



Our Mission:

To become a leading source in the United States for the promotion of national and international networking, exchange, and creative collaboration among scientists, scholars, artists, and other professionals, consistent with the goals of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation of Germany.

Our Vision:

To mobilize the intellectual curiosity, creativity, experience, and passion of Humboldtians to shape the changing landscape of research, higher education, and professional development in the United States and beyond.

Dear Humboldtians and Friends,

Over the last six months, American Friends has taken important steps to expand its support of US alumni of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation.

On April 4 of this year, the Alumni Council of American Friends met for the first time in Washington, DC. Alumni Council members considered the results of the 2012 US alumni survey, as well as the challenges alumni face in staying connected to Germany and the Humboldt community, above all, the time constraints imposed by multiple professional and personal commitments. The Alumni Council began discussion of how to adapt the Kolleg model to US circumstances, strengthen the Humboldtians on Campus program, and develop new “virtual” forms of engagement. Discussion of these and other topics will continue in working groups created by the Council, which will produce an action plan to expand alumni outreach and support.

In a complementary effort, the American Friends Board of Directors will be developing new programs that tap into the intellect, experience, and insights of Humboldtians to help shape US debates about the internationalization of the research enterprise and of professional development, and the role of science and scholarship in society and policy.

As we move forward with these and other initiatives, we will be working closely with the Humboldt Foundation and with US Humboldtians. The success of our programming efforts will depend in part on better information about the current research and professional activities and interests of US alumni. As we begin routine updates to our database, we will be asking US Humboldtians to provide us with a brief description of their field(s) of activity. We would be grateful for your cooperation in these efforts, which will enhance our ability to engage you in ways that connect to your unique expertise and interests.

We thank you for being a partner in our efforts to sustain and strengthen the Humboldt community in the United States and its connections to Germany.

Dr. Cathleen Fisher, President

American Friends Hosts Humboldtians at the American Physical Society Spring Meeting

With over 100 research facilities engaged in physics research, Germany is a favored research destination for many physicists. According to the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation (AvH), since 2007 roughly 15% of all Humboldt Research Fellowships granted have supported research in the field of physics. In the US alone there are approximately 1,300 alumni working in physics-related fields.

To reach both AvH alumni and physicists interested in conducting research in Germany, American Friends of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation (AFAvH) participated in the American Physical Society (APS) meeting in March in Baltimore, MD. The annual APS meeting is the largest physics conference in the world, drawing US and international participants from universities, major laboratories, and industry.

AFAvH sponsored a booth in the APS exhibitor hall, showcasing the diverse funding programs offered by the AvH. Booth visitors included graduate students, as well as early career and experienced researchers. Thirty percent of booth visitors were Humboldtians who were predominantly interested in alumni opportunities and in helping to promote AvH programs in their networks.

A highlight of the APS meeting was a reception for Humboldtians and prospective applicants attending the meeting. American Friends co-hosted

this evening reception with Humboldtian Prof. Royce Zia (USS, 1982) from Virginia Polytechnic and State University (Virginia Tech). Prof. Zia assisted American Friends in identifying Humboldtians currently in physics and reached out to many graduate students as well as German colleagues. Prof. Bruno Eckhardt from the University of Marburg, who also serves on the AvH's Humboldt Research Fellowship Selection Committee, attended the event, along with alumni from more than 20 universities or institutions and prospective applicants from 10 universities in the US and abroad.



Prof. Bruno Eckhardt and Prof. Royce Zia at the APS reception

Research in Germany Presence at the American Geophysical Union and “Destination Europe” Meetings in San Francisco, CA

The “Research in Germany” (RiG) partners in the US, including the American Friends of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation (AFaVH), German Academic Exchange Program (DAAD), and German Research Foundation (DFG), made a double appearance in San Francisco during the first week of December to spread the word about opportunities in Germany. The RiG partners supported concurrent activities at the annual meeting of the American Geophysical Union (AGU) and at a special “Destination Europe” conference intended to inform US researchers about opportunities in the European research area.

American Geophysical Union

Geosciences continue to be a strong field of research in Germany. Presently there are about one hundred German universities and non-university institutions working on research in the geosciences. These institutions focus on research areas such as atmospheric sciences, marine sciences, geology, paleontology, geophysics, geochemistry, water research, land/ resource management, soil sciences, and water engineering.

The RiG partners teamed up with select German research groups to inform participants at the AGU conference about growing research opportunities in Germany. The German research groups participating in the *Geosciences in Germany* booth included:

- Integrated Climate System Analysis and Prediction of the University of Hamburg;
- Center for Marine Environmental Sciences (MARUM) from the University of Bremen;
- Future Ocean—Kiel Marine Sciences of the University of Kiel;
- GEOTECHNOLOGIEN—an R&D program for geosciences in Germany supported by the German Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and DFG;



Geosciences in Germany booth with RiG representatives at the AGU conference

- Swarm Project Office—Satellite Missions in Geosciences of the Helmholtz Centre Potsdam; and
- German Research Centre for Geosciences of the Helmholtz Centre Potsdam.

The RiG partners and participating research groups also sponsored two workshops, one entitled “Research ‘Made in Germany’—First Class Research Opportunities in Marine and Climate Science,” the other, “Research Careers Made in Germany.” American Friends joined its partners in welcoming AGU attendees—including Humboldtians—to a German Social to network with fellow researchers, funding organizations, research council representatives, and administrators.

Interested in learning more about Geosciences in Germany? Then check out the brochure “Research Landscapes in Germany—Geosciences and Environmental Sciences” at: www.research-in-germany.de.

Destination Europe

Sponsored by the European Commission and the member states of the European Union, the “Destination Europe” event in San Francisco showcased important changes in the research landscape of Europe. Researchers interested in working in Europe attended presentations on the funding programs of the European Research Council, as well as sessions focused on sponsorship opportunities offered by several member states.

American Friends supported this initiative by participating in the session entitled “Advance your Academic Career in Germany.” The session featured presentations on the funding opportunities of the AvH, DAAD, and DFG, followed by testimonials from four researchers on the topic of “Destination Germany: Why and How to Make the Move?” Humboldtian Prof. Olga Holtz (KOS, 2006) who holds a joint appointment at the University of California, Berkeley, Department of Mathematics and the Technical University of Berlin, Institute of Mathematics spoke about her experiences in Berlin and about the funding she has received from the AvH. The session’s high attendance and lively Q&A reflected a strong interest in research in Germany.

For information and dates of other Destination Europe events, visit: <http://ec.europa.eu/research/iscp>.

Website Announcement

The American Friends website will be getting a new look. We have been developing a new website design and content to better serve US Humboldtians and our partners. The launch is expected to happen during the second half of 2013. Our web address (www.americanfriends-of-avh.org) will remain the same. Stay tuned for our new website!

Abbreviations

STP=Humboldt Research Fellowship	GWl=Research Award in the Humanities
USS=Humboldt Research Award	
Paul=Wolfgang Paul-Award	BUKA=German Chancellor Fellowship

American Friends Alumni Council Expands

American Friends is pleased to announce the expansion of its Alumni Council (AC) to include three new members: Prof. Damani Partridge (BUKA, 1999–2000) of the University of Michigan, Prof. Richard Proctor (USS, 1995) of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Prof. Gerdi Weidner (GWI, 2002) of San Francisco State University. The expansion of the AC to ten members ensures that the diversity of Humboldtians' experience and disciplines is represented on the Council, which is responsible for developing new alumni programs and activities. Each of the new members has a history of commitment to the Humboldt Foundation and the US Humboldt community, as well as engagement in their respective fields of study.

The expanded Alumni Council convened in Washington, DC in early April to discuss how to better support and engage the 5,000+ alumni of the AvH in the United States. The AC has created several working groups focused on the organization of Kollegs in the United States, the future of the Humboldtian on Campus program, and virtual forms of alumni outreach and engagement.

German Chancellor Fellowship (BUKA) Program News

BUKA Program Expanding to India and Brazil + New Marketing Initiative

The German Chancellor Fellowship Program (BUKA) is expanding to include young leaders from Brazil and India and is getting an overall marketing facelift!

In the April 2013 call for proposals, the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation (AvH) announced that the program will now be open to citizens of the United States, the Russian Federation, the People's Republic of China, Brazil and India. The expansion to India was announced in April, following discussions between Federal German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh about the state of the Indo-German Strategic Partnership agreed in 2000. The inclusion of Brazil in the Program coincides with "The Year of Germany in Brazil 2013-2014"—an initiative supported by the German Federal Foreign Office. Starting in the next selection round, the Humboldt Foundation will grant up to 50 German Chancellor Fellowships annually, with up to ten fellows selected from each of the five countries.

The Foundation has also launched a new BUKA marketing initiative, complementing the efforts of committed alumni in each country. The initiative is intended to improve outreach to young professionals with an interest in international issues and demonstrated leadership potential, including in areas such as politics and public policy, law, media, business, the non-governmental sector, and the arts.

The program's expansion means changes to important deadlines for submission of proposals and evaluation of candidates. These changes include:

- Annual application deadline for all BUKA countries will be September 15;
- Select applicants will be invited to interview for the fellowship in Bonn, Germany in the spring;
- Selected BUKAs will all officially begin their fellowships on October 1;
- Language training in Germany will be a maximum of two months (August-September).

The AvH has also launched a more welcoming BUKA webpage as part of the initiative. The launch of this new webpage coincides with the opening of the Foundation's online Buka application portal. To see the new webpage, application portal, and for full program information, visit: www.humboldt-foundation.de/buka.

2013 BUKA Selection and Orientation

American Friends once again assisted the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation in organizing the 2013 US selection and orientation meetings for the German Chancellor Fellowship program. The selection of fellows for the 2013–14 year took place February 3–4, 2013 in Washington, DC, followed by an orientation meeting for the newly selected Fellows on February 5, 2013.

The successful candidates were honored on February 5 at a luncheon reception hosted by the Deputy Chief of Mission of the Federal Republic of Germany, Mr. Jens Hanefeld. Mr. Hanefeld emphasized the prestige of the BUKA program and the young leaders' responsibility to share their experiences in Germany upon their return to the United States.

The new German Chancellor Fellows represent diverse fields, including art history, geography, political science, international relations, manufacturing, transportation, education, and energy. American Friends congratulates Fellows Caitlin Bergen, Yasmin Bowers, Francesca Fogarty, Lauren Harrison, Christopher Moore, Keith Michael Platte, Lindsay Read, Victoria Shure, Lauren Stokes, and Matthew Tisdale on their selection and wishes them much success. For more information about the new Fellows, visit: www.americanfriends-of-avh.org.

2013 BUKA Triennial Alumni Meeting

The triennial German Chancellor Fellowship alumni meeting will take place in Washington, DC on October 25–27, 2013. A steering group of twelve engaged alumni has spent the last six months planning an exciting program around the theme of "Technology Transformation," with panels focusing on "Technology Transformations of Professions" and "The Technical Transformation of Higher Education." The meeting will also include a bus tour and site visits to urban sustainability sites in the Washington area. Dr. Dale Medearis (BUKA, 1994–1995) and Dr. Lee Ann Banaszak (BUKA, 1991–1992) are serving as co-chairs of the steering committee organizing the meeting. Ms. Rebecca Groves (BUKA, 2001–2002) and Ms. Abi Basch (BUKA, 2006–2007) are coordinating an art salon for Saturday evening. Five members of the Chinese and Russian alumni groups have been invited to serve as panelists on the program. Saturday evening's banquet will celebrate the 60th anniversary celebration in the United States of the AvH Foundation.

BUKA Program History

The German Chancellor Fellowship Program was introduced in 1990 under the patronage of Federal Chancellor Helmut Kohl with the aim of promoting the transatlantic partnership between the Federal Republic of Germany and the USA. In 2002, the program was extended to the Russian Federation and in 2006 to the People's Republic of China. This year marks the expansion of the program to Brazil and India.



**American Friends of the
Alexander von Humboldt Foundation**
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William M. Calder III Fellowship Recipients for 2012–2013

American Friends congratulates Dr. Jan Felix Gaertner (FLF, 2012) and Dr. Emily Baragwanath (STP, 2012) on receiving William M. Calder III Fellowships. Both are highly qualified researchers pursuing research related to classical antiquity or to its reception in medieval and modern times.

Dr. Jan Felix Gaertner

Jan Felix Gaertner studied Latin, Greek, and French in Bonn (1996-1998) and then, for his MA, in Oxford (1999), where he also received the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (2002). After research stays at the Thesaurus Linguae Latinae in Munich and the University of Fribourg in Switzerland, he was appointed a post-doctoral assistant at the University of Leipzig (2003–2010). He then held interim professorships at the Universities of Heidelberg and Bamberg (2010–2012). Since March 2012, Gaertner has been working as a Feodor Lynen Research Fellow at Harvard University, hosted by Prof. Kathleen M. Coleman in the Department of the Classics.



In his research, Gaertner combines philological analysis with literary and historical interpretation. In addition to several articles, he has published a commentary on Ovid's *Epistulae ex Ponto*, book 1 (Oxford University Press, 2005), edited a collective volume, *Writing Exile: The Discourse of Displacement in Greco-Roman Antiquity and Beyond* (Brill, 2007), and co-authored a monograph, *Caesar and the Bellum Alexandrinum: An Analysis of Style, Narrative Technique, and the Reception of Greek Historiography* (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013). During his time at Harvard University, he will continue his research on the Roman civil war and its literary representation by writing a commentary on the *Bellum Alexandrinum*. Additionally, he will prepare the publication of his

Habilitationschrift (post-doctoral thesis), in which he analyses the role of law and legal language in Greek and Roman comedy.

Dr. Emily Baragwanath

Emily Baragwanath completed her MA (2001) in Ancient History at the University of Auckland, New Zealand, before taking up a Rhodes Scholarship to Oxford (DPhil in Classics, 2005). Her main area of scholarly interest is the literary techniques employed by Greek historians in their construction of historical narratives. Her book, *Motivation and Narrative in Herodotus* (Oxford University Press, 2008), winner of Oxford's *Conington Prize* and the *CAMWS Award for Outstanding Publication 2010*, explores the representation of human motivation in Herodotus' Histories. The Greek historians' use of mythology as a mode of narrative and explanation alongside the historical mode, and the relationship between the historians and their poetic predecessors, are topics central to a volume she has co-edited on *Myth, Truth, and Narrative in Herodotus* (Oxford University Press, 2012). Other recent projects have addressed Aeschylus and history, intertextuality in Greek historiography, and virtual history in Herodotus.



The William M. Calder III Fellowship will help support her stay at Heidelberg University as an Humboldt Research Fellow, hosted by Prof. Jonas Grethlein, to work on a book-length study of the fourth-century BC Athenian author Xenophon. Provisionally entitled *Women, Narrative, and Agency in Xenophon*, this study will examine Xenophon's representation of women and how it relates to larger issues of friendship and leadership, at the same time as it investigates broader questions about Xenophon's approach to history, narrative, explanation and literary invention. She hopes that such a cross-genre study will enable us to capture a better sense of Xenophon's character as an author and historian, and of the nature and significance of his literary achievement.

American Friends of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation Donors

January 1–December 31, 2012

Donations from alumni and friends help support our efforts to promote national and international networking, exchange, and creative collaboration among scientists, scholars, artists and other professionals, consistent with the goals of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation.

American Friends of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation is a non-profit organization under the guidelines of article 501(c)(3) of the IRS code; contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.



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* multiple donations in 2012

Spotlight on Alumni

What do mathematics, film and magic realism have in common?

Sofja Kovalevskaja Award-winning mathematician Olga Holtz explores new creative and intellectual boundaries through an innovative film project.

According to Olga Holtz, a mathematician and a former Sofja Kovalevskaja Awardee (KOS, 2006) of the AvH, mathematics, film and magic realism are all the “stuff that dreams are made of.” Olga grew up in Russia dreaming of science, literature and film. Beginning with math puzzles and contests in school, her passion for mathematics ultimately led her to a Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, a research career in mathematics, and a joint professorship at the University of California, Berkeley and the Technical University Berlin.

Throughout her career, her dream of storytelling through film persisted. Three years ago, Olga began developing a movie script based on the novel *Dark Matter* by Aner Shalev, a well-known Israeli mathematician and writer. Olga explained her inspiration: “It was a pretty crazy idea, considering I had not written scripts before and I had not known Aner Shalev. But I felt so strongly this was a story worth telling as a film, and I could tell it well. I knew these characters. And when Aner got back to me and said he loved the first 20 pages, I was on the floor!”

A couple of years and a feature-length script later, Olga is now working on getting the film produced.

Olga began by taking scriptwriting classes in Princeton and Berkeley, and then obtained film director training at the Berkeley Digital Film Institute. Her first directing project has grown into something much more ambitious than a student film. Olga says of the film’s origins: “I always loved magic realism, Jorge Luis Borges, Isaac Bashevis Singer, Gabriel Garcia Marquez. It captures the dreamlike quality of life. One day I had a dream inspired by Borges’ story *The Zahir* about a magic object that makes everyone obsessed. I know obsession very well, in science and in life, so a story just came naturally out of that.”

What is the story? A young ambitious academic embarks on a quest to unravel the mystery of a famous British traveler’s disappearance in 19th century India. His search for the truth results in

encounters with a crazy physicist and an exotic female, which leads him to some other dimension.

The film was shot on the University of California, Berkeley campus and is currently undergoing post-production. “It is extremely hard work,” Olga admitted, “but you do not feel it at all. I was walking on clouds throughout our 12-to-14-hour production days. The collaboration on set is so intense. I was in awe of my cast and crew. We got amazing footage and our fine—no longer rough—cut looks great!” Olga and her film team plan to complete the film by the end of summer. Her new dream is to see it played at world’s top film festivals.

Official Film Site: <http://thezahirfilm.com/>

Facebook: [https://www.facebook.com/pages/](https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Zahir-Film/274684629333680)

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Twitter: <https://twitter.com/TheZahirFilm>

IndieGoGo campaign: <http://www.indiegogo.com/projects/the-zahir/>



Actor Jay Laurence and Prof. Holtz rehearsing an office scene for *The Zahir*.
Photo credit: Suj Randhawa.

Dr. Victoria Bertics Speaks at Workshop on Career Opportunities in Germany

Humboldtian Dr. Victoria Bertics (STP, 2010) shared her insights on “*How to Live and Work in Germany as a Foreign Postdoc*” with a group of over 400 researchers at the February 24, 2013 Research in Germany (RiG) Workshop in Cambridge, MA. Her presentation was part of a session exploring “*Opportunities for Postdocs, Young Investigators and Junior Faculty in Germany*.” Dr. Bertics reflected on her experience abroad as a postdoctoral researcher at the GEOMAR—Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research in Kiel, Germany, offering application tips and advice on living and working in Germany. This workshop was organized in conjunction with the annual European Career Fair at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Cambridge, MA. Dr. Bertics currently is a Postdoctoral Researcher at Harvard University in the Department of Organismal and Evolutionary Biology in Professor Peter Girguis’ lab. American Friends is grateful to Dr. Bertics for sharing insights from her time in Germany with prospective applicants.

Reminder

US Alumni Survey Results (2012) can be accessed on the American Friends website: www.americanfriends-of-avh.org.

Maintaining Alumni Contact Information

We will continue maintaining our alumni records by reaching out to US Humboldtians once a year. Keep on the look out for the “Stay-in-Touch” request to confirm and/or update your contact information. Please note that this request will also ask you to submit a brief description of your current field of research or professional activity.