

AWCH CURRENTS



CELEBRATING
AWCH EVENTS

FEATURING
HANSEATIC HELP

SPECIAL THEME

HOW WE DO HAMBURG

THE AMERICAN WOMEN'S CLUB OF HAMBURG, e. V.

Apr. - Aug. 2021 - Vol. 37, No. 11

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Editorial

Dear *Currents* readers!

Welcome to our summer issue, which is really an end-of-summer issue, as we skipped our regular mid-summer edition this year. It made sense to do so—circumstances have prevented many of the usual updates from our clubs, and few regular events have resumed. We just figured there would be more to report after a short break and, happily, that's at least partly true. Our intrepid clubbers, fiercely masked and properly distanced, have been out and about to the greatest extent possible, making the world a better place for themselves and others, come what may.

While the last 18 months have been hard on everyone, some are harder hit than others. Some of us who have been luckier have used this privilege to help those others. Our favored charity, Hanseatic Help, got a big boost in donations (both material and monetary) and manpower from one dedicated group-within-our-group. FAWCO celebrated its 90 years of service with a salute to "Inspiring Women," and our target project with them, Hope for Girls and Women, will hold both a Region 5 meeting and an online auction this November (mark your calendars now!).

Meanwhile, many of our members were finding ways to social distance *and* be social. They met in open, airy places or online to share books, music, and ideas. They virtually hiked the great American national parks while literally walking Hamburg (if that makes no sense, read all about it here!). They toured the city on two wheels for World Bicycle Day. They Zoomed the Fourth of

July (yes, "Zoom" is a verb now). And many of us went "home" for the first time in a long time, or finally, finally vacationed away.

But many also stayed in Hamburg. This is why we chose an expanded Hamburger Hacks for our theme this issue; there is so much to love in this city, and we want to know what that is for you. Also, visitors are beginning to return to us, and everyone has that special restaurant or place that they bring guests. Maybe your out-of-town-guest tour even takes you to places you'd never go otherwise! We hope you enjoy your fellow clubbers' stories and remember—we are always happily accepting similar recommendations for Hamburger Hacks.

Finally, this is the issue where we say good-bye to Beatrice, who has done so much to make this magazine look like, well, a real magazine! Between her computer skills and her design sense, Beatrice is in high demand; this means that, between her job and working on her masters, she's got her hands full. And so we close this editorial with a call to action: *Currents* need you! You with the ability to use or the inclination to learn InDesign, you who enjoys getting creative with images and/or words, you who likes the idea of a brief, mad flurry of activity every three months—even if you're just toying with the idea, we'd love to hear from you!

We hope your summer was everything you wanted it to be. See you next fall!

Regards,
Beatrice K. and Mason Jane M.
Co-Editors



FEATURING: HANSEATIC HELP



SPECIAL THEME: HOW WE DO HAMBURG



ART IN THE CITY: TOM SACHS

Sam's Suit, 2019
Mixed Media, 142.5H x 70W x 70D inches.

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Summer 2021

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President's Message

Dear Club Members,

End of summer. Although it is only the beginning of August as I write this, it certainly feels like summer is ending—my husband and I are driving back to Hamburg (and stuck in a Stau), the schools in Hamburg are about to start, the weather has turned cool again, and I keep getting messages from members coming back. Back from the States—visiting family and friends or maybe even visiting one of the many beautiful US national parks. Whereas many of us stayed close to Hamburg but took advantage of the AWCH summer challenge “Every Mile Counts” to visit 20 national parks from the comfort of our armchairs, albeit after accumulating many extra miles by biking, hiking, running, or gardening. What fun it has been to cheer each other on as we traveled from one milestone to the next and to remember our own real trips to a national park.

US Independence Day came and went without our traditional BBQ. However, utilizing the talents of our AWCH members, we were able to put together a wonderful virtual event to celebrate the day with music, quizzes, and an informative talk about the US flag. And weren't those goodie bags a treat? “Buy me some peanuts and Cracker Jack...”

Another highlight of the summer was our Refugee Day event in June, in which a small group of members gathered at the Hanseatic Help headquarters to learn more about our selected local charity. This organization has provided tremendous support for the many refugees coming to Hamburg since 2015, and this energy is now being funneled to help many other needy women and men here in Hamburg. It was an inspiring event. I was proud to present

the organization with a check for €4,000 that was raised by our club members to purchase 1,600 pairs of women's underwear, an essential need that often gets overlooked. In another show of the philanthropic spirit of our club, the From the Heart Pillow Project held another successful bagel sale fundraising event.

Finally, to slowly transition from virtual to in-person events, board members have started a social hour held every two weeks at various times and places to give members a chance to meet up and discuss whatever they want. This is a good time to reunite with other members and to meet some of our new members. This summer we have welcomed four new members—Regina L., Karen S.-T., Dorothea S., and Marilya R. We look forward to meeting them in person and do hope that AWCH provides a platform for them to form friendships, to support each other, and to make a difference.

Looking forward to meeting many of you at our End of Summer celebration in September.

Best wishes,
Carol H.
AWCH president



Photo of Death Valley National Park by Carol H.

An Important STATEMENT From the Board

COVID-19 REGULATIONS, AUGUST 20, 2021

Rules for Private Events and Meet-Ups

All private events and meetings outside of the family are limited to 10 people outdoors and 5 people indoors from any number of households. Fully vaccinated people and children under 14 are exempt from this rule. If more than 10 people gather indoors, the same rules as cultural events with no seating plans apply.

Social distancing of 1.5 meters is still the rule in all other social situations. Adequate ventilation is essential for indoor safety and at-home rapid test kits are recommended for indoor meet-ups. This rule includes private meet-ups in spaces like parks. Some areas of the city have restrictions on the consumption of alcohol at certain times.

Dining

Ten people from different households plus children may sit together, and contact data must be provided (with the Luca app or a similar method). No pre-testing is necessary.

Indoor Dining

Indoor dining will be allowed until 23:00. The 3G system applies (Geimpfte or Genesene or Getestete): you must present proof of full vaccination, recovery, or a recent test. Contact data must be provided.

Cultural Events

Theater openings, concerts, and outdoor (500 people) or indoor (100 people) cultural and sporting events are now allowed. Outdoor dancing events are now allowed for up to 250 people. These all require pre-registration, strict seating plans, 3G testing, and contact tracing.

Tours

Guided tours are allowed for groups of 20 outdoors and 10 indoors. Indoor tours require testing, contact tracing, and masks.

Sports

Up to 30 adults may participate in group sports outdoors with distancing or indoors one person per 10 square meters of gym space (with 3G testing and contact tracing). Outdoor swimming is allowed with testing and contact tracing. There are no restrictions on children's sports.

Venues

Museums, botanical gardens, zoos, and memorials are now open with contact tracing and limitations on visitor numbers. Testing is no longer required.

Hotels

Hotels may now open at full capacity. There is a testing requirement every 72 hours in addition to contact tracing and masking requirements. Indoor restaurants are open to hotel guests only.

Shops

All stores may open without a pre-testing requirement if contact tracing is in place. The number of customers is limited, depending on the size of the store.

Testing Requirements

Antigen tests (Schnelltests) are being offered at many locations in the city at no personal cost until October 11, when there will be a charge for the test. In most cases, the testing requirement is also fulfilled with proof of full vaccination (Impfpass) or recovery. An antigen test is now valid for up to 48 hours.

Masking

Medical masks (surgical masks or KN95/FFP2 masks) are no longer mandatory in parks if physical distancing is possible. Masks are still mandatory for everyone aged 14 and older in public transportation, in stores and markets, in places of worship, in public offices, and in medical treatment centers, as well as in all offices, places of business, and public buildings.

Vaccination

For more information, [click here](#).



FAWCO

Inspiring Women Worldwide

Biennial Conference

March 18-21, 2021

BY CAROL S.

The Biennial Conference is for FAWCO clubs all around the world to come together. This year, the March 18–21 conference was virtual on the HopIn platform. A strong delegation of AWCH members participated. AWCH was very honored that our two nominations for \$4,000 Development Grants were awarded, those being Environment: Nurturing our Planet for Harvesting and

Storing for a Better Living, Palghar District, Maharashtra, India; and Global Issues: Close to Home for Empowering Refugee Women in Hamburg, Germany.

A comprehensive report of the conference is available on the [FAWCO website](#).

Every member of AWCH is a member of FAWCO and invited to

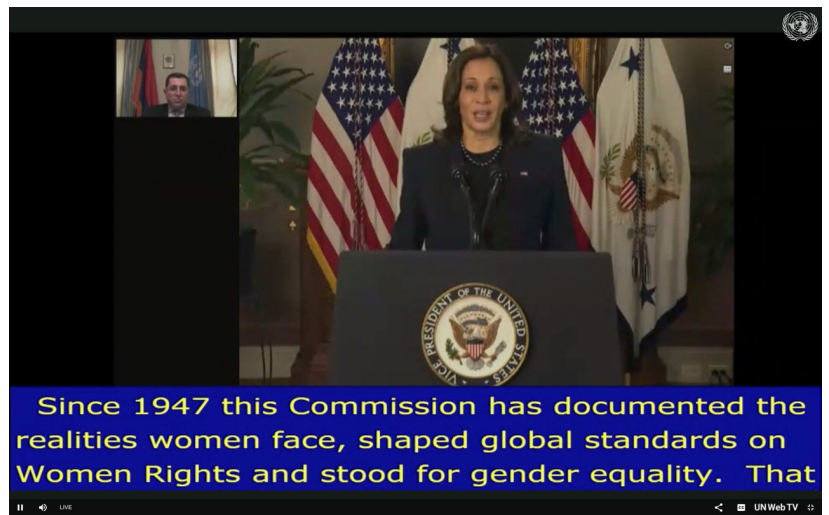
participate in all FAWCO events. Save the dates: the meeting of Region 5 (Germany and Austria) in Vienna, November 12–15, 2021, and the interim meeting in Luxembourg, March 4–6.



UN Advocacy

CSW65

BY CAROL S.



Kamala Harris, UN Opening Speech

FAWCO is a United Nations accredited non-governmental organization (NGO) with special consultative status to the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). The UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), part of the ECOSOC, promotes gender equality and the advancement of women. Its charge is to measure progress towards equality and highlight challenges, set standards, and formulate concrete policies to promote equality and women’s empowerment, and to encourage mainstreaming of the

gender perspective in all UN activities worldwide.

FAWCO is a member of the NGO Committees on the Status of Women (NGO CSWs) in NY, Geneva, and Vienna. FAWCO members and UN representatives regularly attend the annual CSW in New York. FAWCO advocates through written and oral statements submitted to UN Women for consideration by CSW, joining our partner women’s NGOs with consultative status to ECOSOC. The 65th Commission on the

Status of Women (CSW65) took place from March 15–26, 2021, for the first time in an all-virtual format. Over 60 FAWCO members registered to participate online. A highlight was the speech by Vice President Kamala Harris at the [Opening Session](#).

Read Laurie’s summary of CSW65 with lots of important links [here](#).





FAWCO

Inspiring Women Worldwide

Target Project

SAFE Hope for Girls & Women

BY CAROL S.



**HOPE FOR
GIRLS & WOMEN**
Tanzania

The Target Project SAFE (Safe Alternatives for Female Genital Mutilation [FGM] Elimination), is a project of Hope for Girls and Women in Tanzania (HGWT), an organization advocating an end to FGM and other harmful practices affecting women and children in Tanzania, including but not limited to intimate partner violence, child marriage, and other forms of violence. Through the SAFE project, the organization will work to promote and protect the rights of girls and women by providing education to girls and the community at large, strengthening social cohesion, promoting positive social change, and increasing the capacity of women and girls to live free of violence through increased access to protection facilities and skills development. HGWT's mission is to promote human dignity and respect for girls and women. Four

hundred and thirty-four (434) girls were accommodated at the two safe houses over the December 2019/January 2020 cutting season; 383 girls reconciled with their families during 2020, and 292 during January 2021. For more information on the specific goals of SAFE, [click here](#).

As of July 2021, FAWCO has raised \$115,000 for the SAFE project. Of these funds, 95% will

go for programs and services, e.g., psycho-social support, training, community outreach, and education; and 5% to administration. AWCH has thus far proudly raised \$7,782 for SAFE and has attained Aquamarine status on the FAWCO Foundation [Club Donor Wall](#).

AWCH wants to continue supporting this project in 2021! There will be an online Auction for



Hope from Saturday, November 6–Sunday, November 13, 2021. WE ARE CALLING FOR AUCTION ITEMS: material goods, vacation lodgings, virtual experiences, and your expertise. Contact Carol S. at fawcorep@awchamburg.org for information.

For an update on the Target Program and the 2020-2022 Project SAFE, see the latest [Target Bulletin](#).

AQUAMARINE DONOR



**HOPE FOR
GIRLS & WOMEN**
Tanzania

CALLING FOR AUCTION ITEMS
material goods, vacation lodging, virtual experience,
your expertise

AWCH Online Auction for Hope

Saturday, November 6 –
Sunday, November 13, 2021

Contact Carol S
fawcorep@awchamburg.org

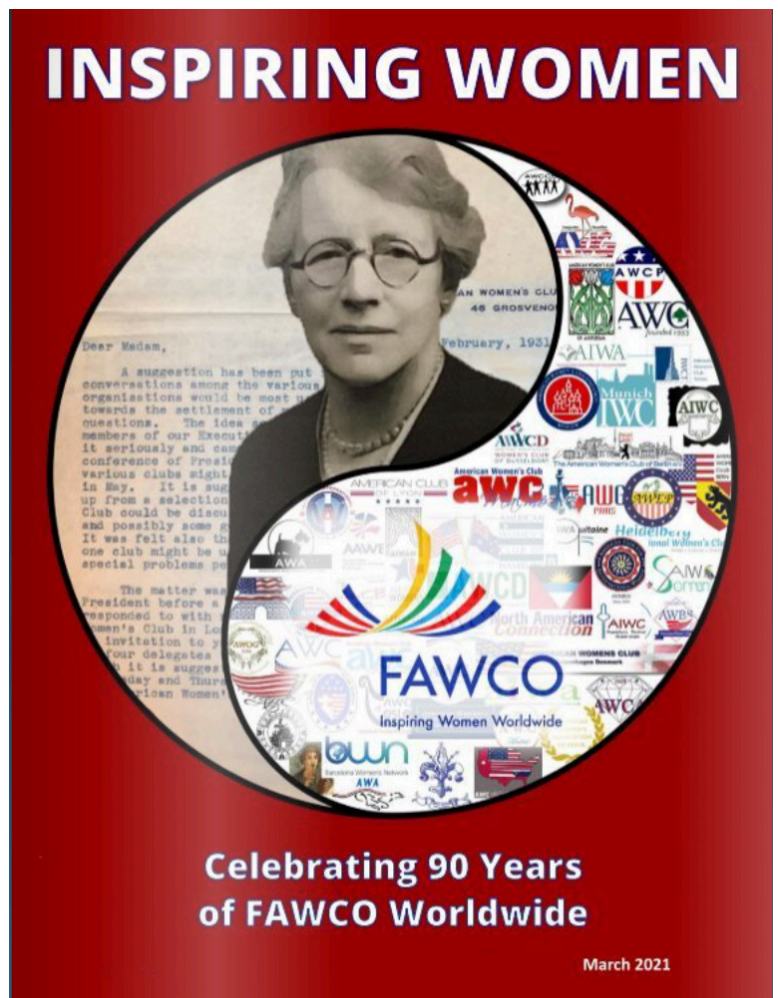
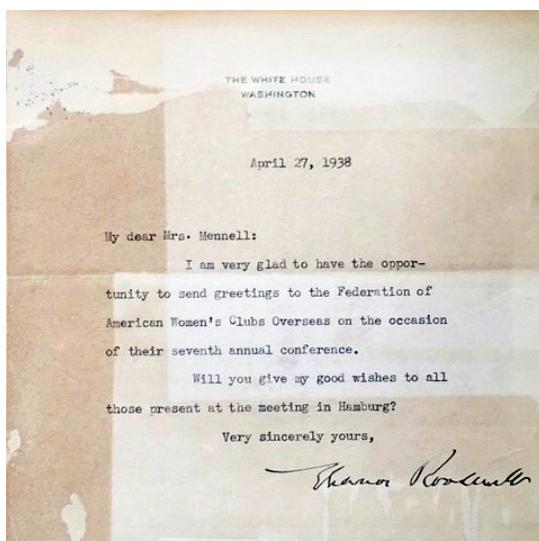
Inspiring Women's Magazine

Anniversary Edition Available Online Now

BY CAROL S.

The current issue of Inspiring Women celebrates FAWCO's 90th anniversary. It is a great overview of FAWCO's history and includes wonderful archival tidbits, such as the letters to FAWCO from US first ladies.

Read it [online](#), or order a copy using the [order form](#).



AWCH News & Events

A VIRTUAL FOURTH OF JULY CELEBRATION

BY MORGAN R.

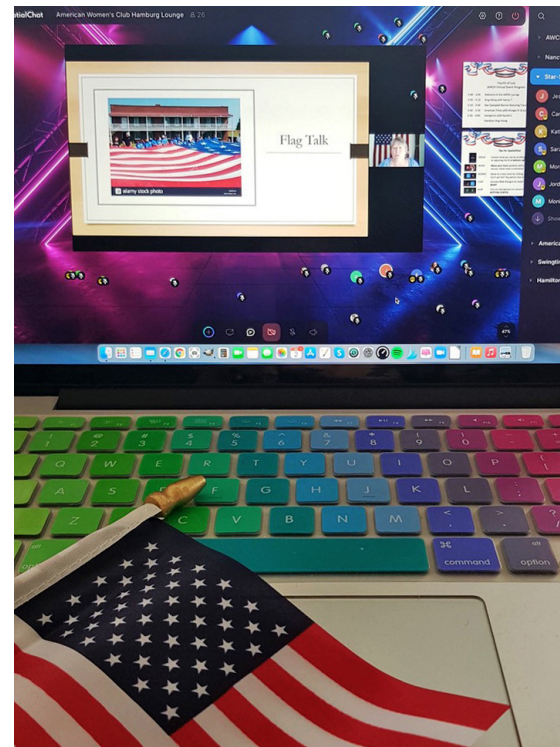
When we think of the Fourth of July, many of us think of past fireworks shows, BBQs, and family gatherings. But this year we had to be creative and open to a new way to celebrate. The result: a fun, family-friendly celebration with music, history, and trivia, all within a virtual meet-up platform called SpatialChat.

Before the event, in the spirit of a more normal celebration of America's birth, participants received a hand-packed and delivered Fourth of July goodie bag filled with candy, Cracker Jack, a fun-sized flag, and patriotic stickers. The treats were a joy to deliver and brought delight to all participants.

The official event on July 2 began in the virtual AWCH Lounge with a warm welcome from our president, Carol H., followed by

an introduction to the program and platform from the event's moderator, Jordan W., who then ushered everyone into the first musical "singalong" with Nancy T. After an uplifting start with "Take Me Out to the Ball Game," everyone moved to a different virtual room where Tracy M. held a very informative talk about the history of "The Star-Spangled Banner," which ended with a beautiful rendition of the anthem by Julia R.

Moving right along, the group teleported into a classroom-style space for American Trivia, first for children, then some tougher questions for the adults. Moderated by Jordan W. and Morgan R., the questions were answered through emojis by each member, which added an entertaining participation aspect to the event.

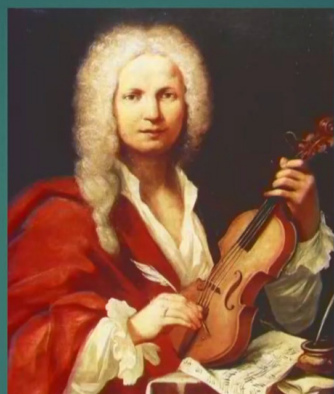


Two more rooms were then opened for everyone to experience a musical performance by Rachel C. and a video from the musical Hamilton. Members also congregated back in the lounge to talk and catch up with one another in the virtual space.

Despite all the circumstances and restrictions surrounding COVID-19, the AWCH's celebration of America's 245th birthday was a fun event. Although, next year, let us hope that we can all meet up once more, hold sparklers, and clink glasses, in true Fourth of July style.



Antonio Vivaldi



The Four Seasons

Never were the sensations of the seasons so vividly expressed as in the baroque music of Antonio Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*. But, truthfully, as familiar as the music is, with its bright and cheerful sounds but threatening undertones, the beautiful pictures that the music paints were never so clear to me until after listening to Elizabeth R.'s two presentations in May.

In her cleverly structured and charming didactic presentation, Elizabeth shared her translations of the four sonnets that Vivaldi wrote as the descriptive basis for

which in turn are organized into a tempo pattern of fast-slow-fast. Each evokes a wonderful picture characteristic of the particular season.

My favorite is "Summer:" the first movement so aptly reflects the intense, lazy heat, slowly replaced by a cool refreshing breeze accompanied by singing birds, and ending with the undertones of an upcoming storm (and a worried shepherd). Every scene can be heard.

*In the heat of the blazing summer sun,
Man and beast languish.*

A CLOSER LOOK AT VIVALDI'S *THE FOUR SEASONS* A TWO-PART PRESENTATION BY ELIZABETH REIFKE

BY CAROL H.

the seasons. Each of the four sonnets is expressed in a concerto of three movements,

*The pine tree is scorched.
The cuckoo raises its voice
And soon the turtledove and goldfinch
Join in the song.
A gentle breeze blows...
But then the sweet zephyr's airs are
Rudely turned
By the brusquely contending North
Wind.
Now the shepherd weeps as the dreaded
Storm gathers above him,
His fate in its hands.*

In the last movement, the storm arrives in full force as the orchestra captures the thunder, wind, and hail (and the shepherd's worries are fulfilled).

Clearly, listening to *The Four Seasons* will never be the same. Thank you, Elizabeth, for these two enlightening presentations!



EVERY MILE COUNTS: BRINGING US BACK TOGETHER

BY HANNA B.



Photo of Cornelia's hiking boots in Vanoise National Park in France

An idea emerged from the dark of the pandemic like an Olympic torch: start a neighborhood fitness challenge. The concept was relatively basic—assign all the members of the club to one of four teams based on proximity, and participants use their logged miles to compete on a virtual platform. The four teams were Red: River Alster (East Alster/North); Yellow: Goldbek (Center/Far East); Blue: Elbe; and Green: Isebek (West Alster).

Designed with the entire gamut of participation in mind, from everyday steps to the fitness elite, the virtual course was just under 10,000 miles, visiting 20 of the most famous national parks in America. Each park or “milestone” would involve writing a lovingly researched piece about the historical, environmental, ecological, and social aspects of each park. Communications chair Jordan W. executed a social media plan for the activity as well.

Launched on June 1, just as the rules relaxed enough to allow for meetings of up to 10 people outside doing sports, members and their friends and family started to enroll and meet up. Four WhatsApp groups further added fuel to the fire, and through friendly banter,

encouraging comments, and strategic planning, the 13-week activity was launched from the starting line: San Francisco International Airport. To date, over 100 people have participated, two-thirds of them AWCH members.

At the writing of this article, no team has crossed the finish line at Acadia National Park in Maine, but each team has enjoyed time in the lead. It has united members across two continents, added a couple of new members, and revitalized our bodies and hearts.

Since I am part of each of the WhatsApp groups, I picked a favorite anecdote from each to share with you (very difficult to pick with all of the love exchanged there). Becky T., knocking it out of the ballpark with her weekly steps, inspired the Red Team. The Yellow Team struggled to recruit enough assigned participants in the beginning and then catapulted into the lead. A touching selfie from Teresa of the Blue Team in Chicago read, “Do you ever wake up and think, ‘not today?’...I was tired but then I said, ‘it’s for the team.’ 8.4km walk downtown—read the words (in the picture)—“Together Stronger, Together Better, Together as One.”” Sue Behrend of the Green Team shared news about her summer vacation and an impressive (but safe) fall during a rope course, and Carol H., with her quick and charming wit, asked if she logged those three meters with the hashtag #everymetercounts.



Photo of Teresa in Chicago

A WINTERHUDE TOUR BY BIKE FOR WORLD BICYCLE DAY

BY CAROL H.



Photo of AWCH bicyclists by Carol H.



Photo of Leinpfad by Carol H.

“Bikes are freedom; bikes are fun. They are good for one’s health—physical and mental—and good for our one and only planet. Bikes are popular and practical, providing exercise and transporting us not only to school, stores, and work but to a more sustainable future.”

—António Guterres, U.N. Secretary General

To celebrate World Bicycle Day, a small group of AWCH members got on their bikes to explore Hamburg’s Stadtteil Winterhude in a roughly 12-km tour wonderfully planned by Carola A. The tour emphasized the many waterfronts of Winterhude and its architectural diversity. We cycled through the villa quarter on the Außenalster, down the Poelchaukamp

with its many stores, galleries, and cafés, and crossed the many canals that connect with the Alster. We admired the brick façades of Jarrestadt, a project of the early ‘30s, built to provide housing for workers in the then-nearby industrial zone lining the Goldbek and Osterbek canals, which served as important transport routes. The Stadtpark was designed as the official R&R (rest and relaxation) center for this residential area. Our tour ended in this 120-hectare green space, with its rose gardens, planetarium, lake, playgrounds, and forest area—and a wonderful café, where we had some delicious cake and exchanged our impressions. A wonderful tour! Thank you, Carola!

Commemorating World Refugee Day with a Tour of Hanseatic Help

BY CAROL H.

With its motto “together we heal, shine, and learn,” we honored World Refugee Day this year by visiting Hanseatic Help e.V., our local charity. Ten AWCH members met at the Hanseatic Help headquarters on June 19 to hear the exciting story of the organization’s founding in 2015 but also to understand how the charity continues to serve the many people in need in Hamburg.

The great influx of refugees from Syria and Iraq into Germany in 2015 was met with an overwhelmingly positive response in Hamburg, as people donated food, clothing, and services to help the refugees. Hanseatic Help e.V. was born when a small but dedicated group of the volunteers saw the need to set up a logistical system to manage this outpouring of goods and donations. The charity provides uncomplicated, fast, and reliable aid to people in need by providing an IT-based, charitable supply chain that accepts donations of goods (primarily clothing), identifies where there is a need, and organizes distribution; it regularly supplies around 150 facilities catering to the needy in Hamburg.

The director of logistics, Manu Szepan, guided us through the warehouse facility in Altona, explaining the various stations in which donations are sorted and registered, and relaying her own personal accounts of how Hanseatic Help serves refugees and the homeless beyond the distribution of clothes by providing integration and training programs. In addition, she explained, although Hanseatic Help concentrates on helping people and organizations in Hamburg, extra supplies are also sent to refugee camps throughout the world using Hamburg’s logistical infrastructure.

Following the tour of the warehouse, we enjoyed coffee and cookies and had the opportunity to ask questions. Philine Kruse, our Hanseatic Help liaison, was also on hand to explain programs where AWCH members can provide assistance, in addition to helping out with sorting and

registering donations. This includes making baby quilts from recycled material, participating in their Hamburg Päckchen Zusammen Drive, and helping out with their new Learning and Training Center.

In an overwhelming signal that AWCH was serious in its support of Hanseatic Help, we were able to present the organization with a check for €4,000 for the purchase of women’s underwear, including over 300 bras (see box). We were proud to announce that through our Chocolate Roses project (organized by Shelly S. and Rachel C.), our fitness courses (Total Body Workouts by Julia R. and Zumba by Anne-Marie S.), individual member donations from our Call for Bras and Underwear, and proceeds from our Summer Challenge and book sale, we had raised €2,000. One generous AWCH member had promised to match our fundraising efforts if we reached €1,250, enough to purchase 500 pairs of underwear; we were way beyond our goal and the money was matched! The check was gratefully accepted by the Hanseatic Help representatives. The emotionally and positively charged meeting was truly a success.

“Touring the Hanseatic Help facilities was a wonderful way to see first-hand how the AWCH’s fundraising efforts are put to use making real change within the



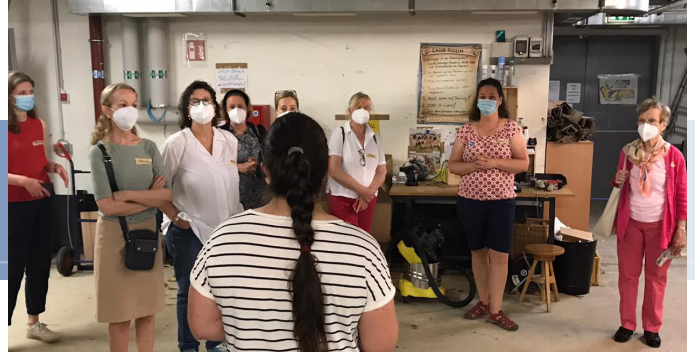
Photos by Jennifer L.

Hamburg community. We were able to see the impeccably-organized clothing, shoes, and hygiene materials ready to be packed to help those in need, including asylum seekers, refugees, homeless, and the elderly.”

—Sara N.

“The Hanseatic Help tour was insightful and informative and wonderfully organized. The group is so personable and open; it is easy to understand why many people want to be involved with them.”

—Marinell H.



What is an Idea without an Action?

BY SHELLY SCHOENESHOEFER

Let’s give Jennifer L. a big hand! If you haven’t met Jennifer, you should. She knows exactly how to put a fundraiser in motion by explicitly defining a unifying message and goal.

June was LGBTQ+ Pride Month, spurring the idea of collecting items such as bras, underwear, and feminine hygiene products for women in need and donating these to Hanseatic Help e.V. Unlike most women’s clothing, which is donated in surplus, women’s undergarments are sorely needed. Many women and girls are without this simple necessity that we often take for granted—and this can have a huge impact on their personal dignity. This project was, then, the perfect way for us to reflect on equality as well as support the needy.

Jennifer first contacted the owner of Körbchenliebe, who kindly donated several boxes of lingerie. But Jennifer didn’t stop there: she had the idea of setting the goal even higher by collecting 300 bras by World Refugee Day. Her goal was met with the help of many AWCH members and her own endless energy.

But Jennifer wasn’t done yet. She knew the effort required to sort and register the donation to Hanseatic Help, and thus recruited a small team to do this two

weeks later. With a group effort totaling 12

hours, the bras were sorted and ready for distribution to their new owners. All bras and underwear that we have donated to Hanseatic Help stay in Hamburg and are readily welcomed by women’s shelters, homeless shelters, and refugee centers. Thank you, Jennifer, and thank you, club members, for caring and participating and making this project a such a success!



Photos by Jennifer L.

KEEPING Current

OUR ACTIVISM COLUMN



GLOBAL PROTEST

HAMBURG | 24.09.21



FRIDAYS FOR FUTURE GLOBAL CLIMATE STRIKE

BY BEATRICE K.

If there is one climate strike you should attend this year, this next one is it. Make your voice heard!

We are back! Join the Environmentally Mindful group as well as other AWCH members at the largest global climate strike of the year on Friday, September 24.

Over 70 countries claim they will achieve “net zero” carbon emissions by 2050, which sounds great. But, in actuality, we only have about six years of our worldwide carbon budget left to spend if we want to keep our global surface temperature below 1.5C degrees.

Over the past few months, Fridays For Future has been reignited, meeting in person in cities worldwide. But that doesn't mean the heat of Fridays For Future died down during the pandemic, when in-person contact was limited. If anything, the organization has grown and spread its message further than ever, as every person on the planet has been directly impacted by the effects of climate change. During the pandemic, we have seen governments ignore the MAPA (Most Affected Peoples and Areas), and Fridays For Future has spelled out its message to world leaders for what this upcoming global climate strike will mean.

The message to world leaders!:

1. The northern hemisphere must cut emissions drastically and set concrete plans to ensure we reach net zero emissions.
2. Work towards a global recovery from COVID-19 by ensuring equitable vaccine distribution.
3. Recognize the climate crisis as a risk to human life.
4. Recognize the importance of biodiversity to indigenous communities and commit to making ecocide a punishable crime internationally.
5. End violence against indigenous people and small farmers and listen to environmental and land defenders.

We want you to be part of the movement! Join us in person, bring a sign, a mask, a friend, your dog, or just yourself, and make your voice heard!

Visit the [Environmentally Mindful Facebook Event page](#) for details and more information on city-wide meetups.

Source 1: <https://fridaysforfuture.org/a/>

Member *Spotlight*

FRAUKE RADEMACHER-HEIDEMANN

Frauke R. grew up on a farm in the northwest corner of Germany, which was a wonderful foundation for a protected and happy childhood but did not provide a wide choice of professional options, especially in the aftermath of war.

An offer to emigrate to the US in 1963 and to obtain a BA at Northwestern University in Chicago was her chance. And after IBM convinced Frauke that a career with them would give her a seat in any opera house in the world...she felt she had arrived. Accepting US citizenship, she dove into American life and loved it. Participating in the early development of computers in the 1970s was breathtaking.

Frauke's high school sweetheart brought her back to Germany to stay—but by then the development of the internet, laptops, and cellphones, all which she had experienced firsthand, removed all obstacles for making the move back.

Homesickness for the US was, however, a problem, until she met Becky T. in 1992, who introduced her to the AWCH—a “home away from home.” Frauke represented our club to

FAWCO for 10 years, first as club representative and later as the Region 5 representative.

What is the main difference between living in Hamburg/Lüneburg vs. Chicago?

Distance. Going from Lüneburg to Hamburg to see an opera takes the same amount of time as going across town to see an opera in Chicago. And, of course, the historical beauty of cities like Lüneburg, with its past of over 1,000 years.

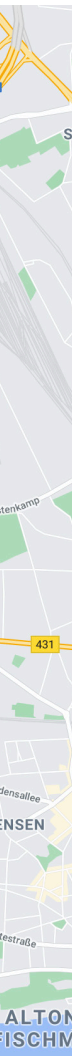
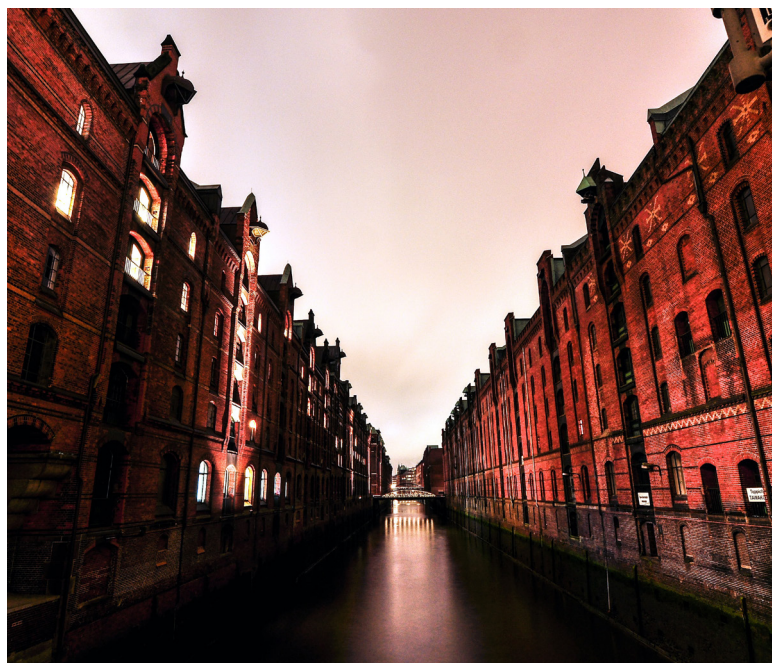


Photo provided by Frauke R.-H.

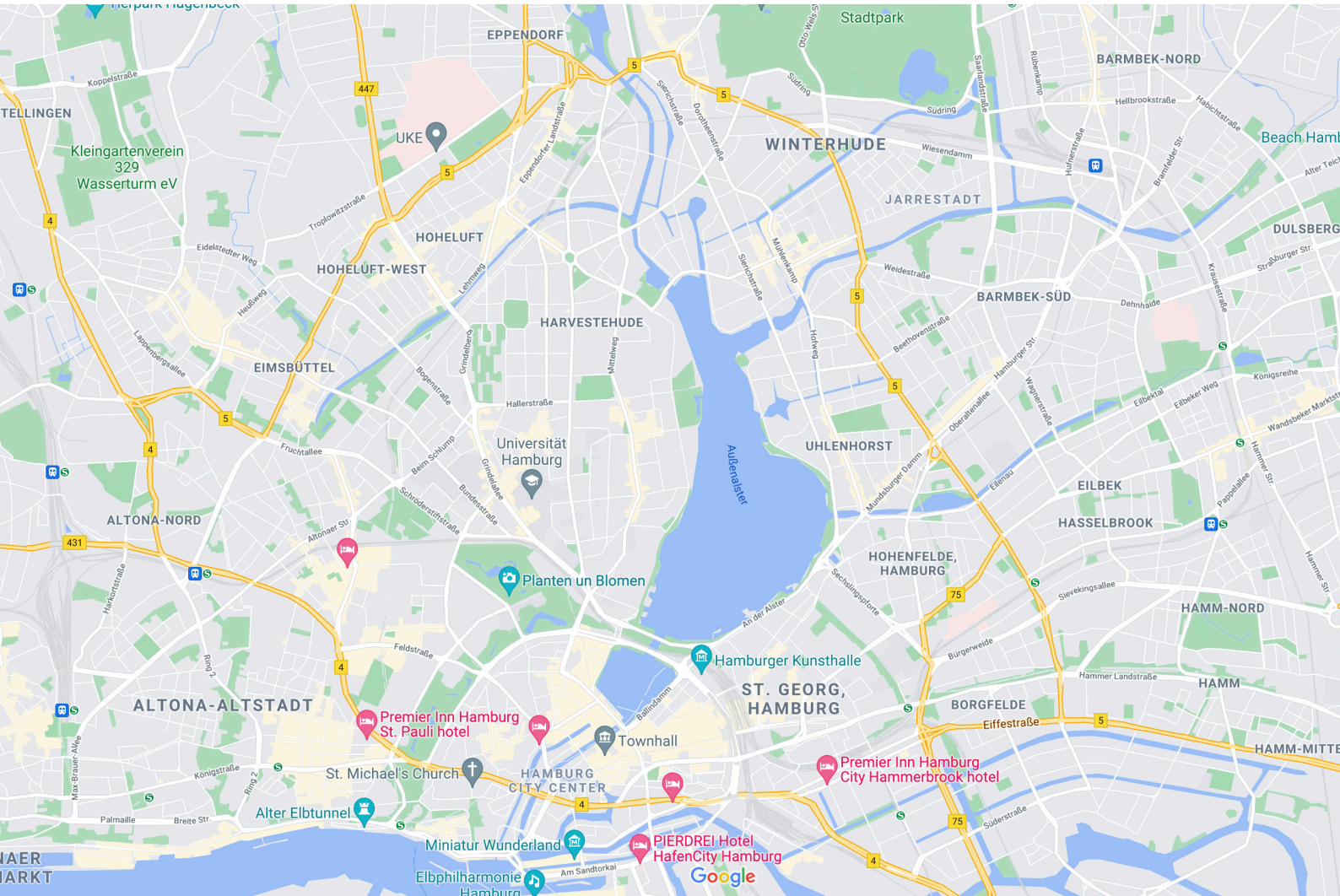
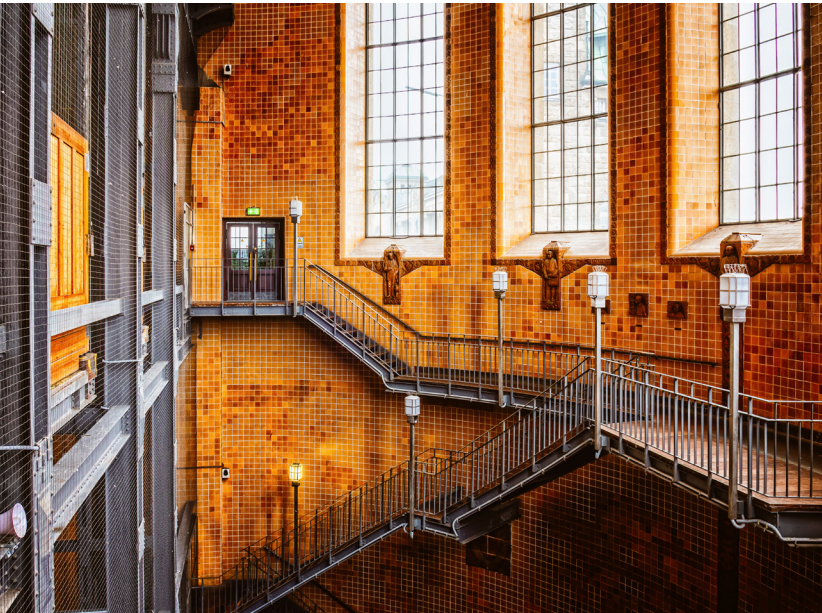
HOW WE DO

REMEMBER HAMBURGER HACKS? WELL, THIS IS THE SCALED-UP VERSION!

Last year we introduced Hamburger Hacks, a place to share what makes this city and region so livable for you. Best outdoor markets, eateries, shops? Half-price tickets after hours, anybody? We asked that you please clue us ALL in, and then we asked for more. Where do you go to restore your soul, or fire it up? What's your go-to restaurant or tour for out-of-town guests (or a dinner for two)? Music, theater, entertainment, or a great scoop of ice cream—whether we've been here 50 years or 6 months, there's always something to discover in this wonderful city. This is where our club members share their insights on their favorite spots in Hamburg. Find out what makes this city so livable for our members!



HAMBURG



HAMBURG AND BEYOND

By Jenny M.

“How We Did Hamburg” is a better title for me because my time there is in the past. We lived there for 20 years and had visitors every summer, so perhaps I can offer some new ideas for you.

Our first visitors each summer were our grandchildren, and we discovered that there are many interesting things to do and places to visit with children. There are wonderful parks near our old home in the center of the city. One is on the grounds of Heiligengeist Kirche across from the Hauptbahnhof and near the start of Lange Reihe. It's small, safe, and perfect for very little children. As our grandchildren grew older, we took them to the “Pirates Playground” at the Grasbrookpark in Hafencity near the Elbphilharmonie. There's a pirate ship to clamber on, a paddling pool, swings and jumping pads, and, best of all, a bamboo tunnel to run through. There's another children's playground in Planten un Blomen, and this has a rope installation for brave children to test their climbing skills on and a “mountain” to slide down.

Other regular treats included a trip to the Freilicht “Open Air” Museum am Kiekeberg near Rosengarten, where children can dress up and pretend they lived in earlier times and see (and smell) a grand old pig and that year's piglets.

The best treat for all the family was a ride on a double-decker train to Travemünde. This train goes from the Hauptbahnhof and links up with a small, local one which goes directly to Travemünde. It's nice to walk past the cafes and shops to the beach and then hire a Strandkorb for the day.

No holiday was complete without a trip or two to the Dinobad Dinosaur Swimming Pool in Altona, especially on a rainy day.



Photo of Kaffee und Kuchen by Miriam Soliman from Unsplash

This was always packed with excited children who loved sharing the pool with dinosaurs. There's a slide (scary if you're very little) in the park nearby to round off your visit.

Our grown-up daughter and her husband were our next visitors each summer. Kate liked to celebrate her July birthday in Hamburg and hunted for restaurants in Lange Reihe and around the Alster for celebratory meals. There is a roof terrace on top of the George Hotel on Lange Reihe that is perfect for cocktails and has a view over the Alster. Cafe Gnosa was a favorite for Kaffee und Kuchen. They discovered a super Terrasse in the Fontenay Hotel which has a view of the Alster, too, from the other side of the lake. The hotel serves a mean cup of tea, as well as summer cocktails.

The Alster served us well when we had visitors, and we had many a brunch at the AlsterCliff restaurant. We'd cross the water by boat from the Atlantic Hotel landing and alight at the AlterCliff dock. We'd cross the Elbe too, going from Landungsbrücke to Finkenwerder and then back across to the Hotel Louis C. Jacob's terrace restaurant for afternoon tea overlooking the Elbe and the enormous Airbus planes, plus a peek at the Max Lieberman painting on display there.



Photo of Planten un Blomen by Moritz Kindler from Unsplash

The hotel is famous for Lieberman's painting *Terrasse im Restaurant Jacob* of that very terrace.

During our last summer in Hamburg, we discovered Warnemünde, a holiday resort near Rostock which used to be in the former GDR. We compared it with Travemünde and enjoyed it just as much, though the car journey was about half an hour longer from the center of town.

Our third regular summer visitor was my sister, who had worked in the fashion industry and who liked to explore Hamburg's many clothes shops. Jungfernstieg was a favorite destination, and we would stop at the Hummerstand Hanse-Viertel lobster bar in the shopping mall where a glass of prosecco and a lobster cocktail were a special treat. This provided fuel for an

afternoon's window shopping on Neuer Wall, which has lots of designer shops all on the one street.

All visitors enjoyed a Tuesday or Friday trip to the Isemarkt in Eppendorf, which is Europe's longest open-air market. We took the U-Bahn to Hoheluftbrücke and walked all the way through the market to the other end and caught the U-Bahn home again from Eppendorfer Baum. The market is under the overhead railway track so you never get wet, and it is interesting at any time of year.

Hamburg is a city full of surprises and offers those who live here and their visitors lots of things to discover. It's a great holiday destination and is much missed by my visitors and me.



Photo of Alster by Niklas Ohlrogge from Unsplash

BUDGET-FRIENDLY ACTIVITIES IN HAMBURG

By Beatrice K.

Hamburg is a wonderful city for all budgets! As a student, I am always looking for fun and affordable things to do with my friends all months of the year here. Here are a few of my recommendations for a student-friendly budget:



Photo of Beatrice K. mini golfing in Hamburg by Peter N.

Mini Golf and Trampolining in Planten un Blomen

For a fun birthday celebration, we went mini-golfing in Planten un Blomen. We played 18 holes, and we had quite a bit of social-distancing space between us and other people. We also enjoyed some wine while we waited for families to take their turns on the course. There are free public bathrooms just a few minutes away in the park, brand new and rather clean!

Open March through October, daily from 10:00am-9:00pm

Mini golf price for children: €3

Mini golf price for adults: €4

Trampoline price: €2 for 15 minutes

Chocoversum Tour

A few years ago, when my mom came to visit, we went on a Chocoversum tour, and the amount of chocolate we sampled was definitely worth the price. The tour was quite long but very interesting, and there were places to sit while the tour guide gave insights into the chocolatey history of Chocoversum. At each station, we sampled the chocolate in its different forms. For example, when the tour began, we sampled a raw cocoa bean for the taste—spoiler alert, not super great. But as the tour progressed, we saw how chocolate is separated, mixed, sweetened, and wrapped, and we had bites of the chocolate at all the stages of its creation. We even created our own chocolate bar at the beginning of the tour and, by the end, our samples were cool and ready to be eaten. A fun activity for guests and family!

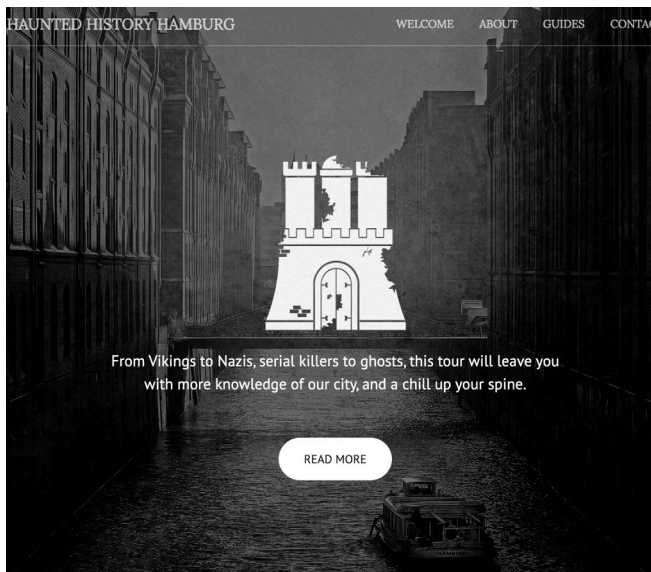
Open 10:15am-6:30pm for a 90-minute tour

Price: €10-15 depending on whether one books ahead of time, group discounts, etc.

Website: [click here](#)



Photo by Tetiana Bykovets from Unsplash



Screenshot of Haunted History Hamburg Walking Tour website

Haunted History of Hamburg Tour

I first came across this tour on the GGI Facebook page and immediately booked it in July because who doesn't need a little spook early in the season?! The walking tour started in front of the Rathaus and ended near the Nikolaikirche. The duration was about two hours and began at 8:00pm. We learned about the cholera outbreak in Hamburg, pirates, and even serial killers! I would not recommend this tour for children because the stories were quite graphic. You can book the tours in English or German.

May through November; Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, 8:00pm-10:00pm

Price: €8 per person

Website: [click here](#)

CHROME—ORIGINAL AMERICAN DINER

By Mary W.

If you are feeling a little blue, as in missing the old red, white, and blue, take a long drive north of Hamburg to Lensahn. There you can feast on all your greasy American diner favorites, including a breakfast of buttermilk pancakes with maple syrup and sausage (served until 5:00pm) or a cheese-and-bacon burger (the Double Giant is 360g of meat—too big to bite politely). Try a burger with a side of fried onion rings. Salads are served, too, but what's the point? The actual Chrome diner itself was built in my hometown of Orlando, Florida, back in 1999 and was shipped to this tiny town located off Autobahn A1. Everything from furnishings to tableware to napkins to saltshakers came from the USA. This restaurant is all about the atmosphere. Check it out under www.chrome-diner.de.

After your meal, you can drive another 20 minutes to the Baltic Coast and walk off some of those American calories along the beach. There are several vacation stops, including Grömitz, Kellinghusen, and Dahme. Each town has a promenade along part of the beach. Dahme and Kellinghusen offer plenty of green space for walks on the beach or forested trails. Both are

also good places to ride bicycles and picnic in cooler weather. Standing at the water's edge, if I close my eyes and breathe deeply, I can almost smell the Florida Atlantic beaches. As long as there isn't too much seaweed onshore!



Photo by R Mac Wheeler from Unsplash

HARBORING HAMBURG GUESTS

By Mason Jane M.

I've lived in four different cities based around large harbors, but none have so deeply identified with their waterway as Hamburg. It's one of the things I love most about this city! The nautical-themed flourishes that pop up in the most unexpected places are a constant reminder that this is a PORT, and when we show Hamburg off, we are all about the port. (Disclaimer: our business is shipping-based, and many of our visitors are in shipping so...the simpatico enthusiasm is built in.)

We start in the Speicherstadt for a good look at how they used to do things in the harbor. The beautiful red brick buildings were (and in some cases, still are) warehouses for what comes in on the cargo ships. The Hafencity lies just behind them, and the International Maritime Museum there is a wonderful way to continue the theme.

And then it's time for a harbor tour! The best of them leave from right there in the Hafencity. Make sure you tour in a smaller boat, a Barkasse, that can fit down the canals. Bölow or Ehlers are both good companies to go with. And always go during low tide!—otherwise your boat can't pass under the bridges and you'll miss some great sights. Another good option is the Maritime Circle Line, the boat version of the hop-on-hop-off city bus tours, but better.

On to Landungsbrücken. Walking there along the Zaha Hadid-designed river walkway is a treat on a nice day. The Rickmer Rickmers is docked permanently on the route—another blast from Hamburg's nautical past. Peek into the old Elbtunnel while you're there, unless you get claustrophobic, because it's shockingly narrow! The general rule for the best experience is to walk down the stairs into the tunnel, then elevator back up.

You can catch a ferry from Landungsbrücken (or walk) to Övelgönne, the charming village-within-a-city that is a no-miss when the roses that practically smother the little houses are in bloom. Now you are in beach bar territory, the most iconic of which is the Strandperle. You can watch the sunset from here while sipping a Hugo (the beachy Hamburg drink of choice) and catch dinner at one of the many good seafood restaurants in the area...OR you can catch a ferry or water taxi and go up-river a bit to Teufelsbrück, where our very favorite restaurant, the Dübelsbrücker Kajüt rests on a barge on the river. It's

traditional Hamburg dishes done just right, served outdoors overlooking the river or indoors, which is cozy and stuffed to the gills with nautical memorabilia from their many years on the river. Actually, this is where we take everybody, tour or no tour. A lovely way to feel Hamburg as it so often feels itself—a city defined by its waterways past and present. Enjoy and stay dry!



Photo of Speicherstadt by Roman Kraft from Unsplash

WHAT IN THE WORLD IS A HÖFT?

By Marilya V.R.

Germans and Americans alike often embark on a nigh-irresistible autocorrection when pronouncing the names of “W”-landmarks: Wittenbergen lighthouse, for instance, and Willkommhöft in Wedel. Though both share the distinction of being linguistic and geographic outliers, it’s the latter that drew me back in the summer of 2021, almost 50 years after I discovered it as a child. During my long absence from Hamburg, I often, and not a little enviously, recommended Willkommhöft’s sidewalk eatery to Hamburg-bound travelers for its Fischbrötchen or Eis (for the thrifty or hurried) and the smoked eel, Sekt, or cake on its lovely terrace (for those feeling more extravagant with their pocketbooks or schedules). So it was the first place I wanted to go when I arrived back here this July. However, it’s only now that I finally learned about its name.

So humor me as I digress to etymology before returning to things culinary and touristy: *Höft* does not come from *Hof*—despite the words’ visual similarities—but instead from *Mitelniederdeutsch Hövt* or *Altsächsisch Hovid*, meaning head/main. Presumably, it was accorded this name by dint of being Hamburg’s main greeting locus for ships of at least 1,000 gross tonnage exiting and entering the harbor, and that is also its reason for being my favorite Hamburg spot to take visitors.

Several small tables with umbrellas are located along Willkommhöft’s sidewalk not a hundred meters from the eponymous bus stop, kitty-corner from a thatched cottage surrounded by roses. Just beyond, in the actual Fährhaus above, expansive and more expensive terrace café and indoor ballrooms beckon.

The tiny chippy-cum-Biergarten (at some 60 years of age, the oldest of its kind in Hamburg) affords a view of a ferry quay and accords a collection of picnickers, wedding parties, and families the opportunity to buy a whole batter-fried fish—head and all—on a bun or an impressively-sized portion of potato salad with fish and chips hot out of the Friteuse. A nice bottle of Pinot Grigio in an ice bucket can be had for only €14. People lounge in the clover and lush grass along the bank adjacent to the ferry landing—no sand beach here, unlike at the Wittenbergen lighthouse visible upstream.

The primary draw for me has always been the fact that

Willkommhöft isn’t touristy at all (arguably because it’s an hour-plus S-Bahn-plus-bus ride on the 189 from Blankenese). While the fairytale greenness of the forest en route between Blankenese and Rissen is appealing in its own right, for me, it’s that moment when any vessel noses into view: seeing the flag run up the very tall mast above the terrace gives even this landlubber a thrill.

In order to greet each of the roughly 50 ships that exit or enter the Hamburg harbor daily, the Fährhaus Schulau employs five *Begrüßung Kapitäne*, at least one of whom predates even my childhood here all those years ago. “Willkommen in Hamburg, wir freuen uns, Sie im Hamburger Hafen begrüßen zu dürfen,” is heard, then the same sentence is repeated in the language appropriate to the ship’s origins. A similar phrase goes out over the loudspeakers for ships exiting. According to the website, a *Kapitän*’s work involves updating a handwritten card catalogue of some 17,000 ships—quite an accomplishment, since the first ship was greeted in this fashion in 1952.

The tradition was started by the global circumnavigator and polar explorer Carl Kircheiß, who christened the flagpole in 1952 with a bottle of rum instead of champagne. The Greeting Captains pride themselves on knowing the records of each day’s harbor traffic. They play a recording of each ship’s national anthem as that country’s flag goes up the flagpole along with its particular shipping flags. Via loudspeaker, the announcer reads the stats on that ship (size, load, destination, homeport, etc.) while conversation stops at both terrace and food truck for a moment of maritime, well, *time*.

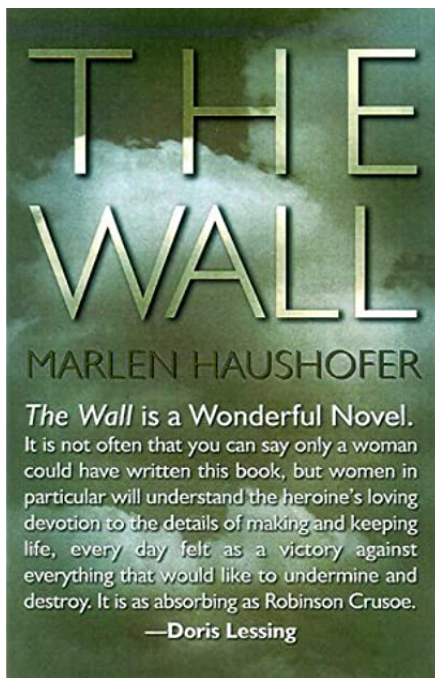
Willkommhöft is a locale with a name from another time; fitting, in that it transcends time on many levels, and it is worth a few hours of your time to enjoy. I know all my visitors have found it a relaxing contrast to the big city. Fährhaus Schulau at Willkommhöft is open until 11pm, and the venue is even more magical at night, thanks to the illumination of both the 60-meter pontoon ferry landing and the terraces. Small wonder that this attraction has even made it onto seafaring charts. Wedel styles itself *Tor zur Welt*, Gateway to the World—not an exaggeration!

Discovering German Literature

in Translation



A Whole Life, by Robert Seethaler, 2015
(English translation by Charlotte Collins, 2015)



The Wall, by Marlen Haushofer, 1968
(English translation by Shaun Whiteside, 1990)

Over the lockdown, I stumbled across a list that Deutsche Welle compiled online a few years ago: the top 100 English-translated German novels, going back to 1901. It seemed like a great source to learn more about Germany and its contemporary literature, so I dived in.

The first two books that I wanted to read on the list were by Austrian authors: *The Wall* (1968) by Marlen Haushofer, and *A Whole Life* (2015) by Robert Seethaler. Both novels are about isolation, solitude, and nature—favorite subjects of mine ever since I became a parent and my dreams turned to being alone in a cabin in the woods, surrounded by silence.

The Wall is considered to be Haushofer's greatest work, though sadly she passed away just two years after its publication. Since 1968, over one million copies have been sold, it has been translated into 18 languages, and, in 2012, a brilliant film adaptation of the novel was released (available on Amazon Prime as *Die Wand*, the original German title of the novel.)

The Wall is dystopian fiction: an unnamed woman's first-person account of being trapped alone in the Austrian mountains after some kind of catastrophic event has occurred in the world. Despite the dramatic premise, it is a quiet novel, an introspective story of daily survival and what we need and cling to when everything else has been stripped away. The narrator lives with a dog, a cow, and a cat, and describes the physical and psychological challenges to her survival. There is an underpinning of doom, a low note of tension that stays with you as a reader and propels you to keep turning the page, while at the same time imagining the mountains and the birds and the sound of the wind in the long grass.

A Whole Life by Robert Seethaler was published in 2015. The novel is in third person and has a simpler, gentler narrative style that contrasts with the grand beauty of the mountains. We are told the story of the whole life of Andreas Egger, a hard-working, simple man, born around 1898, with a love of the mountains and a difficult life. The translation is excellent, flowing and readable and keeping the lyrical tone while avoiding sentimentality and gushing. There is so much emotion—both joy and grief—beneath the surface, and for such a short novel, it's a thoroughly satisfying read.

In both of these novels, I see ties to the German Romantic concept of *Waldeinsamkeit*, which can be translated as the joy of being in solitude in a forest. Both novels are deeply connected to the land and the divine sensory pleasure we can find in nature. In these pandemic times, for me at least, the novels served as a reminder that we can find solace and comfort in nature when so many other areas of joy—friends, family, travel, eating together—are out of our reach for now.

Michaela A.

THE CLUBS WITHIN OUR CLUB

Opera Club

Organizing the Opera Club has been anything but easy in these uncertain days since the beginning of the pandemic. How many people can meet? Do we have enough space? Can we ventilate properly? And if we do manage to complete an opera project, will there be any performances for us to attend?

In the autumn of 2020, we did manage to meet twice pre-shutdown to discuss Verdi's *Aida* in the spacious and beautiful downtown apartment of one of our members. It was a real joy to meet, talk, and appreciate this glorious music during those months of "live" cultural deprivation.

During the full lockdown in early 2021, we enjoyed two Zoom events at which we critiqued operas that each of us had watched at home on our own devices. These two productions, namely Staatsoper Hamburg's *Manon* by Jules Massenet, followed by Opernhaus Zürich's most curious staging of Gluck's

Orphée et Eurydice were certainly controversial and made for lively online discussions.

What does the future hold? While much is unpredictable in the months to come, one thing remains very certain in the opera world: the magnificent, diverse, and unforgettable operas of Giuseppe Verdi will always be performed on a regular basis. Indeed, the Staatsoper Hamburg is planning to perform six different operas by the great composer during its upcoming 2021/22 season. The Opera Club intends to meet monthly during the fall to round out our *Aida* project and then to move on to other Verdi highlights in turn. Our extended Verdi focus will culminate in visits to performances of *Rigoletto* in early 2022, both on the local stage as well as in the cinema "live from the Met." Our meetings are held monthly on Friday mornings in Hamburg-Poppenbüttel. For more information, please contact Elizabeth R. at opera@awchamburg.org.

Elizabeth R.



Photo of Rigoletto, source: Wikipedia

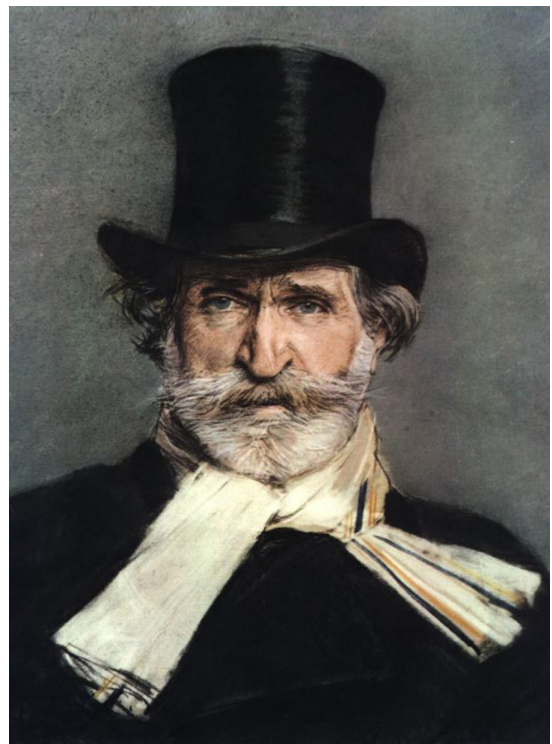


Photo of Verdi, source: Wikipedia

BOOK REVIEWS

from our Book Club

The Mountains Sing

By Nguyễn Phan Quế Mai (2020)

&

The Quiet American

By Graham Greene (1955)

ARTICLE BY CAROL H.

Vietnam. For many of us, the name symbolizes a lost and futile war fought at an enormous human cost. The newspaper headlines in the 1960s were dominated by names like Tonkin Bay, Ho Chi Minh Trail, the Tet Offensive, Viet Cong, My Lai Massacre—and we listened to despairing stories from GIs (including fathers and friends) who came home, participated in demonstrations against the war, and voted for McGovern and his promise to end the war. This was our side of the story.

The Mountains Sing and *The Quiet American*, chosen for our June and July Book Club discussion, show two other sides of the story...and span the time from the Japanese occupation during World War II through the First Indochina War, when France fought to maintain its colony against the growing communist movement of the Viet Minh with the ensuing Great Hunger and land reforms, up to the aftermath of the destructive Second Indochina War (the Vietnam War).

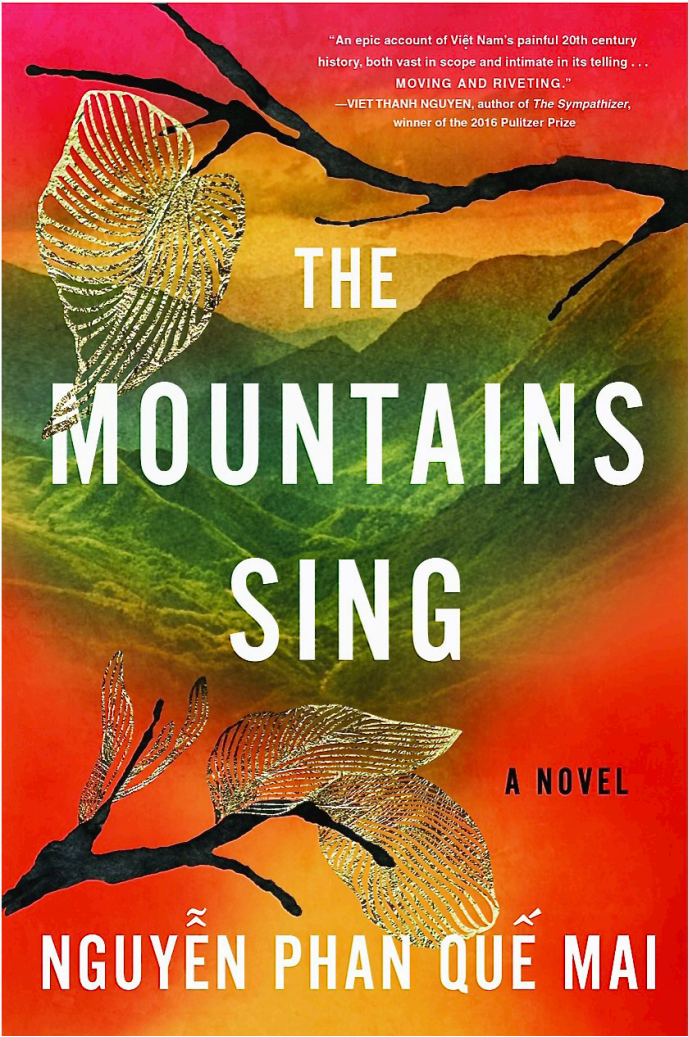
Nguyễn Phan Quế Mai's epic, historical *The Mountains Sing* is set against the backdrop of the Vietnam conflict, through the eyes of the people themselves. It is a story of resilience, determination, family, and hope in a country blighted by pain. Through the travails of one family over four generations, the author outlines the horrors of famine, war, and class struggle using simple but poetic storytelling from the standpoint of a grandmother and her granddaughter. The author weaves a beautiful narrative of the power of one woman to pick up and continue, to love and forgive, and to see her country beginning to flourish again.

Graham Greene's *The Quiet American* also paints a story of a country gripped by conflict, but stands in striking contrast to *The Mountains Sing* in several aspects. First, it spans less than a year during the early 1950s, when the French face defeat and US involvement begins and, second, it views the Vietnam conflict through the eyes of a cynical British journalist. The style of

writing also jarringly contrasts: Greene is the master of using only a few words to describe a scene with extraordinary effect.

On the surface, *The Quiet American* tells the story of the struggle of Mr. Fowler (aging British journalist who insists on political non-involvement) and Mr. Pyle (young American idealist believing in the domino theory and nation building) to win the affection and love of Phuong—a young, beautiful Vietnamese woman. Yet the real story is the deep political conflict of the time. The ways in which the two men conceptualize Vietnam's future is played out in their relationship with Phuong, who is portrayed as a non-feeling object to be won or lost in a contest between the men and their competing world views. In this respect, the books also contrast in the perception of women's power.

We all agreed that reading both books added considerably to our understanding of the complex and deadly Vietnam conflict, almost forgotten today.



“

The Mountains Sing is a beautifully written novel that intertwines the experiences of a young woman and her grandmother through two pivotal eras in Vietnam’s history.

The poetic writing and richly drawn characters lend beauty to the otherwise difficult events depicted in the book. For those of us who didn’t learn much about the impact of Vietnam in history class, this book is an open invitation to explore the country from the perspective of one family, from the 1930s through the present day.

- Sara N.

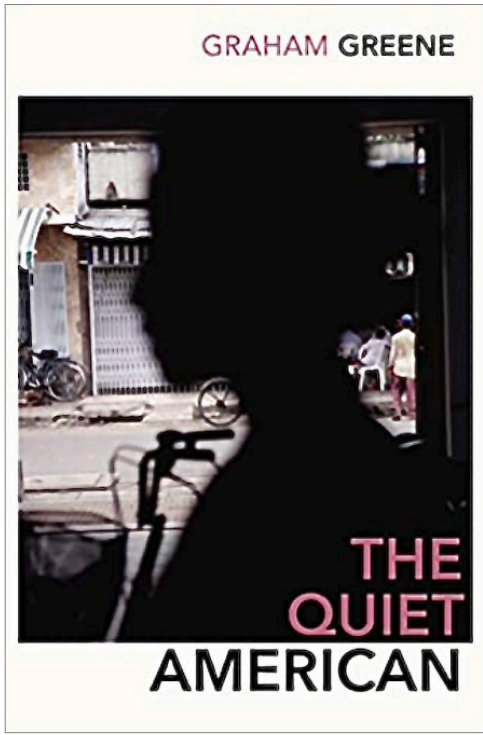
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“

In her book, Mai leads us through history, letting us feel the brutality of humanity, but comforting us with beautiful descriptions of the surrounding nature and showing the great power of family bonds.

- Tanés H.

”



BOOK REVIEWS

from our Book Club

Apeirogon

By Column McCann

ARTICLE BY CAROL S.

The Israeli–Palestinian conflict has brought heart-wrenching havoc to the lives of human beings on both sides. *Apeirogon* by Column McCann tells the true story of Bassam Aramin, a Palestinian whose daughter was killed by a rubber bullet shot by an Israeli soldier, and Rami Elhanan, an Israeli whose daughter was killed in a suicide bombing by Palestinians. Bassam and Rami first seek revenge, then justice, and finally peace. They become best of friends and an international public speaking duo through Combatants for Peace to end the occupation. McCann introduces us to their lost daughters, their families, their lives in Israel and under occupation, the towns and cities, the group for grieving parents, and the activist group, and he lets us hear their voices. They are real people.

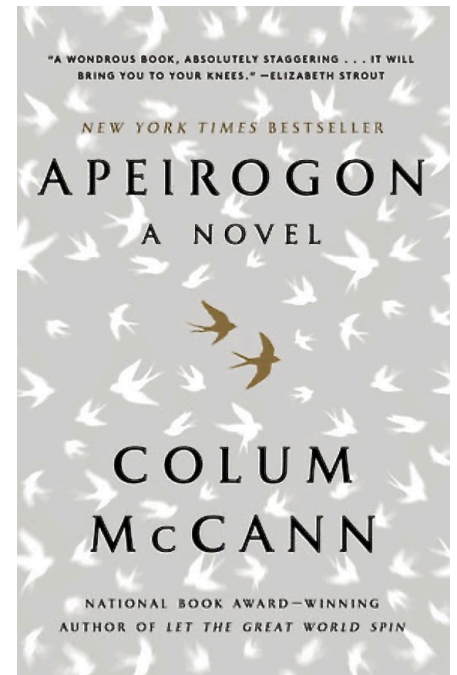
Interwoven into this story is a homage to *One Thousand and One Nights*. The novel comprises 1001 chapters, some of them only a sentence long. The fragments scattered throughout the story of Rami and Bassam are devoted to showing the complexity, diversity, and history of this unique geographical region. Migrating birds are a symbol throughout of timelessness and their indifference to

what is happening in the region. On the other hand, we learn that the pattern of the flight of the frigate bird was used to design the Israeli Predator drone. But McCann doesn't stop with birds: he portrays, inter alia, pictures of Borges in Israel, the development of Zyklon B, the feats of Phillipe Petit, the disastrous journey of a missionary along the River Jordan from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea, as well as experimental opera. An apeirogon is a geometric figure with a countably infinite number of sides, and McCann uses this image to create this epic novel.

McCann is an Irish author who was captivated by the story of Bassam and Rami and spent four years on his meticulous research for *Apeirogon*. Some members of our discussion group found the unconventional numbering of chapters and the crossover of fiction and nonfiction distracting. Most members found the novel impressive and powerful, violent but hopeful, and the fragments brilliant.

Comments

“The title *Apeirogon* already creates curiosity: a shape with a countably infinite number of sides. McCann uses a number of



approaches to tell us about the relationship between Israelis and Palestinians, something that almost everybody has an idea of, but here it is from the human point of view. He uses the structure of the beautiful story of *One Thousand and One Nights* and divides it by two. Two men, two lives, two families, two lands, but the same human experience, which brings them to try to build a possible common future. McCann uses all sorts of symbols, such as birds, interesting stories, and historic events to bring us through the intricate development of a land divided in two countries.” —Tanés H.

Against the Loveless World

By Susan Abulhawa

ARTICLE BY CAROL S.

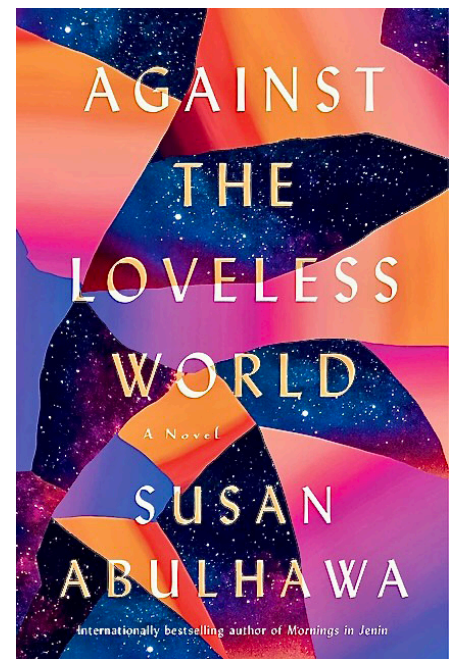
Our choice to read *Against the Loveless World* by Susan Abulhawa for our May Book Club discussion coincided with the 2021 Israeli–Palestinian crisis that began on May 10 and ended May 21. This novel follows the life of a Palestinian woman who becomes imprisoned by the Israeli government on terrorist charges. There was quite some amazement that our choice was so timely, but it was based on our decision to hear a female voice on the conflict after reading Colum McCann’s *Apeirogon*.

As the protagonist, Nahr, sits in solitary confinement in an Israeli prison, she reflects on her life. She was born in Kuwait in the 1970s to Palestinian refugees who fled during the 1967 Six Day War with what they could carry. She identified as Kuwaiti although she was seen as Palestinian, and she dreamed of marrying the perfect man, raising a family, and maybe opening a beauty salon. But when her perfect Palestinian husband deserts her after a short time and her family is facing poverty, she turns to sex work. After the US invasion of Iraq, she becomes a Palestinian refugee in Jordan, eventually returns to Palestine to secure a divorce, falls in love with her brother-in-law, makes a home with him, and submits to her

destiny under Israeli occupation.

The author, Susan Abulhawa, is a Palestinian-American. She was born in 1970 in Kuwait to Palestinian refugees of the Six Day War. She spent her early years in Kuwait, the US, and East Jerusalem. When she was a teenager, she returned to the US and stayed. She graduated from Pfeiffer University in North Carolina and received her master’s degree in neuroscience from the University of South Carolina. She lives in Yardly, Pennsylvania. In her role as an activist and humanitarian, she is not allowed to enter Israel. Although the biographical details of Nahr and Abulhawa overlap, she emphasizes that the novel is not autobiographical.

Abulhawa is a fan of historical fiction. She did meticulous research for this novel, inter-



viewing countless sex workers and activists, studying the flora of the region, and confirming historical facts. Members of our discussion group especially appreciated her portrayal of the importance of family bonds, the beauty of Palestinian food, the fauna, the landscape, and the reverence and respect felt for trees. Our reactions to the portrayals of displacement, sexual violence, terrorism, and imprisonment were more diverse; however, the consensus was that Abulhawa succeeded in shedding light on these themes and that this novel is well worth the read.



Screenshot of Book Club discussion of *Against the Loveless World*

ENVIRONMENTALLY MINDFUL

OUR RECENT ACTIVISM

We are looking for new members! Do you want to be a part of a global movement for climate justice? If so, join the Environmentally Mindful team! Our members are highly active on social media and consistently share resources on climate justice information and promote activities that we can all do individually to support our environment in efforts to combat climate change. Be sure to register for upcoming events and visit our Facebook group for more details.



[EM_awchamburg](#)



[Environmentally Mindful Forum](#)

DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THE IPCC REPORT?

BY SHANAN R.

The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has published a report that is getting lots of attention, as it should. It furthers the sense of urgency regarding the climate crisis that many of us are already fearful about. Greta Thunberg had a fitting response on Twitter that is both abrupt and hopeful...

“The new IPCC report contains no real surprises. It confirms what we already know from thousands of previous studies and reports—that we are in an emergency. It’s a solid (but cautious) summary of the current best-available science. It doesn’t tell us what to do. It is up to us to be brave and take decisions based on the scientific evidence provided in these reports. We can still avoid the worst consequences, but not if we continue like today, and not without treating the crisis like a crisis.”

<https://twitter.com/Greta-Thunberg/status/1424647410526130181>

As we all want the best future possible, let’s continue to be brave and powerful with our actions and always keep the Earth in the front of our minds. The Environmental Forum team is ALWAYS open to hearing and sharing ideas, holding events/meet ups, and furthering education and local initiatives. We are always looking for team members and leaders to help us help the planet. Please contact us at environment@awchamburg.org or check out our Facebook and Instagram Accounts.

Summary of the [IPCC Report](#)
[IPCC Website](#)



PODCAST RECOMMENDATIONS

This summer's wonky and frightening weather is of concern to us all and brings the issue of climate change front and center. There's a lot of information/misinformation out there (and just so many hours in the day), so a quality podcast is a good way to keep on top of what's happening and what you can do about it—and perhaps be entertained in the bargain.

Podcast name: [The Climate Question](#)

This BBC production features leading journalists from around the world weighing in on a different climate issue each episode. Typical of the BBC, they don't dumb their topic down, but they do keep it accessible.

Podcast name: [Drilled](#)

Here's a novel concept—to tell the on-going story of climate change in the style of a true crime drama. Award-winning investigative journalist Amy Westervelt does it brilliantly.

Podcast name: [No Denying It](#)

This new podcast is coming right from the UN itself. It features a range of speakers from scientist to activists to entrepreneurs, and its mission statement says it all: "Because we all have to start somewhere—but the important thing is to get started."



RÄUMT AUF!

TWO DATES

All AWCH members are welcome to join the Environmentally Mindful team as we clean up Hamburg together!

Date 1: Sunday, September 12, in the Stadtpark.

Date 2: Sunday, September 19, at SUP on the Alster.

Clean Up with AWCH

& Hamburg Raumt Auf

- * **Plogging in the Stadtpark - Sunday 12th September**
- * **SUP on the Alster - Sunday 19th September**
- * **Environmentally Mindful Team - dates TBD**



Art in the City

by the Art Group

Current Exhibitions in Hamburg

BY SHELLY SCHOENESHOEFER

MUSEUM FÜR KUNST UND GEWERBE

Steintorplatz Tel: 40 428 13 48 80 service@mkg-hamburg.de

HEIMATEN: AN EXHIBITION AND SURVEY

“QUESTIONS ON HOME AND BELONGING”

until January 9, 2022

This exhibition takes a closer look at the word Heimat, which has two definitions in German: home and homeland. It seems like a simple word, but, in reality, it covers a very emotional and controversial topic. It is a provocative topic with no easy answers and is certainly something that all of us who are expats can understand and examine for what it means to us. This could be a possible Art Group outing this fall.

THE KUNSTVEREIN

Klosterwall 23 Tel: 40 32 21 57

PROOF OF STAKE:

TECHNOLOGISCHE BEHAUPTUNGEN

September 4, 2021–

November 14, 2021

This is a group exhibition, a symposium, and an education project initiated by Simon Deny and the Kunstverein. How does the framing of processes or objects as “technological” influence cultural works? This exhibition sounds very stimulating but very complex.

KORAKRIT ARUNANONDCHAI:

SONGS OF THE DYING/ SONGS OF THE LIVING

December 4, 2021–February 20, 2022

This will be an installation which will include sculpture, film, and paintings and includes several topics such as globalization and information networks. The narration interweaves stories of grief as well as new and different perspectives.

MAGAZINE

September 4, 2021–

November 14, 2021

This exhibition incorporates the change from print publications to online posts. It asks a question by looking at the verb “publish” and what it implies. This looks like a very interesting exhibition for those who love to write.

MARKK—MUSEUM AM ROTHENBAUM

Rothenbaumchaussee 64 Tel: 40 42 88 790

HEY HAMBURG, KENNST DU DUALA MANGA BELL?

until December 3, 2022

This exhibition focuses on our colonial heritage and racism. It tells the true story of the royal family of Cameroon, Duala Manga Bell, and the effects that colonialism had on this family as well as the country.

STEPHEN & SEIDENSTRÄßEN

until November 7, 2021

This exhibition looks at the legendary historical routes and the "New Silk Road," which is currently opening up discussions of how the relationship between Europe and China will evolve.

BUCERIUS KUNST FORUM

Alter Wall 12 Tel: 040 36 09 96 0 info@buceriuskunstforum.de



MODERN TIMES: INDUSTRIAL THEMES IN PAINTING AND PHOTOGRAPHY

until September 26, 2021

Some 30 paintings and 170 photographs are focused on the Industrial Revolution. The exhibition begins in the early days of industrialization and continues up to the present day, including works from Romanticism to contemporary photography and describing the changes over the past 175 years from the artists' point of view.

The next exhibition will be "Nolde and the North," opening October 16, 2021.

Rudo If Holtappel: Vor August-Thyssen- Hütte,
Duisburg-Hamborn 1959, Ludwiggalerie Schloss
Oberhausen © Nachlass Holtappel

Art in the City

by the Art Group

Current Exhibitions in Hamburg Continued

ERNST BARLACH HOUSE—STIFFUNG HERMANN F. REEMTSMA

Baron-Voght-Straße 50A Tel: 040 82 89 78 info@barlach-haus.de

FROM OTTO DIX TO PICASSO:
EXHIBITION FROM THE ERNST-JOACHIM SORST COLLECTION
September 26, 2021–January 30, 2022

This is a wonderful little museum to visit and afterwards take a walk in Jenischpark.

HAMBURG KUNSTHALLE

Glockengießerwall 5 Tel: 040 428131200 info@hamburger-kunsthalle.de

ON HYBRID CREATURES:
SCULPTURE IN MODERNISM
until July 21, 2022

With the coming of World War II and faced with the reality of the atomic bomb, many artists ceased to follow the traditional ways of the art academies and began to express their feelings and experiences of war and the chaos that surrounded them in novel ways.

OUT OF SPACE
until November 28, 2021

This exhibition takes a close look at how artists have defined and constructed space from the 1960s until the present day. It includes installations, sculptures, and videos from some 20 international artists. There are several examples of minimalism and conceptual art. It might be an interesting exhibition to explore and discuss with an art buddy!

RAPHAEL:
THE IMPACT OF A GENIUS
until October 3, 2021

This exhibition is to commemorate the lifework of the Renaissance artist, Raphael (1483-1520). It features numerous drawings, prints, and photographs of his works. Some 500 years later, we are still in wonder at his mastering such a high degree of work that has had such a strong impact on art in the centuries that followed.

The AWCH art group will hopefully put together a small group to visit this exhibition at the beginning of September, depending on pandemic regulations.

DEICHTORHALLEN MUSEUM

Deichtorstraße 1-2 Tel: 040 32 10 30 mail@deichtorhallen.de

TOM SACHS—SPACE PROGRAM: RARE EARTHS

September 19, 2021–April 10, 2022

An exhibition dedicated to American contemporary artist Tom Sachs, whose work is renowned for his large-scale installations on the space program which began in the 1960s. If you want to fly away into the imaginary world of Sachs' art, here is your chance.



Tom Sachs: Sam's Suit, 2019
Mixed Media, 142.5H x 70W x 70D inches.
Copyright: Genevieve Hanson © Tom Sachs

Beyond Hamburgers

TUSCAN-STYLE TOMATO AND BREAD SALAD

INGREDIENTS

4 Tbsp olive oil
6 slices of your favorite bread (i.e., sandwich bread, ciabatta, baguette, sourdough, etc.), diced in small chunks
1 Tbsp balsamic vinegar
3 medium tomatoes, diced
3 basil leaves, chopped
1 garlic clove, minced
Dash of salt
Dash of pepper

PREP TIME: 10 minutes
COOK TIME: 10 minutes
SERVINGS: 2 portions
PREPARED BY: Beatrice K.

DIRECTIONS

1. Heat 2 Tbsp oil in pan on medium-high.
2. Add bread chunks and cook until each side is golden brown or toasted to your liking. Add more cooking oil if needed.
3. In a medium-sized bowl, combine remaining 2 Tbsp olive oil, balsamic vinegar, basil leaves, garlic, salt, and pepper. Feel free to add other vegetables as desired (but keep tomatoes aside for now).
4. On a plate or deep dish, combine toasted bread and diced tomatoes. Add mix from step 3 on top and toss lightly. Enjoy with a glass of your favorite summer drink!



Photo by Beatrice K.



Photos by Max G.



Photo by Beatrice K.



Photo by Peter N.

STORY BEHIND THE RECIPE

On vacation, you expect amazing food with a good view, but when on a gluten-free, plant-based diet, what on earth does one eat in an unfamiliar country?

This past summer, we traveled with three other couples to Mallorca and stayed in a rustic villa overlooking the Mediterranean. As someone on a rather restrictive diet, I was not looking forward to separately preparing my food every day...on vacation. A plant-based diet means little-to-no animal products and focuses on obtaining the four major nutrition groups—carbohydrates, protein, healthy fats, and vitamins—entirely from plants. No gluten means avoiding the “gluten protein” commonly found in wheat, barley, rye, and malt. So, what do I eat then? Mostly Asian and Mexican cuisine, and one can substitute staples such as pasta and bread for a corn or rice-based substitute. What happens if I accidentally eat gluten? Well, let’s just say it’s not fun, and please let there be a bathroom nearby!

So, not surprisingly, I was petrified when one person laid claim to cooking for the week in Mallorca. When you have a dietary restriction, please let people know well in advance of your dietary needs! You should always offer support or prep your own meals, which was what I expected to do. But to my surprise, our chef of the week, Max, said he “had me covered,” as he was a sun-loving, exercise guru who promoted muscle building from plant-based diets. Max was a master of turning bland vegan food

into colorful culinary explosions of taste. As a vegan himself, he was used to preparing foods in an almost kosher style, that is, keeping different foods separated from each other, so he was confident he could keep me from a “gluten attack.”

The first evening, I was worried. I snuck into the kitchen three times to observe the cooking and to offer my help. With each of my desperate attempts to overtake the chef role, he shoved me out of the kitchen and finally locked the door. That night we sat down on the terrace overlooking the sunset and Max brought out the main course, grilled veggies and marinated tofu. He then brought out the side dish in a large bowl, the Tuscan-style tomato and bread salad, which looked amazing—but alas, I knew it was not for me. He then came back out from the kitchen with a small bowl and set it in front of me. “Oh yes!” I exclaimed. It was a gluten-free version of the same salad! The crunch of toasted bread, the juice from the fresh tomatoes, and the seasoning! It was like I’d died and gone to flavor heaven.

Every meal Max prepared, he made me a small dish in a gluten-free version, and I am happy to announce that I did not have a gluten attack once. Thank you, Max!

Film Group



Some good news for film lovers! Since mid-June, the cinemas have once again reopened in Hamburg after being shut for nearly eight months. It has been a long and difficult period for the industry, and certainly we aren't out of the woods yet in regards to the pandemic. However, for those who have been desperate to go to see a film on the big screen, now is the time to go out and support your local cinemas. Don't forget to get tested and wear a mask!

Film Reviews, Spring 2021



Beckenrand Sheriff ***
Germany, 2021
Opening September 9,
2021

Director: Marcus H. Rosenmüller
Writing credits: Marcus Pfeiffer
Principal actors: Milan Peschel, Dimitri Abold, Sebastian Bezzel, Rick Kavanian, Gisela Schneeberger, Johanna Wokalek, Sarah Mahita, Frederic Linkemann

For the last 30 years Karl (**Milan Peschel**) has managed the swimming pool in Grubberg, a small town in Bavaria. He works scrupulously, chasing the ducks from the water or lining up deck chairs precisely. He is a true "sheriff" in charge of order, in spite of the pool being run down with few guests. The town mayor (**Gisela Schneeberger**) and the local building contractor Albert Dengler (**Sebastian Bezzel**) plan to demolish the pool and build new apartments. In order to save it, Karl desperately begins collecting 600 signatures, as well as money. Helpers are Frau Wilhelm (**Johanna Wokalek**), who oversees an eight-man water polo team; Lisa (**Sarah Mahita**), who swims illegally at night; and his new co-worker, Sali (**Dimitri Abold**), a refugee from Nigeria on his way to Canada. Lisa

has won professional swimming competitions; she begins teaching Sali how to swim. Karl and Frau Wilhelm discover a common interest: working puzzles. For every donation to keep the pool in existence, Karl puts a piece into his puzzle.

This humorous German film opens with a quote from Klaus Tschölk, "Freundschaft, das ist wie Heimat" ("Friendship: that is like home"). Beckenrand translates to "edge or side of the pool." There are two parallel love stories, which you can predict. I saw the film in German and occasionally I had to guess my way through some Bavarian dialects, but the plot is predictable, so this is not a problem. The film touched me personally, having worked several years as a lifeguard and swimming instructor in a small town in Missouri, USA. Also, both Karl and I like puzzles. Here, we have much to smile about, especially over the facial expressions of talented actor Milan Peschel. Perhaps the film loses momentum occasionally, but it picks up for a happy ending, thanks to the ducks! (Becky Tan)

Director **Pietro Marcello's** *Martin Eden*, which is loosely based on the novel of the same name by Jack London, tells the story of a poor and uneducated young Italian sailor, Martin Eden (**Luca Marinelli**), who, through hard work, love of an upper-class woman, and determination, moves his way up the social ladder to become a famous and wealthy writer. Set in the politically charged twentieth century, both stories deal with the divided social classes and the clash between two political systems, capitalism and socialism, in which Eden must find out where he belongs. This class difference is well portrayed in the contrast between the luxurious and formal home of his beloved, Elena, and the simple abodes of his sister and of the widow Maria and her family, where he lives.

There are, however, notable differences between Marcello's tale and London's book. First, Marcello "revisited" Martin Eden by transplanting the action from Oakland, California to Naples, Italy. In addition, even though both stories take place in the twentieth century, London's narrative is clearly set at the beginning of the century, and Marcello's account seems timeless, as it jumps around from right after World War I up to the 1970s and back again. The timelessness that Marcello achieves is due in part to his use of archival footage. It establishes that the time period is the twentieth century, but with his frequent inserts of historical footage throughout the film, we are never sure when. Even the music from Debussy and the folk singer Teresa De Sio gives us the feeling that we are in a notional time.

A major part of what makes this film successful is the actors, especially Luca Marinelli as Martin Eden. He is simply beautiful, with his brooding charisma and expressive, hypno-tizing eyes. From the beginning to the end, he presents us with a powerful and true-to-life Martin Eden. **Jessica Cressy**, as his upper-class sweetheart, is also convincing as Elena, with her prissy clothes and fine manners. However, **Carmen Pommella** as Maria, the kind widow who takes Eden in and gives him a chance to continue his writing after his sister kicks him out, is probably the most believable character, and she brings out a gentle side in Eden.

The most disturbing element in this film is definitely the pacing, which seems to be non-existent towards the end. The film starts out powerful and gripping as we get to

Martin Eden ****
Italy/France/Germany
2019
Opening August 26, 2021

Director: Pietro Marcello
 Writing credits: Maurizio Braucci, Pietro Marcello
 Principal actors: Luca Marinelli, Jessica Cressy, Carmen Pommella, Marco Leonardi

know Eden, first as a simple sailor and then after he meets Elena, as a single-minded man, self-educating himself and determined to become a writer, even after many rejections. It is also brilliant how Marcello portrays the proletarian class in the first half of the production, contrasting it with the upper class as he hip hops between Elena's family and the family he is living with. Unfortunately, however, soon after Eden gets his first manuscript accepted for print, the film suddenly jumps to where he has become an unsympathetic, unhappy snob as an accomplished and well-known writer. He suddenly has bleached hair and is wearing aristocratic clothes with a very cynical expression on his face. I almost had the feeling that Marcello thought his film was getting too long and he had to cut it short. This is not the fault of overacting on the part of the leading actor, but rather of over-the-top writing in the screenplay (by **Mauizio Braucci**) and a melodramatic tendency in the director.

In spite of this flaw in the closing stages of the film, it is definitely worth "revisiting" *Martin Eden* in the form of Marcello's newest film, even if it is just to see **Luca Marinelli**. (Karen Schollemann)





Ein bisschen bleiben wir noch (Oskar & Lilli)

Austria 2019
Opening September 2, 2021

Director: Arash T. Riahi
 Writing credits: Arash T. Riahi
 Principal actors: Leopold Pallua, Rosa Zant, Christine Ostermayer, Alexandra Maria Nutz

Siblings Oskar (**Leopold Pallua**) and Lilli (**Rosa Zant**) have been living with their mother Betty (**Anna Fenderl**) in Austria for six years without a legal residency permit. They are originally from Chechnya. In desperation, Betty cuts her veins in a suicide attempt, is sent to the hospital, and then to a home, where she sits in a wheelchair. Special services collect the children (who try to run away and hide) and delivers each to a different foster family. Lilli now lives with a single woman, Rut (**Simone Furth**), who has a boyfriend, Georg (**Rainer Vöss**). Oskar lives with a young

couple and their baby, as well as the family grandmother Erika (**Christine Ostermayer**). Oskar and Lilli try to adjust to the new conditions: strangers, vegetarians, no car, grandma suffering from Parkinson's, etc. Lilli has an unfortunate experience with another girl at school, who is not a real friend. Although separated, the children manage to communicate on their mobile phones and meet up often, once at their former apartment, now occupied by a new family; they visit their mother in her home. Oskar seems mature beyond his years, establishing a loyal friendship with Grandma Erika, even babysitting her and the family baby. He suggests to Lilli that they act like bad kids in order to be reunited. He writes letters to his mother and even finds a source of money. They dream of running away to Argentina.

The film is based on the book Oskar und Lilli by Austrian author Monika Helfer, which originally came out in 1994. Here Oskar is seven and Lilli is nine. In the film, the children seem to have lots of independent time to meet. In real life, I doubt that foster families would allow this much freedom. It would be interesting to learn how much of the film is based on director **Arash T. Riahi's** own immigration experiences, having left Iran at age 12 and moving with his family to Austria in 1984. (Becky Tan)



The Father *****
UK | France 2020
Opening August 26, 2021

Director: Florian Zeller
 Writing credits: Christopher Hampton, Florian Zeller
 Principal actors: Anthony Hopkins, Olivia Colman, Mark Gatiss, Olivia Williams, Imogen Poots

The Father is the first film by acclaimed French playwright **Florian Zeller**, for which he also won an Oscar for best adapted screenplay. It has the feeling of a play, as almost all the action is confined to a lovely apartment where the aging father (**Anthony Hopkins**) lives cared for by his daughter, Ann (**Olivia Colman**). However, we know something is wrong almost immediately in the way he gingerly touches a couple of random notes on the well-worn piano or abruptly pulls off his headphones while listening to opera. Then scenes repeat themselves with different characters and different outcomes. Where is the story? Are we being played and deceived?

We are seeing the world through the eyes of the father. It is a frightening view of inescapable consequences that affect one's perceptions, even vision, causing distrust and confusion, associated with the onset of dementia. We become the father, thanks to Hopkins' amazing (Best Actor Oscar 2021) performance as he tries to navigate these contradictions, fighting and eventually acquiescing. Colman's (Oscar nominated) role, in contrast, is a mourning of loss; for instance, she lovingly touches the fabrics in his closet, trying to get close to him in any way now left to her.

Along with Hopkins and Colman, opera music is a major actor in the film. Favorite arias with themes of "pleading to a greater power outside oneself" dramatically fit and add beauty and universal integrity to this generational tragedy. Mr. Zeller proves to be a real family man. *The Father* was preceded by his 2019 play, *The Mother* (starring Isabelle Huppert), and please look forward to his coming film, *The Son*, with Hugh Jackman and Laura Dern!

Opera music in *The Father*:
 Purcell, "What Power Art Thou" from *King Arthur*
 Bellini, "Casta Diva" from *Norma*, sung by Maria Callas
 Bizet, "Je Crois Entendre Encore" from *The Pearl Fishers* (Nancy Tiltz)



Online für Anfänger (Effacer l'Historique, Delete History) *1/2 France | Belgium 2020 Starting October 21, 2021

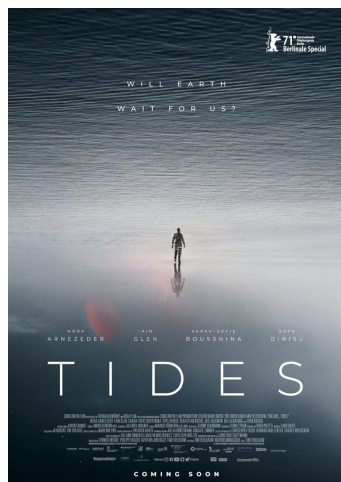
Director: Benoît Delépine, Gustave Kervern
 Writing credits: Benoît Delépine, Gustave Kervern
 Principle actors: Blanche Gardin, Denis Podalydès, Corinne Masiero, Vincent Lacoste, Clementine Peyricot

Marie (**Blanche Gardin**) has one foot in reality i.e., her quickly emptying house, and another in impracticality, whereby she repeatedly acts on whims. This is especially true when imbibing, e.g., visiting her teenage son late at night without her husband's knowledge. Whereas, having faced her demons, Christine (**Corinne Masiero**) is now desperately trying to develop independence via an Uber-like business. Although, as a driver bending over backward to win "likes" and increase her customer base, getting only one-star ratings from clients drives her berserk. While Bertrand (**Denis Podalydès** de la Comédie-Française), freshly widowed with a 13-year-old (**Clementine Peyricot**) to support, cook for, defend (against cyberbullying), et cetera, just wants some lovin'. These middle-aged neighbors are also friends and on call to help one another out. That support is

paramount at this particular juncture in time, since all three are drowning in Internet-related woes; so-called innovative products, they discover, are actually counter-productive and worsening their situations. Together they reach out to "hacker God" to put their world in order.

Co-writers/directors **Benoît Delépine** (France) and **Gustave Kervern's** (Mauritius) nebulously funny script's comedic timing is belabored and out of sync, and some of the episodic scenes feel staged, e.g., the teenager being bullied is cringe-worthy. In all fairness, the lead actors' efforts are valiant, considering that their characters' self-absorption defies credibility, and they are shallow rather than simpatico. **Stéphane Elmadjian's** heavy-handed, awkwardly-paced editing emphasizes the film's sluggishness; **Hugues Poulain** is cinematographer.

The digital-domination themes strung throughout *Online für Anfänger* are well worth exploring, but in a film with a tighter, more suitable plot. *Anfänger's* humor may appeal to some but be forewarned, this is far from a feel-good flick. Its essentially depressingly candid message is to consider current societies' lifestyle dependencies, including "social" media, emblematic of a deeper, bigger social disease. German synchronization, 112 minutes (Marinell Haegelin)



Tides (The Colony) ** Germany | Switzerland 2021 Opening August 26, 2021

Director: Tim Fehlbaum
 Writing credits: Tim Fehlbaum, Mariko Minoguchi, Jo Rogers
 Principal actors: Nora Arnezeder, Sarah-Sofie Boussnina, Iain Glen, Sope Dirisu, Sebastian Roché

In the distant future, the space-faring survivors of the collapse of Earth seek to discover whether the planet has recovered enough to sustain life. Years earlier, the mission Ulysses dis-

appeared without a trace. When the second mission, Ulysses 2, crash-lands, astronaut Blake (**Nora Arnezeder**) must find a way to survive and complete the mission.

Although *Tides* impresses with its cinematography and production design, the unfortunate reality is that those two aspects cannot save it from being a wholly mediocre film. The story is derivative of practically every dystopian sci-fi produced in the last 30 years (*Waterworld* [1995], *Children of Men* [2006], *Interstellar* [2014] in particular). The motivations of the characters are particularly cookie-cutter, to the point where it almost feels like you could guess the dialogue before it is said. With the addition of uneven pacing, the end result is a rather boring feature which is all style and no substance. (Rose Finlay)

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Are you creative? Do you know or are you interested in learning InDesign?



Currents is looking for new members to support layout and design starting October, 2021. Be part of the creative process!

Contact currents-exec@awchamburg.org
to see how you can support the team!

CURRENTS MAGAZINE

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