Contents

What Karen Has To Say ................................................................. 3
News From The Board ..................................................................... 4
Chinese New Year In Becky's Family ............................................ 5
Chinese New Year ........................................................................ 5
Exploring The Area Of The Savoy .................................................. 6
First AWC English Movie Night At The Savoy A Complete Success 7
Ask A Computer Nerd ..................................................................... 8
Multimedia Recommendations For Opera Fans ............................. 9
The Opera ...................................................................................... 9
Report From The Staatsoper ............................................................ 9
Activity Calendar February 2014 .................................................... 10
Valentine's Day With Your Hubby, Or Any Other Man ................. 12
A Single's Guide To Valentine’s Day ............................................ 12
Membership/Congratulations ....................................................... 12
Congratulations ............................................................................ 12
February Birthday Girls! ............................................................... 12
New Members ................................................................................ 13
FAWCO News .............................................................................. 14
At The Movies ............................................................................... 15
Berlinale 2014 .............................................................................. 21
Danke! Danke! Danke! ................................................................. 22
What Karen has to say

It is done. I finally finished the second monthly issue of the AWCH's new Currents. You will see it is not all that new. Changes have been made, to an extent however, that I do not believe will be too obvious to you. Despite that, we will continue with the change as a kind of slower metamorphosis, some good will here, and a little pinch of Dragon blood there, and voilà we’ve got a little magic potion to make our little Currents a big boy.

I learned the layout from scratch. As I found out, knowing all other Adobe Programs does not necessarily mean that you are proficient in InDesign. But thank goodness for the internet. Google, Youtube and co, were my steady and highly appreciated companions throughout the process of formatting this issue. Thank you all for helping and supporting me with this task, especially Shawn and Brooke, for their mental support, my designer colleagues from work, who shared short cuts and other nic nacs with me. A huge thank you goes especially to Allie, who will hopefully peek into our online version every now and then from afar and be content with how I picked up from her and how we implemented her ideas for Currents.

One of the main changes, which Allie has already mentioned before will be moving from the system of having one general topic to individual columns. This does not exclude thematic writing at all! I can imagine that for the summer or especially Christmas our topics will automatically generate themselves under a general theme.

We have great new columns such as the tech-column „Ask a Nerd“ written by Cat C. who will generously share her computer wisdom with the not so talented computer operators. We will try to write more about Citizen Issues, which FAWCO covers to some extent, but will try to break it down to a more common level for us. What citizenship does my German- born baby have? Should I speak German or English with my children and what’s up with my taxes? Questions I’ve heard several times at get-togethers of the club.

You will hear more about all of this at the AGM from me

Enjoy reading. Karen
Starting with a bang

The New Year is starting off with a bang! Last year was a year of change, which can sometimes be difficult. This year, my hope is that we keep the momentum going to strengthen our friendships and spread positive energy, enriching our lives and the lives of those around us. There is so much we can do, so much we can learn from each other, and so much we have to look forward to!

In that spirit, we have a lot of new members to welcome and a lot of great events coming up. First of all, our AGM will be on February 9. We have a lot of information and some new ideas to discuss with you, so please try to make it!

We also have a lot of fun and informative events in the planning stages. Our dance workshop last year was so successful; I thought it would be nice to offer a few more active events. Marinell and Ulrike have done some research into a self-defense course that we would like to organize and also an informational evening about home and personal protection. David Opperman, who is our local American CPA, has agreed to do an informal Q&A about how to get caught up on your US taxes. On May 9 we are once again invited to join The American Club for an evening of theatre and wine at The English Theatre, so please save that date and look for the upcoming invitation.

In addition, we have a lot of new on-going groups. Tracy has started a monthly English Movie Night, at the Savoy Filmtheater. We are also planning to start a monthly dinner group, to visit various restaurants around town. I would also like to get a Book Club going. If there is enough interest, I would love to give it a personal development twist, maybe going through some Louise Hay books or something similar. And if not, we could read novels! I’m open to suggestions, so if you are interested, please contact me. Pres@awchamburg.org

I look forward to seeing you soon!

Shawn, President of the AWCH

THANK YOU

On behalf of the club, we wish to offer our heart-felt gratitude to the members of the board who are leaving their positions this month.

Tina, thank you for keeping the club busy and all the wonderful memories you helped us create. I don’t think anyone realizes exactly how much work you put into that.

Denise, thank you for being the club’s right hand, and all the work you did to help us recruit and keep the club going.

Jess, thank you for all your work behind the scenes, in the data bank, on the website, and as the first friendly face welcoming new members. The club wouldn’t be the same without all of you!
Happy New Year! xīn nián kuài lè!
You may think this comes a little late, but in fact, this is exactly what is said all over the world among the Asian and especially Chinese communities. January 31, Chinese New Year promised fortune and good luck in the year of the wooden horse. The festivities take as along as two weeks, only ending with the Lantern Festival, this year February 14.

Similar to our Gregorian calendar’s 12 months, the Chinese lunar calendar breaks down into cycles of 12, represented by 12 different animals. Each year is assigned to a different animal, as well as one of 5 elements (metal, wood, earth, water and fire.) This year will be the promising year of the wooden horse. According to the Chinese calendar, this year will be full of changes, turmoils and industrial success, however, watch out! This year is supposed to be marked for many natural catastrophes as well! And if you were born in one of the following years, previous horse-years, you may experience all these changes in your life more than others do: 1942, 1954, 1966, 1978, 1990, 2002.

For the economy CNY creates a bigger challenge. Similar to our Christmas and New Year holidays, this time is comparable to a total lockdown of Chinese industry. Millions of Asian employers travel throughout this time to see family and friends spread all over the expansive country and often have journeys of several days ahead of them. It’s not only this one official week of CNY that challenges the industry, rather 20 days before and after. Even at my work, every year we dread the beginning of the year, as it means months of advanced planning and scheduling of business trips, delivery and production periods. If you want your goods to be sent out from China February 7th this year, for example, you must try again. No can do. All are gone on holidays. Your goods must just be sitting somewhere in the rain waiting for the one person responsible for them to come back from his family visit to somewhere in China.

I was lucky enough to have spent the Chinese New Year celebration in 2007, the year of the pig, in China myself, and was awed, by the food, the fireworks every day, all night, for two weeks, and all the happiness, in the streets. What a wonderful holiday! I wish you all a great year of the horse.

Chinese New Year in Becky’s Family
by Becky T.

In the 48 years my husband Lian-Hie and I lived in Hamburg we celebrated Chinese New Year every year in a Chinese restaurant. Our main goal was to eat ourselves silly. This was always in the company of a group of Chinese from Indonesia who had, like my husband, come to Hamburg in the late ’50s to study. Most of them studied medicine, and like us, decided to stay in Hamburg instead of returning to Jakarta to make the hard-working Chinese parents proud (and, hopefully, rich).

So, Chinese New Year was predominantly a festival of food. We put money into little red envelopes, called hóngbāo, and gave them to our children as presents. Lian-Hie was always terribly proud of being born in the year of the Tiger, which he considered something special, much better than his wife, daughter, and granddaughter who are all Snakes, or his son, who is a Dog. How proud he was of his new granddaughter born in the Year of the Dragon – the highest possible rank in the 12 possible zodiac signs in the Chinese calendar.
The Clubs’ New Movie Night

Exploring the Area of the Savoy

by Thebna F.

Did I hear someone say she doesn’t like going to the English language movies at Savoy because Steindamm is such a “bad” area? Well, please get in your adventure mode, my dear, because Steindamm is actually an exciting multi-cultural area which one should explore, if only for its culinary delights.

First on the “tour” are the many ethnic grocery stores - Turkish, Persian, Arabic, etc. Just roaming the aisles is an educational experience and will tempt you to try out new exotic foods. Largest of the grocery stores is the Lindenbazar on Lindenstr.

Before an afternoon film at Savoy, you might want to try out a Turkish bakery. No, Turks don’t just eat baklava with their wonderful tea and mocca. They also have lots of delicious cookies, éclairs, other pastries and puddings. Whole colorful layer cakes are on sale to take home in an easy to carry bakery box. Two good cafés practically next door to Savoy are Rodi’s Simit café (Steindamm 50) and Back-Lava (Steindamm 62).

So now you have seen the film but you are hungry for a real meal. How to decide?! There are almost too many restaurants to choose from. Kabul Restaurant (Afghan) on Steindamm 53 has a cheap, all you can eat buffet. La Famiglia (Italian), Böckmannstr. 14) - across from a large mosque - serves rustic home cooking. Teheran (Iran), Adenaueralle 70, is a favorite of many people. Be adventurous. There is one restaurant after the other on Steindamm and on its side streets.

Get a copy of “Be Well in St. Georg”, a free publication of the area published by the Bezirksamt HH-Mitte. See all St. Georg has to offer - shops, theaters, a very active community center and more. This will tempt you to go to St. Georg even when you are not going to the movies.

Privacy Policy Reminder!

by Shawn K.

With our club’s plunge into the digital age, this seems like a good time to remind you of our Privacy Policy. In our Membership Application, which every member was required to sign, the Disclaimer reads: You also grant permission to the AWCH to use your likeness and that of your family members on its website and publications (last names will be omitted) unless you request otherwise in writing. If you would like to exercise your right to keep your name and likeness out of Currents, both paper and digital, please send your written request to the AWC board ASAP. Thanks!
First AWC English Movie Night at the Savoy

a Complete Success

By Tracy M.

Seven members met at the Savoy Movie Theater on Sunday evening, January 26th to watch 12 Years A Slave, starring Chiwetel Ejifor. The Oscar nominated film is the true story of Solomon Northrup and his incredible fight for survival and freedom. In the pre-Civil War United States, Solomon Northup (Chiwetel Ejiofor), a free black man from upstate New York, is abducted and sold into slavery. Facing cruelty (personified by a malevolent slave owner, portrayed by Michael Fassbender), as well as unexpected kindnesses, Solomon struggles not only to stay alive, but to retain his dignity. In the twelfth year of his unforgettable odyssey, Solomon's chance meeting with a Canadian abolitionist (Brad Pitt) will forever alter his life.

Check the film review of Rose F. at awchamburg.org for more details on the movie.

We had the chance to chat before and after the film, enjoying a drink in the Savoy Bar.

Please come join us for our next visit to the Savoy on February 23.

See you at the movies!

Karen M.
It's so nice to have someone join me watch english movies. My friends, though all capable of writing and understanding English rather watch most movies in their German translation as it is nevertheless more comfortable and easier to understand. I am looking forward to having a set movie date with AWCH!

Brooke V.
I am usually one of those people that hears about a movie now and then from friends and thinks, “Oh, I'd love to see that,” but then 6 months later when that movie comes out on video I realize that I'm too late. So, I'd like to send a personal thank you to Tracy for giving me a reason to get to the theater. Secondly, I have to say that The Savoy is the nicest theater I've ever been to!

Katia T.
The movie night is great because you get to see those “must-see” movies that you wanted to see but never got to get your friends together to actually go. Also, you can decide until the last minute if you really want to go. If you don't, you won't have any costs. If you do, tickets are reserved for you!

English Movie Night at the Savoy
New AWCH Event!

Starting in 2014 there will be a new monthly event at the Savoy Movie theater in St. Georg: English Movie Night at the Savoy.

Here is how it works:
Respond to the evite and tickets will be reserved for you at the theater. You arrive no later than 30 minutes before the movie begins to pick up and pay for your tickets at the ticket desk. Easy!

If you can't make the showing, your tickets will be deleted from the system at no charge to you.

If you are not there 30 min prior to the showing, your reservation is cancelled and seat reassigned, so don't be late!
As we’ve been working to bring our club further into the digital world, I’ve had several members ask me this question.

Technically speaking, Twitter is known as a "microblogging platform". Blogs or "weblogs" are essentially web sites that are regularly updated with topical posts or articles. A "microblog" just means a blog where the length of the content you provide in each post is very short. Twitter is the ultimate "microblog" because it limits each post, or "tweet", to 140 characters (not words, characters!).

"Ok," I hear you say, "I don't care how the nerds define it. What does Twitter actually do? What is it for?

Twitter, like Facebook (or Instagram, or tumblr, or pintrest, or many other services that might be topics for another article), is a social media-type service. This means that when you sign up, you choose whom you’d like to "follow" -- whose tweets you want to see in your timeline. And other people can follow you, so that they can see any tweets you send in their timeline. So far this doesn’t sound too different than a Facebook timeline or pintrest board -- except for the limit on the length of the status messages.

But there are several factors that make Twitter unique in the social media world.

The basic Twitter interface is a very simple text-based one. Posting a message to your timeline ("tweeting") feels a lot like texting or instant messaging. You simply type in your text, and because you have to keep it short, you often resort to texting abbreviations like omg or cul8r. To "tag" another Twitter user in the message, you simply add their username with an "@" in front of it anywhere inside the message. There are many of these types of text shortcuts, which makes this a very smartphone-friendly type of service. Sure, on the website and in the Twitter app, you can do fancier things like add a photo or link to your tweet, but to use the basic interface, you just need to know how to text.

Although Twitter does have "following" and privacy controls that let you control the audience of your tweets, it is by culture a very public forum. In general, people tweet when they want to be heard by a larger audience, and give that audience a place to respond. Twitter is also less invasive in terms of the information it requests from you and how it tracks your posts, so some people prefer it to Facebook simply on security grounds.

But the real power of Twitter is in what’s called a "hashtag". This is another one of those text shortcuts, using the "hash" character (#). Any user can insert words into a message that begin with a hash, and that creates an instant index. You and any other user worldwide who knows this tag can almost instantly filter all messages posted with that same tag in real time. How does that work in practice? For example, a conference organizer could ask all attendees to include a hashtag "#confencename" in any tweets they make about or during the conference -- and then they have real-time access to comments about which panel presenters were best liked, how people like the food and venue, etc. Or a presenter could ask all audience members to tweet questions with a specific hashtag during the presentation, and at the conclusion of the presentation, she has a ready-made list of questions.

The Twitter hashtag allows any Twitter user anywhere in the world to instantly create a topic-based microcommunity, exchanging ideas and comments. This could last a few hours or days (#breakingbadfinale, #grammys), or could be a long-term worldwide movement (#arabsping). In effect, you don’t just follow people, you can also follow topics.

Because it’s fast, mobile, public, and has this capability to create instant online discussions, Twitter has become one of the biggest on-the-ground news sources, and has played a part in the organization of political movements worldwide.

So what is Twitter for? Any or all of the following:

#Getting information from organizations and individuals you admire or find interesting -- and giving them feedback
#Organizing groups of people
#On-site event information
#Getting alternative perspectives during big news events
#Anything else you can think of!

Here’s what the official Twitter marketing department has to say about what it’s for: http://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=4an4_n5n52u

And that’s Twitter! For more information, you can always contact me at webgineer@awchamburg.org; have a look at the resources below, or (naturally!) Tweet me (@catconner). Happy tweeting!

WIKIPEDIA ARTICLE: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twitter
GETTING STARTED WITH TWITTER: https://support.twitter.com/groups/50-welcome-to-twitter/topics/204-the-basics/articles/215585-getting-started-with-twitter

8 American Women’s Club of Hamburg e.V.
Preparations are in full swing for the new Opera Club season! On February 7, we will commence our exploration of the operas of Richard Strauss.

Music lovers, I would highly recommend that you get to know Strauss’ operas if you haven't already had the pleasure. Here are some of the main reasons why:

- **Women!** Strauss certainly seems to have been one of our biggest fans. What gorgeous music he wrote for soprano and mezzo-soprano voices! He loved to put the focus on female characters, as evinced by opera titles like Elektra, Salome, and Arabella. Even the male title role in Der Rosenkavalier is meant to be played by a female. (Why is this? Meeting 2 of this season will provide the answer as we delve into the “what” and “why” of such “trouser roles”.)
- **German language.** The libretti (texts) of Strauss’ operas are all in German, which makes them more accessible to us in terms of not just the words, but also the culture behind the music.
- **Psychological opera!** Strauss' lighter-spirited operas are perhaps better known, but the twisty psychology of some of the characters (women, of course) in his darker works is simply unforgettable.
- **Leitmotiv heaven.** Opera Club members have already been exposed to some fascinating Leitmotive during our Wagner/Der fliegende Holländer season, and Strauss makes brilliant, elaborate use of these recurring themes in his own variations.

Here are a few Strauss opera recommendations: Der Rosenkavalier, Elektra, Salome, Ariadne auf Naxos, and Arabella.

---

**Report from the Staatsoper**

Fellow Opera Club member Andrea H. and I attended Lohengrin recently at the Staatsoper here in Hamburg. This was my first longer Wagner opera. What a brilliant evening it was!

A “classical” version of Lohengrin would be set in 10th century Antwerp with all its attendant nobles, royalty, knights, etc. The production we saw and heard, however, is known as the “schoolroom Lohengrin”, as it is set in a pre-WWI educational institution. Plenty of chalk-throwing accompanied schoolboys’ wooden sword fighting, while the schoolgirls squabbled and pulled each others’ braids - and this was just the chorus. It’s not a version you see every day! But it’s apparently become quite “kult” here in Germany.

We were likewise enthused about this engrossing and marvelous performance with its fine selection of singers and at least one true ultimate “chocolate cake moment”, as Andrea put it.

This won’t be the last performance of Lohengrin for either of us.

---

**Multimedia recommendations for opera fans**

Adriaan Fuchs' free podcast, On and Off the Record. Fuchs takes one opera singer per program and presents a biography loaded with music clips and interview material that is consistently engrossing. His Maria Callas series recently fascinated me for hours.

The podcast is available via iTunes or at http://www.onandofftherecord.com/.
This isn't all! Sometimes special events come up after the Currents deadline. In this case we will use Evites and our e-Newsletter to notify members. Check your email and our online calendar for the most up-to-date event information.

**Stitch’n’Bitch**

**Tuesday, February 4 and 17 any time after 19:00**

Where: Watch the newsletter for location information

Otherwise known as Portable Hobby Night. Come join us for lots of laughs and snacks, a glass of wine, and some crafting.

### ONGOING ACTIVITIES

**HH Helpers**

This group helps new AWCH Club Members to live the good life in Hamburg! If you have recently joined our club and need some assistance, you are encouraged to contact Regina D.

She will not only give you details about the next New Members’ Event but also refer you to the HH Helper in your area and to the groups and committees that might interest you. If you have already been a club member for some time and are interested in assisting new members in your area, please let us know. We are looking for more HH Helpers – especially in the western and southern parts of Hamburg. Contact Regina at hhelpers@awchamburg.org

**Opera Club**

At the monthly meetings of the Opera Club, we are discovering opera one masterwork at a time. We meet several times to get to know a selected opera and then attend a performance together. Beginners are particularly welcome! Meetings are held Friday mornings in Hamburg-Poppenbüttel.

Contact Elizabeth R. at opera@awchamburg.org

**Film Reviewers’ Group**

The film group attends free press showings of films slated to open in Hamburg and writes reviews for Currents and other media. Communication is via email or fax. For more information, contact Becky T. at filmgroup@awchamburg.org

**English Movie Night at the Savoy**

New AWCH Event!

Starting in 2014 there will be a new monthly event at the Savoy Movie theater in St. Georg: English Movie Night at the Savoy.

Here is how it works:

- Respond to the evite and tickets will be reserved for you at the theater. You arrive no later than 30 minutes before the movie begins to pick up and pay for your tickets at the ticket desk. Easy!
- If you can’t make the showing, your tickets will be deleted from the system at no charge to you.
- If you are not there 30 min prior to the showing, your reservation is cancelled and seat reassigned, so don’t be late!

**Moms and Bumps**

We are looking for moms and kids who like to get out and about! If you are interested in getting together, not just for playgroups, but for mother/child-friendly activities, please contact Melissa or Jess at momsbumps@awchamburg.org

**German Conversation Group**

Our Member Sylvia T. organizes a regular meeting to chat and meet in German.

For all those working and practicing their new language. Feel welcome to join.

Watch out for our Evites!
ACTIVITY CALENDAR February 2014

Please check with activity leaders to confirm meeting times and places. More details on all meetings can be found in the membership section and on our AWC website: http://www.awchamburg.org

February

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sunday</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4 🎈</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6 🎈</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>🎈 Stitch’n’Bitch</td>
<td></td>
<td>🎈 German Conversation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 🎈</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual General Meeting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18 🎈</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>🎈 Stitch’n’Bitch</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27 🎈</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Movie Night</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>🎈 Film Group Get Together</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AWC Cancellation Policy:

All events for which participants must reserve in advance and pay at the door must be paid for whether or not the person attends the event. However, if the cancellation is called in before the sign-up deadline, there will be no charge. If a person cancels after the sign-up deadline, she need not pay if a confirmed substitute can be found.

English Theatre evening - May 9

Save the date!

On May 9 we are once again invited to join The American Club for an evening at the theatre! Appetizers and wine will be served during the intermission, and afterwards there will be an opportunity to meet the actors for dessert. Last year the play was really funny, the food was amazing, and the actors were incredibly charming. It was also fun to spend the evening with the guys and gals of The American Club, who will also be joining us for our annual Independence Day Celebration at Cafe Seeterasse.

This event will be subsidized by AWC. Tickets for the play, including food and drinks, will be available to AWC members for a discounted price of 30EUR! Look for an invitation with more details coming soon.
Bank Account Change
by Brooke V.

We are in the Single Euro Payment Area (SEPA) and are obliged to use our IBAN and Swift/BIC with effect from February 1st, 2014.

This replaces the club account number and BLZ (bank sorting code).

Please note that our IBAN is DE75 2069 0500 0000 9117 71
And Swift/BIC is GENODEF1S11

Please use our IBAN and Swift/BIC for transferring money to our account.

For those with online banking, these changes can be made and used immediately.

A Single’s Guide to Valentine’s Day

I personally LOVE Valentine’s day, no matter whether I’m in a relationship or not. This year will be my first Valentine’s Day in 10 years that I will be spending without a partner. And I don’t care. I’ve always felt like Valentine’s Day was more about showing love and appreciation to all the people I loved and not to only one person.

So naturally my mom, sisters, friends and even my boss (back in school even the teachers) would receive a little something for this so pretty day of hearts, love and joy. Last year I gave away little pink bubbles personalized with a little saying for everyone as a little emergency kit: If things go bad at work, and we are close to a nervous breakdown yet again, my colleague gets the bubbles, spreads them all over the office and makes us smile by this tiny gesture. And that’s what Valentine’s Day is all about!

Valentine’s Day with your Hubby, or any other man

Celebrate your love and go out for dinner. Or maybe what you need is to order out Chinese, sushi or Italian food...Or all at once and have a great movie night cuddled up on the sofa. And please do me the favor: don’t take this day too serious. It’s supposed to be fun, based on love and cupid’s hard work throughout the year, and moreover economical success for florists and chocolate sellers.

So please sit back, eat food, enjoy one another’s company, and please, kiss a lot.

Congratulations
February Birthday Girls!

Susan E.B. – 1
Maria R. – 4
Barbara H. M. – 5
Katia T. – 15
Regina D. – 16
Kimberley R. – 16
Beth B. – 23
Wang Di

My name is WangDi S. I was born and raised in Beijing with population density of 22,635/km². I went through grinding schools; then continued on to university to be trained as an electrical engineer. My real desire, however, was to go to the West for a freer world. I was offered a chance and went to Nelson in British Columbia, Canada in 1992. Nelson is a small town tugged away in a mountainous region. The area is inundated with majestic peaks, pristine lakes, dark forests, and abundant wildlife. The population density is 4.5/km². The transition for me was both heart-aching and invigorating. I learned to ski, hike and to co-exist with bears and cougars. I also learned to be a mortgage consultant so to pay for my leisure deeds. On a wintery night in 1994, at the local high school’s corridor, I met my future husband, a German.

Our marriage eventually brought me to Hamburg in 2013, a city full of my beloved classical music, sweet smell bakeries and also with many unknowns to me. I joined AWCH this year in order to explore the operatic world and other opportunities abound.

Julie

I am a native of Dillsburg (outside of Harrisburg), Pennsylvania. I moved to Germany in December 1996 after meeting my husband (a Hamburg native) while studying in France. After months of Goethe Institut and several moves we settled in Frankfurt for 6+ years until September 2004. During my time in Frankfurt, I worked for Boeing as Office Manager until November 2003.

In September 2004 we moved to Heiloo (near Alkmaar) in North Holland. I worked for a shoe import company in Alkmaar for the last 1.5 years of our time in NL and we lived there quite happily until December 2012 when my husband was offered a job in Hamburg.

I have two daughters Anna (age 10) and Lucie (age 7), who keep me fairly busy for now. In my spare time, I love to read, cook, travel and talk walks along the Elbe. while I enjoy living more connected with my husband’s family, I miss my English women's group from Holland who became like family over the years. I look forward to meeting more lovely ladies from the AWC!

David Opperman

Certified Public Accountant

Specializing in U.S. income tax preparation for Americans abroad
I am an American CPA located in Hamburg, Germany

Telephone: 040 5500 8170
E Mail: David@DavidOppermanCPA.de
The FAWCO-OVF voter registration website is almost up and running! Keep your eye on the FAWCO home page.
Click on the Home Page button and request your 2014 ballots over the totally secure, non-partisan OVF-hosted FAWCO website. The user statistics (vs. personal information, which is deleted the instant the ballot request is generated) help your FAWCO representatives talk to legislators in Washington, giving them an idea of the numbers of voters in their districts.
The law requires us to request our ballots in each calendar year, so don’t put off to tomorrow what you really need to do today!

FAWCO’S TARGET PROJECT - RIGHTS FOR WOMEN

FAWCO is pleased to announce the short list of nominees for the Target Project of our Human Rights for Women Target Program:


Eleanor Roosevelt Girls’ Leadership Worldwide (ERGLW)

Applications are now open for this summer’s ERGLW program that will be held at Eleanor Roosevelt’s home in Val Kill, NY. Session I will be July 6–14 and Session II will be July 20–28. Participants will be housed at nearby Vassar College.
The program is open to girls entering the equivalent of sophomore or junior year in High School. The ERGLW offers interactive workshops with top-notch leaders and field trips to the UN in NY. It emphasizes empowerment, social justice, leadership, global citizenship and advocacy. Past FAWCO participants have called the program ”transformative” and ”life-changing.” Applications must be completed by March 15. For more information go to Girls’ Leadership.
Dallas Buyers Club **** ½
USA 2013
Starts February 6, 2014
Directed by: Jean-Marc Vallée
Writing credits: Craig Borten, Melisa Wallack
Cast: Matthew McConaughey, Jared Leto, Jennifer Garner, Steve Zahn, Denis O’Hare, Dallas Roberts, Kevin Rankin, Griffin Dunne, Michael O’Neill, Lawrence Turner, Steve Zahn,
Length: 117 minutes

Screenwriter Craig Borten’s interviews with the HIV+ alternative-treatment advocate Ron Woodroof in Dallas in August, 1992 culminated with over 20-hours on tape and access to Ron’s personal diaries a month before Ron died. Believing it would make a great film Borton began pitching his screenplay in 1996. In 2000 screenwriter Melisa Wallack came onboard. When director Jean-Marc Vallée and Matthew McConaughey were signed producers green-lighted the project. McConaughey plays the charismatic Ron whose passions included rodeo, sex, coke, alcohol, chain-smoking, and gambling while working as an electrician to support his vices. A racist, homophobic redneck when diagnosed in 1985, Ron is also an intelligent risk-taking fighter. Ron rejects the expensive pharmaceutical Azidothymidin (AZT)—cost more than $10,000/year, researches, finds and procures alternatives, i.e. FDA unapproved, and eventually takes the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to court.

The script is strong, with subtleties and composites throughout. Jared Leto as the divine transgender Rayon and Jennifer Garner as Dr. Eve Saks roles are fictitious symbolizing the gay community Ron scorned, to later embrace and help. Watch for: the link between Rayon and Eve; an empty chair when Tucker (Zahn) helps Ron; the sombrero; Ron’s realization of being infected, et al. As a native Texan McConaughey captures the maverick persona—he lost 23 kg (50 pounds) for the role; Leto lost more than 14 kg (30 pounds). The entire cast is outstanding.
Shot in 25 days for under $5 million, Vallée challenged Canadian cinematographer Yves Bélanger and crew to use available lighting and handheld digital cameras. Production designer John Paino’s sets were straightforward for multi-use. Martin Pensa and Vallée’s editing concentrate on retaining the “strong POV of the lead character” and one-shot takes. The minimal special effects (SFX) transform New Orleans, Louisiana into Dallas, Texas—filmmaking is all about illusions. Initially given a month to live—“Ain’t nothing out there that can kill Ron Woodroof in thirty days”—he was right-on, living 2,557 days after being diagnosed. An excellent follow-up to this socially significant, uplifting film would be the documentary Fire in the Blood should it ever obtain the theatrical release it deserves. (See review on the AWC website under Articles > Film Festivals 2013 > Hamburg Filmfest 2013 > Reality on Our Doorstep article.) (Marinell Haegelin)

André is played by the wonderfully subtle and talented actor Stefan Kurt, while Annemarie Düringer, a famous actress from the Burg Theatre in Vienna, plays his mother. Stanley Townsend, an Australian actor, very deftly depicts the corpulent lost son from the USA on an unsuccessful mission to find his real mother. And Nina Proll plays a kind and worldly-wise sausage vendor who manages to seduce André and give him a new lease on life. The movie is not spectacular, but it is well worth watching it just to see these excellent actors. (Pat Nevers)

Second opinion
Lovely Louise ****

Louise (Annemarie Düringer) is an elegant lady in her 80s who claims to have been an actress in Hollywood. She never leaves the house without

**Lovely Louise ****  
Switzerland / Spain  
Starts February 13, 2014  
Directed by: Bettina Oberli  
Writing credits: Bettina Oberli, Petra Volpe  
Cast: Stefan Kurt, Annemarie Düringer, Stabiley Townsend, Nina Proll  
Length: 91 minutes  

This is a subtly entertaining movie about how a stiflingly symbiotic relationship between a mother and her son is resolved. André, an almost irritatingly good-natured man about 50 years old, has been living with his eccentric mother Louise most of his life, driving a taxi to earn a living, spending his spare time building model airplanes, and otherwise looking after his mother. The film shows André holding his mother afloat in a swimming pool and regularly playing cards with her friends, who enjoy the sandwiches he always makes for them. You also see him putting his mother to bed every night and pulling the drapes shut. In return, Louise puts out his slippers every day, right next to her own. These well-chosen scenes very graphically accent the co-dependence of the two. However, their relationship is based on a myth that Louise has concocted, namely, that Louise had to give up a successful career in Hollywood in order to return to Switzerland to care for André when he was four years old. This legend is destroyed when Louise’s illegitimate second son Bill, who was born in the States and whose existence has been a secret, shows up in Switzerland. The turning point of the movie and the characters’ lives is a mad chase in Spain that ends up with the three of them balancing over a precipice in André’s taxi.
one of her formidable hats, proudly hanging on to the son. At home she doesn’t even bother to dress but we see her only in her drab old morning gown whilst bossing around the 50-something André (Stefan Kurt) who still lives with her. He even joins his mother’s water gymnastic group, prepares delicious snacks when Louise’s elderly girl friends come over for playing a round of cards. At bed time he tucks in his mother before leaving for his “own room”, the garage, which has been transformed to suit his needs. André builds model planes, flying them on the airport field where he is well respected for his nifty workmanship. Apart from his planes, he takes an interest in pretty Steffi (Nina Proll) who sells sausages to the group of hobby pilots. He even masters enough courage to take her out for a drive in his taxi. But not only are they disturbed by calls from his boss but also from his mother, complaining of bad dreams. Poor Steffi – or poor André? André is unable to make any decisions concerning his own independent life.

When one day a stranger turns up, the cosy routine is interrupted. Bill (Stanley Townsend) claims to be his brother from America. Who is this noisy charmer calling his mother “lovely Louise” or even “mom”? At first André is only irritated but at long last wakes up into action.

Very subtly and slowly the Swiss director Bettina Oberli (Die Herbstzeitlosen), who also wrote the script, lets us discover the deeper character of her protagonists. Nothing is quite the way it seems to be. Lovely Louise is not as lovely and elegant as she makes us believe, André is not as weak as he thought and Bill is not as rich and successful as he says.

This tragic comedy is a wonderful film about a son-mother relationship. The beautifully framed and long takes by cameraman Stéphane Kuthy emphasize their restricting personal relationship. Stefan Kurt gives his character credibility. Despite very comical situations, his André is never ridiculed. (The well established actor will be known to Hamburg theatre goers. For almost a decade he played successfully at the Thalia Theater). Adrian Weyermann’s rhythmic music, performed by the “Aeronauten”, gives it a light and positive touch. (Birgit Schrumpf)

American Hustle ****
USA 2013
Starts February 13
Directed by David O. Russell
Writing credits: Eric Warren Singer, David O. Russell
Cast: Christian Bale, Amy Adams Bradley Cooper, Jennifer Lawrence, Jeremy Renner
Length: 138 minutes

A real life U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) sting operation that made headlines in the early ‘80s is the basic premise used by filmmaker, David O. Russell and screenwriter, Eric Warren Singer for their film American Hustle. The sting took down about a half-dozen United States congressmen and dignitaries on bribery and corruption charges. A scandal that followed close behind the Watergate cover-up and added to America’s moral identity crisis.

Professional con-artist, Irving Rosenfeld (Christian Bale), and his mistress/partner, Sydney Prosser (Amy Adams) live by the motto that everybody wants something and will get what they want by telling lies. Their lies catch up with them, forcing the two to participate in an FBI sting operation with rookie agent Richie DiMaso (Bradley Cooper) to capture the players involved with money laundering for political cash gifts. Rosenfeld agonizes deeply when forced to betray his good friend, politician Carmine Polito (Jeremy Renner) and creates a plan to make the FBI pay dearly for putting those he loves in harm’s way. (Karen Pecota)
DeaD ****
Germany 2013
Starts February 13
Directed by Sven Halfar
Writing credits: Sven Halfar
Cast: Tilman Strauß, Niklas Kohrt, Thomas Schendel, Juith Rosmair, Tobias Kay, Suzanne von Borsody, Ruby O. Fee
Length: 104 minutes

Talk about a patchwork family. Here we have well-to-do Raimond who is celebrating his 60th birthday during an intimate family dinner in his luxurious home with wife Judith and teenaged daughter Romy. In walks Patrick, looking like a 1950’s rock and roller with Elvis coiffure and leather jacket, followed by his friend Elmer. They arrived true to form in an antique American convertible. Patrick is more than upset; pissed-off would be the description, if I may use that term in this illustrious media. He has just found his dead mother hanging from a rope in the ceiling. After suppressing some sobs and a trickle of tears, Patrick confronts his father, Raimond. Raimond is more than surprised, being unaware that he had a son with this woman, what’s her name, with whom he had a forgettable one-night stand. The five of them settle down a bit uneasily, partly to continue the birthday and partly to forge into the details of the past. That’s nothing compared to the atmosphere when ex-wife Birgit arrives, followed by her (and Raimond’s) son Holger, a wimpy guy in a white Porsche, which he strokes lovingly.

Birgit, increasingly drunk, aggressively stirs the pot of past faults, abuses, and reproaches, revealing an unsavoury past of the man of the house. Patrick and Elmer get into the act, adding their own perceptions of blame. The atmosphere slowly accelerates into physical retaliations and nothing is the same. Amazing how things can change at one small birthday party in a nice part of town. This film reminded me of the last part of Enough Said, patchwork family interacting, except that this one is hideous with a violent ending.

Philomena ****
United Kingdom/USA/France 2013
Starts February 27
Directed by Stephen Frears
Writing Credits: Steven Coogan, Jeff Pope,
Cast: Judi Dench, Steve Coogan, Sopie Kennedy Clark
Length: 98 minutes

How do I write a review about a movie that has won an award at the Venice film festival, may be up for an Oscar and stars such an incredible actor as Judy Dench when I sat through at least half of the movie bored? The story is very moving: Philomena Lee (Judy Dench) searches for her son she lost 50 years ago. A pregnant teenager, she found herself living in a strict catholic convent where she had to work to repay her debts for giving birth there. Against her will, her child is then given up for adoption and she spends the next 50 years living with her secret. The recently unemployed journalist Martin Sixsmith (Steve Coogan) comes across her story and decides to leave his realm of politics and high society for a human interest story. He journeys with Philomena back to the convent Roscrea, across the ocean to the United States and again to Roscrea where the circle is closed.

Sixsmith quotes to Philomena:
“We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.”
--T.S. Eliot, Four Quartets

The true journey of this film is how Philomena and Sixsmith learn to accept each other’s differences and the gift of faith. Philomena learns that the world is larger than her strict Catholic Ireland yet small enough to keep her enormous faith alive. Sixsmith learns that one can still hold on to belief even in the face of lies, betrayal and journalism. Although the story is slow to unfold, the film is worth seeing. Judy Dench gives everything to the character that Philomena and her story deserve. (Alana L.)
Jack Ryan: Shadow Recruit ***  
USA | Russia 2014  
Starts February 27, 2014  
Directed by: Kenneth Branagh  
Writing credits: Adam Cozad, David Koepp  
Cast: Keira Knightley, Chris Pine, Kevin Costner, Peter Andersson, Gemma Chan, Nonso Anozie, David Paymer, Colm Feore  
Length: 105 minutes

Director Kenneth Branagh thrusts viewers into the circumstances defining Jack Ryan’s (Pine) choices. Later recuperating at Walter Reed Army hospital, two encounters are significant: Col. William Harper (Costner) and Cathy (Knightley). Three years pass: Ryan works for a private Wall Street bank. A brilliant financial analyst—cum CIA operative—he uncovers an anti-US economy plot originating in Russia. Reporting this, his handler insists he go to Moscow and infiltrate Cherevin, a powerful financial enterprise. Telling his fiancée, Cathy suggests they meet for a long weekend in Paris; Ryan reluctantly relents. At the well-fortified Cherevin edifice, Ryan realizes that the complex Viktor Cherevin (Branagh) has contrary plans. Which leaves him very little time to navigate and worse yet, Cathy shows up uninvited.

Although based on a character the late author Tom Clancy created, the story is original.

Patrick Doyle’s refreshing music, Haris Zambarloukos’s cinematography, and Martin Walsh’s editing are dead right. Chris Pine brings his own interpretation to the Jack Ryan character, not to be compared with Ben Affleck (The Sum of All Fears, 2002), Harrison Ford (Clear and Present Danger, 1994 and Patriot Games, 1992), and Alec Baldwin (The Hunt for Red October, 1990). Focusing on virtual espionage this thriller reboot has strong acting and a robust attention-grabbing approach that is easy to enjoy. (Marinell H.)

BERLINALE 2014

The 64th annual berlin film festival runs February 6-16. There will be 409 films shown on 64 screens in 25 cinemas, all over the city, not only at potsdamer platz, although this is where the actual headquarters will be. Twenty films will compete for the golden bear to be awarded on Saturday, February 15. This is a unique opportunity to see films from around the world, many in English or with English subtitles. It’s a unique chance to see films which may never show in Germany again, or to see films before they get to the actual cinemas in our neighborhoods.

The Berlinale is the world’s largest film festival open to and attended by the general public, as well as film professionals and buyers: Berliners often take a week’s vacation just to sit in the cinema in February – a great activity for this cold, snowy time of year. What’s good for the Berliners is also excellent for us hamburgers: trains run between the two cities practically every hour – just 90 minutes one way on an ice train.

The entire cinema program is up at www.Berlinale.De. Click English and program.

For more questions and information contact the four members of the awc hamburg’s film group who will attend as accredited journalists, representing three media: currents magazine, www.Kinocritics.Com, and www.Angloinfo.Com. Congratulations to rose finlay, shelly schoeneshoefer, becky tan, and mary wienke. At least one of them will be in berlin at all times, attending festival films, press conferences, and special events. (Br)
DANKE! DANKE! DANKE!

to all AWC Hamburger Helpers and also to Brooke V., Maria P. and Stella K.-R. for joining the group!

A special thank you goes to Chris L., Denise S., Katia T., Monika M., Rose F. and Sylvia T. for meeting and assisting a new AWCH Club member in 2013.

to Tracy M. for organizing the new monthly English Movie Night.

to Sylvia T. for organizing the german language get together.

to Regina D. for doing such a wonderful job for all new members with the Hamburg Helper group.

to The American Club for inviting us to their Superbowl Party.

to Karen M. for taking up the chief editor postion of Currents and for sacrificing her Saturday night to stay home and do layout.

to Sandra S. and Tracy M. for opening their homes to the SnB Club in January.

to Jess M. for hosting SnB so many times before, that now that she’s in DownUnder, makes us aware, how much we relied on her welcoming us at her home.

to all members for being such a great support so far in all our new adventures which we are experiencing at the moment

Watch out for our next issue in early March, with new Columns such as Fashion, Travelling, Food and International Living

We’ll be learning more about the Spring Fashion from the Top Fashion cities and hear were our fellow members like Birgit S., Brooke V., and Melissa P., have been spending their time int he last couple of months all over the world.

AWCH Contacts

Has your contact information changed? Not receiving email from the AWC loop? Or want to put something on the loop yourself? Contact: secretary@awchamburg.org

Want to join the club? Contact: membership@awchamburg.org

Have an idea for a new activity or event? Contact: activities@awchamburg.org

Want to locate your HH Helper? Contact: hhelpers@awchamburg.org

Lost your activity calendar? Visit www.awchamburg.org/activitycalendar

Having trouble with the website? Contact: webgineer@awchamburg.org

Want to write, edit, or proofread for Currents? Contact: currents-exec@awchamburg.org

Want to find out more about FAWCO? Contact: fawco@awchamburg.org

Interested in joining the Film Group? Contact: filmgroup@awchamburg.org

Kruppf in Hamburg – Your gateway to the world

Full service – top quality – fair rates

Your first address in Hamburg for international moving

• Moves from and to Germany
• To any destination in the world
• Moving you within your world

Please contact
John Dakin @ 040 548876-35 or j.dakin@krumpf.de
Transport KrumpfGmbH
Ottensener Str. 10 • 22525 Hamburg, Germany
+49 (0) 40 - 548876-54 • www.krumpf.de

INFO
THANK YOU ALL FOR ALL THE HELP AND SUPPORT TO MAKE THIS CLUB AS WONDERFUL AND INSPIRING AS IT IS.

CURRENTS IS LOOKING FORWARD TO NEW STORIES, NEW EVENTS AND NEW MEMBERS TO INFORM YOU ABOUT IN MARCH.