

# THE TAMPA TRIBUNE

## COMMENTARY

### Berlin Wall Is Living History Brought To Bay Area

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I applaud Jay Goulde and the Outdoor Arts Foundation for their vision in acquiring sections of the Berlin Wall and their commitment to education, history and bringing to life a National Cold War Memorial.

November 2009 is the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. Why talk of this now and what is the relevance?

This Berlin Wall is the quintessential symbol of the "Cold War." An entire generation of Americans is naive to both the history and significance of the Cold War and its effects on the "baby boomer" and "X" generations.

The 28 years that the Berlin Wall separated East and West Germany has left an indelible mark on world history. For those alive during its existence, so many images are permanently ingrained in our minds: President Truman's airlift to keep 1.2 million free Berliners alive for over a year during the blockade; the stories of heroic East Berliners building tunnels to escape, John F. Kennedy's "Ich bin ein Berliner" speech in 1961; and of course, Ronald Reagan's "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall" speech in 1987. These and other moments in history must never be forgotten.

Today, our next generation is fighting and dying for liberty and democracy in the Middle East and many of these young men and women were born after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Knowing and understanding the Cold War is to know and understand the modern world.

Byproducts of the Cold War included such events as the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the construction of the Berlin Wall, the Soviet-Afghan War, the Cuban Missile Crisis and even the 1973 oil crisis. It seems now as if these events are merely pages in history, with our youth today having very little understanding of their significance.

Using art as a vehicle to educate is a tried and true method. Using original wall sections for a public monument to the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Cold War is the right thing, and now is the right time. It is said that if we forget our history we are likely to repeat it. The Outdoor Arts Foundation has a wonderful reputation for bringing art-in-public places projects to Tampa Bay. From fiberglass turtles and manatees to artistically designed dog houses, chairs and butterflies, all of Tampa Bay has benefited from the pleasantries of their artistic endeavors. All without government dollars or taxpayer money.

Now, our local celebrity and his foundation will launch itself to a national if not global stature, bringing Tampa Bay along if we have the will to support them.

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