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When I started my Fellowship in Washington D.C. at the end of July it had already been more than fifteen years since I had lived in the U.S. I had travelled to a lot of other places, mostly Asia. But because I had already spent several months as an exchange student in the U.S., it didn't seem such a priority to me to return. Fortunately, my friend Florian Willershausen told me about his great time as a Burns-Fellow in Chicago which got me thinking. So I applied. My colleagues and superiors have been very supportive from the outset which should not be taken for granted- 10 weeks of absence is a lot to ask for. So I applied and got accepted. I knew pretty soon what I wanted: to go to San Francisco and work at The Wall Street Journal office there. I wanted to see first hand how one of the biggest and best newspapers in the world is working and I wanted to learn about the famous Silicon Valley. It has been the best choice I could have made.

From day one the colleagues at the Wall Street Journal Office were incredibly nice, welcoming and helpful. After a few days I started to always carry around a little notebook so I could write down their recommendations what I should see and where I must eat while I am in San Francisco.

There is so much to see and eat and experience besides work. There are also very many stories in the Bay Area that are just waiting to be reported. In the first few weeks, that was a little difficult for me: To choose and to focus on some stories. At the end of the Fellowship my reporter-heart hurts because there are still so many things I wanted to write about but didn't have the time.

The network of Burns-alumni is great and very helpful. When I tried to find out where I wanted to be placed, I contacted three former Burns-Fellows who had been placed in California, and they instantly took the time to talk to me when I asked them to share their experiences with me. During the week in Washington D.C. I got to know incredibly smart, ambitious and talented colleagues from the U.S., Germany and Canada, who I hope to stay in touch with.

Also, I was very lucky, that a Burns-Fellow was sitting right across my desk in San Francisco. Jack Nicas played an important role in the success of my fellowship, not only on a professional basis but also during my free time - he and his wife invited me to several barbecues and drinks. For me it was important to really spend time with Americans. I knew some Germans in the Bay Area, after all Handelsblatt has two great correspondents in San Francisco. But I wanted to spend as much time with the Americans to learn about their views and interests - and to bond. My colleagues from the Wall Street Journal made this very easy. We went to drinks on average one night a week, one colleague took a couple of us on a boat trip right at my first weekend, we went to see a play of another colleague and watched a baseball game together. In between we talked about different working cultures in Germany and the U.S.

One of the things I was very curious about was how I would adapt to writing in English. I published my first article which made it to the front page of the business section of the

European Edition of The Wall Street Journal by week three. Prior to that, the piece had gone through a heavy editing process. My editor asked me a lot of questions. After several days and multiple drafts it was ready to be published. To my surprise, he mostly made changes concerning the content but did not much alter my writing. In total, I ended up writing four stories for the Journal. One even made it to the front page of the paper. Again, only after several people had first approved of the story idea and then again after several people had read and altered the story.

I tried to split my time between writing for Handelsblatt and The Wall Street Journal equally, but it was tempting to do more work for Handelsblatt because it was just easier. Unlike previous years, the Wall Street Journal does-not have an ever-hungry free tech-blog anymore. Plus, at a paper with about 2000 reporters, every topic is very well reported on. I can only guess that there would probably be a way to publish more simple and non-exclusive stories online, such as summaries of blog-posts of companies, but I aimed for something different from the outset. I wanted to report stories for the print-version.

By choosing San Francisco as my assignment-base, I had already made the decision that I would not be writing about the election that much. I have to say that it hurt my heart as a political correspondent quite often when I heard the other Burns-Fellows in the U.S. telling me about their meetings with Donald Trump. But my goal was to learn about the Silicon Valley culture. And I did. I took my time to really get to know it, allowed myself to meet more people that probably were necessary for my stories in the end and travelled to the Valley frequently. I ended up writing two bigger reports for Handelsblatt around that topic and a few other stories, one for example about the method of using data to predict crime. I also wrote a weekly column for Handelsblatt Online - a good way to make use of all the information that would not make it into a bigger article but was also very interesting.

Looking back, there were only one and a half minor flaws about working at The Journal in San Francisco. One: San Francisco is very expensive. Housing costs are even higher than in Manhattan, so are drinks and food. Also, be prepared for the climate of the Bay Area. Most of my stay, San Francisco was foggy and cold. If you want to have sun, you have to live in Silicon Valley.