

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

CURRENTS

Spring 2015 Vol. 31, No. 1

www.awchamburg.org



President's Message



“In the Spring, I have counted 136 types of weather inside of 24 hours.” -Mark Twain.

I think that Mark Twain is definitely right. Here in Hamburg, I have seen snow, hail, sleet, sunshine, wind gusts and deadly still... All in one day. With this turbulent weather, the flowers have had to fight their way out of the ground and strive to reach the sunshine. I love this time of year. It is a great time to get out and revel in the beauty. This is the time for rejuvenation and the same is happening with the American Women’s Club of Hamburg

This month we are having our first open monthly Board meeting. I am looking forward to seeing many of you at the Amerikazentrum on April 21st, at 11:30, for the inaugural meeting. We will have a lovely lunch at Maredo following the meeting. I look forward to hearing your thoughts.

I am also pleased to announce the re-vitalization of the Book Club. Our new member, Gaby G., a long time member of the American Women’s Club of Finland, has asked if she can help. We have also had a volunteer to restart the Walking Group. Seems like our new membership also knows a few things about CPR!

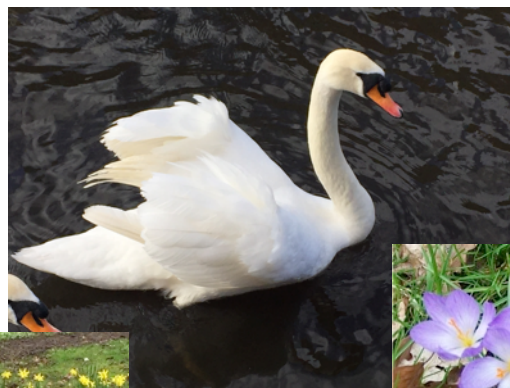
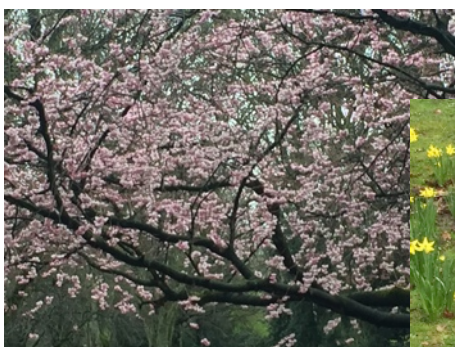
The revision of “Bloom Where You Are Planted” has also begun, thanks to Tracy M. and other volunteers. This extremely valuable resource is so helpful for newcomers to Hamburg (and to Germany). When Carol S. and I spoke with the head of the Amerikazentrum, he thought the book would be great for his new members too. He is also looking forward to working with us to assist newcomers to the area. We are excited to use their facilities, to go to some of their events (as they are open to everyone) and to restart this relationship.

And yes, as you can see, Currents is back after a short hiatus. It is blossoming like the magnolia trees and I am happy to see it flourish. I think that everyone enjoyed the proofreading sessions and Anna S. and Laura O. have clearly shown their ability to do CPR! Another member who clearly knows CPR is Carol S. Despite having the Dreaded Lingerin Hamburg Cough of 2015, She represented the Club well at FAWCO. Her report from that meeting is sure to be a highlight.

As Gustaw Mahler said, “With the coming of Spring, I am calm again.” I leave you with a few photos of the beauty of the season.

All the best,

Laura Langford



Currents Magazine

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Dear readers, dear contributors,

Welcome back to Currents! So many of you have been caring for, laboring over, guiding and shaping, and eagerly reading this publication for so many years. This issue is dedicated to you. We hope you'll find that, despite whatever is new and different about it, Currents is still yours, and that it still has your fingerprints all over it as well as ours ...even inside the screen. We feel, as we know you do, that Currents is time-tested. It is too good to miss, and it is much too good to let fold, with all its traditions as well as all the possibilities it presents us as creative individuals and as a club. This feeling, together with a vision of rebuilding a fun and strong Currents team, have been motivating us as we try to get this ball rolling again. What we have learned? We haven't had to push quite as hard as we had expected. Many contributors were just waiting to get started, and, with the exception of the themed content section, Currents already (or still) rolls itself along astonishingly well.

We would like to thank all the contributors and supporters, who provided assistance and encouraged us with word, thought and deed, who were there to answer our questions, and who together with us reinvented and rediscovered the new Currents magazine.

We hope you enjoy it!

Your new editors,

Anna Sizorina and Laura Otto



serving overseas Americans and the international community since 1931

FAWCO News

by Carol Strametz

Last year I had the chance to attend the impressive FAWCO Region 5 Conference hosted by our club. The December issue of *Currents* has great coverage of this event. Since the Annual General Meeting in January, I am now honored to be the new FAWCO Representative. Many thanks to Tracy M., who served as our representative for the past four years. She did a fantastic job and it will be a challenge for me to live up to her enthusiasm and standard. Thanks to Tracy also for her willingness to continue working for FAWCO and for the Heart Pillow Project that has reached out to so many women. Thank you Susan S.W. for your long-term support of FAWCO activities in our club.

It takes time to understand what FAWCO is all about. How does this virtual organization of 100% volunteers achieve its overwhelming list of accomplishments? FAWCO is a NGO with consultative status; it is a member of the UN agency, UN Women, for gender equality and the empowerment of women; its current Target Program focuses on Human Right for Women and the Target Project, Free the Girls, helps former victims of sex trafficking in Africa and Latin America; it is the oldest non-partisan organization representing private sector Americans abroad; its philanthropic arm, The FAWCO Foundation, has donated more than \$1 million in education awards and development grants since 1967; and there is much more. A good way to start learning about FAWCO is to sign up for the quarterly President's newsletter *Connections*, monthly *News in Brief*, the semi-annual *Forum* newsletter, the *Task Force Bulletins*, and the bulletins for themes such as tax issues, voting, and banking. The newsletter and bulletins keep you up-to-date and help make the website content more transparent. Every member of AWCH is a member of FAWCO and can register on the website www.FAWCO.org.

The Biennial Conference *The Eternal Woman—Equality, Protection, Empowerment* from 23–28 March this year takes places shortly after the deadline for this issue of *Currents*. Reports will be forthcoming. AWCH has an impressive conference delegation of five members. The conference agenda is 10 pages, so along with the highlights of impressive keynote speakers and Foundation Night (when we are asked to dress as our favorite woman), there will be four busy days of workshops, meetings and lectures. It will be fascinating to learn more about the structure of and the women behind this incredible organization.

The next Region 5 Conference for clubs in Germany and Austria will take place from 6–8 November 2015 in Düsseldorf. It will be a wonderful opportunity to connect with FAWCO and with the clubs in our area. All members of AWCH are cordially invited to attend.

The open Board meetings that will be starting in April are a forum where all AWCH members can interact with the Board and contribute to the club through work on committees. Decisions made by the Board will be voted on by the attendees, so help us make AWC your club. A FAWCO committee could accomplish more than one representative!

AWCH is a member of the Federation of American Women's Clubs Overseas, Inc. (FAWCO).

Founded in 1931, FAWCO is an international network of independent volunteer clubs and associations. There are 64 member clubs in 33 countries worldwide, with a total membership of almost 12,000. FAWCO serves as a resource and channel of information among its members, promotes the rights of U.S. citizens overseas; is active as a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) with special consultative status to the UN Economic and Social Council; and contributes to the global community through its Task Forces and The FAWCO Foundation, which provides development grants and education awards. FAWCO and The FAWCO Foundation also collaborate on emergency funding for disaster relief.



The Biennial Conference in Rome is behind us now. It was a wonderful event filled with the energy and enthusiasm of 140 FAWCO women. My detailed Conference Report will follow. In the meantime, please enjoy a few of Leslie Collingridge's photos. Check the FAWCO.org for reports, minutes, summaries of keynote speeches, more photos, and an impressive video.

-Carol S.

Foundation Night: Susan and Tracy are Berta Benz and Rosie the Riveter

Main Conference Room

Region 5 Attendees



Conference Attendees



Are you hiding
your true calling
as a...

Travel Writer It's a dream job and you could have it (erm, we'll talk later about the pay...)!

Food Columnist OMG the food here! Bread from the best bakery with that good butter makes you swoon, and you know just what to do with even the oddest of vegetables from the farmer's markets?! But sometimes our favorite foods and ingredients from home are missing.... Or are they?

Restaurant Reviewer Reviewing restaurants alone = fun
Reviewing restaurants in a group = so much fun it should probably be outlawed....

Children's Corner Columnist There is so much to worry, wonder and write about when your children are growing up in a different culture.

Hamburg Photo Puzzle Contributor Photo puzzles to test readers' knowledge of the city - or maybe you have a better idea? Something like this would be lots of fun for Currents!

Club Historian This club has a long and interesting history, but the real fascination lies in hearing about the lives and experiences of older generations of club members and the Hamburg and AWCH they experienced twenty, thirty or forty years ago. Perhaps you'd enjoy gleaning details from old issues of Currents or doing some interviews?

Hamburg Expert Whether you grew up here or aquired your knowledge through years of reading and exploring: you know this city, its history, its hidden corners, maybe fun little bits of *Plattdeutsch*...please share!

Numbers Person You love to look at the world and its relationships through your bright and clear data glasses? Gosh yes, so do we.

Layout Editor Many hands make light work...By the way the layout for this issue was produced in Pages.

Content Editor You have other ideas, maybe so many of them that they could fill an issue? You'd like to coordinate things and help your fellow club members get their creative juices flowing?



Please let your light shine! whether you'd like to write volumes or just a line or two: any of these types of contributions would be wonderful as *regular features* in Currents. And more editors or proofreaders would be very welcome. But your own idea might be even better! We can't wait to see what you'll come up with...



Travelling Along the Brother Grimm's Fairytale Route in Spring

by Shelly Schoeneshoefer

As spring emerges, so does the desire to travel to various cities which are not very far away. I decided to check out some of the towns along the famous Brother Grimm's route, the route they traveled as they collected their fairytale stories. It is an interesting way to check out the central part of Germany. The route begins in Hanau near Frankfurt which is the birth place of Wilhelm and Jacob Grimm. The route continues north to Bremen and covers three hundred and seventy-five miles as it weaves through towns and villages, forests and castles.

One of the towns I decided to visit was Hameln, which is approximately two hundred kilometers from Hamburg. It is the home of the dark tales of the infamous Pied Piper. It is said that the rat catcher was actually responsible for luring off children.

There are several theories about the Pied Piper, who dates back to the twelve hundreds and could be an interesting research project for someone who likes to dive deeper into the stories.

In the old center of the city is the wonderful Hameln Museum, located on Osterstrasse 8/9, which has paintings, books, and literature about the Pied Piper. The museum also covers other historical topics, which include fossil remains of a mammoth which was found in the nearby town of Tundra.

On the weekend I chose, I had lots of luck. It was not only sunny, but a Middle Ages festival called *Mystica Hamelon* was going on and ran from March 6 to 8. This festival is clearly for the people living there since there were not very many tourists. Everyone was dressed up in crazy costumes and selling interesting goods like beer steins made out of horn, animal pelts, and other strange concoctions. They also had tarot cards readings and many musical and theatrical performances on stage as well as in the streets.

There is a wonderful glass works, Schauglasbläserei located Am Pulverturm 1, where you can see how they blow beautiful art pieces, and there is delightful pancake house in one of the original buildings of the old city. An open air theater production about the Pied Piper, called the *Rattenfänger-Freilichtspiel*, can only be seen on Wednesdays and Sundays from May 27 to September 2. Otherwise you can have a nice bike ride along the Wese.

Between Hameln and Bad Piermont are Schloss Hämelschenburg and Schloss Marienburg, which may prove to be interesting, though I did not have time to visit either one.

The next town that I went to see was Goslar, which is about a two-hours' drive from Hameln. It is located in the Harz Mountains. This town has many buildings dating back to the 12th century. The Old Market Square has an amazing clock that commemorates 1000 years of mining in Rammelsberg. It is enough to make you think of Snow White and the Seven Dwarves. There are more than 50 sights to see in this town, and it is all very accessible by foot. My favorite place to visit was the Zinnfiguren-Museum, the Tin Figure Museum on Königstrasse. It contains little figures out of tin while at the same time gives the historical view of what happened in this area during the last several centuries.

I stayed at a dream hotel called the Alte Münze which dates back to the 15th century and has been renovated. It is located on Münzstrasse 10/11. The people were so kind that I would definitely stay there again if possible. So I hope you all look out the window this spring and check out the grass on the other side of the hill. It is definitely quite green, especially along the route taken by those famous fairytale collectors, Wilhelm and Jacob Grimm.





Trend Scouting in the "Dam"

by Karen Malinowski

Usually when I tell people that I went to Amsterdam I receive a little smirk, a twinkle in the eye, and a nasty little: "So...how was it?" I know exactly what they mean. They want to know how my little magic carpet ride with psychedelic colors and a Teletubby guiding my way was....but no, ladies, I did not go to Amsterdam to take advantage of the very loose regulations on recreational drugs.

I went to Amsterdam for love....my love for vintage.

I personally believe that Amsterdam is one of the greatest places in Europe to get great vintage clothing. Now I know most of the readers here are not vintage lovers, as, most likely, you experienced it first hand in real life when vintage was not vintage but hot new stuff. But for me, a gal in her twenties, vintage clothing has an all new character, is a relict of priceless history and unique in a most fascinating way for me.

When I wear my lovely 60s paisley blouse, I love to imagine that back then, a girl who called herself Sunshine wore that blouse at some Vietnam war protest march and then ripped off her shirt to demonstrate her bare bosom for peace, screaming, "Bombing for peace is like f***ing for virginity". And that would be the reason why the button hole is just a little torn, it's the evidence of long forgotten rebellion. Yes, that's why I love every single little vintage item I own.

That is also the reason why I tried on about forty dresses, nineteen blouses, thirteen pairs of shoes, twelve coats, and eight pairs of pants all in one day in Amsterdam. I will spare you the details of my credit card bill of that weekend!

Fashion-wise, Amsterdam is one of the hot spots. All those tall blond fashion babes, who look so effortlessly trendy, you have the feeling it's not trendy but native Dutch *Tracht* they are wearing.

Sitting in one of the many cafés downtown on one of the nine *straatjes*, a little boutique hotspot in "the



Dam“, it was really easy to point out the current European fashion do's just staring through the window at the lovely ladies walking by.

Here are the trends of the summer 2015 I spotted:

Sneakers! Sneakers! Sneakers!

Yes! Finally! The original American lazy lady's fashion do has become fashionably accepted even in Europe. Only important points to remember:

- White is gold! The whiter your sneakers are this season, the hotter you look!
- Stick to your favorite American labels! Nike is a big winner!
- Don't worry if you can only find your old Adidas Superstars from 2000....WEAR THEM NOW. Superstars and the Smithline are back on the shelf and sold out in most stores already!

Silver and rose-gold metallics are THE HOT COLORS of 2015.

Sandals, sneakers, lace ups, or handbags, go silver or rose-gold! You'll be the fashion highlight! I already secured a little silver purse and antique silver summer sandals to not stand out in the silver shiny crowd this season.

Coming Real Handy to My Vintage Love: The 70s are Back!

So, go all you little Farahs out there and gear up your Fawcett! No matter whether it's your flared jeans (your legs will look roof high!), platform boots (super sexy) or fringed purses (very casual), love, peace and harmony are here to stay.

Next issue, I will be back with more from Milan. The Italians all have their own little fashion freaks on the run, I believe and I will tell you all about my little adventure spinning my heel on the infamous fertility nook of the Bull of Turin's testicles in the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II.

Have a happy April and don't forget: Not everything is fashion. But Fashion is everything.

De Negen Straatjes,

Dutch for "the nine little streets," is a shopping district in the heart of Amsterdam's *Grachtencordel*, or canal belt. The buildings and canals in this area go back to the first half of the 17th century.

Source: Wikipedia



Pictures :

Beautiful Amsterdam

Sneakers: white, white, white, don't be afraid to put on your old sneakers. Follow my favorite saying: oldie but goldie.

I already went full throttle in Amsterdam, got my old nikes out and my new beautiful silver maxi clutch.

Mannequin picture: the 70's are back. As seen at Topshop.



Living my life like that?

Spring is coming, we hear the birds singing, there is a special smell of nature waking up and the sun is sending us warm rays. It is the time of a new beginning. Like nature starting its new life, we anticipate a change, we want to make it better this time, we want to be a bit wiser this year, we attempt to be closer to our loved ones.

And we have a lot of questions: How to live my life like that? How to make a new start? This is a new section for questions and answers to various topics of our life. You are welcome to send your questions to currents-exec@awchamburg.org or you can send a postcard anonymously to the address: Anna Szorina, IIPB, Magdalenenstraße 49, 20148 in Hamburg. Please do not forget the "Ask Anna" password.

If you would like to share your stories and experiences of getting unstuck, please also send your article to

currents-exec@awchamburg.org to be published in the next issue.

Q: My child is going to be born. What language should we speak first? Can he understand the difference and find meaning?

The recent research about dual language learning has found no specific evidence that infants' language learning ability is limited to one language. The scientists found out that a within 24 hours of birth, newborns prefer to listen to their mothers' voice more than that of another woman. They also prefer to listen to the familiar poems, heard in the womb, even if they are produced by another voice. Changes in pitch and stress, and the tone of voice are likely to be the first cues in discriminating between two languages. A newborn monolingual baby can differentiate between his native language and a new one shortly after his birth if the languages belong to different rhythmic groups (German and English). Should the languages be from the same rhythmic group

(Spanish and Catalan), it will take a little bit more than 4 months of his life. So, please, sing, read, show pictures, tell stories, fascinate and just talk, both of you, in your native languages.

Q: Does dual language learning affect my child's cognitive development?

Some of us were confronted with the argument that dual language learning influences the development, and sometimes not in a positive way. Looking at early studies we need to take into consideration lower socioeconomic backgrounds of the participants. The children in these early studies were living in subtractive bilingual environments, where they were forced to learn a dominant second language at the cost of their native one.

If you decide to raise dual language children, you need to create and maintain an environment where the kids are supported, not only with professional instruction, but also with heart and soul, where they learn both languages fully, identify with and enjoy the cultures connected with those languages. Active bilinguals are known to benefit from linguistic and cognitive consequences into the late years of their life.

Source: *Dual Language Development and Disorders* Johanne Paradis, Fred Genesee, Martha B. Crago; Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., 2011

Living my life like that!

Anna Szorina is a psychological counsellor and Heilpraktikerin für Psychotherapie specializing in intercultural families.

Children's Corner

by Anna Sizorina

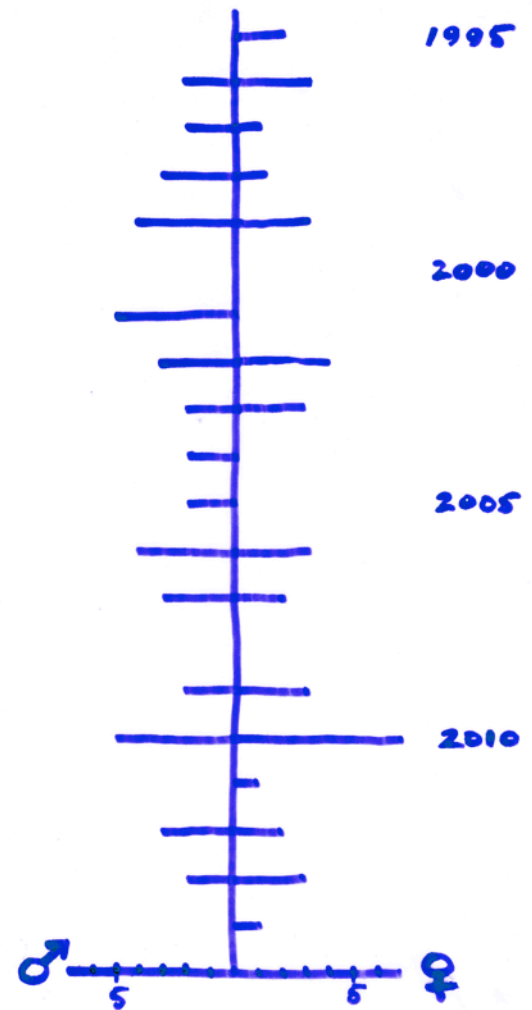
Children living with their parents outside their passport country, bi-cultural, bi-racial and international adoptees, so different, so special, so multifaceted. How do they adapt? Where do they belong? What games do they play? What experiences do they make travelling around the world?

I remember talking to my children a couple of years ago, I was curious how they see themselves among their German classmates. "I am a hidden immigrant", answered my fourteen-year old son, "I look alike, but think different, and it is cool!" "I am a German girl, just like others in my class," retaliated my eleven-year-old daughter. I was startled.

But then I realised that with the start of school years children learn to belong to a social group larger than their family such as a class or a school. In this period it is important to be like others in order to learn the rules of social interaction from inside. They learn to conform and strive to be the same.

As soon as the rules of the game are learned, they move to the next stage to discover their uniqueness, to rebel and to re-establish themselves as adults. They no longer feel comfortable being like others and therefore they test how much difference this world can handle.

We would like to reintroduce the Children's Corner Section to exchange expertise, insights about schools, education system, books, movies, playgrounds and other events. The purpose is to provide help, achieve understanding, and fancy every moment. Together, we can help our children see how colourful the world is. It is fun to be different!



How old are our kids?

Age spread of the 85 club members' children with birth dates between 1995 (turning twenty this year) and 2014 (turning one). This is based on data from the 2014 membership directory, so it doesn't reflect recent fluctuations or new babies. The 41 girls appear to be grouped into about four larger and smaller cohorts with empty years in between. The 44 boys show a slightly more even spread. Fifteen-year-olds (2000) and seven-year-olds (2008) are scarce, while 2010 appears to have been a bumper year for club member babies. Have all you moms of the numerous club four-, five- and six-year-olds found each other yet? With kids entering the German school system or one of the private international schools this year or next, you'll have lots to talk about...



At the Checkout

Laura Otto



Congratulations to Allison M., daughter of AWC Hamburg member Tracy M., on winning the 2015 FAWCO Dual Cultural Award. Allison will be attending Northmont High School in Clayton, Ohio starting in August 2015. She is interested in learning American history and taking writing classes to learn more about style and content of the English language. She also wants to participate on the track team and experience high school immersed in the American culture. As the Dual Cultural Award winner, Allison receives \$3000 that may be used to attend a semester of American high school or an academic or structured educational summer program in the United States.

This award is one of many that the FAWCO Foundation awards every year to members and their children. Created by and for FAWCO clubs, the Awards Program recognizes and honors the academic excellence and all-around achievement of FAWCO Club and FAUSA members and their children. FAWCO hopes to promote international understanding and good will by giving annual awards for study, in the US or abroad, at high school, undergraduate and graduate levels.

Since the first award was given by The Foundation in 1972, many hundreds of thousands of dollars have been given to over 150 recipients. The Foundation Awards Program is open to all FAWCO club and FAUSA members and their children (grandchildren are eligible for the Dual Cultural Award), regardless of nationality.

Contact the AWCH FAWCO Rep, Carol Strametz, for more information on how you, your children and grand children can apply for the 2016 FAWCO Education Awards.

fawcorep@awchamburg.org



Pictures: The Oscar party, Monday, February 23, at the home of Nancy T.

....watching Nancy's TV - very relaxed!

....Shelly wins the Oscar with 14 right answers

.... Concentrating hard on Oscar Bingo

.... The Oscar in the hands of Nancy

....Rose ties with Carola for second place



Oscar Party

by Nancy Tilitz

Gaging from the almost constant laughter, Neil Patrick Harris was a most witty, gracious host, with highlights including the yellow Lego gag-Oscars and Lady Gaga’s shockingly wonderful /totally out of character medley from the “Sound of Music,” dressed in a demure 1960’s ball gown.

On top of enjoying the show, following the Oscar categories to keep track of our correct predictions, we also monitored Tracy’s Oscar Bingo sheets to catch events on the screen that matched squares on our individual bingo-cards.

The grand winner of Oscar Bingo was Becky, who then chose from the table of gifts generously supplied mostly by herself and Karen P. from Sundance, Tribeca, the Berlinale festivals!!

And with the most correct predictions on her ballot, the winner of this year’s 87th Academy Award Oscar Queen Hamburg statuette (pictured above) was... Shelly !!

First runner-up was tied between Rose and Carola – and Carola graciously let Rose take home the statuette for this place as Rose came all the way from Berlin for the event, staying overnight at Shelly’s (thank you Shelly!). Carola did receive the second runner-up statuette.

Everyone, winner or not, selected at least one prize to take home, a remembrance of a fun morning. To quote Abby, “...it was so fun to be able to watch and share it with all the other gals...I had a ball!”

American Women’s Club of Hamburg AGM 2015 Silent Auction

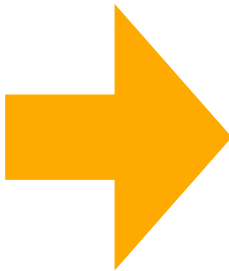
Over 400€ will be donated to the FAWCO Target Project “Free the Girls.”

A heartfelt thank you to all the AWCH members who donated the following items. And a big thank you to all those members who bid on them!

<i>Two Baby Bibs</i>	Jess M.	<i>Reversible Little Girl’s Top</i>	Allison R.
<i>Tooth Monster Toy</i>	Jess M.	<i>Baby’s 1st Touch</i>	
<i>Cream Scarf</i>	Susan S.-W-	<i>& Feel Book</i>	Becky T.
<i>Oscar Books</i>	AWCH Film Group	<i>Two vouchers for High Tea</i>	
<i>Over the Shoulder Bag</i>	Allison R.	<i>at the Hotel Louis C. Jacob</i>	Carol S.
<i>Tour of Train Museum</i>	Stefan B.	<i>Tablecloth and Six Napkins</i>	Tracy M.
<i>12 Pure Irish Linen</i>		<i>60 Minute Massage</i>	
<i>Damask Napkins</i>	Carol B.	<i>with 15 Minute Spa</i>	Nicki S.
<i>Reversible Schlep Bag</i>	Sandra S.	<i>Apron & Coffee Pot + Cover</i>	Allison R.
<i>Christmas Table Runners</i>	Tracy M.	<i>Placemat and Wall Hanging</i>	Allison R.
<i>December CD</i>	Tracy M.	<i>Set of Four Coasters</i>	Carol B.
<i>Brötchen Bag</i>	Allison R.	<i>Wall Hanging</i>	
<i>Two Storage “Baskets”</i>	Allison R.	<i>and 2 Decorative Bird Houses</i>	Allison R.
<i>Two Indonesian Candlesticks</i>	Becky T.		

The non-profit organization Free the Girls creates entrepreneurial opportunities for women rescued from sex trafficking by providing donated second-hand bras for them to sell.

Shawn K. (seated and facing the camera) spoke at an International Women's Club lunch on March 8th, International Women's day. "They were a lovely group of ladies and I told them all about the club, our history, FAWCO, and the changes we have made the last couple years," wrote Shawn afterwards. "Their club has grown and they are getting a younger group coming in..... I sat next to a really nice girl from Tokyo, and another from the Indonesian consulate.... Then we broke into discussion groups about the topic friendship, then each group shared with everyone. Wonderful Indonesian food. Was really nice."



DANKE! DANKE!

Thank you to Brooke V. for her "fabulous" organization of a new and prospective members event in March. Many thanks to all who attended also!

...to the AWCH's Hamburger Helpers. A special thanks for all the time they took in 2014 goes to Birgit, Brooke, Denise and Tracy!

...to Chris L. and her husband for their expert bookkeeping and 2014 tax return at no cost to the club!

...to Petra R. for her work on the online face of AWCH: its website and online calendar, facebook and twitter presence!

...to webguru Cat C. for much good advice and concrete assistance when we needed it!

Where is the Calendar?

Some of you may be paging back and forth looking for the calendar that used to be somewhere around this section. The calendar has been retired for now. Our idea: The purpose of the email newsletter is to publicize club events. Currents, as an online and now forseen as a quarterly publication, is no longer very practical for this and can serve a more reflective purpose. Let us know your thoughts!
- A. and L.

Opera Singer Lunches

by Elizabeth Reifke

Opera Club's two Opera Singer Lunches stand out as highlights of our 2014/2015 season.

First, in November, we had the privilege of sharing a meal and lively discussion with mezzo-soprano **Rebecca Jo Loeb**. Rebecca Jo, a Juilliard-educated American singer, has been with the Staatsoper Hamburg ensemble for the last four years and is now preparing to move on to the Deutsche Oper Berlin.

Kim R.: I thoroughly enjoyed hearing what it is like to be an opera singer: how Rebecca Jo got started, the challenges, the rewards, and to hear about her inspiring aspirations. It was also

very entertaining to hear about some of the unintended 'mishaps' that occurred during a couple of her group's live opera performances and how she and the others on stage dealt with it. She has an extremely good sense of humor and doesn't miss a beat!



Adele R., Freda P., Mary W., Lisa Sch., Rebecca Jo L., Kim R., WangDi Sch., Elizabeth R. - Opera talk, great food, and the best company made for a wonderful extended lunch hour.



Left to right: Carolin H., Lisa Sch., Dovlet Nurgeldiyev, Becky T., Elizabeth R., WangDi Sch., Kandra T.

In February, our lunch guest was tenor **Dovlet Nurgeldiyev**. Dovlet, a native of Turkmenistan who is currently based here at the Staatsoper Hamburg, will be singing lead roles in Mozart's "Die Entführung aus dem Serail" (Opera Club's current project) in April and Verdi's "La Traviata" in May.

WangDi Sch.: Meeting Dovlet was a much anticipated event. During our lunch of nearly two hours, he was engaging, funny, yet personable. We not only learned about him as a person and as a professional tenor, we also walked away with a fresh rose in our hands, given to each one of us by Dovlet. Exciting event? No kidding!

Kandra T.: It was truly an honor to listen to all the fascinating things Dovlet shared with us. From his background to his current role as a member of the Hamburg Opera, Dovlet answered

all of our questions and really gave us awesome insight into what he really does. After this amazing opportunity, I really began to appreciate those who sing opera more than ever before, and I am so thankful for all of their hard work and the time that they put into each performance and practice.

Becky T. sums up as follows: Meeting the singers at the lunches really let me see them as real people, and not just as some kind of otherworldly beings onstage. They are also normal people who shared their stories from real life and told us about the hard road to success. For me, these lunch meetings have brought opera more to life than the operas themselves.



Francesca Woodman (1958-1981)
 Untitled Rome, Italy, 1977-1978/2006
 S/W-Photographie auf Barytpapier
 © Courtesy George and Betty
 Woodman, New York / SAMMLUNG
 VERBUND, Vienna

representation, women artists have challenged conventional notions of identity or femininity and exposed these as social constructs. Along with artists such as Valie Export, Cindy Sherman and Martha Rosler, whose work is familiar to a wide audience, the exhibition also provides a rare opportunity to discover some equally accomplished but less well-known members of the "feminist avant-garde".

Enchanted Time

Masterpieces from the Arthur and Hedy Hahnloser-Bühler Collection
 Through August 16, 2015

Art in the City

Compiled by Ulrike C. Henn

Hamburger Kunsthalle

<http://www.hamburger-kunsthalle.de>

The Feminist Avant-Garde of the 1970s

Works from the SAMMLUNG VERBUND, Vienna

Through May 31, 2015

Galerie der Gegenwart, 2nd Floor

Featuring more than 30 international women artists, this wide-ranging exhibition highlights the early days of the feminist art movement. With over 150 major works drawn from the SAMMLUNG VERBUND in Vienna, it documents how female artists in the 1970s began collectively reshaping the "image of woman" – something that had never happened before in the history of art.

Many female artists are united in their rejection of stereotypical roles. Martha Rosler, for example, uses exaggeration and parody to criticise women's traditionally domestic role, and Birgit Jürgensen tied a cooker around her neck like an apron in her work *Hausfrauen-Küchenschürze*. By playing with the camera or employing masquerade and costumes as an effective means of self-

The exhibition *Enchanted Times* features the breathtaking art collection of Arthur and Hedy Hahnloser-Bühler, a Swiss couple who between 1906 and 1936 amassed an impressive number of Post-Impressionist masterpieces at the Villa Flora in Winterthur. Having been introduced into leading artistic circles in Paris by the Swiss painter Félix Vallotton (1865–1925) in the early years of the twentieth century, the couple soon became friends with Pierre Bonnard, Édouard Vuillard and Henri Manguin, and later with



Félix Vallotton (1865-1925)
La Blanche et la Noire (Die Weiße und die Schwarze), 1913
 Öl auf Leinwand, 114 x 147 cm

Henri Matisse. Through close association and dialogue with these influential figures, Arthur and Hedy Hahnloser-Bühler gained a profound understanding of the artists' creative ambitions at an early stage of their development, and in this way became passionate and very knowledgeable collectors of their work. An unerring instinct for artistic quality also led them to acquire key works by the great pioneers of modernism, including paintings by Paul Cézanne, Vincent van Gogh, Auguste Renoir and Édouard Manet. The exhibition presents a selection of more than 200 works by 18 artists from this world-famous collection, on show in Germany for the very first time.

Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe

www.mkg-hamburg.de

Fast Fashion

The Dark Side of Fashion
Through Sept. 20, 2015

The exhibition *Fast Fashion* at the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg casts a critical glimpse behind the scenes of glamorous fashion. It is bounded by the magic triangle of consumerism, economic interests and ecological issues, and throws light on these themes from the following aspects: fashion and victims; poverty and affluence; global and local effects; wages and profits; garments and chemicals; clothes and the ecological footprint; and new fibre technologies. One part of the exhibition consists of the "laboratory", a platform for ethical fashion labels and new approaches to design aspects such as recycling or upcycling. The laboratory shows what tomorrow's ethically defensible wardrobe could look like. And finally the question is in the air: what influence does the consumer have? Fashion is a social regulative of a very special kind and is regarded as the pacemaker of social change. In this context the exhibition would like to encourage visitors to think actively about the whole topic of fashion and its social, economic and environmental impacts. To this end, it offers comprehensive information and background facts researched together with eminent experts, presented in a scenography especially created for this exhibition.



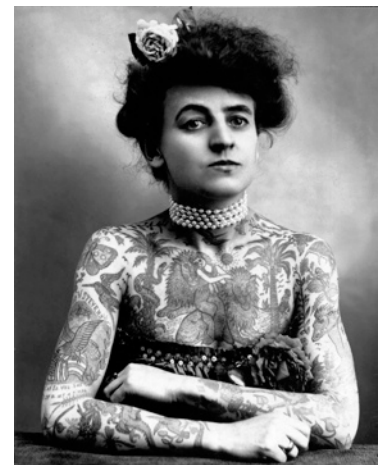
Taslima Akhter, *The Life and Struggle of Garment Workers*. Eleven members of a garment worker's family share the same room to survive. Mirpur, Bangladesh, 2009
© Taslima Akhter

Tattoo

Through Sept. 6, 2015

Hidden out of sight in winter, proudly displayed in summer: tattoos have become a ubiquitous trend, they can be seen everywhere today. But as a constant of cultural history they are far more than a mass phenomenon and a cult fashion accessory. Tattoos tell personal stories, create identity and a feeling of belonging, they are intended to decorate, heal and protect, they fascinate or repel, are mystified or part of a trend. The exhibition *Tattoo* examines in depth, for the first time, the broad spectrum of this ancient cultural technique – which is still very much alive – focusing on the aspect of art and design, showing international attitudes from various perspectives, and picking up on the current debate. It throws light on the ambivalence of the tattoo between a mark of distinction, a sign allocating its bearer to a social class, a badge of identity and a stigma in various cultures, social classes and epochs. One aspect pursued here is therefore the mutual exchange of influence between art, traditional tattooing and visual design. *Tattoo* shows over 250 pieces of work, including photographs, coloured woodcuts, paintings and sculptures, as well as video clips and audio installations, stencils and historical specimens of tattooed skin. From tattooing instruments made of simple tools available in nature to intricate precision machines, colours and pigments convey an impression of the craft in practice.

Maud Stevens Wagner, *Tattoo*
Artist, USA 1877-1961



Deichtorhallen

www.deichtorhallen.de

Picasso in Contemporary Art

In the *Halle für aktuelle Kunst*

Through July 12, 2015

To mark the 25th anniversary of the foundation of the Deichtorhallen Hamburg, an extensive exhibition on the theme of »Picasso in Contemporary Art« will be held from April 1 to July 12, 2015. As the opening presentation in the Deichtorhallen's intensively renovated and modernized Hall for Contemporary Art, the show is dedicated to the overwhelming spectrum of modern and contemporary artists' perspectives on Picasso. With approximately 200 works on loan – from London's Tate Modern and Paris's Centre Pompidou, among others – created by 90 internationally known artists, the show deals with Picasso and his impact on art without showing a single Picasso.

All of the major subjects and periods in Picasso's oeuvre reappear in the exhibition in the form of artist's reception of them: the Blue Period and the associated themes of loneliness, despair, and poverty, but also more lively motifs from the Rose Period, such as the world of the circus, Harlequin, or tightrope walkers. Beyond this, *Les Femmes d'Alger* – as the first Cubist painting – and Picasso's works of the 1920s and 1930s – in which he combines harsh Cubist elements with wide, gentle, and rounded curves – have been stimulating responses among artists for generations. Picasso's aggressively deformative abstractions, which culminated in the reproachful anti-war painting *Guernica*, have led to a spectacular series of political pictorial compositions stretching from the second half of the 20th century to today. In the exhibition, this aspect alone is represented by six monumental *Guernica* interpretations, including Robert Longo's 1:1 homage to *Guernica*.

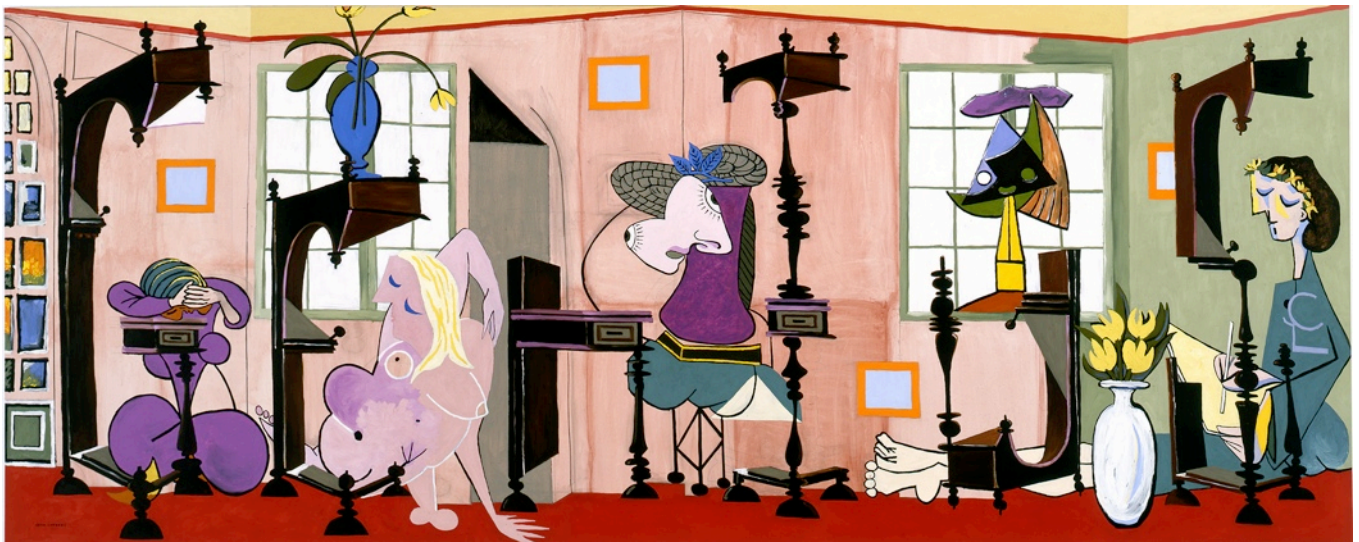


Rachel Harrison: *Untitled*, 2011 Coloured pencil on paper. 57 x 71 cm.

© Rachel Harrison.

Reprofotograf: John Berens Photography - Brooklyn, NY

Sean Landers: *Genius*, 2001 Oil on linen, 86 x 214 inches , 218.4 x 543.6 cm. Credit: Courtesy of the artist and Petzel, New York.



At the Movies

Every Thing Will Be Fine

Opening April 2, 2015

Directed by: Wim Wenders

Writing credits: Bjørn Olaf Johannessen

Principle actors: James Franco, Charlotte Gainsbourg, Rachel McAdams, Marie-Josée Croze, Robert Naylor, Peter Stormare, Patrick Bauchau

One distracted moment is all it takes to change everything. While driving on a backwoods road during a snow storm, an apathetic writer Tomas (**James Franco**) accidentally hits and kills a young boy. Perhaps Tomas should have been paying closer attention to the road, or maybe the young boy's older brother should have been more careful, or their mother (**Charlotte Gainsbourg**) should have called them home before it got so late in the evening. In truth, it was no one's fault. Despite this, the ramifications of the young boy's death echo through the lives of those who remain behind for years to come.

Director **Wim Wenders'** use of color, texture, and symbols brings an ethereal quality to the film which is only enhanced by the addition of 3D. Particularly surprising is the understated acting of Franco who portrays a guilt-ridden writer who reaches his prime only after the tragedy of the



accident. Unfortunately, the editing is at times choppy and distracting, which prevents the film from truly reaching its potential. However, overall Wenders has created a thoughtful portrait of bereavement that should not be missed. (Rose Finlay)

The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel 2

*** 1/2

UK/USA 2015

Opening April 2, 2015

Directed by: John Madden

Writing credits: Ol Parker

Principle actors: Judi Dench, Maggie Smith, Bill Nighy, Celia Imrie, Penelope Wilton, Ronald Pickup, Tina Desae, Dev Patel, Lillete Dubey, Richard Gere, David Strathairn, Tamsin Greig

Here they are - all the familiar faces of the Best Exotic Marigold Hotel, which grossed 140 million dollars worldwide after its release in 2012. For this sequel director **John Madden** could again win a star-studded cast, including **Judi Dench** and **Maggie Smith**, two fabulous British actresses al-

all film reviews and more can be found on





ready in their seventies. To our amusement, they are dealing each other biting remarks about their shortcomings regarding old age, but all in good humor.

Muriel (Smith) is co-managing the hotel with Sonny (Dev Patel) who is not only stressed about his marriage to beautiful Sunaina (Tina Desai) but also about the new guest Guy (Richard Gere), suspecting him to be an undercover inspector. At the same time Lavinia (Tamsin Greig), the second new guest arrives when only one room is still available. How to handle this crisis?

Evelyn (Dench) and Douglas (Bill Nighy) are fully integrated in Jaipur and even started a new job. Madge (Celia Imrie) drives around by taxi between her two wealthy Indian suitors but is unable to choose only one. Carol and Norman (Diana Hardcastle and Ronald Pickup) are still discussing their relationship, after all those years together.

Above all, Muriel keeps a watchful eye whilst unobtrusively steering Sonny in the right direction. His dream of expanding to Second Best Exotic Mari-gold Hotel seems to slip out of his hands. But, in the end all goes well. The wedding ceremony is a colorful Bollywood-style affair with music and dancing where even the oldies join in the hip-swinging fun. The energy and problems of the young and the

reflectiveness of the older generation make it an entertaining mix. (Birgit Schruppf)

Das blaue Zimmer (La Chambre Bleue) ***
France 2014
Opening April 2, 2015

Directed by: Mathieu Amalric
Writing credits: Mathieu Amalric, Stéphanie Cléau
Principle actors: Léa Drucker, Mathieu Amalric, Stéphanie Cléau, Laurent Poitrenaux, Serge Bozon, Blutch

This French drama based on a novel by **George Simenon** opens in a hotel room in the Bleues Chambre Hotel. Here in bed lies Esther Despierre (Cléau), dressed in nothing but pearls, while her very recent lover Julian Gahyde (Amalric) looks out the window. In flashbacks we learn that they have met up eight times, each time cheating on their respective partners: Delphine Gehyde (Drucker) and Nicolas Despierre (Olivier Mauvezin). Every Thursday Esther holds a hand towel out of the upstairs window of the pharmacy where she works; that is the sign for a renewed tête-à-tête (since we are being French here). That's



perhaps all quite normal (at least in France), until several corpses litter the scene, i.e., the man from the pharmacy as well as Esther's husband Nicolas, for a start. Julian tries to remember what happened while being questioned by the police. It seems that it was all some kind of dream turned nightmare; he remembers nothing. Julian had everything, a nice wife, a daughter Suzanne, a business called Agri Tech, and a beautiful house. How did he get into this situation? Who is the evil person in this plot? It takes 45 minutes before we know any of this and 65 minutes before we begin to comprehend the reason for sitting in the cinema. This is a nicely constructed film, but, really, you can watch it on TV sooner or later, or check out the DVD, or even read the book, hopefully in your own language. (Becky Tan)

The Town that Dreaded Sundown

(Warte, bis es dunkel wird) ****

USA 2015

Opening April 9, 2015

Directed by: **Alfonso Gomez-Rejon**

Writing credits: **Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa**

Principle actors: **Addison Timlin, Veronica Cartwright, Tavis Tope, Joshua Leonard, Gary Cole, Anthony Anderson**

Corey and Jami (**Timlin**) are at the drive-in movie theater in Texarkana, Texas. Every Halloween in October, the cinema revives the 1976 scary movie *The Town that Dreaded Sundown*. Soon, however, the couple decides to go for that other most popular activity in Texarkana, namely parking in the woods and necking in the car. Bad idea. They are attacked by a bag head (man with a sack over his head). Corey dies and Jami escapes, but not before the evil doer can whisper into her ear, "This is for Mary to make them remember." The police, under the direction of Chief Deputy Tillman (**Cole**), take on the case, and Deputy Foster (**Leonard**) sits in his police car in front of Jami's house for security. After several more couples are brutally murdered we realize that Jami is being saved as the killer's spokesperson to remind the residents of serial killings which happened in 1946. Jami decides to research this original event since that culprit was never found. Perhaps the murderer is out to revenge a deceased relative or is perhaps even



someone related to the original murderer. Or is it strange Nick, whose father committed suicide and whose mother sits locked up in an asylum? Or is it perhaps Reverend Cartwright who never stops calling the wrath of God upon these Godless people?

The original slasher movie from 1976 *The Town that Dreaded Sundown*, (same title as this new film, but at that time called *Der Umleger* in German) originally set off a wave of similar films such as *Halloween* (1978) and *Friday, the Thirteenth*, (1980) up to Gomez-Rejon's television series *American Horror Story* (2011-2014). Now we have a new plot, new actors, a new version – same idea and title but not a sequel. That original 1976 version by Charles B. Pierce was based on a true story about a serial killer who terrorized the people of Texarkana in 1946, and was never found. The film holds your attention. I seldom predicted the next step, although when Jami's grandmother Lillian says, "I've never been out of Texas in my life," I thought, "hmmm – we'll see how far she gets." This time the filming site was Shreveport Louisiana, USA, which is about 120 kilometers from Texarkana. I enjoyed the typical U.S. southern accent, which is an incentive to see it in English. (Becky Tan)



Die Coopers: schlimmer geht immer
(Alexander and the Terrible Horrible No Good Very Bad Day) ****

USA 2015

Opening April 9, 2015

Directed by Miguel Arteta

Writing credits: Rob Lieber

Principle actors: Steve Carell, Jennifer Garner, Ed Oxenbould Dylan Minnette, Kerris Dorsey, Megan Mullally, Jennifer Coolidge, Bella Thorne

Alexander Cooper is one day short of turning 12 and it's the worst day of his life. Besides waking up with chewing gum in his hair, he learns that no one will attend his up-coming birthday party. Everyone is going to Philip's party on the same day, since it features all kinds of special effects. And he was so much hoping that his secret heart-throb Becky would come, but even she finds it hard to like him after he set the chemistry classroom on fire. Worse still, his family: father Ben and mother Kelly, as well as his two older siblings Anthony and Emily, and even baby Kevon, are so wrapped up in themselves, that they seem to ignore his problem. In a fit of pique, he wishes a bad day on all of them. No problem. The next day (his birthday) total

chaos takes over. Everyone is in a hurry. Mother Kelly sees Anthony naked in the bathroom. The car won't start. Kelly's newly published book has a drastic mistake and must be withdrawn immediately before Dick van Dyke (in real life!) can introduce it to the public. Baby Kevon's bumblebee-shaped pacifier is lost! Ben, who has been Pami (Papa + Mami) to Kevon due to a seven-month unemployment pause, has to take the child along to a new job interview. And it all gets worse with diapers and wee-wee, a bad cold and cough syrup, a driving test and a blue suit, and on and on.

This truly is a fun film for the whole family. It avoids being too silly; the problems seem familiar and we are glad that they are on screen and not hovering over us. The first half is based on a children's book of the same title from 1972 by Judith Vorst. The second half is new. Producer Shawn Levy said they were inspired by similar films such as Parenthood (1989) or Cheaper by the Dozen (1950, 2003). Actually, it reminded me of the recent Paddington film, even though Paddington is animated and this one is not. There is the same sense of innocence and love, with a moral to the story, in this case, that family loyalty overcomes all complications. I love the final birthday scene – give me the three Australian cowboy line dancers any day. All of the actors are fine, especially Australian **Ed Oxenbould** who had to learn an American accent to play Alexander. Even baby Kevon was impressive, played by twin girls, **Zoey** and **Elise Vargas**. (Becky Tan)

Winnetous Sohn ****

Germany 2015

Opening April 9, 2015

Directed by: André Erkau

Writing credits: Brinx/Kömmerling

Principle actors: Lorenzo Germano, Tristan Göbel, Uwe Ochsenknecht, Armin Rohde, Christoph Letkowski, Tyron Ricketts, Alice Dwyer

Max (**Germano**) is a strange boy. Ten years old, chubby and clumsy, he is nevertheless happy in his world of Indians. In fact, he believes that he is an Indian chief, an idea supported by his musician father who is always good for fun and fantasy. Sadly, his parents are separated, perhaps not for good, but at the moment Max lives with his mother and experiences her boyfriends. She delivers him to an Indian summer camp for kids, where they wear



feather headdresses and sleep in tents, a perfect venue for Max, who even converses in Indian dialect and says wise words like “The White Man has the clock, but we have the time,” or “The White Squaw speaks with a forked tongue.” Max bonds with newcomer Morten (**Göbel**) after initial difficulties. Morten also has his problems, e.g., girls make fun of him because he can’t ride a bicycle. Both believe that life will take a more positive direction when Max has been selected to play the son of the Indian Winnetou at the annual open-air Karl May festival. His optimism is almost unreal considering that he has yet to learn to ride a horse, not to mention his nerdy appearance.

This is a delightful film for children and adults, whether you know anything about Karl May or not. Naturally, you will have a different perspective if you have seen a Karl May play (Karl May Festspiele), perhaps in Bad Segeberg. Everyone should take the opportunity to see the real thing. Here the director (**Uwe Ochsenknecht**) plays the mean, tyrant director. Winnetou doesn’t look half as good as in the original (e.g., Pierre Brice), and the site is obviously some smaller soccer field – not the big arena where the original is shown. No matter. This is all about Max who changes everyone’s life for the better plus a few digs at the



whole Karl-May spectacular thrown in for fun. (Becky Tan)

In meinem Kopf ein Universum (Life Feels Good; Chce się żyć) *****

Poland 2013

Opening April 9, 2015

Directed by: Maciej Pieprzyca

Writing credits: Maciej Pieprzyca

Principle actors: Dawid Ogrodnik, Kamil Tkacz, Dorota Kolak Arkadiusz Jakubik, Helena sujecks, Mikołaj Roznerski

A severely disabled man appears before a medical board that is at a complete loss of how to communicate with him. The film will come full circle with this opening scene. The touching but also surprisingly uplifting story that brings us back to this point, is being told in retrospect and was inspired by true events.

Mateus (**Ogrodnik** and **Tkacz** as child), born in the 1980s in Poland, has not only been diagnosed with cerebral palsy but is incapable of thought or emotion; in the insensitive words of an expert he is a ‘vegetable’. Nevertheless, his parents and siblings

fully include him in their lives. The way they talk to him, though they hardly receive any interpretable reactions, and their love and unwavering support will foster Mateus' perseverance to make himself understood one day.

Mateus (Ogrodnik) guides us via voice-over through his upbringing. He shares his thoughts on family, neighbors and friends, and shows us that he is a human being: witty, funny, with likes and detestations, and capable of romantic love. We will learn who eventually finds the key to his 'universe' and enables him to share it. The voice-over, a humorous and self-ironic commentary, prevents the film from turning 'touching' into 'sentimental'. His Polish low-income family is anything but 'picture-perfect', but is strong and real and interesting to get to know. Though all acting is commendable, Kamil Tkacz and Dawid Ogrodnik—able-bodied actors after all—give fantastic performances as a person who can't control the jerky and twisted movements of his deformed body, and is unable to communicate. They let his soul and his alertness shine through and make us love Mateus, not pity him.

Do stay through the credits, not to miss the last scene that shows Ogrodnik meeting Przemek, the real life inspiration to the film! (Carola A.)

What If (The F-Word – Von wegen gute Freunde!) ***
U.S.A. 2014
Opening April 9, 2015

Directed by: Michael Dowse
Writing credits: Elan Mastai
Principal actors: Daniel Radcliffe, Zoe Kazan
Length: 98 minutes

This is the story of Wallace (**Daniel Radcliffe**) who has retreated from the world of love and dropped out of medical school after being burnt by his girlfriend. Wallace meets Chantry (**Zoe Kazan**) at a party and they immediately click. After an evening of fun banter Wallace comes to discover that Chantry lives with her longtime boyfriend. This disclosure puts the offer of friendship on the table and takes us through the "what ifs" of friendship or love for this young couple.



The age-old question of whether men and women can ever truly be 'just friends' is asked from the start. As the world contrives to bond Wallace and Chantry we see both denying their feelings and continuing to be 'just friends'. Wallace struggles with his feelings and whether or not to tell Chantry, thus risking their friendship. Chantry faces her own turmoil trying to understand if you can really truly love one person and develop feelings for another. How these two reconcile their emotions and come to decisions about their future is entertaining and sweet. The issues they need to address are ones many have come across; old love vs new love, choosing the perfect partner; friend vs lover; and finally do you ever need to make a relationship work or is that the death knell for true love.

The witty repartee is fast paced and humorous between Radcliffe and Kazan. There is an obvious chemistry between the two stars which gives this movie a little bit more than the average rom com. (Christine Riney)

What If (The F-Word – Von wegen gute Freunde!) ****
(second opinion)



It's been 25 years since Billy Crystal and Meg Ryan charmed audiences in *When Harry Met Sally* as friends who insist that love and friendship are incompatible and to be avoided for the sake of friendship.

In this romantic comedy Chantry (**Kazan**) and Wallace (**Radcliffe**) don't have such 'deep convictions'; it's more a question of unlucky timing. They meet at a party and hit it off so well that a romance seems inevitable. For Wallace the evening ends in disappointment. He is ready for a new relationship; Chantry is happy with her long-term live-in boyfriend Ben (**Spall**). Pointless to keep her phone number. But then they run into each other shortly after and decide to be friends. Wallace hides his true feelings; Chantry isn't aware of hers. Their friends, Alan (**Driver**) and Nicole (**Davis**) – go-getters when it comes to love and therefore quite the opposite – try their best to help fate along, though not exactly with the desired outcome.

What If manages to maintain an entertaining lightness and still incorporate a view on the problems and decisions today's twenty-something generation faces. There is a lot of fresh talent to watch and well-written lines to enjoy—particularly between

Chantry and Wallace who have a quick-witted way of countering each other's remarks. (Carola A.)

Big Eyes ***
 USA /Canada 2014
 Opening April 23, 2015

Directed by: Tim Burton
 Writing credits: Scott Alexander, Larry Karaszewski
 Principle actors: Amy Adams, Christoph Waltz and Danny Huston

In the 1960s Walter Keane (**Waltz**) established himself among the great artists like Andy Warhol by creating images of orphan waifs with large dark eyes set in different settings. Since he was a self-promoting genius, he then came up with the brilliant idea to commercially sell them as prints and post cards making them accessible to the ordinary people. This brought him fame and fortune. As his fame grew, his greed become even more demanding to the point that he overstepped his boundary which revealed the truth about the painting. Through this turmoil his wife divorces him and the truth comes out that indeed she was the artist, not he. It is also not a surprise that **Tim Burton** is a collector of Keane's work. He uses these haunting sad eyes from her paintings to create an expressionist surreal atmosphere which overflow into the film. It is interesting to note that it was a sensational shock that Margaret Keane (**Adams**) actually was the artist, but in reality there have always been men who take credit for women's work. As Margaret Keane says, "From a distance you look like a painter, but up close, there is much there." In real life Keane is 87 years old and sells her paintings to a gallery in Napa Valley. (Shelly Schoeneshoefer)



Die Gärtnerin Von Versailles

(A Little Chaos) *** 1/2

UK 2014

Opening April 30, 2015

Directed by: Alan Rickman

Writing credits: Jeremy Brock, Alison Deegan, Alan Rickman

Principle actors: Kate Winslet, Matthias Schoenaerts, Helen McCrory, Alan Rickman, Stanley Tucci

King Louis XIV (**Rickman**) decides in 1682 to move family and court from Paris to the country. Unsurprisingly, he orders stupendous gardens – perhaps for his 2000-plus-member court to get lost in? The gargantuan—approximately 800 hectares/8 square miles—park design falls to landscape architect André Le Notre (Schoenaerts), famed for his jardin à la française (French formal) style. Requiring assistance, André invites drawings from respected Parisian landscape gardeners. No one is more surprised than Madame Sabine De Barra (Winslet) at being chosen. Some of the contenders' jealousies displace their common sense,

but Sabine, genuine and a hands-on gardener, concentrates on bringing beauty to mud. Slowly winning over a wide audience of believers, Sabine's impromptu call on the King's gardener generates an honorable impression that bestows a strong ally.

Doing a royal job **Alan Rickman** directs and acts (King Louis) in this historical drama. **Winslet's** powerful performance holds the story together; **Schoenaerts'** restraint border on monotone, **Tucci's** fop is lovable; the sets/costumes pomposity illustrates discrepancies between the classes. Off-putting are plot inconsistencies, and cuts: introducing details of Sabine's back-story, Sabine's presentation at court and, glaringly so, after the lovers tryst that slipped past editors **Nina Gold** and **Robert Sterne**. Tantalizing topics—fidelity, women's treatment at court, trying to control nature—are left dangling. **Ellen Kuras'** cinematography and **Peter Gregson's** music are laudable. Still, all is fair in love, war, and gardening ensuring audiences an entertaining romp among fountains and flora. Presently, over six million visit the Gardens of Versailles annually that together with the château were inscribed to UNESCO's World Heritage List in 1979. (Marinell Haegelin)



How does **your garden** grow...?

Dear AWCCH members,

"Do you have a garden?" the Currents team asked in the email newsletter in mid March, hoping to inspire many enthusiastic and vehement replies in the form of short musings on a topic which might perhaps be a passion for some members, a source of recurring petty annoyance for others, and, who knows, maybe an object of longing – or flat-out loathing?– for others yet. It didn't work out quite as expected. We got a single reply (thank you!)...which we are very cannily *withholding* until we get some more! One tantalizing clue only: her luscious roses are pictured above. So sharpen your keyboard fingers, send along some photos, and let us know about the plants you grow, or kill, or long to grow or kill, even (yes!) if the topic is not your favorite one. Limited to your bedroom windowsill or the odd seed bomb on the construction site? Getting an insider's view of what goes on in a *Kleingartenkolonie*? Converted to slug farming after all? Found a use for those funny mushrooms in the lawn? We so want to know! Hopefully we can publish some more in the upcoming issue...Along with the answer to that pressing question: **Whose roses?**....and is her thumb green? ...**or black?!**

Currents' new PINBOARD.....

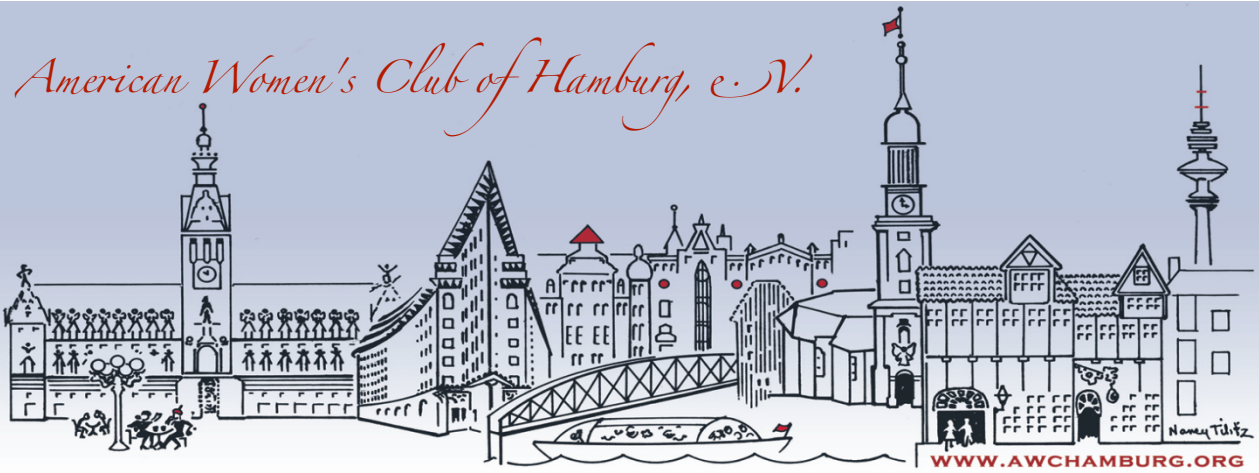
Currents has now gone ad-free, as you may have noticed, with one exception: We hope to offer each AWCCH member one simple classified ad of up to 30 words in length per issue, starting with the next issue (in June). The AWCCH Board is behind us in this and we think it could be a great service to members: a place to advertise your small busi-

*ness or sell your homemade goodies, to find renters for your apartment while you're away, or tout your teenager's services as a babysitter. ***BUT*** Gathering and keeping track of the many (we hope) submitted ads, in addition to our other Currents-related responsibilities, would be difficult for the tiny Currents editorial team as*

it stands at the moment. Is it possible that it might be the perfect way for some member who "knows CPR" (i.e. who is ready to pitch in where help is needed) to enjoy getting more involved? Thus the inaugural ad:

*.....
NEEDED: One PINBOARD editor!! offering: email alias if necessary, friendly team and lots of appreciation!*

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



*More from the FAWCO biennial Conference (5)
Photos by Leslie Collingridge*



*New Members' Event in March (2)
Photos by Brooke V*