



## Alumni Association Newsletter

no. 1, 2003

***The Alumni Association is organized to promote and support the general welfare of the John-F.-Kennedy-School and to offer a forum through which alumni can stay informed of school-wide and alumni issues.***

**Dear Fellow Alumni!**

**We wish you a very happy New Year!**

**In addition to reporting on last year's Fun Day and Reception, you will see that this edition's emphasis lies on various Reunions that occurred in the last two years.**

**We are very grateful to those Alumni who have contributed articles about their reunions and hope that we'll be receiving many more articles and other contributions about Alumni Events during this year and in the future.**

**The Alumni Association has several events planned for this year. A "School Dance" will be scheduled sometime in May or June (check with the May edition of the**

**Newsletter or at JFKS.net for the exact date). We will be meeting for a July Picnic in the Schönower Park and will continue our bi-monthly Stammtisch gatherings. We'd love to see more of you at our meetings and are open to suggestions for other Alumni events. Enjoy reading about the experiences of some of your former school mates.**

*The editors*

### **FOR SALE: JFKS ALUMNI MOUSEPADS !!**

**We still have ALUMNI MOUSEPADS for sale. (see sample below)**

**You may pick one up at the bi-monthly *Stammtisch* / Get-together at the Mystery Island Café at Leibnizstr. 17 (next date: Thursday, the 20<sup>th</sup> of March), or contact us by E-Mail (see details in this newsletter). Mr. Hanna also has some in his office at the JFKS.**

**The sales of the mousepads are important for our financial standing. The mousepads cost €5,- each. For JFKS watches contact: Andreas Hartmann at (030) 769 17 17**



## **A retrospect: The Alumni Association's September reception / JFKS Fun Day 2002**

On Friday, the 27<sup>th</sup> of September, 2002, approximately 60 former students and teachers gathered in the old Aula for our annual reception. Herr Schürmann and I addressed the group at the beginning of the evening. Both of us expressed our hope to make this a regular event. Herr Schürmann told us about the changes the school had undergone in the last years. He also made clear that he is interested in helping us in any possible way. The attendance could have been better, but it was a good start, and the fact that those who were there represented at least 12 different classes was also a positive aspect. Some who visited our booth at the Fun Day the following day said that they did not show up at the reception because they felt that attending both events within two days was quite a lot to do, especially for those who have children.

Since I was personally involved in the Fun Day planning, I also experienced some problems planning the reception, mainly due to Fun Day preparations. We will discuss these aspects and may move this year's reception to another date. All in all the reception was fun, however. Many thanks go to those who planned and attended this event. Also, we thank Herr Schürmann, Mr. Hanna and the administration of the JFKS for letting us use the Aula.

On the following day, the Alumni Association e.V. had a booth at the JFKS Fun Day. As on the previous day, we sold Alumni mousepads and JFKS watches; and handed out information in the form of the Alumni Newsletter. We also had a donation box which was generously filled, especially by my own class, the Class of '82. Knut Marczinske donated €340,- which was left over from the 20<sup>th</sup> reunion of the Class of '82. We are very grateful for this donation

, Besides selling mousepads and watches, we also made some money at the Basketball-Throw near House Reil. This was run by Rainer Hoedt, who teaches Sport and Geography at the JFKS. Many thanks go to him for his participation. From the money that we made at the Fun Day, approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$  goes to the JFKS. That money is used for various projects within the school community. Since every booth at the Fun Day has to hand in all of its profits at the end of that day, we do not know at this point how much we made. We will publicize the figures in one of the next Alumni Newsletters. All in all, the Fun Day weekend has found us to be an integral part of the JFKS community. This lets us hope that we will reach a larger group of Alumni in the future. I would like to thank everyone who invested time and a lot of work during those two days.

By John-C. Hagen (Class of '82)

## **December Get-Together at the Irish Harp Pub**

On Saturday, the 28<sup>th</sup> of December, 2002, approximately 80 former students of the JFKS gathered at the Irish Harp Pub which is located at the Giesebrechtstrasse in Charlottenburg. The pub has been a meeting place for JFKS students (and teachers) for at least 25 years. The 28<sup>th</sup> of December – or the weekend between Christmas and New Year – has been a regular date for a good number of years. This year, the Alumni Association made the get-together an official date. Since the number of those who showed up was relatively high, we will advertise the date again this year. Many voiced their wish for more such social gatherings. Therefore, we are going to plan a "School Dance" at the JFKS, probably before the end of the school year. It could take place in the High School building, which would definitely bring back memories to most Alumni. More information concerning this plan will be published in the next edition of the Alumni Newsletter.

## News From America: Mini-Reunion in Las Vegas

Some organizational efforts are being made by JFK School alumni on this side of the Atlantic, too! After discovering the most valuable alumni e-mail directory a couple of years ago, several U.S.-based alumni set out to get back in touch with some of their high school "Kameraden" from the mid-1970s. The eventual result was a small reunion one weekend last November in Las Vegas. Attending were **Christine Noe (Black)**, JFK School 1973-1977, now a bank manager in Kalispell, Montana; **Diane Peterson (Shaw)**, JFK School 1969-1977, now an accountant in Los Angeles, California; **Bert Booth**, JFK School 1968-1974, now an airline pilot living in Bel Air, Maryland; **Brian Branagan**, JFK School 1972-1977, now a regional insurance sales manager in Tampa, Florida; **Mike Buschow**, JFK School 1972-1976, now an architect in Sacramento, California; **Chuck Herzig**, JFK School 1973-1977, now a geology professor in Los Angeles, California; **Kirk Horton**, JFK School 1972-1974, now a surveyor in Amenia, New York; **Peter Munsig**, JFK School 1975-1977, now a schoolteacher in Cape May, New Jersey; **Tom Scherer**, JFK School 1972-1974, now an economist in Washington, DC; and **Jay White**, JFK School 1969-1977, now the general manager of a Marine Corps dining and social club in Yuma, Arizona.

Las Vegas was chosen not for its culture (or rather lack thereof!) but because it was within driving range for several attendees and it is otherwise easily accessible by plane from all over the U.S. The location was fortuitous also because it made possible an excursion to beautiful Zion National Park in southwestern Utah, where several attendees – led by Professor Herzig – made the ascent to Observation Point.

The gathering was full of emotion. Most of the attendees had not seen each other since Berlin! It took time of course to catch up on the last quarter-century (marriage, children, etc.), but equal time was spent reminiscing about Berlin days. Classmates and teachers were remembered; adventures and misadventures were recalled. Old photos and letters were shared, giving undeniable – and sometimes unforgiving! – evidence of previous incarnations. Everyone agreed that the next reunion cannot wait another 25 years.

In the 1970s – and maybe still? – American students at the JFK School were mostly transient and, when their Berlin stays were over, would typically scatter to all parts of the U.S. where they started entirely new lives. This diaspora could make the high school experience seem lost forever. It was evident from the reunion, however, that despite divergent lives since Berlin, the old ties do still bind – and the Berlin-JFK School experience in fact lives on.

By Tom Scherer

## Those were the days my friend !

Klassentreffen der "Class Of '81" in Berlin

Ein wenig beklommen haben wohl die meisten zunächst durch die hellerleuchtete Scheibe des „Kleister“ geblickt. Draußen brandet auf der Potsdamer Straße der Verkehr der neuen-alten Hauptstadt, in der sich so vieles verändert hat. Und dort drinnen sitzen sie – Silhouetten nur, die ehemaligen Mitschüler. Haben auch sie sich verändert? Die große Liebe nun dick und faltig? Der Schläger plötzlich sanft und lammfromm? Der Primus nun mehr mittelmäßig erfolglos? Der Loser von einst im strahlenden Licht: „Mein Auto, mein Haus, meine Yacht“. Und wo stehe ich nach zwanzig Jahren? Klassentreffen haben schon etwas besonderes. Ein Eintauchen in die Vergangenheit, ein erstes Resümee des eigenen Lebens in dessen Mitte man doch eigentlich erst steht. Tief Luft holen und hinein!

Unter lautem Hallo erfolgt eine erste Musterung: Wer ist die Frau mit dem Kopftuch? Ach ja – Sylvia Menke. Der smarte, junge Mann mit der Brille? Die Körpergröße verrät ihn – Ben Gottwald! Genauso wie den Riesen mit der glänzenden Platte über der Nickelbrille? „Julle“ Seelig hat Haare gelassen. Auch Russell Green ist kurzgeschoren, gut sieht er aus, und schließlich würde selbst Jimmi Hendrix wohl heute keinen Afro mehr tragen. Fast unverändert hingegen Angela Peetz, selbst der Fotoapparat ist noch allgegenwärtig. Und wer ist die attraktive Blondine? Die hätte einem doch schon in der Schule auffallen müssen? „Die kannst Du nicht kennen, das ist meine Frau,“ klärt Dirk Schröder auf, „hätt'ste wohl nicht gedacht, dass ich auch mal eine abbekomme!“

Dann brechen die „Drei von der Tankstelle“ in die Runde: Axel Kliesch, Jörg Felsch und Ralph Höhns haben wohl schon das eine oder andere Bier der Schulzeit angeknüpft. Das wilde Leben hat Spuren in ihren Gesichtern hinterlassen, aber die Unbekümmertheit ist die Gleiche – ein Spruch jagt den anderen und fegt die letzten Reste von Befangenheit aus dem Schankraum. „Fichte die Sau, die alte Golischen, Mrs. Holocaust...“, plötzlich sind sie alle wieder da. „Beer is legal, sex is fun: were the class of `81“. Manche Dinge ändern sich dann eben doch nicht.

### **I trade all my tomorrow`s for a single yesterday**

Die John F. Kennedy Schule hingegen ist kaum wiederzuerkennen. Der Hauptstadtboom hat ihr gut getan. Aus dem 70iger Jahre Betonbunker mit den peppig-bunten Fensterrahmen ist eine modere, hervorragend ausgestattete Schule geworden. Nur das alte Haus Reil mit dem Grundstein davor ist unverändert. Ein wenig grau geworden ist Ulrich Schürmann. Die Begeisterung, mit der er einst im PW-Unterricht für die sozialdemokratische Idee geworben hat, ist nun auf seinen Job als Schulleiter übergeschwappt. In der Politik engagiert er sich nicht mehr. Verständlich ! Liegt doch vor allem im Bildungsbereich in Berlin vieles im Argen. Da fehlt den Schulen der Hauptstadt sogar das Geld für Toilettenpapier oder Wandfarbe. Glücklicher Schürmann, wenigstens der Kennedy-Schule scheint es an nichts zu mangeln. Mit dem Regierungsumzug hat die US-Botschaft die JFKS zur Embassy-School erklärt und zahlt für jeden amerikanischen Schüler aus dem diplomatischen Corps den gleichen Betrag, den sie für eine eigene Schule aufbringen müsste. Das Geld ist gut angelegt.

Wow ! Musikräume wie in einem Konzerthaus, eine neue Theaterbühne, Kunsträume, Labore, die Superturnhalle olympischen Ausmaßes, der Sportplatz mit Tartanbahn und ein Computerkabinett, das manche Softwarefirma pieffig erscheinen lässt: Fast möchte man Kabale und Liebe, Bernoulli-Ketten und Logarithmen noch einmal auf sich nehmen, um hier lernen zu dürfen. Staunend streifen wir über die Flure, beneiden neues und entdecken altes: Die Aula, in der Schulzeit begann und endete, die Essensausgabe mit den Schweineeimern, das alte Grundschul-Klassenzimmer mit den Cubby-Holes, das Büro von Frau Ferchland, längst im wohlverdienten Ruhestand, aber wer erinnert sich nicht an ihre Anrufe „Frau Sowieso, machen sie sich keine Sorgen, aber...“, Silke Lochmanns Wandgemälde vor dem Biologieraum, die ramponierten Locker („Da passt genau ein Schröder rein.“ O-Ton Höhns) und – Jack ! Noch immer hängt das große Portraitfoto von John F. Kennedy in der Vorhalle der Aula. Und noch immer verfolgen einen die Augen des legendären Präsidenten, scheinen mal wohlwollend freundlich, mal missbilligend streng zu gucken. Auf dem Foto ist er kaum älter als wir es heute sind. Na, Mister President, sind Sie zufrieden mit ihrer Class of `81 ?

### **The times they are a-changing**

Früher haben wir ungesünder gelebt. Sex and drugs and Rock n`Roll – diese Zeiten sind wohl vorbei. Im Zeitalter von BSE und Maul- und Klauenseuche versammeln wir uns zum politisch-korrekten vegetarischen Buffet im St. Michaelis Heim: das Klassentreffen steuert auf seinen Höhepunkt zu. Herr Bewer, Frau Winkler, Frau Tinnappel und Frau Dr. Grötzebach, nur wenige Lehrer sind gekommen. „Wissen Sie noch, wer ich bin ?“ Die Deutschlehrerin rätselt, schüttelt den Kopf. Kein Erkennen ? Ist das nun ein gutes oder ein schlechtes Zeichen ? So schlimm kann man also gar nicht gewesen sein, dass sie nicht immer noch mit Grausen an einen zurück denkt. Oder war man einfach nur nicht gut genug ?

Längst sind die alten Freundschaften erneuert und mit einigen Gläsern befestigt, die Gespräche kreisen nun auch um die Zukunft und nicht mehr nur um die Vergangenheit. Doch die alten Zeiten sind immer präsent. Eine Bildershow wirft noch einmal junge, hoffnungsvolle Gesichter an die Wand. Plötzlich sind auch die dabei, die nicht hier sind. Wo ist eigentlich der Wingefeld ? Hat jemand von Tom Collit gehört ? Was macht Yvonne Vita ? Unsere Schule hat offenbar ihr Ziel erreicht – wir sind eine ziemlich internationale Truppe: Zwischen dem Ganges und der San Francisco Bay, von Frankreich nach Neuseeland, in Potsdam oder Peking: Kennedy-Schüler trifft man fast überall. Erst jetzt wird richtig klar, welche Detektivaufgabe die Organisation des Klassentreffens war. Christiane Schnitzer und Claudia Stief haben allen Grund in die Kamera zu lächeln, ihre monatelange Arbeit hat sich gelohnt, unser Dank ist ihnen sicher.

Es ist schon spät als Russel Green zur Gitarre greift. Ben Gottwald begleitet ihn am Klavier.  
„So I called up the Captain, please bring me my wine. He said, we haven't had that spirit here since nineteen sixty-nine”...

### **It's always up to you, if you want to be that,...your coming along**

Petrus ist kein JFK-Alumni. Berlin erlebt das kälteste Pfingstfest seit Jahren. Die geplante Dampferfahrt und das Picknick im Park fallen buchstäblich ins Wasser. Glücklicherweise gewährt uns Julius Seelig in „seiner“ Kita in Spandau Obdach. Ein idealer Platz, um bei Kuchen und Sekt, beim Fußball und Schaukeln die kleinen Wertebuch, Lochmänner oder Weinitschkes kennen zu lernen. Kinder eines neuen Jahrtausends, mit vertrauten Gesichtern, Abbilder ihrer Eltern und doch anders. Die Kleinen haben ihre Schulzeit noch vor sich, die Kämpfe um Anerkennung, den ersten Liebeskummer, die Angst vor schlechten Noten, die Suche nach der eigenen Identität. Und hoffentlich können sie dann auch – zwanzig Jahre nach dem Abitur – sagen: those were the days my friend !

By Kai A. Struthoff

### **Class of '77 Reconnects with School**

The class reunion on January 11th was a great success is what I heard from the nearly thirty participants. The location at the school and tour given by principal Herr Schürmann contributed significantly to the former students being able to reconnect with their scholastic origins. Of equal importance naturally was the chance to catch-up with fellow classmates at a more personal level. The class started arriving at around 4 p.m. to check in, stick on name tags, pick up the current class list (available on request by e-mail), and to have a welcome drink. Herr Schürmann led us off then on the tour of the school campus half an hour later; first of all through the new Arts & Music wing, of which the Small Aula is a part. He explained how the school had expanded in the past 25 years to educate about 1700 students now. The good old Army buses we were so fond of aren't available anymore, but instead there is the Trust Fund now, sponsored by the US government, which or instance finances many of the school's special projects.

After passing through familiar facilities such as the Old Aula we found our first classrooms again - that was fifth grade - in the elementary school building. Little had changed there, except for the expansion of the library.

Next we toured the sports facilities. The class was quite impressed that DM 100 Million had been spent according to Herr Schürmann on the expansion of the school since we graduated. We thought we had a pretty well endowed school in our times, but what we viewed now could make us envious the following generations. In the new big "sunken" gym, which stands on the site of the former small gymnastics hall, we saw how all this was also benefiting those outside our school: a women's basketball tournament was being held. On the snow-covered athletics field we learned that the tracks and soccer field have been covered with rubber. The guys remembered the scrapes they had suffered from falling on the gravel during outdoor sports activities.

After passing offices of old-time teachers in the new high-school wing we briefly entered Herr Schürmann's own office. He pulled out and presented a binder with copies of our Abiturzeugnisse. Heard that mine was located.

Then we came across this year's Yearbook staff working in one of the computer rooms off of the large high-school library. Told them we were the first class to publish a yearbook at JFK; back then though we did the editing with typewriter, paper, pencil, and the like.

Going through the upper stories of this new wing we viewed the science labs and even more rooms with computers. Got to hear what kind of mischief I had been up to in Chemistry once. Had forgotten all about that. Herr Schürmann told a favorite anecdote: no student should dare miss a period of Herr Hellman's Chemistry class – even for a class trip – and Hellmann was actually serious!

In the teacher's room (which curiously enough was labeled "WC Jungen") we studied the pin board with photos of almost all the teachers on it. There were only a handful we still knew. Unfortunately hardly any of them had shown up for our reunion. Frau Lochmann was there briefly at the beginning, but disappeared again soon. Other invited or retired teachers had said they "might" come. Nevertheless

we kept questioning Herr Schürmann on what had become of certain teachers, learning for instance who advanced or moved to where and who was associated with whom.

The high point of the tour finally was the visit to the old high school room in which many of our class had Social Studies (PW) with Herr Schürmann. It was recounted how he would pace up and down in front of the class saying "Wie Sie alle Wissen gehöre ich einer Partei an dessen Namen ich hier nicht nennen will..."

Georg Jaesrich noted that the old bulky heaters were gone. They had cooked your buns in the morning, but let you freeze in the afternoon. Herr Schürmann pointed out that the heating now runs through the window frames.

On one scruffy locker, where several old layers of paint were exposed, we discovered the original blue we knew. Our hearts also warmed at rediscovering one mural left over from our times: the actually slightly depressing painting near the entrance of the skeletal man standing behind bars viewing a city-scape.

Back in the Small Aula's entry hall we found that the Greek buffet had been set up by the catering Symposion restaurant. But first we had the formal opening of the reunion with a welcome address by Petra Linke. Dinner was served almost like school times: take a segmented food tray and put your Essensmarke in a bowl before you could load up on for example salad, pastries, lamb, gigantes, and fruit. Many praises were heard for the food. The drinks were selected and brought by Iris Gamradt. We had set up the tables separate from each other earlier in the afternoon, but now people started to rearrange them so that eventually we had one long table for everyone!

Later after enough food and plenty of talk we enjoyed the performances given by two JFK-student quartettes: the 10<sup>th</sup> grade girls Sweet Adelains and the 13<sup>th</sup> grade boys Barbershop Quartette under the direction of Dr. Hepner. They sang popular rock ballads and serenades. The girls made me blush when they focused their song "I can't believe I'm in love with you" on me. Bet Dr. Hepner had set them onto me. Alexandra Piechatzek was also sitting in the front and in turn found Barbershop boys kneeling at her feet and kissing her hand. A caller from the audience said they ought to go on tour (their predecessors did). These kids certainly were good. An inquiry was made if they can be booked for a gig. Yes, just ask Dr. Hepner. During the rest of the time music from our younger days played in the background on a system provided by Ronni Rabau.

An exhibition table was set up presenting various memorabilia. There was a painting of mine I made of the school, someone brought her JFK sports shirt and a history book that never was returned, and Andre Gahleitner, who came all the way from Vienna, had a stack of pictures dating back to elementary school times. Quite interesting too was Dorothea Goldschmidt's collection of Spickzettel. She confessed that once she accidentally turned one in with a test and even asked the teacher to get it back. What she didn't care to share after all though was the script she had along of the Abitur speech she had held with Karsten Peters. "My God, I wrote that?" It had evidently been quite controversial back then. On the table too were alumni mousepads for sale and a collection can for donations to the Verein der JFKS-Freunde. A folder was presented as well that contained messages and greetings to the class from many who could not attend.

Time flew with hardly enough time to make the rounds and get reacquainted with everyone. Some are still single and one (Georg) is expecting his fifth child soon. No grandchildren yet, as far as I've heard. I think I'm the only one with own children at the school.

We would have had over 30 participants, but there were several late cancellations and no-shows.

Nevertheless I dare say the best and the brightest of our class were in attendance. I could tell all really enjoyed themselves, and in a way relived an important phase of their youth. May this event remain in mind for a long time and contacts be renewed.

My thanks goes to Petra Linke, Iris Gamradt, Nicola Rönpag, Ronny Rabau and Peter Reich for their help and support. A special thanks goes of course to Herr Schürmann for reopening the school for us and for his enthusiasm for this reunion. The plus in the budget wasn't especially great, but that along with the extra donations I transferred to the Verein as a thanks for being able to use these school facilities. And finally a big thank you to everyone who helped clean up at the end, especially with moving the tables and platforms.

But that wasn't the end of the evening. More than half of us reunited on at the Park Café for a couple more hours. Topics there I heard circled then for instance on who had the hots for who back in school.

By Alan Benson

## JFKS AND ALUMNI Calendar of Events (June 2003-August 2003)

<b>*June 2(Monday)</b>	<b>Alumni Association Organizational Meeting 19:00 GR 116</b>
June 5(Thursday)	H.S. Spring Concert No. 1 Aula 19:30
June 9 (Monday)	PENTECOST VACATION – NO SCHOOL
June 12(Thursday)	H.S. Spring Concert No. 2 Aula 19:30
June 19(Thursday)	E.S. Music Eve Aula
June 20(Friday)	E.S. Assembly Aula 9:00 – 11:00
June 24(Tuesday)	Abifeier Aula 18:00
<b>*June 26(Thursday)</b>	<b>JFK – Commemoration Ceremony at Rathaus Schöneberg 16:00</b>
June 26(Thursday)	Opening Day of the “John-F.-Kennedy”-exhibition at the Deutsche Historische Museum (until 13 October)
<b>July 1(Tuesday)</b>	Graduation Ceremony Aula 19:00
July 3(Thursday)	LAST DAY OF SCHOOL
July 5(Saturday)	Class of '93 Picnic Schönower Park
<b>*July 6(Sunday)</b>	<b>JFKS ALUMNI Picnic Schönower Park 11:00</b>
<b>*July 17(Thursday)</b>	<b>JFKS ALUMNI STAMMTISCH / GET-TOGETHER Mystery Island Café Leibnizstr. 17 (Ecke Schillerstr.) 8 p.m.</b>

**August 25(Wednesday)** School Resumes

**Note: All alumni events have been noted with an \*. All dates could be subject to change.**

**For additional information about JFK-events, please get on-line at [www.JFKS.net](http://www.JFKS.net)  
or  
look out for the upcoming newsletter in September.  
The Alumni Stammtisch will take place on every 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of every second  
month at  
“The Mystery Island Café”, Leibnizstr. 17, corner of Schillerstrasse.**

### **Editorial Info:**

The editorial staff: Birgit Bekehr, class of '85, Elisabeth Hoedt (former Hagen),  
class of '83, and John-Christoph Hagen,  
class of '82.

We want to express our sincerest thanks to Marla MacKay, class of '86, who has  
again generously offered to print the paper  
free-of-charge for us. The newsletter can be read on the jfks web page  
[www.jfks.net](http://www.jfks.net) . To obtain a printed copy, please send a stamped, self-addressed  
envelope to: John-F.-Kennedy-School c/o Alumni Association Teltower Damm 87-  
93, 14167 Berlin.

The idea of the newsletter is to inform alumni of upcoming events, going on in  
school and to provide a forum for your own information. The section „Class Notes“  
is meant to grow with your help in the future. We will provide a „mailbox“  
([classnotesalumni@jfks.net](mailto:classnotesalumni@jfks.net)) for you to send in your information. We do,  
however, maintain the right to edit your letters.  
We will not print rude or racist statements of any kind.

**A Big Request: We´re still working on compiling an alumni address list and need  
YOUR help!! Please inform us of who keeps your class´s address list up-to-date  
or mail  
your class list to Hauke Dämpfling, class of 2000, who will compile the lists for us.  
His address is: [Hauke@zero-g.net](mailto:Hauke@zero-g.net) . He will keep all data secure and confidential-  
addresses will be released only with permission. Thank you!!**