let them come to Berlin!"

It has now been 10,316 days since the Wall fell.

The anniversary was marked with a full front page picture in the Berliner Zeitung newspaper. In an editorial, the paper said:

"These days are special days and this edition of the Berlin Zeitung is also special."

People have been responding to the anniversary with their memories of the Wall, and what it represented:



*In the early '80s I lived in a flat overlooking the Wall. We* could see the East German guards from our window and frequently waved at them. Some waved back, others pointed their guns at us.

#### Scots

Me too, Tony, only waving without the gun-pointing. We lived in Lindendstrasse in Kreuzberg, now part of Axel Springer Strasse. Went back for 1st time 2 years ago and the building we lived in is still there. Ours was a kind of squat/disused fire station. The guards used to watch us with binoculars when we messed about at the windows and we used to watch them back. I used to go through to the East on the Ubahn, Kochstrasse-Friedrichstrasse to buy whisky. Memory blanks after that.

#### Daniel

I used to live right next to the former wall. My neighbor was an old lady who had lived there since forever. She watched as the wall was built, and she watched as it was torn down. From the same flat! To top it off, the street where I lived (Heidelberger Straße) is actually semi-famous for being one of the sites where an escape tunnel was built. But, what most texts don't mention is that the street is actually divided into three parts; the outer sections in Treptow (East Berlin) and the middle section in Neukölln (West Berlin). I moved to the middle section some time after the Wall fell. The reason this is important is because on the Eastern side, it wasn't really possible to live right next to the wall, due to the death strip. But on the Western side it was possible.

## Reunion 2012 promotion update

Since so many of us who attended the 2012 Reunion in D.C. witnessed our very own promotion ceremony (at Saturday night's banquet) of Michelle Estes '90 to LtCol by Berlin Brat twostar General Rick Martin '77 (pictured below).

We thought you'd like to know the latest..... Michelle just came out on the full Colonel's list this February. Currently stationed at RAF Mildenhall, England, here's Michelle getting the news:











### Berlin Brats Alumni Association Newsletter

### Our 30th Stammtisch Jubilee

from Herr Prigge and Charlie Bluem

How did we (Herr Prigge and Mr. Bluem) begin meeting monthly in March 1988?

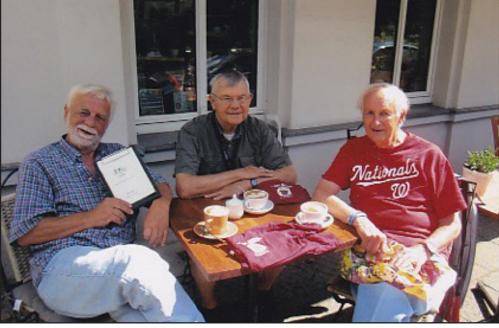
What really brought us together then, since we had been colleagues for years?

Did we team-teach together? No!

Had we planned a great big educational event together? No!

So what really brought us together that began our big 30th?

Simply put, Herr Prigge needed a common sink with hot and cold running water because he entertained a lot as "host nation



Herr Prigge, Charlie Bluem, and Art Benson enjoying the summer sun during a Treff at Mich Kaffee café in 2017.

teacher." Working with the Principal and DEH, our project was accomplished. When the job was professionally "our achievement" by visiting the Freie (Free)

done by the plumbers, we celebrated University Café.

That was our first Café *Treff*! From then on, with few excepsince. The exceptions occurred American High School; during that between Christmas and New Year's.

Considering vacations, schedule

tions, we have been meeting monthly ever when Charlie was transferred to Lakenheath time, we met during the summer months and

conflicts, sick time out, and, and, and.... we

estimate we have visited more than 200 different cafés in Berlin! These represented many different nations and café specialities. For example, pictured here with Art Benson last summer, we were at Mich Kaffee...ThiTing it on a vegan sidewalk café. We have always avoided Schicki-Micki Cafes, however!

By chance, we are spending our 30th in the Russian Café Pasternak.....but please don't tell Special Counsel Robert Mueller, you hear?

As long as there are current events, BAHS students, and colleagues' families, day-in, day-out living, there will be something to talk about.

So it is again 30 for us and still counting!

So, Auf Wiedershehen for now, until we meet again.



### **Brats unite!**

We were so happy to catch up with Shawn Bingham (class of '86) over dinner!!

L to R: Melvin Rodriguez '87, Angie (Coleman) Rodriguez '87, Shawn Bingham '86.

# When in Vegas – LOOK FOR THE BERLIN WALL

Main Street Station (casino, brewery, and hotel) has a treasure hunt of sorts.....200 N. Main St., Las Vegas.

It features 17 unique artifacts, antiques, and artworks from all over the world.....to include a portion of the Berlin Wall!

When you visit the hotel....stop at the concierge desk – pick up the walking guide (*i.e.*, treasure hunt map) to locate the 17 unique originals throughout the hotel/casino such as street lamps from Brussels, a chandelier from the Figaro Opera House in Paris, a stained glass window from Lillian Russell's Pittsburgh Mansion....and yes, a portion of the Berlin Wall in the gentlemen's restroom!!! Sorry, ladies. Actually, we were told men are allowed to escort the ladies in for a viewing and a picture!

Bet you didn't know this.

Possibly the best kept secret in all of Las Vegas!!! You're welcome, Berlin Brats!





# 2018 Olympic closing games ceremony uses the Brat dandelion!

Dandelions part of the closing ceremonies of the Winter Olympics in Korea.

In memoriam for all the athletes that had passed. Dandelions represent seeds of a new beginning.

# Did you know that in Germany large wheels of cheese were used as measuring units?

by Nicole Glass, German Embassy

What do you call a tiny little kid in German? A Dreikäsehoch! Literally translated, this colloquial German word means "three-cheesestall," but has little to do with cheese and instead defines a child (usually

a boy) that we would refer to in English as a "tiny tot."

A Dreikäse-hoch usually refers to a curious and intelligent child who is too small to do much, but tries to act like a "big shot." If, for example, an ambitious five-year-old tells his parent that he wants to run in a

marathon, the parent might respond, "but you are a *Dreikäsehoch*" – thereby indicating that the child is too little (only three cheeses tall!) to do so.

But why does this colloquial term refer to cheese, of all things?

Throughout history, cheese has always been an important resource. The Greeks considered it a delicacy, using it as a sacrifice for the Gods. The Romans considered it an important part of their diet, carrying slabs of cheese with them as they roamed through Europe. Cheese

quickly gained popularity across Europe in the Middle Ages, and people soon knew what to expect when they obtained a wheel, which were usually about the same size and weight, according to WDR.

As a result, cheese become a standard measuring device in homes across Europe. In French, the word caisse refers to

both boxes and cheese, and both were used as measuring devices. Similarly in Germany, large wheels of cheese were used as measuring units.

Thus, the word *Dreikäsehoch* originated in 18th century North-

ern Germany, referring to little boys no taller than three stacked wheels of cheese.

However, this mildly humorous reference was chosen as the third-most endangered beloved German word in 2007, and is slowly falling out of use in common language.

But perhaps you can help bring this 18th century word back into conversation. Next time you see a tiny tot trying to engage in activities he is too small for, you can remind him that's he's still only a little *Dreikäsehoch*.



### The 68th Berlin International Film Festival (Berlinale)



The renowned film Festival opened in February with a world premiere screening of "Isle of Dogs." Over the course of the next few days, about 400 films were shown at the Festival, 24 of which competed for awards known as Golden and Silver Bears. Adina Pintilie's "Touch Me Not" emerged with the film world's nicest looking award: the Golden Bear for Best Film.

The Berlinale is the world's largest publicly attended film festival, selling around 300,000 tickets for its events each year. Prominent celebrities and politicians attended the event.

### Bitburg Barons visit American Overseas Schools History Society (AOSHS) and our Berlin Wall section in Wichita

We visited the Museum of World Treasures on Monica's (at AOSHS) recommendation to see the Berlin Brats' "Wall" and "Clarence"--Bonn's school mascot!!!! So glad we did!!! How special is that?!

The Barons took their place in DODEA Europe lore as Bitburg High School closed its doors last year ... June 2017, after 60 years. The school opened in 1956. Last year, 154 students were enrolled, including 31 in the last graduating class. Bitburg Air Base itself closed in '94. Students will now attend school in Spangdahlem. (The high school was one of the last buildings on the annex to close as the Air Force prepares by summer 2018 to hand over the Bitburg housing area to the German government. The last families moved out in 2014, according to Air Force officials).

# Frankfurt alums also visit AOSHS this quarter

A dozen or so Frankfurt American High School alums (Classes 1967 to 1971) visited AOSHS as part of a three- day mini-reunion. No word on whether they visited the Berlin Wall while there.

But, they did attend an "America" concert in Salina, KS, on St Patrick's Day. You will remember that "America" is made up of London Central High School Brats!

### AOSHS – The American Overseas School Historical Society

For more than four million Americans who were educated

overseas since 1946, pieces of history could be gone forever –

yearbooks, trophies, letter jackets, class pictures, time capsules, school flags, and mascots. As schools overseas close down, those artifacts and memorabilia go away, too. AOSHS keeps



the memories alive.

If ever in Wichita, Kansas....stop in and visit your artifacts and our section of the Berlin Wall!
AOSHS

704 W. Douglas Avenue Wichita, KS 67203-6401 Telephone: (316) 265-6837 aoshsoffice@sbcglobal.net







Top left: The Berlin Wall section that the Berlin Brats bought in 2005. Top right: Bitburg Barons Eve (Carey) Christich '73, Gerry Christich '73, and Monica of AOSHS. Center: Frankfurt alums and welcome banner at AOSHS. Above left: AOSHS' street frontage in Wichita. Above: Frankfurt alums browsing the yearbooks at AOSHS. Left: America, the rock band formed in England in 1970 by Dewey Bunnell, Dan Peek, and Gerry Beckley. The trio met as sons of US Air Force personnel stationed in London, where they began performing live.



Linda Bird. Her father was President. Can you say tight security? In the background, Major General Franklin, US Commander of Berlin, and a Pan Am plane.

*by Bob Bradley '60 ('55'-'57)* 

In 1966, I was issued an important military order: date Linda Bird's (daughter of President Lyndon B. Johnson) traveling companion (no smart-ass remarks; it was a girl) when they visited Berlin. We took them to dinner, went bar-hopping, then Linda Bird invited us to the Ambassador's residence where she played 45 rpm honkey-tonk records. She was tall, about 6', VERY nice, not affected. My date was the opposite, a pain. Linda Bird later dated George Hamilton (the actor), but went on to marry Charles Robb.

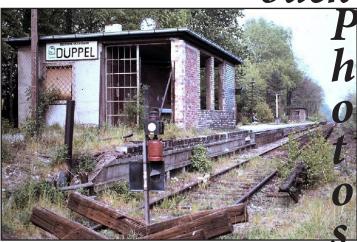
The Ambassador was located in Bonn, but had a Berlin residence also. Berlin had been walled since 1960. I lived in Berlin in the mid-'50s when my dad was stationed there, rode my bike to East Berlin pre-Wall. Then I joined the military and was stationed in Berlin when I got this order.

I wasn't good-looking or tall enough to be Linda Bird's date. They got a 6'3" MP lieutenant who looked like he stepped off the cover of G.Q. magazine.

As a note, Bob went on to marry TAR teacher Dorthea Jacobitti ('66-'68).



h r o w back





Sylvester Stallone in Berlin circa 1988, from Mike Friedrich.

### Why Berlin remains the Bitcoin capital of Europe in 2018

by Tanzeel Akhtar; news@thelocal.de 23 January 2018

When it comes to spending the digital currency Bitcoin, it seems Berliners have been on trend longer than the rest of Europe.

The German capital was first dubbed the "Bitcoin Capital of Europe" by the Guardian in 2013 and since then a number of other businesses have been keen to accept cryptocurrency as a form of payment.

Nowadays people can buy an apartment, book holidays, eat and drink in a number of trendy bars and even pay for further education using the controversial cryptocurrency Bitcoin.

There are a number of appealing factors which make Bitcoin an attractive form of payment. One of them is the blockchain technology behind the cryptocurrency. This means Bitcoin is managed by its network and not by one central authority.

Be warned - Bitcoin investing is not for the faint-hearted! This year Bitcoin price has been falling as concerns grow that governments will crack down on the industry. Currently Bitcoin is trading at \$10,600 after hitting almost \$20,000 in December.

### ESMT encourages Blockchain education and accepts Bitcoin payments

One of the first universities in Germany to accept Bitcoin as a means of payment is the European School of Management and Technology (ESMT). The ESMT Berlin EMBA is ranked highly in the world for career progress and first started accepting Bitcoin payments in December 2016.

Georg Garlichs, CFO of ESMT explains that Bitcoin is a decentralized virtual peer-to-peer currency and can now be used for all payments to ESMT. The institution also accepts Ethereum, Litecoin and Dash - all cryptocurrencies - as a form of payment. "Similar to an SMS, the digital currency enables worldwide money transfers within a few minutes without involving a bank. ESMT is an innovative and future-oriented business school,"



says Garlichs.

Garlichs explains that ESMT is keen to remain on trend in education and explains in 2018 there are a number of courses available to those who want to learn more about trends such as Blockchain, Bitcoin, Ethereum and Initial Coin Offerings (ICOs) which have been in the news lately.

# Why have Berlin based businesses been keen to introduce Bitcoin payments?

Niels Göttsch is the owner of Leuchtstoff Kaffeebar in Berlin which introduced Bitcoin payments in 2012 and has been fascinated by cryptocurrencies for a very long time. Why? Göttsch explains the idea of having a currency that doesn't need an authority and therefore cannot be controlled by any state or company as one reason.

"There's no political decisions in there. The algorithm is transparent to everybody," says Göttsch.
Göttsch explains the second reason is that nobody can control Bitcoin payments. "First it is pseudo-anonymous, it's hard to track user data. Second is you don't need a bank that charges random fees. It [Bitcoin] is international and can be transferred to local money in every

country you are in."

Leuchtstoff Kaffeebar also accepts Ether as a form of payment. Do many customers use the Bitcoin and Ether payment services? Göttsch says: "It was more in 2012. Now with the high fees it's not that common anymore."

### 'Most exciting place in world for cryptoenthusiasts'

In recent years, Berlin's tech startup scene has

been attracting ever more international talent. Rhian Lewis, a British software engineer and co-founder of the cryptocurrency portfolio tracker countmycrypto.com is based between Berlin and the UK.

She explains how her love affair with the Berlin Bitcoin scene first started in 2014. Lewis decided to take on a six-week contract in Berlin in early 2014, not knowing what to expect.

"Id never even visited [Berlin] before but I knew there was a lively tech community. I'd been involved in Bitcoin and alts [alternative cryptocurrencies] for about a year, and was part of an online community of crypto women. I mentioned on one of our Google hangouts that I would be working there and it

turned out that one of the women on the call - Anna Kurth - was just about to start her own meet-up group for women in Bitcoin [in Berlin]," says Lewis.

Networking is key in the crypto scene and Berlin's tech scene has a strong, vibrant community. Developers, anarchists, libertarians, cypherpunks and would-be entrepreneurs have all been rubbing shoulders at bars in Berlin where you can pay with Bitcoin and where everyone is open to talking about crypto.

"Lovely Anna welcomed me not just into her group but also introduced me to other Berlin Bitcoiners and my new life in Germany started. I took a contract extension for six months, falling in love with the city and its vibrant crypto underground," says Lewis.

"The energy carried through to daytimes and there were a couple of

attempts to set up Bitcoin co-working spaces, first in Kreuzberg and then in Mitte. I scored a discounted desk for the summer after building a website for the original co-working space," says Lewis.

She compares London and the Berlin tech scene. "Although I'd been to plenty of London meet-ups, most were quite business-focused. Level 39 at Canary Wharf was a frequent meet-up venue, and many of the people at the social events were either preoccupied with their start-ups or else figuring out how block-chain could work in the context of their banking jobs. In contrast, the grass-roots approach of Berlin's crypto-enthusiasts was a breath of fresh air," says Lewis.

Lewis says she now spends three to six months in Berlin every year and is considering a permanent move to the German capital. "I think Berlin is probably the most

exciting place in the world to be if you're interested in blockchain or cryptocurrency simply because it's the one place where people are still passionate about decentralization as an idea, rather than as a get-richquick vehicle," says Lewis.

### Berlin offers technology and philosophy

There are a number of things Berlin can offer those who have a thirst for life and fulfilment. "It's a place where you can talk deep into the night about technology and philosophy and ideas, and where you can feel that everything is possible. The era of cheap Bitcoin beer and minuscule transaction fees may have disappeared, but the original punk energy lives on. Creativity and original ideas will fuel the next phase of crypto's evolution... Berlin's startups have a huge advantage in this respect," says Lewis.



We have been contacted by the Special Events Curator at the Allied Museum in Berlin to assist in locating those involved in the TAR time capsule burial.

So far we have located:

*Edward Bass* – 6th grader pictured in the Berlin Observer article helping to bury the capsule.

*Don Reed* - 6th grade teacher/choral who wrote TAR's school song and is included in the capsule. (FAC '64-'92)

Diana Dial Reynolds - PTA President from 1994
Carolyn James - School Nurse

Ynez Olshausen – School Principal

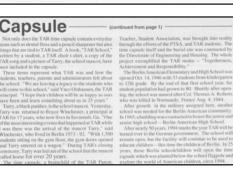
....and a couple other students that were there for the burial!

The plan is to have a ceremony – next May to unearth! Maybe this would be a good time to plan a Berlin mini-reunion? Attend the ceremony? Plans have not been finalized but they are looking at May 24th, 2019.



To be "unearthed in 2019"





### THIS YEAR WE VOTE ON THE 2020 REUNION LOCATION



Our vote is usually in the fall.....but this year will be moved up to June. Only current members, *i.e.*, dues-paid members, get to vote. So please make sure your annual dues are paid at this time!

The membership form is on our website at:

http://www.berlinbrats.org/members.htm.
Scroll ½ down the page and download the form for mailing in

OR use PayPal.

Email confirmations are sent out.

Email confirmations are sent out We rotate "west" in 2020.

We're looking at/receiving proposals from Seattle, Portland & Eugene, OR, San Diego, and Salt Lake City. Proposals for the vote will be narrowed down to two locations, those best meeting our needs and requirements.

### **Upcoming Events**

### Fort Worth, TX

Overseas Brats Gathering
Aug 23-26, 2018
Hosted by: Overseas Brats

### **Next Reunion**

we head "west"

2018

location scouting year

then the vote



ZUZU REUNION!

(location determined by vote)

### **Contact Information**



### **Berlin Brats Alumni Association**

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Find us on Facebook@
"Berlin Brats Alumni Association"
(the official fan page site)

"Berlin American High School (BAHS)" (an open group chat page)



follow us on Twitter

@BerlinBrats

Newsletter Brat: Kimberly Keravuori '85

### Early '60s Site

By invitation only Contact Jim Branson '64 <u>jbranson01@hotmail.com</u> for an invite

### American Overseas School Historical Society

Gayle Vaughn Wiles, President email: <a href="mailto:overseasschools@aoshs.org">overseasschools@aoshs.org</a> website: <a href="mailto:www.aoshs.org">www.aoshs.org</a>

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