

Portland, October
2010

Dear Frank,
honoree Board of Trustees,

It's 7 a.m., the sun just rised. We are driving south to the Oregon Coast, to cover a Tsunami drill. The 3 of us with a mugg of coffee in our hands, still a bit sleepy though, listening to Nena. As Scotty, the fotographer, says he loves her. Anne, the reporter, instead loves talking to me about her German ancestors. As every 3rd American does. This is the way they make you feel comfortable and home here. And I really feel comfortable and home in this moment. Even if I don't like Nena.

The Burns Fellowship brought me to Portland, Oregon. A great city: big enough to never get bored, small enough to never get lost and more than green enough to name it „eco capital of the US“.

I am with Newschannel 8 KGW, an NBC-affiliate, ownded by Belo, a company from Texas. Scotty, Anne and the others produce 8 News shows a day. Their stories are about everything,: from cats in a tree to gobernal campaigning. The biggest issue while I have been here was the Kyron Horman story. An 8 year old missing boy, whose stepmother is suspected to have killed him. I had the impression our collegues where investigating even more than the police.

In the daily morning meeting producers and reporters debate the stories of the day. Most important: Is it a talker? Is it emotional? And where (not if, because this is never a question) can we be live?

The latter is a disadvantage for us fellows, because they don't want us to be live. I learned, it's not only because of the language but also because of the strict regulations of the labour unions. I could do interviews for them, but that's it pretty much. In the beginning I was kind of dissapointed, but then I focused on the big advantages that offered.

First of all, I had a great time to observe and to learn from their way of doing journalism (so different from our mostly content driven approach). And I got to know every part of beautiful Oregon by traveling around with my colleagues to the most popular and the most remote spots. That could not have been better.

In the second place, I had the wunderful opportunity to produce my own stories. Fortunately I had bought a video camera back home. That allowed me to produce independently. In the beginning it was really hard to convince my bosses in Germany to buy any story from the US. „Too far away from our audience!“ But I just ignored their concerns and sent them a first package... And I got them! They even wanted me to produce a whole serial, which was impossible timewise, mostly due to the fact that I worked for the first time as a reporter, fotographer and editor at once. Though a very timeconsuming experience, but wonderful! The KGW fotographers and editors helped me with a lot of ideas and little tricks. That was great. And some of my colleagues started teasing me because of the big camera backpack that was all the time following me on my bike... crazy German... BUT it was worth it!

I produced 6 stories for German Television:

„Nachrichten aus Übersee: Deutsche Reporterin beim US-Fernsehen“

3:00 min MDR Ländermagazin

„20 Jahre Wiedervereinigung: Zwei Thüringerinnen in San Francisco“

3:00 min MDR Ländermagazin

„Aufräumen mit einem Vorurteil - Grünes Portland“

1:45 MDR Aktuell

„Mit Badeschlappen gegen Obama: Ein Besuch an der Basis der Tea Party“ 1:45 MDR Aktuell

„Umweltschutz: Die Revolution von Portland “

4:30 MDR Auslandsmagazin Windrose

„Zufallstreffer: Die Wartburg in der kalifornischen Provinz“

3:00 MDR Ländermagazin

Besides that I was more than lucky to share one very special Oregon event with my co-workers. They invited me to join their team on the biggest relay of the world - The Hood2Coast! A 200 miles run from Mt. Hood to the Oregon Coast. I never thought that people could keep up 30 hours in a van („you only get a break when you run!“) and still like each other afterwards. But we did!

All that made my summer. I will miss driving around with Scotty, Anne and all the others. I will miss chatting about the lausiest stories, the biggest difficulties in American politics and the best hikes in the Cascade Mountains.

I am more than thankful: The fellowship and my KGW colleagues just made me having some of the happiest, most enriching weeks of my life. I will try to keep a smidge of the „easy going“

attitude for my newsroom back home. And I might even listen to Nena once in a while. Just to remember Oregon.

Thank you, Frank. Thank you, Board of Trustees.

Sincerely,

Yours Susann Reichenbach