

# UC Berkeley

## UC Berkeley Previously Published Works

### Title

Bernhard Blümich: On the Occasion of His 70th Birthday

### Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/41261029>

### Journal

Applied Magnetic Resonance, 54(11-12)

### ISSN

0937-9347

### Authors

Augustine, Matthew

Blümler, Peter

Reimer, Jeffrey

### Publication Date

2023-12-01

### DOI

10.1007/s00723-023-01631-x

Peer reviewed

## **Bernhard Blümich: On the Occasion of His 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday**

It is often incumbent on editors of Festschriften to provide a technical or personal background on the honored scholar. In our case, Professor Bernhard Blümich has prepared a thought and soul-searching article (see page xxx) that is far more compelling than an analysis provided by us. Rather, the three of us detail below a few sentences about our engagement with the whole person of Bernhard Blümich.

Matt Augustine writes: Bernhard is scientist and naturalist wrapped into one. I spent many entertaining hours with Bernhard in the corner of Asilomar ENC poster sessions and on the top of a mountain, with pants drenched to the knees from post holing in deep snow, talking about hiking and learning about NMR physics. It was not until recently, however, that I was fortunate enough to collaborate with him on a recent project involving three site chemical exchange. True to form, the project was born from our conversations, including a visit to his home in Aachen, a bike ride to Belgium (unlike Eichi Fukushima, I was not courageous enough to take Bernhard up on his offer for an extended ride on his tandem bike), and a lot of tic-tac-toe drawings describing two-dimensional particle translation. Neither of us were experts in molecular dynamics simulations, so we had to learn it all as we went along. By the end of our understanding process and ultimate paper writing, Bernhard had purchased a microscope, nanoparticles, and molecular imaging hardware so that he could measure the phenomena himself at his home in Aachen! I aspire to capture his energy and enthusiasm for understanding science and NMR and I hope to continue a fruitful, enjoyable, and productive relationship with him well into the distant future. During our conversations I have discovered that my own ideas have either been tried or pondered by Bernhard at some point in his life.

Jeff Reimer muses: I first met Bernhard at a Rocky Mountain Conference early this decade by approaching him with a request: my ostensible sabbatical host in Germany had suddenly retired, leaving me with plans to move my family to Germany with no academic partner. Not only did Bernhard offer to host me, but he also guided me through the many intricacies of German academic and social cultures and provided me the opportunity to teach a class at RWTH to German students, many of whom are colleagues to this day. Moreover, Bernhard was again the most generous and thoughtful host for my Humboldt Research Award in 2015-16 where I had the chance to meet him for coffee and discuss the broad aspects of MR, from RASERs to internal field gradients in MOFs. During that year Bernhard opened his lab to a postdoc (Alex Forse) and a PhD student (Velencia Witherspoon) from my group in California. Both are now professors, and it is without doubt that their intellectual and scholarly success is in part due to the time and generous intellectual engagement from Bernhard. Like Matt, though, I cannot help but cherish the wilderness experiences with Bernhard and his wife Joanie: from Austrian alps to woodland marshes, from cycling around lakes to the Fall colors in the mountains of New York. I close by noting that the measure of a person, some say, is their ability to connect with those that are very different. Here Bernhard stands out, for it his soulful engagement with my special needs child that strongly and profoundly brought about a life-long impact: Bernhard's long conversations with my 13-year-old about German history, and his own family history, were so engaging that my child would ultimately study history in college, and is now a high school history teacher in California. For Bernhard, the personal is the universal in both science and life.

Peter Blümmler remembers: My first encounter with Bernhard was mediated by Franz Fujara who was my tutor during my studies in physical chemistry. Franz knew that Bernhard was looking for students to start research on spatially resolved NMR at the MPI for Polymer Research under the auspices of H. W. Spiess. So, I made an appointment with Bernhard, and we quickly came to a mutual understanding and agreement that I will do my diploma thesis with him on NMR imaging of polymers. I just recall the moment I was going to leave, and he asked me for my full name, after I clearly pronounced my last name, we both burst out laughing... this was birth of the infamous “Blues brothers in NMR”<sup>1</sup> and an extremely intense and fruitful collaboration for the next decade. During this time, I often had the feeling that Bernhard was something like my second cerebral hemisphere. We often simultaneously shared ideas which just needed a quick conversation to materialize on paper. I still have several notebooks from that time, which are just entitled “ideas”. However, most of time we had to find out that somebody else already did it. But for me as a young chemist discussing mainly physics with an experienced Privatdozent (Bernhard’s official title at this time) was extremely exciting, stimulating and encouraging. Without a doubt Bernhard was THE stimulus that created the necessary self-confidence that I might be able to become a scientist. He got me interested and convinced me for an academic career and incredibly promoted me. He certainly had a tremendous impact on my life and career. His knowledge and lateral thinking shaped me as a scientist, his enthusiasm kept me going, and his humor and personality made us lifelong friends. Although I have no intentions to write my biography, but if, Bernhard certainly would be the main subject of at least two chapters!

Thanks Elwood! Yours sincerely, Jake.

In preparing this Festschrift it has been our honor to collect these manuscripts from Bernhard’s friends and colleagues and present them to Bernhard, and the entire NMR community, in the form of a birthday present. Every point of this review process brought smiles to our faces recalling all of the good times spent learning and doing good science with our cherished colleague Bernhard Blümich.

Matthew Augustine

UC Davis, USA

maugust@ucdavis.edu

Peter Blümmler

Johannes Gutenberg-University Mainz, Germany

bluemler@uni-mainz.de

Jeffrey Reimer

---

<sup>1</sup> I. Armstrong-Smith „A *briefcase full of NMR*“, *The Analytical Scientist* **315** (26) (2015) 24-31.

UC Berkeley, USA  
reimer@berkeley.edu