

ARTHUR F. BURNS FELLOWSHIP 2014 · FRAUKE LÜPKE-NARBERHAUS ·  
BOSTON GLOBE

In my job at Spiegel Online, I sometimes write up to 10 news briefs a day. At night I try to list them all in the right order as a memory exercise, but often I cannot. While I was in Boston, I wanted to do something I generally cannot do in Hamburg: take more time to write fewer stories. I succeeded.

I spent weeks researching a story for Spiegel Online about sexual assault on American college campuses. I read studies, talked with survivors and experts, and contacted officials at the state Department of Education and several universities. They seemed reluctant to talk about that topic at all, and perhaps they considered Germany too far away to spend a lot of time talking with a reporter from Spiegel Online.

As a result, I had to write several e-mails and make many phone calls, which sometimes made me feel that I was writing for a student magazine. I had the same experience researching other articles. This complicated my work, of course, and it was sometimes very frustrating, but also good training in persistence.

My Boston Globe colleagues supported me during my research as much as they could. They helped me find the right contact persons, recommended articles, and talked over the subjects with me.

All in all, I felt very welcome in the Globe news department, although the office itself isn't very charming. I had to walk from a subway station a few minutes on a huge street to an immense building. The newsroom looks like those in American movies: It's too big, with dozens of reporters and editors preoccupied with their work. It had almost no plants and I needed binoculars to see the nearest window. (Good news: Within the next few years, The Globe is expecting to move to a smaller building closer to the city center.)

You could easily get lost at The Boston Globe because of its size, which is mainly due to its history as a much larger newspaper. And, I guess, due to its financial problems: Recently around 50 veteran employees in all departments accepted a buyout offer.

During my stay at The Globe, I took part in some news conferences and talked with the chief editor of the paper's website, [Bostonglobe.com](http://Bostonglobe.com), about pay walls and storytelling. My Globe colleagues were interested in me and in journalism in Germany. I ate lunch and dinner with them, went sailing and partying. Sometimes they asked me; sometimes I asked them out.

Until I took the initiative, I wrote no articles for The Globe, not even a news brief. Even before I arrived, my contact person wrote me an e-mail: "You're technically not working for the Globe. We are happy to host you, give you a place from

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which you can work for your home newspaper, help you acclimate to the city, etc. However, there's no expectation that you will be writing for The Globe."

That wasn't a problem for me. I had other plans anyway. But in the end, I wrote one piece for The Globe, which is supposed to be published at the beginning of November: an essay about 25th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. My colleagues were happy about the offer and pleased with the article. So was I.

While in Boston, I also wanted to do something else that I could not do in Hamburg very often: learn about a mostly unfamiliar culture, new people, and new places. Again I succeeded.

My Boston roommate invited me to a lake in New Hampshire. I spent a couple of days with her American extended family, including her 89-year-old grandmother, Sally. I got to know about s'mores (roasted marshmallow and chocolate cookies). I also canoed, ran, sailed, and talked with them about food, the German reunification, and American gun laws.

I got to see a friend in New York, traveled to Maine, Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard, and Rhode Island. I visited museums and spent lots of time in cafés, drinking ice tea and reading The Globe, The New York Times, Time, The New Yorker, and The Atlantic.

I got to know Boston and Cambridge with the help of many people. One German teacher, for example, showed me the Harvard campus. Later, the chief editor of the student newspaper, the Harvard Crimson, told me about student life. I met the director of international affairs at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (some kind of MIT's foreign minister). I got to know young artists, who introduced me to the art scene. I enjoyed to talk to them, without having a concrete story in mind.

I dined with the former German consul general to Boston in an elite club. Because I did not know how exclusive it was, we had to eat in a separate room. I wore jeans and a blazer, adding to the faux pas. I also spent an afternoon with a Polish survivor of Auschwitz at a private World War II museum established by an American millionaire. That is something I will never forget.

Now, at the beginning of October, I'm happy that I don't have to leave America right away. After about 10 weeks in the country, the culture is no longer unfamiliar to me, but there is still much to see. I have therefore extended my stay so I can travel to the Midwest (Chicago) and the West (San Francisco). I have enjoyed my time in the United States. I have experienced and learned much, and reflected a lot, and I will continue to do so for four more weeks.