

American Women's Club of Hamburg, e.V.

CURRENTS

Fall/Winter 2018 Vol. 34, No. 04

www.awchamburg.org



HOLIDAYS

President's Message



Best wishes for a happy and safe holiday, from our family to yours!

Hello Everyone,

I'd like to wish you all a very happy and safe holiday season! It's the time of year when we are all busy with gifts, parties, family, friends and travel. I sincerely hope each of us can find some time to relax and enjoy some holiday cheer! For my family, the holiday season has always been about traveling across the US to visit extended family and friends.

This year, we'll drive from Austin, through Tulsa, Memphis, Nashville, Raleigh and – finally – end our trip in Providence. We love to travel by car and

our annual cross-country road trip has become a family tradition that we cherish.

For a myriad of reasons, my husband and I have found the holiday season to be a great time to take an extended road trip. The rural roads in the US are usually empty and a little snow (or ice!) only makes the landscapes more beautiful. Holiday cheer is easy to find on the highway. Our fellow travelers are almost always happy and many of their cars are decorated with bows, reindeer antlers and tinsel.

To pass the time, we tune in to local public radio stations, which usually play a combination of local music and holiday standards. We also love to listen to local call-in talk shows, which give us a feel for some of the "hot topics" across the country. When we lose all radio signals (yes, that still happens!), we queue up a book on tape or podcast. We always seek out unique local restaurants, stay in small motels and make time for kitschy tourist attractions. Short side trips – like visiting the "Blarney Stone" in Shamrock, TX, the Meteor Crater Museum in Winslow, AZ and the Unclaimed Luggage Center somewhere in the middle of Alabama – have made some of our best holiday memories.

For my family, our annual road trips are the perfect way to reconnect, relax, and enjoy the vibrant local cultures we encounter along the way. Whether you are staying at home, traveling locally or making a more extended trip, I wish you all peace and joy this holiday season!

Happy Holidays!

Lyn Herr, AWCH President

Editor's Message

Holidays. A special and meaningful time for AWCH members in so many ways. Halloween parties start the season, followed more quickly than one expects by Thanksgiving, Chanukah, Christmas..... and all before the New Year begins. A special thanks to our very active board members who have "pulled out all the stops" to organize some incredible events this season. But also a big thank-you to the many who have shared your holiday traditions and thoughts, as we have learned to embrace and adapt to new customs.

I hope you all find the time to sit back and enjoy this issue of *Currents*. See what we've been doing during the holidays. Plan a visit to the theater, a museum, or a nearby *Kino*. Get inspired to read a book or see an opera. Think of someone eligible for a FAWCO Education Award. Or find the time for a *Glühwein* at one of the many Christmas Markets in or out of

town. And after all that celebrating and feasting—maybe it is time to read Karen's ideas on fashion and minimalism.



This issue is dedicated to the loyal and fantastic crew of *Currents* proofreaders! Thank you so much for your support over the year!

Carol Harbers, Editor-in-Chief

Currents Magazine

© 2018 American Women's Club of Hamburg e.V.
 Postfach 13 04 05, 20104 Hamburg
 Website: <http://www.awchamburg.org>

Bank Information:

American Women's Club of Hamburg
 Sparda Bank Hamburg e.V.
 IBAN: DE75 2069 0500 0000 9117 71
 BIC: GENODEF1S11

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Halloween at the US Consulate General



Comments from the partygoer's



The Halloween party was really fun. We played games, went through the haunted house, drank something and had a great time with our families. The food was very yummy and I had fun spending time with my family and meeting new people. I like American rituals and I find them funny and nice. —Noah B. (age 12)

Well, where do I start? I have decided to focus on the “behind the scenes” of this Halloween event. I was amazed by the support, which was displayed on so many levels. There were a few “pre-party” gatherings where many members produced the Halloween creations. It was a treat to see how creative we all could be. The lovely designs and decorations were made over laughter, exchanging stories and not to forget the yummy food.

The day before the event, I was pleasantly surprised to see that so many of you had gone out of your way to make this event happen for our families and children. I had the opportunity to meet some new members and catch up with a few others. I left that afternoon feeling like my community had grown which was special.

The fact that we could have a Halloween party at the US consulate was something I feel lucky to have experienced. I am thankful to have met the U.S. Consulate General and his family. Everyone felt their hospitality and openness.

Mainly what left me touched by this event were the helpers, some whose children are all but grown and out of the house and others from the local schools in Hamburg. They all got dressed up, took our kids on tours through the haunted house, brought decorations from their homes, baked some delicious food and had a variety of games to play, so our children could experience what Halloween is all about! They created moments for all of the children who attended the Halloween party. I just wanted to take this moment and thank all of you for all that you do! I became a proud member of the AWCH after seeing what the amazing woman in Hamburg can accomplish.

—Jennifer L.



I had a great time. Everyone was really nice to us and I felt very welcomed. I also felt that American vibe which I like so much. It is just nice doing something different for Halloween and getting to know some new people. I also enjoyed spending time with the smaller kids and playing the grand piano!

—Mira (age 14)

This year's AWCH Halloween party was a fantastic event, which my family thoroughly enjoyed. The party was graciously hosted at the American Consulate on the Alster by Kathrin and Rick Yoneoka (aka a gory, bloody doctor and Evil Knieval) on Tuesday, October 30. My daughters, Eloise (8) and Poppy (4), loved the haunted house, which Shelly S. and her team set up in the consulate's basement, and decorated with incredible spooky concoctions. The girls loved being led through the different themed rooms of the haunted house by the guides, and it took me two visits through the basement to realize that the witch 'Consulata' was none other than our very own Holly T. But the highlight of the evening for the Schnelle family was when the girls and my husband Wolfram were awarded the best scary group costume for their trio of mummies. Eloise in particular was thrilled, especially after being mortified by her father staying 'in character' the entire ride to the party on the Number 4 bus! I guess she learned the valuable (!) lesson that sometimes your parents totally humiliate you in public by acting like a mummy and in the end you go home with a trophy...? Many thanks to Charis H. and her team for organizing such a fun event—we're already looking forward to next year's party!!

—Diana P.S.



AWCH Family Thanksgiving

When entering the room of the DESY Bistro, you enter a splendid, festive atmosphere that promises a wonderful evening. Children run around with smiling faces, families greet each other warmly and wish a happy Thanksgiving. Gradually, everyone arrives, the buffet fills with delicacies and the mood is cheerful. And then it starts. The charming Teresa, who is responsible for events at the AWCH, leads through the evening and welcomes everyone. The official part of the evening will be opened with speeches from Vice President Suzana, as well as Honorary President Kathrin and her husband Rick,

The Consul General of the United States of America. This Thanksgiving is unfortunately the last festival here in Hamburg for them. After three years, they move on. With their speeches they remind of what Thanksgiving is all about: being grateful. It appears that Thanksgiving is the favorite feast of most. There are no gifts, you are happy to be together. No matter where you come from, no matter who you are. And there was another reason to celebrate: 14-year-old Riley celebrates his birthday on this day and was congratulated by everyone.



Thanksgiving, a day for giving thanks. And what better day to give to a charity that has done so much for other charities. Hamburg has its fair share of people in need, and luckily many organizations to help them: soup kitchens, women's shelters, homeless shelters, emergency shelters, cafés for mothers, parent schools, drug programs, etc.—the list is long. In 1994 an ambitious and insightful woman, Annemarie Dose, recognized a unique opportunity to stop the needless waste of food by stores, restaurants, and other institutions by bringing the food to where it is needed. The Hamburger Tafel, e.V. is born and continues to grow. The logistics are overwhelming, but so is the demand. Currently, Hamburger Tafel delivers food to over 90 social institutions north of the Elbe. Thank you, ladies, for supporting this endeavor through donations and raffle tickets.



Wonderful people, amazing atmosphere, fantastic food



Finally the turkeys are served and the lush, delicious Thanksgiving buffet is opened.

After enjoying the food - Karen hosted this year's raffles. Again generous prizes were donated this year. A total of € 445 came together, donated to the Hamburger Tafel e.V. With this money, needy people are supplied with basic food such as flour, oil, because these foods have a particularly long shelflife and are rarely donated by supermarkets.

At this point a big thank you to all, who made this wonderful evening possible. Teresa for coordinating all helpers, Carol S., Tracy for coordinating those fantastic turkeys, Charis, Karen and all helpers before, during and after dinner. We are already looking forward to the next year. —Dorothee H.)





Canvas and Wine Events at Studio 42

What could be more entertaining than a wine and ainting/handicraft party to unleash your inner artist?

It was a fun, social setting with an American artist to guide us step-by-step in replicating the featured painting or sharing ideas for creating ornaments and trees. The atmosphere was very comfortable and welcoming with excellent music being played in the background. We were able to exchange stories about our creativity levels and life in Hamburg, get to know other members, as well as share a night out with those who have become not only members, but also friends. By the end of the two evenings, we had reproduced 14 various interpretations of our Southwest cactus garden and at least two-dozen cards ready to be mailed.



On two different Friday evenings at the beginning of November and December, two groups of our AWCH members gathered at Studio 42 to discover their hidden talents. The first event centered on a Southwest cactus garden. Once the wine bottles were

opened and the paint was placed on the palettes, the creative juices started flowing—oh, the joy of painting à la Bob Ross. It did not matter whether we created a frame-worthy masterpiece or a tacky reproduction of the image given, the giggles and laughs opened up the inner child in us all.

On the second evening, also a Holiday Party for the Arts Groups, our *Basteln* (handicraft) skills were in high demand. Confronted with colored paper, glitter, yarn, colored pencils, stickers, stamps, scissors and glues, the challenged group of 11 created wonderful Holiday cards that will surely be received with joy.

Studio 42 is definitely a space that we will come back to in the future to continue our creative journey.



Studio 42 is owned and operated by Shelley H. Gutknecht-Stöhr. She and her team offer a wide variety of events and ongoing classes for both adults and children in English. Some of the offered events include Felted Pot Holders, Photography Workshops/Tours, Stamping, Figure Drawing and Macramé, to name a few. (J. Lane)

Studio 42
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Art Club News - Art Club News - Art Club News - Art Club News

Our long time club member Emilia J. was among the artists exhibiting at the Hamburg University Medical Center annual art show in Eppendorf. Carol B. and I attended the official opening (*Vernissage*) in mid-October. Exhibitors are talented employees of the UKE, including doctors and professors. Two floors of the UKE-ART13 were jam-packed with interested viewers, with the artists present to answer questions.

The young and exquisite award-winning pianist, Berlin-born German-Bolivian talent, Adriana von Franqué, began with the deliciously complex *Black Earth* by the Turkish composer Fazil Say, which included plucking the piano strings, giving the composition a definitive Turkish flair. This, despite having cut her finger that very day! Who says art is not a painful process?



Emilia J.'s paintings also stood out among her colleagues; she was one of the few working with the idea of 'process'. Four large acrylic and oil canvasses along with a creative journal were inspirations from a piano concert that featured the works of Frédéric Chopin. Included were two headsets so that viewers could also listen to the initial musical inspirations, in essence Emilia was 'painting' the music. —Shelly S.



The Christmas Tree

by WangDi Schadendorf

Written in 100 A.D. or so, the Roman historian Cornelius Tacitus described the land of the Germans in his *Germania* like this:

The country in general, while varying some what in character, either bristles with woods or festers with swamps. It is wetter where it faces Gaul (France), windier where it faces Noricum Austria) and Pannonia (Hungary). Though fertile in grain crops, it is unkind to fruit trees. It is rich in flocks, but they are for the most part undersized. Even the cattle lack the splendid bro that are their natural glory.

These swampy woods, however, played a role in the historical milestone of the Battle in the Teutoburg Forest in 9 A.D. that stopped the advancing Roman army from occupying Germany east of the Rhine River, which may help explain the deeply rooted German fascination with its mystical forest. For example, the Grimm Brothers set the stage for the well-known fairy tales of *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Hansel and Gretel* and *Town Musicians of Bremen* in the dark, sometimes gloomy, forest. It is also in the forest that the handsome Prince Tamino in Mozart's *The Magic Flute* conquers his trials and tribulations towards his enlightenment. With the Christmas holidays looming on the horizon, one cannot help but think that the Christmas tree tradition originated in Germany because of this fascination.

According to www.history.com, "it is a widely held belief that Martin Luther, the 16th-century Protestant reformer, first added lighted candles to a tree. Walking toward his home one winter evening, composing a sermon, he was awed by the brilliance of stars twinkling amidst evergreens. To recapture the



scene for his family, he erected a tree in the main room and wired its branches with lighted candles."



Tree Poem: Author unknown, graphics melonheadzClipArt (<https://www.etsy.com/shop/MelonheadzClipArt>).

Suffice to say that Luther's idea of imitating nature's effect on a tree helped establish the German tradition of Christmas tree decoration. It also planted the seed for a business model almost 500 years later.

More than 50% of German households still prefer a real Christmas tree; more precisely, a perfect real Christmas tree. Which implies the tree should be pyramid shaped, with full and dense branches reaching to the bottom of the tree. To meet these increasingly exacting consumer standards, "wild-grown" trees from the forest were not good enough anymore and special Christmas tree plantations were established in Schleswig-Holstein around 1981. Approximately 90% of Christmas trees today are Nordmann Firs as their full needles are soft, dense and of a lush, dark-green colour.

The production of a modern Christmas tree has become complex and efficient. First, tree nurseries, which are concentrated in Kreis Pinneberg adjacent to Hamburg, source the expensive Nordmann Fir seeds from their natural range in the high Caucasus mountains of Georgia, sow and grow them for three years until the seedlings reach 15-20 cm in height. These seedlings are then shipped to special Christmas tree growers, mostly located in the eastern half of Schleswig-Holstein with its conducive climate moderated by the Baltic Sea and sand soils. Once the seedlings have been planted, it takes between 8 to 10 years until they are ready for harvest. Certain horticultural practices are imperative

during this time to ensure the form and quality of a perfect Christmas tree. For example, weed control is necessary to prevent excessive weed growth potentially shading off the needles. Each year in the spring, the delicate newly grown leaders have to be protected from birds perching and breaking them. Regularly shearing and snipping to shorten the branches is also an important step to shape the trees into a dense and perfect pyramid. Christmas tree production is a labour-intensive and slow process.

A quality Christmas tree should not only have the perfect shape, looking full and healthy, it should also be as fresh as possible, keeping its needles for a long time. Buy local is the best advice here as they have been harvested recently and are thus fresh. Once the harvested trees reach the household, they should be acclimatized slowly from outdoor to indoors. Cutting a disc off the base of the trunk and keeping the bottom in wet sand or water also help prevent them from shedding the needles prematurely. With all this in mind, enjoy your Christmas tree hunt this year! Best of the season and Merry Christmas!



Have Yourself a Merry Retro Christmas

by Pat Frickey

My family takes a step back in time every December to replicate the typical 1950's American Christmas tree. If you are a fan of the nostalgic, near cult film *A Christmas Story*, you will see an almost identical tree in Ralphie's living room though his Christmas was a decade earlier. Things didn't change so rapidly in those days.

Essential are the strings of colorful lights framed by aluminum reflectors. The challenge in Germany is that these strings of American 110 volt lights cannot just be plugged into the 220 volt German socket. We have been proud owners of two 1500 watt voltage transformers, which are quite massive and have had to be hidden behind the Christmas tree. It is a miracle that the strings of lights have survived at all. One year we forgot the transformer altogether, and for about five minutes we were staring in wonder at a very ethereal tree. Two years ago our first transformer had broken, and we didn't even notice until the lights started popping like popcorn. Tragically we lost about six bubble lights. All was not lost. Luckily we were able to find bubble lights in the States the next summer, thanks to something only thought of as a mighty river in the 1950's..... Amazon.

Ah bubble lights. I guess that is the main reason we don't switch over to the German lights. These gaudy candle-shaped bulbs of yesteryear, which boil up their colorful liquid, delight every child and vintage American. These tasteless remnants of our

childhood memories will never be available here. They are too garish for a nation which basically loves a minimalist Christmas tree adorned with simple candles or white lights. A shame, really.

I can't wait until this Christmas to watch when my three-year-old grandson's eyes light up when he spies the Christmas tree. Did I mention it will be loaded down as usual with tons of tinsel (recycled every year) and about a hundred colorful ornaments? I predict he won't even notice those decorations. It's the bubble lights which will fascinate him most.



Not So Traditional

by Mary Wienke



I don't think people who want to have children consider that it might not be possible. Women often use birth control to prevent pregnancy. Some women eat right, quit alcohol, and take vitamins to enhance chances of becoming pregnant. There are women who plan exactly the right time to have a baby and those who choose not to have children. But for the most part, women don't plan for infertility. After a decade of being told that I could have a career and bear children later in life, it never ever crossed my mind that I would not have a child. My surprise and heartbreak was that I could not.

I come from good stock, or so I thought, given that I have three sisters and a brother and all of them have children. And their children have children. And now even some of their children's children have children! My 89-year-old mother boasts five children, ten grandchildren, nineteen great-grandchildren and three great-great grandchildren (to date). So without belaboring the point that I am the only female in four generations not to have a child due to unexplainable infertility, this fact of my life has unexpected consequences. How do you spend the holidays without your own children? Many exhausted parents are probably thinking: Bali, baby! They imagine sitting in a hot tub, tossing back designer cocktails while the sun sets, like in a Club Med commercial.

But the reality is much different. Most of us childless folks join in celebrations of other family members or friends and their children. For many years, before I moved to Germany, Christmas Eve was always at the largest house. My siblings brought their families and after a huge meal of ham, turkey, and all the *fixin's*, the boisterous crowd would gather around the Christmas tree for a rollicking ripping

open the presents frenzy, made much more frenetic due to apple pie and ice cream, *csöröge* (homemade Hungarian donuts), chocolates galore or in a word: sugar. Ten kids under the age of 12 can destroy packaging faster than a squirrel cracks a hazelnut (see YouTube: red squirrel opens and eats hazelnut). For years I watched as my nieces and nephews looked excited, disappointed or openly perplexed at gifts that I had so carefully selected for their appropriate age group. After moving to Germany, my family Christmas Eve was much smaller. My two German/American nephews, trending German, used scissors to cut the tape on each present, careful not to rip the wrapping paper. Said paper was nicely folded, piled up, and later recycled. They actually looked at each gift, admired by all, and only then would the next gift be carefully, maddeningly sliced open. After several long sessions of slow motion unwrappings on Christmas Eve, nodding off from my fourth or fifth glass of Sekt, I suggested to my German husband that we start our own Christmas Eve tradition.



Our tradition begins with a trip to the downtown Karstadt store deli counter on the morning of Christmas Eve to buy dinner. This is because I have helped prepare huge Christmas dinners from the time I could roll a *ciga* noodle (Hungarian soup noodle), about age two. Now that I have a choice, I do not want to work at Christmas. We indulge in pâtés, cheeses, sliced meats, marinated vegetables, olives, shrimp cocktail, smoked duck breast, fresh rolls and a crusty loaf of French bread. We have fresh butter, cold pressed olive oil, cream cheese, crackers, fruits, Key Lime Pie, Paul

Hévin truffles, Godiva chocolate, Laurent Perrier champagne, various wines and Cognac. My cat Astra is particularly fond of the wild deer pâté, which she detects as soon as I open the bag holding the tissue wrapped slice. Astra appetizer treats are allowed or else laying out the grand buffet would be



a challenge to complete without severe leg wounds. After our living room table is set, as Christmas carols play and the tree lights twinkle, we have a quiet, romantic champagne toast followed by Facetime with my mom to wish everyone gathered in the largest family house in Florida a very Merry Christmas. It's not Bali, but even being footloose and fancy free as my mom likes to tell us, there is still no place like home for the holidays!

Christmas at the McMoedes

by Tracy McGhee Moede

There are a few things I do differently now that I "own the Christmas show" in our home and want to combine traditions from two cultures for the holidays.

I am like most of you in that I carry on some of the traditions that I learned from growing up in my parents' home. Our tree (then and now) has homemade ornaments, colored lights, and an angel on the top. Our Advents calendar has pictures you can turn, like the one my mom had hanging in our house in Maryland. We go to church at 11 p.m. for the Christmas Eve service. Now I stand next to my husband and girls instead of my brother and sister. And even though we are in Germany, the four of us open our presents in our jammies on the morning of the 25th.

We don't eat ham or turkey on the 25th, but the traditional *Beizfleisch* served over spaghetti noodles Dietmar had at Christmas growing up. In addition to the electric colored lights, our tree also has candles which do get lit! When the girls were little, we attended a *Weihnachtsmärchen* (Christmas fairy tale) every year. And Dietmar insists the girls still

get a candy Advents calendar.

One thing I don't do is the massive Christmas card sending that my parents did. Germans aren't that greeting card crazy as Americans are and the cost of purchasing and mailing that many is unreasonable. I found a lovely website www.wunderkarten.de that sells cards for every occasion, but especially nice ones for Christmas. There are regular folded cards and postcards with the option of uploading photos. I order 15-20 postcards and put the "McMoede's Top Ten of 201x" list on the back. Writing that list 15+ times is enough to give anyone writer's cramp, so I print it on a large DIN A4 label, cut it down to size and stick it to the back. Of course, it now has to go in an envelope, but with under 20 cards it doesn't cost a small fortune. Everyone other than close family in the United States gets a Facebook Christmas Message. The times they are a changin'.



Evolving Christmas Traditions

by Carol Harbers

"A proper Christmas tree should have a snake in it," starts Mark Forsyth's second chapter in *A Christmas Cornucopia: The hidden stories behind our Yuletide traditions*. No one questions that the Christmas tree tradition started in Germany and was made popular in England through Queen Victoria, with both her mother, Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, and husband, Prince Albert von Coburg-Sachsen & Gotha, coming from Germany. The jump over to America was a given. But few realize that its true origins were in the Middle Ages as a "Paradise Tree", where it stood center stage in "mystery plays" enacted by guilders at various churches in northwestern Germany and northern

France on December 24—the name day of Adam and Eve. It was no coincidence that this holy day directly preceded the Christmas celebration—the original sin of Adam (and Eve) was redeemed by Jesus (and Mary). The Reformation ended the church plays—but not the tree tradition. Thus not surprisingly one still finds real apples on Christmas trees here in the north and, at least in my tree, a snake.



The Ultimate List: The Eight Best Christmas Movies

by Karen Eve O'Shaughnessy



December is the time to get all cozy, eat Lebkuchen and cookies, and have your best eggnog substitute: Glühwein. There is no better way than to celebrate those goodies with a cuddly movie session, and what better way to overcome any kind of home sickness!? Here are the best Christmas movies ever: It's a fact. Everybody says so. Anything else is fake news.

1. Muppets Family Christmas

This is my personal favorite. The 80's classic served as my portal to the American world during my childhood in Europe, when I watched it on the VHS my parents had recorded the last Christmas my family spent in the US with all kinds of Christmas specials for kids (and was considered the holy grail among my sisters and I). I still watch the Muppet's Family Classic on YouTube on repeat from Black Friday to Christmas Day every year. In my eyes, no other holiday movie is able to grasp the holiday sentiment nor the heartwarming fuzzy feeling as much as this timeless classic. Children will love the 45 minutes filled with fabulous songs to sing along to, while the grown-ups can enjoy the clever jokes; with all their favorite characters from Kermit and his Muppet Gang, the Sesame Street crew—even the Fraggle Rock guys are on Board! Jim Henson at his best.

2. Lampoons Christmas Vacation

You know nothing, if you haven't seen this cinematic masterpiece from 1984. Chevy Chase taught us the essential rules you need to know for any real holiday season:

- Having your eggnog out of Moose glasses is a must.
- Bigger, brighter, awesome lights.
- Only the biggest tree is the right tree
- Mele Kalikimaka is the thing to say on a bright Hawaiian Christmas Day...
- Family is everything

3. How the Grinch stole Christmas

He's a mean one, Mister Grinch... Though there have been countless new versions, and 2018 is bringing out another one as well, the classic 1966 cartoon of Dr. Seuss' children's rhyme will always be in my heart (two sizes too small or not) and recorded on that very VHS I mentioned earlier. The original—the legend- the real thing.

4. Scrooged

Charles Dickens would be proud to see how Bill Murray as Francis Xavier Cross is a brilliant Christmas miser, trying to staple antlers to the heads of mice for the big live TV production. Murray is probably the best Scrooge in film history, no exaggeration! Yet another Christmas Classic that makes me think: The '80's might have been the best Christmas decade.

5. Die Hard I-III

Legendary bad-ass John McLane (Bruce Willis) in Nakatomi Tower, against the ultimate German bad-guy Hans Gruber (Alan Rickman). The most epic showdown in movie history...well Ok, at least in '80's movie history. John McLane is such a magnificent holiday genius, that even when the movie plots are set in summer in a heat-wave-struck New York City, we still regard him as our Christmas angel. No-one can bring more Christmas spirit to you than a roughed-up Bruce Willis in a dirty sweaty and bloody white tank top, pierced with shot wounds and glass stuck in his feet or with Nickels in his hands trying to find out who the 21st president was. Ho-Ho-Ho McLane!

6. The Long Kiss Goodnight

Samantha (Geena Davis), devoted mother and wife finds out she is a tough cookie – a real killing machine. This is pre-Kill Bill (Tarantino), and when this movie first came out in 1996, Davis was still top! Though the storyline might not be the most convincing, and we have certainly watched better movies, this film is a personal must-see in my family (my mom likes the thrills of blood and justice served violently), and so Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without this The Bourne Identity goes Kill Bill killing spree.

7. Elf

Unfortunately, I was introduced to this movie only later on in life. My childhood could have been so much happier already a lot sooner.

Buddy (Will Ferrell) accidentally ends up in Santa's sack when he is a baby and grows up in the North Pole as one of the elves. When his gigantic-like size, compared to the other elves, makes it increasingly more difficult to keep up with his elf tasks, he finds out that his real human father is on the naughty list due to his selfishness. He decides to help his father regain the Christmas spirit and travels to the human world, where life isn't easy for an elf. This

Scrooge story pimped with more laughter, and a fun Will Ferrell will make this season a holly-jolly Christmas.

8. Home Alone

For the first 10 years of my life, the only French words I could speak were: Les incompetents. Kevin's sister, cousin or whoever she was, said that to poor little Kevin the night before they all left him behind. This movie is a must-see. The Christmas music, the tacky '80's decorations and the heart-warming Christmas spirit is what makes this blockbuster an evergreen of the holiday genre.



Our Christmas Reading Tradition

by Jenny Mather

When my children were tiny, their favourite Christmas book was Dick Bruna's *A Christmas Story*. We read it in December and January (and at other times throughout the year too) but always at bedtime on Christmas Eve. Dick Bruna, the Dutch writer and illustrator, is best known for his stories about Miffy the rabbit. His simple texts and child-like drawings are loved by very young children and mine were dedicated followers of Miffy's antics. We were delighted to find his version of the Christmas story because his drawings of Mary and Joseph and the baby, the shepherds and their sheep, the wise men on their camels and the choir of angels are as beautifully drawn as Miffy and her family.



After our move from England to Connecticut we had a whole new world of American writers to explore. My six year old discovered Laura Ingall Wilder's books and read to us about her pioneer Christmases in the long, bitter winters in North America. We also came across Tomie de Paula at our local library situated just off the picture-perfect village green. We added his *The Christmas Pageant* to our winter reading list. Mr de Paula collected antique quilts and used their geometric patterns to illustrate *Twelve Nights Before Christmas*, which gave us a glimpse into New England winters of long ago.

A book which we brought with us from the old country doesn't sound Christmassy at all. It is *The Tailor of Gloucester* written and illustrated by Beatrix Potter. The tailor lived "in the time of swords and periwigs" and he sewed for "gentlemen who wore embroidered waistcoats." The tailor was very poor but very skilled and he was asked to make a coat embroidered with roses and pansies for the Mayor of Gloucester who was getting married on Christmas Day morning. Miss Potter wove into her story the old superstition that animals are given the gift of speech and talk to each other during the night between Christmas Eve and Christmas morning. When the tailor fell ill and couldn't finish the coat, which was to make his fortune, the mice who scampered about his shop did the embroidery for him and sang as they sewed through the night.



Now Hamburg is our home but the children are grown and gone. They came to us last Christmas and we dug out the old holiday books for our grandchildren. On Christmas Eve, when they were clean and shiny after bath time and they had put out milk and mince pies for Father Christmas and plenty of carrots for his hungry reindeer, we carried on the tradition. First we read *The Christmas Pageant*, then *'Twas the Night Before Christmas* and finally *The Tailor of Gloucester*. Soon it was time for bed and the happy anticipation of a wonderful tomorrow for us all.

Heimweh

Flew the coop in 2000. Jokingly sought asylum in the Netherlands. No hiding my light under a Bush.hell. Boy, was I wrong. A tisket, a tasket, an orange coconut in my basket.

Things back home feel like they've gotten worse. So bad, that my homesickness (which rears its ugly head at the most inopportune moments—looking for graham crackers for key lime pie, trying to explain the joy of a 2-hour Target run, or why I YouTube Ellen at least once a week to keep my kindness quotient high), puzzles even me.

Gifted my parents with an empty nest long after I'd actually left home for college. Their graying nest is missing one grand, baby bird. Now a mother myself, and always from Thanksgiving to NYE, I would give just about anything to be back nestled in her bosom. Laughing raucously at the same old stories, told the same familiar way. I never tire of those memories. They are ingrained, embedded, inbred.

That word Heimweh, a strange melodious word play. Only for those who have 2 tongues—one AE the other DE.

Heimweh. Rings in my ears like a "highway" back to what I once only knew. Home is where the heart is, but what do you do when it's split in two?

by Ericka Seifried

What I miss

by Ericka Seifried

The holidays—all of them!—took on new meanings once I became a mother. I am not sure if it's more because I live abroad (I am still not sure if I espouse being an expat), or if my native culture is so thick in my veins. But the differences are clear and reveal themselves at least 10 times a year (March and August seem to be culturally universal in my experience). The glaring differences are apparent at pointed times, like seasonal homesickness.



It already starts each year in January. Having to explain what all the fuss is about for Martin Luther King (MLK) Jr.'s birthday to my son who knows little of his contributions and sacrifices even though I try. YouTube provides some age appropriate videos of civil rights and non-violent protests. But they fall short because there's little practical evidence over here. In February, I know it's commercial and kitschy, but good old Valentine's Day somehow seems less important, less red, without conversation hearts to remind me of how I feel, and who should "be mine". Ok, but that's not really a holiday.



Actually, I shouldn't complain because the Fourth of July is a welcomed tradition at my house. But it's mostly because my guys love BBQ. So everyone is happy to eat burgers, pulled pork sandwiches (because ribs are too complicated to smoke here), and even corn on the cob on this day. I even have them requesting coleslaw and iced tea when the weather cooperates. But when the sun goes down, I am reminded I am in dark, fireworklos Germany. No homemade rum ice cream either. The pits.

But I am rarely more American, at least not unapologetically so, than at Thanksgiving. It is my holiday. And I am very stubborn about it. It may be all I have. I don't cut corners, acquiesce or ask forgiveness. Thanksgiving is ALWAYS ON THURSDAY and is IN ENGLISH, AMERICAN ENGLISH! No ifs, and, or buts! That turkey must be golden brown and roasted that day. Those Parker House rolls formed and slathered in creamy butter, and the dressing must have the right balance of white bread, corn bread and sausage (ok, it's salsiccia!) And there must be pies with homemade crusts. Work is put on the backburner, and my son must dress for dinner and we welcome (curious and cherished) friends into our home to celebrate being thankful, gracious and kind. It's gotten easier. I can find some substitutes for my southern dishes. Sweet potatoes instead of sweet potato pie, sautéed kale instead of collard greens, and corn pudding instead of stewed corn. My son gets a taste of what my mother and grandmother used to make for our family.

But this year was tough. For the first time in nearly a decade, Thanksgiving was on a Saturday. And it made being here a bit less tolerable. Luckily my entire family has the same type of expensive, state-of-the-art phone or tablet. So it makes sharing the traditions and cooking rituals possible. I watched my sister mix her gravy, called my dad while he was picking up last minute cranberries for the sauces, and proudly showed my mom my version of squash casserole all in real time with the help of technology and social media. Apple and Facebook for better or worse have given me back my family traditions. Kilometers and time zones between us, but we share, we give thanks and we look forward to the next time we are all together. Maybe Christmas—virtual or real. But I love iPhones and Facebook for these reasons. Counting my blessings (á la Ray Coniff Singers) thanks to my dad sharing his iTunes music library with me!



Happy Holidays however you manage to celebrate them so far from your other home!



FAWCO, founded in 1931, is an international federation of independent organizations comprising 65 member clubs in 34 countries worldwide, with a total membership of around 10,000. FAWCO is a U.S. nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization run by volunteers. FAWCO's mission is to build strong support networks for its American and international membership, to improve the lives of women and girls worldwide, to advocate for the rights of U.S. citizens overseas, to mobilize the skills of its membership in support of global initiatives for education, the environment, health and human rights.

AWCH is a proud member of FAWCO and every member of AWCH in good standing is a member of FAWCO.

Connect and Inspire

FAWCO Region 5 Meeting. Heidelberg, November 9-11, 2018

Heidelberg International Women's Club (HIWC) hosted the FAWCO Region 5 Meeting in Heidelberg from November 9–11, 2018. This newest FAWCO Member Club welcomed 50 ladies from the FAWCO Member Clubs in Paris, Cologne, Düsseldorf, Augsburg, Vienna, Amsterdam, Berlin, Brussels, Denmark, Dublin, The Hague, Hamburg and Munich. Becky T., Carol S., Charis H., Karen Eve O'S., Susan S.-W. and Tracy M. attended for AWCH. Connect and Inspire was a meeting with ample time for connecting, chatting, helping, supporting, understanding, and of course, inspiring.

During the Friday evening welcome dinner, the clubs introduced their members and gave a brief presentation answering the following questions: "What's one thing you do for new members to make them feel welcome?" "What's one way you take extra care of your current members?" "What's one of your most successful new member recruiting techniques?" You can view the answers on the HIWC website. (<https://heidelbergiwc.org/resources/Documents/FAWCO/FAWCO-R5-Club-Introduction-Answers-About-Membership.pdf>)

The first session on Saturday morning was devoted to FAWCO. Hope Moore, FAWCO 2nd VP for Member Clubs, gave a brief introduction to FAWCO and several volunteers described their experiences. Becky T. explained what it means to be a FAWCO Counselor. The 12 current counselors are all former Presidents of FAWCO. Becky was president from



1995–1997. This first session closed with a video of the 2018 FAWCO Youth Volunteers in Berlin. (<https://www.fawco.org/global-issues/youth-program/cultural-volunteers/berlin-2018>).

The second session was devoted to the FAWCO Foundation (TFF), the philanthropic arm of FAWCO. As of 2018, almost \$2 million have been disbursed to benefit FAWCO clubs, individual members and FAWCO-related initiatives. Susan Wheeler, TFF President, gave an overview. Tracy M., TFF VP for Programs, gave us an introduction to the Education Awards and Development Grants; and individual members presented awards and grants received. Carol S. was happy to say a few words about the Hazarwadi Open Well, Maharashtra, India, that

was completely financed by TFF. Applications for 2019 Education Awards and Development Grants are now available on the Foundation website <http://www.fawcofoundation.org/our-programs/education-awards-2017.html>. Deadline for the submitted application is January 27, 2019.

Tricia R Saur, FAWCO Target Program Chair, gave us an update on the Target Project Hope Beyond Displacement. This project was conceived to build better futures for refugee women and girls in Jordan through education, vocational and leadership training. The \$150,000 raised to date well exceeds the initial goal of \$125,000. As a UN accredited nongovernmental organization (NGO) with special consultative status to the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), FAWCO places a high priority on giving its members the opportunity to contribute to achieving the UN 2030 Agenda for the Sustainable Development Goals.

The buffet lunch was catered by Julia Rais-Morres, who has a catering enterprise (Serai) and started the project Cooking for Hope, which helps unaccompanied minor refugee men become integrated into the community. It was amazing to see the four boys

to our date. For example: What are you passionate about? What's the most interesting thing that you have learned today? What are you most excited about now? However, after several "dates", we soon realized how important it is to ask the right question to connect. It was a fun but an exhausting and very loud networking session.

The last session of the day consisted of participating in two of the half-hour breakout groups: Q&A with Amanda Lane, Director of the Collateral Repair Project that implements the Target Project; Member Club Workshop with Hope Moore; Working



with Refugees with Ulrike Näumann, HIWC Member; and Scottish Dancing with Angelika McLarren, FAWCO Region 5 Coordinator.

Saturday night dinner and Sunday morning tours closed this fun and successful meeting.

Congratulations and special thanks to Christine Funke and her amazing HIWC team for making this meeting true to its theme Connect and Inspire.

(Carol Strametz with text from Ulrike Näumann, HIWC)

from Afghanistan, Syria, Eritrea and Irak organizing the catering buffet professionally and cheerfully. The proceeds from our lunch went to Cooking for Hope.

An hour-long Speed Dating session topped the agenda after lunch. We took our seats in two rows that had chairs facing each other. A seat rotation took place every two to three minutes, so that each of us talked to half the attendees (25!). We were provided with a list of questions to help us connect



FAWCO Lunch & Learn

Carol S., our AWCH FAWCO Rep, and Tracy M., our AWCH Treasurer and VP Programs for the FAWCO Foundation, hosted a lunch in December at the Speicher 52 to provide an introduction to FAWCO and the FAWCO Foundation. The timing was perfect, just as the Christmas Markets kick off in Hamburg and the spirit of giving is in the air.

We learned about FAWCO, a virtual organization fueled by volunteers from around the globe. This network of members raises awareness and takes action on issues that impact our world— education, environment, health, and human rights. Importantly, FAWCO is an accredited United Nations nongovernmental organization (NGO). The FAWCO UN Team engages with like-minded UN accredited NGOs to advocate for women and children worldwide.



FAWCO also provides membership support in areas such as US tax and voting. Best of all, as AWCH members we are all members of FAWCO and can all take action by either donating time, money or ideas to these worthy endeavors.

We also learned that through the FAWCO Foundation, a sister organisation to FAWCO, we and our family can benefit through nine Education Awards (see next page). The Awards together total \$45,000. Or perhaps you have a cause that you believe in and requires funds. The seven Development Grants are also currently open for submissions and are each worth \$5,500.

In addition to having the possibility to receive, our AWCH members have also given \$7,177 over the last two years toward the FAWCO Target Project “Hope Beyond Displacement”, for which we have been awarded Diamond status on the Club Donor Wall of The FAWCO Foundation. An impressive achievement!

This is a short version of what FAWCO and the FAWCO Foundation accomplishes and what we learned over lunch. More questions? Carol S. or Tracy M. have all the answers. It is worth asking. (Christine R.)



Please consider doing the following:

- Register now for the 2019 Biennial Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland, March 21–24, 2019.
- Apply for a 2019 Education Awards for yourself, your child or grandchild. Please download applications on the FAWCO Foundation website. Deadline January 27, 2019.
- Register on the website and subscribe to FAWCO publications.

FAWCO members are invited to join upcoming regional meetings:

- Region 7 Meeting, January 18–19 hosted by AIWC Marrakesh. For more information contact aiwamarrakesh@gmail.com.
- Region 8 Meeting, February 15–17 hosted by AWA of Rome. For more information contact hildegard.niggemann@gmail.com or veraweillhalle@gmail.com.
- Region 9 Meeting, February 21–24 hosted by AWC of Lebanon. For more information contact bechara5@yahoo.com

Do you have a great photo of Hamburg?

The magazine *Inspiring Women* is creating a special photographic collection of images of the 65 FAWCO clubs. If you have an image representing Hamburg please send it to inspiringwomen.editor@fawco.org. **Deadline is December 31, 2018.**

FAWCO Foundation Education Awards 2019



The Member Awards are for all AWCH members, the Academic Studies Awards for their children, and the Dual Cultural Award for their grandchildren. These awards offer a host of opportunities to finance further education, so please read carefully.

Created by and for FAWCO clubs, the FAWCO Foundation Awards Program recognizes and honors the academic excellence and all-around achievement of FAWCO and FAUSA members and their children and grandchildren. FAWCO hopes to promote international understanding and good will by giving annual awards for study, in the U.S. or abroad, at high school, undergraduate and graduate levels. Since the first award was given under the aegis of The Foundation in 1972, many hundreds of thousands of dollars have been given to over 150 recipients.

The Foundation Awards Program is open to all FAWCO Member Club and FAUSA members and their children (grandchildren are eligible for the Dual Cultural Award), regardless of nationality and regardless of whether or not the affiliated Club has made a contribution to The Foundation's programs. The 2019 Education Awards will fall into three separate categories: Academic Studies Awards, a Dual Cultural Award, and Member Awards. All awards are merit-based.

Academic Studies Awards

For Children of FAWCO and FAUSA Members

Arts Award \$5,000 This award is for undergraduate or graduate study in the history, theory and/or practice of the performing arts, visual arts, film and media arts, architecture and graphic arts.

Sciences Award \$5,000 Sponsored in part by AIWC Genoa, in memory of Frieda Bacigalupo Natali This award is for undergraduate or graduate study of scientific subjects (e.g., biology, chemistry), mathematics, medicine, engineering, environmental studies, computer science, economics and business administration.

Humanities Award \$5,000 Sponsored in part by AAWE Paris, in memory of Gertrude de Gallaix

Humanities Award \$5,000 Sponsored in part by Caroline Newton

Due to generosity in sponsorship, there are two awards available, which will be given to the two highest-ranked applicants. This award is for undergraduate or graduate study in the fields including, but not limited to, education, law, social studies, history and languages.

Dual Cultural Award

For Children or Grandchildren of FAWCO Members

Dual Cultural Award \$5,000 Sponsored in part by AWC Bern and Donna Erismann, in memory of Suzanne Erismann. This award may be used to attend a semester of American high school or an academic or structured educational summer program in the United States.

Member Awards

For FAWCO and FAUSA Members

Shirley Kearney University Study Degree Award \$5,000 This award is for continuing or resuming studies in an undergraduate or graduate level university degree program.

FAUSA Skills Enhancement Award \$5,000. This award is for acquiring new skills or enhancing already existing ones and will allow a FAWCO or FAUSA member to become more capable and confident by acquiring the skills to improve performance in any given field.

Women in Sciences, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, and Medicine \$5,000. Sponsored by the former AWA Dubai in memory of their 21 years supporting the international community of Dubai. This award is for the study of STEM disciplines including the study of chemistry, computer and information technology science, engineering, geosciences, life science, mathematical sciences, physics and astronomy.

Continuing Education Award \$5,000 Sponsored by Mary Stewart Burgher of the AWC Denmark, in memory of Pauline "Pete" Arnold Scheweppe. This award is for a FAWCO or FAUSA member to further their education at university or an equivalent level through courses, workshops, and certificate programs. Subjects can encompass all areas of interest—inter alia, journalism, writing, the arts, and philanthropy—excluding science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects and medicine subjects.

Visit <http://www.fawcofoundation.org> for more information and to download the applications. All applications must be submitted by **January 27, 2019.**

Contact Carol S. at fawcorep.awch@gmail.com if you have a question or would like any help.

A Prodigal Daughter Returns to the AWCH and..... Bonding at the Sprengel Museum, Hannover

I am a New Yorker and like many of my ex-pat friends who came to Hamburg decades ago, the city became my permanent residence and has since been called "home." But if I really ask myself where I feel most at home, some strange answers emerge, one of them being "inside a great museum." Museum going has always been second nature to me and one of my favorite hobbies. What could be better than being engrossed in a great work of art, film or book?

When I first came to Hamburg, I did museum tours for the AWCH because I was working at the Museum for Kunst and Gewerbe at the time. I stopped because family and work commitments took precedence, but after recently hearing from a friend (an avid art lover, opera goer and culture buff) that she planned to rejoin the AWCH, I decided it might be a good idea to do the same. Luckily, I joined just in time for an excursion to the Sprengel Museum and Kestner Gesellschaft organized by Holly T. with the Art Group in October. When I heard of the planned tour, I could hardly contain my joy because, although I had never been to the Sprengel Museum or Kestner Gesellschaft, they had both indirectly played an important part in my life. While co-gallerist and curator at a Hamburg gallery, I spent almost a year translating a book, *Nomadengut* into English. It is the story of Louise Strauss Ernst, the first wife of Max Ernst and a champion of women artists' rights, who was sent to Auschwitz after her U.S. refugee rights were denied. She wrote the story of her life on scraps of paper for mental survival, documenting the Nazi rise to power in the process. The papers ended up in the archives of the Sprengel Museum, where Dr. Ulrich Hempel, the then director, wanted to use it in his 20th century modern art lecture series.



old friends. New and old bonds were forged. I was happy and touched to be with women who had done interesting things in their lives and had exciting stories to tell. We changed trains in Uelzen, a station designed by Hundertwasser with its Alice in Wonderland like design, and I was already halfway down the rabbit hole in what I knew would be a special journey.

Holly T. did an exceptional job of organizing the trip, pointing out Hannover's attractions on the way to the Sprengel Museum, where her guidance was par to none. There was much to see and too little time to see it in, but Holly expertly chose the highlights. She began the tour with an explanation of the building's architecture. We stood under the Calder sculpture, facing "museum street" with its cobblestones, and the Maschsee behind us. Holly described how the tiered cobblestones leading up to the entrance of the museum were designed to symbolize the "elevation of art" and continued on to explain how the glass windows allow museum goers to look onto the urban environment because the architect did not want walls. His intention was to recreate an atmosphere of openness and dialogue—art with the outside world; and a resounding museum theme—art should be accessible to all. Standing adjacent to us on the riverbanks were the voluptuous sculptures of Niki de Saint Phalle, dancing in the wind. They immortalized something special—perhaps what great women can achieve when they put their minds to it.

The Sprengel family owned a chocolate factory and collected art. They were inspired by the renowned *Entartete Kunst* (degenerate art) exhibition, meant by Hitler to deter people from collecting art of this kind. The Nazi's claimed this art had a demoralizing effect on society and ruined people's values, but it had an opposite effect on the Sprengels. They went to Switzerland and bought works from Paul Klee



We met at the *Hauptbahnhof* at 7:45 am on Sunday morning and I was happy to make new acquaintances—but even happier to catch up with

and then continued collecting, amassing an exceptional collection of German Expressionism and French Modernism. After donating their private collection to the city of Hannover, the Sprengel Museum was founded to house their collection along with other works of modern art. The emphasis unites the old with the new, juxtaposing a work by Cranach with artists from “Die Brücke” and “Der Blaue Reiter”. The collection’s paintings of German expressionists, from Max Pechstein to Otto Mueller, Emile Noldle, Karl Schmidt-Rotluff and Max Beckmann (and more), invite us as viewers to confront our own existential reality.

Franz Marc’s horse, *Man in the Dark*, and *Baden im August* are among my favorites. In the latter, a man is shown in a boat with a woman stretched across him and a monster fish, appearing out of nowhere. The fish is menacing and threatening, symbolic of the political climate at the time. The boat breaks, symbolizing Beckmann’s travels over sea, his escape into exile and his fleeing from Nazi Germany. His sculpture *Man in the Dark* shows a man with his arm in the air and his overly large feet planted firmly on the ground. They symbolize the need for a human being to be grounded and resolute, especially in dark times. Despite the man being afraid, he has his good values to guide him. His themes of a dark past are relevant for us today. If we embrace history’s lessons rather than deny them, we may be able to transform our own lives.

The club then went to visit the reconstructed *Cabinet of Abstraction* from El Lissitzky and the unique *Merzbau* by Kurt Schwitters with installed electric light switches conceived by the artist to shake us out of our passivity.



Merzbau was originally destroyed in 1937 but reconstructed in the Sprengel Museum in 1979. We also visited the special interactive light cell *Header* by James Turrell. The exhibition in the middle white cuboid building, honoured Florentina Pakosta, now 85, and commemorates women getting the vote.

Although the bulk of the Sprengel Museums’s collection is devoted to Classical Modern and is composed of the important artists groups from “Die Brücke” and “Der Blaue Ritter,” the Italian Futurists, Surrealists, and Cubists are also represented. I was especially happy to see that Mimo Rotella’s poster art had found its place there—I had taken Rotella around Hamburg when he exhibited at our gallery. The whole tour was a walk down “museum lane”, reminding me of how much I love art, how it anchors my feelings and helps me picture different periods of my life.

After a lovely lunch at the beautiful ARTE restaurant we visited an exhibition at the Kestner Gesellschaft, a society originally founded in 1916 to promote

the arts, now an art gallery. The special exhibition was of ‘best Friends’ that dressed the same style and somehow looked alike.

On the train back to Hamburg, it was impossible not to feel that I had somehow come home again. —Marilyn R.

A Play of Line and Intoxicating Color

In September, five art group members visited a pop-up weekend exhibition and panel discussion (in German) at the private Hauck and Aufhäuser Bank on Neuer Wall. The exhibition was initiated by two young Hamburg gallerists focusing on 20th-century German works on paper, Sabrina Lemcke of Galerie St. Gertrude in Altona and Thole Rothermundt in St. Georg. They were joined by Alexander Kunkel, another young art dealer and collecting consultant from Munich, and Geertje Foth, who has been restoring paintings in Hamburg for 20 years.

Foth showed works and photos demonstrating her



fascinating restoration process. The other three exhibited the *crème de la crème* of their offerings, small jewels of works: a fine pencil landscape by Adolf von Menzel, a postcard-size pastel by Max Liebermann, a late abstract face by Alexej von Javlensky, a watercolor panorama landscape by Horst Jansen, along with many others by artists including Dodo, Franz Marc, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner and Jeanne Mammen.

The panel discussion focused on the question of whether high art prices correspond to high quality in art. Oliver Lähndorf, director of the Affordable Art Fair (AAF) Hamburg, joined the gallerists as a panelist. We learned that the market for old masters has been going down as prices for contem-

porary art continue to rise. In part, the panelists felt this was due to the "image factor" of an art collection as a form of advertising. Banks, they said, were getting more involved with art collectors, demanding art as a guarantee for loans and wanting a share in the profits when art bought with borrowed money increased in value. Presumably this explained why this discussion was taking place at a bank.

Oliver Lähndorf described the AAF, where the maximum price for works exhibited is 7500€, as the first point of contact with art for many visitors, who afterwards began going to museums and galleries. The gallerists present were skeptical about this commercial introduction to art and also complained that big-time collectors flock to the AAF looking for bargains and the next big thing. Lähndorf defended the AAF, saying that with rents, real estate prices and other living costs so high now, even high-earning young people can't afford to begin collecting art at normal prices.

When asked how one should decide whether a work of art is worth the asking price, the panelists sug-

gested beginning by checking the Art Price Index for the artist and then considering how typical it is of the artist's work (the more typical generally worth more), how significant the subject matter is and how good the condition is. They said to try to pinpoint what the most important thing is about the artist and to assess how well the work reflects that.

Thole Rotermundt concluded the discussion saying that the greatest joy comes from acquiring and living with a work you find challenging. He told us about the (in)famous Hamburg collector, Harald Falckenberg, who bought his very first work of art, a Gerhard Richter, more or less as an investment. When he sold it 15 years later, he made enough money to buy the Phönix Hall where he now stages exhibitions and shows his important collection as part of the city owned and operated Deichtorhallen. In the meantime, his reasons for buying particular works had changed completely. He has talked about how collecting art vhas influenced his personality, and asserts "I only collect what I don't understand." (Holly T.)

Art Group: Lecture on 3-D Printing

In September a small group of AWCH art lovers ventured out of the museum and into a very young world of pop culture and mass production with a lecture by American artist Erin Kopach on 3-D printing. Sylvia T. generously hosted the event in her home and we enjoyed a light tapas lunch before the lecture.

While her audience imagined 3-D printing to be something like Star Trek beaming, she explained that, in fact, it functions more like a glue gun, where melted biodegradable plastic or resin is pressed through a moving nozzle or nozzles according to a template created on a computer. The result is a model that can be used to cast objects in metals and other materials through the lost

wax process. Working with a program called

Hollow Dame, 2018, Erin Kopach

Z-Brush, Erin created a template while we watched of a hybrid creature influenced by her studies at art college, where she specialized in fantasy creative design for video games. Shelly S. tried her hand at it and it was fascinating to see how minor changes could make her creature cute and sweet or spooky and menacing.

Erin told us that because you get charged by cubic centimeter of solid material used when ordering a 3-D print, it is cheaper to make an object as hollow as possible without destabilizing it. This involves a lot of practice and some of

Erin's most popular works have been inspired by her errors. Her "Glitch Busts" are simulations of classical portrait busts, which have been hollowed out so much that parts of the busts have vanished. The template programs she uses also enable her to "pop in" and "pop out" sections of the bust and rearrange them, erase or multiply them. With hand-painted graffiti accents, the resulting edgy, occasionally disturbing and slightly glamorous 21st century reincarnations of stodgy old art are on view at Popstreet.Shop in St. Pauli. (Holly T.)



Spiral Kopf, 2018, Erin Kopach

Book Club:

Educated by Tara Westover

In September the Book Club participated in the FAWCO 2nd Annual Summer Global Book Read by reading *Educated* by Tara Westover. This fascinating memoir recounts Tara's childhood growing up in a conservative Mormon community in rural Idaho. Even within the conservative community her family was considered extreme. Her father was a rabid survivalist, stockpiling provisions and weapons for the apocalypse and keeping his family as far as possible from the reach of the government. Apart from church activities, the family was removed from interaction with others. The children were homeschooled, medical care was shunned and even interaction with extended family was limited. With the encouragement of one of her brothers, Tara attended college and began to learn about the world from which she had been sheltered and realized how limiting and repressive her childhood was. With the help of professors she continued her education, eventually earning a PhD from Cambridge, and left her life of chaos and isolation. Tara's narrative of her childhood and journey into the world makes for compelling reading, keeping the reader fully engaged throughout the book. As a book club selection, this memoir provides a cornucopia of topics to explore and discuss.

Exploring family dynamics and the effect on development is always interesting. While some dysfunction is certainly not uncommon, when undiagnosed mental illness is introduced, it can have some horrific results. Tara eventually understood that her father suffered from bipolar disorder. His reckless disregard for basic safety procedures in his salvage business, often over the objection of his sons, resulted in several serious accidents to himself and his children but he relied on his wife's herbal treatments instead of seeking traditional medical care. He adhered to a strict interpretation of his Mormon religion, while ridiculing other members of the congregation for their failure to do so. He kept his family isolated from outside influences, however two of his sons attended college and he encouraged Tara to sing in a choir. Even though he didn't support Tara's education, he managed to provide the funds she needed to continue at one point. His ideas and opinions ruled the family but he couldn't be counted on to provide a sense of stability. Keeping the family



together was important to him, no matter the cost. When Tara brought up the physical abuse she was receiving from one of her brothers, she was ostracized for going against the family. Also, her brother, who was violently abusive to Tara and frequently involved in altercations with other people, certainly displayed symptoms of mental illness, possibly also bipolar disorder. Tara thought she was receiving support regarding her abuse claims against her brother from her mother and sister, only to be betrayed by them when her father demanded that the family came first. We discussed the possibility that perhaps both Tara's mother and sister experienced Stockholm Syndrome, as they either witnessed or experienced the brother's abuse and yet denied it when the issue was brought up to the family. Even when the family environment is chaotic and toxic, the idea of leaving your family is a hard one to accept.

The role that memory plays was also discussed. While it's common that siblings remember different things about childhood, Tara's footnotes about how her memories differed from others indicates that she wasn't always clear about events. While Tara did not mention any incidents of sexual abuse, several of us thought that this was a possibility with regards to her brother, and that this could be an explanation for her lapses of memory.

While it is understandable why Tara would want to remove herself from this environment, there was some speculation about why she would write a memoir. Perhaps it was an exploration into understanding her own life and making peace with the path she ultimately chose. Her choices have resulted in being an outcast from her family. Knowing the value they place on family and keeping the family secrets, she must have realized that this book would not be embraced and would probably irrevocably cast her out of the family and yet she expressed the hope that someday she would have a relationship with them again. There is also the possibility that she was capitalizing on the success of memoirs of a similar vein, such as *Hillbilly Elegy*, *Unorthodox* and *The Glass Castle*. And, perhaps, she knew she has a story to tell about not just accepting the situation you are born into and having the power to take the steps necessary to improve your life.

Tara portrayed her homeschooling to be haphazard and almost non-existent, however, we did question her recollection of this. She must have received more education than she indicated as she passed the SATs in order to be accepted to university. Although one can't discount that Tara must also be quite intelligent to have overcome her educational shortcomings to be as successful as she has been. The merits of homeschooling were also discussed in our group. It can be a rich and fulfilling experience and the success of many home-schooled children attests to this. However, when it's limited to portraying a one-sided view, it omits important information that allows a child to develop his or her own opinions.

Educated is a riveting story and lends itself to further thought and discussion. Ultimately, though, one must not overlook the primary theme of this book. As with other similar titles, the message of this memoir is the power that education has to elevate one's life. No matter what the circumstances of one's life are, education results in not only a greater understanding of the world but of ourselves and our place in it. (Anne C.)



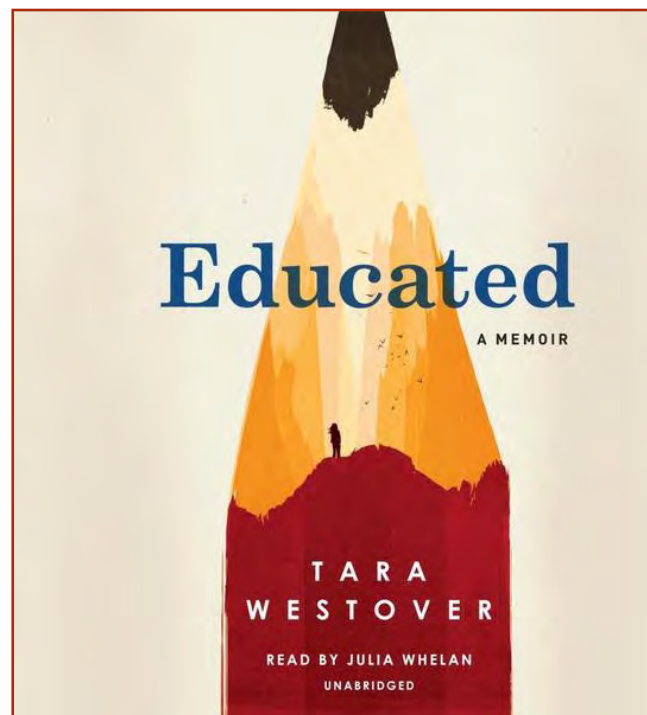
"My favorite moment was the book club discussion, listening to the interpretation of other ladies and having a wonderful open discussion (expanding on home schooling, fears of the federal government, mental health, The Stockholm Syndrome, memory itself...and much more.) I would definitely recommend for a book club reading. A great read that certainly holds your attention and encourages profound thinking." (Teresa P.yL.)

"Educated is well written, but not an easy read for me, emotionally. I appreciate that the book reinforces the idea of education empowerment. Through education, Tara Westover was able to reflect, reevaluate her past to truly move forward." (WangDi S.)

"The book was a thought-provoking story of how Tara Westover, a girl raised by survivalist parents, overcame the chaos and isolation of her childhood to eventually earn a Ph.D. from Cambridge. As Tara pursued her formal education, she became estranged from members of her family. Tara's process of understanding and accepting these estrangements helped her forge her own identity, and that ultimately became the most important part of her "education". (Lyn H.)

"The story whisked me along at a great pace and kept me engaged from beginning to end. Parts of the book are harrowing, others inspirational. I had difficulties with her inability to sever ties with a physically abusive brother and, at times, an unsupportive mother and a horrifically uncaring father." (Tracy M.)

"A gripping story of one woman's struggle to shake off her past and embrace her promising new future—without alienating her family. Beautifully written, but leaving many open questions for the reader." (Carol H.)





The Handmaid's Tale

by Margaret Atwood

On Wednesday, 21 November, a large group of us gathered at Hilary W.'s home to discuss Margaret Atwood's seminal work of "speculative fiction", *The Handmaid's Tale*. Written in 1984, when Atwood (a Canadian) was living in West Berlin, this dystopian novel is a first-person account by Offred, a woman who lives in New England at the end of the twentieth century. Offred was once called something else, once had a job and a husband, a child, a mother, a best friend. But in the aftermath of a military coup in the former United States, she's been stripped of her former identity and, without any knowledge of where her family, is pressed into service as a "handmaid", a woman forced to serve as a surrogate mother for a powerful man



whose wife can't have children. Offred's account of the totalitarian regime of Gilead is a chilling look at what happens when religious fervor and misogyny lead to the toppling of a democratic country.

The Handmaid's Tale provided us ample food for thought, and we had a lively discussion about the power of the book as a work of fiction and its ability to feel completely relevant more than 30 years after it was first published. The story inspired us to talk about a wide range of meaty topics, from power and gender dynamics, to male- vs. female-dominated societies, the hypocrisy of the fervent "believer" or the very powerful, and the role of sexuality in society—and what happens in the vacuum when it's artificially removed. Andrea started us off with an introduction to the novel and some questions, and things quickly took off from there. Overall, it seemed that we all enjoyed reading *The Handmaid's Tale*, and many of us would recommend it to others. Only Anne had seen the full two seasons of the recent TV mini-series based on the book, but I have a feeling more of us will start watching it now... (Diana P.S.)

"Tara Westover has joined numerous female authors who have overcome dysfunctional pasts, become well-educated, and gone on to publish powerful selfie books. She has become a national celebrity finding a podium on TV: Tara being interviewed, Tara singing songs to us, all while wearing her ruby red lipstick. Perhaps she wrote this book to get some recognition from her family, but in the end it will be just for money. It feels like all these fringe communities are under attack and are in a need of change. At the same time, some women are able to make an escape and money at the same time." (Shelly S.)

"Facinating story. Tara's family is so extreme that the story seems exaggerated, however having lived with similar communities, I see this as scarily realistic." (Anne-Marie S.)

"Tara wrote a very compelling and fascinating narrative. As a nurse it was so fascinating to see the effects that undiagnosed mental and physical illness can have on not only those affected, but also their families and friends." (Mary-Jane S.)

"A book written so engagingly it is hard to not be absorbed by it. The first part is written in great detail to describe the family and their environment, later there is more of a narrative and actual storyline. The book touches on several topics: the importance and impact of education—but also on family dynamics, the role of religion, power, mental illness, home schooling and trust. Thoroughly enjoyed it—and also the discussion we had at the book club." (Tine H.)

And other group events...

The Opera Club kicked off the 2018/2019 season with *Così fan tutte* (Women are like that!), a frolicking and colorful production of Mozart's famous opera buffa by Herbert Fritsch. Both the tenor Dovlet Nurgeldiyev (*Ferrando*) and baritone Kartal Karagedik (*Guglielmo*) are amongst the personal favorites of our members and thus the more tragic when Dovlet injured himself during the production (but was promptly replaced by a tenor in the audience!) How faithful really are their virtuous and beautiful fiancées, played by Ira Aldrain (*Dorabella*) and Maria Bengtsson (*Fiordiligi*)? Not very, it turns out, when *Don Alfonso* (Pietro Spagnoli) and *Despina* (Sylvia Schwartz) join forces to prove their point —*Così fan tutte!*



Our next Opera Club project? A John Neumeier staging of C.W. Gluck's *Orphée & Eurydice*, co-produced with the Opera of Chicago and the Los Angeles Opera in February. With Elizabeth R.'s excellent guidance we have been preparing since October for the performance at the Hamburger Staatsoper. Tracing the development of opera from the Madrigal singers to the classical period of opera has been a treat. Greek mythology, ballet, and beautiful music. Can't wait!

Koffeeklöön, AWCH's German Practice Circle, continues to meet twice monthly in alternating daytime and evening gatherings. Facilitated by



Karen O'S., a native German speaker and flawless English speaker, *Rock Our Kitchen* is a judgmental-free zone for all levels of German speakers to get together and catch up—all while practicing their German. If you're new to speaking German though, don't worry. All conversation is in English until the drink and food orders are placed. Always on

the hunt for new places to chat auf Deutsch, the locations vary. So far we've enjoyed coffee at the Roncalli Cafe, brunch at the Nord Coast Roastery, and pancakes at the Cafe mit freundlichen Grüßen. Who knew there was such a nice cafe above the Jungfernstieg Vodafone shop? Evening outings have included cocktails at Bolero, pizza at *Rock Our Kitchen* in Grindel, and dinner and drinks at the Klippkroog in Altona. So, if you're looking for a place to practice what you've been learning, or are already a proficient German speaker willing to help others and make new friends, please contact Karen (socialmedia@awchamburg.org) to join.



...and we love to stich n'bitch

Moin Moin, Stiletto!

by Karen Eve O'Shaughnessy

Fashion and Minimalism can go hand in hand.

My dear Fashionistas, 2018 is coming to a close, and the exciting time of renewal and resolutions is dawning. Perfect time to re-assess yourself, your own development, and goals of the past year. As a true Fashionista, you can't do that without re-evaluating your wardrobe!

We love our wardrobes, don't we? Our little collections of belts, sunglasses, those cute new shoes with the leopard print, those handbags we just don't get around to actually using. Bottom line: we have more clothes than we wear and more than anyone could possibly need.

As a fashion gal, that seems to be a given, a generally agreed upon principal and core of the fashion life. It is not. Actually, it is the opposite. Fashion should make you happy. If you have too many clothes, no room to store them and no actual overview of all the things you have: Then fashion will make you unhappy and weigh you down with all the clutter.

Minimalism! What used to be hyped as "simplify your whatever" is now called minimalism. This is the key to set you free from clutter. Minimalism here, detoxed living there...the ultimate wardrobe is kept minimal.

Read more about that on Pinterest!

What I am telling you is acquired knowledge from blogs, magazines, and admiration for very well-dressed people. And actually, I know you are all aware of this: Owning less makes you happier. See the new German movie *100 Dinge* opening Dec. 6 for reference!

I am currently in trial phase myself. My job situation has changed, and I currently don't need to be all dolled up for an office anymore. So I tossed most of my clothing in boxes, stored them away and only left five basic well-fitting t-shirts, three nice blouses/tops (leopard print, flashy colors), three basic blouses in black or white, three pairs of pants/jeans, and four sweaters in my closet. I occasionally need to revisit my boxes and pull out a nice dress, but that is a good thing, and it will then go back into the closet. This is an experiment, not boot camp!

I even stocked up on basic t-shirts, all in the exact

same style—one that looks good on me and feels very comfortable—and in various neutral colors. This way, like a uniform, I don't have to think about what to wear in the morning, unless it is a very special occasion, and can save precious time for having coffee or talking to my mom on the phone!

Eventually, I will need to tackle those boxes of clothes, when my trial run is over in February. Right now, it looks like I will say bye-bye to two big boxes of clothes that actually, never made me happy and I haven't missed them in the last six weeks at all.

Sounds good? You don't have to get rid of all your clothes! Start with baby steps. Go through your wardrobe, take every item out of your closet, and think about it carefully: Does this make you happy?



Do you enjoy wearing this? Is it easy to combine? YES? Then keep it! Or is it always difficult because you actually only have those one pair of pants that go with it? You are afraid to sit down in a dress? Or you always hated that green color? Toss it! You have to think about it more

than half a second? Toss it! Either donate it or put it aside for the AWCH Fashion Swap next Spring! (more information to come).

At the end, you should only have essential items in your closet. If not, look again: How many shirts do you own? Could you survive a hurricane, tsunami, or a zombie apocalypse, and still have enough clothes to wear a new item every day for the next six months? That is too much, toss more!

This concept, of course, varies on an individual basis. You might not care about fashion, or work in a business where you need to be in super fashion mode every day. This principle can be applied to most other areas in life as well: kitchen supplies, children's toys, or your DVD collection. Minimalism is the beauty to realize that we are not defined by how much we own, but *what* we own. Feel better, toss more, own less.

Or like the fabulous Reggi J. always says: "Was dich nicht glücklich macht, kann weg."

Six Less Famous Christmas Markets in Germany

by Jordan Beck Wagner

As the nights get longer and the air gets colder, Germany's squares and street corners begin to fill with Christmas spirit. While Munich and Berlin are known for their numerous Christmas markets, here are some smaller and less famous Christmas markets to explore this holiday season.

1. Erfurt

As the capital of the German state of Thuringia, Erfurt dates back almost 1,300 years. Its most famous resident, Martin Luther, declared Erfurt is "in the ideal location...the perfect place for a city." With a well-preserved old town splattered with old, half-timbered houses and beautiful facades, Erfurt provides the perfect backdrop for a gorgeous Christmas market.

With St. Mary's Cathedral and the Church of St. Severus on a hill overlooking Domplatz, the square hosts Erfurt's Christmas market, the largest in all of Thuringia. Indulge in a Thuringian bratwurst and enjoy the Christmas spirit in a town so loved by Luther.



2. Weimar

Less than an hour away from Erfurt is the city of Weimar, one of the old cultural capitals of Germany. Renowned for authors such as Goethe and Schiller, musicians such as Bach, the Bauhaus movement, and governmental influence (Weimar Republic!), Weimar plays host to adorable Christmas markets every year – the best on Schillerstraße, Theaterplatz, and Marktplatz.

As the location of the first public Christmas tree, Weimar continues to erect a fabulous Christmas tree every year. Additionally, the town hall is converted into a life-size advent calendar for all to enjoy! Make a weekend out of it and combine a trip to Weimar with a stop in Erfurt.

3. Nürnberg

Nuremberg isn't exactly a Christmas secret when it comes to Christmas markets (arguably, it is actually Germany's most famous Christmas market!). However, with over 400 years of Christmas traditions, this market should not be missed. On the Friday before the first Advent Sunday, Christkind appears on the balcony of the Church of Our Lady to officially open the market. While the market is extremely packed on the weekends due to tourist groups visiting from all over the world, it's much calmer on weekdays. With over 180 stalls on the Hauptmarkt, there's something for everyone! Indulge in some Glühwein and gingerbread and keep one of the mugs as a souvenir from this Christmas market



4. Rothenburg ob der Tauber

Less than an hour away from Nuremberg is the picturesque walled town of Rothenburg ob der Tauber, located along Germany's Romantic Road. Much like Nuremberg, Rothenburg ob der Tauber's Christmas market is absolutely packed weekend afternoons due to tourist groups. If possible, stay overnight to experience the stillness of the town and the Christmas spirit after all the tourists leave. It's also a great day trip from Nuremberg. Due to being a walled town, the interior of this medieval town (the old town area) has not changed much for hundreds of years. Additionally, local law requires buildings to maintain this old charm. Visiting Rothenburg ob

der Tauber's Christmas market is like stepping back in time with colorful, half-timbered houses, cobblestone streets, and narrow passageways. Make sure to try the local delicacy "Rothenburger Schneeballen," a sweet treat beloved by the town's citizens. If visiting on a Friday or Saturday, plan to climb the Town Hall's tower for great views of the entire town and the Christmas markets.

5. Heidelberg

The charming fairytale city of Heidelberg is a personal favorite of mine after having lived there for two years. While the Christmas market is spread out through the entire old town area including Universitätsplatz, Marktplatz, Bismarckplatz, and Karlsplatz—the Christmas market actually extends the entire length of the pedestrian-only Hauptstraße, the longest in Germany.

Here’s my Christmas market secret—make sure to visit the Christmas market at Heidelberg Castle. Lesser known than the Christmas market in the old town, the Christmas market at the castle is smaller, more charming, more authentic, and often overlooked by tourists. It’s easily reachable either by foot (prepare for lots of steps!) or the town’s funicular. There’s nothing more romantic than sipping Glühwein under the lights of Heidelberg Castle.

6. Hamburg

A German Christmas market guide isn’t complete without mentioning Hamburg’s Christmas markets. With over 20 Christmas markets, there’s something for everyone – from the X-rated St. Pauli Christmas market to the famous City Hall Christmas market to the local Christmas markets of each neighborhood.



My personal favorite – and perfect for children – is the Christmas market at Apostelkirche. With only 6-8 stands total, the Christmas spirit is best captured through children’s story time, Christmas carols, and Santa’s visit. Make sure to check out this Christmas market as well as your neighborhood’s Christmas market for a more authentic experience.

Final Thoughts

If there is one area where Germany really excels, it is its amazing Christmas markets. From the largest Christmas markets in Berlin and Mu-

nich to the smaller Christmas markets in Erfurt, Weimar, and Heidelberg, there’s something for everyone. Each market has its own distinct and unique flair, making no two Christmas markets the same. Happy exploring and Merry Christmas!

Whoops! Rüdeshiem? Frauke R.H. knew better. This picture in our last issue was actually of Lüneburg.... and what a great opportunity to introduce the lovely Christmas markets in this nearby town. Thank you, Frauke!

Lovely Christmas light decorations, appealing Christmas markets, gorgeously decorated churches, the City Hall and the Water Tower compose a breathtaking holiday setting. Come and enjoy one of the many Christmas markets in Hansestadt Lüneburg. It’s only a 50-minute train ride away from Hamburg and a 10-minute walk to the center, the Rathausmarkt.



Weihnachtsmarkt vor dem Rathaus. Open every day from Nov. 28 to Dec. 23 with a daily trumpet concert at 4:25 p.m. from the city hall tower, followed by a brass band Wednesday through Saturdays. Santa comes every day at 4 p.m. Special music 5 – 6 p.m. on each Advent Sunday; Dec 2: Lüneburg City Orchestra; Dec 9: Christmas Carols Set; Dec. 16: Artlenburg Music Corps

The historic plaza ‘*Am Alten Kran*’ has an unforgettable Christmas market in the Hansestadt Lüneburg. Every Mo – So, 12 – 9 p.m.

Historischer Weihnachtsmarkt: In the old town, next to the Michaelis church. Only on Dec. 1 and 2 between 12 – 5 p.m.

Weihnachtsmarkt bei St.Johannis: Glühwein and traditional Feuerzangenbowle served from steaming cauldrens, all day between Nov. 28 and Dec. 23

Lüneburger Weihnachtsdorf: In the courtyard of the restaurant Krone in Heiligengeist Strasse there will be a romantic Christmas village between Lüneburg’s historic houses and a ‘Schnucken Alm’ (your chance to find out what that is) and a grand Christmas Tree. Mo-So from 11 am to ‘open end’ between Nov. 23 to Dec. 23. The Fairytale Walk is a mile long in the town center with 12 little houses telling the most known fairy tales. Besides listening in high German, one can also listen to the tales spoken in Plattdeusch. (Frauke R.-H.)

Art in the City

68—Pop & Protest

Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe
<https://www.mkg-hamburg.de>
 Through March 17, 2019

by Karen O'Shaughnessy

We didn't start the fire...

Dr. Carsten Brosda, Senator for Culture and Media to Hamburg, used Billy Joel's chorus of his '89 smashing hit single to introduce the newest exhibition at the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe (MKG), *68—Pop & Protest*. Naming notable events from Billy Joel's song, Dr. Brosda bridges what has lead up to cause the legendary '68 protests and revolts that are behind this extraordinary exhibition. *68—Pop & Protest* shows the various sides of the iconic '68 Generation—culture, protest and political situation. Ignited by the dramatic events in

the 60's, the younger post-war generation is pushed to not only question but to be inspired to revolt against current political situations and thrive for hope and power to the unheard.

Closely embedded in the student movement in Hamburg and its role in German history of shaping society to what it is today, the exhibition invites the visitor to question how the '68-movement influenced our today and whether 50 years later, the efforts of the

young people then are still generating change.

The exhibition includes the statue of Herrmann von Wissman, the 19th century governor to German-controlled East Africa, which was vandalized and torn down by Hamburg students in 1968, protesting the imperialism and its effect to world politics reaching far into the 20th century. Also on display is the famous banner carried by students: "Unter den Talaren, Muff von 1000 Jahren.

Notable is also the LP cover display, showing



iconic covers from The Doors, Jimmy Hendrix or Santana, and in the same room with colorful concert posters from the Grateful Dead and others.

Paper dresses made out of a thin fleece are examples of how fashion became not only mainstream, but an instrument of protest and political statement. The fashion displays make any fashion lover squirm and realize that "itsy-bitsy" is not just a fashion phenomenon of today.

Many exhibits contain or are supported by video clips and audio impressions, allowing the history to come to life and into the imagination of even younger visitors who might have only heard about the revolutionary times from their parents or even grandparents, while actual witnesses will be thrown back into the exciting and hopeful past.

Though the events shown in this exhibition happened 50 years ago, the topics that concerned people then may be as relevant today more than ever. After all, just like Billy Joel said, "...it was always burning, since the world's been turning".



Ausstellungsansichten_68-Pop&Protest
 Photos Karen O'Shaughnessy

Otto: Die Ausstellung

Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe
 www.mkg-hamburg.de/ausstellungen/vorschau/otto-die-ausstellung
 Through to 17 February 2019

by Carol Battenfeld

Q. How many Otto Waalkes' fans can you scrunch into the spacious two-tiered lecture room at the MK&G?

A. Several hundred human sardines!

With foresight, an extra viewing screen had been installed upstairs, anticipating the crush from young kids to very senior seniors, all ardent fans of „Otto“—a North German cult accomplished comedian, musician, and painter. Dressed in his usual black suit, sneakers, and black baseball cap—with the typical orange visor and signature orange curlycue “O” on the black crown, he looked (and acted!) as fresh and enthusiastic as he did when he wowed crowds back in the ‘70’s. He had us all in the palm



of his hand yet again with an impromptu—and hilarious—speech.

Thereafter the crush of humanity moved to the exhibition rooms. I took a quick look around, decided

seeing anything was hopeless, so popped down to the museum shop to snap up a catalogue, set of clever Ottifant Skat cards, and a nifty large blue canvas tote bag with rope handles—sporting a big gray smiling Ottifant graffiti on one side.

A week later I was back to take photos and devote several hours to regale myself with his paintings (watercolors, on canvas, acryl, pencil sketches....) and excerpts from his films (earphones and padded benches provided), and at least 15+ scenes from his TV appearances (earphones also provided).

Otto, who just turned a superbly preserved 70, is from Emden in Ostfriesland (where there’s an Otto museum devoted to his art). Special among his “signature” figures is “Ottifant”, but also the yellow-and-red-striped 1889 Pilsum lighthouse on the North Sea coast and a critter I think is a sloth. Otto often depicts himself in a winged cap.

A graduate of the Hochschule für Bildende Künste in Hamburg, he helped finance his studies with regular appearances as a comedian/entertainer/story teller/musician (guitar, bass, cello). His English is excellent and he uses it frequently (French, too!), often intertwined with his deliciously clever puns

and rhymes.

All paintings are done with humorous homage to famous artists, from Rembrandt to Andy Warhol, Picasso to Lichtenstein,



just for starters, each with a clever title and/or pun. Pick your favorite—mine is Delacroix’s *Liberté*; but rather than *la Liberté* waving the tricolor, she is substituted by a wing-capped Otto in jeans and t-shirt, with an East Friesian “flag” (white on white) in one raised arm and a teapot in the other (an homage to the famous East Friesian tea). Surrounded by dozens of Ottifants—all with raised teacups in their trunks. Ya just gotta go see it—the banner at the top is absolutely priceless.

By now you’ll need a coffee/lunch break; head for the popular self-service “Destille” for really tasty homemade goodies, from soups to desserts and decent prices.

If your German wasn’t quite “up to it” to catch all the puns and wordplays, then the Otto catalogue is the answer—and you can laugh all over again! BTW the museum store is accessible even without an entrance ticket—super ideas and bargain prices for quality holiday or birthday gifts.

.... and from our club member currently in Alabama, Liz Gobeille-Rudolph: “When I think of Otto, I laugh and remember the time when he and I played a game of hide and seek at the magazine kiosk in the HH airport. We were both looking at magazines, and then for some reason looked at each other and he started this silly game of peek-a-boo; he’s a funny guy!!”

By now you’ve got the idea: TERRIFIC. A must-see *Ausstellung!!!*

Hinz und Kunzt (H&K) is on the bandwagon, too—Otto (of course with cap) is not only on the cover of the H&K October issue, there’s a four-page spread all about him inside. (*Achtung*: when you buy a copy, make sure that the salesperson is wearing an H&K i.d. tag, assurance that you’re supporting the 300+ H&K-ers, who depend on these sales.)

Ausstellungsansichten_Otto_die Ausstellung
 Photos Carol Battenfeld

Philippe Vandenberg—Kamikaze

Hamburger Kunsthalle

www.hamburger-kunsthalle.de/ausstellungen/philippe-vandenberg

Through February 24, 2019

by Karen O'Shaughnessy

"To me, there is no happy painting, truly great painting always has something desperate about it, something frightening, something ugly even" – Philippe Vandenberg, 1997



Philippe Vandenberg (1952–2009), *To Love is to Flagellate I*, 1981–1998, Oil and charcoal on canvas, 152 x 302 cm, © The Estate of Philippe Vandenberg / Courtesy Hauser & Wirth

The dramatic sounding title of the Kunsthalle's great fall exhibition "Kamikaze" seems almost natural considering Phillippe Vandenberg's opinion about art.

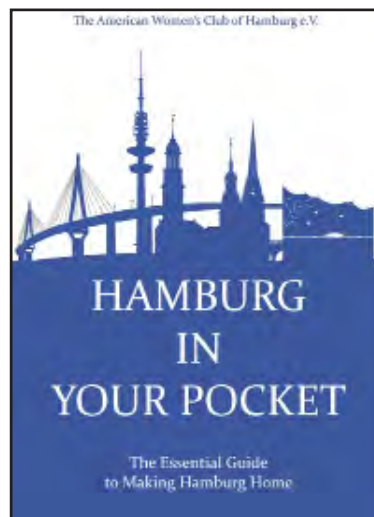
The Hamburg Kunsthalle is showing the biggest Vandenberg exhibition, and Germany's first ever exhibition of the Flemish artist. The diverse work ranges from large sheets of repetitive words and phrases, as well as blood-splattered work to large, relief-like, mono-colored canvases and figurative paintings reflecting relationships and family bonds.

Kamikaze—divine wind, in its original Japanese meaning—is best known for the self-destruction; suicidal maneuvers carried out by the Japanese air force in WWII. Philippe Vandenberg himself believed in the creative destruction, what he calls Kamikaze; that something new can only ascend from destroying something in return. Scrapping off paint from his canvases, re-applying new layers of color and repeating the process was therefore just as much one of his signature methods as his continuous use of real blood in his work.

Vandenberg uses the word Kamikaze itself in its original form or in abbreviations in his paintings, drawing attention to this self-reflection of his inner turmoil, it seems. This can also be observed in his stylistic breaks that come across as chaotic at first but then fall into place in a logical stream of his engagement for those different motifs, as controversial as they might seem. Torture, swastika, sexuality, religion and relationships, to just name a few. I therefore highly recommend a guided tour and/or many references to the exhibition book to be able to grasp the great but maybe troubled mind of Vandenberg in its full context.

In fact, this exhibition does not come across as a "happy place." Like Philippe Vandenberg's quote from the beginning, his paintings are surrounded with an aura of desperation, a tragedy even. According to Vandenberg that might just be great painting.

New to Hamburg? Lived here ages, but want to know more? This is the handbook for you; full of tips compiled over the last 30 years from AWCH members making Hamburg home. Recently updated, it contains useful cultural information, entertainment tips, as well as advice for getting your residency permits, navigating the school system, using public transportation, and even paying your taxes. With over 200 addresses and internet links to tried and tested restaurants, sport facilities, children activities, and much more, both newcomers and long-term



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Film Reviews and more...



RBG—Ein Leben Für Die Gerechtigkeit (RBG) **1/2**
 USA 2018
 Opening December 13, 2018

Directed by: Betsy West, Julie Cohen
 Writing credits: Documentary
 Principal actors: Ruth Bader Ginsberg, Nina Totenberg, Bill Clinton, Orrin Hatch, Lilly Ledbetter



Betsy West and Julie Cohen's *RBG* is informational, educational, political, emotional, historical, and entertaining, in essence owing to U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg. The Internet explodes whenever she writes a dissent; following a 2013 Supreme Court (S.C.) case, Ginsberg's fiery dissent earned the Internet meme Notorious R.B.G. (contrasting her with rapper Notorious B.I.G.). Ginsberg inspires television SNL (Saturday Night Live) skits, and "Super Diva!" T-shirt's double entendre honors her and her love for opera. The remarkable

Ginsberg is, at 84, an icon, especially with Millennials.

A Brooklyn, New York native, in 1956 Ruth was one of nine women attending Harvard Law School. In 1971, Ginsberg's first case argued before the Supreme Court (S.C.) was about the Constitution's Fourteenth Amendment's Equal Protection Clause to women, and in 1975 she argued a reverse discrimination lawsuit on behalf of a single father. Advocate Gloria Steinem gives credit for all Ginsberg's quiet work that changed laws regarding gender equality and women's equal rights. In 1980, President Jimmy Carter nominated Ginsberg to a U.S. Court of Appeals seat.

Her children, Jane and James, concur Marty allowed Ruth "to be serious and reserved." "Dad did the cooking, Mom the thinking." Their parents met at Cornell University, married a month after graduation, and then attended Harvard in Cambridge, Massachusetts. When President Clinton appointed Ginsberg to the S.C. in 1993, Marty willingly moved from New York to Washington, D.C. Three days after celebrating their 56th wedding anniversary in 2010, Marty died. (Watch for, "Marty Ginsberg for Supportive Husbanding" tucked in the end credits.)

This biographical doc, squeezes lots but not all details into 97 minutes, comprises pathos, grit, fortitude such as why Ruth learned to "burn the candle at both ends," and surprises. Production values are rock-solid; the point about Ginsberg "retiring" during President Obama's tenure is too subtle, considering a S.C. seat was held vacant 11-months in 2016 by the Republican-dominant Congress.

Prepared to step down when no longer able to forcefully do her job, Ginsberg quotes, "I ask no favor for my sex. All I ask of my brethren is that they take their boots off our necks." "What she did in the 1970s is very important now ... (laws will) help keep our country in check." Ginsberg's stature may be diminutive, but her prowess is monumental. "Oyez, Oyez, Oyez, the Court is now sitting." Sit yourself down, and see *RBG*. (Marinell Haegelin)

Gegen den Strom (Kona fer í stríð, Woman at War) ****
Iceland | France | Ukraine 2018
Opening December 13, 2018

Directed by: Benedikt Erlingsson
Writing credits: Ólafur Egilsson, Benedikt Erlingsson
Principal actors: Halldóra Geirharðsdóttir, Jóhann Sigurðarson, Juan Camillo Roman Estrada, Jörundur Ragnarsson

Director **Benedikt Erlingsson's** imaginative use of music as the (protagonist) emotional harbinger is distinctly alluring. The roll of drums, a flaring sousaphone, accordion trills or piano chords are interchanged, depending whether fair or ill winds blow. Whereas, Erlingsson depicts hope through a trio of singers in Ukrainian native attire; pay attention to the musical troupes' placement at the end.



The twins (both played by **Halldóra Geirharðsdóttir**) embrace life passionately in their beliefs, convictions, courage, and commitment. Halla is like a *valkyrie* grasping the tiller while steering fearlessly at her chosen target –currently the aluminum industry's wrongs to her country's ecosystem. Halla's actions reverberate throughout the island; police action intensifies,

as does media coverage. When not an activist, Halla directs a choir, whereas, Ása placidly lives her Zen-ness, and teaches yoga. A phone call's surprising news, in the form of little Niki (**Margaryta Hilska**), forces Halla to reevaluate priorities. When Sveinbjörn (**Jóhann Sigurðarson**) drops Halla off everything is progressing according to plan, and then it is not, and with no room to wiggle.

Cinematographer **Bergsteinn Björgúlfsson** encapsulates the pristine, and rugged, smudged Icelandic landscapes that atmospherically represents onscreen events in tone and texture. **Halldóra Geirharðsdóttir** blithely steps into that landscape to deliver an awe-inspiring performance. At the end is a scene with a dazzling twist; in tandem with Erlingsson and Björgúlfsson's camera, as the sisters' hug, Geirharðsdóttir lets audiences inside Halla's space/confusion, with the result that we all ultimately and simultaneously understand. **Davíð Þór Jónsson's** music adds flavorful dimensions; **David Alexander Corno** edits. A tourist character, clearly serving a purpose during the film, is uncharacteristically abandoned. Just as, using the musical troupes more sparingly could have had greater effect.

Erlingsson's individualistic style and quirky wit fuse with notable talent to command attention in this political satire film. *Woman at War* leaves an impression: She is definitely someone you want on your side. Icelandic with German subtitles, 101 minutes (Marinell Haegelin)

Mary Poppins Returns ****1/2
USA 2018
Opening December 20, 2018

Directed by: Rob Marshall
Writing credits: David Magee, John DeLuca
Principal actors: Emily Blunt, Lin-Manuel Miranda, Ben Whishaw, Emily Mortimer, Colin

Firth, Meryl Streep, Dick Van Dyke

Disney is taking us back to Cherry Tree Lane, where the mischievous Jane and Michael Banks were scaring away one nanny after the other, until Mary Poppins, practically perfect in every way, came along and taught not only the children, but the adults, what family is all about.

In this Disney masterpiece's sequel, we are set about 25 years after Mary Poppins left Jane and Michael Banks, flying off with her magical attire once the wind had changed.

Today, the Banks children are all grown up. Michael (**Ben Whishaw**) has children of his own, and Jane (**Emily Mortimer**) is an independent woman living by herself. One year after Michael's wife had died, he finds himself in deep money trouble. Seems like the perfect time for good ol' Mary (**Emily Blunt**) to come back, descending from the clouds with her talking umbrella, to once again help the Banks family. Together with her old friend Jack (**Lin-Manuel Miranda**), the friendly street lamplighter, Mary Poppins takes the new generation of Banks children on yet another adventure that again, won't just help the children, but will show the adults, how wonderful life can be.

This powerful musical pops with colors, adventures and memorable songs that may not quite reach up to the classics "a spoon full of sugar" or "Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious", yet do not need to shy away from comparison. However, there is nothing to compare anyway. Though the narrative pattern is close to the original, it presents a whole new spin on Mary Poppins' adventures, who even rocks a bob. Thanks to Emily Blunt who makes this magical Nanny her all-own Mary, we almost forget about Julie Andrews and her spoons of sugars and such nonsense.

Colorful and exciting for children, this film is actually for the grown-ups. For those who watched *Mary Poppins* as a child, and as adults are painfully aware that life does not get easier when you get older. You worry more, there is more to worry about and you cannot seem to overcome the longing for the innocent happiness you believed that you had lost long ago. Beautiful and practically perfect in every way. (Karen Eve O'Shaughnessy)



Mary Poppins Returns (Mary-Poppins' Rückkehr) ****

Let's go fly a kite as Mary Poppins (**Emily Blunt**) returns to the Banks family in their time of need. The Banks children of the *Mary Poppins* (1964), Michael and Jane, have grown up and now Michael's three precocious children are in need of a nanny. With the help of her friend Jack (**Lin-Manuel Miranda**), her trusty umbrella, and a dash of magic, Mary Poppins is determined to bring joy back to a family overwhelmed by a personal loss.

Whenever a sequel to a beloved classic is released, there is always a fear that it will not be capable of living up to the original. In many instances, this is the case, whether due to actual problems with the quality of the production or the mere influence of nostalgia.

However, somehow Disney has managed to recreate the magic of the original *Mary Poppins* some 54 years after its release.

Director **Rob Marshall** and screenwriter **David Magee** clearly have a fundamental understanding of what made the original film great and also how to play on nostalgia without it feeling tired or schmaltzy. The songs by **Marc Shaiman** and **Scott Wittman** evoke the original film and are catchy while not being too derivative. However all of this would mean nothing if were not for the true standout of *Mary Poppins Returns*, Emily Blunt.

The role of Mary Poppins seems so intertwined with Julie Andrews' voice and demeanor that it seems impossible for anyone else to take over the role in a meaningful way. Yet, Emily Blunt not only capably manages this feat she also succeeds in making the role her own. There is no doubt, that she will be lauded for this performance. Lin-Manuel Miranda also charms with his terrible cockney accent in the same eternally mocked style of **Dick Van Dyke**. Add to this a talented cast of supporting actors, some enjoyable dance scenes, and a wonderful amount of traditional animation, and what results is a delightful new family film that no one should miss. (Rose Finlay)

Westwood: Punk, Icon, Activist

***1/2
UK 2018
Opening December 20, 2018

Directed by: Lorna Tucker
Writing credits: documentary
Principal actors: documentary with Vivienne Westwood, Christina Hendricks, Kate Moss, André Leon Talley

In *Westwood: Punk, Icon, Activist* we are introduced to **Vivienne Westwood**, the petite fashionista originally from a working class family in North West England. She began her professional career as a primary school teacher

and housewife. It wasn't until she met Malcom McLaren, the future manager of the Sex Pistols that she began to take her hobby for fashion and start to work on it more professionally. She became one of the founders of punk fashion in the 1970s. After her personal and business relationship with McLaren ended in the '80s, she started out on her own and made an even bigger impact with her fashion shows. However, despite her popularity, the press was less than kind and it took until the early '90s for her to be recognized by the industry when she was voted Designer of the Year in 1990 and 1991. With comprehensive interviews, director **Lorna Tucker** highlights Westwood's quirky nature and how her politics play a strong role in the design of her clothes. She doesn't just design for beauty, but she is looking to combine quality with a political statement. Tucker focuses throughout the documentary mostly on the story of Vivienne Westwood herself and her clothes curiously come in second to her interesting personality and history. Nevertheless, the insight into the woman behind the fashion house and the behind-the-scenes look at her creative process makes this a worthwhile film to check out. (Rose Finlay)

„Eine herrlich exzentrische, einmalige Person und ein Mode-Original“ *The Guardian*

Ein Film von LORNA TUCKER



Die Schneiderin der Träume (Sir)

Opening: December 20, 2018
India / France 2018

Directed by: Rohena Gera
Writing credits: Rohena Gera
Principal actors: Tillotama Shome, Vivek Gomber, Geetanjali Kulkarni, Rahul Vohra, Divya Seth Shah



After two months of her arranged marriage Ratna's (**Tillotama Shome**) husband dies, making her a widow at 19. She now has to provide not only for herself but for her sister's education and leaves her village to find work in the big city. Her dream is to become a tailor. In Mumbai Ratna starts working for the affluent young architect Ashwin (**Vivek Gomber**) running his household. But will she be able to stay since he has returned from the United States without his fiancé and the wedding was called off? Gloomy and listless, the young man ignores her, sitting in his luxurious apartment in front of his computer or staring out at the glittering city below. Ratna stays in a tiny room next to the kitchen, watching him with concern. She tries to make him feel comfortable, serving him quietly and efficiently. They hardly speak but one feels that they are considerate of each other. After all, it is an intimate

space they are sharing.

Ashwin's family wants him to marry and he feels pushed by his dominating mother. When she once more tries to get him on the phone, he gestures to Ratna to lie for him. She seems to understand his misery by commenting, "parents are in such a hurry to marry us off," obviously referring to her own situation as well. It makes him realize that he too is bound by Indian tradition and his status in society. Ashwin's dream is to be a writer instead of working in his father's building company. He allows Ratna to study dress making in her free time, working toward her own dream. During a posh party, arranged by Ashwin's mother, Ratna is serving the snobbish crowd. When she stumbles and a female guest gets splattered with wine, she is rudely reprimanded by an arrogant lady. To everyone's surprise, her employer Ashwin comes to her rescue. This is unheard of and he will have a lot of explaining to do, not only to his demanding mother but also to his friends.

The Indian-born filmmaker **Rohena Gera** studied in California, New York and Paris. She herself grew up with domestic help at home in Pune and has a realistic look at the situation of her protagonists. With *Sir*, her first feature film (after years of TV-work, documentaries and script-writing), she is evoking a poignant love in a low-key manner. The characters' loneliness and daily confrontation builds a sensuous situation. Tillotama Shome is superb in her role as Ratna, a woman struggling with dignity for self-sufficiency despite the social rigidities she is facing. Ironically, for the same reason Ashwin feels unfree by living in a "golden cage".

Dominique Colin's camera moves smoothly from room to adjacent room of the apartment showing the couple in their solitude but yet connected. The dramatic tension is kept in balance with

Jacques Comet's thoughtful editing. Rohena Gera directs the extremely complex dynamics between all the protagonists with unobtrusive insight. "The film doesn't take on caste, but the way we deal with economically backward classes in India, perhaps, comes from the old casteist mentality", she says. *Sir* was screened at the *Critic's Week Sidebar* at Cannes and very deservedly won the Gan Foundation Award, as well as the audience prize at the Cabourg Film Festival in France. (Birgit Schrupp)

Der Junge muss an die frische Luft *****

Germany 2018
Opening December 25, 2018

Directed by: Caroline Link
Writing credits: Ruth Toma
Principal actors: Julius Weckauf, Luise Heyer, Sönke Möhring, Joachim Krol, Hedi Kriegeskotte, Ursula Werner, Rudolf Kowalski

Hans Peter (**Julius Weckauf**), his mother Margaret, father Heinz and brother Matthes live together with his paternal grandparents Bertha and Hermann in the German countryside. Later the family moves into a house shared by his maternal grandparents Anne and Willi in Recklinghausen, a small town in the so-called Ruhrpott, in the central-western part



of Germany. He enjoys interacting with a large extended family, especially with his various aunts: Gertrud, Lisbeth (who is a nun), and Annemarie (who sings at every opportunity). Perhaps they are middleclass, but there is enough money to buy a horse and the whole family goes to the stables to watch him learn to ride. This is Hans Peter at age seven to nine, 1971-73. He is a nice boy, a bit "plump," with a talent for comedy. For example, he dresses up as a princess for Mardi Gras, entertains an appreciative audience with a small role in a school play, and impersonates customers at his grandmother's small general store. He loves to watch comedians on television. This talent is a life-saver, as life has its tragedies, in this case the death of two family members, but sometimes he can't contain himself. It becomes too strenuous and the family says, "The boy needs some fresh air," which is the English translation of the title.

This is based on an autobiography of the same title by Hape Kerkeling, in which he often quotes his grandfather Willi who says, "Everything is possible if you don't give up," something Willi learned on a 300-kilometer foot march home after serving in World War II. Director **Caroline Link** turned 60 pages of Kerkeling's life into a biopic. If you are familiar with Kerkeling, as artist, musician, comedian, and author, you might watch the movie with images of him in your mind. Anyone with no knowledge of the real Kerkeling will appreciate the film, simply due to the talented newcomer, nine-year-old Julius Weckauf, who plays young Hans Peter. This is Julius' first film; he was chosen after the production crew sorted and interviewed 5000 candidates in casting. He definitely has a career ahead of him, if he decides to continue along this line. (Becky Tan)

Drei Gesichter (3 Faces) ***

Iran 2018

Opening December 26, 2018

Directed by Jafar Panahi

Writing credits: Jafar Panahi, Nader Saeivar

Principal actors: Behnaz Jafari, Jafar Panahi, Marziyeh Rezaei

Director **Jafar Panahi** and actress **Behnaz Jafari** play themselves in a road movie, which requires close-ups of them sitting in a car. Jafari has received a mysterious video in which a young girl, Maedeh, (**Maedeh Erteghael**) pleads for help. Supposedly, she is attending a Tehran drama school.



But is she committing suicide? Hanging from a tree? Or is this an enacted school drama? Panahi and Jafari jump into the car and use up the rest of the film's 100 minutes to converse, talk with people along the way (often in Turkish, since this is the language of the area) and show us beautiful Iranian landscapes. The best scenes portray typical Iranian customs. For example, we learn that it is dishonorable for a young girl to strive for an acting career. Or a young boy enrolled in university first cuts off his foreskin, which is then buried on the university campus to ensure that he become successful in his studies. The university

campus gardens are full of fore-skins of young men, who strive to become doctors or engineers. The film *3 Faces* showed at the 2018 Filmfest Hamburg, where Panahi was honored with the festival's 2018 Douglas Sirk Prize. Panahi is probably Iran's most successful film director, having won festival prizes in Berlin (*Taxi*), Locarno (*The Mirror*), and Venice (*The Circle*). Presently his creative efforts are hindered by restraining government decisions which forbid him to leave Iran, as well as being prohibited to make films in general, something which he has successfully worked around, as proven in this newest production. The Douglas Sirk Prize has been awarded every year since 1995, when it went to Clint Eastwood. Since then other talented filmmakers such as Jim Jarmusch (1999), Isabelle Huppert (2003), and Tilda Swinton (2013) have been honored. Panahi received the award for his life's work since 1995, when he first gained recognition with *The White Balloon*. Because Panahi could not leave his native country, Iran, his daughter Solmaz Panahi came in from her home in Paris to accept the prize for him, accompanied by actress Behnaz Jafari. He thanked the audience via a videotape. (Becky Tan)

Sibel *****

France/Germany/Luxemburg/
Turkey 2018

Opening December 27, 2018

Directed by: Çağla Zencirci, Guillaume Giovanetti

Writing credits: Çağla Zencirci, Guillaume Giovanetti, Ramata Sy

Principal actors: Damla Sönmez, Emin Gürsoy, Erkan Kolçak Köstendil, Elit Iscan, Meral Çetinkaya

Sibel (**Damla Sönmez**) lives with her younger sister Fatma (**Elit Iscan**) and her father Emin (**Emin Gürsoy**) in a small mountainous village in Turkey near the Black Sea. Emin is the mayor of the village and also has a small shop.

Fatma goes to school, although these days might be numbered, as she is a likely candidate for marriage. Sibel is 25 years old and helps her father; there is no longer any mother in the house. Sibel also works in the fields with the other village women and brings food to elderly Narin, who is confused and believes that her fiancé will reappear after all these years. After suffering fever as a child, Sibel can no longer speak. She communicates in a language of whistles, which the villagers understand. Due to her handicap, Sibel is an outsider; this prevents her from interacting in the small conservative community, but at the same time, allows her to overstep certain boundaries and make her own way. She often goes



into the forest with a rifle (a present from her father) to look for the wolf that terrorizes the population. She has a small hut in the forest. One day she discovers Ali (Erkan Kolçak Köstendil), an injured soldier who has gone AWOL. She sets him up in her hut and treats his injuries; this is her first encounter with a

man, a rare occasion as her culture prevents women from interacting with anyone outside of the family.

The film *Sibel* definitely deserved to win a prize at the Filmfest Hamburg, as well as prizes at other festivals such as Montpellier and Locarno. Directors Zencirci and Giovanetti visited the actual village Kuşköy where this whistling is truly recognized as a language practiced by the villagers to communicate. They said, "The whistled dialog in the film is real, and Damla Sönmez learned the language from a whistle-language coach." The whistling reminds one of birds in the forest. Background music is unnecessary except at the opening and the ending for the credits, so that we can concentrate without interruption, as Sibel grows into probably the first emancipated woman in her archaic environment. (Becky Tan)

Der kleine Drache Kokosnuss – Auf in den Dschungel ***

Germany 2018

Opening December 27, 2018

Directed by: Anthony Power

Writing credits: Mark Slater, Anthony Power, Gabriele M. Walther

Principal actors: animation voiced by Max von der Goeben, Carolin Kebekus, Dustin Semmelrogge

Kokosnuss (Coconut) and his friend Oskar are on their way to summer camp on a jungle island. Although a specialty camp for fire dragons and gorge dragons (*Feuerdrachen*, *Fressdrachen*), they ignore the rules and smuggle their friend Matilda, a porcupine, onto the boat. Also on board are Chef, the cook, Miss Proselinde, the teacher, and Kokosnuss' father Magnus. Three dragon sisters, Ananas, Mango, and Pampelmuse (pineapple, mango, and grapefruit), and dragons Desirée, Dennis and Dirk come along. Naturally the trip does not go smoothly, ending with the boat ramming a cliff and sinking halfway, a foot march into the jungle, strange dragons speaking an unfamiliar language, separation from the group, and, worst of all: a meat-eating plant which loves to chew on dragons. Two new friends appear: Wokk, a young water dragon, and Amadeus, an experienced sea dragon.

This is a sequel to *Der kleine Drache Kokosnuss – Feuerfeste Freunde*, which showed in 2014. Both are based on popular books by Ingo Siegner. Although much is discussed about the camp, the group arrives only after 54 minutes into the film, and leaves five minutes later. It's all about getting there. The story emphasizes the value of friendships in spite of misunderstandings and contrary opinions, important messages for children five years and older, as well as the whole family. At 83 minutes, the film seems too long and becomes repetitive in parts. However, the colors and the music are so good that we can forgive this problem. The various dragon ethnic groups are identifiable in colors blue, pink, orange, or lilac. The jungle is gorgeous. The fun, jazzy, jivey music comes from Young Chinese Dogs, a German (in spite of the name) pop band from Munich. (Becky Tan)



The Favourite *****

Ireland | UK | USA 2018
Opening January 3, 2019

Directed by: Yorgos Lanthimos
Writing credits: Deborah Davis, Tony McNamara
Principal actors: Olivia Colman, Emma Stone, Rachel Weisz, Joe Alwyn, Nicholas Hoult, Mark Gatiss, James Smith

Queen Anne (**Olivia Colman**) is old, ailing and plagued with gout. She seeks solace in the company of Sarah Churchill (**Rachel Weisz**) who has risen on her husband's coattails to become the Duchesse of Marlborough. Sarah overreaches herself and uses her position to empower her husband..... Sounds like serious stuff, but it most certainly isn't. Director **Yorgos Lanthimos** has made a modern version of a Restoration drama complete with swear words you wouldn't imagine a queen would hear, let alone use, and all the intrigue that such plays are known for. Add superb attention to detail in costume and set design and you are transported back to England's early eighteenth century. The characters may not move as people did in the seventeen hundreds but the writers have done a wonderful job of making them talk as if they lived then. The acting is flawless, with both **Olivia Colman** and **Emma Stone** giving superb performances.

The Duke of Marlborough is fighting the French in a long drawn out, unpopular and expensive war. Sarah is using her influence with the queen to get her to persuade parliament to increase taxes to pay for it. The queen's Prime Minister Lord Godolphin (**James Smith**) explains that raising taxes will be unpopular and ruinous to those who pay them, namely the country's landowners. What is the poor, sad queen to do? Luckily she has someone else to turn to and that is Abigail (Emma Stone, with a perfect English accent) who has turned up at court as Sarah's penniless cousin and who, like Sarah has very grand designs to improve her status.

This dark comedy is fast paced and fascinating even though it may not be entirely historically correct. Who cares, however, when it is such a jolly good romp? (Jenny Mather)

The Favourite (The Favourite—Intrigen und Irrsinn) ****1/2

Director **Yorgos Lanthimos'** version of 18th century England's royal court drama drips with opulence, and seduces with sumptuous visual indulgences. The enfeebled Queen Anne (**Olivia Colman**) is attended by and relies heavily on cousin-cum-Lady Sarah Marlborough (**Rachel Weisz**). Sarah's advice has intentional effect; Earl Godolphin (**James Smith**) at Treasury leads the Tories (dark wigs) and domi-

nates Queen Anne's 1st Parliament. Lord Marlborough (**Mark Gatiss**) commands the army; whilst the war in France drains the coffers, a coalition (white wigs) led by the Speaker, Earl Harley (**Nicholas Hoult**) is maneuvering to end it. Into this hotbed of party line intrigues, gossip, and decadence arrives a downfallen cousin (**Emma Stone**) beseeching Sarah for a position. Abigail's circumstances, and forthcoming manner initially prompts amity. That then develops into irritation until finally, a breach between

them. Abigail's conundrum is a checkered background, an innate sense of decency, and her position.

Lanthimos' talent shines spectacularly in this filmic exercise. Audiences are served an extraordinary, optically provocative experience courtesy of **Robbie Ryan's** cinematography, **Yorgos Mavropsaridis'** poised editing, complete with staggeringly germane music. The cast is excellent; especially fabulous are repartees between/among the nimble Stone, Weisz, and Colman characters. Pivotal is **Fiona Crombie's** production design, **Lynne Huitson's** art direction team, **Alice Felton's** set decoration, and **Sandy Powell's** costume designs—make a point of paying attention to their stunning work.

Considering the exquisite attention to flavor and details during the film, its least favorite attribute is the apathetically weak ending; audiences, and *The Favourite* deserved better. 120 minutes (Marinell Haegelin)



Theater in Hamburg

Tonight's Bill of Fare Is Chaos & Confusion

By Marinell Haegelin



Debbie Radcliffe/ Kathryn Troy and Alan Booty/Sven Ivorsen

One winter's night in 1965, five individuals' foibles collide, and absurdities abound during dinner. Whatever could be the cause? Through subtly written, clever dialogue, Jack Sharkey exposes each character's personality. "O, what a tangled web we weave when first we practice to deceive!" Walter Scott.

Tonight's the night – Jeremy's boss is coming to dinner! Before leaving, he magnanimously offers stay-at-home Kathryn their car for shopping – they're hopeful Mr. Ivorsen will announce Jeremy's promotion to full partner in the firm. Dashing out, Jeremy forgets legal briefs; therefore, Kathy's surprised when Charles Bickle, artist-cum-professional sponger arrives, arms overloaded with art supplies and oozing charm. Returning for the briefs, Jeremy's speechless at seeing old college chum Charlie. To give them time to reacquaint, good-sport Kathy takes the waiting taxi and briefs to Jeremy's office. Whereas, his and Charlie's tête-à-tête exposes Jeremy's long-held dirty lil' secret—he forged his law diploma. Quickly pressing his advantage—accommodations for the unforeseeable future—Charlie settles in by arranging for an artist's model, ignoring Jeremy's pleas. Then, the shapely model arrives. Returning, Kathryn misinterprets Tina's chatter thinking Jeremy's having an affair; the guys' double-talk makes matters worse, and Kathy storms out. Frantic, Jeremy's solutions involve more lies, and two accomplices. Thus, when his blowhard

Here Lies Jeremy Troy,

a farce by Jack Sharkey at the English Theatre of Hamburg
with Robert Rumpf directing



James Walmsley/Jeremy Troy and Stephen Chance/Charles Bickle

boss turns up, everyone's role-playing. "What could possibly go wrong?" Ohm, Kathy reappearing? A late snowstorm? And dinner's yet to be served.

A prolific writer, American dramatist Jack Sharkey turned exclusively to playwriting in 1975. Thereafter, he wrote 83 scripts, plus comedies and musicals under his name and four pseudonyms. Sharkey, a child prodigy "found the daily (piano) practicing a drag," yet composed music, and directed as well. Written in 1965, *Here Lies Jeremy Troy* was his first play, and mixes pathos with laugh-out-loud sections.

"I have wanted to do it (*sic*) since we started the theatre," said director Robert Rumpf, who waited 42 years for the right combination of actors, and set designer (Mathias Wardeck). London Casting Director Gordon Griffin narrowed the playing field by videoing five groups (of actors) reading scenes, which Rumpf viewed and cast remotely from Hamburg. Rumpf knows farce: "The actors have to take their characters seriously to make a farce work. Their performance is not supposed to be funny to them, only to the audience." Equally,

Rumpf worked out characters' interactions when he blocked the play, refining movements later with the thespians onstage. James Walmsley pointed out

Stephen Chance/Charles Bickle's biggest challenge occurs nightly: he enters the stage, his arms full of artist's props that he puts down, while delivering key dialogue introducing his character. Each audience's initial reaction influences how he places the many props that shortly he must easily, quickly remove. Isobel Wood/Tina Winslow focused on adding substance to her seemingly ditzy character. She appreciated Sharkey adding dialogue in the last scene justifying Tina's mettle, and honesty. Since he's not in Act 1, a first in his long career, Alan Booty/Sven Ivorsen developed tricks to keep his energy at the right pitch. Booty also focused on the correct balance between Ivorsen's pretentiousness that's essentially a guise to hide Ivorsen's insecurities. Other than Wood in her premiere stage role, all have previously appeared onstage at the English Theatre.

The English Theatre's current comedy menu is a delicious way to chase away winter blues. Even in his title, Sharkey's wordplay is compelling: a



LtoR: Debbie Radcliffe/ Kathryn Troy, Alan Booty/Sven Ivorsen, Stephen Chance/Charles Bickle, James Walmsley/Jeremy Troy and Isobel Wood/Tina Winslow

that having a director who works with the actors is especially gratifying.

A unique form of comedy, farce mixes exaggerated buffoonery in absurd, improbable situations to entertain, that post-war American theater accented using dramatic poignancy. The London farceurs concurred that for audiences to understand each character's personality and underlying motives, their delivery, and timing is critical. James Walmsley/Jeremy Troy was challenged by a dialogue-intensive role, and its physicality. Walmsley intuitively keeps a well-adjusted reign on exaggerations to help audiences appreciate Jeremy's dilemma. In the clichéd homemaker role, Debbie Radcliffe/Kathryn placed importance on an empathetic portrayal to reveal her character's genuine personality. For example, concentration is required when Kathryn/Radcliffe talks at length about deeper feelings, as she simultaneously moves a prop offstage, without disrupting its emotional rhythm and flow.



Debbie Radcliffe/ Kathryn Troy and Isobel Wood/Tina Winslow

certain camaraderie grows among the five table companions, plus a doozy of a twist at the end. Who would've thought lying's so easy and fun!

HERE LIES JEREMY TROY premiered November 11 and runs until February 2, 2019. The next production is BEAUTY OF THE FATHER, a play by Nilo Cruz. Premiering on February 14, it runs through April 13, 2019.

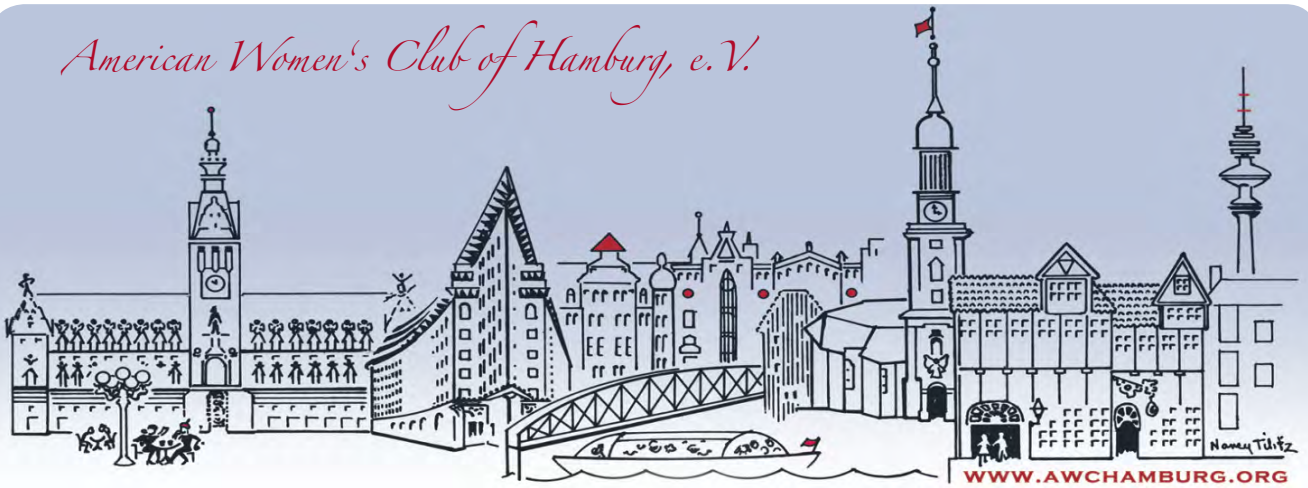
Evening and matinee performances; tickets available at the theatre or online: www.englishtheatre.de. The English Theatre of Hamburg, Lerchenfeld 14, 22081 Hamburg, Tel: 040-227 70 89: U-Bahn Mundsburg.



Stephen Chance/Charles Bickle and Isobel Wood/Tina Winslow

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American Women's Club of Hamburg, e.V.



Holiday Party

