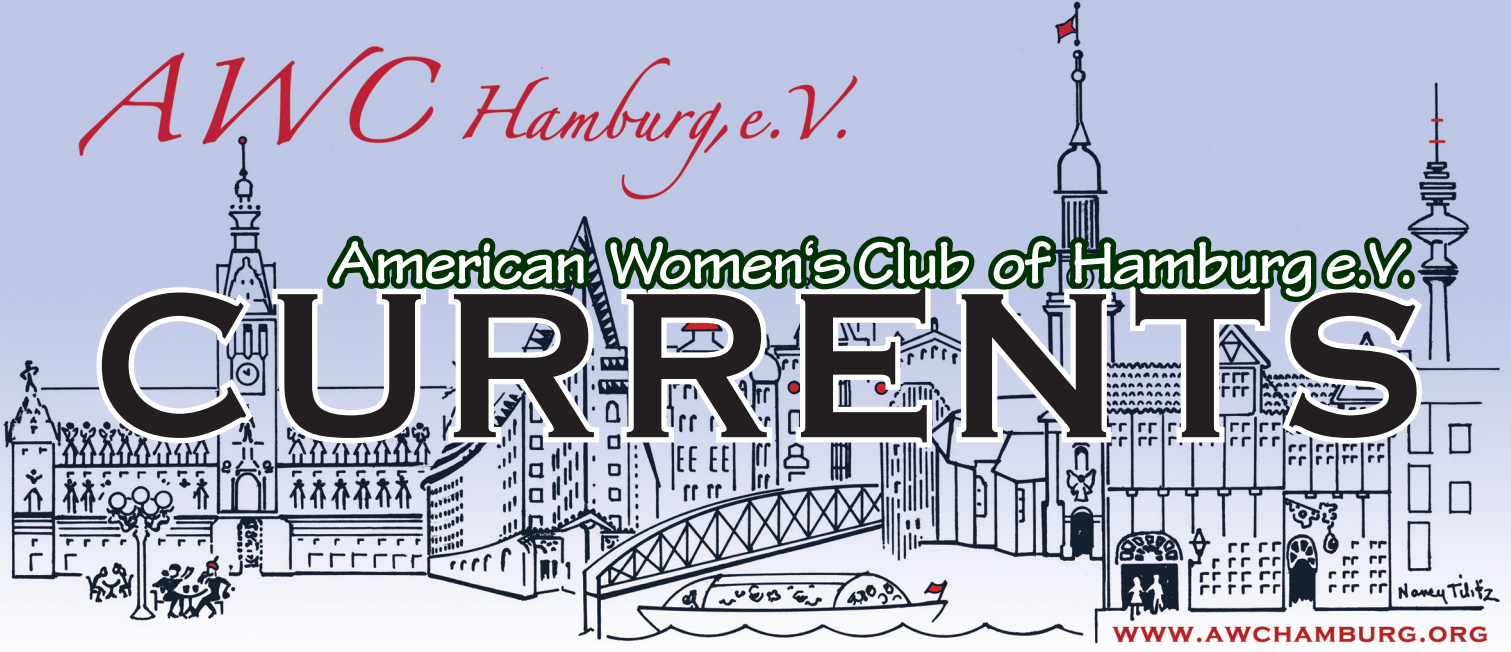


AWC Hamburg, e.V.

American Women's Club of Hamburg e.V.

CURRENTS



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November/December 2013

JOY
FESTIVE
SEASON HANUKKAH
PARTY SANTA
HOLIDAYS JINGLE
WINTER SPIRIT BELLS
X-MAS ST NICHOLAS
TREE MERRY
THANKSGIVING
TURKEY JOY
PRESENTS
ST CHRISTMAS
JOYFUL SPIRIT JOY JINGLE PARTY
BELLS NEW YEAR
MERRY GIVING
X-MAS SANTA
HOLIDAY SEASON X-MAS CLAUS
PARTY PRESENTS
BELLS
JINGLE
GREETING

President's Message



The Christmas season is one of my favourite times of the year. I love everything about it – from the smells of *Glühwein* and *Schmalzgebäck* at the Christmas markets, to *kitschig* decorations in the supermarkets, from leisurely walks beneath the twinkling Christmas lights on crisp evenings, to the taste of homemade cookies. I love planning presents too – complainers about commercialization and nay-sayers be damned! Even if it's for a short time, everyone is transported into a Norman Rockwell painting and good cheer is in the air.

But the thing I love the most about the Christmas season is that it forces us to slow down and remember how wonderful it is to spend quality time with friends and family, doing nothing but eating and talking. For that reason, it can be a really difficult time of year for ex-pats when we are so far from home and a lot of our families.

I really enjoyed the recent survey we did. It not only provided us with some valuable information, but it was also touching to read members' comments about what they value about the club. By almost unanimous consensus, what members value most is not the newsletter or films, dinners or activities. What members value most is the friendships we have made and the opportunity to meet with other women who not only speak our language, but who also understand our culture and can identify with the sometimes difficult and sometimes exciting task of adjusting to life in a different culture. Not surprisingly, the most popular events, according to our survey, are the holiday events. This club is our connection to home, and that connection is more important than ever during holidays.

This holiday season, I want to encourage everyone to make that connection and participate in some of the holiday events we have coming up. On November 6 we will hold our Celebration of Membership event at the Consulate and I think that will be a very special evening. Kara is hosting a book exchange and brunch at her home on a Saturday morning in November. I had the honor of being invited to the new Consul General's home for dinner, representing our club. She is a very warm and lovely lady, and has agreed to host our annual Christmas Cookie Exchange in early December, as past Consul Generals have. We also have our annual Thanksgiving Dinner and Christmas Party to look forward to. There will be a lot of opportunities to meet up in the coming months, and I hope to see each one of you at least once!

Love, Shawn

Message from the Content

I've been spending a lot of time in the mornings going on long (5-7 km) walks with my massive dog. I love watching as the green leeches slowly from the leaves on the trees, giving way to beautiful reds, gold, and oranges. It lets me know that the holidays are slowly approaching and not long after, the start of the New Year. New starts and beginnings!

Having two kids and being a holiday fanatic, I always find myself overwhelmed with the possibilities each and every year. I enjoyed reading everyone's suggestions and can only hope that you, the members, can feel the same way. This should serve as a guide to you to receive the most enjoyable holiday season imaginable.

With the New Year will come a new Currents. I know several of you feel very strongly about this but if you think back to the very first edition, when this wasn't a magazine, but a newsletter, that Currents has come a very long way indeed, changing and growing with the needs of the club and the advancements in technology. This issue holds a lot of important information that pertains to the upcoming club year, please read through everything. As the club goes into yet another membership year, I encourage you, yes you, to write to myself, to the editor in chief, Allie, or to the board with any ideas you have for Currents or club. What do you want to read about? What direction do you want to see Currents and the club go? No idea, article, recipe, or suggestion is too small; feedback is greatly welcomed. Without readers, Currents is just a file on a computer or a piece of paper. It develops a meaning and a sense of purpose as soon as someone picks it up and reads it. Let us, through you the members, give it that meaning and purpose again.

I always enjoy reading what all of you have to say. We are such a diverse and fantastic group of women, that I've always enjoyed having the sense of community the club gives me. Let's keep this tradition going! Thanks to everyone who has contributed, given feedback, or helped in any form or fashion. Here's to stress-free holidays and the start to another great year!

Kara W.

Letter from the Next Content

Pat F. & Jenny M.

As the January/February edition of *Currents* will be co-edited by a couple of teachers, you won't be surprised to learn that they have chosen "Teachers and Teaching" as their theme.

This is something which we all have experience with, and it covers a wide range of topics. Hopefully it will remind you of interesting and entertaining anecdotes about your schooldays and those who guided you through them.

Is teaching the same the world over? Many of us have children at school here and perhaps some of them will be kind enough to write a paragraph or two, telling us about school life in Hamburg.

Are teachers the same the world over? (I sincerely hope not, when I think of the eccentric old dears who steered me through my school career.) Is there an interesting one lurking in your memory whom you'd like to tell us about?

We are looking forward to a lively, upbeat and amusing issue, full of your opinions about the topic we have chosen.

Please submit your articles by Friday, November 25 (or sooner) to Pat F. or Jenny M.

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Currents Magazine

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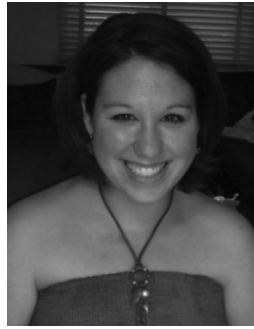
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CONTRIBUTORS



Message from the Executive

Dear Readers,

A new era has not only dawned but is reaching toward midday in the publishing world. The age of paperless, digital publishing has now also come to *Currents*. This is the last issue of *Currents* to be provided solely in print.

After much deliberation and discussion, and several polls and surveys of the membership, the Board of the American Women's Club of Hamburg has come to a final decision. As of January 2014, *Currents* is to be issued as an e-magazine. If not all are initially happy about this, I am sure everyone will be pleased to learn that this development is intended to be accompanied by a substantial decrease in the membership fees. In addition, the new, electronic *Currents* will be easily available to all members and to potential members and other interested parties not as a simple electronic version of what we've been printing, but with many exciting new features possible only with the new format, from all-color photographs to easy links and even multi-media offerings as the time comes. I will allow the board of the club and of *Currents* to inform you of all the details in their own spaces. If you, as readers, have comments and inquiries regarding those, please do not hesitate to contact those people for more information.

For this leads me to my own much-deliberated decision. As *Currents* enters into this new digital era, I find that I am increasingly unprepared for the developments and challenges before the magazine. Therefore I am thrilled to be handing the reins of this magazine over to my recent Deputy Executive Editor, Allison Marseille. Allie has been learning the ropes of running a club magazine for the last few months, and has already become familiar with all of the ins and outs of layout, distribution, and editing. Recently she has also been very busy with the potential of e-publishing and e-distribution. I am sure she is the best woman for the job, and I can not wait to see her first issue in January. A big round of applause for her as she steps up to this position!

Of course, it is with a heavy heart that I take leave of *Currents*. *Currents* has been a great source of welcome distraction, overwhelming satisfaction, and overall fulfillment in my life for many years now. Many thanks to all of you who have helped make *Currents* the beautiful, inspiring magazine it is today. I will never forget it!

With that, I wish you happy (e-)reading!

Yours, Sus

Coming in 2014: 39 EUR Digital The times they are a changin': the digitalization of *Currents*

The digitalization of *Currents* is something that has been in the works for a couple years now, and our recent survey revealed that 59% of respondents are in favour of a digital format. For many reasons, this is a necessary and logical step for the club. There are still those however, who feel passionate about holding paper in their hands. The AWCH board and *Currents* team have wrestled with this issue for some time now, and I think we have come up with a good solution that will accommodate both camps. But first, let me discuss with you some of the reasons why we are moving in this direction.

For various reasons, membership in recent years has been dropping. American companies have stopped sending as many Americans abroad. The internet makes it very easy for people to connect, and several international groups have sprung up. Compared to similar clubs, our membership dues are high, and that is often a barrier for someone who is a passive member of our club, not able to participate in many events. Many of you have mentioned to us that you wish dues were lower.

At the same time, the costs involved in printing and sending *Currents* has remained high. In order to print the type of magazine we have now, the minimum order is 250 copies. With only 107 members, many of those *Currents*, and a lot of paper, are going to waste. One half of our annual budget now goes to the printing and postage of *Currents*. If membership in January drops any further, we could not realistically continue to print *Currents* in the form it is now.

There is also a dwindling interest in *Currents*. According to our survey, only 60% of respondents regularly read our magazine. We have been hearing from members that the themes have been uninteresting and they wish we had more informational articles,

including things to do around Hamburg. It has also consistently been very difficult to find contributors.

Here is our solution: In the coming year, we would like to offer two types of memberships – a digital membership and premium paper membership. Digital membership subscribers would receive *Currents* as a digital magazine only. Paper membership subscribers would continue to receive *Currents* on paper, by mail. We are offering the Nov/Dec issue in both paper and digital so you have a sample when you make your decision.

In order to print smaller amounts, however, we will need to go to laser copy and the quality of print is slightly lower than the current magazine. Please also understand that the digital copy will be available considerably sooner than your paper version arrives to you. Also, due to lack of contributions, we feel it necessary to publish *Currents* on a quarterly basis, rather than five times per year.

In addition, we have identified other areas in the budget where we could lower costs. With these changes, according to preliminary figures, we estimate that membership dues could be reduced to 39 EUR for a digital membership and 59 EUR for a premium paper membership (dependent on our final budget for 2014 and the number of members we have).

This opens up several issues I would like to address. The first is privacy. The digital *Currents* will not be an "exclusive" member benefit. It will be open to anyone, available on our website. This gives our magazine greater advertising reach, gives our hard-working film group a larger readership, and it will hopefully be a draw for new members as well, if they can see what we are about. You can also freely share it with friends and family.

EDITORIAL

Any sensitive information will be available in the members-only, password-protected section of our website. With the larger exposure, let me again remind you of our privacy policy. We will be using first names and last initials only, no names below pictures, and no locations of upcoming events, but 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 immediately.

Aside from *Currents*, our club has a lot of wonderful, valuable, unique member benefits such as:

- HH Helpers – Valuable, practical help for anyone adjusting to a new life in Hamburg.
- Free events for members (including our Celebration of Membership event at the Consulate coming up in November)
- US Holiday celebrations
- FAWCO membership - our own political lobby in Washington, as well as philanthropic causes
- The Film Group, Book Club and Stitch 'n' Bitch

- Tons of activities and access to a network of vibrant international and American women!

A digital *Currents*, in full color, with links and photo galleries, could very well renew some interest in our magazine. We are also planning a *Currents* brainstorming meeting, to get new ideas and refocus on a direction that captures member's interest and better meets their needs.

As you know, according to our Constitution, any change in dues requires a membership vote. We will be voting on lowering dues at a special meeting in late November, so if this issue is important to you please look for the upcoming invitation and make plans to be there.

We are optimistic and excited about these new changes and the birth of a new type of membership, bringing our club into the future. As always, if you have any feedback, we are here to listen!

Shawn K, AWCH President

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!

AWC Hamburg Survey Results!

As you know, this last month the AWCH board sent out a club survey to find out what members value most in the club, and identify areas where we might improve. We tried our best to reach everyone to remind them of the survey, many by phone, and it was wonderful to connect with many of you personally. With 74 respondents, a 69% majority of the club filled out that survey, so we now have a good consensus and some interesting results.

It is no surprise that most members value the club because it offers them a connection to other American and international women and wide variety of activities. It's so important to keep that connection to home and meet with others who really understand the ups and downs of an ex-pat lifestyle.

An overwhelming majority of respondents regularly read the E-Newsletter, and we have a 93% positive response to the Evites. Our most popular events are "Holiday Events", "Lunch/Dinner with the Board", "Tours of Hamburg", and the "Film Group", all in that order. So if you are looking to connect with people - that's where you can find them!

I tallied up the times of day that are best for people and 22% prefer mornings, 19% prefer afternoons, 16% prefer the dinner hours, 37% prefer later in the evening, and 6% mentioned weekends although it wasn't even on the list. We try our best to offer a variety of activities at different times of day, but in the future it looks like we need to include more evening and weekend activities.

Almost 65% of respondents never use the Amazon button that is found on the AWCH website. If you click on that button, you will be forwarded to the Amazon.de website. When you make your purchase, Amazon will then transfer 5 % of your total order directly to the AWCH account. This is a simple and free way to contribute to the club.

Our club magazine *Currents* is regularly read by 63% of respondents, while 37% read it occasionally or seldom. To the question of digitalizing *Currents* and lowering dues, 59% responded in favour of digital and 41% prefer paper. The top priority for a digital version is an easily readable format. Finally, 36% of respondents never visit our website, 31% visit 3-4 times a year, and 33% are regular visitors. Thank you to everyone who participated, and please know that we hear you! We will be working hard in the future to accommodate your needs and make this club better than ever.

Relief for Happier Holidays... Hopefully

by Marinell H.

The word “tips” caught my eye in Kara’s message regarding the theme for this issue. Over the years I’ve squirreled away helpful advice from others, and learned lessons through experience. Putting just some of these into practice has made my holidays saner, more manageable, and extra enjoyable.



it’s now a tradition for me. A small band plays carols in front of the church at 14:00, setting the mood for the merriment inside. Wonderful crafts, condiments, and preserves made by parishioners are sold, and at the rummage sale I always find something, e.g. a lovely wooden plant stand for €5. Delicious *Kaffee* and *Küchen* (cakes) are served, the atmosphere is *gemütlich* (cozy), and chatting with parishioners who I’m now acquainted with certainly puts me in the spirit of the season. Additionally, money raised helps the church fund.

5– Give sweet bread. Banana (or date, prune, pumpkin or lemon) nut, raisin orange, cranberry, or fruit bread are quick, and relatively unknown in Germany. Better still, buy small loaf pans—I’ve seen them sold in different super markets (once in *Aldi!*) or check *Kaufhof* and *Karstadt* department stores on *Mönckebergstraße*. Recipes that call for a 9 x 5 x 3-inch pan fill three small loaf pans.



Close your eyes and imagine: you’re sitting in the *Michel* (St. Michael’s Church), the beautiful crèche and simply adorned tree are on the altar, the lighting is ambient, and the heavenly voices soar around you. Ah! Tis the season.

Wishing you all a lovely, tranquil Christmastime and a *Guten Rutsch!*

- 1– Start early! With whatever you plan to buy, bake, make, decorate, etcetera.
- 2– Recycle presents. The scarf that isn’t your style could be perfect for Aunt Mathilde. Be sure to mark who the present came from, so you don’t give it back to the same person.
- 3– Give the gift of time. Years ago friends and I became practical. Although price limits were set, shopping took too long for presents that weren’t necessarily special. Instead, we decided to spend time together. We’d meet, and treat each other to lunch, a wine, coffee—you get my drift. Or during the *Adventszeit* we’d go to the *Seemannskirche* (sailor’s churches) along *Ditmar-Koel-Straße*, just off of *St. Pauli Hafensstraße*. The Swedish, Danish, Finnish, and Norwegian markets are not to be missed.
- 4– Check out *Adventsmärkte* (Advent markets) at local churches. Nearby is a small Lutheran church that has its on the first Advent Saturday between 14:00 and 16:00. Yes,



6– Buy items at the after-Xmas sales for next year. I confess, I’m not that organized but my brother’s been doing this for years and he brags about how much money—and stress—he saves!

7– Invite friends for January. Two of my favorites are: brunch on the 6th of January (we take down decorations after that date), or dinner. Or plan an outing later in the month when the hullabaloo has passed, and the grind is setting in again.

8– Last but not least, check out churches’ schedules for choir and musical performances that begin during the Advent season. Many are nominally priced or free.



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Surviving Thanksgiving Chaos

by Kara W.

Hi, my name is Kara, and I'm a foodie. I love the idea of new recipes, complicated dishes, and the thrill I get when said recipe turns out a beautiful product. Here's what I don't love: my kitchen looking like a flour bomb exploded, coating everything in a fine layer of dust, the dishes that quickly pile up, the stress of juggling two kids, two dogs, and a finicky dish in the oven or on my stovetop.

I get this way with one dish. Last year I decided to undertake a grand Thanksgiving meal to feed around fifteen to eighteen people while my mother was visiting. Most of these people were my German in-laws who had never had an American Thanksgiving meal in their lives. I found myself facing the challenge of finding all the ingredients I needed (okay, my mom smuggled a good many in her overweight suitcase) without spending loads of money and time. I also found myself having to juggle all this cooking while going through the daily routines that any Thursday called for in our home. Imagine how I felt looking over my laminated recipes of about five to six dishes and one dessert; I was pretty sure I would be bald and crazy by the time the food went onto the table.

Through meticulous planning, lots of running around aimlessly, and bossing my poor mother around in my kitchen, the meal went off with hardly a hitch (okay, so my sister-in-law decided to breastfeed at the table about the time I started carving the turkey, but I digress. Wait, no, I had to explain to my very southern mother why a naked boob was peeking out at her while she was trying to eat mashed potatoes but that's for a whole different kind of advice article!)

I'm going to give you a few tips I picked up last year and plan on using this year. Should you find yourself wanting to cook a big meal in a small amount of time, feel free to use whatever information you glean from this article!

1. Gather your recipes at least two weeks in advance and make a list of ingredients, noting the ones you cannot get easily here in Germany. I'm going to suggest several websites at the end of this article for such ingredients. Also look for substitute ingredients that can easily go in their place. Look up any translations you may need for spices and other ingredients so you don't find yourself staring in wonder at the grocery store, kicking yourself because you have no idea what sage is in German. Make sure that the recipes you choose are at your experience level. Don't go for complicated if you yourself are new in the kitchen. Sometimes the simplest recipes make for the greatest results.
2. You also want to start looking for a turkey ahead of time. Decide if you want a whole turkey or a turkey breast. I remember a friend who lived in a small apartment in the city not thinking the whole turkey thing through and went via public transport to get a turkey, took it on a train ride because it was really big to get it home, and then ended up having to thaw it out on her balcony because it wouldn't fit in her fridge. She also had a bit of a problem getting the darn thing in her oven. I used two turkey breasts for the number of people I was feeding and injected them with my marinade the night before.
3. Read through every recipe, noting the cooking time and preparation involved. Specifically look for any dishes that can be prepared in advance. This will help when you have

four things that need to go into an oven that might fit one dish max if you have a smaller kitchen and therefore a smaller oven.

4. Make several time plans in advance about a week before the day you want to host your meal. Make a shopping plan, making sure you have ordered and received the special ingredients. I started a day in advance on my cooking, putting into place which dishes or steps could be done beforehand. After that, I made a list of the dishes, their cooking times, and when they needed to be started and in what order. Luckily I have great dishes that hold in heat so keeping food warm was not a problem. If you find yourself needing this, reduce the heat of your oven to 50-100 Grad after you have pulled out the last dish and sit the food in there to re-warm before putting on the table. Remember to get your turkey out and start thawing it the day before to make it easier to stuff and cook. Note the cooking time needed for the size of turkey you have and make sure you have an oven that can fit more than one dish in it. If not, start your turkey really early and wrap in layers of foil after it is done to lock in moisture and cooking juices. After you have finished all other dishes, you can re-warm your turkey in the oven, basting it frequently with cooking juices to make sure it does not dry out. I found that keeping some broth handy on the side helped in this process.
5. The morning of the first day you start your cooking (if you need more than one day, if not, the morning of) start out by doing all of your prep work. Chop, dice, cut, cube, and peel anything for any of your dishes ahead of time to save yourself those precious minutes beforehand. For potatoes, keep them in a salt-water bath after you peel them to keep them from going brown or iffy-looking. If you are using sweet potatoes, you can save stovetop space and time by getting steamer bags at the grocery store. You peel and cut your veggies, toss in the bags with a little water, and microwave according to the time chart. I did this with my sweet potatoes to cut back on the time needed to make my casserole.
6. Start following your guidelines for your dishes. I had music going in the background for me, had my mother with one or two recipes she was in charge of, and my kids watching "A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving". This helped me to focus and to prevent any interruptions. Have other people set your table and do smaller tasks and chores so that you may focus on what you have to do. If you have a dessert that needs to be served warm, put it in the oven right before you start putting food on the table, with a timer somewhere near you so you don't forget it (been there, done that, hated the way my house smelt afterwards).
7. ENJOY your hard work and bask in all the compliments you receive. Go ahead and swear you will never do this again but do so with a smile on your face.

Huge meals take a lot of practice and patience to get just right. When you throw in living in a foreign country, it gets hectic. Take any mix-ups and accidents with humor and a grain of salt. Being able to laugh keeps you sane and makes the experience more enjoyable. Below are several websites for ordering American ingredients. These are just a few to get started with. Google may

help you find more. They tend to be more expensive, so keep that in mind for your budget. Most of all, have fun and a great Thanksgiving!

- www.amazon.de sometimes has the best delivery times and prices. They might not, however, have a lot to choose from.
- www.ebay.de sometimes has American ingredients with cheaper price tags.

- <http://americancandy.de/> I have never used this one but they seemed to have a pretty good variety on their inventory.
- www.americanfood4u.de
- <http://www.usa-food.de>

Nürnberg for Christmas

by Tracy M.

A few years ago when my mother was visiting us for Christmas I thought it would be a good idea to travel with her and my daughters to Nürnberg and visit the *Christkindlesmarkt*, the “world famous” Christmas market. Germany was hit with one of the worst snowstorms it had seen in recent history. Since I trust my driving in inclement weather, but not that of others, I decided to book seats with *Deutsche Bahn*. This was good for many reasons. Just to name a few: the roads were impassable, even the train had to take a different route due to tracks being covered with wind-blown snow, our train trip was only four and a half hours long, compared to that of close to six hours by car, I had bought the tickets 90 days ahead of time and got 50% reduced tickets for the four of us that were cheaper than paying for a round trip’s worth of gas. In Nürnberg the main train station is located downtown and only a short walk to the Christkindlesmarkt and a 15€ taxi ride from our hotel. Since our hotel was only five stops from the market, we used public transportation, paying less than 10€ for four people to travel all weekend long.

The *Nürnberg Christkindlesmarkt* is a Christmas market with a long tradition. It is one of Germany’s oldest Christmas fairs. The pre-Christmas event on Nürnberg’s Main Market Square dates back to the mid 16th century. It is a wonderful place to get into the Christmas spirit. The weekend we were there, it felt like we had been transported to a movie set. Snow-covered streets, the enticing smells of mulled wine and rum punch, roasted almonds, *Nürnberg Bratwurst* and gingerbread filled the air. We got to see local brass instrument bands play holiday songs on the church steps, Christmas “angels” passing out candy to little kids, and horse-drawn carriages passing through the cobblestone streets.

More than 180 market stands – all decorated for Christmas with fresh greens and lights – invite you to enjoy traditional Christmas ornaments of all shapes and sizes, the local gold-foil angel, Zwetschgenmännle made of prunes, toys and games and delicious holiday treats to eat and drink. Some of our favorite stands sold mini vegetables made of marzipan, snow globes, traditional ornaments, handmade gifts and lots and lots of food and sweets.

Not only do the adults have their pleasures: *Glühwein*, rum with schnapps, for example, but kids also have their kind of fun! You can find a nostalgic two-tiered merry-go-round, a mini Ferris wheel and a steam railway. There are many “hands-on” stalls such as a Christmas bakery, children’s post office or puppet theater. A highlight for little ones is the visit of the *Nürnberg Christkind*. Every Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday at 2:30 pm, he invites children to ride free on the merry-go-round.

People from around the world make a winter pilgrimage to Nürnberg for this Christmas market and it truly is only a few hours from Hamburg. Don’t miss this most German of German traditions. It is well worth the trip. Check it out at www.christkindlesmarkt.de



Halloween Marches to Hamburg

by Shelly S.

While visiting the United States eleven years ago, my four year old son discovered Halloween. We were invited to several children's parties, a Halloween parade at the children's museum and even the Denver Zoo had an elephant smashing the largest pumpkin in the world under its feet. As the fall leaves turn bright red and orange, we passed houses lined along the street, each of which were cleverly decorated with coffins, flying witches, and other frightening decorations; just enough to send shivers down your back in the dark. My son was happy to choose and dress up in his new Cookie Monster outfit from Sesame Street while clinging to his plastic pumpkin head filled with candy. He looked like he had just won the local lottery.

The next year I had to visit the neighbors ahead of time in order to organize trick or treat in our building. Halloween in Hamburg at that time was nonexistent. In fact I made Halloween cookies for the kids at the kindergarten when they had



their *Laternenfest*, which happens to be on November 11. The kindergarten teacher told me, "We don't want to mix up the kids with foreign holidays!" handing back to me the box of cookies. I gave them back to her and said, "Okay but these are just cookies!"

The *Laternenfest* is in celebration of St. Martin's Day which is, in essence, celebrating the completion of the harvest. Many countries celebrate this holiday but in different ways. In Germany there is usually a bonfire and the children parade in a procession carrying paper lanterns on a stick.

My son has never forgotten that Halloween experience and so as the years have passed, we have taken to the streets to ring people's doorbells. It was a cold-call sales approach and we had many doors slam in our face but we were also rewarded by those who did give Adrian something and we had nice cross-cultural conversations with many of our neighbors who later became some of our good friends. Years later we participated in the Halloween Street that Tracy Moede organized in her area since it had that small neighborhood feeling to it as opposed to that of the high rise buildings of Eimsbüttel. This old form of going house to house was dying out in the US while here in Germany it was growing. It has also taken on a new form; the costumes are always scary and the children are now singing songs, reciting poems to get candy in return. I am proud to say that I have the craziest decorated house in our neighborhood and have over 40 children ringing my bell on Halloween. It has helped me reach out and get to know my community and I am very happy that Halloween has finally hit Hamburg.

David Opperman

Certified Public Accountant

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I am an American CPA located in Hamburg, Germany

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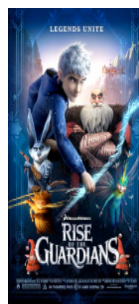
E Mail: David@DavidOppermanCPA.de

Naughty and Nice Santa Claus

by Marinell H.

The
long-
standing
question is: Was
Santa Claus real or
not? Synonymous with
Christmas, the sheer number
of movies about him is proof of the
pudding: Santa is real! At the end of a hectic
day, or when it's too snowy/rainy/cold or whatever,
snuggle down with a nice, or naughty flick. I've added
some titles to a list of Santa films I came across, so there's
one for each day of December leading up to Santa's big night!

1. *Miracle on 34th Street*, 1947. Director: George Seaton; Santa: Edmund Gwenn
2. *A Christmas Carol*, 1951. Director: Brian Desmond Hurst; Scrooge: Alastair Sim
3. *It's a Wonderful Life*, 1946. Director: Frank Capra; Cast: James Stewart, Donna Reed, Lionel Barrymore
4. *Elf*, 2003. Director: Jon Favreau; Santa: Edward Asner
5. *Arthur Christmas*, 2011. Directors: Sarah Smith, Barry Cook; Santa: Jim Broadbent (voice)
6. *The Polar Express*, 2004. Director: Robert Zemeckis; Santa: Tom Hanks (voice)
7. *The Santa Clause*, 1994. Director: John Pasquin; Santa: Tim Allen
8. *White Christmas*, 1954. Director: Michael Curtiz; Cast: Bing Crosby, Danny Kaye, Rosemary Clooney
9. *Christmas in Connecticut*, 1945. Director: Peter Godfrey; Cast: Barbara Stanwyck, Dennis Morgan, Sydney Greenstreet
10. *Holiday Inn*, 1942. Director: Mark Sandrich; Cast: Bing Crosby, Fred Astaire, Marjorie Reynolds
11. *Nanny McPhee*, 2005. Director: Kirk Jones; Nanny McPhee: Emma Thompson
12. *Matilda*, 1996. Director: Danny DeVito; Matilda: Mara Wilson
13. *Rise of the Guardians*, 2012. Director: Peter Ramsey; Santa: Alec Baldwin (voice)
14. *Santa Claus: The Movie*, 1985. Director: Jeannot Szwarc; Santa: David Huddleston (Jeffrey Lebowski – *The Big Lebowski*)
15. *Bad Santa*, 2003. Director: Terry Zwigoff; Santa: Billy Bob Thornton
16. *Trading Places*, 1983. Director: John Landis; Cast: Dan Aykroyd, Eddie Murphy
17. *Home Alone*, 1990. Director: Chris Columbus; Cast: Macaulay Culkin, Joe Pesci, Daniel Stern
18. *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, 1993. Director: Henry Selick; Santa: Edward Ivory (voice)
19. *A Very Harold & Kumar 3D Christmas*, 2011. Director: Todd Strauss-Schulson; Santa: Patton Oswalt
20. *The Hebrew Hammer*, 2011. Director: Jonathan Kesselman; Santa: Richard Riehle Santa's evil son: Andy Dick
21. *A Christmas Story*, 1983. Director: Bob Clark; Santa: Jeff Gillen
22. *Die Hard*, 1988. Director: John McTiernan; Cast: Bruce Willis, Alan Rickman, Bonnie Bedelia
23. *It Happened One Night*, 1934. Director: Frank Capra; Cast: Clark Gable, Claudette Colbert
24. *The Muppet Christmas Carol*, 1992. Director: Brian Henson; Cast: Michael Caine, Dave Goelz, Steve Whitmire, Jerry Nelson



Mary's Top 5 German Christmas Markets

by Mary L.P.

Over the past three Advent seasons, I have been lucky enough to visit 18 different cities within Germany to partake in their festive Christmas market atmospheres. Seeing that this is the last Currents before Christmas, I thought I would share my top five favorite German Christmas markets:

5- Lüneburg: This quaint market is located only 50km from Hamburg. The stalls are decorated in a Brothers Grimm fairytale theme. The market itself is on the smaller side, but having the historic churches of Lüneburg as a backdrop make it worth the short trip there.

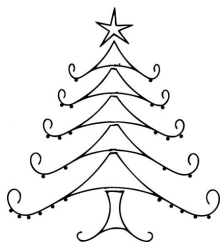
4 – Schwerin: This market runs from the Schwerin Lake up to the castle. There is a large heated tent to go into to get out of the cold. The market is very family friendly; it hosts a toboggan run and artificial ice rink, petting zoo, Nativity scenes, and life-size polar bear band. Also, beneath the large Christmas tree that can be found in the market square, children can visit Father Christmas and tell him what they want.

3 – Hamburg: I am sure most have visited at least one of the many Christmas markets Hamburg has to offer. If not, take the time this year to stroll through what we have in our own backyard. The Town Hall market has a wide range of stalls, a Santa Claus that flies through the air on his sled several times a day, as well as many different cuisines to try. Aside from the Town Hall market, we are lucky to be able to find both large and small markets throughout the city.

2 - Nuremberg: This may be the most famous Christmas market in Germany, and I can understand why. Even though Nuremberg is a trek from Hamburg, it is worth the visit for its market. There are over 180 wood stalls with red and white cloth roofs, all of which lends to an authentic feel to the historical quarter of Nuremberg. At this market, I tried many different foods and saw a wide variety of handmade items that were not available anywhere else. The atmosphere is full of energy and Christmas cheer. I believe that this market is more an experience than a visit.

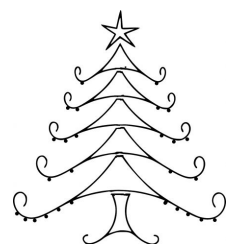
1 – Braunschweig: The number one market on my list is Braunschweig. Braunschweig is only a short distance from Hamburg, and well worth the train ride or drive. The beautiful backdrop makes for a perfect background to get you into a festive spirit. The market offers unique drinks, one of the tastiest mulled wines I tried, as well as many local artists selling their handmade items. Standing in the middle of this market with the medieval backdrop made me remember why I think Germany is so unique and magical during the Christmas season.

A website that I find useful when picking different markets to visit is www.germany-christmas-market.org.uk. This site lists the big markets in Germany and gives a short description of each one. Take a few days out of your busy holiday calendar and experience some of the different traditions cities close to Hamburg have to offer. I know I will be doing exactly that in a short time



Christmas Markets and their Dates

by Kara W.



Hamburg is filled with many wonderful things to experience during the holiday season. Christmas markets, or Weihnachtsmärkte, are perhaps one of the most unique and enjoyable things an American can attend. You will find below a list of several such events as well as the start and end dates for some of Hamburg's more popular Christmas markets in 2013, listed by the part of the city they are located. Mary has also provided us with her top five Christmas markets in Germany, see page , so I have provided the dates for those as well. Enjoy and happy holidays!

Winter Dom: 08.11 -08.12

Weihnachtsmarkt am Rathaus: 26.11-23.12

Weihnachtsparaden: (Christmas Parades 2013) 30 November, 7 December , 14 December , 21 December The parades start at Saturn on Mönckebergstraße at 11:30, 14:00, and 17:00.

Weihnachtsmarkt am Jungfernstieg: 25.11.2013-06.01.2014 (Closed from 24.12 to 25.12)

Weihnachtsmarkt Gänsemarkt: 26.11-23.12

Weihnachtsmarkt an der Petrikirche: 26.11-30.12 (Closed from 24.12 to 25.12)

Weihnachtsmarkt Santa Pauli: 22.11-23.12

Weihnachtsmarkt Fleetinsel: 25.11-23.12

Weihnachtsmarkt Gerhard-Hauptmann-Platz: 26.11-30.12 (Closed from 25.12 to 26.12)

Weihnachtsmarkt Niendorf: 29.11-24.12

Weihnachtsmarkt Ottensen: 25.11-23.12

Weihnachtsmarkt Bergedorf: 25.11-23.12

Weihnachtsmarkt Harburg: 22.11-23.12

Hamburger Märchenschiffe Weihnachtsprogramm für Kinder: 25.11-23.12 Go to <http://www.maerchenschiffe.de/> for more information. As tickets sell quickly for these events, be sure to buy yours ahead of time!

Weihnachtsmarkt Winter Pride St. Georg (Gay-Lesbian Christmas Market in St. Georg) 28.11-30.12 (Closed from 24.12-26.12)

Lüneburger Weihnachtsmarkt: 27.11-23.12 for more information go to www.weihnachtsstadt-lueneburg.de

Schweriner Weihnachtsmarkt: 25.11-30.12 (Closed from 24.12 to 25.12) for more information go to <http://www.schweriner-weihnachtsmarkt.de/>

Nürnberger Weihnachtsmarkt: 29.11-24.12 for more information go to <http://www.christkindlesmarkt.de/>

Braunschweiger Weihnachtsmarkt: 27.11-29.12 (Closed from 24.12 to 25.12) for more information go to <http://www.braunschweig.de/weihnachtsmarkt/>

Segway Fun

by Kimberly K.

On a sunny and cold Autumn day, seven brave women met at the tennis club Witthöft in Brahmfeld to conquer their exciting adventure ahead. Smiling faces, helmets on, these hare-footed ladies were ready to take on the world. Their mystery doohickey was a two-wheeled battery power machine that is created for a single standing rider. This contraption had a code name: Ginger. Today it is known as a Segway. It has no brakes; the rider and the handlebars control its speed and direction. Supposedly the Segway can go up to 20 km per hour.



and Susan was a wonderful experience! Everyone had fun and had become quite a group of daredevils by the end of the event. I personally am looking forward to the next Segway adventure. My helmet, warm jacket and gloves are waiting by the door.



We had two very kind gentlemen that gave us a lesson and laid out a Segway circuit, so that the Bond girls could get into action. Once we were all ready to roll, our adventure started. Tina was our guide and with her fancy footwork showed us the way to the Ohlsdorf cemetery gardens. It was so much fun dodging in and out of hedges along small pathways, stopping and taking in the wonderful scenery of the park itself.

What a brilliant way to be introduced into the American Women's Club of Hamburg. Spending two hours zooming around on a Segway with these lovely ladies, Regina, Jess, Tina, Denise, Tracy



Hotel Leonardo in Stellingen and the International Garden Show

by Heike S

On the 4th of September, 13 ladies set out to a lovely afternoon of visiting the International Gartenschau (IGS). To make the day even more special, Patricia Steinkuhl from the Leonardo Hotel Chain Group invited us for some delicious hors d'oeuvre and drinks on the terrace of the Leonardo Hotel in Stillhorn. After a tour of the hotel and its facilities, the group set out to a brisk walk over to the IGS. Luckily, the Hamburg skies graciously decided to spare us from rain and thus we had the chance to admire all of the flora and fauna and debate over the landscaping artwork 'Dream-opoly', which depicted parts of the North American culture in a provoking way.

Award-winning roses, fruits and vegetables were then admired in the Greenhouse, where two vegetables left us stumped as to what they are called. Who can identify these two purple vegetables for us?



Around dusk, we concluded our delightful outing, just in time for the closing of the grounds. A big thanks to Shawn K. for the organization and also Patricia for having us in her hotel!

ACTIVITY CALENDAR NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2013

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, November 12, 26 anytime after 19:00
Tuesday, December 10 anytime after 19:00

Where: Watch the newsletter for location information
Contact: Beth G. at snb@awchamburg.org

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

Celebration of Membership

November 6, 18:00

Where: Watch the newsletter for location information
RSVP via Evite or to Tina at ads@awchamburg.org by Oct 30
Please see separate invitation.

BUNCO Game Fundraiser

November 2, 19:00 – 23:00

Where: Watch the newsletter for location information

Contact Tracy Moede at fawcorep@awchamburg.org for more information

Come join us for a fun night of Bunco, a dice game that requires no talent, skill or strategy and help us raise money to continue our support of the Integrated Tribal Watershed Development Project. With our past help the ITWDP has provided sufficient water supplies that now help eradicate extreme poverty and hunger in the tribal areas of India.

Partners and husbands are welcome! Singles welcome!

Costs: 10€ per person plus a dish or drink to share

How to get there: By public transportation: Take the Nr. 1 bus directly to the main entrance at Notkestrasse. (Bus stop Zum Hünengrab/DESY)

Everyone will need to check in at the guard house and he will give your directions to building 3 (only 3 minutes on foot).

Books and DVD Exchange Brunch

November 16, 11:00

Where: Watch the newsletter for location information
RSVP via Evite by Nov 14

With the long winter months and holidays right around the corner, let's get together for food, conversation, and a book and DVD exchange. Bring a brunch item, any English books you may wish to exchange, and any DVD's you hope to get rid of in exchange of other books and DVD's. Directions to my home will be sent to you once I have received your RSVP. As we do have dogs, please let me know if you are either allergic and/or afraid. Also, if you are interested in hosting a carpool, please let me know via karawahn@gmail.com under the subject heading "carpool". All leftover books and DVD's will be donated to soldiers overseas.

Planetarium: The Cosmic Wall – A Monument to Pink Floyd

Thursday, Nov 21, 19:15

Where: Watch the newsletter for location information
RSVP via Evite or to Tina at ads@awchamburg.org by Nov 10 (tickets sell fast) and transfer the money as soon as possible to the AWC account

Pink Floyd's 1979 masterpiece "The Wall" is probably the most creative piece in rock history. Experience songs like "Another Brick in Wall," "Hey You" and "Run like Hell" during

a spectacular laser light show under the star dome of the Planetarium.

Cost: €11, 50 Euro

Thanksgiving

November 30, 17:00- 22:00

Where: Watch the newsletter for location information
RSVP via Evite or to Tina at ads@awchamburg.org by Nov 15

We will celebrate Thanksgiving as it is best done with lots of great food, dear friends and cheer! The AWCH will provide the turkey & gravy, water, coffee, teas and will also offer a babysitting service (5 Euro per family taking advantage of this super deal) and a "Charlie Brown" movie. Please see the sign-up list in the "Event Conversation" link to indicate what side-dish or dessert you will bring and don't forget your serving utensils marked with your name. Please bring a bottle of your choice to share with all. We look forward to celebrating with you and giving thanks.

The room is limited to 60 so please reserve your seats now.

Cost: Dinner for Non-Member's is 10 Euro per person (does not include Member's and their family members). Please transfer this to the AWC account by Nov 15.

The official AWCH no-show and cancellation policy will be in effect. Your yes RSVP on the Evite is a space reservation and payment will be required if RSVP response has not been updated by November 15.

Christmas Bash and White Elephant Trash

December 4, 18:30

Where: Watch the newsletter for location information
RSVP via Evite or to Tina at ads@awchamburg.org by November 27

Margaret courteously opened her home to us to have a nice Christmas get-together with some wine and snacks and also can do our traditional White Elephant Trash. Please do not buy any nice presents! If you really don't have anything to regift, please keep your spending below 5€.

Cookie Exchange

Date tbd, 11:00

Where: Watch the newsletter for location information

RSVP via Evite or to Tina at ads@awchamburg.org by November 30

We are happy that the new Consul General opens her home to do our traditional Cookie Exchange. Please come and share the Christmas joy with some cookies and carols. Please bring two dozen cookies.

Visit Christmas Markets Downtown

December 17, 17:00

Where: Watch the newsletter for location information
RSVP via Evite or to Tina at ads@awchamburg.org by December 16

Let's stroll the Christmas markets together and start with the best punch in town and continue on over Jungfernstieg to Rathausmarkt - or where ever we feel like going!

ACTIVITY CALENDAR NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2013

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>

November

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2 BUNCO
3	4	5	6 Celebration of Membership	7	8	9
10	11	12 Stitch'n' Bitch	13	14	15	16 Books and DVD Exchange Brunch
17	18	19	20	21 Planetarium	22	23
24	25	26 Stitch'n' Bitch	27	28	29	30 Thanksgiving

December

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4 Christmas Bash and White Elephant Trash	5	6	7
8	9	10 Stich'n' Bitch	11	12	13	14
15	16	17 Visit Christmas Markets Downtown	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

ONGOING ACTIVITIES

Cancer Support Group

For confidential information about cancer and/or cancer support groups in Hamburg, you can call Allene P. at Tel (04181) 29 18 82 or csupport@awchamburg.org

Couples and Family Outings

Couples and families convene on a monthly basis to do everything from finding the best pizza in town to sitting on Santa's lap at Christmas. This is open to all AWCH members, their partners and children.

Contact Tina at familyfunctions@awchamburg.org

Cultural Subsidy

These events take place several times a year, and are designed to fulfill your desire to experience Hamburg's vital and varied cultural offerings as well as one of the benefits of membership in the AWCH. We offer small discounts on tickets to major cultural events, e.g., opera, musical, or theater. Check our website for such offers or keep an eye on the activities calendar. If you have an idea about an event to offer with the cultural subsidy, contact activities@awchamburg.org.

Broads for Books and Brunch

A book club that meets every odd month. For more information please contact Kara at bookstoo@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

Girls' Night Out

Seeking women thirsty for cultural exchange and a refreshing adult drink, meeting up at hot spots around Hamburg.

Contact activities@awchamburg.org

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

Multi-Kind Group

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 Eugenia at muttikind@awchamburg.org

The Hamburg Explorers

The adventurous Number 5 Bus Group has a new name and email address! This year The Hamburg Explorers will spice up their activities by changing to the U1. This will allow members the chance to explore the many others parts of Hamburg that are worth discovering. The Hamburg Explorers can be contacted at hexplorers@awchamburg.org

Proofreading Group

Proofreaders meet twice per issue to proofread Currents. It's a lot of fun! For dates for the next issue, see the note from the next Content Editor on page 2 or contact currents@awchamburg.org.

Stitch 'n' Bitch

A handicrafts group that gathers to, well, stitch and bitch. That is, we get together to share projects, company and conversation. Contact Beth at snb@awchamburg.org

Scrapbooking/Paper Crafting Group

This group is open to all levels of scrapbookers and paper crafters from beginners to advanced levels. We will get together to "scrap," share techniques and tools, and inspire others with our ideas as we work on our own projects. We have an English-speaking contact with acid-free supplies in Hamburg to help with your projects. Meetings are held monthly and locations vary. Contact: scrapbook@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



BUY T-SHIRTS

Classic T-Shirt	€ 13
Long Sleeved Hoodie	€ 15
Scoop-neck Stretch T-Shirt	€ 15

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.

Save the date: Hamburger Helper Get-Together

Wednesday January 15, 2014, 19:30

Are you looking for something new and interesting to do in the New Year? Would you like to meet new people and feel good by giving some help to a new AWC club member? If you already are a member of the Hamburger Helper team or if you are interested in learning more about becoming a Hamburger Helper, please join us for this evening get-together. We will share our experiences in assisting new members and talk about what more we can do to serve them best.

Location: Restaurant T.R.U.D.E. Maurienstraße 13-15, <http://www.trude-hh.de>

The Restaurant T.R.U.D.E. is located on the premises of the "Museum für Arbeit", very near to the S-, U- and Bus Station Barmbek.

Cost: What you order

We kindly request you to sign-up by Sunday, January 12 to hhelpers@awchamburg.org

HELP WANTED!

Currents needs more help with production! We are looking for (in no particular order):

Content Editors, who 'edit' the content of one issue throughout the process, from picking a theme to getting it up onto the website;

Layout Editors, who have interest and / or knowledge in 'making her pretty', i.e. setting up the look of a page and a whole magazine as well as linking it up to the internet;

Contributors, who write for the magazine about any topic they may be interested in and submit their ideas and articles to Executive or Content Editors;

Proofreaders, who meet twice for each issue to handle immediate editing questions and go through the articles submitted. Proofreaders do not commit to coming to each meeting, but rather come when they can.

Calling All Members: Activities Chair Needed!

Doing events for the AWC is a lot of fun!

I started doing this fun part within the club right after I first joined five years ago. I first did it to lend support to Isabell, who was also in charge of activities at the time, and to get an idea about what being 'Activities Chair' is all about. I continued on with this even when Lauren took over this position. She had been doing event planning before and it was a piece of cake for her but she didn't speak German and had never lived in Hamburg before. So I stayed on as the 'assistant' activities coordinator. Almost two years ago I took the over the position completely. I loved exploring my city in a new way as well as being able to show people my favorite restaurants. It was easy to do and I had support not only from the board, but from the club members as well. Many members thought up events or organized some themselves. Why? Because it is fun!! Now, however, I want to do something else. My relocation jobs have really started to pick up and sometimes I cannot go to an event. So I am now searching for someone who would like to continue for me! I'm open to help support the "new girl" and can also well imagine helping out with this position for two (or more!?) years. If you are interested or just have questions and are curious please contact me, Tina, at activities@awchamburg.org

Congratulations!

Birthday Girls



NOVEMBER

Jennifer M.	01
Suzette B.	02
Shelly S.	03
Patricia R.A.	13
Birgit W.J.	16
Mary F.L.	16

DECEMBER

Susan S.W.	02
Lori D.	18
Carol B.	23
Lisa S.	29



Holiday Recipes from Members



by Jenny M.

One warm December day, when we were living in south Texas, a neighbor asked me for a recipe for a wassail cup. She thought that British people went "a wassailing" every Christmas and wanted the ingredients for her Christmas party. Without reminding her that we have moved on from Dickens' times and that I hadn't been invited to her party, I looked in a recipe book from the old country and found a recipe for mulled wine, which we both agreed would fit the bill. Here it is along with two recipes for two new festive drinks from the old country.

Mulled Wine

From Mrs. Beeton's Everyday Cookery (printed 1969)
 ½ pint water (500 ml)
 Nutmeg
 6 cloves
 ½ lemon
 Small cinnamon stick
 1 and ½ pints claret
 Sugar to taste

Heat the water gently in a pan. Stir in the grated nutmeg and the rind of the lemon. Add the cinnamon stick. Bring to the boil and cook for ten minutes. Strain the liquid into a basin and add the wine. Sweeten to taste. Return to the pan and heat gently without boiling. Serve at once.

Drivers' Punch

Serves eight
 From Good Homes Magazine (printed 2008)
 100 g cranberries
 2.5 cm water
 100 ml cranberry juice
 500 ml blood orange juice
 1 lime, juiced
 1 orange, cut into wedges
 Mint to decorate

Method:

Put the cranberries into a freezer safe container, cover with the water and freeze until solid. Mix the cranberry juice and the blood orange juice with the juice from the lime. To serve, smash the frozen cranberries into shards and place in eight highball glasses. Top with the mixed juices and garnish with a sprig of mint and a wedge of orange.

Apple-berry Mulled Wine

Serves twelve
 From Good Homes Magazine (printed 2008)
 Two 750 ml bottles red wine
 1 litre cloudy apple juice
 115 g caster sugar
 Small cinnamon stick
 2 star anise
 3 tbsp Cointreau
 100 g frozen Fruits of the Forest (or a bag of mixed berries)
 1 small apple, sliced into rings

Method:

Pour the wine and apple juice into a large pan, add the sugar, cinnamon stick and star anise. Heat gently, stirring occasionally until the sugar dissolves and continue heating gently for a further 15 minutes. Just before serving, swirl in the Cointreau, frozen fruit and the apple rings.

"Here We Come A-wassailing" is a traditional English carol and a Wassail cup (or bowl) is a hot drink to warm the fingers and toes of the carol singers.

by Mary L.P.

Raspberry Walnut Baked Brie

1 sheet puff pastry (I use a frozen one or *Blätterteig* if you need the German term for it)
 1 (8 ounce) round Brie cheese
 1/3 cup seedless raspberry jam (*Himbeermarmalade*)
 2 tablespoons chopped walnuts (*Walnüsse*)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Line a baking sheet with aluminum foil and lightly grease with cooking spray.

Lay the puff pastry onto the prepared baking sheet. Center the Brie wheel onto the pastry. Spread the jam evenly over the top of the Brie. Sprinkle the walnuts atop the jam. Fold the puff pastry over the top of the Brie, sealing all openings.

Bake in preheated oven until the pastry is golden brown, about 20 minutes.

I like to serve this with crackers and apple slices.

Two fantastic holiday recipes from Mom's kitchen

by Sus E.B.

Here are two recipes which stem from the many memorable holidays of my childhood. My mom has always been a fantastic cook, whom we always remembered to appreciate generously. Whenever we praised her cooking, she always replied: "They sure know how to keep it coming!" I've tried both recipes myself by now, and have managed to evoke the memories but I'll never be able to compete with Mom's talents. The first is a classic for any turkey meal, and even tastes great on that morning-after turkey sandwich with whole-wheat bread and lettuce.

Mom's No-cook Cranberry Relish

1 pound of fresh cranberries
1 large navel orange
1 cup granulated sugar
3 TBSP Cointreau, brandy or bourbon

Wash and cull the berries.

Peel, then cut the orange into eighths and pick out the seeds.

Grind berries and orange in a food processor, switching on and off until they are evenly ground but not liquid. Scrape into a bowl, add sugar and liqueur and mix well.

Refrigerate for at least 2-3 days to develop and blend tastes.

Will keep in the fridge for at least 3 months.



I remember coming home from college one year for Christmas with the family and feeling a bit out of sorts. When I told my mom how I felt a bit sad that Christmas didn't really feel like it used to, she offered an insight that I have only recently learned to appreciate: "When you get older, the way you experience a holiday changes, but you learn to enjoy making it special for others." Cooking and baking were just one of the ways my mother always managed to make holidays special. Thanks, Mom!

Of course, we spent at least one long afternoon each winter baking Christmas cookies. These didn't require cookie cutters or decorating, so we kids weren't usually part of this recipe, but they were always my favorite to eat. I'm still working on getting them the way I remember...

Angel Nut Bars

(adapted from The Joy of Cooking)

Have all ingredients at room temperature. Position the rack in the middle of the oven and preheat to 350 F. Line an 11" x 7" pan with greased aluminum foil, leaving 2-inch tails on either end.

1. Beat until well-blended and fluffy:

- 4 TBSP softened unsalted butter
- 2 TBSP granulated sugar
- large egg yolk
- ¼- ½ tsp vanilla extract

2. Stir in, and then knead with fingertips until well-blended:

- ¾ cup all-purpose flour

3. Firmly press the dough into the pan, until it is an even, smooth layer.

4. Bake for 10 minutes, and then set aside to cool.

5. Beat until well combined:

- 2 large eggs
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 ½ TBSP flour
- ¼ - ½ tsp baking powder
- 1/8 tsp salt
- 1 ½ tsp vanilla extract

6. Stir in:

- 1½ cups pecans or walnuts (may be toasted)
- 1 cup flaked or shredded sweetened coconut

7. Spread the mixture over the baked layer. Bake until the top is firm and golden brown and a toothpick in the center comes out slightly wet.

8. Cool the pan slightly and top with an icing of

- 2/3 cup powdered sugar
- 2 tsp fresh lemon juice

9. Let stand until completely cool. Use the foil tails to lift the whole thing out to a cutting board, then cut off the bars and peel off the foil. Store the bars in a tightly sealed cookie tin, layers separated by waxed paper. Freeze well.

Kara's Favorite Pie Dough

by Kara W.

This is one of my favorite pie crust recipes to use. I put the spices in the dough for fall and winter but those can be substituted for lemon zest and dried mint in the summer, depending on the pie you are making. I love having the spices in the dough for pumpkin and apple pies; it adds an extra burst of flavor when paired with the butter in the crust. If you have a fondant roller at home, use that, it usually gets you thinner dough! I prepare my pie dough twenty-four hours in advance and keep it in the fridge to make sure it is set enough before rolling out.

2.5 cups (around 313 grams) all-purpose dough plus more for dusting and rolling
 2 Tbsp. granulated sugar
 1 tsp. salt
 1 tsp. ground cinnamon
 ½ tsp. ground nutmeg (*Muskatnuss*)
 ¼ tsp. ground cloves (*Nelken gemahlen*)
 1/8 tsp. ground All-spice (*Piment gemahlen*)
 1/8 tsp. ground ginger (*Ingwer gemahlen*)
 1/8 tsp. ground cardamom (*Kardamom gemahlen*)
 1 cup (one block of 250 grams) butter, unsalted, cold, cut into cubes
 ½ cup very cold water (or ice water if you have ice on hand)

1. Combine the flour, salt, sugar, and spices in a bowl and whisk together to blend.
2. Using your preferred method, cut the butter into your dry ingredients; this can be done with clean fingers, a food processor, pastry cutter, or fork. The final outcome should be pieces of butter that are no bigger than the size of peas, with your ingredients resembling sand.
3. Stir in the cold water slowly and mix with a fork until the ingredients are wet. Using clean hands that have been dusted with flour, gently mix the ingredients with your fingers until it resembles dough. Do not overwork or over-mix. You should be able to see some marbling in the dough from the butter.
4. Form the dough into a disc, wrap firmly with plastic wrap, and set in the fridge to set. It says to chill at least one hour but I usually do several hours to overnight, depending on how cold your fridge is and how warm your kitchen is. The last thing you want is for the butter in the dough to soften quickly, it will cause your dough to literally melt down into your pie plate once in the oven.
5. When ready, take your chilled dough out of the fridge and let sit on a counter for a few minutes to soften, not letting it sit longer than five minutes. In the meantime, dust your work area lightly with flour and rub your rolling pin with a fine coating of flour. Do the same with your hands. Transfer the dough to your floured surface and quickly roll out until about 1/8 to ¼ of an inch thick. Roll lightly onto your rolling pin and then roll back out into a greased 8-inch pie plate. Cut to fit, crimp edges, and put back in the fridge for about fifteen minutes to firm up. Pre-heat your oven to 170-180 Celsius / Grad and bake crust until golden brown.



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Charity Begins in the AWC Hamburg

by Tracy M.

We all know that philanthropy is not one of the main goals stipulated in the AWC Hamburg constitution. The purpose of our club is to advance international understanding, to assist American women and their families living in the Hamburg area and to provide support as they adjust to life in Germany, to advance cultural exchanges among American, German, and other nationalities, and to inform members about issues of interest to Americans.

However, we do a great deal towards helping those less fortunate than ourselves. Until now, each member has supported various FAWCO charitable projects, such as the malaria net project for families in Africa, water wells for families and schools in Cambodia, and other projects, through a donation of 8€ per member. This comes from dues and is a yearly contribution to FAWCO. We have also donated over 1,500€ to the Integral Tribal Watershed Development Project (a water project) in India, which is the pet project of club member, Ulrike Henn. This support came from the profits of our AGM silent auctions in 2011 and 2012, “a slice of cake” fundraiser at the 2011 Thanksgiving dinner and the two Bunco games evenings we have had at our rooms at DESY.

that has been hosted in Hamburg since 2011.



Charity is an American tradition and member Beth G. has been the driving force behind the heart pillow project for breast cancer survivors. She and the Stitch ‘n’ Bitch group have made and donated over 50 pillows to local hospitals. This project is also supported locally by the natural bed and furniture maker Coco-Mat, which has also worked with other American Women’s Clubs in other countries. In the framework of a charity event initiated in co-operation with the AWC Hamburg, over 100 pillows were produced by COCO-MAT and were ceremoniously handed over to the Mammazentrum Hamburg of the Jerusalem Hospital in March. An article and photos even made local press!

A further example is a group of AWC members, lead by Kara W., have walked and run in every Koman Race for the Cure event



The March 2013 Bagel Sale was a fundraiser where the profits were used to purchase fabric and filling for more pillows. There will be another event at COCO-MAT, as well as another bagel sale this fall.

The Stitch n Bitch group has also been called to action by Jess M. She is a follower of Craft Hope, a love inspired project founded in 2009 designed to share handmade crafts with those



less fortunate. It combines a love for crafting and the desire to help others into a worldwide phenomenon. So far, we have sewn educational bean bags for children in Liberia, West Africa, collected towels and washcloths for marine mammal rescue groups after the Gulf Coast oil spill, made bracelets for orphans in Russia and made stuffed animals for children who lost their homes to hurricane Sandy.

Since our beginning we have collected and distributed over a hundred thousand handmade items to charitable organizations worldwide. We have formed partnerships with incredible charities that work in the heart of communities that need love the most.

So there we have it, we are a philanthropic club in our own special way. If you are feeling the need to be involved in a charity think about joining the heart pillow and Craft Hope groups, buy some bagels, or bid on items at the AGM!

Once again in January at the 2014 AGM, there will be a silent auction that will feature unique objects donated by club members and local businesses. Please support us by donating items. If you have items to donate, your company, or your partner's company has items they can donate or know of a local business that is willing to donate, please contact your FAWCO Rep, Tracy M. at fawcorep@awchamburg.org. Thanks for all your help.

Free The Girls Charity Event: AWC Hamburg Lends a Hand!

by Kara W.

FAWCO has many committees and sub-committees, one of which serves to prevent violence against women and children. While reading the most recent newsletter, I saw that the Ending Violence against Women and Children committee is sending out information about free the girls. "What is Free The Girls?" you may ask. This organization collects new and gently used bras to donate to women in Mozambique who have been rescued from lives of sex trafficking and violence. These women have the opportunity to get back on their feet by selling second-hand clothing. Now, bras may seem like an odd choice, but take a moment and open your underwear drawer. Go ahead! See how full it is with bras you probably might have worn once in two years? We buy things, wear them twice, never return them, and hoard them until we have no choice but to throw them out. Let's put them to use rather than making them garbage! In January, I will put together a final donation location and dessert evening for our members. I plan on also giving a small presentation about FAWCO's EVAWAC committee and Free The Girls and how our members can help lend a hand, regardless of how much free time and money they have on their hands!

Here's how to start:

You'll notice the event in November for a books and DVD's exchange. Send any bras you may have to this event or contact me for information or to set up a drop off. Talk to friends and neighbors about any they may have to contribute! Lastly, educate yourself: go to www.freethegirls.org to learn more about this fantastic organization and what you can do to help. Keep a lookout in your inbox and Currents for the final donation and tally of how much we have gathered in January. We need women like you, our members, to help other women less fortunate! Free The Girls!

Message from the FAWCO US Issues &

by Tracy M.

A word to the wise: remember that your US tax filing was due (if you requested an extension) on October 15!

Some really good news (for a change) from the IRS is that a topic index has been created especially for international filers - a tremendous help for those of us who have been daunted by the huge and confusing IRS website. Go to: taxmap.ntis.gov/taxmap/internationalindex.htm

And while we are thinking about filing tax returns, special commendation goes to American Citizens Abroad (ACA) for their Comprehensive Compliance Program proposal to Treasury officials, in an effort to defend the interests of those who have been too frightened or too confused to comply with their US tax and reporting obligations. You can read their proposals by visiting the ACA website and type Comprehensive Compliance Program proposal in the search bar.



At the Mov-

compiled by Becky T.



For a complete list of reviews, consult our on-line reports:

www.awchamburg.org

or

www.KinoCritics.com

MOVIE RATING SYSTEM

- ***** Excellent flick! Don't miss it!
- **** Good movie, worth going to see
- *** Not a bad way to spend a few hours
- ** OK, but read the review to understand my reservations
- * Bad, but we've got to give them credit for making a movie!

ALL FILM REVIEWS AND
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The Notebook *****

Starts November 7

The Notebook is a masterpiece about (in)humanity that is not for the faint of heart. It made me sick to a point that I almost left the movie theater several times because of the violence. In World War II Hungary, twins (**András and László Gyémánt**) are sent to live with their grandmother (**Piroska Molnár**) in the country. Greeted with cruelty, they create a program designed to make them hard and immune towards pain. In order to make sense of it all, they keep record of the good and the bad in a notebook. (*Katia T.*) (Note: excellent film, but for adults only due to highly violent content)



A Blackfish *****

USA 2013

Starts November 7, 2013

Directed by: Gabriela Cowperthwaite

Writing credits: Gabriela Cowperthwaite & Eli B. Despres

Cast: Kim Ashdown, Ken Balcomb, Samantha Berg, Dawn Brancheau (archive footage), Dave Duffus, Daniel Patrick

Dukes (archive footage), Howard Garrett, Dean Gomersall, John Hargrove, Carol Ray, Tilikum, Jeffrey Ventre
Length: 97 minutes

Gabriela Cowperthwaite has crafted an unforgettable, breathtaking documentary. Meet Tilikum: the performing bull orca weighing 12,000 pounds (5,400 kg) has killed three individuals. Meet past Sea World (SW) whale trainers: they believed SW's jargon. Meet researchers: the marine mammals facts are outlined. Beginning with Dawn Brancheau's—a safety conscience senior SW trainer—untimely death February 24, 2010, we shift back 39 years and forward to a 2012 court decision. Truth begets doubt: which is the predator?



Traveling approximately 100 miles daily in matriarchal pods that are equivalent to separate nations, each family speaks their own unique language. Males stay with mom's pod—Tilikum was captured when 2, and their lifespan corresponds to humans. In the wild, nations never mix—SW captures and imprisons injudiciously, or seldom assault much less kill a human. With bigger brains than humans, orcas sense of self, and social bonding is higher. "Blackfish" feature strongly in indigenous cultures mythologies.

Painstaking research and compilations of archival footage spawned this comprehensibly informative, and heart wrenching film. Graphic visuals include: raking (biting) by whales caged in small tanks; a performing SW trainer being crushed; orcas injuring trainers. Public opinion counts: Pixar changed an upcoming animated film after viewing *Blackfish*. Suggestions proffered would be kinder for trainers, and more humane for the whales: Let's hope Sea World pays attention. (*Marinell H.*)

Blue Jasmine ****

Starts November 7

Jasmine (**Cate Blanchett**) was a college student when she met and married Hal (**Alec Baldwin**), a handsome, wealthy New York financier. He drastically alters her life path. She instantly becomes a wife of wealth and over the years learns from her husband to belittle those less fortunate—including her own family. Jasmine comes to ruin as quickly as she came into wealth when Hal's fraudulent business is uncovered. Hal selfishly commits suicide and leaves Jasmine to put their house in order. Tormented by the intense scrutiny and ridicule, Jasmine walks away from a once high-flying lifestyle with no money, no securities and no friends. Ginger (**Sally Hawkins**), Jasmine's sister lives in San Francisco and offers Jasmine refuge in her meager abode. Grateful but frustrated with the difficulties her transitional life reveals, Jasmine's process of self-discovery is painfully mesmerizing. It's a bleak picture of what happens when avoidance of the truth becomes her reality. Written and directed by Woody Allen. (*Karen P.*)

Jackpot ***

Starts November 14

Oscar (**Kyrre Hellum**) wakes up underneath a quite dead naked woman in a strip joint somewhere in Norway. Commissioner Solør takes him to police headquarters to interrogate him about the events leading up to multiple crimes. Oscar is as clueless as the commissioner, but tells him bits and pieces, facts expanded for our benefit with the help of flash-backs. Thor, Billy and Tresko work together in a factory which makes plastic Christmas trees. Oscar supervises their work. The four of them win a huge sum in the lottery, but as three of the four are not the brightest, math is way over their heads and they can't possibly divide this sum by four. It might be easier to divide by three, so one contender is eliminated. And hey: even six-year-olds can divide by two. Jackpot is a comedy gangster film with a surprise ending, fun for the holiday season. Well-known author Jo Nesbø obviously had much fun writing the original script. I highly recommend that you see it, if your German is good enough, which shouldn't be too difficult considering that the commissioner grills Oscar in typical Scandinavian slow-motion with all the time in the world. (*Becky T.*)

Zonenmädchen ***1/2

Starts November 14

Sabine Michel, writer & director of this documentary, and her four girlfriends had just graduated school in the German Democratic Republic in 1990, when East and West Germany were reunited. Overnight their country ceased to exist and was joined with a political system they had been taught to view as 'the enemy'. A unique experience: different from the re-unification the generation of their parents went through, and —though with parallels— different from the global immigrant experience. The film traces their paths: their—after all — different upbringings, and the directions their lives took after a brief period together as au pairs in Paris. Their common history remains a strong bond. Very personal portraits emerge by giving the women space to speak for themselves, by observing them each in their environment and how they interact in the group. Admirable how frank and generous they share their thoughts for this project!

Unfortunately at times it gets a little confusing: after all there are two 'Veras' and two 'Claudias'; childhood photographs are shown without sufficient explanations, and the director speaks with her own voice and through a narrator. Her personal health issue has undeniably symbolic character, but still became too much of a topic. (*Carola A.*)

Zaytoun ****

Starts November 14

An Israeli military plane is shot down over Beirut in 1982 and Yoni (**Stephen Dorff**), the pilot, is captured by the PLO. Fahed (**Adballah El Akal**) is a Palestinian kid who lives with his father and grandfather in a refugee camp. The father's greatest wish is to be able to return to his homeland to replant the one remaining olive tree (zaytoun) from his orchard, but when he is killed in a bombing incident, Fahed knows that this task will be his responsibility. After his father's death Fahed turns to the PLO. While he is in charge of overseeing the prisoner Yoni, he shoots out of anger and wounds him. When Yoni is returned to his cell after his short hospital stay, Fahed realizes that Yoni is his only hope for getting out of war-torn Lebanon. He frees him and they flee – first by taxi, then further with a stolen army jeep and a poor old donkey. They are an unlikely pair and what seemed at first to be a purely political movie now graduates to become the story of an unusual friendship. As a team they hike and climb over arid land, Fahed the leader since Yoni is still suffering from his wound. Fahed is protective – seeking their food and even preparing an herbal poultice for the wound. At an abandoned amusement park and then at an area studded with mines the aggressiveness between them lessens.



The ordeal is over when they finally meet UN workers, but the tree is not yet planted. Against the will of the UN people, Yoni and Fahed take off in a convertible to find Fahed's family's village. This is the breakthrough in their relationship. It is almost like a road movie in two parts: first Lebanon and then Israel. And although Fahed's future is still problematic, they part as equals and again, in this movie as in other such as *The Band's Visit*, for example, we see how much connects Israelis and Palestinians. (*Thelma F.*)

The Family***

Starts November 21, 2013

During a "family" barbecue, one mob boss, Don Luchese (**Carp**) tries to assassinate another, Giovanni Manzoni (**De Niro**). The Manzoni family survives and Giovanni decides to testify against Don Luchese and enter witness protection. The Manzoni family has been moving around for several years and finally settle in a lovely French village as the Blakes. The FBI is close by for their protection, lead by Agent Robert Stansfield (**Jones**).

Giovanni begins his new life as Fred Blake by burying a body in his backyard. His wife Maggie (**Pfeiffer**), who is not pleased by how the local supermarket staff treat her, can't resist leaving a small explosion behind. Like father, like son, teenager Warren

(**D'Leo**) marks his turf at school with fists and cash. Their daughter Belle (**Agron**) gets in the swing by backhanding an aggressive classmate who thought she was easy game. Not exactly the low profile that Agent Stansfield wants them to keep. A rather tongue in cheek humorous "family" film where the simple story line is kept taut by the genius of De Niro who is well supported by the rest of the family. (*Mary W.*)



Adore (Tage am Strand) ****

Starts November 28 2013

In Adore, Roz (**Robin Wright**) falls in love with Ian (**Xavier Samuel**), Lil's son, and Lil (**Naomi Watts**) with Tom (**James Frecheville**), Roz's son. Roz and Lil raised both boys as if they were brothers. So what do we call the phenomenon of a mother falling in love with her almost child? Adore offers much room for labels, the "Oedipal Complex" being the most obvious one. I liked the fact that this movie leaves room for interpretation and forced me to reevaluate my own beliefs. Also, the scenery was beautiful and the acting of the four main characters sensual. (*Katia T.*)

The Way Way Back ****

Starts December 5

Sitting in the way way back (the bench seat facing backward) of a '70s classic automobile, driving toward a small seaside town in Cape Cod, 14-year old Duncan (**Liam James**) endures belittling comments made to him from his soon-to-be stepfather, Trent (**Steve Carell**). Duncan's Mom, Pam (**Toni Collette**) and Trent's snotty daughter Steph (**Zoe Levin**) sleep through the encounter. A disappointing welcome to Duncan's summer vacation at the beach house. Duncan's awkward adolescence phase does not allow him to communicate his feelings: rejection by his father, the abandonment by his mother as she lives for the next drink or joint with the neighbors, observing Trent cheating on his mother, and the frustration of not fitting in with his peers.

Duncan finds escape from his new make-shift family by exploring the town on a pink Stingray bike. He stops for a bite to eat at the local fast food place and meets Owen (**Sam Rockwell**) playing pac-man. Owen offers him a summer job at his family run business--the town's famous water park. Duncan joins the Water Wizz rag-tag team and finds his summer happy place until his vacation is rudely cut short. Duncan calls Trent out on his selfish behavior toward his mother. Trent's ego is deflated. He can not handle the challenge by the 14 year old. On the long drive home, Pam chooses to get in the way, way back to commune with Duncan who has made her very proud. (*Karen P.*)

Only Lovers Left Alive ****

USA 2013

Starts December 19, 2013

Directed by: Jim Jarmusch

Writing credits: Jim Jarmusch

Cast: Tom Hiddleston, Tilda Swinton, Anton Yelchin, Jeffrey Wright, John Hurt, Mia Wasikowska, Slimane Dazi, Carter Logan

Length: 123 minutes

Writer/director **Jim Jarmusch** keeps the storyline simple: two Vampires' centuries long love is threatened. Different by nature and living on different continents poses challenges, but the opening parallel shots establish they are soul mates. Contrary to Jarmusch's existential *The Limits of Control* (2009), the lucid treatment here opens a whole new perspective on the vampire persona.

Self-obsessed Adam's (**Hiddleston**) "wilderness" is Detroit, Michigan, USA, whereas "ruthless" survivor Eve's (**Swinton**) at home in Tangier, Morocco, Africa. Time: present-future. With sources so contaminated both procure pure blood from hospitals: Adam as Dr. Faust from Dr. Watson (**Wright**), and Eve through dear friend Christopher Marlowe (**Hurt**). A musician/composer extraordinaire, after centuries of anonymity Adam is despondent, although zombie Ian (**Yelchin**) continuously supplies him with vintage instruments, and whatnot. Eve hates traveling, but recognizing Adam's quandary flies to Detroit via Paris. Their rejuvenating reunion becomes discombobulated when Eve's younger sister—blood sister—Ava (a compelling **Wasikowska**) shows up. Ava's affinity for discord has not abated since their last get-together 87 years earlier, and her appetite is unquenchable. The resultant push comes to shove: "We really don't have a choice, do we".



The film, with the gracefulness of a vinyl record's rotation, has the Jarmusch cadence of sensual pleasure. Sumptuous visual detailing coalesces with leitmotifs (**Jozef van Wissem's** original music) that transport us between continents, encapsulated through Yorick Le Saux's cinematography. Pet thespians Swinton and Hurt's measured performances add depth that Hiddleston easily matches. Intelligent dialogues comprise visual and spoken references to historic luminaries and issues: Shelly, Byron and Shakespeare—that "philistine zombie", Galileo, Darwin and Einstein, musicians, nature, ecology, political sideswipes, and delectably humorous zingers. Culminating with a fitting finale, when we glimpse Adam and Eve anticipating Eden: "Excusez-moi...". (*Marinell H.*)

Only Lovers Left Alive ***

Starts Dec 19

Despite being besotted with each other, married couple Adam and Eve are living in different countries. Adam has fashioned a nest for himself in a dilapidated Victorian house in present day Detroit. Eve lives in the ancient and exotic town of Tangier.

It's never made clear why the couple lives apart, but it makes for a marvelous visual contrast between dark, derelict, decrepit Detroit and sunny, shabby Tangier. Each is dependent on others. Eve's friend is Kit (**John Hurt**) who has a fascinating secret, as indeed do Eve and Adam. Adam is a reclusive musician whose friend and fan (**Anton Yelchin**) obligingly finds vintage guitars for him. Quite where Adam acquires the money for them is also never made clear. Fearing that Adam is falling into a depression forces Eve to leave her happy life with Kit behind and she takes a night flight to be with her husband. Once there she chivvies Adam into touring the city in the old car which he loves. Together they explore the former grandeur of the deserted buildings which once fuelled work and wealth for America's car industry and the employees who toiled in it. Their contentment is shattered when Eve's sister Ava (**Mia Wasikowska**) invites herself to stay. Neither Eve nor Adam is happy to see her and they predict that this visit, like her last one a number of years earlier, will end in tears. They are forced to send her back to Los Angeles or Zombie Central, as Adam describes it when the inevitable occurs. The best thing to do is to leave Detroit behind and fly together to Tangier to help them get over Ava's nasty little incident. When they arrive they hear the sad news that Kit is failing. Whatever will they do? Indeed, they have no choice.

Tilda Swinton and **Tom Hiddleston** are perfection and seem born to play their parts. Their lines are well written and witty though spoiled by the (mostly) unnecessary swearing. The setting is fascinating to watch as the plot slowly-sometimes too slowly-unfolds. Mr. Jarmusch has taken an old movie genre, dusted it down and given it a lighthearted but sophisticated touch for today's audience. His movie, with its equally clever soundtrack, is a feast for the eyes and ears. (*Jenny M.*)

Blancanieves (Ein Märchen von Schwarz und Weiss)

Starts November 28

Literally: "white snow." We quickly recognize the classic story of *Snow White* through just one slightly raised eyebrow on the face of nurse Encarna who becomes the most sadistic wicked stepmother of all time. But first: Antonio and Carmen are happily married and expecting their first child. It's the 1920s; he is a famous bull fighter in Spain. A ferocious bull injures Antonio, putting him in a wheelchair for life. Carmen dies giving birth to their daughter Carmencita. Encarna, anticipating the opportunity to obtain great wealth, cares for Antonio in his vast castle. Carmencita, upon the death of her grandma, packs up her pet rooster Pepe and moves in with stepmother and father, where she must toil far worse than the lowest slave. Pepe is eventually served for dinner. In the true spirit of the original fairy tale, the adult Carmen is taken into the woods for a fate similar to that of Pepe. She is rescued by six bullfighting dwarves. She joins their troupe, becomes famous, and attracts the attention of her stepmother, who makes her way to the bull-fighting ring for a final showdown with the poisoned apple.

It's not surprising that this fantastically tantalizing film by **Pablo Berger** was Spain's nomination for a 2012 Oscar, won best film at the San Sebastian film festival and won 10 Spanish Oscars, called Goyas. It is a black and white, silent movie in

the spirit of that other successful film: *The Artist*. Short texts of explanation are in English. Absolutely brilliant is **Maribel Verdú** as the stepmother with her talent to appear both sinister and beautiful. Both young Carmencita, **Sofia Oria**, and mature Carmen, **Macarena García**, are fine actresses. This new take on a classic story shows how greed and envy lead people (here: the stepmother, a dwarf, and a circus manager) to take advantage of those naïve or unfortunate, but still love shines through (a father



for a child, a child for an animal, and a small man for a woman). The ending gives much food for thought. The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* recommends *Blancanieves* for all age groups, but I would not allow children under 13. Published in 1812 by the Brothers Grimm, it is a fairy tale for grown-ups and the authors would have approved one hundred percent. (*Becky T.*)

Das Kleine Gespenst (The Little Ghost) *****

Starts November 7

The little ghost lives in Eulenstein Castle and only comes out at midnight to inspect the portraits and to talk to his friend Schuhu, the owl. One day school children visit the castle and Karl comes into his life – a new friend. Soon the little ghost experiences the village by daylight and sees that the village people are preparing for a big 375-year anniversary event and the arrival of a "black mystery man." This film follows quite closely the book of the same name by Otfried Preußler; it came out in 1966 and has never gone out of print, a well-loved childhood memory in Germany. Perhaps you don't speak German so well, but I'll bet your children do, and this is a marvellous opportunity for them to experience a must-see German cultural event, with real actors (not animated – well the ghost might be). (*Becky Tan*)

A little ghost lives in an old castle and he wants to be able to see the world during the day. By changing the clock, he was able to see the world during the day. He got too close to the sun while running from three kids and turned black! After playing a lot of jokes, the ghost is sad no one wants to play with him and wants to go back to being awake at night. He becomes friends with a little boy named Karl and needs Karl's help to turn back into a night ghost. They have a big adventure with a happy ending. (*Erika Wahn*) Based on the beloved childhood story, *Das Kleine Gespenst*, by Otfried Preußler, this magical story comes to life and is a fun film for the whole family. This film is suggested for ages six and up. (*Kara W.*)

DANKE! DANKE! DANKE!

To Nancy T, Shelly S, Kimberley K, Marinell H, Jenny M, Birgit S, Christine R, Mary W, Rose F, and Becky T for representing the club and associated media as accredited journalists at the 21st Filmfest Hamburg. Their special film festival issue of Currents will appear soon.

To Karen P for publishing a special Currents issue featuring the Sundance, Tribeca and Hamburg short film festivals and to Marinell H, Shelly S, Nancy T and Becky T for contributions. If you have not received your personal copy of this festival issue, please contact Becky T: rebecca.tan@t-online.de or tel 5503972.

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Want to look up a film review from a previous issue of *Currents*? visit www.awchamburg.org/AWCH_ClubActivities/AWCH_Film_Reviews

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