



A one-year study abroad program in beautiful Freiburg, Germany, at the foot of the Black Forest.
Program sponsored by the University of Wisconsin, University of Iowa, University of Michigan, and Michigan State University.

Academic Year in Freiburg

2016

Spring

Founding AYF Alumni & Friends e.V.

Bringing past, current, and future AYFers together ~ By Brendan Ryan AYF 2013-2014

On October 25th, 2015, nine former students of the Academic Year in Freiburg study abroad program officially founded an outreach and networking organization for alumni of the AYF program (formerly known as *Junior Year in Freiburg*). While this organization is based in Freiburg, the members hope that its activities will engage past, present and future AYF and JYF students as well as friends and family all around the world.

Supported by Ulli Struve, the club's founding members set in stone the charitable nature of this organization and formulated a charter. The founders represent a decade and a half of AYFers who found their way back to Südbaden and were excited to chat amongst themselves about their motives for coming back to (or never leaving) Freiburg – along with the hurdles and accomplishments that an international life requires.

Although the group's members may be finding themselves at different stages in their lives – from student to *Berufseinsteiger* to parent everyone is represented – they all share the common bond that their study abroad experience has become a bedrock for their later life adventures.



Founding Members of AYF Alumni & Friends

(Continued on page 2)



By starting this group we want to ensure that this great opportunity remains available for future AYFers and connections are cultivated and maintained among alumni.

During our founding meeting, the current group voted on the inaugural leadership of the AYF Alumni & Friends e.V., a non-profit civic association under German law, and discussed the future outreach activities of the club. We hope to keep up an ongoing conversation with current AYFers and put on some event(s) for them. We wish to connect with former Freiburg alumni from the Junior Year and Academic Year in Freiburg wherever in the world you may be by maintaining a club website and supporting AYF Reunions. To strengthen the AYF program and support future generations of students, we plan to start a fund-raising campaign for travel grants and stipends.

If you or someone you know is interested in becoming a member of AYF Alumni & Friends e.V., check out our website at <http://ayf-alumni.de/> or get in contact with us via email at info@ayf-alumni.org.

"Grünes Deutschland – Grünes Freiburg "

Professor Sabine Mödersheim, Resident Director 2015-16, University of Wisconsin – Madison

This semester, 20 students explored the “Green City” Freiburg in a hands-on course on “Green Germany – Green Freiburg.” Germany is a global leader in environmental policies and technologies, and Freiburg is a major pioneer in this development. This is evident in the ubiquitous solar cells installed on roofs and facades, wind turbines on the slopes of the Black Forest, and the innovative car-light neighborhood Vauban, to cite just a few examples.

How did Germany come to play this pioneering role and what can we learn from its example? What is the role Freiburg played over the last decades? We studied the history and politics of the German Green movement, in particular the anti-nuclear movement that started in the Freiburg region and the founding of the Green Party. We explored new trends in German environmental approaches and examined the relationship between technology and culture, as well as environmentally responsible economics.

One major part of the course was a case study of Freiburg: Students went out to research aspects of urban planning, renewable energy, waste management, public transport, education, tourism, etc. Reading the local newspaper and watching current media showed us how environmental protection and sustainability are represented in the German media and mainstream discourse. In their dorms, students found out about the German art of recycling called “Mülltrennung” and started to examine their own habits regarding trash, energy, food, and so on.

In one of the first projects of the semester, students were asked to take pictures along their daily commute from the dorm to the university at the city center in order to document the many small things that are part of everyday life here in Freiburg, such as the bicycle bridge across the railway tracks at the train station and the counter: They found out that there are over 300 miles of bike



*Solar high-rise on
Berliner Allee*

(Continued on page 3)



Cherries at the farmers market

paths in the city, and about 30% of all downtown traffic is bike traffic. About 35 000 people use a bicycle to get around downtown every single day.

Several students started projects studying their carbon footprint or eating habits and discovered how easy it is to change small things towards a more sustainable life style. Others studied urban gardening projects, one of them right next to the university and library. They also discovered that it is easy and affordable to live a more sustainable life style on a shoe-string budget in a city that provides easy access to local transportation and directly marketed regional and seasonal food, for example. Finding out that this lifestyle is actually healthier and cheaper, came as a surprise to some who had assumed that eating mostly organic food and living in a passive house were not affordable to those living on a budget.

Reading about “Green Freiburg” and seeing it first hand, actually being part of it by living in this environment, are quite different: AYF students experienced how many small things can be done that add up to make an impact, eventually even on a global scale.

Paris Climate Summit: Greetings from Vauban

By Brendan Hanrahan, AYF 2015-2016, University of Wisconsin – Madison

Living in Vauban has revealed to me again and again precisely why this city markets itself as “Green City Freiburg” and, as of yet, nothing demonstrates this more than my experience on the 28th of November this past year. Following a satisfying Thanksgiving dinner and night of casual no-stakes poker with fellow AYFers, my over-capacitated stomach and I were fully prepared to sleep in that morning. However at around 8 a.m., I was awoken by the *Klingeln* of my doorbell followed by the *Klingeln* of my roommate’s doorbell. As I mustered the energy to unwrap myself from my blanket cocoon, my roommate—also an AYFer—barged in to make sure I’m awake, still in boxer shorts and bed head. “That was our neighbor, dude. Apparently he needs our help to set up speakers for an environmental Demo-thing. I guess we need to meet him in Vauban’s Market Square like right now.”

I chuckled at the fuzzy the details surrounding the invitation but I was immediately intrigued. Primarily because our neighbor is a famous personality in the Vauban student community, known for tinkering with solar cells, ...

(Continued on page 4)



Current AYFers James Adams (left) and Brendan Hanrahan (right)

urban-gardening, a preference for reggaeton electronic music and especially his red hair (No joke. Those who don't know him by name, call him *der Rothaarige*). Being called upon by *der Rothaarige* was sure to make for an interesting time, regardless of how vague he had conveyed what we were actually getting ourselves into.

After throwing on clothes, I quickly grabbed a *Brötchen* for an on-the-go breakfast and made my way to the *Marktplatz*. Once there, my roommate and I encountered a group of maybe 40-50 Freiburgers of all ages already out despite inclement sprinkling rain brandishing posters calling for action against climate change. Our neighbor and his roommates greeted us with broad grins, happy that we had joined them. We were led to a crazy contraption, essentially a pedable quadricycle pulling a trailer with two mounted old bicycle frames. The chains of the mounted bikes were connected to a rear axle generator, which harnessed the mechanical energy to produce electrical current. This current was then used to power speakers that blasted techno music to pump up the demonstration participants. "*Damit kann man eine ewige Party machen!* - With that thing, the party can go on forever!" our neighbor proudly declared. "Your job is to keep it going."

I would be lying to say this was an easy task. To provide an adequate current for the speaker both people pedaling had to maintain a pace certainly beyond leisurely. But fueled by the energy and passion of our fellow demonstrators we were not fazed in the least and set to work. The march started in Vauban, continued down Merzhäuserstraße, went up Lorettostraße, until a left on Günterstalstraße led us to Johanneskirche. Here we met another group of demonstrators and what was 40-50 was now 300+ strong. Continuing up Kaiser-Josephstraße, we picked up even more people as we went past the University and *Stadttheater*. The final destination was the Stühlinger Park where 1500-2000 people had gathered to raise awareness and demonstrate support for the coming climate talks in Paris (*Klimagipfel*).

The *Badische Zeitung* reported the next day that similar demonstrations had occurred in Stuttgart, Karlsruhe and Mannheim. Apparently more people were expected, but the rain kept numbers down. Even so, 2000 people raising environmental awareness is quite impressive.

(Continued on page 5)



Bikes mounted on the "Quadricycle"



Generator on the "Quadricycle"

And although I am no stranger to demonstrations, which are almost a daily occurrence in Madison, WI, I had never seen so many people gather for an environmental cause. As someone who studies Botany and Environmental Studies, this really resonated with me. I truly felt at home, surrounded by people who feel as passionately as I do about finding a solution to the climate crisis. My roommate and I were so thankful to be part of such an event. This is an experience we will never forget and further confirmation that our decision to live in Vauban—and even to come to Freiburg in the first place!—was worth it a hundred times over.

AYF Student Concert - Save the Date!

If you live in the Freiburg area or are planning a visit, we cordially invite you to join us for a staged concert on Monday, June 6, 2016.

Under the title *Meine Ruh ist hin, mein Herz ist schwer: An American perspective on German Romanticism* AYF students will present their very own and very personal approach to *Die schöne Müllerin* by Franz Schubert.



From left to right: Mitchell Mantey, Emily Gengler, Megan Henry, Brendan Hanrahan, Herbert Schiffels

Megan Henry (soprano) will be joined by **Emily Gengler** als uni-tv student journalist, **Brendan Hanrahan** as young miller journeyman Franz Wilhelm (poet and composer), and **Mitchell Mantey** as Professor for German Romanticism and German Humor, doubling later as muscle man and Casanova. Piano accompaniment: **Herbert Schiffels**.

The concert is free and open to the public. Please join us on Monday, June 6, 2016, 7 p.m. in the Großer Saal, Haus „Zur Lieben Hand“, Löwenstr. 16.



The AYF Alumni Newsletter is published two to three times a year for all Freiburg alumni who studied at the Albert-Ludwigs-Universität under the auspices of the Junior Year in Freiburg or the Academic Year in Freiburg.

Please forward the Newsletter to other JYF and AYF Alumni with whom you are in contact. Thank you! To update your contact information, please go to <http://www.ayf.uni-freiburg.de/alumniform.html>.

For more information about the Academic Year in Freiburg, visit our web site at <http://www.ayf.uni-freiburg.de>