

THE MUCKRAKER

the students' voice since 1997

THE INDEPENDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY SCHOOL STUDENTS' NEWSPAPER

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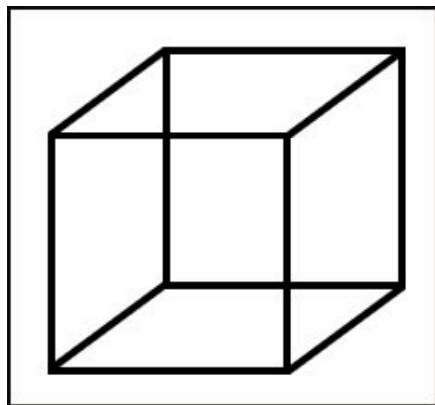
PAGE 1



Finally! The first half of this semester is over, and two weeks of well-deserved fall vacation await us. That is, if we manage to find some leisure time amidst homework, projects and the struggle against the swine flu. It's the time of the year when most things are peaceful. The Treaty of Lisbon was signed by almost everyone (Klaus will come around!), all Nobel prizes were awarded to renowned scientists - and a President -, and even the Chinese agreed to participate at the Frankfurter Buchmesse, against all opposition. The reports of Amnesty International on the number of world-wide death penalties seems to cause little indignation. "The weather is depressing enough."

Judging by the results of the U18-Wahlen, at least 34% of our school community is happy about our current government. We will assume that the rest is either extremely angry, disappointed, annoyed or indifferent about it. In any case: we know that one particular person in Berlin needs to learn English now, so if you're seeking a well-paid tutoring job...

At the Muckraker office, we found this fascinating picture of Necker's Cube(s). It clearly demonstrates that we are perfectly capable of seeing two different objects in one depiction (do you see the two cubes already? Try to switch back and forth, it has a hypnotizing effect!)

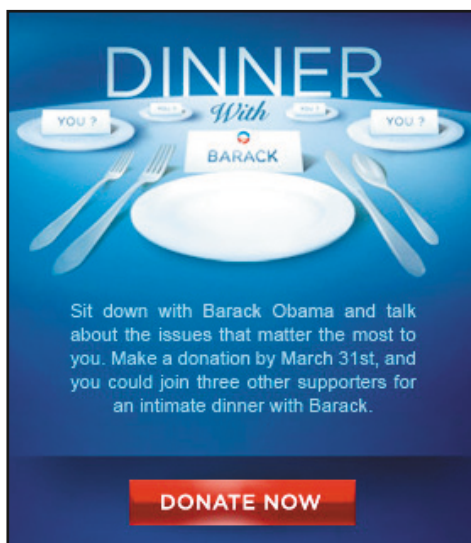


With that very philosophical thought in mind: Enjoy the little sunshine you get during the days and cuddle up with this fantastic Muckraker!

Cheers,
Your editors

Obama Loaded:

The President's internet campaign mogul gives a behind-the-scenes account in the Berlin Amerika Haus



How to go from political new-comer to president and Nobel Peace Prize laureate in two and a half years: Choose your predecessor wisely. Develop progressive and appealing concepts and acquire character and rhetorical skills to embody and poeticize these concepts as only a few could.

But don't forget to hire Blue State Digital, send 2 billion email messages to a pool of 13 million people, and organize rolling-hill-painting on 1500 barns.

It is undeniable that Barack Obama himself is quite a novelty on the political landscape, but his team's employment of technology is what others in politics and businesses are looking to crack. Last Sunday, the coordinator of the Obama internet campaign from Blue State Digital appeared as a guest at the Berlin Amerika Haus' discussion series titled "America Reloaded: One

Year of Barack Obama" to share some of his tactics with a curious audience - including the PR heads from the CDU and Grüne.

Grassroots, bottom up: Obama wanted his campaign itself to reflect the transparency and citizen initiative that was his promise. On the meta-level, a clever way to rally trust. More immediately: People like feeling needed, involved and listened to.

That's where the 13-million-people email list rooted in mybarackobama.com comes in. Listees were organized into about 7 different categories based on their degree of activity. Those who rarely even opened mail were among the 'freeloaders'. People who were willing to complete any task asked of them were second to top and unofficially called the 'Evangelists'. Those who even responded, contributed on their own accord to the website and took their campaign efforts beyond cyber space - the ideal voters - were the 'Superstars'. Free-loaders received only general emails. The higher on the ranking you were, the more insider information you were sent. The Superstars got regular video message updates by the campaign manager, filling them in on the newest strategies. The goal was to boost as many people into the sphere of Superstars as possible.

There were several message writing 'protagonists', each playing a different role: The campaign manager (action plans, progress updates), Barack Obama himself (establishing himself as stately, writing rarely and with ear-

Obama, continued on page 2

Weimar

Jede deutsche Stadt ist irgendwie Goethe- oder Schillerstadt, doch Weimar ist es wirklich. So luden die Deutschlehrer ihre Schüler auf eine Exkursion in den Spuren des großen Dichterzweigestirns, bis in die Wohnzimmer der Berühmtheiten. Vier Thüringer Rostbratwürste verschlangen manche Schüler daraufhin. Auf Seite 3 beschreibt eine Fahrtteilnehmerin ihre Eindrücke.

on pages 3

Vampires

Supernatural things are humbug? Not in our new column, "Tales from Beyond the Looking-Glass"! This month featuring: real vampires! Fascinated by blood, auras and immortality? The learns more...

on page 7-8

JFKS Life

Teacher Feature: Kathrin Röschel

Frau Röschel is our German High School Principal and thus just as busy as Dr. Hepner, whom we interviewed in the last issue. Nonetheless, she took the time to answer questions about her career and her plans for JFKS.

Tell us a little bit about yourself! Where were you born, where did you grow up and go to school?

I grew up in the small town of Genthin in Eastern Germany and went to school there before I came to Berlin to study at the Humboldt University. After the Wall came down I continued my studies and research at The City College of New York.

Which was your best subject at school? And your worst?

Math was always my favorite subject and, in general, I believe I was more Lisa than Bart in school.

What inspired you to become a teacher?

I always liked working with children and was a swim coach when I was in high school.

Besides that, I discovered early that I had the gift to explain things to my fellow students in a way that they not only understood, but also enjoyed (even when I was talking about Math and Physics ...), and that it was even a pleasure for me.

Describe your first day as a teacher. Did you think that it was the right job for you from the start?

I certainly do remember my first day as a teacher: I became a homeroom teacher right away and the kids in my class were a collection of students who did not pass the probation time in their high schools. Let me just say that they hadn't experienced education at its finest, but we worked hard together and enjoyed little steps. That was definitely my hardest time as a teacher, but maybe also the most successful.

What is, in your estimation, your most important job as Headmistress of the school?

To keep our school the special place it is and lead it into the future with knowledge and wisdom. That will only work if we work together - students, teachers, administration, and community.

Has your new position caused you to lose contact with the students?

I will work hard to avoid that. I am still teaching and I am in contact with many students, but you also have the responsibility to make yourself heard. A school is made for students!

What are your goals as Headmistress? Do you have a vision for the JFKS?

I have quite a number of goals and visions for our school and we could and should talk about that in detail later and in different groups. One thing I would like to reintroduce to the JFKS is an exchange program with the United States. I think we definitely need that a.s.a.p.

What five objects would you take on a deserted island? And if you could take only one?

I would take Tom, Lina, Max, and my husband of course (even though they wouldn't like to count as objects) and a sailboat.

If only one thing - a blackberry!

Do you have a favorite quote or a motto?

"If we would know what we were doing, we wouldn't call it research" A. Einstein.

What would you do if you found 1000 Euros on the street?

If I couldn't find the owner, I would use it to buy more rainforest to save it. That's what more people and companies should do with "extra money"!

Any last words?

I really do look forward to working with you!

Sophia Kula

Obama, continued from page 1

nestness about political plans), Michelle Obama (perhaps the more casual addresses), and a few others.

All emails were less than 200 words long and included the points: Why you are receiving this email? What do we want to you to do?

1/5th of Obama's votes are attributed to the email list...

And it still fulfils a purpose now that he is in office: The listees weren't only categorized apropos engagement, but also profiled for interests and occupation. Today, President Obama can mobilize support from the citizens, say, by sending all doctors, nurses, and disease victims updates on the health care debate.

Seizing the right moment to send an email, the manager says, is most important. He related an anecdote about the night of the Republican National Convention. Barack and Michelle Obama had resorted to Hawaii. The Obama campaign wanted to stay quiet for the week and get a sense of Republican party dynamics with Sarah Palin on board. But they had the cleverness to break this silence when Palin declared on national television that community organizers can't change countries. The Obama internet headquarters immediately sent out a message of disapproval. That Wednesday night became the biggest donation spurt in the entire campaign.

Which brings us to that next little point: Money. 500 million dollars were raised online for the Obama campaign. That makes 80% of the campaign money donated by - on average - 45-year-olds who gave up to 100 \$ - on average - 2.3 times. Grassroots not even so shabby. With a little bit of advertisement savvy, that is: One fundraising project was the famous "Dinner with Barack". Five sponsors would be selected to have dinner with the candidate, on the candidate.

Their stories would then be told online - without any efforts from the Obama team.

Most campaign videos and all songs ('Yes We Can', Obama Girl's songs) were created by the voters, without any input from the headquarters. And this was precisely the goal: The campaign was to become a peoples' initiative, a community project. Peoples' stories were to take center stage, not Barack Obama. There are many examples of individuals who made the campaign their new social group. 'Charlie', who lost his wife before the campaign, joined the Obama family. Many were moved by a short film about him (created by his community campaign team) and decided to jump on the wagon. Thanks to the application of a googlemaps-like program, Obama supporters could always easily inform themselves about campaign events near them and host their own. 3.5 million of such events were organized across the country.

In rural areas, where large get-togethers are difficult and Clinton prevailed, the barn-painting activity came to life. A man wrote to myobama.com asking which exact colors he should use to paint the Obama logo on his barn. Other supporters became inspired and soon, a barn-painting contest was declared. The 1500 logo barns made for incredible news coverage.

It goes to show what advanced salesmanship can accomplish. It will doubtless be fascinating to see where else modern communication technology - through email and SMS threads and 'smart mobs' - will take people. The Obama campaign performed a world-class example.

Lena Walther

Zwischen Schillerkaufhaus und Goethecafé



Ein bisschen Goethe, ein bisschen Schiller und viele alte Häuser: So präsentierte sich jedenfalls das Weimar, das die 13. Klasse an einem kühlen, grauen Freitag im September besuchte. Anlass war die im Unterricht durchgenommene Zeitepoche des Sturm und Drangs. Früh morgens, zum verabredeten Zeitpunkt um 6:30 Uhr, standen schon einzelne Grüppchen frierender, schlechtgelaunter Jugendlichen auf der Rampe und erwarteten sehnsüchtig die Busse. Diese trafen dann kurz vor sieben ein, und es gab sofort ein Gerangel um die besten Plätze. Auf der vierstündigen Hinfahrt wurde noch einmal ordentlich Schlaf nachgeholt und ausgiebig gefrühstückt, was die Gemüter auch wieder ermunterte.

In Weimar angekommen, teilten sich die Schüler in ihre jeweiligen Deutschklassen auf, nicht jedoch ohne vorher ein großes Gruppenbild vor dem Dichterdenkmal auf dem Theaterplatz gemacht zu haben. Die misstrauischen Blicke, die wir von den Einheimischen ernteten, waren wohl gerechtfertigt, denn außer unserer riesigen Reisegruppe von rund sechzig Leuten gab es in Weimar an dem Tag relativ wenige Touristen. Der eigentliche Kern Weimars, die historische Altstadt, ist überraschenderweise noch fast vollständig in ihrem Erscheinungsbild erhalten geblieben, je-

doch, wie wir bald feststellten mussten, auch ziemlich klein. So zog es diejenigen, die mit ihrer Klasse gerade nicht an einer der für diesen Tag geplanten Führungen teilnahmen, in die Cafés oder in die kleinen Geschäfte, die, wie alles in Weimar, sehr altmodisch und gediegen wirkten, angefangen vom Zwiebelmarkt (wo wirklich überall Zwiebelsträußchen angeboten wurden), bis hin zu solchen Etablissements wie dem Hotel Amalienhof mit stilechten Rokokomöbeln und Blümchentapeten.

Nach einiger Zeit versammelten sich dann die Klassen mit ihren Lehrern vor den jeweiligen Gebäuden, die aus der Sturm und Drang Epoche stammen. Zum Beispiel wurde der Wittumspalais besichtigt, eine große Villa, in der die Kurfürstin Anna Amalia lebte und von dort aus „ihr“ Weimar regierte und die Ausübung der Künste und der Kultur aktiv förderte. Unter ihrer Regentschaft zog es viele Denker und Dichter nach Weimar, darunter auch Goethe.

Sein Wohnhaus, das ihm großzügiger Weise vom Herzog geschenkt wurde, liegt auf der sogenannten „Flaniermeile“ Weimars, die Hauptachse, die zum Palais führt und wahrscheinlich die einzige größere Straße in der Stadt ist. Goethe, wie uns die freundliche Touristenführerin erzählte, war ein äußerster Genussmensch. Er ließ zum

Beispiel seine Treppen im italienischen Palazzostil umbauen und seine Wände in teuren und relativ knalligen Farben streichen. In fast jeder Ecke steht eine Marmorstatue oder hängt ein Bild, so dass man den Eindruck gewann, in jedem Zimmer würden einen mindesten sechs Paare Augen verfolgen. Na ja, obwohl der Hausherr doch recht exzentrisch erscheinen mag, sein Haus mit der skurrilen Einrichtung war wohl das Spannendste der ganzen Fahrt.

Das letzte Gebäude auf dem Programm war Schillers Wohnhaus. Dieses war das bescheidenste der drei, da Schiller es sich selbst kaufen musste, und sein ganzes Leben lang „auf Pump“ lebte. Die Einrichtung ist einfach, aber man fühlte sich darin um einiges wohler als in Goethes Domizil. Unter anderem erfuhren wir auch, dass Schiller an einer Lungenkrankheit litt und deswegen Äpfel in seinem Schreibtisch verfaulen ließ, da die Zersetzungsgase gut gegen Hustenreiz sein sollten. Als Goethe einmal in diesem heißen, stickig fauligen Zimmer auf Schiller wartete, soll er von dem Gestank und der schlechten Luft in Ohnmacht gefallen sein.

Gott sei Dank roch es in den Privatgemächern der Dichter nicht mehr so unangenehm, dafür aber in den Eingangshallen der Museen. Im Wittumspalais schlug einem im Eingangsbereich gleich eine Mischung aus Kellerluft und WC-Geruch entgegen, und im Schillerhaus musste wohl ein Rohrbruch für den starken Fäkalien Gestank verantwortlich gewesen sein. Dafür gab es wahrscheinlich bei allen Teilnehmern einen fetten Punkteabzug! Was jedoch wirklich gelungen war, waren die Führungen an sich, die verständlich, interessant und nicht zu detailreich waren. Auch auf die verschiedenen Fragen gab es immer eine Antwort, was der Erfahrung nach nicht immer der Fall ist. Das Fazit war gemischt: Einige meinten, die Kosten und die lange Anfahrt (vier Stunden) hätten sich nicht gelohnt, aber viele waren auch der Meinung, dass die Erfahrung sie letztlich doch bereichert habe. Nach drei intensiven Touren und etlichen Bummelpausen stiegen wieder alle in die Busse ein, und man fuhr der Heimat Berlin wieder entgegen, wo man sich dann doch auf das eigene Bett (oder die nächste Party) freute.

Kirstin Lazarus

Comments, Replies?

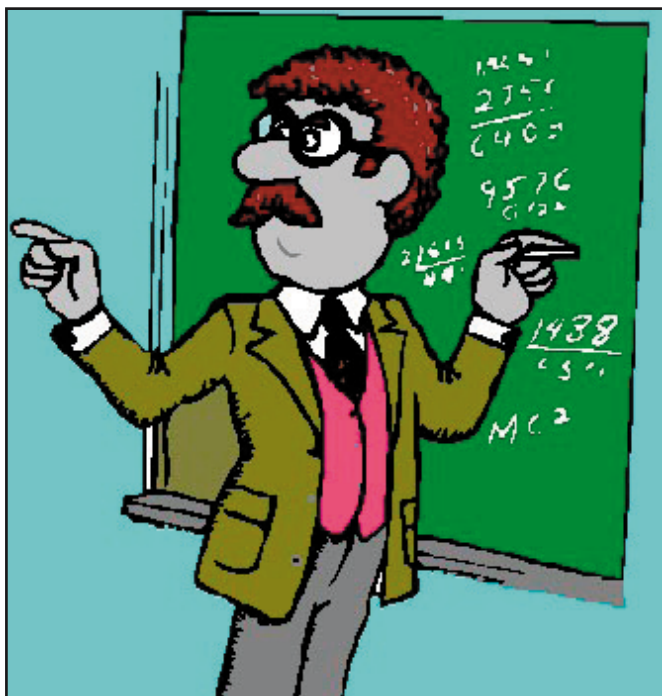
send your opinions and articles to:

themuckraker@gmail.com

JFKS Life

Response to "Learn for Life, Not for Teachers!"

Dear Muckraker,
I was pleased to read your article entitled, "Learn For Life, Not For Teachers," because it summarizes a lot of what I think about teachers in general and teachers at JFKS in particular. To continue your point, I'm not sure what kind of "career" you can call it when you work from 08:00 to 15:00 each day. That's not even a full day! Well, to be fair, I suppose teachers get off *slightly* later if you count all the



time that teachers at JFKS spend scheming for ways to deduct points. And, in fact, just *slightly* later when you include actually marking the papers (for instance, you used "scrabble to class" when you meant "scramble to class," and "its" when you meant "his or her;" but overall, very well written: 2+) and recording the devilishly lowered grades into a grade book, no doubt laughing all the while. So I guess between all that, your average JFKS teacher works until, say, 17:00 or 17:30. But I guess it also might be even *slightly* later, if you take into effect the planning that goes on. Making presentations, re-reading the books to be taught, independent reading that becomes part of a lesson's introduction or enrichment: that all takes time. So, I suppose JFKS teachers really get off at like 18:30ish. But, still, there might be a faculty conference or department meeting to discuss how to best serve students, or, perhaps, you find a teacher meeting independently with a student after school or helping with a sport or activity. So, let's make it like 19:00 – 20:00. But before teachers leave, they have to take care of administrative matters, like attendance or parent communication. 20:30. This is a normal day, too, so in the days after tests, klausuren or projects are collected, I suppose this might maybe, possibly go *slightly* later. Then, they have the audacity to have families to look after and lives to lead! Can you believe it?! Luck-

ily there is no commute because the teachers live at school, so they have all sorts of time to sit around in their living room (teacher's lounge), drink coffee, count the ungodly stacks of cash they earn, and pelt each other with paper balls made from student homework.

Teachers... pfft, they are a lazy and insolent lot. I bet they were this lazy when they were getting their Bachelor's Degrees, certainly lazier during their Master's Degrees (no doubt with a major in meanness), and in the cases of the laziest and meanest teachers of all, during their doctorate degrees. I mean, seriously, they're qualified... why don't they teach college again?

I agree students should teach themselves, thereby rendering teachers obsolete. Because so many students can and would... I mean, we all learned satire from reading Swift and Vonnegut on our own, right? Until those proud, brave students find a way to overthrow the system of so-called learning that exploits them for lavish amounts of money, I guess students will still have to suffer through the tyranny and boredom of the only time in their lives when the people who evaluate them will care as much or do so much for them.

Yours truly,

Sean Reap
English Department

-Staff-Box

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1. Come to our weekly meetings in the 20-minute-break on Tuesdays in B214
2. Send in your articles to themuckraker@gmail.com
3. Drop a note in our mailbox or approach us randomly in the hallways

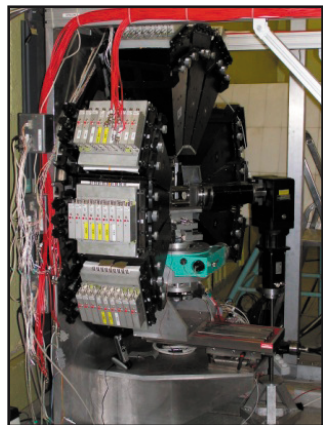
Culture

Deutsche Physiker an der Wolga

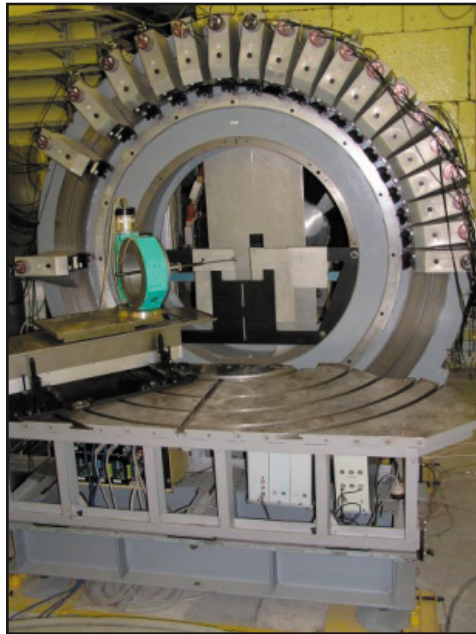
Weitgehend unbemerkt von der deutschen Gemeinde in Moskau arbeitet im ca. 100 km nördlich gelegenen Wissenschaftsstädtchen *Dubna* eine Gruppe deutscher Physiker am Vereinigten Institut für Kernforschung (Joint Institute for Nuclear Research, JINR) an der Wolga. Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland zählt zwar nicht zu den 15 Signaturstaaten des international renommierten Instituts, ist jedoch vertraglich assoziiert und kann aufgrund ihres Beitrags zum Institutshaushalt die Einrichtungen dieser internationalen Forschungseinrichtung nutzen.

Innerhalb der vielfältigen, am Institut verfolgten Forschungsschwerpunkte ist die Arbeit der Gruppe der deutschen Mitarbeiter konzentriert auf die Bereiche der theoretischen Physik und der Neutronenphysik. Auf experimentellem Gebiet liegt der Schwerpunkt der aktuellen Aktivitäten am Frank Labor für Neutronenphysik, das mit seinem schnellen, gepulsten Forschungsreaktor IBR-2 eine weltweit einzigartige Neutronenquelle für Experimente mit dieser Teilchensorte zur Verfügung stellt. Die Besonderheiten dieser speziellen Neutronenquelle ermöglichen Untersuchungsmethoden, die andernorts nur unter größerem Aufwand oder mit verminderter Effektivität möglich sind.

Die deutsche Gruppe betreibt am IBR-2 die beiden Neutronendiffraktometer EPSILON und SKAT zur Untersuchung polykristalliner Festkörper. Im Wesentlichen handelt es sich bei den untersuchten Materialien um geologische Proben unterschiedlichster Herkunft. Untersucht wird zum einen die auf anderem Wege schwer zugängliche Struktureigenschaft Textur (SKAT) und zum anderen die in manchen Gesteinen auftretenden inneren Restspannungen (EPSILON). Beide Instru-



Aktuellstes Projekt der Arbeitsgruppe ist die komplette Erneuerung ihres 100 Meter langen Neutronenleitersystems, durch das die im Reaktor erzeugten Neutronen zu den Diffraktometern mit den dort befindlichen Proben geführt



werden. Die Arbeiten stehen im zeitlichen Zusammenhang mit einer Modernisierung des Reaktors und zielen in der Hauptsache auf eine Erhöhung der Zahl der verfügbaren Neutronen am Ort der Proben und damit auf höhere Empfindlichkeit bzw. verkürzte Messzeiten hin. Bei der Installation des neuen Neutronenleitersystems handelt es sich um eine beträchtliche Investition mit der das deutsche Engagement am Forschungsstandort Dubna nochmals deutlich unterstrichen wird.

Wenngleich es sich bei den angestellten Untersuchungen um Grundlagenforschung handelt, sind die untersuchten Proben größtenteils sehr anwendungsbezogen gewählt. So ist die neutronendiffraktometrische Untersuchung von Gesteinen aus Tiefenbohrungen, aktuellen Tunnelbauprojekten bzw. Salzlagern hinsichtlich ihrer Textur bzw. eventuell vorhandener Restspannungen durchaus ein wertvolles Hilfsmittel in der Beurteilung z.B. der Stabilität geologischer Formationen. Für jegliche Art von Bergbautätigkeit können daraus wertvolle Erkenntnisse hinsichtlich potentieller Gefahren, die aus den Eigenschaften der betroffenen Gesteine herrühren, gewonnen werden.

Die bestehende Arbeitsgruppe setzt sich zusammen aus deutschen Physikern und Geologen aus Freiberg/Sa., Kiel und Potsdam unter der Federführung von Prof. Dr. Frischbutter des Geoforschungszentrums Potsdam. Weiterhin gehören der Gruppe russische Mitarbeiter des JINR an, darunter promovierte Physiker bzw. angehende Doktoranden. Interessierten Diplomanden und Doktoranden der Physik bzw. der Geologie oder entsprechenden artverwandten Disziplinen bietet die Gruppe Möglich-

keiten zu Diplom- oder Doktorarbeiten, die ggf. auch vom Bundesministerium für Forschung und Technologie gefördert werden können. Geboten wird Interessierten ein spannendes Arbeitsumfeld in einer, für den Russlandkenner sehr aufgeräumten, modernen und von Naturwissenschaftlern geprägten Stadt mitten im Grünen. Offizielle Sprachen im Institut sind Russisch und Englisch, wobei russische Sprachkenntnisse natürlich für eine Teilnahme am kulturellen Leben und zur Nutzung der Freizeitmöglichkeiten im Wolgastädtchen Dubna äußerst hilfreich sind.

Aber auch für Nichtphysiker ist der zweistündige Ausflug an die Wolga mit dem Express vom Savelovskij Voksal ein durchaus lohnender Ausflug am Wochenende. Ein Spaziergang entlang der Wolgapromenade oder an der Mündung des Moskau-Kanals in die Wolga mit anschließendem Essen in einem der lokalen Restaurants ist ein ohne größere Planung realisierbares Tagesprogramm. Ein Besuch der deutschen Arbeitsgruppe am Institut dagegen erfordert einen längeren Vorlauf und sollte nur von Physik-Enthusiasten angepeilt werden, wobei sich die deutschen Mitarbeiter durchaus interessierte Besucher in ihrem Reich vorstellen können. Ein Kontakt kann über Dr. Ch. Scheffzük unter der e-Mail Adresse scheffzük@geoforschung-potsdam.de hergestellt werden.

Von Peter Wiechert (StR, JFKS)
und Dr. Christian Scheffzük
(Geoforschungszentrum Potsdam,
JINR)

The Cynic's Dictionary

NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

"Newest method of war prevention. Effectiveness currently in test phase. Next year's candidates include: Kim Jong-il and Mahmud Ahmadinedschad."

Feeling cynical, too?
Then submit your own definitions to themuckraker@gmail.com by November 23rd.

Eileen Wagner

*Culture***Zeidler im Wunderland – Steigen Sie ein**

Wenn Südafrikaner über Südafrika schreiben, dann kommt da meistens etwas Negatives bei raus. Das Land ist dreckig, die Leute behandeln einen miserabel, alle wollen einem nur ans Geld. Ich bin kein Südafrikaner und hege daher großen Respekt für das Land und seine Einwohner. Wie sehr uns Europäern unsere Mitmenschen im Süden in mancher Hinsicht überlegen sind, wird mir immer wieder erneut klar.

Wir wollten uns vor einigen Jahren einmal richtig was gönnen: Eine Nachtzugreise von Berlin aus nach irgendwo. Und nicht nur eine Nachtzugreise, sondern auch noch eine im Schlafwagen, in dem man ein richtiges Bett hat, nicht zu vergleichen mit den Pritschen, die einem im Liegewagen geboten werden. Also stand ich mit Familie und Gepäck unterm Arm auf einem Bahnsteig in Berlin und fror. Keine 15 Minuten nach der geplanten Abfahrtszeit kam der Zug dann auch an. Ein grummelnder Schlafwagenschaffner stieg aus und blaffte uns, noch ehe er den Eingang freigemacht hatte, an: „Jetzt steigen Sie doch endlich ein!“ Wir stiegen ein und gingen zu unserem Schlafwagenabteil. Doch – Pustekuchen, nix Schlafwagen. Noch ehe wir was sagen konnten fauchte uns der Schaffner an: „Schlafwagen ist kaputt, gibt nur noch Liegewagen. Und jetzt hören Sie endlich auf sich zu beschweren, gehen Sie schlafen und machen Sie das Licht aus, dann merken Sie eh nicht mehr, was für’n Wagen das ist.“ Ohne auch nur ein Wort gesagt zu haben, zogen wir uns gehorsam um und legten uns schlafen, wie sich das gehört. Schließlich ist der Schaffner ja König. Am nächsten Morgen wachten wir auf, und der Schaffner schrie uns auch schon an: „Drehen Sie sich wieder um! Da war ein Unfall, wir fahren jetzt drum rum, dauert zwei Stunden länger!“ Wir drehten uns um, und der Schaffner sollte recht behalten: Wir kamen in der Tat drei Stunden später an.

Aber ich will eigentlich auf etwas anderes hinaus, nämlich auf eine Zugreise in Südafrika, nur wenige Monate danach. Noch vor einem Jahr hätte ich nach diesem Satz aufgehört zu lesen, denn die Worte „Zug“ und „Südafrika“ konnten nach meinem Weltbild nicht in einem Satz vorkommen, genau so, wie nach meinem Weltbild das Erste nicht im Zweiten vorkommt. Ich hätte den Artikel weggeschmissen, den Schreiberling als „dreckigen Lügner und Ketzer“ beschimpft und seine sofortige Verbrennung auf dem Scheiterhaufen gefordert. Doch dann überraschte mich mein Vater mit der Ankündigung, wir

würden in den Herbstferien eine Bahnreise mit einem Nachtzug von Johannesburg nach Kapstadt machen. Ich war ganz blaff, beschimpfte meinen Vater als „dreckigen Lügner und Ketzer“ und wollte schon sein Feuerchen anzünden, da hielt er mir, blau auf weiß (unsere schwarze Druckerpatrone war leer), die Buchungsbestätigung hin.

Und so kommt es, dass ich keine zwei Monate später mit Familie und Gepäck unterm Arm auf einem Bahnsteig in Johannesburg stehe und friere. Trotz unserer schlechten Erfahrung beim letzten Mal haben wir erneut einen Schlafwagen gebucht. Wir sind gut gelaunt und voller freudiger Erwartungen – bis eine Durchsage kommt. Der Zug verspätet sich um ca. 15 Minuten, einer der Schlafwagen ist ausgefallen. Neben mir macht es „Klunk!“ als meine Schwester umkippt, meine Eltern haltensich aneinander fest, und auch mir schwant Böses. „Nicht schon wieder!“ denke ich mir, „Wehe!“ Wütend ziehe ich schnell los, um Feuerholz zu sammeln – der Schuldige muss brennen!

Ich habe mit Hilfe meiner Schwester schon einen ziemlich ordentlichen Scheiterhaufen zusammengestellt, da hören wir plötzlich ein „Klack, Klack! Klack, Klack!“ aus der Ferne. Wir drehen unsere Gesichter in die Richtung, aus der das Geräusch kam, und prompt fallen wir uns die Kinnladen runter. Wir heben sie wieder auf, und haben so Zeit, das Ungetüm, das da puffend auf uns zukommt, zu bestaunen. Ich weiß nicht, wie ich es euch beschreiben soll; für so etwas gibt es nämlich keine Worte. Ich würde es gerne als „Dampflok“ bezeichnen, aber es hat den Namen nicht verdient. Es sieht so aus, als hätte Werner von Siemens persönlich es gebaut. Aber er muss damals schlechte Arbeit geleistet haben, denn es scheint nur noch durch Uhu (oder ein Uhu-ähnliches Produkt) zusammenzuhalten. Wenn ich mich vor diese „Lok“ auf die Gleise werfen würde, würde sie wahrscheinlich mehr Schaden erleiden als ich. Aber trotzdem dampft sie gemütlich an uns vorbei und zieht hinter sich eine Museumssammlung an Wagons her. Doch die größte Überraschung erwartet uns, als dieses Geschöpf Satans vor uns hält, denn direkt vor unserer Nase ist mehr Baustelle als Wagon stehengeblieben. Mit einem zischenden „Pffft!“ geht die Tür vor uns auf, zehn Meter weiter die andere Tür des Wagons; wir steigen durch die eine Tür ein, die Bauarbeiter durch die andere wieder aus. Wir sehen noch gerade, wie eine ältere Frau den Baustellenstaub wegwischt, dann huscht sie auch schnell davon.

Plötzlich zuckt mein Vater zusammen und geht einen Schritt zurück. Ich drehe mich um und sehe den Grund – auf uns läuft ein Schlafwagenschaffner zu. Er erinnert mich erstaunlich an den von der letzten Fahrt und ich will ihn schon anflehen, er solle mich doch bitte nicht schlagen, da meint er in einem entschuldigenden, fast demütigen Tonfall, wir sollen ihm doch bitte verzeihen, unser Wagen sei leider ausgefallen. Man habe keinen gleichwertigen Ersatz gefunden, habe aber alles getan, einen gleichwertigen Service zu bieten. Und die Reise sei ja selbstverständlich für uns kostenlos.

Wir sind baff, aber glücklich. Der Schaffner führt uns in unser Abteil, und nun folgt eine Überraschung der anderen. Das Abteil sieht von innen genauso aus wie die Lok von außen. Einige Beispiele: Die Betten scheinen durch ein Wunder der Statik durch nichts als verbogene Büroklammern zu halten. Ich lasse mich schon aus Protest mit aller Wucht auf mein Bett fallen – aber es hält, und ist sogar unglaublich gemütlich. Die Fensterscheibe ist nicht eine Fensterscheibe, sondern aus mehreren zerbrochenen Autoscheiben zusammengesetzt – trotzdem ist sie glasklar und 100% dicht. Wir haben einen Wasserhahn im Abteil, der zunächst eine warme, braune Brühe ausspuckt – nach nur zwei Sekunden aber auf Kristallklares, kühles Wasser umstellt, und, und, und.

Als der Zug dann endlich mit zwei Stunden Verspätung abfährt, beschließen wir, im Speisewagen essen zu gehen. Der ist sofort auffindbar, und sogar das Essen schmeckt. Auf dem Rückweg fallen uns zwei Männer auf, die zwischen den Wagons zu hängen scheinen. Wir fragen sie, was sie da machen, und die Antwort, die wir erhalten, kommt dann doch ein wenig unerwartet: Die Kopplung sei ausgefallen, sie würden die Wagons festhalten. Auf unsere Nachfrage, ob das nicht ein wenig überanstrengend sei, meinen sie: „No no!“ sie würden ja außerdem nur einen Wagen mitziehen müssen, danach würde ja der Zug schon enden. Die armen Schweine vorne bei der Lok täten ihnen bloß Leid! Sie lachen. Uns wird bei dem Gedanken schwindelig, und wir legen uns schlafen.

Am nächsten Morgen weckt uns der Schaffner – pünktlich, trotz anfänglicher Verspätung. Wir seien in Kapstadt angekommen.

Wie gesagt, wir können was lernen.

Culture

Tales from Beyond the Looking-Glass: Real Vampires

Tales from Beyond the Looking-Glass will feature articles about non-mainstream groups of people. In the articles, I assume that esoteric beliefs and practices are real and work. Those who believe only in what science has so far been able to prove may find these articles to be rather silly and unrealistic. This article is about those people who self-identify as vampires and what they claim this entails. I do not make any attempt to verify these claims or pass judgment on these people. In the article, I make the assumption that these people experience what they say they do; however, you will have to make up your own mind whether you choose to believe it or not.

Imagine you lie awake every night, wide awake, knowing you have school the next day yet not being able to fall asleep. Imagine the light seeming so bright to you that you have to wear sunglasses the whole day, even in the dark hallways of your school. Imagine your skin being so sensitive to the sun that even wearing sun screen with SPF 50 you get sunburned after fifteen minutes. Imagine feeling a burning need within you, a terrible thirst that won't abate no matter how much you drink. This is the reality that faces many people every day of their life. What causes this condition is a mystery, but due to the defining characteristics that unite these people they call themselves vampires.

There are many different types of vampires and no-one quite agrees on the definitions of each of them. However, most people *do* agree that there are three main groups: sanguinarians, psi-vamps, and hybrids.

Sanguinarians, also known as blood-vamps, are the type of vampire most similar to the fictional vampire à la Bram Stoker or Anne Rice. While they do not spontaneously combust in the sunlight, many of them *are* very sensitive to the sun and bright lights. Though many prefer the night, they can go outside during the day without much difficulty. They often have heightened senses, which means that they can hear people whispering about them a few meters away, see something on the horizon long before anyone else notices it and even smell it when someone in their vicinity is bleeding. They are *not* immortal and the community is far too young to verify claims of extreme longevity. The one point where sanguinarians differ most from psi-vamps: sanguinarians drink blood.

Now, don't get all freaked out. There is no vampire waiting around the corner

in search of prey. For one thing, sanguinarians don't need very much blood, at most a few tablespoons full, though some are content with hardly a taste. For another, most sanguinarians have so-called donors, people (usually close friends or partners) who allow the sanguinarian to drink their blood every once in a while. If a sanguinarian cannot find a donor, he or she usually drinks animal blood.

The most common method seems to be rare steak, since bovine blood is the least prone to carrying infections. No known cases of sanguinarians dying because of lack of blood exist, but they do get weaker and more volatile the longer they are without blood.

The other major group of vampires are the psi-vamps. These often experience much the same things as sanguinarians – heightened senses, sensitivity to sunlight etc. – however, they do not drink blood, instead drawing the energy they need from other sources. Psi-vamps absorb the energy of their surroundings and of specific individuals.

What does this mean? Without getting into a long-winded explanation of auras and energy fields, every living being has their own inherent life energy, part of which forms the 'energy field' around them that serves to protect the individual from various psychic influences. Different places also have different ambient energies – a classroom full of bored kids will have a different feel to it than a rock concert. Psi-vamps can draw energy from these energy-fields and absorb it into themselves.

Now, this sounds rather dangerous. And psi-vamps *do* have to deal with the ethical question of how much to take from whom. Most agree that skimming the excess energy off a crowd is harmless because that way no single individual is depleted excessively. Some also say that skimming off the excess energy of an individual person is alright (this is where donors come into play again), however, the danger here is that that person may feel tired and grumpy until their bodies have re-filled their depleted energy level, plus the psi-vamp once again faces that moral dilemma if he or she takes energy without permission.



Photo: <http://static.howstuffworks.com/>

Other sources include animals and plants, man-made power sources such as electric cables, and natural energy such as the energy created by a big storm or the sun. Since they need to be able to sense and manipulate energy, many psi-vamps have other psychic abilities such as astral projection or clairvoyance.

This is also the group which includes the most subcategories – most people agree that a vampire who drinks blood is a vampire who drinks blood, but with psi-vamps, some people prefer to differentiate by where they get their energy from. Thus we have such subcategories as emotional vampirism (feeding off people's emotions), elemental vampirism (taking energy from the elements), natural vampirism (taking energy from plants etc.) and many others.

Hybrid vampires are exactly what they sound like – a hybrid of blood- and psi-vamps. In other words, they can take energy both through blood-drinking and psychically. Most people involved in the Vampiric Community seem to think that either hybrids of pure psi-vamps are the most common type.

Most vampires say they are just as human as anyone else, with just a slight energy problem. However, there is a minority that believes they truly do not possess a human soul, but rather a vampiric one. They call themselves Gwaetgar (first syllable rhymes with 'bite') after the Welsh word for 'Blood-drinker'. They crave blood but unlike sanguinarians they can suppress that craving and function at a relatively nor-

Vampires, continued on page 8

Culture

Vampires, continued from page 7

mal level. However, when they *do* drink blood regularly they act and think at a much higher level than humans. They can manipulate/influence energy with ease and often become witches, shamans or magicians because of this. Their non-human souls are most evident on the astral plain as they have wings in this form.

The next question people are bound to ask is 'How do I become a vampire?' The answer: you don't. If you are born with it, you experience an 'awakening', usually sometime during puberty, during which your need for energy/blood arises and some of the other characteristics of vampire-dom may manifest. If you aren't born with it, you won't be a vampire. But that is not a bad thing: apart from the need for extra energy, real vampires do not differ very much from other humans. Any other characteristics which they might show can just as well be developed by any other human. And needing energy does not make things easier. It just makes your life even more complicated than it already is.

The fact that people are born to be vampires begs the next question: what causes vampirism? No-one really knows the answer, but there are quite a few theories floating around on the Internet that range from genetics over viral infection to energy leaks or energy addictions. Some believe that they have been cursed/chosen by some kind of higher being, but obviously that would require belief in such a being and thus is not a very practical theory for the entirety of vampires.

Interested in learning more? There are quite a few vampire sites online, but beware of social predators and of roleplayers! The latter are more annoying than dangerous, so if you meet someone online who claims to be a 600-year-old vampire from the Ventrue Clan... chances are they're a roleplayer, not a real vampire. Reliable sites include:

www.sanguinarius.org (The Vampire Support Page; contains lots of articles on a variety of related subjects and messageboards/forums; focuses mainly on sanguinarians)

www.bylightunseen.net (More scientific approach to vampirism)

www.drinkdeeplyanddream.com (Another good real vampire page)

<http://sphynxcatvp.nocturna.org/> (Many articles on vampirism; focus is on both sanguinarians and psi-vamps) Comments? Questions? Criticisms? Ideas for topics? I'd love to hear from you! If you wish to contact me, please email me at endlessong@rocketmail.com. I'll be sure to answer!

Endless Song

Handy Hyperlinks



In this issue we'll be looking at various sites that aim to make the world a better place both socially and environmentally.

→ www.thehungersite.com

A site where you can click once every day to give something to a charity organisation – for free! The sponsors pay for everything. At the top of the page there's tabs which direct you to the various causes – currently there's Hunger, Breast Cancer, Child Health, Literacy, Rainforest, and Animal rescue.

→ www.freerice.com/

If you ever had or have Mr. Felt as a teacher, you probably know this site. It gives you vocab words that get progressively harder and asks you to choose a synonym from a list. For every right answer the sponsors donate 10 grains of rice to the UN World Food Program to help end hunger.

→ www.betterplace.org/

If you were in Berlin at the end of the summer vacation/beginning of school, you probably saw the ads for this site out in the city. If you want to donate money to a cause you feel you can support, go to this site. There are all sorts of projects listed that need a certain budget, from education and health to environmental protection. 100% of the money goes to the project, and you can get your money refunded if the project turns out to be a fraud. You can also help locally by offering expertise, time etc., and since this is a Germany-based site, you will probably easily find local projects. You can even start your own project if your pet concern is not listed!

→ www.350.org/

An organization that aims to increase awareness of the limit of CO₂ in the atmosphere that this earth can take without changing too much – 350 ppm (parts per million). To this end there all sorts of actions scheduled to take place on October 24th all around

the world that somehow incorporate 350 – 350 bikers driving through the city, 350 trees planted, flowers planted to form the number 350 – there's two or three things planned to take place in Berlin, but if you have a better idea, by all means, do it! And do it soon – only eight days left till October 24th!

→ www.guerrillagardening.org/

A site that documents the efforts of so-called guerrilla gardeners around the world – that is, people "interested in the war against neglect and scarcity of public space as a place to grow things, be they beautiful, tasty (or both!)", to quote the site. In other words, it's about people who plant things in the middle of the city, wherever there's a bit of unused space. The site has tips if you want to start your own garden (for instance in that neglected patch of earth around the tree in front of your house/apartment block!) but if you're too lazy (shame on you!), you can also help by donating money or plants.

→ www.care2.com/

Another site that aims to make the world a better place. Just like The Hunger Site, you can also click to give every day – just go to the "free click to donate" link under the "quick links" list on the left. Causes on this site include Children, Rainforests, Big Cats, Breast Cancer, Pets, Seals, Oceans, Primates, Global warming, Stop Violence Against Women, and Wolves.

→ www.footprintrechner.at/

offers a program that calculates your ecological footprint and tells you how many planet Earths it takes if everyone lived the way you do.

Sophia Kula

Entertainment

Movie Review: Inglourious Basterds

Reservoir Dogs, *Pulp Fiction*, *Kill Bill*. These movies all have one thing in common: their director, Quentin Tarantino. The financial and critical success of his previous films have aided Tarantino in earning his name as the "new renegade force in Hollywood", and any movie that seems to share slight similarities to his signature aesthetic violence nowadays is described as "Tarantino-esque". After almost a decade of working on his project, Tarantino proudly presents *Inglourious Basterds*, a film that is undoubtedly reckless and provocative in style.

In Nazi-occupied France, French-Jewish refugee Shosanna Dreyfus (Mélanie Laurent) witnesses the massacre of her family by the SS Colonel Hans Landa (Christoph Waltz), also known throughout the land as The Jew Hunter. Narrowly escaping with her life, Shosanna flees to Paris, where she fabricates a new identity as the owner of a small cinema. There, she wins the infatuation of a German war hero, and before long, agrees to host the premiere of his own Goebbels-produced biopic at her theater. Meanwhile, the ruthless Lieutenant Aldo Raine (Brad Pitt) organizes a group of Jewish-American soldiers in France to undertake brutal acts of retribution. Joined by the renowned German actress and undercover agent Bridget von Hammersmark (Diane Kruger), the so-called "Basterds" engage themselves on a mission to assassinate the top leaders of the Third Reich. On the crucial night of the German movie premiere, fates concur at Shosanna's cinema, where both the "Basterds" and Shosanna are prepared to carry out revenge plans of their own...



Everybody who has seen the movie's title in print must have found themselves asking, "Why are the two words in the title misspelled?" The movie never gives an explanation as to why the title is written incorrectly, but it does offer another key factor that is ridiculously inaccurate: its plot. *Inglourious Basterds* is a movie that seems to take joy in getting all historical facts wrong. Of course, Hollywood's movies have always changed a small portion of history to be able to narrate the story of their protagonists more dramatically, but *Inglourious Basterds* goes so far as to induce its audience into fits of laughter with its erroneousness. However, the defend-

ers of the film have claimed that historical imprecision is the whole point of the movie, and that it is "kosher porn": an over-the-top revenge fantasy for Jews. But if "kosher porn" was the point, would it not have been better to cast an actual Jewish as the Basterds' leader instead of the all-American Brad Pitt? Tarantino's intention in casting Pitt must have been to earn most of his profit from movie-goers flocking to the cinemas to watch the world-renowned star playing a major role in his film, and his plan naturally worked. I think it is safe to say though that Pitt gave his most disappointing and rigid performance of his acting career; he speaks and acts as if the lower half of his jaw is set in concrete throughout the whole movie. Nevertheless, the flawless debut performances of Christoph Waltz and Mélanie Laurent, the lengthy dialogues in which the characters examine superfluous subjects such as King Kong, the well-manicured set pieces, and the subjective ultra-

violence made the movie more than entertaining to watch.

Inglourious Basterds offers its audience an entirely new perspective on World War II, and however counterfactual it may be, it should not be missed. Just be careful not to stuff yourself with food before you go to watch this movie; you may find yourself suffering from a minor stomachache while the Basterds' carelessly scalp their enemies.

Released on August 20th, currently playing in the cinemas.

Hyerin Park

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www.muckraker.webs.com

Entertainment

Top Twelve Halloween Pranks

1. Dress up really well, so that no one can recognize who you really are. Then join a group of trick-or-treaters (preferably some you know). They'll be scared of you, since they won't know who you are.

2. Lie down in your front yard pretending to be a corpse in its coffin. (Put on a lot of makeup so that you'll look really dead.) Let the trick-or-treaters come back merrily from getting their candy, then sit upright and scare them by screaming.

3. Stalk someone (safest if it is one of your friends).

4. Wear a cute costume but a horribly terrifying mask.

5. Put a lot of plastic forks, knives, and spoons in your neighbors' yard.

6. Hide behind a bush, then jump out and scare the trick-or-treaters. It works the best if you're wearing a scary costume.

7. Put fake spiders or insects into the candy bowls.

8. Quietly run up behind people and toot a car horn.

9. Put toothpaste or shaving cream on door handles and doorbells for the next trick-or-treaters to enjoy putting their hands in.

10. Cover fence and mailbox in toilet paper.

11. Ring the doorbell continuously.

12. Traditional and simple: ring the doorbell and run!

What to avoid:

Getting killed by people you scared really badly.

Scaring small children (danger of them peeing into pants or a fight with protective mother).

Damaging or staining house walls or cars.

Getting no candy.

Rebecca Jetter

Sudokus!!

Eileen Wagner

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 through 9.

Easy Sudoku

6		3	4			2		1
			3				4	
4	2	9		8	7	6		3
3	1	5	2	4	9		6	
2		8		5		3		4
			8	1	3	5	2	9
9		6	5		8		3	
	7	2	6	3	1	4		
5	3	1	9			7	8	6

Hard Sudoku

			4					
4			8			5		
3		8		1			4	
	6		3		5	8		
	8			6			2	
		9	2		7		6	
	1			5		3		6
		5			3			9
					8			