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Re: Final Report for the Arthur F. Burns Fellowship Program

I can't think of a better way to spend two months than as an Arthur Burns fellow. I'd like to thank Dr. Frank Freiling and Mario Scherhauser for their support and advice throughout the program as well as the International Center for Journalists and the Internationale Journalisten-Programme for making the experience possible. In order to get the most out of your fellowship I'd suggest setting some clear goals beforehand and checking your progress in completing throughout your stay. Nine weeks flies by, so below are a handful of ideas to help you hit the ground running.

I whole-heartedly recommend Tagesspiegel and Berlin for future fellows eager to learn about Germany and life in a German newspaper. The staff at the Tagesspiegel is friendly, receptive and encouraging, having hosted several Burns Fellows in previous years and even sending some of their own to the States as Burns Fellows. The team on the editorial page (Meinung) was very welcoming and engaging. Malte Lehming, Moritz Schuller, Clemens Wergin and Sebastian Bickerich made for great colleagues, debate partners and lunch pals. The political, social and news capital of Germany is a wonderful place to spend a few months as a foreigner and journalist. The city is very livable and the locals are laugh-you-off-your seat loveable. Such charms notwithstanding, opportunities to travel throughout Germany should be seized with adventurous abandon as Berlin is not a good yard/meter-stick for the rest of the country.

Wherever you end up, be sure to attend editorial meetings and speak up. When introducing yourself, tell those present that you are willing and able to write for various sections of the publication and that you welcome their suggestions for stories. If there are certain story ideas that you have, decide which sections would be most appropriate and go directly to the various sub-editors. And do this within your first week so that you're on their radar screen. Stories will come and go, and if you can get in early you won't miss any opportunities. You will also gain the attention and respect of your German colleagues, who are not nearly as cold and stand-offish as popular myth would have it. They are just more direct. By being direct yourself, you'll fit right in.

You'll notice fairly quickly that German publications read more like editorials (think The Economist). While there might not be a strict across-the-board editorial line for the newspaper, many articles will plainly argue that policy X or parliamentarian Y is rubbish. Tied to this is the fact that German journalists view themselves more as writers than reporters. While an American journalist might use quotes to stress a point, Germans

typically insert their opinion directly into the article. Don't shy away from this. Look at it as an opportunity to air your views.

One way to get a feeling for this and other differences in style and content is to apply for Probe-Abos" or trial subscriptions from various newspapers. They are free, last two weeks and cancel themselves automatically. It's very simple and can be done on-line. Why not stagger four trial subscriptions to various newspapers throughout your stay? In addition to being informed about what your colleagues are discussing, this will help you get a feeling for the different perspectives of various German newspapers.

In terms of personal life I have a few quick suggestions to make. Date a local. There's no better way to learn about German, Germans or Germany. Join a "Stammtisch," where friends and colleagues get together and shoot the breeze. Get on the email lists for the American Academy and the Aspen Institute. Rent a row boat at the Cafe am Neuen See in Tiergarten. And be sure to play soccer, join a Yoga class, drink plenty of beer and buy a cheap bike. The first will help you meet locals, the second will keep you balanced, the third will help you ease into friendships and the fourth will get you home, as the U-Bahn stops running long before you should.

Unfortunately, I was unable to attend the introductory seminar. Given the stories I've heard and the bond that many of the fellows seem to develop, I recognize that I missed a special week in Washington. From what I've heard, it's a great way to kick the fellowship off. While I was able to make friends with the Americans, my biggest regret is not meeting the Germans. I hope I'll have the chance down the road.

Enjoy!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joseph N. Yackley". The signature is fluid and stylized, with the first and last names being more prominent than the middle initial.

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