

THE  
**WESTCHESTER**



**GUARDIAN**

PRESORTED  
STANDARD  
PERMIT #3036  
WHITE PLAINS NY

Vol. IV NO XLXXIII

*Westchester's Most Influential Weekly*

Thursday, October 14, 2010

# When Hiring Freezes Don't Actually Work

## Westchester Community College

[www.westchesterguardian.com](http://www.westchesterguardian.com)



## TRAVEL

# Willkommen, Bienvenue, Welcome

By Barbara Barton Sloane



*A remnant of the Berlin Wall*

**Berlin** has had a more wrenching history than most cities on earth. No European city in recent times has changed as much, in the process transforming itself from a divided geopolitical anomaly into a modern mainstream capital and undergoing a major overhaul at every level. Old landmarks have been renovated, new ones acquired and others wiped out altogether, including what was once the most famous Berlin landmark of them all, the Wall. It was a divided city during the Cold War when Soviet and American tanks faced off at Checkpoint Charlie and, finally, the biggest historical moment of all – in 1989 the **Berlin Wall** fell. Out of such chaos has grown a city that is adaptable in the extreme. Its waves of immigrants, expats and creatives ensure that tolerance is its greatest value.

Is there anything left of the Wall?, the first question many visitors ask. The answer is not much. A short section has been preserved and is in pristine condition. However, there is a stretch of the Wall called the **East Side Gallery**, the longest surviving section and the world's largest open-air gallery, showing the work of 118 artists from 21 countries. I stood gazing up at the artwork, some touching and evocative, some irreverent and some very much of the moment. No trip to Berlin would be complete without coming and paying homage to this most iconic site.

I flew to Germany on **Air Berlin**, the country's second largest airline. Preparing myself to arrive and immediately need a long, restful snooze, I was glad to find

that this was not the case and I hit the ground running. Why? With one of the newest fleets of any airline, my flight was superior in all ways. From the moment I boarded, I felt I was in good hands and would be well cared for. (I was). The food was inventive and quite good, the seats cozy, and the thick, plush comforter that I snuggled under was icing on the cake. No jet lag for me.

I checked into the **A&O Mitte Hotel**, budget-priced but with all the amenities necessary for a comfortable stay. The lobby was pretty and modern and my room had everything I needed, a reading light above the bed, fresh white bed linens, an ample desk, windows that opened wide to cool breezes, an Internet café and it included a TV! Annette Kuhner at the A&O Mitte was most helpful and efficient and made my stay particularly pleasant. Livening up the place: Robert, the handsome on-site Karaoke-man. He showed patience and forbearance as I struggled (and embarrassed myself) belting out "Rocky Mountain High." (Note to self: don't try that again!). My breakfast the next morning offered delectable rolls, a selection of cold cuts, cheese, juice and good, strong coffee. Oh, and *berliners!* (That's the German word for Danish pastry). Shall we now, finally, put to rest memories of the gaffe President Kennedy made when he visited this city and proclaimed "Ich Bin Ein Berliner?" Oh well, the crowd loved him anyway - loved him so much, in fact, that they've built, in his honor, the fascinating **Kennedy Museum**, a collection containing an impressive mix of personal items, historical documents and private and political photos which provide an insight into the continuing fascination of this family.

## Much To Do About...Everything!

I only had three days in Berlin but I tried to see as many of the not-to-be-missed sights as I could. The **Brandenburg Gate** is Berlin's signature icon and once marked the turbulent division of East and West Berlin. It now stands at the head of a pedestrian plaza just blocks from the German Parliament. This Neo-Classical structure, located in



*The Brandenburg Gate*

former East Berlin, stood watch over a divided city until the Wall came down. The Gate is reached by walking down one of Berlin's most famous streets, *Unter den Linden*, a grand boulevard lined with 18th century buildings restored after WWII.

From here various new landmarks catch the eye: the postmodern towers of **Potsdamer Platz**, the **Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe**, and Norman Foster's revamped **Reichstag** complete with a visitable glass cupola. A walk to the top is a must. What makes a visit to these landmarks vastly important is that they all lie along the line of the former Wall and, in one way or another, are intended to heal that wound of history and stitch the city back together. Other post-Wall additions to the landscape include the **Judisches Museum** in the hip Kreuzberg neighborhood – housed in a remarkable building by Daniel Libeskind, a whole slew of new embassies, and a huge new **Berlin Hauptbahnhof**, Europe's largest railway station.

Berlin has more art galleries than any other city in Europe and is a hot spot for rising artists. **Museum Island** is a UNESCO World Heritage site, Europe's largest connected museum area. There are five museums in this complex: The

Old National Gallery with ancient Greek and Roman artifacts, The Bode Museum containing a vast collection of sculptures, The Neues Museum with Egyptian works of art including the renowned sculpture of one of the most famous women in the world: Nefertiti, The Altes Museum, built by this city's greatest architect, Karl Friedrich Schinkel and The Pergamon Museum replete with Babylonian antiquities. Add to all of this culture the fact that Berlin's nightlife is akin to a religious rite and dining here offers a sumptuous smorgasbord of choices, what you've got is a new, scintillating, international city that begs to be discovered.

Berlin is beautiful, bustling, and brimming with things to see and do. It also happens to be just under an hour by fast train – **DB Bahn** – to another city that the *New York Times* has designated Number 10 in its list of "31 Places to go in 2010" – **Leipzig!**

A train from Berlin to Leipzig takes under an hour on the Fast Train and one has the thrill of arriving in its central station or Hauptbahnhof which underwent modernization in the mid-90s, making it one of the most modern railway stations anywhere. It contains a three-

*Continued on page 17*



## Travel

# Willkommen, Bienvenue, Welcome

*Continued from page 16*

storey shopping mall built in 1997 and houses about 140 stores and restaurants open almost around the clock.

## A Place of Limes

Back in the 7th-9th centuries, a group of Slavic settlers who venerated the lime tree founded Leipzig which means "Place of Limes." I can't promise you'll see many lime trees there today but you can count on being surrounded by innumerable green parks filled with stately trees, lush plantings and placid ponds filled with ducks and swans. We rode bikes through a park just across the street from our hotel and found it a very pleasant way to feel truly a part of the action.



creative years until his death. During this time, he wrote outstanding music such as the Christmas Oratorio and St. Matthew Passion as well as the Art of Fugue, Mass in B minor, many cantatas, and countless musical gems far too numerous to name.



One of my fondest experiences in Leipzig was attending an open-air picnic/concert put on by the Gewandhaus Orchestra. The sun was setting, turning the sky pink and gold as we spread blankets on the grass, the better to meet and chat with one's supine neighbors and share a glass of bubbly. The concert opened with the rousing "Kaiser Waltz"

by Johann Strauss, loud and lilting. We had to restrain ourselves from jumping up and whirling around on the grass but one adorable child named Yara, *ein schönes Mädchen aus Leipzig* (a pretty little Leipzig girl) did just that. She hopped and danced around our blanket like a tiny, blond woodland sprite, a perfect accessory to the lilting Strauss waltz!

That evening seemed to sum up in one happy bundle my entire travel experience...exciting, inviting, and above all, welcoming. To quote Gerd Harry Lybke, owner of the Eige + Art, one of the most influential galleries in Germany, "Leipzig is a town of students, musicians and artists. It has a history of welcoming strangers. In the middle of nowhere,

between Frankfurt and Prague, Leipzig was the marketplace where travelers met." He added, "The second time you come to Leipzig, you are considered one of us."

Photos by and courtesy of Michael Sloane / Michael Sloane Photography.

As Beauty/Fashion Editor Barbara Barton Sloane keeps us informed on the capricious and engaging fashion and beauty scene.

*Travel Editor Barbara Barton Sloane is constantly globe-hopping to share her unique experiences with our readers; from the exotic to the sublime. As Beauty/Fashion Editor she keeps us informed on the capricious and engaging fashion and beauty scene.*



*St. Thomas Boys Choir*

## Music, Music, Music

With musical roots that go back to the 13th century, in this city you feel the power of music everywhere – in the streets and squares, in concert halls and in the many authentic places where famous composers and musicians lived and worked. Among the many great names: Johann Sebastian Bach, Felix Mendelssohn, Clara and Robert Schumann, Richard Wagner and Gustav Mahler. A few other stunning bits of musicalia: the **St. Thomas Boys Choir** has a proud tradition of almost 800 years and the **Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra** is the oldest symphony orchestra in the world!

## Happy Birthday Herr Bach

The Bach Museum, renovated over the past two years, reopened this March for Bach's 325th birthday. At St. Thomas Church, Bach became the choirmaster and remained in this position for 27

## If you go to Berlin:

### Hotels for the Budget Conscious

A&O Berlin Mitte  
127-129 Kopenicker Str.  
[www.aohostels.com](http://www.aohostels.com)

A&O Berlin Friedrichshain  
73 Boxhagenere Str.  
[www.aohostels.com](http://www.aohostels.com)

### Luxury Hotels, Berlin

The Brandenburger Hof  
[www.brandenburger-hof.com](http://www.brandenburger-hof.com)

The Westin Grand  
[www.westingrandberlin.com](http://www.westingrandberlin.com)

The Grand Hyatt  
[www.Hyatt.com](http://www.Hyatt.com)

The Ritz Carlton  
[www.ritzcarlton.com](http://www.ritzcarlton.com)

### Restaurants

Fischers Fritz  
[www.fischersfritzberlin.com](http://www.fischersfritzberlin.com)

Vox  
[www.vox-restaurant.de](http://www.vox-restaurant.de)

Brasserie Desbrosses  
[www.desbrosses.de](http://www.desbrosses.de)

### Of Interest

The Kennedy Museum  
[www.thekennedys.de](http://www.thekennedys.de)

Berlin Tourism  
[www.visitBerlin.de](http://www.visitBerlin.de)

## If you go to Leipzig

### Hotel for the Budget Conscious

A&O Hotel Leipzig Hauptbahnhof  
2 Brandenburger Str.  
[www.aohostels.com](http://www.aohostels.com)

### Restaurant

Auerbachs Keller  
[www.auerbachs-keller-leipzig.de](http://www.auerbachs-keller-leipzig.de)

### Of Interest

St. Thomas Church  
[www.thomaskirche.de](http://www.thomaskirche.de)

Leipzig Tourism  
[www.ltm-leipzig.de](http://www.ltm-leipzig.de)

Air Berlin  
[www.airberlin.com](http://www.airberlin.com)