

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

# CURRENTS



Summer 2023 | Vol. 39, No. 2

## HOW YOUR GARDEN GROWS

Editorial

# GARDENING: A SAGA IN SEVERAL SEASONS

We've been house-hunting for a couple of years when we see it: the cottage in the woods of our dreams. Even though "the woods" is actually only three big trees, they abut and tower over the little house, sheltering and protecting it. Quite literally! As it turns out, those trees, themselves protected by law, are the reason the house hasn't been snapped up by developers and demolished in favor of condos—there's no way to take down the house without killing them. We love our trees!



But...the trees have sucked all the life out of the surrounding soil, which is cement-like. No wonder almost everything else on the property is dead. We are told nothing will ever grow here.



However...as home renovations get under way, I begin intensive soil conditioning. Composting, mulching, feeding, acidifying...wow, there are a LOT of rocks. And broken glass and chunks of brick. And a lot of this is just sand. Why?

But! Emboldened by chutzpah, I start a large worm farm, which I lavish with love and table scraps. The couple of half-dead scrubby plants that were here already are definitely perking up! I put in a ton of new baby plants, knowing they won't look great for a few years, but the pleasure of watching them grow is worth it. I feel myself bathed in benevolence, bringing life where once death held sway.



So now it turns out that all the pipes to and from the house are kaput. Why did it take the renovation team so long to figure this out? Something having to do with those trees...

Anyway, the whole yard comes up again.



But! At least this gives me an opportunity to treat the soil deep down, for what that's worth. Both new pipes and the baby plants go back in.

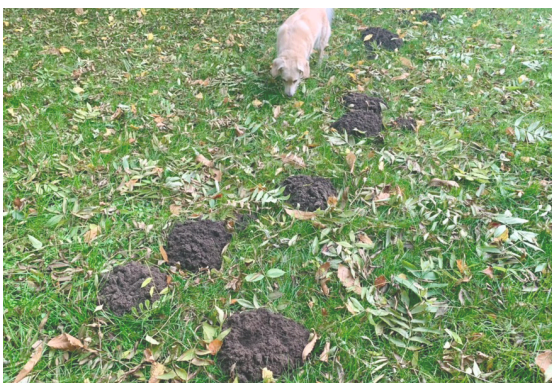
And then we go to the States for six weeks. It barely rains the whole time we're gone. Death, death, and more death.

So. More plants, plus a ground-watering system, go in. I really pile on the mulch for the winter.

And the spring is glorious! Followed by a lush summer, colorful fall, another cozy winter deep in mulch, and an even better following spring. And then another. The sour cherries, plums, gooseberries, red currants, and tomatoes are fat and brilliant. The soil is dark and soft and wriggling with our lovingly cultivated earthworms. But it's not just the plants that love worms...

Now we've got moles.

With a shrug and a laugh and a tear in my eye,



Mason Jane Milam  
Executive Editor

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# OUR GARDEN GROWS

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**BEHIND THE SCENES** Stephanie Matlock Allen, Carol Harbers, Becky Tan

# KEEPING CURRENT

## A Note from the President

Hello everyone,

I hope you are enjoying the pause that summer brings to Hamburg. Everything slows down, which offers me a perfect moment to reflect on where the club has been and where it is going.

YOU'VE BEEN DOING SO MUCH!

The first half of this year has been incredibly vibrant for the American Women's Club of Hamburg. We are grateful to have so many members willing to share their diverse passions with the rest of us. I was struck by the beauty of this during a particularly memorable week in May:

Monday: I rowed in the rain with twenty other members who were enthusiastic about trying a new sport despite very challenging weather! Thanks, Adrienne Bulow, for organizing this great event. Meanwhile, our club chorus, The Songbirds, were singing during their regular rehearsal at Nancy Tilitz's art gallery.

Tuesday: A few of our members took advantage of the US Embassy's one-day visit to Hamburg so they could receive passport services without traveling to Berlin. One of the benefits for American members is the club's close relationship with the US Embassy and Consulate.

Wednesday: I met a delightful group of new members over coffee at Adrienne's home. It was especially fun to meet Genevieve, who brought along her lively toddler and adorable little baby.

Thursday: The morning kicked off

with the annual spring bagel sale—a beloved tradition for those who miss their favorite type of Brot! Tracy Moede again coordinated the whole thing as a fundraiser for the club's From the Heart Pillow Project, and it was a huge success.

In the afternoon, a group gathered on Großneumarkt to dedicate the Stolperstein of Lea Heymann. The small memorial stone was sponsored by the AWCH in 2019, but the pandemic delayed a ceremony. In the meantime, Carol Harbers tirelessly researched the Heymann family and connected with descendants in the US, several of whom traveled to Hamburg for this moving remembrance. It was a moving experience that I will not soon forget. You can read Carol's full account in this issue.

Finally, that night, dozens of the AWCH members and their families joyfully gathered at the Operettenhaus for USA Night at the musical *Hamilton*. Our partnership with the US Consulate means our club members were offered half-price tickets and invited to a special reception beforehand, which included a talk by actor Charles Simmons, who plays George Washington.

Friday: The Opera Club gathered for its monthly session at Elizabeth Reifke's home, where they delved further into *The Tales of Hoffman*, part of a series of sessions preparing them for the live performance in June. This group has been meeting for years, and the members speak lovingly about the education they've received and

the bond they've grown together.

At the same time, another group of the AWCH members was sorting clothing donations at Hanseatic Help. We meet every other Friday for volunteering sessions organized by Diana Schnelle and Shelly Schoeneshoefer.

Whatever your interests, the AWCH always has something for you. And if you don't see an activity that fits your interest? It's easy to get your own event on the calendar. Just contact Sara to find out how ([activities@awchamburg.org](mailto:activities@awchamburg.org)).

AND FOR THE REST OF THE YEAR:

We've got some special events coming up, including the new membership meeting, Meet & Mingle, on September 6. In October, we are working with the US Consulate to host a booth at Hamburg's huge Tag der Deutschen Einheit celebration on October 3. We will need as many volunteers as possible, so let me know if you can help! Next is the FAWCO Region 5 Meeting in Hamburg November 3-5, an annual conference for members of women's clubs throughout Germany and Austria. Then we let loose with our annual Thanksgiving feast in November and the holiday party in December.

I look forward to seeing you soon—

Stephanie Matlock Allen  
AWCH PRESIDENT



ROWING IN THE RAIN



AWCH MEMBERS PREPARE TO TAKE THEIR FIRST STROKES, LED BY EXPERIENCED ROWER MARIANNE KOLDING (IN BLACK)



COACH STEFFI KLUGE TEACHES SOME OF OUR LADIES HOW TO GET THEIR BOAT MOVING



STEPHANIE MATLOCK ALLEN AND JENNIFER FOSTER WERE THRILLED TO WATCH *HAMILTON* DESPITE NOT UNDERSTANDING GERMAN YET!

# IN MEMORIAM

## Frauke Rademacher-Heidemann

July 31, 1939 – July 24, 2023

Frauke 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 mobile phones, all of 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 Tan in 1992, who introduced her to the AWCH—a “home away from home.”

Frauke not only represented our club to FAWCO for ten years but also brought the AWCH closer to FAWCO. She was our club representative and later the Region 5 coordinator. She was recruited in 2006 to help organize the FAWCO conference in Berlin. As Angelika McLarren recalls, “She was not so sure at the beginning but

jumped on the wagon full force by recruiting volunteers from all our sister clubs in the region.” Frauke continued to organize regional meetings all over Germany for over ten years, even organizing the meetings in towns without an AWC but with lots of history and culture, like Eisenach, Aachen, Lüneburg, and Leipzig. She also served as FAWCO advertising chair for many years. In 2011 Frauke received the Carolyn Curtis Brown Spirit Award for appreciation of service exemplifying the spirit, inspiration, and dedication of FAWCO founder.



Frauke loved to entertain at her home in Lüneburg but always made that extra effort to come to Hamburg for AWCH events and opera at the Staatsoper. And if you ever had the chance to visit her in Lüneburg for a tour of the city or the Lüne Abbey, you would not have been disappointed.

Her death was sudden and unexpected. Although she had had a few years of personal and health issues, she

had a strong will to live and remain active. A dear friend from Chicago was visiting, and they had been traveling to Italy and Dresden and had just celebrated a birthday in East Frisia near the family farm that she had left so many years ago.

Frauke was a fountain of knowledge and an inspiration. Her professionalism, warm heart, and mischievous smile will be greatly missed.



# HYDROPONIC GARDENS



## ARE CHANGING LIVES IN NAIROBI, KENYA

by Stephanie Matlock Allen

One very special garden project you should know about is Awesome Blossoms in Kenya. The program is supporting the installation of hydroponic farms at several schools in the slums of Nairobi. It provides training and incomes to the women who tend the crops and fresh vegetables for the schoolchildren.

The American Women's Club of Hamburg and other FAWCO clubs are currently raising funds to support Awesome Blossoms. This innovative idea was chosen as the current "Target Project: Environment" beneficiary. The AWCH has so far donated \$3,488 toward Awesome Blossoms.

And it's so deserving! The garden endeavor is part of Safe Spaces, a community outreach center founded by Peninah Nthenya Musyimi in the slums of Nairobi. Peninah is a charismatic and ambitious leader who has been working hard to improve the lives of women and girls. Over the past fifteen years, her program has empowered 1,200 girls through academics, sports, arts, and health guidance. They have become advocates for themselves and for their villages.

Awesome Blossoms's hydroponic gardens are another way to provide skills, education, incomes, environmental improvements, and healthy lifestyles to the women and children of Nairobi. The compact gardens use a unique vertical water-based growing system that is incredibly efficient and productive. Each school farm includes 500 hydroponic gardens.

In June, the first donation of FAWCO funds was used to install a hydroponic farm at Our Lady of Mercy Shauri Moyo, which serves 950 young girls. Safe Spaces is training seventy-five female entrepreneurs to manage the farm and sell the crops. The FAWCO funds will support upcoming farm installations at two more schools. Their first school-based hydroponic farm was installed in 2019 and has been a successful model.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Meet Peninah:** We are thrilled to announce that Peninah Nthenya Musyimi is scheduled to speak in Hamburg at the FAWCO Region 5 Meeting on November 3. She and Allan C'oredo, the project manager for Awesome Blossoms, will travel from Kenya for the event. We hope you can join us in welcoming them!

**The AWCH Silent Auction:** Our annual silent auction is scheduled for September 10-18. All proceeds will be donated to the Awesome Blossoms garden project. Can you donate at least one item to the auction? We love homemade goodies, interesting products, services and classes, gift certificates to local businesses, vacation stays, and anything else you can imagine! Email Jordan with your donations and questions at [fawcorep@awchamburg.org](mailto:fawcorep@awchamburg.org).

Learn more about Awesome Blossoms: [safespaces-nairobi.com/](http://safespaces-nairobi.com/) Learn more about the FAWCO Target Project: [fawcofoundation.org/programs/target-project](http://fawcofoundation.org/programs/target-project)

# A SHAKE-UP & A SHOUT-OUT

by Carol Harbers, LFR Deputy Representative

Your representatives to the Landesfrauenrat Hamburg e.V. have witnessed a few important changes and a buzz of excitement in the last several months at the LFR monthly meetings. At their Annual General Meeting in June, a new executive board was elected and changes to the constitution were approved. Effective June 5, Eva Burgdorf (Evangelisches Frauenwerk Hamburg-West/Südholstein), Angelika Ohse (Deutscher Ingenieurinnenbund), and Angela Fechner (LAG Feminismus-Bündnis 90/Die Grünen) form the executive board, with each board member having equal status. The executive board is supported by two extended board members, Dr. Christina Maria Huber (BPW-Business Professional Women) and Annika Huisinga (TERRE DES FEMMES). Doris Schramm (Dolle Deerns) is the new treasurer.

The new structure of the board, as well as a

change from monthly to quarterly business meetings with the club delegates, are all part of a reform to reduce the formalities of the LFR and to ensure that more time is available to implement discussion and to realize changes.

The outgoing board members, Petra Ackmann, Silke Martini, and Dr. Susanna Bunge, were thanked for their commitment and engagement over the past three years. They not only successfully guided the LFR through the challenging COVID-19 pandemic, but also supported and implemented numerous projects, including the third Gleichstellungspolitisches Rahmenprogramm (GPR) (Equality Policy Framework) adopted by the Hamburg Senate in January 2023.

The LFR board is excited about the new GPR and invited two representatives of the Office of Equality and Social Cohesion to introduce the new policy framework to



The Landesfrauenrat Hamburg e.V. (LFR) lobbies for women's political and socioeconomic rights at the local level. It is an independent umbrella association representing fifty-five women's groups and thus over 300,000 women in Hamburg and the surrounding area.

It is Hamburg's largest voluntary women's lobby, and the most influential.

The AWCH has been a member since 1986. Joana M.-O. and Carol Harbers represent the AWCH at their regular meetings and can be contacted at [LFR-Rep@awchamburg.de](mailto:LFR-Rep@awchamburg.de) for questions or information.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: DORIS SCHRAMM, EVA BURGDORF, ANGELA FECHNER, ANGELIKA OHSE, ANNIKA HUISINGA  
MISSING FROM PHOTO: DR. CHRISTINA MARIA HUBER

PHOTO BY LFR PRESS

THE NEW GPR PROGRAM IS PRESENTED IN A 156-PAGE BOOK AVAILABLE AT THE LFR OFFICE, OR IT CAN BE DOWNLOADED HERE [HTTPS://WWW.HAMBURG.DE/CONTENTBLOB/16837944/2DOCO4B4E82D7F5BBEAA3982E25CFE2C/DATA/2023-01-17-GPR.PDF](https://www.hamburg.de/contentblob/16837944/2DOCO4B4E82D7F5BBEAA3982E25CFE2C/DATA/2023-01-17-GPR.PDF)

LFR delegates. Entitled “Together for More Equality in Hamburg,” the GPR summarizes equality policy challenges for Hamburg, sets out the principles to guide policy making, and presents 110 defined measures to improve equality between women and men in Hamburg. The new and updated GPR reflects the close collaboration with the LFR and other interest groups to address inadequacies of previous GPRs. To quote Katharina Fegebank, Senator for Equality:

“Equality for women is still a long way off. Our goal is to ensure that all Hamburg residents have the same opportunities and equal rights... With this new package of measures, we are making it clear: There is still a lot to do. The issue of better reconciliation of family and career remains a perennial topic, as does the promotion of more women in leadership positions. We’re staying on the ball!”

The presentation by the Office of Equality and Social Cohesion was well received by the LFR delegates—but all acknowledged that success would depend on careful monitoring and feedback.

Joana and I look forward to introducing these measures to our club and seeing that your voices and these measures are implemented.



# NEED A PIANO?

Becky Tan would like to donate hers to anyone interested. For details call Becky at 040-5503972 or 0172 809 7 908 or send an email to [rebecca.tan@t-online.de](mailto:rebecca.tan@t-online.de)

# BANKING OPPORTUNITY

Exciting news! As part of FAWCO, AWCH members are now eligible to open a bank account with the State Department Federal Credit Union (SDFCU). Accessing an American-based bank account continues to be one of the biggest obstacles facing Americans abroad. However, SDFCU is a fantastic opportunity for those abroad and their families.

It's easy to open an account:

1. Go to <https://www.sdfcu.org/>
2. Click on "Join" at the top
3. Select "I qualify through my relationship with one of your organizational affiliates"
4. Select "Federation of American Women Clubs Overseas (FAWCO)"
5. Select the accounts you would like to open

Regardless of the type of account you open, you are required to open a Regular Share Savings Account at no additional cost. If you have any questions about SDFCU or opening an account, contact Jordan Wagner via [fawcorep@awchamburg.org](mailto:fawcorep@awchamburg.org)

# GERMAN UNITY DAY

by Stephanie Matlock Allen

Every year, Germany celebrates Tag der Deutschen Einheit to honor the German reunification in 1990. The national celebration alternates among cities, and this year it is landing in Hamburg on October 2 and 3.

Hundreds of thousands of visitors from throughout Germany are expected to descend on the city, and the AWCH will be there to welcome them in the most American of ways: with sweet and delicious homemade cookies!

The US Consulate's office honored the AWCH by asking us to host its booth at the international community festival. They wanted something fun, enticing, interactive, and stereotypically American.

So we plan to ask for your help to bake tons of bite-sized cookies. We will also present some of our talented members on the entertainment stage. Keep an eye on the newsletter for full details about the celebration!

Of course we'll need plenty of volunteers to bake cookies beforehand and to work at the booth on October 3. If you can help out with either, send us a note at [vpres@awchamburg.org](mailto:vpres@awchamburg.org).



**“For centuries, Hamburg has absorbed external influences, has networked internationally and been integrated into the global community. Hamburg is home to people from around 180 countries from all over the globe. The port and trade, people and cultures: international ties enrich our country. We invite you to experience this at our festival—along with many partners for whom Hamburg is a home base.”**

CREDIT: DER TAG DER DEUTSCHEN EINHEIT WEBSITE

“THERE ARE NO WORDS THAT CAN EXPRESS HOW GRATEFUL I AM FOR CAROL HARBERS AND THE AWCH FOR THE AMAZING OPPORTUNITY THAT WAS GIVEN TO MY COUSINS AND I. WALKING AROUND OUR FAMILY’S ANCESTRAL HOME AND SEEING THAT THEY ARE BEING REMEMBERED WAS AN OVERWHELMING EXPERIENCE. ONE THAT COULD NOT HAVE BEEN DONE WITHOUT THE AWCH. I AM SO APPRECIATIVE THAT MY GREAT-GREAT-GREAT AUNTS ARE HONORED WITH THESE STOLPERSTIENE AND WILL DEFINITELY MAKE TRIPS BACK TO HAMBURG TO SEE THEM AND REMEMBER MY FAMILY.”

- SOPHIE PAPPAS



SALOMON FAMILY  
PHOTO BY CAROL STRAMETZ.



### DEDICATION CEREMONY

PHOTO BY THELMA FREEDMAN



STOLPERSTEINE WITH STONES

“I’D LIKE TO SINCERELY THANK THE AMERICAN WOMEN’S CLUB OF HAMBURG FOR THEIR WORK ON THE STOLPERSTEIN PROJECT AND THE PLAQUES IN HAMBURG NOW DEDICATED TO MY GREAT-GREAT AUNTS—LEA, ROSA, AND FANNY SOLOMON. WALKING IN THEIR FOOTSTEPS, VISITING THEIR HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOODS, AND STANDING IN THE SHADOWS OF THEIR FORMER HOMES WAS AN INCREDIBLY POWERFUL EXPERIENCE, ONE I WILL NOT SOON FORGET. THIS EXPERIENCE WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE INTREPID WORK OF CAROL HARBERS AND THE AWCH, AND, FOR THAT, I AM ETERNALLY GRATEFUL.”

- DAN KASTANIS

# STOLPERSTEIN DEDICATION TO THE SALOMON/HEYMANN FAMILY

by Carol Harbers

Since 1995, the Cologne artist Gunter Demnig has been commemorating victims of National Socialist tyranny with his STOLPERSTEINE project by placing small memorial stones in front of their last voluntary residence. The stones are intended to keep alive the memory of the victims of National Socialism—Jews, Romas, Jehovah’s Witnesses, homosexuals, “euthanasia” victims, and political dissidents. Each Stolperstein (stumbling stone) is dedicated to a person who was stripped of their rights, persecuted, or murdered during the National Socialist era.

Yes, stop and think. We know the staggering numbers of people victimized by the Nazi regime, but the Stolpersteine give us names. And, if we take the time, we can begin to see faces and hear stories.

Five direct descendants of the Abraham and Sophie Salomon family, flying in from New York and Texas, joined ten AWCH members to dedicate the Stolperstein sponsored by the AWCH in January 2020 to honor and remember holocaust victim Lea Salomon Heymann. Today, six Stolpersteine dedicated to Lea and her family, sponsored by anonymous donors, can be found on Grossneumarkt and a neighboring street. Although the COVID-19 pandemic had prevented a dedication ceremony when the first Stolperstein was placed, the elapsed time allowed an intensive family search, ultimately leading to the reunification of the Salomon family descendants now living in the States.

The youngest of seven children, Lea Salomon grew up in Hamburg-Neustadt. She met her husband, Paul Heymann—a merchant, hairdresser, and translator—in 1919. The couple had three children, who struggled to stay in school and learn a trade during the rise of the Nazi regime. In 1941, there was an abrupt change. Lea,

along with her husband, her daughter Wilma (age fourteen), son Alfred (age seventeen), and her two sisters, Rosa and Fanny, were all deported from their homes in Hamburg-Neustadt to concentration camps in Minsk and Riga. None returned. Luckily, Lea and Paul’s eldest daughter was able to immigrate to Texas (via Shanghai) with the support of a cousin, the daughter of Lea’s oldest brother, Sally.

Our dedication ceremony was highlighted by a short, personal reflection from AWCH member Joana M.-O. on the impact of the Stolperstein project for the victims, the survivors, and the community. A pamphlet was distributed with details to the lost family members, including surviving photos and excerpts from letters they sent before their deportation.

The family descendants were deeply moved as the Kaddish hymn was recited in memory of their family members: mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, aunts, uncles—torn away from a normal family life under their neighbors’ eyes.

The Stolperstein Initiative in Hamburg started in 2001 with strong support from the City of Hamburg. Today, more than 6,581 memorial stones have been placed in the sidewalks of Hamburg, with each name being attached to a bibliography researched by the initiative. Go to the Stolpersteine website to sponsor a Stolperstein or get involved in the project by translating bibliographies into English. <https://www.stolpersteine-hamburg.de>

For me, this has been an extremely personal journey that has brought alive the atrocities that happened during this dark time in my adopted home. I sincerely hope this project has opened the eyes of other members and will remind us of the importance of remaining vigilant against human rights transgressions.

STOLPERSTEIN:  
STUMBLING  
BLOCK  
—SOMETHING  
THAT CAUSES  
DIFFICULTY OR  
HESITATION

# A FESTIVE, FLOATING



PHOTOS BY STEPHANIE MATLOCK ALLEN



# FOURTH OF JULY FETE

by Stephanie Matlock Allen

The club's annual Fourth of July party took place on an Elbe riverboat this year, and the floating party was a huge success.

Despite an incredibly rainy summer day and a last-minute change of venue that left the organizers scrambling, all of our guests made it aboard with their positive moods intact.

Around sixty people attended, and ten talented bakers responded to our call for homemade pies as a way to celebrate America! They really came through, and although the bakers were awarded with blue ribbons, it was the attendees who won, as we tasted our way through an incredible array of desserts. A huge thank-you to everyone who spent so much time and effort baking on a Tuesday!

There were more than a dozen kids on board between the ages of nine and fifteen, and they had a great time together, playing Uno and Monopoly, eating too much sugar, and building new friendships.

The credit for this great night goes to Nanci Schmidt, the AWCH events chair, who booked the boat, planned the details, shopped for and delivered and arranged all the food, decorated the room, and brought along her adorable new grandbaby for everyone to admire. Thank you, Nanci!

We also celebrated the culmination of this year's Spring Challenge fitness event. Forty-seven people on two teams battled to the very last moment after spending more than a month running, walking, bicycling, rowing, Pilates-ing, and moving forward in a friendly competition that provided plenty of motivation. Thank you to Hannah Bergland for organizing this year's challenge! Be sure to read her own account of the fun in this issue.



# PHILANTHROPIC ACTIVITIES ARE STILL GOING STRONG



DIANA PERRY SCHNELLE & FAMILY

by Shelly Schoeneshoefer

Since 2018, we have supported Hanseatic Help through groups helping with clothes sorting, filling of school backpacks for children, and even a FAWCO development grant initiated by Jennifer Lane. During the pandemic, our interaction was limited. With the coming of the Ukrainian war, it took a while for Hanseatic Help to restructure its resources to allow groups to help once again. Thanks to Diana Schnelle, we now have set dates where we all can get together and work at the warehouse, or we can sign up at their Help Stores to distribute clothing. It has been a very successful run of activities, and new members have been very involved, which makes it an easy way to get to know them. So if you are looking for something to do or would love to meet some members of our club, please let Holly Todd or myself know so we can put you in the loop. Look forward to hearing from you!

PHOTOS BY MELISSA AZIZ



The AWCH also participated in the Laufen Gegen Gewalt on July 2, 2023, which was sponsored by the Hamburg Autonomous Women's Shelters. This is an organization that we supported before Hanseatic Help, and we still support them indirectly by participating in this run. A number of our members and their family members joined – running, walking, and skating the seven kilometers around the Alster.

Although this year's run is over, you can still participate by donating money to this important cause, which raises funds to support the residents of the women's shelters and promote awareness of domestic violence against women in Hamburg and the world.



MEMBERS OF THE WINNING TEAM ACCEPT THEIR €100 PRIZE, WHICH THEY CHOSE TO DONATE TO MAMABABY HAITI

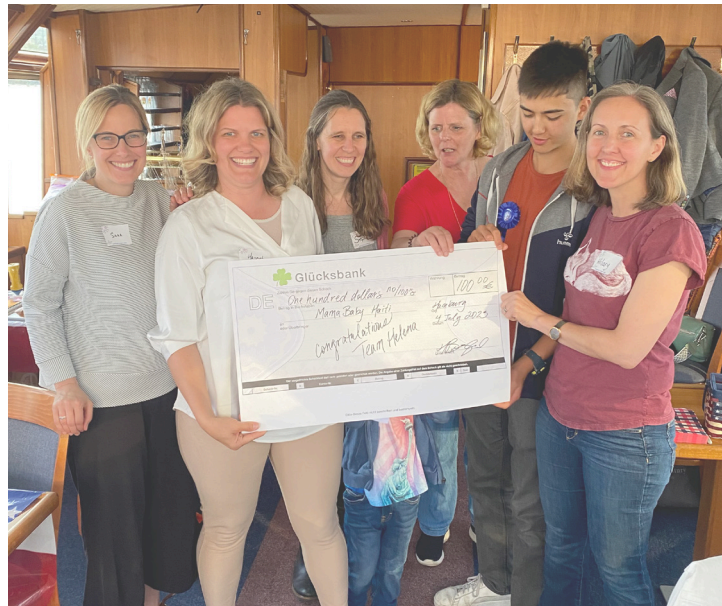


PHOTO BY MELISSA AZIZ

## A SPRING CHALLENGE TO REMEMBER

by Hannah Bergland, Spring Challenge Coordinator

This is the third year the AWCH has offered the Spring Challenge, a fun, virtual, wellness competition. After two years of running between America’s national parks, for 2023 we switched to our own continent for “AWCH Every Kilometer Counts: European Edition.”

This year, there were two teams totaling forty-seven participants: Team Helena Lange and Team Lida Gustava Heymann—both teams named after feminists in Hamburg’s history. Each team traveled 8,230 kilometers (about twice the width of the United States) and virtually visited eighteen national parks all over Europe.

The trail started in Ireland, then crossed into Great Britain and Scandinavia, then down through portions of eastern Europe, and back to Germany.

At each stop, an AWCH member or friend lovingly researched and composed short narratives about the history, topology, ecology, and other fascinating facts from each of these national parks. Without these volunteers, this Spring Challenge would not have been possible. A hearty thank you to everyone who contributed: Holly, Sara N., Stephanie, Regina, Hilary,

Michaela, Susan, Diana, Meredith, Mason Jane, and Jordan.

Now for the winners! Although it’s a team competition, we want to acknowledge the top three competitors who traveled the longest distances.

In third place was Holly Todd with 725 kilometers; second place was the son of Hilary Wang, Julian, with 751 kilometers. And first place goes to Jim Allen and his biking mania with 1,176 kilometers!

### FORTY-SEVEN COMPETITORS PUT IN REAL KILOMETERS IN A COMPETITION ACROSS EUROPE

It was an intense finish this year, with the teams racing neck-and-neck toward the end, but, ultimately, Team Helene made a brazen sprint for the finish. Congratulations, Team Helene!

This year’s prize was 100 euros to donate to any organization. Team Helene decided to dedicate the funds to a non-profit called MamaBaby Haiti, whose goal is to lower the maternal and neonatal mortality rate in Haiti, one mother and baby at a time. Thank you to our anonymous donors for the prize money!

Next year we plan to hit some of the most famous national parks in Europe, and we hope you will join us!

PHOTO BY SHELLY SCHOENESHOEFER



# A GLIMPSE INTO THE WORLD OF THE HOMELESS IN HAMBURG



by Shelly Schoeneshoefer

When I moved to Hamburg, I noticed individuals standing outside stores or going into restaurants presenting magazines and asking for money. I always said no since I didn't really understand what they were about and, since I couldn't speak German at the time, I couldn't ask. Once I found out what they were doing, and that it actually made a difference in their lives, I was hooked. You as a magazine buyer make an impact on that particular person's well-being by buying one, reading it, and then leaving it at another location, like at your doctor's office. The publishing company is called Hinz&Kunzt, and the magazine is staffed by people living on the streets of Hamburg.

It is a very well-written magazine, and each edition has its unique concept. For many years now, I have had a few favorite sellers, and when I have a chance, I buy a magazine from them or buy them a cup of coffee and hear their stories. Recently, a long-time AWCH member, Carol Battenfeld, told me that one of her favorite AWCH tours was of the Hinz&Kunzt facilities, and that it still remains strong in her memory.

So, with that in mind, one cold day in April, a group of AWCH members met Chris, the tour guide that Carol had met many years ago, and he took us on a journey into the world of the homeless in Hamburg. It certainly gave each one of us a new perspective on places we see every time we are in the city. We first visited the place where they can get medical help if they are injured or sick and receive a good meal on Mönckenburgstraße. Chris informed us that seventy percent of the homeless are men, twenty-eight percent are women, and two percent are children. These statistics are only for those who are legally registered in Hamburg, so the actual percentages may differ.

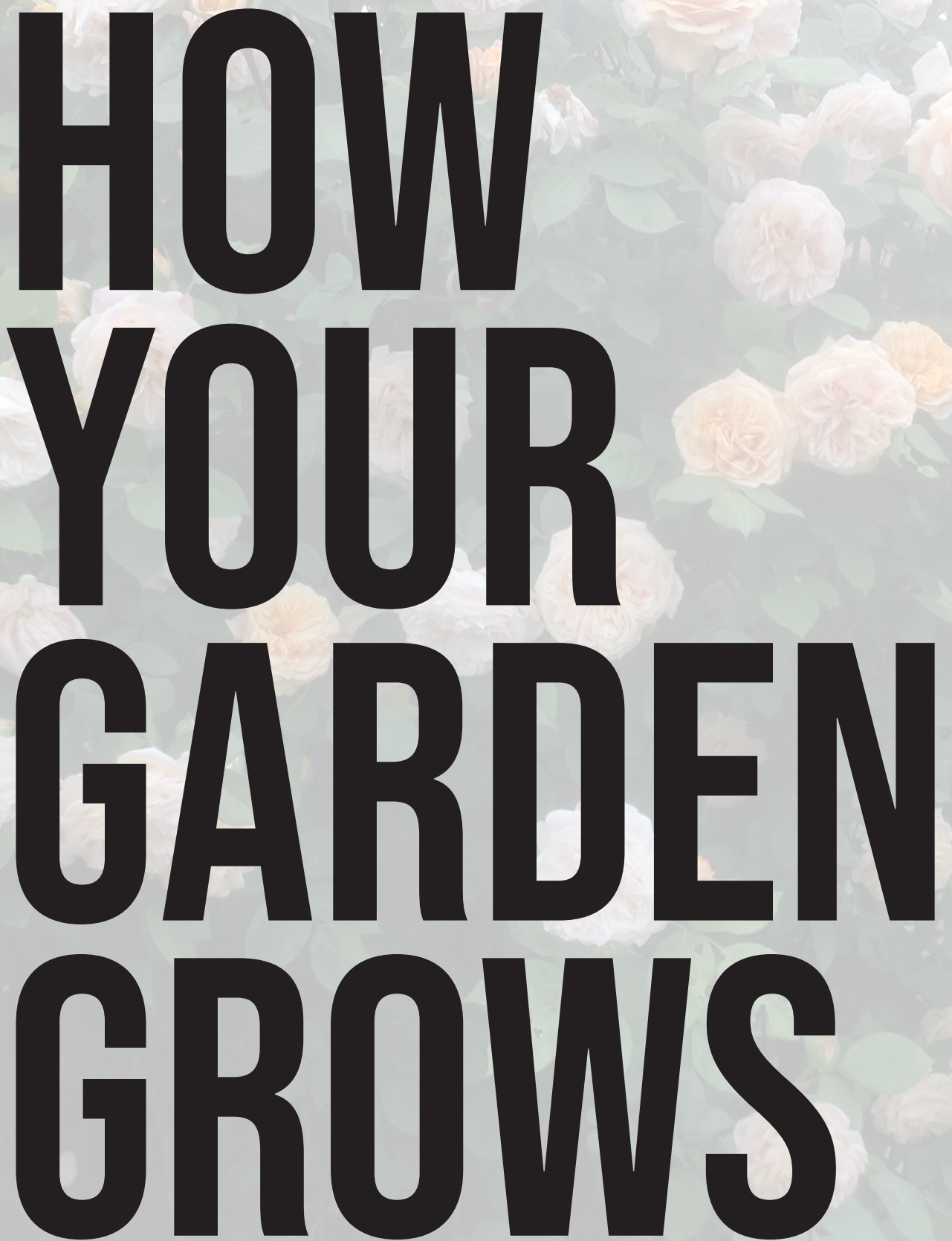
A building located near the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe and Hamburg's main public library is a place where drug users can go to have a professional caregiver provide them with clean needles. Chris told us this was very important toward keeping disease numbers low. The users have to bring their own drugs, and we

were shocked to see how many people were waiting in line. He then took us to another area where the homeless have mailboxes and to living spaces for disabled and homeless people who are drug- and alcohol-free. They also have a place where they can take showers and clean their clothes. It makes sense. How is a homeless person ever to get off the street when they don't even have a mailing address? It made me think of the ever-growing homeless population in the US and how much more we could do for them.

Chris then took us aside and told us his story, which was unbelievable. It started when he was placed in a catholic institute run by nuns after social services had determined that his parents were neglecting him and his brother. As the nuns were also abusive, he tried to escape several times, and, by age eleven, he was on the street. He managed to survive the winter there, and over time he also managed to make it to Hamburg, where he heard about this magazine. He didn't have an education, but this place provided an opportunity, and most of all the structure, that he needed to put his life together. Chris said this magazine gave him a reason to live.

The original idea for Hinz&Kunzt magazine came from England, but it has been a huge success story here in Hamburg. Chris said the most important thing was to buy the magazine and then leave it places for others to read, since they don't do any advertising. He said it was better to give money to the poor than to have them steal it from you. Don't think about how they are spending their money, because that's their business, not yours. An important point: legitimate sellers will be wearing a Hinz&Kunzt identification badge—look for it.

They are always looking for people to work on the magazine and are very happy to receive donations. Two-thirds of their funding is from donations and one-third is from magazine sales. If you ever have a chance to take a tour, it is definitely a worthwhile glimpse into the world of the homeless. Link: [info@hinzundkunzt.de](mailto:info@hinzundkunzt.de)



# HOW YOUR GARDEN GROWS

## HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

by Tracy Moede

I am not much of a gardener, really. Things tend to die when I am in charge of their care. That, and the fact that we have a small yard and there isn't much room for large projects, limits how creative I can be in the area of "how pretty can I make things look before they begin to fade." I am quite proud of our roses that grow just off our terrace. I get many compliments on them from the neighbors. I let them believe that I am in charge of these beauties when all I do is trim off the rose buds after they have bloomed. My husband, Dietmar, is the sole reason why we have grass that stays green, bushes that grow, and flowers that bloom. My job is weeding and mowing the lawn. This is a job I take very seriously, and I enjoy mowing in a different creative pattern each week in the warm months. It is quite Zen-like for me, and I relax and have a chance to let my mind wander.



PHOTOS BY TRACY MOEDE

I love hollyhocks and plant them wherever I see a spot that begs for some attention. They are so easy to grow, and they look great every year.

In the past three years, I have taken over two neglected patches of green around my house that actually belong to our town. Our Gartenamt is quite small, and there have been pleas for help in the past

and, little by little, I have taken over a few small areas. Just off our carport is the patch we call "das Dreieck" because, well, it is just a small triangle. It was nothing but a wasteland for dog poop and cigarette butts from passers-by, but I have filled it with a circle of small boxwood bushes. Because it is round, Dietmar has dubbed it "the doughnut" (I often think our family motto should be, "why call things by their proper names when a funny name will do?"). It is surrounded by a lot of ground-covering plants that spread. Easy to maintain with very little risk of me killing anything.

Another section is a large circle in our roundabout. Cars used the grassy area to park, and it was looking a bit grim. We contacted the Burgermeister, who was quite willing to provide some small bushes and grass seed if we took care of the mowing and watering.

Fortunately, the gardeners took care of the planting and reseeding and even installed large wooden you-can't-park-here pillars to keep the cars off.

One nice outcome is that the gardeners now know us, and we have a big job coming up of removing some dead but deep-rooted shrubs right up against our carport. I'm hoping they will help us out and bring their heavy equipment.

# SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST—PATIO STYLE

by Joana M.-O.

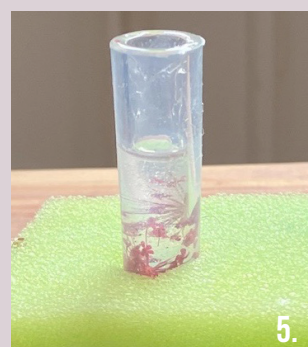
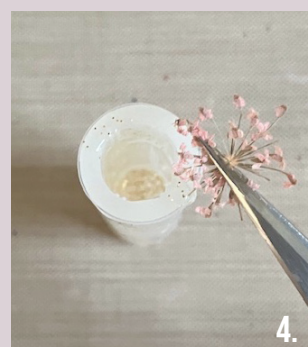
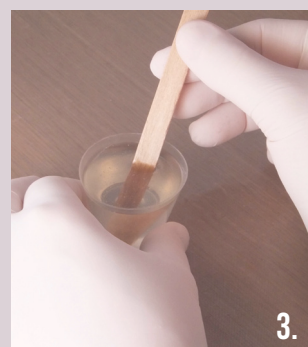
Growing up bookish and fair-skinned in Texas, I have a somewhat ambivalent relationship with nature and gardening. Yes, we had a yard, but it was mainly a place of heat, stinging and biting bugs, dry grass, and sunburn. Despite the heat, my parents had a vegetable garden.

Even though I took great delight in devouring sweet peas straight off the plant, vine-ripened summer tomatoes in our salads, and the bushels of basil my parents turned into pesto, I was never asked to help with any of the gardening chores. Perhaps for these reasons, gardening feels daunting to me, like something very difficult I would have to learn from the ground up (pun intended). When our children were small and in German daycare, it seemed like all the rage for families to get a Schrebergarten or allotment to spend their weekends gardening, surrounded by the gentler, more verdant nature of northern Germany.

That additional responsibility was not attractive to us, so my husband and I decided to make do with the patio that we were already lucky enough to have. We do like plants, but we have adopted a very “survival of the fittest” attitude towards our patio pots. When the weather gets nice, we tidy, sweep, and pull up the weeds growing up between the paving slabs (sorry, plants, I know you’re just trying to survive!). Usually there is an empty pot or two following winter’s trials, so we’ll buy an herb or a flowering plant we have been coveting. This year it is lavender, to remind us of trips to southern France.

We have also had a black-eyed Susan to remind me of home and a clematis, because I just like them, but they did not thrive. My husband enjoys watering and remembers to do it. I have been known to stick some seeds in pots and forget them, but there is no intentional gardening going on otherwise. This means our patio is mainly a home for hardy perennials, “weeds,” and volunteers. Those volunteers are one of my great delights. I learned the phrase from my father, who might come into the house with a flower, a zucchini, or even a butternut squash and announce, “We got a volunteer!” These gifts of nature usually sprouted on top of or near the compost pile.

Apartment living has frustrated my own various attempts at composting, but we do have a fledgling volunteer apricot tree. We found the pit, probably dropped by one of the neighbor children, on our patio. It had already split and showed a small sprout. We stuck it in a pot and hoped for the best. It survived this last winter, so we are optimistic it will not only survive our benign neglect but thrive for many years to come.





# CREATING FOREVER FLOWERS

Create a keepsake with treasures from the garden! Dried flowers, leaves, and other botanicals can be encapsulated in resin to become a unique piece of jewelry!



PHOTOS BY SARA NAUMANN

## SUPPLIES

- Two-part epoxy resin
- Mixing cup for resin and a stirring stick
- Toothpick
- Tweezers
- Dried flowers
- Silicone pendant mold
- Craft mat or parchment paper to protect your work surface
- Plastic gloves
- Bead cap with loop
- Silver chain with clasp
- Sandpaper
- Jewelry glue
- Optional: Fine clear or white glitter

by Sara Naumann

## STEPS FOR RESIN PENDANT WITH DRIED FLOWERS

1. Pour one part resin into the measuring cup.
2. Add an equal amount of hardener into the cup.
3. Mix thoroughly, stirring gently for about three minutes until all the striations are gone. Add a small amount of glitter to the resin, if desired.
4. Place the mold on a level surface. Use the stirring stick to drizzle a bit of the resin into the mold, filling it 1/3 of the way. Place a dried flower in the mold, using the toothpick to guide it into position. Add more resin and another flower, if you wish.
5. When you've finished filling the mold, let the resin dry undisturbed. With most resins, this will take about twenty-four hours. You can cut a small slit in the foam part of a kitchen sponge, or a foam packing piece, to create a more stable holder for the mold.
6. After the resin has dried, you can remove it from the mold. Adding a bit of warm, soapy water to the mold and twisting it back and forth will make it easier to remove the resin piece.
7. If the top of the resin piece is uneven, simply sand the surface with sandpaper or an emery board. Take care not to inhale resin debris—a mask is recommended.
8. Use jewelry glue to adhere the bead cap to the top of the resin piece; when that's dry, slide the piece onto a chain to make a necklace.

Note: Because this craft involves chemicals, please ensure you're working in a room with lots of ventilation. Tie back long hair, protect your clothes with an apron, and wear latex or rubber gloves. Please read the manufacturer's instructions carefully before mixing the resin. There may be some differences between manufacturers. The resin I use, ArtResin, works on a 1-to-1 ratio.

# GARDEN OF MEMORIES

by Mary Wienke

Plants speak to me. In my earliest memories, I am lying on the grassy slope of our front yard listening to the humming of the green quilt, speckled in white and purple, that lies beneath me. Only when I turned six, which required a doctor checkup to start kindergarten, did I discover I desperately needed glasses, and through new eyes, I learned that bees were humming around me. The bees were visiting little purple and white flowers interspersed among blades of grass. Trees had leaves. Flowers had petals. Birds had wings. The earth itself was teeming with armies of ants and other crawly creatures. A whole new world had opened up to me.

Some sixty years later, I still love to lie on the grass, close my eyes, and listen to the earth humming. In a way, it is how I ground myself. When I open my eyes, I feel a deep-rooted connection with all the flora surrounding me. My garden in Hamburg is a long way from our yard in Florida. Growing up in Orlando, our house was built on land that was a former orange grove, and fourteen orange trees remained. In spring, brilliant white orange blossoms perfumed the whole town (long before Disney turned Orlando into a bustling city that crowded out the orange groves). The smell of orange blossoms evokes a sense of my home there, just as other plants here in Hamburg summon memories. Here, our garden surrounds the house. We have solid evergreens, three towering white birch trees, and a variety of smaller shrubs and trees. The evergreens remind me of the summer I spent backpacking through the Rocky Mountains. The birch trees

recall the winding road into Lake Placid, New York, where I spent a year working for the Olympic Authority. We have a large red Japanese maple that speaks to me whenever I look at it for long. It was my mother's favorite tree. She would sit in the living room with her coffee looking out the window and report on the seasonal colors, but she most enjoyed the effects of Mother Nature's paintbrush. Her favorite stroke was just after a light rain: dozens

of water droplets would hang from each branch, and when the sun came through, she saw diamonds sparkling. I can hear her even now when the tree dazzles, in her childish joy, shouting, "Diamonds! Come see!" Diamonds drip from my own eyes.



PHOTOS BY MARY WIENKE

Plants are often given as gifts, which I always welcome. For many years, I held an annual tea party for the AWCH Film Group. Adele Riepe, who was very active with

*Currents* and the Film Group for many years, once brought a "magic hortensia." She laughed as she said she had no idea what kind of magic the plant had, but that she was told the flowers would change color over the summer. Over the years, the magic hortensia has grown and flowered in white, pale pink, and dark rose colors. It did indeed bloom where it was planted and always reminds me of just how lovely Adele was and how she graced us with the magic of her intelligence and charm.

Helen Parusel gifted me a perennial, which she called a balloon plant (Ballonblume). I planted it next to the Japanese maple and was totally surprised when, the next



## In a way, it is how I ground myself. When I open my eyes, I feel a deep-rooted connection with all the flora surrounding me.

year, it bloomed, because the Japanese maple had grown over it. I cut back the Japanese maple slightly. Then COVID-19 came and changed everything. Frequent trips to the garden stores ended. I maintained the garden and enjoyed the freedom of green space outside my door, often lazily plucking a few weeds. My friend Helen, however, immersed herself in creative writing classes. While I came through the lockdown with a nice garden, Helen wrote her first novel! Her book, *A Mother's War*, was published this spring. The novel centers on a forbidden romance in World War II German-occupied Norway while revealing the true nature of Nazi Lebensborn maternity homes. I highly recommend it to the Book Club! Caring for the balloon plant often reminds me of my first novel, which I have never finished.

Plants are also given in trade with other plant enthusiasts. Sharing cuttings or seeds is a great way to propagate our favorites and enjoy successes in other gardens. But there are many challenges to successful growth. A doe arrived one early spring and enjoyed our garden so much that she gave birth to twins under our huge rhododendron. The fawns lived

with us for six entertaining weeks until a large stag appeared and took the family away with him. The doe and her bucks returned each spring for several years. During these years, the deer deprived me of many flowers, and I had to settle on a few blooms that the deer found literally distasteful. This year, I am sad that no deer have visited, but glad that I have had gorgeous lilies three years after first planting some my friend Alana Leichert gave me. We have known each other for almost thirty years, and despite intervening life experiences, our friendship after so many years still blooms beautifully.

We also have sweet miniature roses unearthed from the family home of my husband's mother and aunt, which were grafted by his grandfather to produce red and yellow roses on the same bush. And standing tall is a flourishing ginkgo tree, a tribute to Frank Lloyd Wright from friends we traveled to Chicago and Airventure Osh Kosh with in 2011. There are so many memories in our garden that an afternoon walk with my cat Astra by my side can feel like watching short home videos. I very much look forward to planting some more memories.

# OPERA CLUB



## THE LATEST GRAND FINALE

by Elizabeth Reifke

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In early June, a large group of Opera Club participants relished the opportunity to attend a performance of Jacques Offenbach's final opera and greatest masterpiece, *The Tales of Hoffmann*.

We could not have had a more exciting start to this project back in March—namely, our lunch with Hoffmann himself, American tenor Matthew Polenzani (see previous *Currents* issue). Over the course of three monthly meetings (not to mention an extra all-in-one evening gathering), we explored the fascinating, dramatic, humorous, elaborate, etc. elements and background of this work in detail.

Finally, it was time for the big event. *Hoffman* is the most spectacular production in the Staatsoper's repertoire and was a great payoff for all of our time spent on this project, providing endless inspiration for discussion before, during, and after the show. What a joy to experience such an extraordinary masterwork in the company of so many fellow AWCH members!

Interested in attending the Staatsoper Hamburg's season premiere this fall, namely Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunow*? Following a historical introduction by our very own Anna Sizorina, Canadian mezzo-soprano Kady Evanyshyn will join us for a behind-the-scenes look at this developing production. We will also get the chance to talk with her and ask questions in a relaxed luncheon setting at a downtown restaurant.

INTERESTED IN  
ATTENDING THE  
STAATSOPER'S  
SEASON  
PREMIERE THIS  
FALL?

PHOTO BY ELIZABETH REIFKE



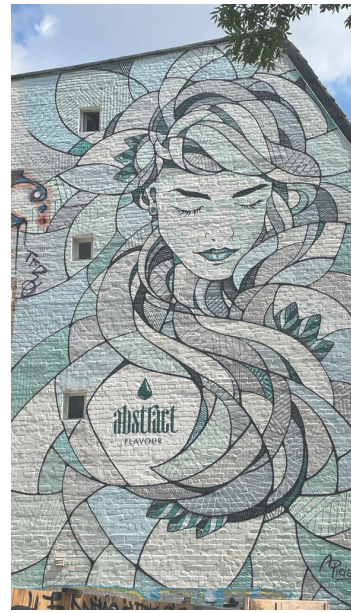
# HARBOR EXPLORERS

by Carol Strametz

In June, the Harbor Explorers visited the western part of the Elbe at Teufelsbrück and met for lunch at the Dübelsbrücker Kajüt. This restaurant sits on a pontoon on the Elbe and rises and falls with the tides. We ordered Hamburger specialties (e.g., Backfisch with remoulade) and enjoyed good conversation. Thank you Ann Gebauer-Thompson for bringing us together.

PHOTOS BY CAROL STRAMETZ





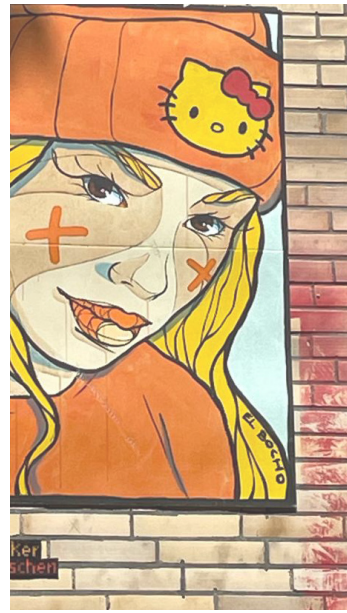
# THROUGH

## PHOTOGRAPHY CLUB

by Jordan Wagner

The Through The Lens Photography Group started up again after a winter break! Meeting in different locations in Hamburg once a month, the group toured Övelgönne in April, Schanzen street art in May, and St. Pauli/Reeperbahn street art in June. Whether you have a fancy camera or just your iPhone, come along for a yummy lunch, great walk, and the best conversations!





# THE LENS





# MAHJONG CLUB TURNS THREE

by Stella Kwong Riechmann

Our AWCH Mahjong Group is still going strong after its three-year anniversary. Although originally inspired by me, the primary teacher behind it is Leonie Hentschel, who has been playing this ancient Chinese game for over thirty years. She is patient and full of stamina, which is important for us since we are asking questions continuously. She repeatedly explains to us with a confident ease that someday we will be playing as well as she does.

The group started with about twelve members, including some husbands and young adult children, with many of them becoming enthusiasts. Each member hosts a Mahjong Night where a potluck dinner is served around 5 p.m. We then play the game with a break for a wonderful dessert. Currently we have about twenty members, depending on vacation time and work schedules, but we are always looking for new members. When there is a newcomer, we teach them from scratch and usually create a table of beginners and a table of more advanced players. Fun and laughter is the goal, and often we finish up with a small prize for the player with the highest score at each table. The dates are posted on the AWCH monthly activities calendar, and we look forward to seeing any one of you who would like to join.

I am also planning a fund-raising high tea for Hinz&Kuntz soon.



# DO YOU KNOW WHAT *PONG* MEANS?

by Nicola Robertz

Do you like to gamble? Then join the AWCH Mahjong Night, and we'll teach you how to play.

The third Saturday of the month is Mahjong Night. Each month has a different host but, every time, the group goes in on a potluck dinner and enjoys a social meal before the mahjong tables get set up and the gambling starts.

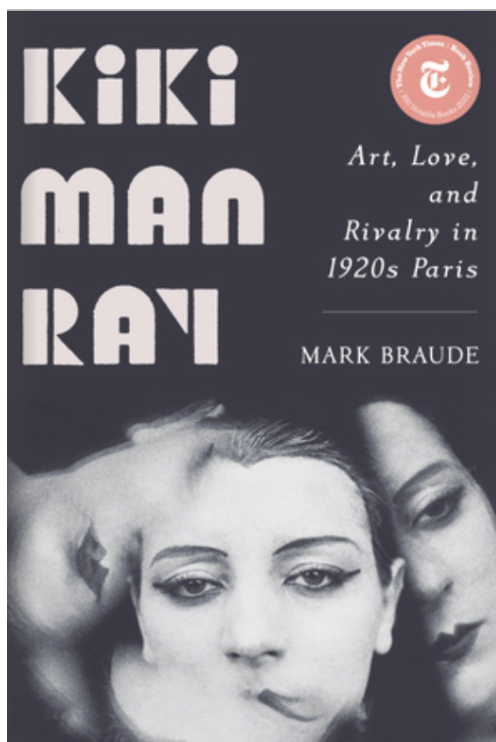
The players find each other easily at the different tables for the different levels,

from total beginners (joined by a helpful teacher) to advanced players. It takes a lot of luck to collect the same kinds of tiles to "mahjong" a game. But being the winner of a round doesn't automatically guarantee the most points. With the wrap-up of the round, the points get collected, and at the end of the night, our wonderful mahjong leader and organizer, Stella, hands out a little gift to the player with the most points.

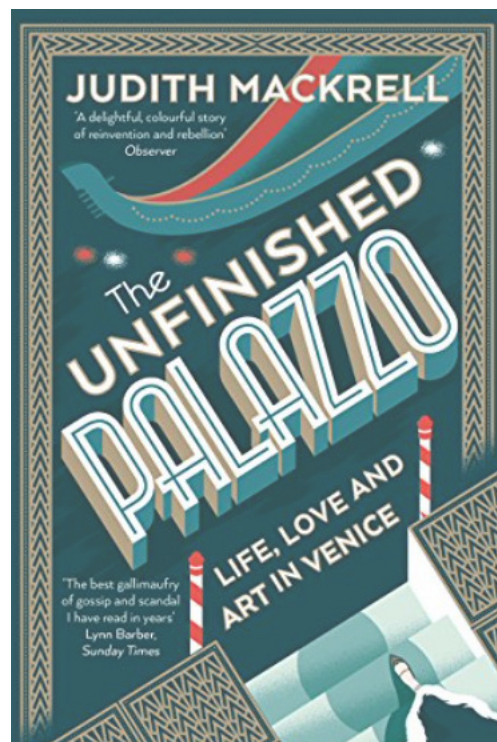
JOIN US THE THIRD SUNDAY  
EACH MONTH FOR AN  
EVENING OF FOOD & FUN!



# BOOK



BY MARK BRAUDE



BY JUDITH MACKRELL

# KISAB

by Carol Strametz

A small but enthusiastic group of book friends met in person over Venetian delicacies—shrimps, cicchetti, Aperol Spritz—and French desserts to discuss *The Unfinished Palazzo* and *Kiki Man Ray*. Both are nonfiction books that delve into the lives of prominent figures in the art world and their respective cities. While they share common themes of art, love, and rivalry, the central figures and narrative focuses are different. The consensus was that these would not be typical book choices for all, but that they were interesting reads.

*The Unfinished Palazzo* focuses on three wealthy, eccentric women: Marchesa Luisa Casati, Doris Castlerosse, and Peggy Guggenheim. Each owned the unfinished Palazzo Venier dei Leoni, planned as the grandest palazzo on the Grand Canal but only finished to the ground floor, the magnificent upper two floors appearing only on the architectural drawings from the eighteenth century. It is the palazzo—eccentric in its own right—that provides the historical thread to tie these three

women together. The social and cultural life of Venice outside of the Palazzo Venier does not play a major role in this book.

The Marchesa Luisa Casati, a rich heiress from Milan, acquired the palazzo in 1910. Luisa considered her life and herself a work of art and indulged in an extravagant and unconventional lifestyle. She donned extravagant and outlandish attire, which included a live cobra as a stole. Her lavish parties, featuring very eerie ostentations, attracted prominent artists, writers, and intellectuals. She was a muse and patron of art, but in the end she squandered her immense fortune and died poor at age seventy-six in London. The author discusses her possible affliction with Asperger syndrome, but she was also a reflection of the bohemian spirit of the early twentieth century.

Doris Castlerosse, socialite and actress, took possession of the palazzo in the summer of 1938. Doris moved in elite circles and was notorious for her romantic relationships with rich and powerful men, including Winston Churchill, as well as his son, Randolph. Her beauty and charm attracted many admirers, including the prominent artists Cecil Beaton, Man Ray, and Edward Steichen, who all photographed her, contributing to her legacy as a muse. Doris resided only briefly at the palazzo, leaving in 1941, when Italy was in the midst of World War II, but she did bring in an Art Deco ostentation and installed bathrooms. She died in 1942 at age forty-two of an accidental overdose of barbiturates, according to official records.

Peggy Guggenheim, American art collector and gallerist, bought the palazzo in 1948 and turned it into her home and also the renowned museum of modern art, the Peggy Guggenheim Collection. Her vision was to create a space where contemporary and avant-garde art could be displayed and celebrated. She transformed Doris's bathrooms into galleries and successfully pursued her vision to ensure the preservation and accessibility of her collection. Peggy was known for her eccentric personality and her various romantic and volatile relationships with artists and writers, including Samuel Beckett, Dunja Barnes, and Max Ernst. Sadly, her relationship with her children was complicated and broken. She died alone in 1979 at age eighty-one.

*Kiki Man Ray* explores the lives and tumultuous relationship of Kiki de Montparnasse (Alice Prin) and Man Ray, as well as their interactions with other influential artists in 1920s Paris. Kiki was a child of poverty, who arrived in Paris and found her way into artists' studios at age sixteen to become a model and muse. She also established herself as a nightclub singer, actress, and writer.



PHOTO BY CAROL STRAMETZ

Man Ray was an American surrealist known primarily for his avant-garde photography. They met in the early 1920s, and a passionate but conflicted relationship developed between them. Man Ray was possessive and jealous and couldn't accept Kiki's free spirit, but they loved each other and collaborated on artistic works that featured her. In late 1928 or 1929, their relationship ended. Man Ray never acknowledged Kiki and did not name her as the model in some of his most famous photographs (*Le Violon d'Ingres* and *Noire et blanche*). Man Ray went on to become a successful and influential artist, but Kiki's life spiraled into depression and addiction. She died poor at the age of fifty-two. Man Ray refused to comment and to attend her funeral. Her friends collected funds for a procession through Montparnasse but not enough to bury her in the Montparnasse Cemetery, where she had wished to be alongside artists and intellectuals. Sadly, she was laid to rest in the pauper's vault at the Thiais Cemetery.

*The Unfinished Palazzo* is captivating but repetitive. All three women of the Palazzo Venier were wealthy and had bad marriages, bad divorces, famous lovers, dresses by famous designers, portraits by famous artists, alienated children, and outlandish lifestyles. Although Kiki de Montparnasse was not wealthy and sewed her own clothes, she did have famous lovers and was a muse for famous artists. She had the *joie de vivre* to create her own persona, and Kiki Man Ray pays her homage.

## THE TAKES

Two easy-reading and well-researched books that bring to life four fascinating women who, in their own ways, influenced, propagated, and preserved the art movements of the respective eras in which they lived— from the turn of the nineteenth century to post-war Europe. Flamboyant women who believed in themselves.

Carol Harbers

During a time before Instagram and selfies, Mackrell's documentation of the "relentless self-absorption and unfiltered vanity" of three notoriously eccentric women who loved to display themselves was at least good for gossip (to gawk) at their parties and lifestyles in Venice, although I sympathized more with Kiki de Montparnasse in the second book, who was hardly born with a silver spoon in her mouth.

Venita Kaleps

# GERMAN LITERATURE IN TRANSLATION

by Michaela Anchan

*I'm reading my way through the Deutsche Welle list of the "Top 100 German Books in Translation" as a way to learn more about Germany (and all the European history I did not learn at school in Wellington, New Zealand).*

I'm not normally a big reader of war books, though that's changing as I try to learn more about German history. I chose to read these two World War I books from the list—*Storm of Steel* (1920) and *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1928)—within a short time of each other, and I'm not sure if it was the right idea. Being a memoir and a novel, they differ in many ways, but both also are intensely focused on the trauma and senselessness of war, and I found both pretty overwhelming and intense to read.

*Storm of Steel* by Ernst Jünger is a memoir covering his years as a soldier from December 1914 to September 1918. There are not so many other "characters" in this memoir—comrades are mentioned here and there—and instead, the focus is on battle action.

There are incredibly detailed descriptions of the fights and battles he was part of—all taken from a journal he wrote at the time. The detail is exhaustive—the types of guns fired, the names of missiles and grenades launched at him, the troop and battalion movements, the structure of the trenches, the march from one small French town to the next. It took me the first third of the book to get into the momentum of this, and it's only when he eventually moves close to Somme, and the great battle is in the distance, that I felt the words really gained depth and fluidity. His descriptions

of the battles are incredibly auditory: we can hear the thunder of battle all around and feel the overwhelming relentlessness of it and the absolutely traumatic horror and brutality. I found it hard to continue after the Battle of the Somme, where I know my own relatives died. Descriptions of digging trenches in fields where the bodies are layered deep between layers of dirt. The close escapes. The shock. Battle after battle. A village decimation. A withdrawal. A battle. It's hard to read—but of course it's supposed to be hard. That's the point.



PENGUIN CLASSICS



ERNST JÜNGER

STORM OF STEEL

The advantage of a novel is that the author can play with the arc of the story and can give you some "relief" from that brutality, and I found *All Quiet on the Western Front* an easier read because of this. The novel features a group of classmates who enlisted together, and their friendships and stories become the core of the story. Between the horrors of the trenches and the battles, there are episodes of goose theft, drinks with pretty French girls across a river, and a wife smuggled

into the hospital for a "conjugal visit"—there is story and drama and emotional connection that bring a relief from the war. It also, perhaps, gives the death and brutality even more resonance. The novel was the one that left me in tears, and one that still haunts me with images—I'll never forget Paul Bäumer hiding in that shell crater with the French soldier. But *Storm of Steel* is a historic record—and I will recommend it to my father, who is studying our family tree, including his grandfather's military records and his time at the Somme.

# ART GROUP

## THE F\*WORD OUT LOUD FRONT AND CENTER

by Diana Perry Schnelle

On Thursday, June 1, a group of about twenty of us had a fantastic tour at the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg. Julia Meer, curator of graphic art at the MK&G, led us through the exhibition *THE F\*WORD: Guerrilla Girls and Feminist Graphic Design*. Meer chose to curate this exhibition as a way of drawing attention to how few works by female artists are in the collection and the decisions that have been made historically about forming museum collections.

The Guerrilla Girls are an anonymous feminist art collective composed of female activists who have been exposing and critiquing sexism and racism within the art world for almost four decades. Formed in New York City in 1985, the Guerrilla Girls wear gorilla masks and use pseudonyms referencing female artists, such as Frida Kahlo, Käthe Kollwitz, and Alice Neel. The group stages “guerrilla” public actions and creates posters, billboards, and books in an attempt to disrupt the status quo and reveal discrimination and inequalities.

Meer explained to our group how she was able to purchase the entire graphic collection of the Guerrilla Girls’ work directly from the group, thereby providing them with money to continue their work. The tour was a wonderful look behind the scenes at curatorial choices in putting on museum exhibitions, as well as an exhilarating show of powerful—and often very funny—artwork. After the guided tour, a number of us had dinner nearby.



This *Frangbrötchen* represents the 400,000 graphic works in the MK&G Hamburg

The *crumb* represents works by women: **1.5%**

A MESSAGE FROM THE GUERRILLA GIRLS

PHOTOS BY SHELLY SCHOENESCHOEFER



GERHARD RICHTER, SEESTÜCK (BEWÖLKT), 1969. OIL ON CANVAS. STAATSGALERIE STUTTGART, ON LOAN FROM BADEN-WÜRTTEMBERGISCHEM KULTUSMINISTERIUMS SINCE 1972. CAT. RAIS. 235

# DOUBLE VISION

by Pat Frickey

Serendipity pure. What a delight it was being part of a private “insider tour” led by Dr. Brigitte Kölle at the Hamburger Kunsthalle in late June. Dr. Kölle, head of contemporary art, is the curator of the exhibition *Double Vision* featuring works by Vija Celmins (born in 1938 in Riga) and Gerhard Richter (born in 1932 in Dresden). Although Richter is well known in Germany and Celmins in the US, and both are still alive, and though they have never met and maybe never will, there are remarkable parallels in their themes, mediums, and philosophies. It was fascinating listening to Dr. Kölle explain how she went to New York to coax a reluctant Celmins to agree to the duo exhibition. Richter had agreed to it from the start. It was Dr. Kölle’s vision, inspiration, and determination that brought this brilliant and insightful exhibition all together. She glowingly described the works and techniques of both artists with nuggets of her conversations with Celmins sprinkled in. A special thanks to Diana Perry Schnelle for arranging the tour, and, as Dr. Kölle revealed as we were about to leave, she, too, was grateful to Diana who had assisted her with *Double Vision*’s English translations.



ALL ART PHOTOS BY MASON JANE MILAM | GROUP PHOTO BY PATRICK MÜNTE



VIJA CELMINS, FOUR STONES, 1977/2014-16. TWO FOUND AND TWO MADE OBJECTS. OIL ON BRONZE, WITH ARTIST'S PEDESTAL. THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO, PURCHASED WITH FUNDS PROVIDED BY JACK SHEAR

GERHARD RICHTER, OHNE TITEL, 1968. OIL ON CANVAS. MUSEUM WIESBADEN. CAT. REIS. 194-20



HOLLY TODD RECENTLY DIRECTED A FASCINATING TOUR OF THE EXHIBIT *GABRIELE MÜNTER: THE HUMAN IMAGE* AT THE BUCERIUS KUNST FORUM. HERE'S HOLLY IN ACTION AND THE LUCKY GROUP THAT GOT TO WITNESS IT ALL FIRSTHAND.



CHECK OUT HOLLY'S ARTICLE IN *CURRENTS* SPRING 2023 ISSUE ON THE AWCH WEBSITE

# THEATER

A LATIN EXTRAVAGANZA!

# GROUP



PHOTOS BY ©THORSTEN BAERING

Collien Konzert & Theater & Hamburg St.  
Pauli Varieté present

## VARIÉTÉ DE BUENA VISTA

by Becky Tan

A solitary trumpet opens over two and a half hours (including one intermission) of entertaining Cuban music: rumba, salsa, cha-cha-cha, mambo, etc. British author/director Toby Gough moderated the evening in English, introducing Cuban music from the 1950s “before the revolution,” when Havana was the Las Vegas of the Caribbean and Americans streamed over from Florida, (including myself, my parents, and my four siblings; we drove the whole way from Missouri, US, in 1955).

Later, in the 1990s, Cuban music took a new trend under the influence of jazz, which we also experience in this performance. Here we appreciate accomplished stars, ranging in age from sixty to over eighty years, who have a long history of performing worldwide. Pedrito Calvo, singer and Grammy winner (with the band Los Van Van in 2000), is eighty-one years old and supposedly has thirty-two children. Jesus “Aguaje” Ramos plays his trombone in the seven-member Buena Vista Social Club Orchestra and compares musical notes with Roldán Carballoso, who plays the lute guitar. Pianist Emilio Morales keeps the swing going, as does the excellent percussion. They all support not only the fantastic singers, but also the dancers who present Caleño-style dance, e.g., two elderly twins, Alonso and Fernando Caicedo, as well as youngsters, including two dancing couples in gorgeous costumes. There are also four acrobats from the Cuban National Circus.

You will recognize many of the over twenty songs, including “Guantanamero,” “I Put a Spell on You,” and “Sandungera.” This must-see performance will play in the Hansa Theater, downtown Steindamm 17, until September 2. Don’t miss it.



YASMANY BARRIENTOS &  
MAYLIN HERNÁNDEZ



LÁZARO ESCANDÓN VERÁ

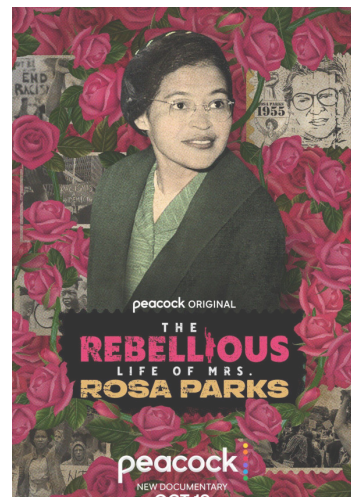


# FILM GROUP

## THE REBELLIOUS LIFE OF MRS. ROSA PARKS

review by Shelly Schoeneshoefer

Who was Rosa Parks? Was she a quiet seamstress or a symbol for freedom? Many in the audience had not ever heard of her, but once you discover who she was, you realize that she was one of those hidden figures whose recognition has been long overdue. Based on Jeanne Theoharis's award-winning book by the same title, this documentary shows how hard life was in Montgomery, Alabama. The documentary takes us through the civil rights movement, where we see archival footage from Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, and incidents like the trials of the Scottsboro Boys. The documentary builds the background of Parks's role as she dedicates her life to the pursuit of political activism. The film extensively researches her role in the Montgomery bus boycott, the most successful boycott in US history. This documentary is the perfect subject for schools, since it enlightens us on important characters that have played roles in American history. 101 minutes.



©PEACOCK

### THE REBELLIOUS LIFE OF MRS. ROSA PARKS



USA 2022  
OPENING TBA

DIRECTED BY: JOHANNA  
HAMILTON, YORUBA RICHEN

DOCUMENTARY INCLUDES:  
LISAGAY HAMILTON, ROSA PARKS,  
BRYAN STEVENSON, PATRISSE  
CULLORS, ERICKA HUGGINS



# THANK YOU

Many thanks for the invitation to an exclusive preview of this very special documentary from the Amerikazentrum Hamburg e.V., sponsored by the American Consulate General Hamburg and the US Embassy Berlin. Suzana Zhuta, vice president of the Amerikazentrum Hamburg e.V, introduced the documentary. We celebrated Juneteenth, which is now a national holiday, by watching this film. You may not have heard of this holiday, which is relatively new, but when we look back in time to June 19, 1865, we can see why it is so important: on this day, an order was issued by Major General Gordon Granger, a US Army officer and Union general in Galveston, Texas, stating that all slaves had been freed under the Emancipation Proclamation.

# THE YOUNG LOVERS

review by Marinell Haegelin



©ALAMODE FILM

## THE YOUNG LOVERS

IM HERZEN JUNG | LES JEUNES AMANTS



FRANCE | BELGIUM 2021  
OPENING AUGUST 3, 2023

DIRECTED BY: CARINE TARDIEU

WRITING CREDITS: SÓLVEIG ANSPACH, AGNÈS DE SACY, CARINE TARDIEU, RAPHAËLE MOUSSAFIR

PRINCIPAL ACTORS: FANNY ARDANT, MELVIL POUPAUD, CÉCILE DE FRANCE, SHARIF ANDOURA

Life can sometimes catch people by surprise. Take the case of French director **Carine Tardieu**'s newest film, *The Young Lovers*, when two unsuspecting people's lives are knocked out of sync, to audiences' delight. The screenplay evolved from Icelandic-French director-writer **Sólveig Anspach**, inspired by her mother's personal experience, working with screenwriter **Agnès de Sacy** before Anspach's death. Taking on the responsibility, Tardieu added her spin to the storyline with de Sacy creating an awesomely astute and warmhearted film made better by the fine-tuned, credible performances of **Fanny Ardant** and **Melvil Poupaud**.

When Pierre (**Poupaud**) and Shauna (**Ardant**) first meet at the hospital where he works, circumstances are stressful; she slips away, forgetting her photograph. They both lead full lives: he is a happily married oncologist; she is a happily retired architect. Fifteen years later, he almost misses his chance to return the photo when he, colleague and friend Georges (**Sharif Andoura**), and team are in Dublin, Ireland, meeting with a medical laboratory. This time, the circumstances are different; they are relaxed, have more time. Pierre and Jeanne's (**Cécile de France**) seven-year-old, Marcel (**Martin Laurent**), is a handful, while, at eighteen, Rosalie (**Sarah Henochsberg**) is too busy for them; initially Jeanne takes his news in stride. Cécilia (**Florence Loiret Caille**), herself experiencing a daughter's (**Olenka Ilunga**) leaving home, is intrigued, imagining which of Shauna's older friends it could be. Nonetheless, their twenty-five-year age difference confounds everyone. Just as Shauna's illness confounds their newfound nurturing relationship.

The inherent respect and empathy mark this film with grace and dignity seen too seldom on-screen, imbued by the cast's stellar performances; all the characters are likable, decorous, realistically unsettled. **Elin Kirschfink**'s cinematography and **Christel Dewynter**'s editing follow the nuanced timing in the depth of Poupaud and Ardant's rich portrayals, thus capturing the pathos entwined within, enhanced by the swells of **Eric Slabiak**'s soundtrack. Only at the end does *The Young Lovers* stumble, then end most abruptly. 114 minutes.

# JOY RIDE

review by Diana Perry Schnelle

When Audrey (**Ashley Park**), an Asian-American lawyer, must go to Beijing to close a business deal, she brings along her childhood best friend, Lolo (**Sherry Cola**), as her translator. The two friends have grown up to be very different—Lolo is an artist who makes explicit sex-positive artworks and lives in Audrey’s basement, while Audrey is successful and on track to become a partner in her law firm—but as girls they bonded over being the only Asian-Americans in their very white American town. As part of the trip, Audrey wants to connect with her old college friend Kat (**Stephanie Hsu**), who has become a famous actress in China. At the last moment, Lolo invites her quirky cousin Deadeye (**Sabrina Wu**) along for what turns into a crazy road trip. And, in the vein of many road trip movies, at the heart of this comedy are a lot of raunchy shenanigans and convoluted plot twists that test the women and their friendship.

What sets *Joy Ride* apart from the usual “buddies on the road getting into trouble” movie is the all-female Asian-American cast, and how the script highlights and then dispels stereotypes about Asian women and members of the Asian diaspora. The movie can be very funny; a hilarious bit about Korean pop (K-pop) bands is simultaneously silly and smart. But at other times the movie feels so aggressively irreverent and insistently naughty—in all senses of the word—that it can feel boringly repetitive in its insistence that these women are living their best lives. There’s a lot to like here, from clever self-referential comments about the importance of Asian representation and digs about inter-Asian discrimination, to a scene that shows how much extra work Audrey has to do to prove her professional place as a woman of color surrounded by white bros, to the endless positive vibes around sex, sexuality, gender, and finding out who you truly are while having a great time with your girlfriends. There are also hilarious performances: Sabrina Wu had me in stitches with their deadpan portrayal of Deadeye and Sherry Cola was an endless boss lady. But ultimately I found *Joy Ride* to be strangely tedious and trying too hard to be outrageous to effectively incorporate the sincere part of the story, which feels tacked on as an awkward afterthought. 95 minutes.



©LEONINE

## JOY RIDE



USA 2023

OPENING AUGUST 24, 2023

DIRECTED BY: ADELE LIM

WRITING CREDITS: CHERRY CHEVAPRAVATDUMRONG, TERESA HSIAO, ADELE LIM

PRINCIPAL ACTORS: STEPHANIE HSU, ASHLEY PARK, SHERRY COLA, SABRINA WU

# JEANNE DU BARRY

review by Shelly Schoeneshoefer



©WILD BUNCH GERMANY

## JEANNE DU BARRY JEANNE DU BARRY—DIE FAVORITIN DES KÖNIGS



FRANCE | UK | BELGIUM 2023  
OPENING AUGUST 24, 2023

DIRECTED BY: MAÏWENN

WRITING CREDITS: MAÏWENN,  
TEDDY LUSSI-MODESTE, NICOLAS  
LIVECCHI

PRINCIPAL ACTORS: JOHNNY  
DEPP, MAÏWENN, BENJAMIN  
LAVERNHE, MELVIL POUPAUD,  
PIERRE RICHARD

**Maïwenn** is a name we are unlikely to forget. Like Jeanne du Barry, Maïwenn certainly has not taken the conventional path in life to get to where she is now. Married at sixteen to the famous director/screenwriter Luc Besson, Maïwenn certainly has learned the tricks of the trade to produce one of the most expensive French films made in 2022. With its budget of \$22.4 million, *Jeanne du Barry* truly expresses the lavish atmosphere seen at the court of Versailles. Maïwenn was not only the director but was one of the screenwriters, producers, and, most importantly, she played the lead female role in this film about the controversial courtesan Jeanne Bécu at the court of King Louis XV. Maïwenn's decision to use **Johnny Depp** after all of his trials and tribulations seemed a bit risky, but he naturally made a perfect King Louis XV, who, in his late fifties, had clearly seen better times. Depp shows off his talent for speaking French which, unfortunately, will get lost when they dub the film into other languages. It seems that even at Cannes, Maïwenn created a scandal by spitting in a journalist's face, and one could wonder if the ghost of the headstrong Jeanne du Barry had come alive. Although Maïwenn seems to be anti-#MeToo movement, the audience shouldn't let that be an influence when viewing her film.

Maïwenn's elegantly handcrafted film captures the elaborate atmosphere of the royal court while giving us a view into the court's inner workings and its mannerisms. The film begins with a narration of her humble beginnings as the illegitimate daughter of a seamstress. Due to her legendary beauty and wit, she chose the best career suited for her, as a prostitute working in the salons visited by aristocrats. Through schemes and politics, she receives the opportunity of a lifetime, but with every opportunity there is a price to pay. Scandals intrigue, and satire is the perfect vehicle for reflecting a woman's point of view in this historical drama. 116 minutes.



# CATCH THE KILLER

review by Shelly Schoeneshoefer

It's New Year's Eve and Baltimore's skies are alight with fireworks as parties rage throughout the city. Suddenly the world turns upside down when a mass shooting occurs, and the city's celebration turns into full panic. The film footage literally turns upside down several times, bringing an unstable, queasy feeling of uncertainty, except that then we catch a glimpse of how a talented young police officer, Eleanor Falco (**Shailene Woodley**), can swim in almost any environment. It doesn't take long before the FBI's chief investigator, Geoffrey Lammark (**Ben Mendelsohn**), recruits her, since she seems to be a natural profiler—until he reads her file. Her questionable past gives her advantages that the others resent.

This psychological thriller moves at a suspenseful pace accompanied by loud, unexpected sounds. We go behind the scenes to where politicians get their way; the media plays its role, leaving the police to pick up the pieces of shattered lives. The film definitely has gaps in the storyline, but they can easily be overlooked due to the visual intensity of the film. 119 minutes.



©TOBIS FILM

**CATCH THE KILLER**  
**MISANTHROPE, TO CATCH A KILLER**  
★★★★☆☆

USA 2023  
OPENING AUGUST 24, 2023

DIRECTED BY: DAMIÁN SZIFRON

WRITING CREDITS: DAMIÁN SZIFRON, JONATHAN WAKEHAM

PRINCIPAL ACTORS: SHAILENE WOODLEY, BEN MENDELSON, JOVAN ADEPO, RALPH INESON, RICHARD ZEMAN



# FALLING FOR FIGARO

review by Marinell Haegelin

Whoever says opera is uninteresting has yet to see director **Ben Lewin**'s newest film, co-written with **Allen Palmer**, *Falling for Figaro*. An Australian at heart, Lewin's cast is full of Down Under natives delivering delightfully good and wonderfully nuanced performances. Whether cracking a witticism, struggling with a high/low note, or sidestepping something totally off-key, the accompanying timbre is majestic and majestically mangled music. Ah, such wickedness.

Millie Cantwell (**Danielle Macdonald**) has everything going for her: youth, intelligence, and good looks—besides a high-ranking position in investment management in London, a debonaire long-term boyfriend named Charlie (**Shazad Latif**), and a gorgeous apartment. Which is why, when Millie announces she is taking time out to follow her dream, everyone is struck speechless. Well, almost everyone; Charlie accommodates her choice. Seeking out friend Patricia's (**Vicki Pepperdine**) advice, she learns about 1) Scotland's fast-track contest, Singer of Renown, and 2) the renowned opera diva-cum-singing coach Meghan Geoffrey-Bishop (**Joanna Lumley**); Millie wrangles an interview. Meanwhile, nestled in a wee village in the Highlands, Meghan has been working a while with Max Thistlewaite (**Hugh Skinner**) for that very contest, and the local boy is the community's favorite. So when Meghan takes on Millie, naturally Max is bound to be perturbed. Millie even manages to gain the gruff hotelier Ramsay's (**Gary Lewis**) favor—no wonder she was plump for promotion. The question is, though, whose quest has the temerity to triumph.

This rom-com might seem unsurprising, but only if you miss the seriously minute gradations in the talented actors' portrayals. They swing easily from zesty (sometimes rebelliously so) characteristics to languid pensiveness, e.g., Lumley's reflective stares into a far-removed time/place. Lumley's artfulness is attested to by her supreme nastiness (fun to watch), while Macdonald, a mezzo-soprano indeed, adds charm and gracefulness. *Falling for Figaro*'s production values are solid, views of the Scottish Highlands breathtaking, and the music soaringly good fun worth hearing. 114 minutes.



©24 BILDER

## FALLING FOR FIGARO VERRÜCKT NACH FIGARO

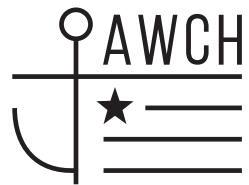


AUSTRALIA | UK 2020  
OPENING JULY 27, 2023

DIRECTED BY: BEN LEWIN

WRITING CREDITS: BEN LEWIN,  
ALLEN PALMER

PRINCIPAL ACTORS: DANIELLE  
MACDONALD, SHAZAD LATIF,  
HUGH SKINNER, JOANNA LUMLEY,  
GARY LEWIS



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