

THE MUCKRAKER

the students' voice since 1997

THE INDEPENDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY SCHOOL STUDENTS' NEWSPAPER

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Although this is technically not the first issue of The Muckraker XII, we'd like to seize the opportunity and officially welcome all of you back to school! The start into the new school year was smooth to some and rocky to many, but we survived the first and crucial weeks of reality check. We don't look at our alarm clocks with as dumbfounded a stare at 6 am anymore, we have tested the waters with new teachers and classmates, and have a more tangible vision of what the year may bring.

While many upperclassmen already have their first Klausuren behind them, two individual students will experience a completely new dimension to the word responsibility: our brand-new Student Council presidents, Frances Copeland and Julian Graham. The voting results were extremely close this year, so we're all eagerly awaiting the promised back-to-school extravaganza. If they aren't drowned in work by then, next month's issue will feature an extensive interview with the two...

The Muckraker is back with old and new. You will notice our advice column Dear Delilah and our "Berlin Tipp". Zeidler is still our news anchor from down south; Anna's Nothing discusses the very surprising something some young artists put forth; our new librarian, Mr. Epps is the featured teacher; and if you've ever been curious what goes down on our school psychologists' couches, read the mediators' activity introduction! Enjoy the issue; may it put a smile on your faces when deadlines and grey skies leave you squirming!

Cheers,
The editors.

Best Buddies Activity

"Hey retard!"
"What up cripple?"

These are phrases that handicapped people have to hear every day. They fight a life of misery and depression. This is the point where Best Buddies comes in and helps. Best Buddies is an activity that fosters friendships between people with and without intellectual disabilities. It is an international non-profit organization in 37 coun-

tries and with 350.000 members in 2007. Even more, it is a growing community. Best Buddies strives to have half a million people in 50 countries by 2010. And maybe YOU can be a part of it!

"It might be easy for people who are listening to understand, why it's so vital and important for those who are mentally and physically challenged and why it would be a great thing for them to be integrated into society and to make a friend. But I think what young students, college kids, and high school kids don't know, is that if you get involved, what you'll get back from this experience is so valuable to the course of your life. You'll have an opportunity to meet someone you might never come in contact with. To learn about compassion and understanding. And that will lead you to be a good citizen and to participate. So get out there, find out about Best Buddies. Do it! Go for it! Become a friend for no better reason, than to make one!" - Kevin Spacey

If you are looking for more information about Best Buddies, continued on page 2

BEST BUDDIES



DEUTSCHLAND

Power Monopolies

Why is it that so much power lies in the hands of so few students at JFKS...and what ramifications come with this imbalance? Former JFKS student Yelden Sarybay speaks from experience.

on page 3

Advice Column

The Muckraker is introducing a new column: an advice column. -Except it's not Dr. Sommer answering your questions, but a "Dear Delilah" you can address. In the future, the column is yours to shape. Read it; see what you think; and send us any and all questions you've had on your mind!

on page 2

Kinderalkoholismus

Dass Jugendliche heutzutage immer öfter in den Genuss des Alkohols kommen ist nichts Neues. Gruppenzwang, falsche Vorbilder und Ignoranz führen dazu, dass das Komasaufen zur Kultur wird. Oft vergessen diese Krankenhausandidaten aber, dass sie selbst auch Vorbilder für noch jüngere sein können. Minderjährige Kinder sind auf dem besten Weg, ihren großen Geschwistern als Alkoholiker zu folgen. Wer, fragt sich Max Jürgens in seiner Kritik, muss nun die Verantwortung tragen? Was muss konkret getan werden, um Kinder davor zu schützen?

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Julius-Leber-Brücke

Überraschung! Die neue Julius-Leber-Brücke ist wie ein Geschenk der BVG, das unerwartet aber doch mit viel Dankbarkeit empfangen wurde. Nur fragt sich der eine oder andere auf dem Weg zur Schule: Woher kommt die Station? Wohin führt sie? Welche Brücke ist gemeint? Und wer war Herr Leber? Antwort auf diese Fragen findet ihr...

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JFKS Life

Teacher Feature: Mr. Epps

Dear Delilah...

Dear Delilah,
school has started, it's been two weeks, and I am already exhausted! I have so much to do, and my teachers aren't taking my problems into consideration, and are just giving me more work, as if their subject were the most important one of all. I have piles of homework and loads of tests and quizzes to study for. It seems like the work never stops! I'm in school 7 hours a day, and when I come home, I have to study and do my homework, and after that, the day is already over!! I can't meet up with friends as much as I used to, and I'm in a bad mood all the time! What should I do??

- Stressed-Out

Dear Stressed-Out,

First of all, you're not the only one who feels like this! All of us suffer the strain of the new school year, but there are some ways for you to keep the workload from overflowing. If you have loads of homework, try doing some of it in lunch in the library! It may sound boring, and you might think, „Why should I waste my lunch on homework?“, but it really helps! You finish half of your workload, so you don't have to do it all at home, and you don't have to lug so many books along! Secondly, so that it doesn't seem like you are working non-stop, when you come home, take half an hour to sit, maybe chat with your mum, eat and drink something, or maybe go to the computer and check your emails...Anything for you to wind down! After that, start working on the homework that you have left! As for the studying, once you have learned new material, sit down with it after school and learn it...That way, when you have a quiz/test coming up, you don't find yourself cramming the night before!! It may seem like a bad idea, but if you learn a little everyday, it's much better than not doing anything and trying to learn 4 months of material in one night! I know you must be frustrated because of your workload, but just remember that you are one grade level higher now, and more is expected of you. Throughout your school years, the work will increase immensely, so be prepared!!

Yours truly,
Delilah

Please introduce yourself.

Well, hello, I'm Mr. Epps. Nice to meet you.

Please give us a short history of your life.

(Laughs) There is no short history of my life. I'm old. (Laughs)

Well, if I were younger, I could give you a short history of my life. So I guess I have 2 beautiful daughters, and one of them standing here. I have 4 sons who are away at university in California. I travel a lot. I've been a librarian for about 9 years. Before, I was an English teacher for 15 years, and I'm from Los Angeles. I've been an athletics coach, yearbook advisor, department chairperson ... Shouldn't you ask me what my hobbies are?

This is for the newspaper? Oh, dear, I thought I left my celebrity life behind in L.A.

So what are your hobbies?

I don't have any hobbies...Oh maybe working out, weightlifting, tennis, reading, and hiking...travelling.

Do you find anything extraordinary about our school?

I don't think it's extraordinary at all. (Laughs) First of all, it has a great newspaper. Oh and I have never met so many smart and polite students.

Where do you see yourself in 10 years?

Gulp. 10 years. That's a lot of time. In 10 years, I'll be the librarian at the best high school library in Europe (British accent), which of course will be John F. Kennedy School.

What is your favorite book?

You can't ask a librarian that! I can't have a "favorite".

Who should be the next president of

Best Buddies, continued from page 1

mation on how the program works, or what your obligations are, you can check out our homepage www.bestbuddies.de, or our Youtube channel (www.youtube.com/bestbuddies), or our SchülerVZ Group (Best Buddies Deutschland e. V.), as well as our Facebook group (Best Buddies Deutschland e. V.), or just come to the second organizational



photo: Julia Epps

United States?

(Thinks) Someone who is not running. I'd say none of the above.

Do you have something that no one knows about you?

Oh, boy! No one? Well, I am not good in sports, and I met John River.

Do you have a pet peeve?

I have a pet peeve. It's cleaning up people's candy wrappers in the library.

Do you have a guilty pleasure?

Definitely chocolate. And.. let's see, shopping.

Do you have a profound advice for the students of JFKS?

People who have never cried, have never loved.

Thank you very much for the interview.

No problem.

Jung-Hyun An
Joanna He

meeting on Thursday, 09.10., from 13:00 – 13:20 in B214. If you have further ideas or questions, just send us an e-mail to: best.buddies.jfks@gmail.com

The Best Buddies team would be very delighted to meet a lot of you. Thank you!

Bernhard Reifeld

Comments, Replies?

send your opinions and articles to:

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Mediators Revealed

Every Friday, a group of students come together in the 20-minute break to discuss what happened during the week: A fight between two eighth graders, a student-teacher conflict, or even a whole class that seems to be off to a problematic start.

But what can they do to help? For one thing, they won't come stomping into a classroom, take out a bullwhip, and aimlessly start punishing little kids. Instead, they want you to come to them. So if you know that you have a problem reconciling with your friend, who suddenly starts dating the guy you've been drooling over for the past 3 months, or if your buddies unexpectedly decide to exclude you and you have no clue as to why, ask them to have a mediation. It may sound silly, but it really does help. Firstly, because everybody gets to say their opinion, and secondly, because there will be a compromise that everybody can live with. All the mediators are there for, is to keep a conversation going, and to keep it objective. And don't worry, the mediators won't gossip about your problems because what was said in a mediation is secret. No one who took part should talk about it.

So, if you decide to try it out, don't hesitate. Speak to the person you had a fight with and then come to the mediators' room. We're there for you every lunch period in B 219 and glad to help. Just remember: one conflict that's solved affects a multitude of people in a positive way. Spread the word!

*Tatiana Bühler
Kirstin Lazarus*



Power Monopoly

Why and how the administration must change student "politics"

Welcome (back) to JFKS, where student involvement reigns (almost) supreme. It drives the spirit of the school and gives students some control over the school experience. The multitude of activities and groups at JFKS is enough proof that the students actually do care about what goes on in their environment. Yet despite the variety of interests represented at JFKS, not all too many people get to the leadership positions of these groups. So what's wrong? The problem is pressure on a few and exclusion of the many.

The problem

The fundamental problem in our student organizations is that there is a very small number of students who actually lead them. It isn't uncommon for a head of group x to be also head of group y. This loophole in the school policy means that the few students who do hold leadership positions are stressed throughout the year about the different organizations in addition to keeping their grades up. It also undermines the scores of brilliant students who also have ambitions to be real leaders.

Pressure

Obviously we are here because, well, we have to be. We are expected to study and excel in all our courses and get into a university or what not. But to up the chances of getting into a top university, many students will shower their report cards with many, many activities. It's not anything unusual or selfish. Last year has been the hardest year to get into universities and the prospect of the upcoming one doesn't look all that easy, either. But when a single student starts becoming head of so many organizations, the pressure doesn't add up, it multiplies. Often, these young men and women will resort to unhealthy habits such as cutting time off sleep, drinking more coffee, and sometimes skipping lunch to catch up on homework or just work for the group. Ambitions and expectations are heavy on teenagers and allowing them to take up more and more head positions is tantamount to saying: "Go kill yourself." And it's not like you can say, "Well, you signed up for them, so deal with it" because youthful "maximalism" tells us that we can do it. Of course, everything seems to add up neatly on the weekly schedule, but often, we don't realize how much unex-

pected work shows up after you take on a position.

Exclusion

On the flip side of the pressure-problem is exclusion of the whole rest of the school. There are many students who've been at the school for a while and think that they have no chance at "competing" with the people who've been "active" for years or who have been student representatives since 7th grade. So not true. I would actually prefer to have new faces as heads of old organizations because their fresh minds are not yet bogged down with administrative limits and they can attempt to do anything. And since the "heads of" usually do start their political "domination" early on, they tend to stay on top for a while, leaving the rest to feel like underdogs. In a school which offers so much and produces such great people, how can we have kids who feel like they're useless?

Suggestions?

To the administration: 1) Fill in the loophole in the student handbook and school policy that allows one student to head multiple organizations. 2) Launch a campaign to encourage more students to become active in student organizations. 3) If you are reluctant to do this, call a school conference. Haven't seen those in a while, but apparently you still officially call them.

To the "heads of": DELEGATE. I know how much work everything can be, trust me. I was once part of that "elite" crew of kids with multiple titles. On the one hand, it may seem like nobody is going to take the work seriously enough, but if you trust them, they will, and if they don't, they lose your trust. It's as simple as that. And be realistic. Putting so many activities on your plate makes you lead a painful lifestyle that often doesn't allow you to enjoy life. So if you can, drop some things.

To the rest: Be proactive. Challenge yourself with leadership positions and don't think of this as a competition between you and the rest of them. It's you you have to compete with. And bug the administration about the loophole! Have a nice school year. And good luck with all your responsibilities and courses.

Yelden Sarybay

Culture

„Hacke zu“

„Hacke zu“- ein Ausdruck, der nicht jedem unbedingt geläufig ist, vor allem nicht jemandem, der das Koma-saufen und die Vorglüh-Kultur der heutigen Jugend nicht kennt oder selbst noch nie erlebt hat. Es ist ein Generationsbegriff, der den Volltrunk-Zustand beschreibt; den absoluten Rausch, kurz vorm fatalen Gang zur Toilette. Spätestens seit den berühmten 52 Tequila-Shots eines Berliner Schülers ist wohl jedem klar, dass Alkohol in der heutigen Jugendkultur eine große Rolle spielt. Die Meinungen gehen schon da weit auseinander: Während Eltern, Politiker und Lehrer Jugendalkoholismus als schweres Problem bezeichnen, halten andere dagegen, Alkohol sei nun mal ein Teil des Erwachsenwerdens.

Übers Betrunken-Sein mit 15 oder 16 lässt sich streiten, und eine solche Diskussion in dieser Zeitung anzustoßen würde so manchen an dieser Schule mächtig erzürnen. Deswegen will ich lieber einem anderen Thema widmen, einem Problem, das eigentlich viel schwerwiegender und ernster ist als Jugendalkoholismus - nämlich Kinderalkoholismus.

Ein „Jugendlicher“ ist eine Person zwischen 15 und 24 Jahren, alles darunter zählt als „Kind“. So beschreiben es zumindest die Vereinten Nationen und fast weltweit wird diese Einschätzung als gesetzliche Norm umgesetzt. Da ist es umso überraschender, dass sich die Politik nicht mit der Problematik eines betrunkenen Kindes auseinandersetzt. Denn Alkohol gilt auch bei Kindern längst nicht mehr als Einzelfall einzustufen. Sogar in der Zeitung liest man hin und wieder, dass 13-Jährige „hacke zu“ auf der Straße aufgegriffen werden - und das sind nur die Fälle, die es in die Zeitung schaffen. Von den „House Partys“ oder Clubgängen mancher 14-Jähriger wird nicht berichtet,

da dies meist hinter verschlossener Tür stattfindet und zum Teil von den Eltern geduldet wird. Fakt ist, dass bundesweit die Hemmschwelle für Alkohol sinkt, und dass viele Kinder ihr erstes Bier schon mit 12 unschuldigen Jahren „genießen“. Deutschland ist allerdings nicht das einzige Land mit dieser Problematik. Noch schlimmer ist es beispielsweise in Spanien. Während großer öffentlicher Feste laufen dort kleine betrunkene Kinder massenhaft durch die Straßen. Die Eltern haben da schon lange nichts mehr zu melden.

Natürlich wirft sich die Frage auf, wie es soweit kommen konnte. Wo liegen die Ursachen für eine solch gravierende Entwicklung? Schließlich wird schon seit längerem versucht, den Verkauf von Alkohol an Minderjährige mit schärferen Gesetzen und höheren Strafen zu unterbinden und dem Problem somit entgegenzuwirken. Doch offensichtlich haben solche Maßnahmen die Lage eher verschärft als verbessert. Das Problem liegt schon lange nicht mehr bei der Politik, die sich ständig die Schuld für Alkoholismus selber in die Schuhe schiebt. Wenn Kinder anfangen zu trinken, dann ist es ein gesellschaftliches Versagen, den Verwundbarsten ihre Grenzen aufzuweisen. In diesen jungen Jahren können nur zwei verschiedene Elemente der Gesellschaft Einfluss auf das, drastisch gesagt, „Trinkverhalten“ eines Kindes nehmen: Freunde und Eltern. Weil der Freundeskreis ein nicht-kontrollierbares Element ist (und das ist ja auch gut so) liegt die Verantwortung einzig und allein bei den Eltern. Dass dieses Grenzen-Aufmalen in einer Bierkultur sehr schwierig ist, bedeutet lange nicht, dass es unmöglich ist. Eins steht nämlich fest: Es ist notwendig.

Max Jürgens

„Ich verstehe nur Bahnhof“

Wie ein Bahnhof Geschichte erzählt

„Friedenau... Schöneberg... Julius-Leber-Brücke.“ Wie? Welche Leber war das?

Verwundert gucken die Schüler, die zum ersten Mal die neue Station zu Gesicht bekommen: große, silberne Säulen, Glas und nicht wenig Beton. Plötzlich und ohne Vorwarnung drängelte sich diese winzige Station, 300 Meter entfernt von der Yorkstraße, in die Fahrbahn der S1 hinein.

Diejenigen Zeitgenossen unter uns, die das Glück oder auch Unglück haben, schon ein paar Jahre mehr auf dieser Erde zu leben, haben sich vermutlich gefreut, dass der Bahnhof „wiedereröffnet“ ist. Denn die Station ist keineswegs neu. Der Bahnhof „Schöneberg“ wurde schon im Jahre 1881 erbaut und war der erste Bahnhof in dem Viertel. 1932 musste er seinen Namen an den heutigen Bahnhof Schöneberg abge-

ben und wurde auf „Kolonnenstraße“ umgetauft. Was man auf dem ersten Blick nicht vermuten würde ist, dass er auch in die Planung von Germania miteinbezogen war. Hitler und sein Lieblingsarchitekt Albert Speer planten gemeinsam, nach dem „Endsieg“ Berlin zu einer monströsen Hauptstadt eines großgermanischen Reiches auszubauen. Glücklicherweise ist diese großwahn sinnige Idee nicht umgesetzt worden. Ein Beispiel: Neben der „großen Halle des Volkes“ mit einem Kuppeldurchmesser von 250 m hätte das Brandenburger Tor wie eine Gartenpforte ausgesehen. Die Halle wäre so groß, dass dort ein hauseigenes Wetter durch die nach oben steigende Feuchtigkeit entstehen würde. Nach dem zweiten Weltkrieg war der Bahnhof Kolonnenstraße jedoch schon

Julius Leber, *continued on page 5*

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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. Join the Muckraker Yahoo! Group
4. Drop a note in our mailbox or approach us randomly in the hallways

Culture

Dinner with Meg Ryan

At this summer's annual Giffoni children's film festival, participating student jurors had the opportunity to meet many international stars. I was lucky enough to meet and have dinner with Meg Ryan. It happened on a warm evening in Italy...

Tall, blonde and blue-eyed, Hollywood actress Meg Ryan entered the movie theatre. Cameras flashed, people stared, and everyone burst into applause as she sat down in a black leather armchair on the stage. Fame certainly does have its benefits. For a 47-year-old, Meg Ryan looks extremely young. -No doubt due to a whole crew of skilled make-up artists, hairdressers, and outfitters doing their best to make her appear glamorous. The desired effect was definitely achieved. She looked stunning. Meg Ryan surveyed the approximately 150 teenagers sitting in front of her with wide smiles. "Hi!" she greeted the audience, and we all smiled back. Then the questions-session began. "How do you deal with the fact that some newspapers write a lot of nasty stuff and a fair amount of gossip about you?" somebody asked. "Does it upset you at all?" She laughed. "Well it used to. But I've stopped reading stuff they write about me by now. It wasn't worth reading anyway. Because, honestly, who cares what they think about you."

The Hollywood star then answered a lot of questions about famous directors and actors she's met and acted with. "One thing I can say, though, is that I've learned something from every single person I've ever worked with. The cameramen, fellow actors, the set and prop designers, directors, the lighting and sound technicians. Every one of these people had something to teach me," she concluded.

"How did you actually become an actress?" I asked. "What did you have to go through from the moment you knew what you wanted to become till where you are now?"

- It turns out that Meg Ryan never planned to become an actress in the first place and only realized how much she loved it when she already was one. She began studying journalism at the New York University when she found herself in need of money to pay for her housing and tuition. So she started acting in commercials. Later, she moved on to soap shows and then to playing in movies. Soon, she was rich and famous. "Though I just try to live as normally as possible," she added.

Meg Ryan has acted in countless films. She had the main role in 'When Harry met Sally', 'City of Angles', 'The Women', and countless others. She has the extraordinary ability of playing many diverse roles... and each one of them down to perfection. After approximately 1-2 hours, the session came to an end, and Meg Ryan had to leave. Everyone was leaving the movie theatre when an organizer of the festival walked up to me and told me to go to the Jurors Office at 7 pm. "Why?" I asked. But he didn't answer.

I did as he had said. At the office, I wasn't alone. Five other teenagers were standing there as well. All, I noticed, spoke perfect English. Nobody, however, knew what we were supposed to do. At long last, a woman came out and smiled. "You're all going to go to a restaurant and have dinner with Meg Ryan," she said. Everyone stared at her. "You're joking," I said. She shook her head, still smiling. There were a few seconds of complete silence. Then everyone spoke at once. "Oh my God!! I need to call my mom!" somebody shouted. "Why us?" somebody else exclaimed. "I don't believe it! My camera is out of batteries," a third person complained. "We're going to dine with Meg Ryan! MEG RYAN!!!"

"Calm down everybody," the woman told us. "It's almost time to go. If you'd just follow me!" Talking excitedly, we all followed

her to a mini bus standing right outside the cinema. We got in and sat down, hardly believing that this was really happening. After a short drive, we got out beside a cosy looking restaurant, high in the Italian mountains. Meg Ryan hadn't arrived yet, so we all sat down to wait for her, all the while feeling extremely nervous.

After a few minutes, she came, and we all stood up to introduce ourselves. The conversation was highly interesting. Meg Ryan turned out to be a very friendly person. She kept asking us about ourselves and how we got to the festival in the first place. We in turn asked her how she deals with paparazzi badgering her all the time. "I just try to ignore it," she said. Meg also brought her 16-year-old son along, and we asked him what it was like to be the child of celebrities. He said that it got extremely annoying sometimes. Everywhere he goes, people keep asking him about his mother. And at partys, nobody pays any attention to him and always turns to look at his mother at once. It's like living in somebody's shadow all the time, he explained.

I noticed that Meg Ryan kept playing with her hair and tilting her head to her right side. Oh well, even celebrities have habits. After about 45 minutes, we made a few quick photos with her. Then she had to leave again. "She's so nice isn't she?" the girl sitting next to me said. I nodded. What I liked about Meg was that she didn't try to keep herself in the spotlight. She was actually curious about us, six teenagers with perfectly ordinary lives. Of course, maybe she was just doing it to improve her image. But somehow I didn't think so. She really seemed genuinely interested. As if she really wanted to know. Either that, or she really must be an outstanding actress!

Lisa Feklistova

Julius Leber, continued from page 4

so zerstört, dass man nur noch die Gleise als Rohmaterial wegtransportiert hat.

Der Entschluss, diesen Bahnhof wieder in Betrieb zu nehmen, dient hauptsächlich der Anbindung zur zukünftigen S21. Der Aufbau begann Januar 2008 und ist mit der Eröffnung im Mai noch keinesfalls beendet. Doch wie kommen die Damen und Herren von der BVG nun auf den Namen „Julius-Leber-Brücke“?

Nun, es ist nahe liegend, dass er nach der Brücke, die 50 Meter nördlich vom Bahnhof liegt, benannt wurde. Die nächste, aber auch letzte logisch Frage lautet: WER war Julius Leber?

Aufgewachsen in einer liberalen Familie in Lübeck hatte Leber schon früh mit Politik zu tun. Als Schüler trat er bereits der SPD bei. Später studierte er in Straßburg Nationalökonomie und Geschichte und meldete sich freiwillig für den Kriegsdienst. Er wurde Chefredakteur des Lübecker Volksboten und Mitglied des Reichsbanners Schwarz-Rot-Gold, eine sozialdemokratische Vereinigung, deren Ziel es war, die Demokratie in der Weimarer Republik zu bewahren. Schwarz-Rot-Gold galt damals demokratisch liberal, die national-reaktionären Kräfte blieben bei Schwarz-Rot-Weiß, der Flagge des Kaiserreiches.

Wegen seiner politischen Ansichten wurde Julius Leber von den Nationalsozialisten verfolgt. Unter anderem wurde er überfallen

und durch Messerstiche schwer verletzt. Später verbrachte er als „gefährlicher Gegner des Regimes“ 20 Monate im KZ Sachsenhausen. Er hat sich danach im Freundeskreis von Claus Graf Schenk von Stauffenberg bewegt, wurde aber schon vor dessen Attentat am 20. Juli 1944 auf Hitler verhaftet. Er hatte an einer hochrangigen Besprechung der KPD teilgenommen, wobei auch ein Spitzel saß, und wurde kurz darauf von der Gestapo verhaftet. Auch nach einem halben Jahr Folter und Misshandlungen lieferte er kein Geständnis und wurde am 5. Januar 1945 in Plötzensee hingerichtet. Sein Grab ist im Waldfriedhof Dahlem. Julius Leber zählt zu den Berühmtheiten, die auf der „Roten Insel“ rund um den Schöneberger Gasometer gelebt haben (Ja, dieser große, senkrechte Zylinder aus Stahl war einmal ein Gasometer!).

Falls man also nächstes Mal die Gelegenheit hat, in die Stadt zu fahren, darf man sich einige Gedanken über einen Bahnhof machen, der so viel Geschichte erzählt. Wer weiß, vielleicht entschließt man sich sogar, nach Plötzensee in die dortige Gedenkstätte zu fahren, um noch mehr über Julius Leber und den Widerstand gegen Hitler zu erfahren. Solch ein kleiner Wochenendausflug gehört schließlich auch zum Berliner-Sein.

Eileen Wagner

Columns

Thoughts Aside: Olympia

The first couple of days of the 2008 Olympic Games absolutely fascinated me and hopefully some of you as well. I'm not talking about the political aspects. Let's give that a rest, shall we? Let's focus on sports for once, after all, the Olympics were meant to be a sports event.

Those rhythmic movements and monotonous announcements, the German patriotism on ARD and ZDF and the British patriotism on Euro Sport if you tune it in English... Naturally, we didn't want to miss a second of it... Admittedly, when you spend your vacation in a tranquil and idyllic small-town landscape (or something similar), as I'm sure some of you have, there simply isn't anything better to do. However, what is more fun than watching men with leggings doing gymnastics (äh-hem), especially when one man on the German team has the surname "Boy" and hearing how the Brits pronounce Hambüchen's name, while he makes his third mistake and falls from the high bar face first?

Did you watch "Degen" and "Florettfechten"? Two Germans won...Yay... (Please ignore the sarcasm). Well, considering that China won more than twice as many medals than Germany and more than three times as many Gold Medals, it seems nearly natural that any German success, small as it might be, needs to be praised above all else.

The next big thing on TV was athletics. Yay! I suppose sprinting was fun. The American top class runner named Gay couldn't even qualify for the final... Too bad. Maybe he could have a chat with Mr. Boy... (Talk it over with some friends, and you might catch the innuendo).

At the end of the Olympics, Taekwondo was on; however, it was hardly aired on German television. But since the summer vacation was nearly over by then anyways, most of us had probably stopped watching Olympia to resume pondering about school and the life many of us wouldn't have anymore. But since athletes hardly have a life, why should students be any better off? (This basically means that we should identify with athletes. No, this is not an awkward notion). Then again, athletes at least get paid well. But how does the saying go? "Wer's nicht im Kopf hat, hat's in den Beinen." Where do you want to have "it"?

Farsane Tabataba-Vakili

Cohen of Canada: Are you Uniform?

At the beginning of every school year, all new students share a common goal: to fit in. To be like the rest, they strive to say "the right things", act "the right way", and, most of all, wear "the right clothes".

Some schools have always required students to wear a uniform to help solve this problem. The idea behind the school uniform was that differences between social classes would be eliminated if everyone wore the same clothes. This message is still important today for schools in many areas where there is a split in the economic standing of students' families. Uniform comes from the word unite and this is exactly what schools use uniforms to do: create unity among students.

In the United States, uniforms have been making a comeback since the Bill Clinton presidency. President Clinton encouraged the use of uniforms at impoverished schools in large cities, many large high schools in Los Angeles being prime examples. Since then, uniforms have made a return in many American public schools.

Given that there isn't much history of uniforms at schools in Germany, it isn't surprising that they have practically disappeared today. The last uniform-like item of clothing was the Schülermütze or "school hat", which up until the 1930s (when it was banned by the Nazis) was a staple of every German student's clothing. It approached uniform status, although it never attained widespread, official significance. Now, only a handful of German public schools require uniforms, although in Germany—as in the rest of Europe—there is a constant debate over their re-introduction.

In the United States and Canada, some sort of common clothing was worn by all students in almost every public school before the social revolution of the 1960s. At least before the wave of support that Bill Clinton brought in the 1990s, uniforms had become something that only private schools, catering to upper-crust children, employed.

Meanwhile, in Asian countries such as Japan and Malaysia, every school from Kindergarten to Prep School has uniforms. In South Korea, celebrities targeting a young audience often sport a type of school uniform. School uniforms (as well as the schools themselves) are seen by many young

Koreans as romantic. This contributes to their general popularity throughout Korea and other Asian countries. Despite the desire to eliminate class distinctions in school, school uniforms—especially in North America—can sometimes have the reverse effect, especially now that uniforms are almost exclusively a private school thing. Students who live in poorer neighbourhoods and attend underprivileged schools often see the students who wear school uniforms as rich, snooty types. The uniform has thus become not a symbol of one's school, but of one's social standing. Those who don't wear them assume that all rich people, and only rich people, wear a fancy uniform as a sort of "badge of honour" for those in the "rich club". This is not at all true. The majority of students at private schools who wear uniforms are from good, middle-class families, not overwhelmingly wealthy ones. There are also kids on scholarships. The complexion of private schools is very diverse in terms of class.

Another common misconception is that a school uniform consists of a blazer, a dress shirt and dress pants, and a tie for boys and blouse, skirt, and tie for girls. Although this is a typical school uniform, the image doesn't hold true for all schools. Uniforms can be as casual as a hoodie with the school logo on it. Some schools (such as my own) allow for a more relaxed version of the uniform, such as a school polo shirt during the warmer months of September, May, and June.

But the debate continues. Do uniforms really stop class distinctions and cliques? Do they prevent inappropriate dress, such as what one Los Angeles public school described as "gangster clothing"? Are they worth all the cost to parents? And, most of all, is their re-introduction to public schools a smart move, which will curb bullying and competitiveness, or just a desperate attempt to quickly solve a problem with old-fashioned means? Won't this policy be dictated by the very social cliques that uniforms were brought in to eliminate? This is a worldwide debate that everyone—teachers to politicians to businessmen—have weighed in on. And you can, too. You can easily make your statement with what you wear.

Alexander Cohen

Columns

Zeidler Zappt: Politics the SA-way

South Africa's political stage is terribly fascinating. If something like this happening to such a beautiful country weren't so terribly sad, I'd love to describe it as rather funny.

There are two leading roles on this stage: Thabo Mbeki, South African president, and Jacob Zuma, president of the ruling party ANC, the African National Congress.

The first of the two describes himself as a "child of the revolution". His parents were anti-apartheid activists, and aged 14, he joined the ANC. After the arrest of Walter Sisulu, Nelson Mandela and other leading figures of the

ANC, he went into exile, returning to South Africa only after the release of Nelson Mandela. When "Madiba", as Mandela is also known, became South Africa's first post-apartheid president in 1994, Thabo Mbeki became deputy president, and in 1999 he became President himself. He has often been publicly criticized: For not managing to lower the level of criminality, for not sufficiently criticizing Zimbabwean president Robert Mugabe, as well for his government's AIDS-policy (the South African booth at an international AIDS-Exhibition displayed garlic and beetroot as effective weapons against HIV/ AIDS, and his minister of health Manto Tshabalala-Msimang repeatedly discouraged the use of antiretroviral drugs).

The person who makes this all interesting is the second man, Jacob Zuma. Just as Thabo Mbeki, he dedicated his entire life to the ANC and the struggle against apartheid. But unlike Nelson Mandela, Thabo Mbeki and most leading government figures, who are all Xhosa men and women, Zuma is a Zulu; and unlike Thabo Mbeki, a highly educated man, Jacob Zuma has no education beyond fifth grade

There is a joke in South Africa that goes as follows:

"What do Jacob Zuma and a cell phone have in common?"

"They both need to be recharged regularly!"

Hard to understand for an outsider, it gets rather funny when one knows the details. Jacob Zuma has three times been charged by the national prosecuting authority (NPA), but has never been successfully convicted yet.

In 2005 the NPA's first attempt to put Zuma in prison failed, as the charges



Zuma

photo courtesy of www.tagesschau.de

had to be dropped after the prosecution's application for a postponement of the trial was denied. No verdict was ever returned, although Zuma was widely believed to be guilty.

The second trial was the only one that actually came to a conclusion, when he was accused of raping the daughter of a friend. He was declared innocent. An interesting fact: He knew that the woman was HIV-positive, and when questioned as to why he had unprotected sexual intercourse with her anyway, he stated that he took a shower afterwards to reduce the danger of becoming infected. Since then, he is often depicted with a showerhead on his head.

But the third trial is the really interesting one. On the 18th of December, Jacob Zuma became new ANC-president, replacing Thabo Mbeki. 10 days later, Zuma was recharged. On the 12th of September, Judge Chris Nicholson declared that the charges against Jacob Zuma were unlawful, as Zuma hadn't been given the chance to make representations before being charged.

For the fact that two out of three cases have failed before actually reaching court, Zuma's critics accuse him of misusing the judicial system (see popular South African cartoonist Zapiro's cartoon picturing Jacob Zuma raping Lady Justice, who is being held down by prominent representatives of leading pro-Zuma organizations).

The NPA has announced that it will appeal the decision, but it is highly unlikely that they will succeed in reaching a conviction before next April, the next scheduled date for an election in South Africa.

If a man is sentenced to at least one year of imprisonment, he is no longer

eligible for parliament and can thus not become president. So once again, Jacob Zuma's road to presidency is open. But another part of the judge's statement is even more interesting. Judge Nicholson wrote that there was a possibility that the president and his cabinet had tried to influence the judicial system in their decision to press charges against Jacob Zuma. The media and Mbeki's opponents misreported this, stating that Judge Nicholson had said that this was a fact.

And from there on, everything went rather fast: The

ANC's National Executive Committee met on Friday; on Saturday it announced that it would "recall" Mbeki as president. Shortly afterwards, President Mbeki's spokesperson announced that, as soon as all constitutional requirements would have been met, the president would resign. It didn't take long before most of the cabinet members announced that they would step down together with Mbeki.

On the 21st of September at 19:30, Thabo Mbeki announced that he had handed in his resignation to the spokesperson of parliament and would step down as president of the Republic of South Africa on a date to be decided by the National Assembly. He "categorically" denied having tried to influence the NPA in its decision "to prosecute ... [Jacob Zuma] or not to prosecute... [Jacob Zuma]".

Many South Africans believe that recalling the president was a bad idea. "Things could get out of hand. This will not be good for foreign investors as well as for us in South Africa. I am worried", a South African said, as reported by tagesschau.de in an article captured "Südafrika könnte in die Krise stürzen". Not all people believe that Mbeki leaving will have such a negative impact. Many of Zuma's supporters, such as the ANC youth league, led by Julius Malema (the man on the cartoon with "ANC YL" written on his sleeve, who is well known for having publicly threatened all people who would hinder Jacob Zuma from becoming president and for having said "We will kill for Jacob Zuma!"), celebrated Zuma winning his court case and Mbeki's resignation.

*Columns / JFKS Life***The Eighth of the Nothings**

Sometimes it feels as though everyone is an artist. Some days, it seems all of my friends consider themselves either a photographer or a poet, and I often have the impression I am surrounded day in and day out by a flurry of sketches and doodles and sheets of writing all scratched out and corrected. Probably it's a combination of hormones, too much time, and too much emotion. But the thing is, though the millionth facebook album of black and white city shots does tempt a condescending smile, most of these efforts are actually, well, quite good. Somewhere between the clichéd rain-covered window shot and the age old no-one understands me line, there is a class of art produced by the young people in our community that rings fresh, original and true. Amateurs they might be, but untalented they certainly aren't. It is with embarrassment that I admit that often, when seeing a student's work on the green building wall, or hearing a song a friend of a friend wrote, or reading a Muckraker article, I am at least as surprised as pleased to find myself admiring the work. To expect to disdain and then finding yourself impressed is indeed one of the most humbling experiences life offers. Who knows, perhaps you, like I, will find you are annoyed at the self-serious "art" of your peers, only to turn around and find a piece that is both insightful and full of self-deprecating humor...

Anna Zychlinsky

The Cynic's Dictionary**ELOQUENCE**

"A method of convincing fools. The art is commonly presented under the visible aspect of a bald-headed little man gesticulating above a glass of water. Alternatively: something that "Prof." Ernst Fraenkel and certain others do not possess."

Feeling cynical, too?

Then submit your own definitions to themuckraker@gmail.com by October 6th.

Eileen Wagner

Berlin Tipp:**Wie wählt Amerika?****Veranstaltungsreihe zu den USA-Wahlen im Amerika Haus**

Das Ringen der beiden Kandidaten ums Weiße Haus wird immer spannender. Die Medien überfluten uns mit Neuigkeiten und Informationen. Dabei bleiben einige Fragen unbeantwortet oder unberührt. Welche Eigenschaften und Werte verkörpern die Kandidaten? Welche Rolle spielen diese für die Wahlentscheidungen der Bürger? Die Medien - mobilisieren oder manipulieren sie die Menschen in ihrem Wahlverhalten? Sheriffs, Gouverneure, ... - wer wird am 4.11. auch noch gewählt?

Heute, am 29. September, beginnt im Amerika Haus eine Veranstaltungsreihe, die sich diesen Themen annimmt. Anliegen ist es, das Wahlgesehen etwas genauer zu betrachten und auch mit einigen „deutschen“ Vorurteilen und Irrtümern aufzuräumen. An einem anderen Abend gibt es außerdem „Wahlkampf live in Berlin“: Democrats und Republicans „abroad“ stellen sich einem Streitgespräch und antworten auf die Fragen des Publikums. Die „Wahlnacht in Berlin“ am 4.11. wird mit einem sehr abwechslungsreichen Programm aus Live-Interviews, Gesprächen, Live-TV-Übertragungen sowie mit viel Musik und guten Wahlnachts-Cocktails die Besucher auf die

letzten Stunden des Kopf-an-Kopf-Rennens einstimmen.

Alle Veranstaltungen sind kostenlos. Unter Anderem gibt es:

-Montag, 29. September 2008, 19 Uhr

-Wie Amerikaner in Deutschland und Deutsche in Amerika den Wahlkampf erleben

Montag, 13. Oktober 2008, 19 Uhr
-US-Wahlkampf in Berlin: Streitgespräch zwischen Demokraten und Republikanern

Montag, 27. Oktober 2008, 19 Uhr

-Alles nur Show? Moderner Wahlkampf mit Musik und Medien

Dienstag, 04. November 2008, 18 Uhr - 2 Uhr

-„Wahlnacht in Berlin“ (Anmeldung erbeten) 18.30

- 20.30 Uhr Lesung von Holly Jane Rahlens aus ihrem neuen Buch „Mein kleines großes Leben“ (Bitte separat anmelden.)

Ort: Amerika Haus Berlin (Hardenbergstraße 22-24, direkt am Bahnhof Zoo)

Info: www.wie-waehlt-amerika.de

Lena Walther

Teacher Quotes for the Yearbook 2008-2009

The Yearbook 2008-2009 will be different. It will be longer. It will have more of you in it. It will be a challenge, and we need your help. We ask you to please submit funny or intriguing teacher quotes. Listen closely to what your teachers say and write down the odd moments to share the wealth with the entire JFKS community. This year's Yearbook will be eighty pages longer and 100 times better than last year's. For sure. We will have four pages of Teacher Quotes, instead of one. How about that? And no more John and Jackie Kennedy in your place when you were absent at picture day. Help us move into a new era of "yearbookieness" and submit quotes to:

yearbookies09@googlemail.com

Thank you!

PS: You can pre-order your Yearbook every Thursday and Friday during the 20 min break for currently 25€.

Stefanie Lehmann
Farsane Tabataba-Vakili
Yearbook Editors 2008-2009