Chairman’s Letter

After spending much of the pandemic reporting remotely, often isolated from even their newsrooms, the Burns Fellows of 2021 came to their assignments with an exceptional level of enthusiasm and commitment.

The Arthur F. Burns Fellowship is predicated on the idea that journalism brings understanding through in-person reporting, meeting sources, and delving into new communities. The best investigations, narratives, and analyses all stem from this traditional reporting.

Burns Fellows tell us that they never would have discovered the best, most memorable and often most important stories they produce had they not been forced to learn about a new place, new people, new ideas. From a conversation over coffee in a host newsroom to seeing a flyer on the streets, fellows soak up fresh ideas, take chances and are inspired by new opportunities. The result is in-depth, nuanced reporting that they never could have produced from their home newsroom.

In addition, by bringing these journalists across the Atlantic to learn and bond together, the program encourages creative cooperation. Recent examples include German and Canadian reporters providing joint coverage of their concurrent national elections, and U.S. and German teams reporting on the European energy crisis. Everyone benefits from this increased collaboration between media in different countries—the reporters, their home and host newsrooms and, of course, their audiences.

Each year, these impressive journalists produce hundreds of stories during their fellowships that enlighten and educate their readers and viewers and that would not have been possible without the Burns Fellowship. And the program has a lasting impact on its alumni, who learn new ways of thinking about their work and their world. When the Ukraine war started in 2022, dozens of Burns alumni rushed to the front lines to bring those important stories home to their audiences.

We are grateful to our many donors who are proud to support strong international reporting which has an enduring impact on the transatlantic relationship.

Sincerely,

Marcus W. Brauchli

Managing Partner, North Base Media; Former editor-in-chief of The Wall Street Journal and The Washington Post
Stephanie Wolf (Burns 2021)
Freelance Audio Reporter and Photographer, Denver, CO
(previously Arts and Culture Reporter, Louisville Public Media/WFPL News, Louisville, KY)
Hosted by: Common Ground, Berlin

“The Burns Fellowship was such an incredible experience professionally and personally, and I continue to stay in touch with the other fellows from my class. While abroad, I produced several stories, but spent the bulk of my time doing research, interviews, and reporting for a radio documentary, titled A Critical Moment. I partnered with my colleague back in Louisville, Kentucky, on the project. The documentary, which compares how the United States and Germany teach schoolchildren about their respective painful histories, aired in January of 2022, and a year later, it won a 2023 RIAS Media Prize for Best Radio Story. My time in Germany, with my colleague back in Louisville, Kentucky, on the project. The documentary, which compares how the United States and Germany teach schoolchildren about their respective painful histories, aired in January of 2022, and a year later, it won a 2023 RIAS Media Prize for Best Radio Story. My time in Germany, I traveled to Hamburg to embed with European climate activists. Following a lead, and working closely with another fellow, I took a chance with my coverage that week. To my surprise, all my pitches were accepted and I landed an A1 position with the article back in Canada, while also getting good play from a subsequent accompanying audio report. This event would have gone unreported had it scrambled to wean itself from a journalistic perspective. Jonas and I produced an ARD documentary from the material, which was broadcast in late 2021.”

Claudia Scholz (Burns 2022)
Editor and Reporter, Handelsblatt, Düsseldorf
Hosted by: The Globe and Mail, Toronto, ON

“In the summer of 2022, there was certainly no better place for a German business and politics reporter than Toronto. Due to the energy crisis in Europe, Canada suddenly moved to the center of German foreign policy—thanks to its potential in gas, oil and hydrogen. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz travelled to Toronto with a business delegation to meet Canada’s Prime Minister Justin Trudeau—and I found myself right in the middle of it! It was a great opportunity for me to be on the Burns Fellowship with my host newspaper, The Globe and Mail, during this eventful time for German-Canadian relations. From the beginning, I was treated as an equal reporter and welcomed in the newsroom. Editors showed great interest in all topics related to the Ukrainian war and its consequences for Germany and relations with Canada. I therefore focused on these topics, where I could offer added value in the eyes of my host. This paid off: I was able to publish articles in The Globe and Mail continuously from my first week.”

Janice Dickson (Burns 2021)
Reporter, The Globe and Mail, Ottawa, ON
Hosted by: Die Welt, Berlin

“For the first month of the fellowship, I covered the aftermath of the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, focusing on Canada and Germany’s efforts to evacuate people who assisted their governments from the country. With talk of a potential refugee crisis, I decided to travel to eastern Turkey near the Iranian border to talk with Afghan refugees who made the perilous journey. I spent hours speaking with exhausted refugees about their trip and hopes for the future. The day after returning to Berlin, I learned that Ramstein Air Base had been transformed into a massive evacuation center, so I went there to talk with Afghans and to U.S. officials about the process. I filed stories from Ramstein to both The Globe and Die Welt, my host paper. In September, I shifted my attention to politics as two national campaigns were well underway in both Germany and Canada. I wrote stories about Germany’s election for The Globe and Mail, along with Die Welt reporter Ricardo Breyton, who The Globe was hosting in Toronto. Together, we wrote a story about the Canadian election for Die Welt. It was a really wonderful partnership.”

Kenneth Sharpe (Burns 2022)
Journalist, National Radio Host, and Producer, CBC, Toronto, ON & St. John’s, NL
Hosted by: Reuters, Berlin

“In my second week in Germany, I traveled to Hamburg to embed with European climate activists. Following a lead, and working closely with another fellow, I took a chance with my coverage that week. To my surprise, all my pitches were accepted and I landed an A1 position with the article back in Canada, while also getting good play from a subsequent accompanying audio report. This event would have gone unreported to Canadian audiences if not for my spontaneous trip. Even after 15 years as a journalist, I experienced so many firsts in my career on this fellowship, which were directly related to the opportunities the Burns placement enabled and supported.”

David Uberti (Burns 2022)
Hosted by: Handelsblatt, Düsseldorf

“A lot of journalism is being done right now in Germany. My Burns Fellowship accomplished both, placing me near the heart of Europe’s largest economy as it scrambled to wean itself off Russian energy after the Kremlin invaded Ukraine. I reported for The Wall Street Journal from Germany and nearby countries as households and other businesses faced skyrocketing energy bills. Coincidentally, while I was producing this coverage, WSJ began looking for a reporter to cover energy markets from my home office, New York. I jumped at the opportunity. I’ve switched beats and have since been immersing myself in a topic I didn’t realize I was so interested in—and that the Burns Fellowship allowed me to explore. Right place, right time.”

Ibrahim Naber (Burns 2021)
Chief Reporter, Welt/Welt am Sonntag, Berlin
Hosted by: The City, New York, NY

“During my Burns Fellowship in the U.S., I felt privileged to have the freedom to implement my ideas independently as a reporter. Over the two months, I covered a range of topics, including a Trump rally in Alabama, a vaccination campaign in the Bronx, and an interview with ex-CIA director General Petraeus for WELT AM SONNTAG. I was also called upon a few times to provide live coverage from New York for our TV station. For my home newsroom, I focused on two larger projects. The first was a short documentary for WELT on the 20th anniversary of 9/11 that profiled former police officer Will Jimeno who miraculously survived after being buried in the rubble. The second was a longer research project into America’s (radical) right movement, for which I filmed several days in Montana with co-fellow Jonas Schreijäg. This was a crazy week in a parallel world, but it was very valuable from a journalistic perspective. Jonas and I produced an award-winning ARD documentary from the material, which was broadcast in late 2021.”

Even after 15 years as a journalist, I experienced so many firsts in my career on this fellowship, which were directly related to the opportunities the Burns placement enabled and supported.
Where Burns Alumni Are Now

United States & Canada

“Sufficiency, I thought two months in Berlin was too short a time to have any kind of transformational experience, and that before I knew it, I’d be back to the same old routine in Toronto. But I was wrong. In the end, as many other fellows have said in the past, Burns was a life-changing experience for me and I’ve come out of it a completely different person.” — Tamara Khandaker (Burns 2022), Host, Nothing is Foreign Podcast, CBC, Toronto, ON

Hosted by: Die Welt, Berlin

Germany

“I loved the Burns Fellowship and feel that it made me a better reporter and world citizen. I am leaving with a better understanding of Europe and Germany at a critical time. I also have new friends in Germany, Canada and the U.S. I feel very lucky to have been a part of it.” — Eliza Collins (Burns 2022), Politica Reporter, The Wall Street Journal, Washington, DC

Hosted by: Süddeutsche Zeitung, München

“Since my time in the U.S., I trust myself and my reporting in a new, unexpected way that might lead me into a broader future. It assured me of what I really want to report on—and where. I dove into research methods that I didn’t have any idea about before. I found close new friends in journalism. I was shocked and impressed so many times.” — Franziska Klemenz (Burns 2022), Reporter, Sächsische Zeitung, Dresden

Hosted by: The Oregonian, Portland, OR

“Russia invaded Ukraine just a few months after I returned to the U.S. from the Burns Fellowship. The Journal’s foreign editors quickly sent me back to Europe, and I spent the next year covering the war. It was for the fellowship—and the experience I gained on the foreign desk while in Germany—I doubt I would have had the chance to go to Ukraine.” — Ian Lovett (Burns 2021), Reporter, The Wall Street Journal, Los Angeles, CA

Hosted by: Berliner Zeitung, Berlin

“I hoped for three things from my stay at the Vancouver bureau of The Globe and Mail—an editorial team from which I could learn something; a team that is small enough for me to make true connections; and to better understand a city that is considered one of the most livable places in North America... In the end, I couldn’t have asked for a better placement.” — Elana Berger (Burns 2022), Reporter, Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger, Köln

Hosted by: The Globe and Mail, Vancouver, BC

“I want to spend the rest of my career finding new ideas and putting them into my work. But Burns has given me the confidence to do that.” — Bastian Brinkmann (Burns 2022), Deputy Head Economics, Süddeutsche Zeitung, München

Hosted by: The Wall Street Journal, New York, NY

Burns alumni are also living and working in these countries:

Australia: 1  France: 2  The Netherlands: 1
Austria: 3  Ghana: 1  Nigeria: 1
Belgium: 7  Hungary: 1  France: 1
China: 1  Israel: 1  Russia: 4
Egypt: 1  Italy: 3  Turkey: 2
Turkey: 1  Singapore: 2  United Kingdom: 10
Switzerland: 3  Sweden: 1  Uzbekistan: 1
S tephanie Bolzen was a junior reporter and editor at WELT’s foreign desk in Berlin in 2003 when she decided to apply for the Burns Fellowship. The Bush administration had begun making a public case for an invasion of Iraq in 2002 and the war officially began in March 2003. Stephanie was fascinated by the U.S. and wanted to better understand the changing geopolitics after the September 11 attacks and the reasons for invading Iraq.

“Bush’s decision had massive political repercussions for Europe. The Iron Curtain had only been down for a decade, and now there was a new split between East and West because of the Iraq War,” she wrote. “At the same time, I needed to understand first-hand what made the U.S. go into this war. I came back with the understanding that the U.S. is driven by a sense of invincibility.”

She was placed at the Chicago Tribune and was impressed by and excited to learn from her new colleagues. As she wrote, “At the Chicago Tribune, I learned a lot from award-winning journalists, how superbly accurate and passionate they are about their work. Most importantly, having the chance to see the world from a U.S. perspective is crucial to understanding geopolitics.

One memorable experience during her time there was when she accompanied a city desk colleague to an assignment at O’Hare airport for the opening of a new hangar. At one point her colleague said to her, “Stefanie, you got ta meet our senator!”

She recalled, “I remember this tall guy coming up to me, shaking my hand: ‘Hey, I am Barack. You are from Germany? Amazing!’ I should have kept in touch.”

Although she did not manage to keep in touch with the future U.S. president, she wrote that her Burns Fellowship experience “taught me to always be curious, seize the opportunities, build networks and be a team player.” Her experience also confirmed that she wanted to be a foreign correspondent.

In 2007, she was awarded the Milena Jesenská Fellowship and spent three months at the Institute for Human Sciences in Vienna, researching and writing a paper on Central and Eastern European transition countries. In 2009, WELT sent her to Brussels as their EU and NATO correspondent. After four years there, she moved to London to become WELT’s United Kingdom and Ireland correspondent. She spent 10 years there “living and breathing the historic chapter of Brexit,” as well as reporting on five prime ministers and the death of Queen Elizabeth. When she left in 2023, she hosted a farewell party that led me to becoming the leader I am today.”

Ten years later, she is now back in the United States as a West Coast correspondent. She spent 10 years “living and breathing the historic chapter of Brexit,” as well as reporting on five prime ministers and the death of Queen Elizabeth. When she left in 2023, she hosted a farewell party that led me to becoming the leader I am today.”

Right after the fellowship, she started working at the business magazine Red Herring, where she covered green technology—among other issues—and benefited from her reporting experience in Germany, which has been a leader in solar power. She later became a founding editor of Greentech Media and then a freelancer focusing on business and technology.

“Ultimately, my experience in those roles led to me getting recruited by The Guardian to help launch a sustainable business section in the U.S., where I was eventually promoted to partnerships editor and then managing editor,” she said.

Jennifer is now the executive editor of the Chicago Sun-Times, where she has been praised as a tenacious and innovative journalist with a passion for local media.

“The Burns Fellowship started me on my career trajectory that led me to becoming the leader I am today.”

Having to navigate finding a place to live, transportation, a gym (so I could do my physical therapy), all while living by myself in another country taught me important life skills and left me feeling confident in my ability to take care of myself. (Luckily I spoke German!) Experiencing this fellowship while disabled also gave me another lens through which to connect with people and experience life in Germany.”

While gaining experience as a foreign correspondent was significant and learning German song lyrics was a bonus, the financial reporting experience turned out to be transformational. As she wrote, “the fellowship helped me transition into business reporting.”

When asked about highlights from her fellowship, she provided a long list, including “turning in my first story and getting good feedback from my manager, who seemed impressed that I managed to get additional information from an interview while still meeting the 15-minute wire deadline; attending German press conferences; singing Johnny Cash with a fun group of Germans at a party and also learning the lyrics to ‘99 Luftballons’ with Burns Fellow Julie Siple on another occasion; and successfully pitching, reporting and writing a business feature on Germany’s shrinking flower industry that ended up being published in The Wall Street Journal.”

She managed to accomplish so much despite arriving on crutches due to a serious knee injury sustained a few months before the program. In fact, that situation ended up giving her unique insights during her fellowship.

T he Burns Fellowship started me on my career trajectory that led me to becoming the leader I am today.”

The opportunity to see the world from a U.S. perspective is crucial to understanding geopolitics...having the chance to see the world from a U.S. perspective is crucial to understanding geopolitics.
Alumni Resources

As 2008 Burns alumnus Mike Giglio once wrote, the Burns Fellowship “patches together some rungs on the overseas journalist ladder, which has been hacked to pieces by the crappy state of things.”

The media industry has been through a sea change in the past decade. Journalists are expected to do vastly more with fewer resources. The Burns Fellowship strives to fill those gaps to provide journalists with professional development opportunities both during and after their fellowships.

During the program, fellows have the opportunity to build their foreign reporting expertise, expand their sources, and broaden their perspectives. Once they return home, Burns provides networking opportunities to help boost their careers, speaking events to keep them engaged on major overseas media projects.

The Holbrooke Research Grants, named in honor of diplomat Richard Holbrooke, offer stipends for Burns alumni to conduct foreign reporting trips on a topic of interest to the transatlantic community. One recent Holbrooke winner is Amanda Peacher (Burns 2013), currently a senior acquisitions editor at Marketplace. Amanda traveled to Austria in 2021 to report on European climate change action, the economic impact of COVID-19, and solutions to social and environmental challenges that could serve as examples for the United States. Her radio stories aired on The World and Marketplace on syndicated programs that were broadcast to millions of public radio listeners nationally.

Another Holbrooke grantee, Sadiya Ansari, was selected for the Fellowship in 2020, but when the program was postponed due to the pandemic, she opted for a Holbrooke Grant instead. She traveled around Germany to report in-depth on how the country has managed to integrate more than one million refugees who arrived in 2015. She wanted to examine what lessons could be learned for other countries from this mass, unplanned migration. As soon as it was safe to do so, the fellowship resumed hosting alumni dinners, providing a venue for alumni to reconnect, network and hear from prestigious speakers.

Recent keynote speakers include NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg; Friedrich Merz, chairman of the Christian Democratic Union; Dr. Rajiv Shah, president of the Rockefeller Foundation; and journalist and author Bob Woodward.

As Zoom meetings exploded during the pandemic, the Burns Fellowship realized it could also take advantage of this technology to provide more intimate alumni gatherings by hosting class reunions for their 20th and 30th anniversaries. The reunions have been a great success and have allowed alumni to catch up on each other’s careers many years after their transformative Burns experiences.

During the pandemic, the program also hosted a few webinars on topics of interest for alumni, including on Canada’s role in the world and media reforms related to social justice issues.

To encourage all alumni to continue producing well researched, high caliber stories, the fellowship awards journalism prizes to the best articles or broadcast stories produced that year. The Arthur F. Burns Awards are presented to alumni for an outstanding journalistic contribution, and the George F. Kennan Commentary Award is presented to any journalist for a remarkable commentary related to the transatlantic relationship or the United States in a German publication.

The Burns Fellowship helps support alumni throughout their careers so they can continue to rise in the media field and provide enlightening and critical news to their audiences.
Host Organizations

The following media organizations hosted Burns Fellows from the 2021 and 2022 classes:

UNITED STATES & CANADA
- 6AM City—Portland, OR
- The Austin Chronicle—Austin, TX
- Bloomberg—New York, NY
- The City—New York, NY
- The Globe and Mail—Toronto, ON and Vancouver, BC
- The Hill—Washington, DC
- The International Consortium of Investigative Journalists—Washington, DC
- NBC—New York, NY
- The New York Times—Washington, DC
- NPR—Washington, DC
- The Oregonian—Portland, OR
- ProPublica—New York, NY
- The Seattle Times—Seattle, WA
- The Tennessean—Nashville, TN
- The Verge—San Francisco, CA and New York, NY
- WAFB—Baton Rouge, LA
- The Wall Street Journal—New York, NY
- The Washington Post—Washington, DC

GERMANY
- Augsburg Allgemeine—Augsburg
- Bayerischer Rundfunk—Munich
- Berliner Zeitung—Berlin
- Handelsblatt—Düsseldorf
- Media Pioneer—Berlin
- RND—Berlin
- Süddeutsche Zeitung—Berlin and Munich
- taz, die tageszeitung—Berlin
- Der Tagesspiegel—Berlin
- Thomson Reuters—Berlin
- The Wall Street Journal—Berlin
- WELT—Berlin
- WELT Audio/Podcast—Berlin

**Berlin Zeitung, Berlin**

“When you walked through the editorial office in the evening, there was still a light on late at one desk. Marieke Walsh’s. She wanted to quickly finish a story before interviewing a victim of the Munich attack in 1972 the next day and flying to London the day after to report on the queen’s funeral. From there she wrote a story for the home editorial office and of course one for us, including photos. To this day, when I ask colleagues about Marieke Walsh, they say: Oh! That was the Burns Fellow who always had political discussions with us in the morning and worked until late in the evening to finalize her copy.”

Sören Kittel, Head of Local News

“The opportunities that the fellowship created for me were beyond anything I could have hoped for and the Berliner Zeitung was a great newsroom to be placed in. The team there was incredibly friendly and supportive and went out of their way to show me the ropes and point me in the right direction for sources and stories. Through the fellowship I got the chance to do more feature writing and investigative work and had a true taste of life as a foreign correspondent (navigating language and cultural differences and juggling midnight edits with the desk back home). I can’t recommend the fellowship enough to any journalist hoping to build their skill set and test out other styles of reporting.”

Marieke Walsh (Burns 2022)

Senior Political Reporter, The Globe and Mail, Ottawa

Hosted by: Berliner Zeitung, Berlin

**PDXToday, Portland**

“Meeting Eva and adopting her as an honorary member of our team was such a special experience and a highlight of the work year. She came to us to learn about our brand and company culture, but we reaped an equal measure of benefits in the process—from learning about her life and work in Germany (and getting many incredible travel tips) to the simple gift of acknowledging the common ties that connect us across continents. The sense of connection fostered by the Arthur F. Burns Fellowship Program was invaluable.”

Ben McBee and Cambrie Juarez, City Editors

“I was very impressed with the openness and innovation-driven mindset at 6AM City. They have a clear vision for their hyperlocal newsletters and what purpose they should serve as a journalistic product—I learned a lot that I brought back to my home media company, the BR/ARD. The staff—especially the Portland team—was exceptionally welcoming and really made me feel like a team member from the start.”

Eva Limmer (Burns 2022)

Reporter, Bayerischer Rundfunk, Munich

Hosted by: 6AM City/PDXToday, Portland, OR
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Dr. Gregor Peter Schmitz, Editor-in-Chief, stern
Jennifer Wilmott, Editor-in-Chief, Die Welt
Ulrike Winkelnkemper, Co-Editor-in-Chief, Tageszeitung
2021 Burns Fellows at the German ambassador's residence in Washington, DC.