

## ***Our Majors, Minors and Study Abroad Alums Have Lots to Report About***



**Amber Adams (Salzburg '98)** writes: I'm starting a new business and transitioning careers. I'll be working with special-needs kids teaching them movement lessons. I've been doing this part-time for years now, and want to shift into making it my full-time job. Amber's business website is <http://sensorynexus.com>.

**Jeffrey R. Elliot (France '79):** Richard Danner, Prof. Emeritus of French, sends in this news of Jeffrey Elliot: Yesterday afternoon Mary and I attended the retirement ceremony of Colonel Jeffrey R. Elliott, which took place at the Keystone Conference Center in Fort Indiantown Gap, PA. After many years of service with the National Guard, Jeff has retired as State Judge Advocate (i.e., he has been "the ranking military lawyer in the Pennsylvania Army National Guard, and has been directly responsible for providing legal advice on a range of military and domestic operations matters to the Adjutant General of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania . . . . At the ceremony Jeff received numerous awards, and in retirement he will hold the rank of Brigadier General. In his remarks to the large audience he mentioned study abroad among the important formative elements that helped prepare him for his career. Col. Elliot also practices law with a private firm.

**Kristina Monroe Bishop (Salzburg '94):** I am a faculty member now at the University of Arizona. The program I run is titled Geography of Health and Development. In one week leave for South Africa where I now run a study abroad program! Running the program each summer is the most fun I have working and what I look forward to each year. I hope in 20 years I am still running it and able to keep up with all the students who have joined me along the way.

**Ashley Robinson (Salzburg '96):** I am now living in New Orleans, owning and managing a few properties here. I love the architecture of this city - very European. There's so much history here. With some research, I learned the house I live in was built by a man named Eugene Lacost whose tomb is a popular tourist attraction. In 2014 dollars, his tomb cost almost \$1 million to build! As for work, I recently left my Marketing Director position with a law firm and am now looking for new (read: more interesting) opportunities. I think about moving back to Austria or Germany often, so maybe my next update will find me somewhere I can use those hard-won language skills ;)

**Wendi Ousley (Salzburg '93):** After several years of teaching at The Columbus School for Girls, a private, all-girls' school, Pre-K through 12, in July of 2007, I moved to Tucson, Arizona. I accepted a position teaching German and English at Canyon del Oro High School, a public, co-educational high school of about 1,600 students. Here, I have been the assistant varsity girls' volleyball and head varsity boys' volleyball coach. As the German teacher, I was able to increase enrollment and expand a two-year German program into four-year program including Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate. In May 2013, I accepted a position as an Instructional Support Leader in our district, which is a two-year contract. After nineteen years in education, I have taken a new path in my career, deciding to leave the classroom to become a teacher coach and mentor. I am pursuing an EdS degree with the goal of becoming a school psychologist or director of the Amphi Mentor Program. In my free time, I enjoy traveling and have taken seven trips abroad with my students. In addition to my wanderlust, I also like to read, hike, and camp, and I am an avid sports' fan. I live with my son and our dog, Charley.

**Bodie Stewart (Leipzig '99):** I'm in my last semester at Georgetown University Law Center. It has truly been the greatest intellectual adventure of my life. I also worked as a legal extern at the Atlantic Council (a transatlantic think tank) for my mentor, Dr. Brummer, where he's a Fellow and Director of one of their policy departments. I'll likely be working in the finance department at an international law firm one block off of Wall Street, starting in October (Milbank Tweed). My life looks completely different now as compared to a few years ago. I feel like I'm doing what I should be doing, and I'll feel even more strongly that way once I start working in October. Before then, I have another few months of school, two months of studying for the NY Bar Exam, and then I'll travel for two months before beginning to work (Yosemite, Yunnan Province in China, Borneo, Japan/Osaka, and three weeks in Nepal, including a two-week trek to/from Everest Base Camp).

**Adam Sheets (Salzburg '97; BA German 2000):** I had an interesting fall. I've been playing harmonica and organ with a national blues musician (Johnny Rawls) for several years. I'm up to about 15 or 20 shows a year now. This fall he asked me to do two weeks in Luzern Switzerland for the Luzern Blues festival. It was fantastic. I haven't had much of a chance to speak German since OU.

**Marion Kee (BA French 79; France 75-76)** I'm in Redmond, WA (Seattle area), where I moved in 1998 after marrying my husband, Fred Wamsley, in 1997. Fred is another O.U. graduate (Honors Tutorial College Physics, 1978). My current computational linguistics job has me working online; my boss is a Russian living in Australia, the CEO is an American in Florida, the guys who runs our servers is a German in Germany, the sales staff are American and Dutch and live mostly in the D.C. area, the Arab linguist is in Boston, the Chinese and Pashtun linguist is in Istanbul, and I'm working in French up to my elbows and finding that I know it even more thoroughly than I had thought--that is because of the immersion from studying abroad. I've been working with the dean of the Honors Tutorial College (Jeremy Webster) over the past couple of years on setting up a scholarship in our estate plan, and ended up volunteering for the HTC Board of Visitors' new subcommittee on diversity. So that's what my O.U. involvement has been lately. I also go back and visit Carnegie Mellon University (where I worked for over 14 years and earned my M.S.).

**Adam Hart (MA French 2011):** Herta Rodina, Associate Professor of French, reports this news from Adam: Adam Hart was hired in January at The O'Neal School in North Carolina to teach French at the high school level. Adam completed Ohio University's M.A. in French in 2011, and he had been working at an elementary school in Arizona as a teacher's aide for special education students. The O'Neal School contacted Adam in December, and he began work the following month. The O'Neal School is a private college preparatory school in Southern Pines founded in 1971. There are currently 445 students and 56 faculty members, 74% of whom have completed post graduate studies. One hundred percent of O'Neal students graduate and are accepted to universities each year; Adam even met a senior who has been accepted at Ohio University!

**Melania Lavric (M.A. French 2010)** is currently working at the Fay School, an independent day and boarding school in Southborough, Mass. She teaches four classes of beginning and intermediate French to 7th, 8th, and 9th graders. She works with students with a variety of language levels and abilities; some of her students recently worked through Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *Le Petit Prince* and created a video project based on the story."

**Michelle Craig Rippeth (Merida '87/'88; BA Spanish '89):** I am currently a school counselor at Vinton Co. HS after having taught hs Spanish for 15 years. I lived abroad in Germany and travelled to Medellin, Columbia. I have assisted law enforcement officials by translating for them, and my students developed a Spanish questionnaire to help them obtain personal information from Spanish speakers. My fondest memories of OU are associated with my times in the Merida Mayab program. Dr. Tony Serna was so fundamental to that program and my experiences have forever impacted how I taught and how I view the cultural aspects of the language experiences. I have an abiding love for the Yucatan Peninsula and its people.



**Jim Billings (Salzburg '90):** As you can imagine, the Government contracting business has been quite slow these past few months - but I have been busier than ever. Earlier this year, the Social Security Administration purchased a rather large voice-system upgrade... that was nice. We are almost finished with the project. I am also working on a similar upgrade project with the U.S. Senate; I hope to have a purchase order by early next calendar year. Last July Christine accompanied me on my annual business trip to Italy to visit my US Navy customers. We visited Sicily, Naples, and Rome in the span of 8 days. We had such a wonderful time; Italy is my new favorite country.

**Allison Cayse (Salzburg '2000):** Hello Everyone, Today (June 10, 2016) is my last day at Global Custodian before moving on in my career. . . . I hope our paths will cross in the future. If you want to contact me privately I can be reached via email at [allison.cayse@gmail.com](mailto:allison.cayse@gmail.com).

**Greg Glenn (Salzburg '86)** Danke fuer die Nachricht Dr. Thomas. Ich werde gerne der Familie von Frau Kaiser schreiben. Ich kann es kaum glauben, dass Frau Kaiser 66 Jahre alt war, als ich ihren Kunde war! Damals hat sie immer die beste Schnitzel mit Pommes frites gekocht. Ist Gasthof zum Loewnstern noch geoeffnet? Was macht jetzt Herr Winding? Arbeitet er noch beim Hotel Heffterhof? Eines Tages werde da ich mein altes Zimmer mieten! Ich folge "Heffterschloss" in Facebook! Viele Gruesse aus Philadelphia!

**Annie (Major) Urbanek (Salzburg '2000):** I am into my 2nd semester as a graduate student at OU - I can do everything online, which is what I have done so far. I'm enjoying this level of education/challenge...although, I must say, raising my boys and working along with this...it's been quite busy! I'm in Health Law now, which is outside my wheelhouse. I plan to come back to Athens for a good visit this summer.

**Deidra (Malott) Schneider (Salzburg '94):** I have some exciting news to share with you - the Army "Reisebüro" is sending us to Deutschland this summer! We are so excited. We will be living in Grafenwoehr which is in Bavaria, very close to the Czech Republic.

**Melissa Messersmith (Salzburg '98)** Herr Thomas, I am so sorry to hear this sad news [about Frau Kaiser's death]. I remember some excellent meals at Gasthof Löwenstern. Frau Kaiser was very sweet. If I remember correctly, we had our final group goodbye dinner there and you wrote the most wonderful poem for us. I am glad to hear you and Frau Thomas still travel and are doing well. I am also well. Hopefully I will taking an international program management job with a company in Ohio sometime in June. I may finally get that elusive job I have been seeking most of my career and get to travel. Perhaps one day again we can meet in Austria! Thank you for always staying in touch.

**Reed Miller (Salzburg '95):** We are still in Budapest and are liking it more the longer we stay. While the language is still a huge barrier, we are becoming more familiar and getting to know things better which always makes a place feel more like home. I'm teaching this year in the high school, and it is going well. This is actually the first time that Leigh and I have both been working full time since Oliver was born, so while the new job has not been a hard adjustment, the two working parent family life has been. Whew -- we're tired. You will be happy to know that my German skills still come in handy. We were recently in Austria and it was wonderful to be able to speak to people and get pretty much anything I wanted without having to resort to pointing and hand signals. We hope to live in a German speaking country again, but we'll see what happens.

**Mike Socotch (Salzburg '79)** recently returned to Salzburg for the first time in 30 years. He writes that "the visit brought back warm memories of our trip in '79. . . .For me, [that trip] was a great experience and broadened my views of the world ... ." Mike lives in Connecticut with his family, and is a corporate commodities manager for Benjamin Moore Paint.

**Chris Wyatt (German Minor '89):** Chris is a Colonel in the US Army. After several assignments in Germany and Africa, he is currently Director of African Studies, US Army War College, Carlisle PA.

**Debbie McCorkle (BA French 84; France '82)** received the Claes Nobel Educator of Distinction award from the National Society of High School Scholars. McCorkle was nominated for the award by student Amber Wilson. A student member of the organization can nominate a teacher who has made a "significant contribution to their academic career." The award is given to teachers who are "outstanding role models and exemplary practitioners who have made a lasting difference in a student's life by encouraging them to strive for excellence" in and out of the classroom, according to the awards website. McCorkle said the best part of receiving the award is knowing that her work does make a difference, especially to students like Wilson. "It's very very touching, it really makes you understand the impact you have," McCorkle said.

