



AWCH **CURRENTS**

**CELEBRATING
THANKSGIVING**

**FEATURING
THE RETURN OF
LIVE THEATER**

SPECIAL THEME

**HOW WE DO
HOLIDAYS**

THE AMERICAN WOMENS CLUB OF HAMBURG, e.V.

Sept. – Dec. 2021 Vol. 37, No. III
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Editorial

Dear Currents readers,

Mason Jane: As ever, we close the year with the whirlwind of the holidays, but we here at *Currents* have had a little extra flurry and bustle to contend with: our stalwart Beatrice has turned the InDesign helm over to new member Stephanie M.A. Great to meet you, Stephanie, and thank you for stepping up! And now here's the brave woman herself:

Stephanie: I want to thank everyone for such a warm welcome to the group! I joined only a couple of months ago, but already I've met so many wonderful people and attended great events, including the book exchange and the Halloween party. At a recent new-members breakfast, I had a wonderful morning with a great group of women. After my first lonely year in Hamburg, I feel like a light switch has been thrown, and I can now see how lively the city really is!

I am also thrilled to join the *Currents* team and have been heartened by how lovingly the club members embrace the magazine. I've seen dozens of volunteers provide the writing, photography, proofreading, and even mailing of each issue. It's meaningful to a lot of you, and I'm honored to be a part of it.

My family and I moved here for my husband's job. We previously lived in Idaho, Oregon, and Arizona. My son is nine and learning German at public school. I gave up my job when we moved, but I now work part time providing administrative support for my sister's therapy practice in California. I'm also in daily German classes and making very slow but steady



AWCH members welcomed newcomers at a brunch at Ufer on November 12.

Photo by Stephanie M.A.

progress. I was a journalist for many years, working at newspapers and TV stations. Since I left the industry, I've kept up my skills by providing communication and newsletters for several non-profit groups where I volunteered.

I look forward to meeting more of you soon! Please feel free to reach out if you want to help with *Currents*, with AWCH communications, or to chat about anything else!

Gratefully, and with warm wishes for the new year,

Stephanie M.A. and Mason Jane M.

currents-exec@awchamburg.org

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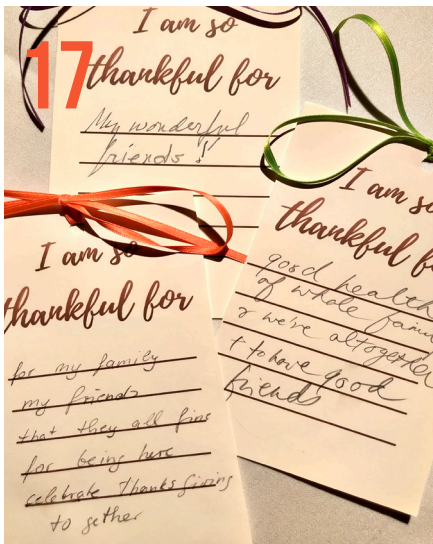
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GIVING THANKS, TOGETHER



FRIDAYS FOR FUTURE

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President's Message

I've always found this time of year somewhat magical. The days become incredibly short and crispy cold but the holiday lights, bustling Weihnachtsmärkte, and all those wonderful baked goods bring joy and warmth.

Thanksgiving is always the start of the holiday season—and I am so grateful that we were able to continue our tradition of an AWCH Thanksgiving dinner, despite the ongoing pandemic. The opportunity for so many of our members and their family members to sit together and enjoy a delicious turkey dinner was wonderful. Thanksgiving is a time to reflect on the things we have to be thankful for ... and despite a very long year full of uncertainties and isolation, no one was at a loss for things to name.

The decision to cancel the long-planned holiday party was not easy, but we are hoping our new Cookie Exchange platform and other small group events will keep us in touch over the holiday season. I, for one, am looking forward to staying at home and baking some cookies and sharing with others. Maybe COVID-19 has taught us how to enjoy the quiet times, too.

Our Region 5 FAWCO meeting in Vienna also happened just in time, as Austria went into lockdown a few days after this informative meeting. You can read some of the highlights of the meeting in the FAWCO pages. But, clearly, the opportunity to meet in person was the real highlight—and one is reminded how important this personal contact is and will remain.



Social Hours have provided a great opportunity to meet our many new members.

Fall has been a busy time for philanthropic activity in our club. Three major events—a flea market for Hanseatic Help, a pre-loved book sale for the Nandanvan Trust, and our annual auction for the FAWCO Target Project—were all successful and rewarding. Our members have also been busy sorting clothes at Hanseatic Help and sewing pillows and drainage bags for our From the Heart Pillow Project.

As the year comes to a close, the board members start actively preparing for our Annual General Meeting. This will be a virtual event again, ensuring that everyone has the possibility to "attend." This is also a time of retrospection—what have we accomplished this year? And what can we do better next year?

I look forward to seeing you all in January ... and, in the meantime, wish you all a wonderful and peaceful holiday season. with your family and friends.

My best,
Carol H.
AWCH president

NOTEWORTHY

From the Board

Your presence is requested at the

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)

of the American Women's Club of Hamburg e.V.
on Sunday, January 30, 2022, from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a virtual meeting
will take place via Zoom.

Only due-paying members will be allowed to attend and vote.
Please go to our website for more information and to register.

Contact Hannah at
membership@awchamburg.org for any further questions.

AWCH Coronavirus Protection Policy

We care about our members, especially during the COVID pandemic. All events and activities will follow the guidelines and recommendations set forth by the city of Hamburg and the latest version of our own **Coronavirus Protection Policy** (Schutzkonzept), which can be viewed and downloaded on our website (www.awchamburg.org/club-info/official-club-docs/).

You can read the current Hamburg guidelines for containing COVID-19 in detail in German on www.hamburg.de/verordnung. This page is always updated to show the current regulations. In English, a shorter version is available under www.hamburg.de/faq-english.

In light of the highly contagious Omicron variant, it is urgently recommended that everyone gets fully vaccinated, including boosters, as soon as possible.

Vaccinations: To get a vaccination for yourself or a child, sign up at your local doctor's office or place of work, or go to one of the pop-up sites in your own area: www.hamburg.de/corona-impfstationen.

Information about booster shots: This information changes rapidly, but check out these two websites: www.hamburg.de/corona-impfung and www.ndr.de/nachrichten/hamburg/coronavirus/Auffrischungsimpfung-gegen-Corona-in-Hamburg-Fuer-wen-und-wo,impfen726.html

Test centers: An interactive map of certified rapid test centers can be found at www.hamburg.de/corona-schnelltest.

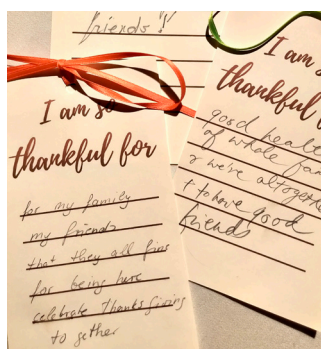
A Bountiful Evening of Giving Thanks

BY ERICKA S.

Our annual Thanksgiving festivities were held on Saturday, November 20, 2021, at the Hamburger Polo Club in Hamburg-Klein Flottbek. The theme, American Thanksgiving, was brought to life by AWCH club members Carol S., Sarah T., Susan B., and Carol H., who planned all the various elements of the program, including the festive décor, charitable giving, and delicious menu prepared by the venue staff.

Doors opened at 4 p.m., and Monika M. and Melanie M. got right to work handing out nametags and checking in members and their guests according to the 2G+ protocols set in place. Once the majority of people were seated, our club president, Carol H., welcomed new club members from 2020 and 2021 and special guests Yumi A. (honorary AWCH president) and her husband, Consul General Darion Akins. All were happy to hear from Consul General Akins, who brought greetings and anecdotes about his large family's rich holiday traditions being continued by his 30 to 40 aunts and uncles and innumerable cousins back in Texas. He also shared a touching moment as he mentioned that Hamburg has been the first assignment where all three members felt at home. Many of us can relate, I'm sure!

The turkey buffet was opened to nearly 80 guests, including 14 children, and people excitedly moved back to their tables to enjoy the meal on their loaded plates, share a



few toasts, and reconnect with friends at-long-last seen. Before dessert was served, Susan B. and her charming daughter Vivian (8) read selected sentiments shared by members on the "What I am thankful for..." cards placed at each seat—a tradition many have come to anticipate and love in sharing their gratitude.

This year was a particular success, considering that looming threats of COVID-related lockdowns nearly cancelled our celebration. The Hamburger Polo Club provided a new location for us all to eat, drink, and be merry, while parents conversed and children explored the grounds outside. Everyone



who walked into the dining area passed by a bountiful donation to our annual canned food drive for the Hamburger Tafel. And bid winners had another opportunity to collect their treasures from our recent charitable event, the AWCH Online Auction for Hope.

Special thanks go to all the women who organized this heart-warming and successful event, and to Carol S., who provided the recipe for the

stuffing and sweet potatoes. Thanks are also in order for the numerous members who added to the cornucopia of food donations to the Hamburger Tafel. Your thoughtful donations were hand-delivered by Holly T. and Susan S.-W.—danke schön, ladies! All in all, it was a beautiful way to come together and ring in the holiday season. Happy holidays to you!

Photos by Jordan W. and Susan B.

Witches, Vampires & Lots of Fun

AWCH Families Celebrated Halloween Together at a Pumpkin Farm

BY MARIE R.



This year's Halloween party was an outdoor event at Hof Bartels in Rade, about a 20-minute drive south of Hamburg. Thank you to Jennifer L. for discovering this American-style farm with a pumpkin pyramid, corn maze, squash and gourds galore, and pumpkin-carving activities. Farmer's golf is played with clubs shaped like clogs on sticks with large balls on a larger field with a creative variety of holes.



Fifteen AWCH families clad in spooky and/or funny costumes enjoyed playing a round of golf, nibbling on fresh cupcakes, and warming up with a cup of coffee or two. Congratulations to Callie R. and Timo for Best Adult Costumes and to Safran and Alois for Best Kid Costumes (go vampires!). Pat B. and Marc and Amy won the grand prize for Best Family Costume. Thank you to Shelly S. for creating the spooky and sweet yoyo trophies and to Sara N. for putting together cute trick-or-treat bags.



After the golf and the costume contest, a few members braved the maze while others explored the grounds, sampled goodies like pumpkin waffles, or shopped at the farm

market. The fresh autumn air and country setting made for a great break from the city and a fun Halloween event for the entire family. Thank you to all who organized and participated.



Photos by Susan B., Callie R., and Holly T.



AWCH Tours Altona's Jewish Cemetery

Local Landmark is a Somber and Fascinating Piece of History

BY DIANA S.



On Sunday, November 7, a group of almost 20 AWCH members and partners gathered for a tour of the Jewish Cemetery in Altona. We were very fortunate, both because we (mostly) avoided a dismal forecast for rain and wind, and also because we had a wonderful tour guide, Irina von Jagow, who is the head of the Stiftung Denkmalpflege Hamburg. Irina's tour was in English and covered much of the history of the cemetery, which, we discovered, is actually two cemeteries in one location: an Ashkenazi cemetery, founded by Jews from Germany, Eastern Europe, and Russia, and a Sephardic cemetery, founded by Jewish immigrants from Portugal. Irina pointed out the important section of the grounds dedicated to famous and revered rabbis, and she described in detail the symbolism of images and text on the tombstones. I found it very

interesting to learn that Jewish cemeteries, unlike many Christian cemeteries, are not intended to be used as public places for reflection, and when they took over supervision of this cemetery, the Stiftung Denkmalpflege had to agree they would not add benches or otherwise encourage visitors to use the grounds as a park.

The Jewish Cemetery in Altona is a somber yet absorbing place to learn about the history and burial traditions of the different groups of Jews who have lived in Germany, as well as about the historical relationship of Altona to Hamburg. I hope we'll organize another tour in the future and highly encourage anyone who missed this one to join.

Pre-Loved Books Find New Hands

October Fundraiser

Aids Nandanvan Trust

BY DIANA S. & ULRIKE H.

On the afternoon of Saturday, October 23, AWCH member Michaela A. hosted a book sale at her home in Winterhude. Many club members donated hundreds of pre-loved English books, which Carol H. and Michaela organized into various categories, ranging from thrillers to children's books. Club secretary Sara N. helped set up and break down the event, and those of us attending were welcomed with lovely snacks provided by Carol S. and had plenty of time to browse the fantastic selections and to catch up with friends in a beautiful setting.

The event was a fundraiser for the Nandanvan Trust in Maharashtra, India, which the club has been supporting for the last decade. Ulrike H. came all the way from Berlin to be at the event, and she gave an inspirational presentation about the work that the trust does to promote a strong sense of community and improve education and health for some of the poorest people in India.

The primary aim of the trust is to increase agricultural productivity by restoring the natural local resources through water-



AWCH members browsed and socialized at Michaela A.'s home. All photos by Sara N.

shed projects. Since 2011, numerous FAWCO grants have been awarded to Nandanvan projects through the initiative of the AWCH: founding a village in 2011 and starting a watershed project with help from the villagers; constructing a well in 2018; building a kindergarten in 2019; planting cashew nut trees in 2020; and constructing a grain/seed storage building in 2021. All of the projects aim to help farmers develop the land and to help



their children achieve a promising future. The book sale was a huge success and raised €905 euros for the Nandanvan Trust—and many members left with plenty of new books to keep them company through the grey Hamburg winter!

The entire event was a smash hit due to the hard work and very generous donations of so many club members.



Hanseatic Help & You

“

Notes from a new volunteer

I had been meaning to volunteer at Hanseatic Help for a long time, and I guess a few factors held me back: misguidedly, I thought the location was far in the west, and also, I felt a little intimidated going alone. When I heard on short notice that a group from AWCH was getting together on a Sunday to help, I decided it was a good time to volunteer and to get my family to come with me. And checking the map, I realized the location was much more convenient than I thought—by the fish market on the harbor.

We had such a great time, the kids, husband, and I! We arrived to a greeting from the thoroughly organized and enthusiastic Jennifer L., who sorted us with registration, hand hygiene, and a locker for our bags, and then we dived into work. From about 2 until 4 p.m., we sorted and folded kids' winter jackets, women's jumpers, and jackets by size. It was a real eye-opener to see how much work it takes to sort all the clothes donations, and how it really is best to give only things of high quality. My kids (8 and 12) were able to participate easily and felt useful. On the way home, we talked about how good it was to see the other side of things—and what happens to the “bag of donations” that gets put together every six months or so at our house. It also made me think about all the people who would miss out on warm, good-quality clothes if Hanseatic Help wasn't around to facilitate this important work. We feel very thankful for finding an accessible and helpful service project for our family to participate in, and we hope to be regular fixtures on the Sunday team!

— Michaela A.

”



Donate Warmth Today!

Winter is approaching, and temperatures are dropping. This means many people are in need of winter clothes, especially for men. If you have winter items in good condition to part with, Hanseatic Help is urgently collecting the following items:

- warm, sturdy clothing for men and women: jeans and joggers, sweaters and hoodies, casual jackets, rain jackets, and especially thick winter jackets.
- children's clothes, especially small sizes (50-56, 62-68), jackets and tops, winter jackets, triangle scarves, baby towels, sleep sacks, cuddly blankets
- sturdy winter shoes, boots, and sneakers for adults and children
- long underwear and gloves
- backpacks
- warm sleeping bags, sleeping mats, blankets, and tents

They gratefully accept the following items as new only:

- underwear and socks (urgently needed)
- bedding
- hygiene articles: razors, shaving foam/gel, deodorant, toothbrushes, shampoo,

shower gel, hairbrushes, pads, tampons, panty liners, wet wipes. Also happily accepted in travel sizes.

What they do not need: blouses, dresses, short skirts, evening wear, suits, dress shirts, fur coats, sandals, dress shoes, fashion accessories, or handbags.

Drop off your donations at Hanseatic Help (Grosse Elbstrasse 264 in Altona) on Tuesdays, Thursdays, or Fridays from 10–6 and Saturdays from 10–4. Or donate at the following: January 15, 11–7, at AEZ mall in Poppenbüttel and January 29, 10-6, at Kampnagel Cultural Center, Jarresstr. 20, Winterhude.

—Jennifer L. and Holly T.





Diversity Unites and Enriches Us

BY HOLLY T.

Our local charity Hanseatic Help’s first live event since the pandemic began was an inspiring podium discussion in German on integration and volunteering.

Speakers representing four Hamburg volunteer-supported organizations talked about the challenges of providing a weekly café for the homeless and others (in addition to their better known GoBanyo “shower bus”), offering pop music and art workshops for young refugees and locals, connecting senior citizens with younger people in cultural and social activities, and procuring work opportunities in Hamburg firms for the disabled.

You can watch the event, which took place in October, online at facebook.com/HanseaticHelp/videos/353476143194199



Photos by Jennifer L, Shelly, S., and Holly T.

Fun times at the flea market!

To raise funds for our local charity, indefatigable Hanseatic Help enthusiast Jennifer L. organized a stand for AWCH in September at the Museum der Arbeit’s popular flea market in Barmbek. With iron lady Shelly S. clinching high prices for special pieces at one end of the stand, Jennifer snared buyers with low prices, moving lots of the rest at the other end. These seasoned sellers were supported by a team of seven other members, and fun was had by all. They earned a whopping €530, which Hanseatic Help gratefully accepted. These funds will again go toward purchasing underwear for needy women and children. Thanks so much to all who donated items or lent a hand!

-Holly T.



Living the SDGs in Vienna

Hamburg Members Traveled for FAWCO Conference

FAWCO

Inspiring Women Worldwide

BY CAROL H.

Finally! From November 12 to 14, representatives from the nine FAWCO clubs in Region 5 (Germany and Austria) were able to once again meet in person, this time in the beautiful city of Vienna with all its splendor as the former seat of the Hapsburg Empire. Fifty women attended the meeting, including members of the FAWCO board and The FAWCO Foundation board. The host team, Working for Global Women (headed by Bev Bachmayer) of the International Women's Association (AWA) of Vienna, went all out to plan a meeting with an excellent mixture of social activities and city tours, informative lectures, and interactive sessions. The meeting also served as a small ninetieth birthday party for FAWCO itself, as we celebrated the accomplishments of this vibrant international organization.

Flanked by social events and dinners, the conference day itself was packed with eight hours of information, networking, fundraising, and fun. FAWCO President Emily van Eerten emphasized the group's ability to bring about positive change and introduced the new Mapping Project, which visualizes the extent of FAWCO's charitable work over the years. Target Program Chair Tharien van Eck reported that the organization had met its goal of raising \$140,000 in support of FAWCO's current Target Project S.A.F.E. in Tanzania, giving an update on the project overall. My-Linh Kunst recapped the three intense days of programs presented at the Human Rights in Focus virtual event last month. Stressing the important international work that FAWCO does, UN Liaison



Members of various FAWCO clubs in front of the Vienna Hofburg during a city tour.

Laurie Richardson reported on FAWCO members participation at the UN Climate Change Conference COP26 in Glasgow. FAWCO Foundation President Barbara Bühling gave an overview of the projects and the grants that have been awarded to Region 5 clubs (Hamburg can be proud!) and also announced this year's Development and Education Awards.

The interactive exercise was a great networking activity, in which we moved into groups to discuss two questions given to each group. What an excellent strategy to share information about our club's

activities, plans, and best practices—and, of course, the long-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our programs.

But it was the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that were the center topic of the meeting. The Working for Global Women team engaged three excellent women speakers:

Alena Sirka-Bred, head of Vienna's Department of European and International Affairs, showed how the city administration had addressed sustainability even before the SDGs were initiated by introducing its Smart City concept. The framework and

goals are monitored closely and updated to meet their goals of high quality of life, social and technical innovations, and conservation of resources. The success can be measured by the impressive top-ranking status Vienna holds for many titles, including “World’s Greenest City,” “Highest Quality of Life,” and “Best City for Start-Ups.”

Ursula Bauer, from the City of Vienna’s Gender Mainstreaming Department, drew on the fictional image of a single Viennese mother and her daughter to outline the services available to help women live independent and self-determined lives (SDG #5). The commendable progress and transparency of these services can be attributed to the federal constitutional requirement for all municipal departments to make public their budget allocations for gender relevance and outline measures to reduce discrimination.



Karin Kuranda, of SDG Watch, analyzed Austria’s SDG record. While the country is a leader in sustainable development, it falls short on climate and sustainable consumption and, like many other wealthy nations, scores poorly on “negative spillover” (the impact its actions have on other, less affluent countries). This presentation helped us put global achievements in perspective.

AWCH had five representatives attending the meeting: Tracy M., (vice-president of Communications for The FAWCO Foundation), Susan S.-W., Anna S., and Jordan W., as well as myself. This was my first FAWCO meeting, and I was happy I attended. It is one thing to sit in Zoom meetings for the various FAWCO events or to flip through their informative newsletters and website...but to meet the women running the organizations, as well as the presidents, FAWCO reps, and members from other clubs, was truly a rewarding experience. big thank you to all members of the Working for Global Women team of the AWA Vienna for such an impressive meeting.

Inspiration in Vienna

‘It is important for many people to do things imperfectly, rather than for a few to do them perfectly’

BY ANNA S.

Meeting in Vienna was inspiring in many ways. Vienna is a fascinating global city that combines history and modern trends: it is ranked first of the 10 greenest cities, is one of the 231 cities that offers a high quality of living, and is one of the 25 best cities for startups in the world. It holds the second position in “Prosperity” and holds the Inclusive City Seal and Award. I was impressed by the approach to gender equality in the City of Vienna administration and the “Smart City” concept. Smart City Wien aims at a “high quality of life for everyone in Vienna through social and technical innovation in all areas, while maximizing conservation of resources.”



Apart from global issues, we had numerous discussions in smaller and larger groups about issues in different clubs. In our small group, we handled a topic of inclusion, a trend for our times. When we talk about inclusion, many of us think about including others. Inclusion starts with us and flows within us. And we, women, from different cultures and continents, know inclusion has its roots in a warm feeling of belonging.

I asked myself how FAWCO manages to provide the feeling of “collective positive energy,” as one of my friends called it, to all attending its conference. One of the guiding principles is, “It is important for many people to do things imperfectly, rather than for a few to do them perfectly.” Being thankful, sharing appreciation, and acceptance is a great power that can unite many different individuals. Gratefulness is not about loving every little detail; it is about appreciating the effort members make to turn our world into a better place. Think about women who worked on the board during the last years, who led activity groups, members you met at social events

virtually and face to face. Remember those whose presence made you feel good, imagine their faces and their smiles, write a note thanking them for their effort and giving the details of what appealed to you, what you found particularly good, what you want to have more of. Being thankful will enhance the connection and a sense of belonging in the AWCH community.



Special thanks to AIWC Düsseldorf for SDG puzzle pieces.

A Talk with Author Abi Daré

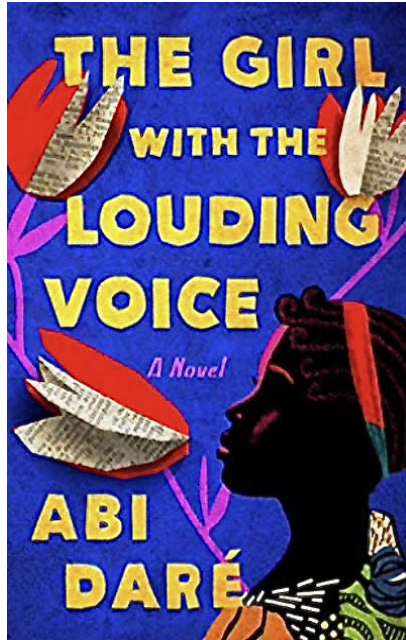
Her Novel Addresses Empowerment of Nigerian Women

BY PAT N. & CAROL S.

The FAWCO Education Team invited all the members of FAWCO to join a Zoom discussion with author Abi Daré about her bestselling novel *The Girl With the Louding Voice* on Sept. 8, World Literacy Day. The book was chosen because of its focus on the significance of education for the empowerment of women. But it covers a series of other topics as well: poverty, culturally embedded oppression and abuse of women, the power of language, human rights, human trafficking, domestic slavery, and domestic abuse.

The main character of Abi Daré's book is Adunni, a young girl from a rural village in Nigeria whose mother has instilled in her a passionate desire to receive an education and educate other girls as well. Her ambitions are thwarted when she is forced into marriage with a much older man to save her family from financial ruin. Through a series of life-and-death adventures, she manages to escape from her marriage but then is sold into domestic servitude to an abusive woman in the city of Lagos. Despite extremely adverse circumstances, Adunni continues her pursuit of education. With the help of a neighbor, Ms. Tia, who has been educated in England and understands the power of education for women, Adunni wins a scholarship to a girls' school that places her on the threshold of realizing her dreams.

We experienced Abi Daré as an attractive, self-confident, and highly motivated young writer. In contrast to Adunni, Abi was fortunate to have been born into an educated family interested in furthering her education. Her mother was the first female professor of taxation in Nigeria and even wrote a book on taxation while raising her daughter as a single mother. Abi was motivated to create a truly memorable character in a master's class in creative writing



at Birkbeck College of the University of London. Thus arose the spunky, cheerful, and highly resilient character of Adunni,



who tells her story in first person, speaking a language—based on English, Yoruba, and Pidgen English—that Abi created for her. The figure is based on experiences Abi had growing up in Nigeria, where young girls from poor families often have to forgo schooling in order to earn money for their families as domestic laborers. In Nigeria and elsewhere, their plight seems to be invisible to their wealthy employers, who simply take them for granted. For Abi, it did not suffice that Adunni have a loud voice but rather a “louding” one that can extend to others in the world. As Abi Daré explained, her book seems to have opened the eyes of at least some employers to support the education of servant girls. Abi also discussed how her book emphasizes the importance of acts of kindness in making differences in a person's life.

The Girl With the Louding Voice clearly promotes the FAWCO mission “to increase awareness of global issues in educa-

Our Take

Venita K.: Even though I thought many parts of this book seemed predictable, the fast pace shined a light on the plight of underage girls in Nigeria robbed of an education by an early marriage in their village...only to seek escape to the city where it is even more dangerous for a 14-year-old to be a housemaid. A hopeful look at what hard work and kindness can achieve, even in the darkest circumstances. That one “giving a break” to someone can make all the difference.

Marilyn R.: I've spent the pandemic at Zoom readings by authors on a weekly basis (for courses I teach and to keep up with various authors I translate). I have a very high bar, but this event did not disappoint. Author Abi Daré was clearly invested in giving us a nuanced and genuine experience, and she responded to our questions with thoughtful and considered replies that belied the fact that she's probably answered similar questions countless times over. I came away feeling inspired to re-read the novel in order to see it anew through the lens of the details she mentioned.

Pat N.: It was an interesting session. What a confident and eloquent young woman Abu Daré is! I wasn't really that enthused about the book, a gripping story well-told but not a literary sensation. However, after learning what went into the book and the effect it has had in Nigeria, I am humbled. Good for Abi, and good for FAWCO for picking up on it.

tion” and its commitment to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal #4: Quality Education by 2030. We can look forward to another such session in 2022.



Photo by Jordan W.

Blue Bird of Happiness

Every year since 1995, FAWCO members throughout the world have contributed their creativity and sewing talents to the FAWCO Friendship Quilt. This international collaboration has resulted in a unique collection of stunning handmade quilts, which have all been quilted by Roberta Zee of the Munich International Women's Club. The greatly coveted finished product is raffled each year at the FAWCO annual conference to raise money for the FAWCO Foundation's programs and charitable causes.

AWCH Contributors

Carola A.
Shelly S.
Susan S.-W.
Anne C.
Tracy M.

Online Auction Raised Nearly €3,000

Members Donated Dozens of Items, Services, and Gift Certificates

BY CAROL S.

Thank you! Thank You! Thank You! The Online Auction for Hope from November 6–14, 2021, was a huge success, raising €2,689 for the 2020–2022 FAWCO Target Project S.A.F.E.



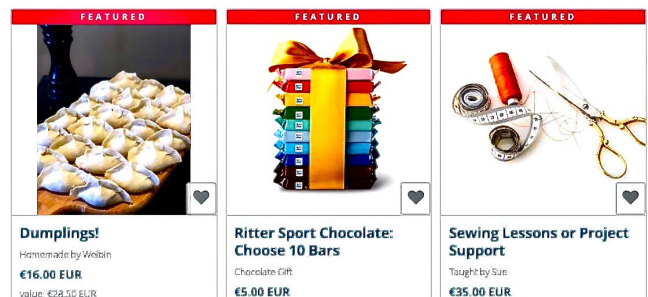
**HOPE FOR
GIRLS & WOMEN**
Tanzania

What is S.A.F.E.?

Safe Alternatives for Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Elimination

- S.A.F.E. is run by Hope for Girls and Women in Tanzania—an organization advocating an end to FGM and other harmful practices, such as intimate partner violence and child marriage, in Tanzania.
- S.A.F.E. aims to protect the rights of girls and women by providing education to girls and the community at large and by increasing the capacity of safe houses.
- S.A.F.E. provided 434 girls accommodation at two safe houses over the December 2020/January 2021 cutting season, and 383 girls were safely reconciled with their families.

To learn more, visit the FAWCO website, www.fawco.org.



Heartfelt thanks to all those who generously donated a total of 89 items.

AWCH Members: Ann G.-T., Carol H., Carol S., Charis H., Chris L., Christine R., Cornelia T., Emilia J., Hannah B., Holly T., Irmgard Z., Jess M., Jordan W., Leonie H., Nancy S., Nancy T., Sandra S., Sarah T., Shanan R., Shelly S., Stella K.-R., Sue B., Teresa P.Y.L., Tracy M., WangDi S., and Weibin L.

Sponsors: Kostas Oreopoulos and Katy Behrmann-Oreopoulos of Coco-Mat, Linda Pampallis of L'Afrika, Hillel Lowinsky of Lowinsky's N.Y. Coffee & Tea, Miniatur Wunderland, Morgan R. of Rudolph's Restaurant, Weinhaus Cord Stehr, photographer Peter Thomann, and artist Jutta Rika Bressemer.

Last but not least, a big thank you to all the enthusiastic bidders who made this auction such a success!

FAWCO FOUNDATION



The Foundation Educations Awards Program is open to all FAWCO and FAUSA members and their children, regardless of nationality. Nine awards totaling \$37,000 will reward recipients on the basis of academic excellence and all-around achievements.

To be eligible, you must have been a member of a FAWCO club by September 27, 2020.

Check the FAWCO Foundation website for the application. You will need to start your application process now to meet the January 27, 2022 deadline.

AWCH members & kids are eligible for these education scholarships

Academic Awards 2022

These awards are intended for children of FAWCO or FAUSA members.

Arts Award—\$4,000 sponsored in part by the family and friends in memory of Jessie Rodell, former president of the AWC of The Hague.

For undergraduate or graduate study in the history, theory, and/or practice of the performing arts, visual arts, film and media arts, architecture, or graphic arts.

Sciences Award—\$4,000 sponsored in part by the AIWC Genoa and the Bacigalupo family in memory of Dr. Frieda Bacigalupo Natali.

For undergraduate or graduate study of the scientific subjects of biology, chemistry, and physics, as well as mathematics and medicine.

Humanities Awards—\$4,000 sponsored in part by the AAWE Paris in memory of Gertrude de Gallaix.

For undergraduate or graduate study in fields including, but not limited to, education, law, social studies, history, and languages.

The Foundation Award—\$5,000 celebrating 50 years of the Education Awards, sponsored



sored by 1993 EA recipient Sami Bitar.

For undergraduate or graduate study of engineering, environmental studies, computer science, economics, or business administration.

Vocational Award—\$4,000 for an individual enrolled in a training program or a course of study at a trade school, either of which will conclude with a vocational certification.

Dual Cultural Award 2022

This award is intended for children and grandchildren of FAWCO and FAUSA members.

Dual Cultural Award—\$3,000 sponsored in part by AWC Bern and Donna Erismann in memory of Susanne Erismann.

To be used to attend a semester of an American high school or an academic or structured educational summer program in the United States.

Member Awards 2022

These awards, for FAWCO and FAUSA

members, recognize the diverse lives of our members, their achievements, and their never-ending quests for knowledge and self-improvement.

Shirley Kearney AWC Basel University Study Degree Award—\$4,000

For continuing or resuming studies in an undergraduate or graduate-level university degree program.

FAUSA Skills Enhancement Award—\$4,000

This award is for acquiring new skills or enhancing already existing ones. This will allow a FAWCO or FAUSA member to become more capable, competent, and confident by acquiring the skills to improve performance in any given field.

Continuing Education Award—\$4,000

sponsored by Mary Stewart Burgher of the AWC Denmark in memory of Pauline “Pete” Arnold Scheweppe.

For a FAWCO, FAUSA, or FAWCO individual member for further education at university or an equivalent level through courses, workshops, and certification programs. Subjects can encompass all areas of interest—inter alia, journalism, writing, the arts, and philanthropy—as well as science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM), and medicine.

In Memoriam

ADELE RIEPE

APRIL 21, 1937–NOVEMBER 23, 2021

-paying tribute to Adele Riepe within these pages makes a lot of sense. Adele was a woman of many talents, just some of which shone through on these very pages during her stint as *Currents* executive editor a little over a decade ago. At home in the wider world of journalism, her legacy is evident in the editorial standards this magazine upholds today.

Adele joined AWCH in 2002, when she moved to Hamburg to be closer to her daughter Sybille's growing family. It wasn't her first time in the German-speaking world. As a young adult, she modeled in Germany and Austria during semester breaks from Smith College and, an avid skier, she explored the Alps. In 1968, she moved from New York to Wiesbaden and from there on to Bonn. In what was then the capital of West Germany, she managed the *New York Times*' bureau for 18 years.

In 1995, Adele moved back to New York, where she worked at *The Times* History Productions in the heart of Times Square before starting her own business in 1999. In Hamburg, she taught English to top executives, journalists, and politicians.

In all her endeavors, her phenomenal charm and positivity shined through. When her wallet got stolen on a HVV bus, her retelling of the incident didn't focus on the pocket thief or the hassle of canceled cards and lost keys. Instead, she detailed the conversation with the cute policeman who filed the report and his shock at just how much that stolen wallet had cost. (She had good taste).

When her jeans felt a bit snug after the Christmas holidays, she laughed it off with a simple, "Oh well, one less croissant for me tomorrow!" And when she fell down the stairs at a downtown movie theater, breaking a bone and winding up in the hospital for six weeks, she shared a funny life lesson with her friends: "Never see the new James Bond film TWICE. The first time I went, I didn't fall." (During that hospital stay, by the way, she met a guy and fell in love).



Adele quickly became an enthusiastic member of the AWCH film reviewers group. She lent her professional experience in journalism to proofreading and layout as content editor for several years before serving as executive editor from 2005 to 2009.

She passed away in late November, surrounded by family. Until the end, her daughter Sybille said, Adele was herself—funny, in a good mood, and without fear. "What a

woman, what a life!" Sybille says. Indeed, Adele was a woman of extraordinary talents, extraordinary life stories, and an extraordinary sense of humor. That's how she should be remembered by those who knew her. Those who never met her can only imagine what she was like. They truly missed out.

—Deborah S. Carol H., Becky T., and Ulrike H.

How We Do *Holidays*



Joana M. O.'s Season of Gratefulness

Thanksgiving in March

Thanksgiving is my favorite holiday. I loved the long weekend and being with my favorite people. It was also the one day of the year when the kitchen was fully freed from the health regime we otherwise maintained. My father took over the kitchen and there were things like gravy (!), pie (!!) and whipped cream (!!!). I reveled in the preparations and was a willing sous chef.

Living in Germany, I sorely miss being with my family on Thanksgiving and enjoying dishes that remain once-a-year foods for me. I was preparing for a trip home one spring and mentioned to my parents that I would love to have a

Thanksgiving. They said “Why not?” and a new tradition was born. We started having Thanksgiving when I came home, no matter what time of the year it was. Since then, my parents always have an extra bag of cranberries in the freezer and a can of pumpkin in the pantry.

Eight White Envelopes

There is a lovely Christmas story on the internet called “The White Envelope.” It tells the story of how one family struggled to find the right gift for a family member who said he had everything he needed. They started a tradition of giving to a local organization or charity—sometimes in very hands-on and creative ways—instead of a present.

I loved this story, and it made me wonder if I was doing enough to introduce my children to the Jewish tradition of *tzedakah*, the Hebrew word for charity or giving, in our own celebrations. I made a list of the charities and organizations we support, and I wrote a short explanation of why we support them. I got eight envelopes and put one in each. Now, each year, after lighting the Hanukkah candles, we open one envelope and read about these amazing organizations that are doing the work of *tikkun olam*, healing the world. My kids get a great reminder of our family values, and I think it is a great addition to the Hanukkah celebration that is also called the Festival of Lights.

Wrangling the Wish List

When I think about wish lists, two images come to mind. The first is horrified parents looking over lists to Santa filled with expensive toys they know will be played with once. The second is a cartoon of Dennis the Menace popping up from a pile of wrapping paper on Christmas Day saying "Is that it?" (There is also Dudley Dursley's reaction to getting just 36 birthday presents!) How can we let kids look forward to their presents AND manage expectations on a wish list? I'm a big fan of something I learned from other parents, and that is telling your kids they can wish for four things:

- Something you want
- Something you need
- Something to wear, and
- Something to read

This works for Christmas, Hanukkah, and even birthdays!

Santa's Wrapping Paper

When my kids were young, I loved doing things to encourage their imagination and wonder. They grow up fast enough, so why not? This meant I was very happy when a neighbor proposed sharing "Santa's wrapping paper." The idea is that each parent wrapped their gifts from Santa, and then that paper disappeared out of the house and moved on to the neighbors. Those neighbors could also use it as Santa's paper and pass it on, or they could safely use it to wrap other presents, because there would be no overlap with the Santa presents. It worked like a charm and was a fun exchange. I highly recommend this system because kids always, always find the hiding places. If you make the mistake of keeping Santa's paper, there are 364 days from one Christmas to the next in which they might be innocently looking for something, come across that paper, and recognize it. Believe me, they will remember, because that is exactly what happened when my neighbor moved and we didn't have our exchange anymore!

Global Mish-Mash for Mason Jane M.

Holiday traditions are both widely cultural and quirkily individualistic. It's a funky combination of the two that makes the family dynamic at holiday times so special. No matter how rigidly they observe their culture's holiday regularities, there will always be something a family does that is theirs alone—a dessert that Omi made that we now make, a god-awful sweater that Papi always wears, Aunt Diddy's insistence on a pre-festivity "cleansing" of the house with burning sage and strategic crystal placement.

Even things that were annoying the first time around eventually mellow into nostalgia fodder: case in point is a classic *Bauernfrühstück* that got combined with leftover Mexican food one New Year's morning that has become something we now can't do without. It's terrible! Really not good! But it's nostalgically indispensable, and that's the point.

I grew up in New York City, the daughter of transplanted Texans. My husband and his people are likely northern German since the Bronze Age. We both lived (separately) in Asia for years. Our blended lifestyle is the result of picking over various cultures for what appeals to us, like hungry but persnickety guests at a salad bar. For example, we happily open all our Christmas presents on Christmas Eve German-style, but we come downstairs to stockings hung by the chimney with care on Christmas morning American-style (and even though my daughter doesn't see the point, I stuff oranges and walnuts in there alongside the trinkets, because tradition). These habits dovetail nicely, without conflict.

Most choices are easy. *Oh, Tannenbaum* is a more elegant song than *Oh, Christmas*



It wouldn't be Christmas if we didn't make this from scratch every year!

Tree, so we go with the former, but *White Christmas* in German is just weird, so no. All right, seafood for Christmas dinner would not be my first choice, but I can work with that. Raisins in cheesecake will never, however, sit right with me, so compromises must be made (I pick them out of my piece—with chopsticks).

While the cultural smorgasbord is its own reward, there's a nice side effect to all this picking and choosing. I now know more about the traditions of my own culture for having examined them alongside the new ones I've adopted. It's a treat to learn and share the origin stories of so many enjoyable habits that were, well, merely unexamined habits before! Also, through researching our traditions (German, American, and other) I can hammer home the point to my daughter that everything in life should be examined, questioned, and chosen (or rejected) with a full heart AND mind. I so much want her to understand this.

Except for the *Texmexbauernfrühstück*. She just has to live with that.

How We Do *Holidays*

Jordan W.'s Weihnachtsmarkt Mugs



The sweet smell of mulled wine and the anticipation of Christmas mugs galore—it's time for my annual solo trip to two Christmas markets in Europe! As with most traditions, mine adapts and changes over time to fit new life circumstances.



When I moved to Germany, I fully embraced the Christmas markets, as they are something not common in the USA. The food, the mulled wine, the souvenirs, the ambiance—all something traditionally European and an important part of my newly adopted country.



In my first year, I decided I wanted to visit two quintessentially German Christmas markets that had always been on my bucket list: Rothenburg ob der Tauber and

Nuremberg. And thus began my yearly tradition of visiting two new Christmas markets each year!

I've now also visited Dresden and Meissen, Bern and Basel, and Erfurt and Weimar. Each market has its own traditions, culture, and quirks that makes it distinctly unique from the others. Along the way, I've collected a mug (sometimes multiple mugs!) from each Christmas market that I visit.

As I decorate my apartment every year for Christmas with childhood ornaments and other decor collected from my mom and the USA, I look back on my mugs with fond memories of these adventures and new traditions!



Photos by Jordan W.

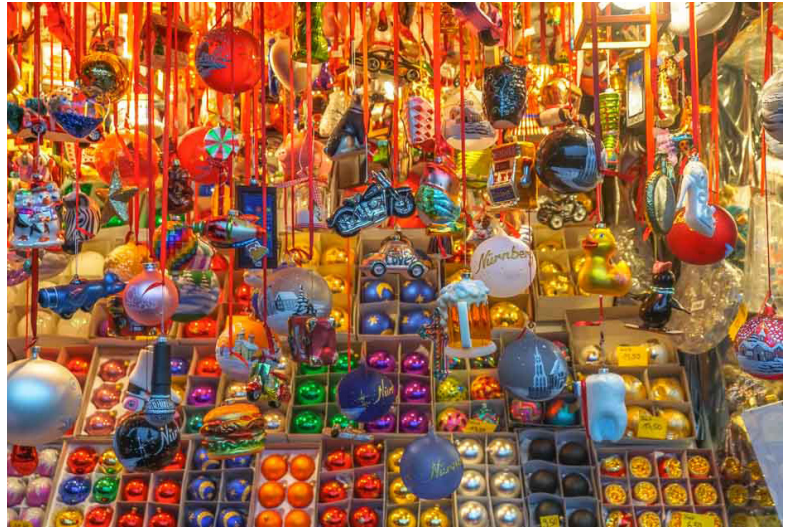
Jenny M.'s British Traditions

Christmas begins in November in Britain with Stir-Up Sunday. A Sunday or Saturday is set aside to make Christmas cakes and puddings. Two puddings are often made because one is eaten with Christmas dinner and the second is kept for New Year's Day. Usually the Christmas meal is replicated on New Year's Day in Britain, including another turkey. Stir-Up Sunday is often a time when relatives get together and make a batch of cakes and puddings for the holidays. This happens with my daughter's husband's family and results in a super homemade pud, which is much nicer than a shop-bought one.

When I was growing up, my mum popped a silver sixpence wrapped in greaseproof paper in her pudding for a lucky person to find. Silver sixpences had long stopped being currency, so the silver sixpence was saved from one year to the next. Health and safety concerns, along with the paucity of silver sixpences, mean this tradition has died out.

Last year, I sent a German hand-blown glass pickle Christmas ornament to friends in Yorkshire. The pickle came with a note explaining the German tradition, that the person who found it on the Christmas tree was the first to open his or her presents. This caused much discussion among the guests. It's a lovely tradition, and one which is unheard of in Britain. Children there open their stockings on Christmas morning, and then the family members usually take turns opening presents after lunch.

Churchgoers attend church on Christmas morning in Britain and hear the vicar repeat the age-old words, "And it came to pass that Mary was safely delivered of a child." A story that I could never reconcile when I was little with the one about Father Christmas, who delivered presents to everybody by means of a sleigh and a team of reindeer flying across the night sky. Thank goodness for these stories that give us a reason to celebrate and bring friends and families together. Happy holidays everyone.



CHRISTMAS PUDDING

PREPARED BY: Jenny M.
ADAPTED FROM: Mrs Beeton's
Everyday Cookery (circa 1970)

6 oz finely chopped suet	1.5 oz almonds
6 oz moist brown sugar	1 small wineglass brandy or sherry
6 oz raisins	3 oz plain flour
3 oz chopped candied peel	A little milk
6 oz sultanas	Pinch salt
Grated rind of a lemon	1/4 tsp grated nutmeg
6 oz currants	3 oz breadcrumbs
2 eggs	

- Grease two 1.5 pint basins (baking dishes with lids.)
 - Finely chop the suet and almonds, wash the fruit.
 - Sift the flour, salt and nutmeg into a mixing bowl.
 - Add the breadcrumbs, suet, sugar, dried fruit, peel, lemon rind and almonds.
 - Beat the eggs well and stir into the mixture.
 - Add milk and mix to a soft dropping consistency.
 - Put mixture into basins, cover and steam for 5-6 hours.
- Silver sixpences are optional!

How We Do Holidays



VEGAN PUMPKIN PIE FILLING

425 g pumpkin puree from a large Hokkaido pumpkin (or a can)	120 g vegan cream cheese
65 g sugar	3 tsp pumpkin pie spice (2 tps. cinnamon, ½ tps. ground ginger, ¼ tps. ground nutmeg, ¼ tps. ground cloves)
85 g maple syrup	30 g vanilla pudding powder
1 tsp vanilla extract	Your favorite vegan, partially-baked pie crust
½ tsp salt	
240 mL coconut milk	

PREP TIME: 15 Minutes

COOK TIME: 50-60 minutes + 40 minutes if making puree from fresh pumpkin

SERVINGS: 6

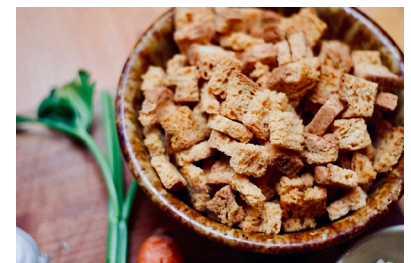
PREPARED BY: Holly T.

Origin story: Adapted from Bianca Zapatka's excellent recipe (in German) which, using German-bought ingredients, captures the flavor and consistency of traditional American pumpkin pie and includes instructions for a pie crust,:: biancazapatka.com/de/pumpkin-pie-kuerbiskuchen

1. For fresh pumpkin puree, cut a large Hokkaido pumpkin in half, scoop out seeds, and bake flesh side down on parchment paper on a baking tray in the oven at 200 C for 40 minutes. When cool enough to handle, scoop out and puree.
2. Beat pumpkin puree, sugar, maple syrup, coconut milk, vegan cream cheese, vanilla extract, salt, pumpkin pie spice, and pudding powder in large bowl until smooth.
3. Pour mixture into warm pie crust and smooth the surface.
4. Put pie in oven, lower heat to 180 C, and bake for 50-60 minutes until firm and golden brown.
5. Allow to cool completely and ideally refrigerate for at least 4 hours before serving.
6. Serve with vegan whipped cream or—our favorite—vanilla coconut milk ice cream (Alnatura).

DRESSING OR STUFFING

500 g day-old bread, dried in slices and cut in 1.5 cm cubes	250 g celery stalk, diced	10 g parsley, chopped
100 g butter	2 large eggs, beaten	10 g fresh sage, chopped
250 g onion, diced	½-1 L poultry stock	2 tsp dried sage
	1-2 apples, diced	Salt and pepper



1. Put butter in a skillet over medium heat. Add onions and celery and cook until softened, about 10 minutes. Set aside to cool.
2. Place cut bread in a large bowl. Add the apples, parsley, sage, salt, pepper, and cooled skillet ingredients. Mix well. Add the eggs and enough broth so that mixture is well moistened. Mix well and season to taste.

3. Grease a baking dish with butter and put in the mixture. Bake at 170 C for about 30 minutes. Top should be brown and interior firm but still moist.

Alternative I: Bake in a steam oven at 180 C, 30% steam until top is brown and interior firm.

Alternative II: If turkey is stuffed with the mixture, both the turkey and stuffing must reach a temperature of 74 C.

COOK TIME: 30 minutes
SERVINGS: 8-10
PREPARED BY: Carol S.



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THE CLUBS WITHIN OUR CLUB

Meet the Moms' Connection Leaders!

BY HANNAH B.

New member Tatiana I. S. (left) and member Shanan R. (right, with family) stepped up to take Moms & Bumps to a new level. They are looking to expand the group to include mothers, grandmothers, and families with children of all ages in the Moms' Connection. The pair sent a survey to all members who noted in their membership information that they had a child under the age of 18. Thanks to a generous response, Shanan and Tatiana have a good base of suggestions and information from which to launch the new group.

Tatiana joined the AWCH this year and indicated on her application that she is an early childhood educator and counselor. She is a dual Spanish-American citizen and speaks English, Spanish, Catalan (she's from Barcelona), and Portuguese. Her husband is an aeronautical engineer and they live near the Airbus facility, south of the Elbe. Tatiana and her husband have a small child together.

Shanan is one of our dynamic and very active members who juggles a full-time job at Ecover with raising their toddler, Emily.



She calls Colorado her home, but has lived in Wyoming, Chicago, and New Zealand. Shanan has been active in the Environmental Forum, Stitch 'n' Bitch, and now the Moms' Connection.

These two women are filled with ideas on how to bring mothers and children together at the AWCH. Look for their—and your—ideas to come to fruition and email them to be added to their distribution list. Get involved: momsconnection@awchamburg.org.

Rethinking Belonging

BY ANNA S.

In the times where loneliness becomes a disease of the twenty-first century, belonging can become its antidote. The need to belong to others and the need for meaningful and rewarding social relationships is embedded in our DNA. A need to belong comes hand-in-hand with a strong desire to be viewed positively. At the same time, belonging is known to support social adjustment, well-being, and longevity. According to Brene Brown, belonging does not force us to change who we are, it gives us space to be...who we are.

Global mobility may challenge belonging. Having left our countries of origin, we started a journey into the new and distant. We learned how to fit and blend in to be accepted. And during all those travels, we



were longing to belong. It occurs to me that the whole idea of the AWCH is to give American and international women a place to belong. Being a part of the club can be beneficial to our health if we feel accepted by the group.

Criticism may kill a sense of belonging. Despite the cognitive evolution and the rash development of our thinking brains, our emotional brains operate on stone-age

principles. Isolation and social rejection mean a lonely life and a miserable death. So remember that when you criticize others, you are telling them: you are not good enough, you do not deserve to be a part of the group or a part of our family. And this hurts. The pain of social exclusion uses the same neural network as physical pain. And the reaction to social pain is similar: we either freeze or avoid or leave the situations that cause this pain.

My holiday wish to all of us is to embrace diversity, to share fondness and appreciation with women who are working hard and who are using their creativity to enrich the AWCH. Remember, they are open and vulnerable and courageous, and they deserve our applause.

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

Fridays for Future

EM Members Join Annual Strike

This year's global climate strike in Hamburg saw 25,000 people come out! The strike lasted five hours, and there were speeches and live musical performances, but I guess it didn't have the impact on the recent German election that people were



expecting. However, even with the current issues, it is apparent Hamburg wants to move in a green direction.

-Beatrice K.



Plogging for good

A Fun Way to Clean Up the City

On September 9, a group of eight wonderful AWCH members met in Stadtpark to try out PLOGGING, a new trend that involves jogging and picking up trash. This event was put on by the official Hamburg Räumt Auf group, and we joined other people to help clean up the Stadtpark. There was not much jogging in our group but lots of getting into the bushes and trees and picking up big and small pieces of trash. We had a nice time together and got quite a "thank you's." It felt good to clean up such a beautiful place, and we talked about other neighborhoods in Hamburg that could benefit from some quick group trash collecting!! If you or your club/business is interested in cleaning up, this local company is raising awareness and taking action! Oclean - https://oclean.hamburg/en/oclean_home_eng/

We also had a few hardy cleaner-uppers who took to the Alster on canoe or paddle board to clean up the Alster. One of our AWCH members even managed to pull out a chair.

-Shanan R./Cornealia T.

ENVIRONMENTALLY MINDFUL

COP26: OUR IMPRESSIONS OF THE GLOBAL MEETING IN GLASGOW

From an individual perspective

The decision to go to Glasgow was easy. I went for several reasons—to take part in the Glasgow Climate March, to visit the Green Zone (including to see our friend’s exhibition, *Polar Zero*) and to be a part of what was happening. The march was quite upbeat but (at the same time) very sobering, with speeches from young people about what they are dealing with in their poorer countries in Latin America and India, and with those from wealthier countries calling out their governments for their failings. The Green Zone was interesting and educational; I recommend Wayne Binitie’s *Polar Zero* to see how art, science, and engineering have worked together to tell the story of the ice and CO2 from the dawn of the industrial revolution. (www.glasgowsciencecentre.org)

The overall feel of COP26 was frantic (everyone trying to meet someone, get to something, or get home again), a huge security extravaganza and, finally, everyone I spoke to—journalists, engineers, hydrogen businessmen, climate activists—said something similar, that this COP was still only a beginning and that what happens in the next few days and into the following months may not be enough. So I guess I came away feeling everything is balanced on a very keen knife edge—good with not quite enough progress yet. **(Catherine R.)**

From a business perspective

I work for Ecover, and we have a “greens-keeping team,” a team that manages sustainability metrics for our company. A member of this team was able to visit COP26 in Glasgow, and she shared her experience there. What I took away from her presentation was that, while the work going on inside the conference and the protesting going on outside on the streets were both



The 26th United Nations Climate Change conference, known as COP26, was held in Glasgow in early November 2021. Several members of the AWCH Environmentally Mindful Club traveled to Scotland to attend the event.

important to push these matters forward, she thought that the media, while quite negative, was not spotlighting enough the fact that so many people were inside the doors trying to bring real change for the climate and our world. And that this should be an inspiration point: that there are SO many people that are working to make a difference. **(Shanan R.)**

From a science perspective

Life on Earth emerged some four billion years ago and higher-order forms of life—plants, animals, and fungi—some two billion years ago. The basis of all higher-order life forms was the fusion of two separate microbial organisms through collaboration. The microbial universe is the basis for life on Earth and provides an ecosystem function to all higher-order life forms, which is



still not well understood. The microbiome and the ecosystem function and services that it delivers, in whatever environment in which it is present—soil or human gut—is the subject of intense scientific investigation and is providing a framework for us to better understand the impact of our era and how to moderate its effects towards a more sustainable future. (Anthony Finbow) **(Christine R.)**

Art Gathering

by the Art Group

A Visit with Cornelia T.

Artist Opens Up Her Studio for Visit with Art Club Members

BY SAMANTHA B.

Art is a line around your thoughts.
—Gustav Klimt

My first experience as a new member of the AWCH art group was to attend the studio tour of our fellow AWCH member Cornelia T., and what a treat it was. Cornelia is not only an incredibly talented artist, but she is a wonderfully generous host, opening her garden and home to a selection of AWCH art lovers. After the year that we have all had, it was such a privilege to be able to gather (albeit in masks) on a wonderful autumn day and enjoy a behind-the-scenes tour of Cornelia's studio.

On show was a selection of Cornelia's work. Cornelia also gave us candid insights into the life of an artist and the complexity in-

volved in developing a final piece. Her recent landscape work has an organic quality; she captures the wildness of nature beautifully. The nature of the materials she uses is incredibly specific and the result of many hours of trialing different mediums. The type of Japanese paper chosen and the ink and paint selected are incredibly difficult

to "control" and require a form of surrender to the process. Cornelia herself admits that it has taken many years for her to reach this point, to free herself of her classical training and allow the painting to emerge. Many sources of her inspiration are from nature and childhood memories of her native home in Transylvania. A single work of art can take months to complete.

As the conversation evolved, the group discussed further this connection between nature and art, and Cornelia kindly delved into her basement to extract from her many works some of her earlier pieces. These were abstract works with striking colors and were very different from her current work. As Cornelia described her ideas and the motivation behind the work—the desire to feel grounded and rooted to the earth and how that was a metaphor for her stage in life—more was revealed to me through her work. Here we could see that her art was truly "lines around her thoughts," and I enjoyed immensely learning about her life and artistic journey. Thank you, Cornelia, and all who helped to make for a wonderful experience.



Photos by Shelly S.



BOOK REVIEWS

FROM OUR BOOK CLUB

Memorial Drive

A Daughter's Memoir

By Natasha Trethewey (2020)

ARTICLE BY CAROL H.

In recognition of the **16 Days of Activism** campaign that started in November, the book club chose the 2020 memoirs of Natasha Trethewey, a Pulitzer Prize-winning poet and the US Poet Laureate for 2012 and 2013. The book is a beautifully written, heart-rending account of domestic violence as viewed through the eyes of the victim's daughter. We were unanimous in our assessment that the book was excellent—addressing from a unique angle an ever-increasing problem that often gets ignored, buried, and forgotten.

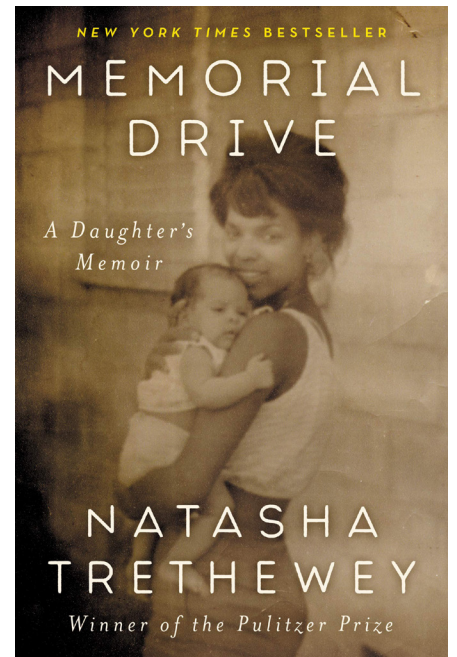
Trethewey's mother was shot to death in 1985 in Atlanta by the author's abusive stepfather. The memoir explores the long-buried past Trethewey fought to forget. Relying on memory, case documents, and transcripts of recorded phone conversations, Trethewey offers a personal depiction of domestic violence as experienced by a child and put into context by an adult. This book is not an easy read, but it is an illuminating one.

The author uses elegant prose to paint a loving childhood in the American South and the slow changes in her life as her biracial parents split apart, undoubtedly faced with undue pressures

from a changing but still unaccepting society. Soon afterwards, a stepfather moves in, the tone changes, and the author sketches a portrait of her mother's life as she works hard to gain recognition in her career and, at the same time, suppress the perpetually cruel and powerful forces of domestic abuse. Her daughter (the author) is aware of what is going on and even thinks she herself is responsible, should do something, and needs to get away...

Thirty-five years later, the author comes to grips with her suppressed nightmare, juxtaposing the beautiful prose describing her childhood with the jarring accounts of police records in the days leading up to her mother's killing and the ensuing trial. It is an abrupt but fitting end.

Our discussion kept going back to the mother—what kept her in the relationship? What could she have changed?



We agreed that the racial aspect of the story was not the critical theme; we yearned to learn more about the unexplored father. In the end, we agreed that the book is about the daughter and her homage to her mother. Both were subject to wounds that never will or will only slowly heal.

The book was a good complement to our November 2020 read *No Visible Bruises: What We Don't Know About Domestic Violence Can Kill Us*.



“

Memorial Drive confronts domestic violence head on...

”

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

The color orange represents a brighter future—free from violence against women and girls—and is used as a unifying theme running through this annual global campaign. Commencing on November 25, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, and ending on December 10, Human Rights Day, this year marks its thirtieth anniversary. It is a call to increase awareness, stimulate advocacy, and create opportunities for discussions about challenges and solutions to end violence against women and girls.

Gender-based violence has increased during the COVID-19 pandemic due to exacerbation of the risk factors for gender-based violence (e.g., unemployment and poverty) and the reinforcement of gender stereotypes and harmful social norms. It has been estimated that 11 million girls may not return to school because of COVID-19, thereby increasing their risk of a child marriage. The economic fallout is expected to push 47 million more women and girls into extreme poverty in 2021, reversing decades of progress and perpetuating structural inequalities that reinforce violence.*



We need to push the agenda forward now! To raise awareness of the campaign, several iconic buildings were lit up in orange throughout Hamburg on Nov 25 in a campaign by the six Zonta Clubs** in the city to “Sag Nein!” to violence against women and girls.

*Data source: <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2021-11/UNiTE-campaign-2021-concept-note-en.pdf>



Photo: @Ruth Lüth representing the **Zonta Clubs Hamburg, Hamburg-Alster, Hamburg-Elbufer, Hamburg Hamburg Hanse, Hamburg Hafener, and the Golden-Z Club of Hamburg-Hanse

BOOK REVIEWS

FROM OUR BOOK CLUB

The Country of Others

By Leïla Slimani (2020)

ARTICLE BY CAROLINE D.

Young, excitable, and adventurous, 22-year-old Mathilde meets handsome Amine Belhaj, a Muslim Moroccan soldier (Spahi) while he is stationed in her small hometown in Alsace during World War II. They fall in love, marry, and, after the *libération*, Mathilde follows Amine to Morocco to start a new life together on his farm. Despite her initial romanticism (even keeping Ramadan with her in-laws), Mathilde is swiftly caught up in a kind of no-man's land between cultures, traditions, and religions. Her French compatriots make fun of her (it doesn't help that she is not only in a mixed marriage but also a head taller than her husband) whilst the locals don't really trust her. As a person, Mathilde is fiercely independent, but as a wife, her life is dominated by men and the culture she has adopted—she has no voice, no influence, no power.

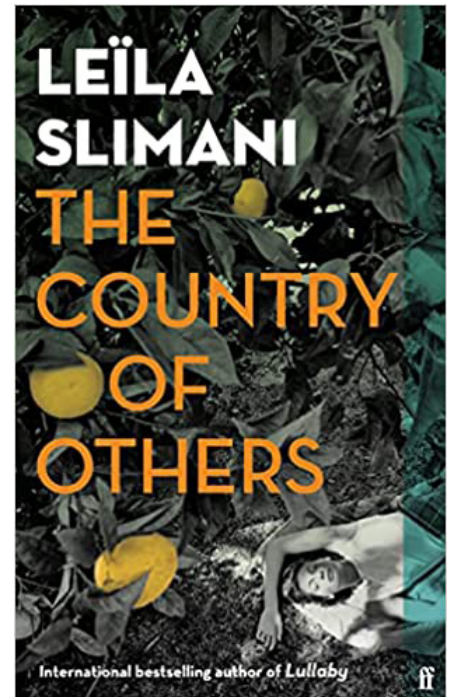
There is a recurring theme in the novel of one person evoking tradition to wield power and even violence over another. Mathilde's children are considered *métisse* and suffer in silence. Her husband loses the voice she fell in love with once he's back in his native land—"Publicly, Amine exudes pride in having been willing to die for France, but, alone, he would shut himself away in silence and brood over his cowardice, his betrayal

of his people." Over time, Mathilde changes...and we are confronted with the question: is this change in Mathilde a sign of assimilation, a survival instinct, or a resigned submission?

The story of Mathilde and Amine is mirrored by Morocco's struggle for independence post-World War II. Both Morocco and Mathilde & Amine work hard to realize their ambitions but clash when the lack of a voice is underlined by a constant lack of money and clout to make their dreams come true.



Leila Slimani writes stunningly and keeps you totally captivated (although increasingly disturbed) while reading the book. Mathilde is no hero. She is not even an anti-hero. She is real. On the one hand, she had the balls to wed not only a foreigner but a colored man in the 1940s, when this was a total no-go in her social sphere. But she has sides to her one just cannot sympathize with. While she herself suffers from discrimination, she bullies her



local maid, who she treats as a racial inferior. Slimani's book jolted me and made me research the Spahi. Even I, a French national, had no idea that over 80,000 Moroccan soldiers fought for France during World War II—that they went from being freedom fighters (beginning of World War II) to losers (during Vichy) and then victors (de Gaulle), and lastly to be perceived as traitors to their own country because France didn't deliver on its promise of independence. On a personal note, my parents post-war Franco-German love story and wedding, which neither of their families was willing to attend (she a French Catholic from a family of industrialists fighting Vichy in the free zone, he a Protestant German), simply pales in comparison to this story told by Laila Slimani.

Discovering German Literature

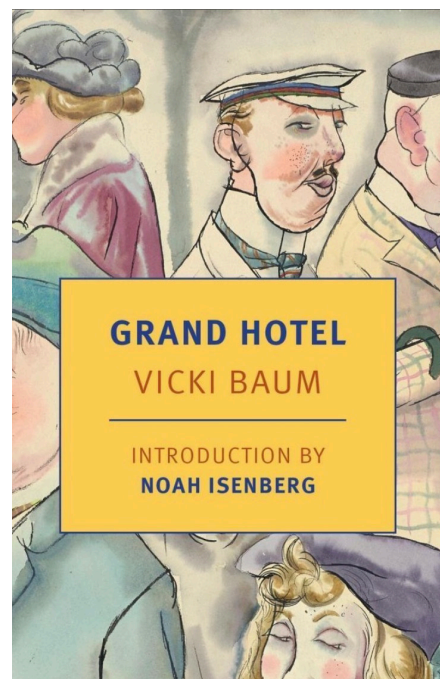
in Translation

A few years ago, Deutsche Welle compiled a list of the top 100 English-translated German novels, going back to 1901. Last issue, I reviewed two Austrian novels from the list that were written almost 50 years apart. This time I'm going further—two novels with 74 years between them, though this time both are set in Berlin. *Grand Hotel* by Vicki Baum might be familiar to some, though I have to admit I had never heard of it. It was published over several months in 1929 as a serialized story in a Berlin magazine and was an immediate hit. In 1930 it was adapted into a stage show and translated into English. Baum then relocated to Los Angeles and adapted the novel to a film, which premiered in 1932 starring Greta Garbo and Joan Crawford, winning numerous awards, including an Oscar for Best Picture.

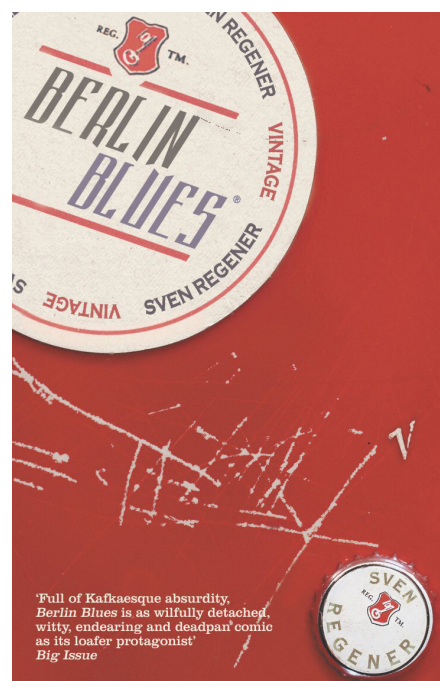
The story is set in a glitzy hotel in a Berlin that is bustling and cosmopolitan. There are multiple personalities and perspectives, both guests and staff: a great Russian ballerina at the end stage of her career; a World War I veteran; a young, modern woman with big dreams; a charismatic swindler; and a lowly hotel porter with a pregnant wife. Their stories are intertwined; as characters pass through the lobby of the luxury hotel observed by staff or meet in the breakfast room, we hear their opinions of each other and their own back-stories and motivations. There is escape and glamor but with a foundation in reality, and the characters have depth and authenticity and their own real anxieties. It is an in-between time for the city and the characters, and we can see how well Baum did that in retrospect—touching on the recovery from the First World War alongside the first whispers of the Depression that eventually led the country to the Second World War. *Grand Hotel* was a precursor to class dramas like *Upstairs, Downstairs* and *Downton Abbey*, as well as lavish hotel films like *Grand Budapest Hotel*, amongst others.

Berlin Blues portrays a very different Berlin—the gritty West Berlin of 1989. The novel is hilarious—absurd and sarcastic, with great dialogue. The scope of the novel is small in comparison to the grandness and macro scale of *Grand Hotel*: a bartender—Frank, called Herr Lehman by all his friends—has managed to avoid many adult responsibilities most of his life and is happy with his career. But a series of inconveniences—a dog, an impending family visit, an infatuation with a woman, an unfortunate trip to East Germany, the breakdown of a close friend—leads him to a bit of an existential crisis. This is a book where not a lot happens, but the dialogue and episodes are funny and the characters are self-deprecating. Sven Regener, the author, is a German rock musician. *Berlin Blues* was his debut novel, and it went on to sell over one million copies. It was also adapted to film in 2003 and was very well received, winning a number of awards.

Michaela A



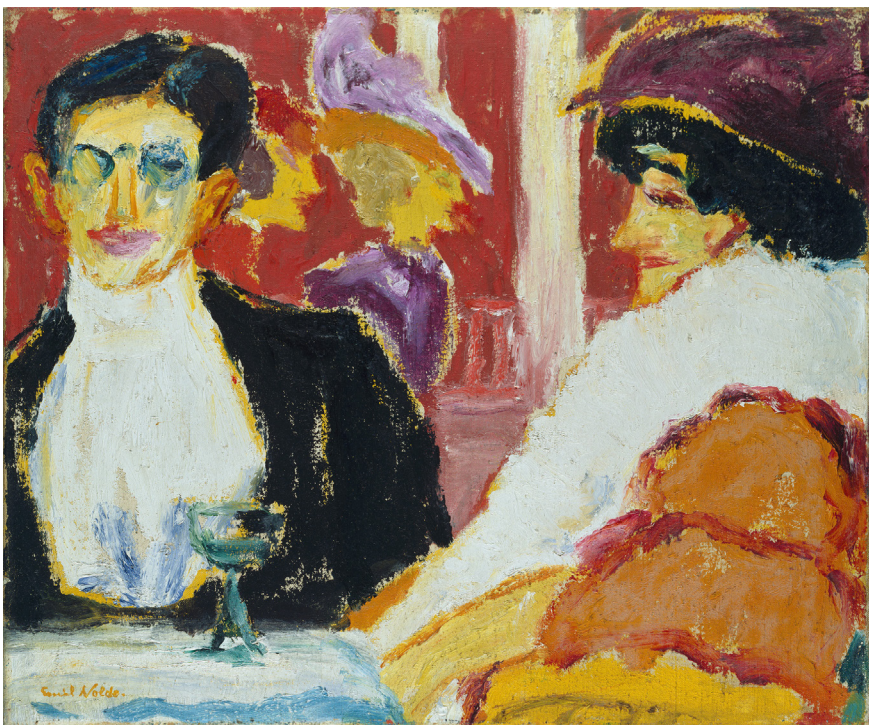
Grand Hotel by Vicki Baum, 1929
(English translation by Basil Creighton,
revised by Margot Bettauer Dembo, 2016)



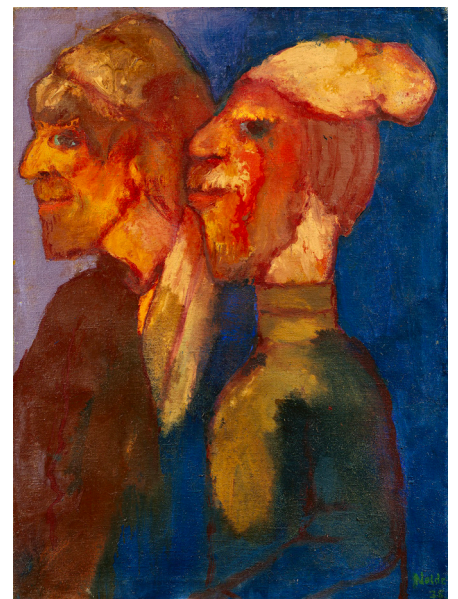
Berlin Blues by Sven Regener, 2001
(German title: *Herr Lehmann*; English
translation by John Brownjohn)

In Hamburg

Here you can learn about cultural events throughout the city, including museums, film showings, live theater & art galleries



Herr und Dame (im roten Saal), 1911, oil on canvas, 73 x 88 cm
Hamburger Kunsthalle, Dauerleihgabe der Stiftung Hamburger Kunstsammlungen
© Nolde Stiftung Seebüll Photo: Elke Walford



Gaut der Rote, 1938,
oil on canvas, 100.5 x 74 cm.
© Nolde Stiftung Seebüll
Photo: Fotowerkstatt Elke Walford,
Hamburg, and Dirk Dunkelberg, Berlin

How Does a Bad Man Make Good Paintings?

Two Exhibitions Showcase Emil Nolde

BY HOLLY T.

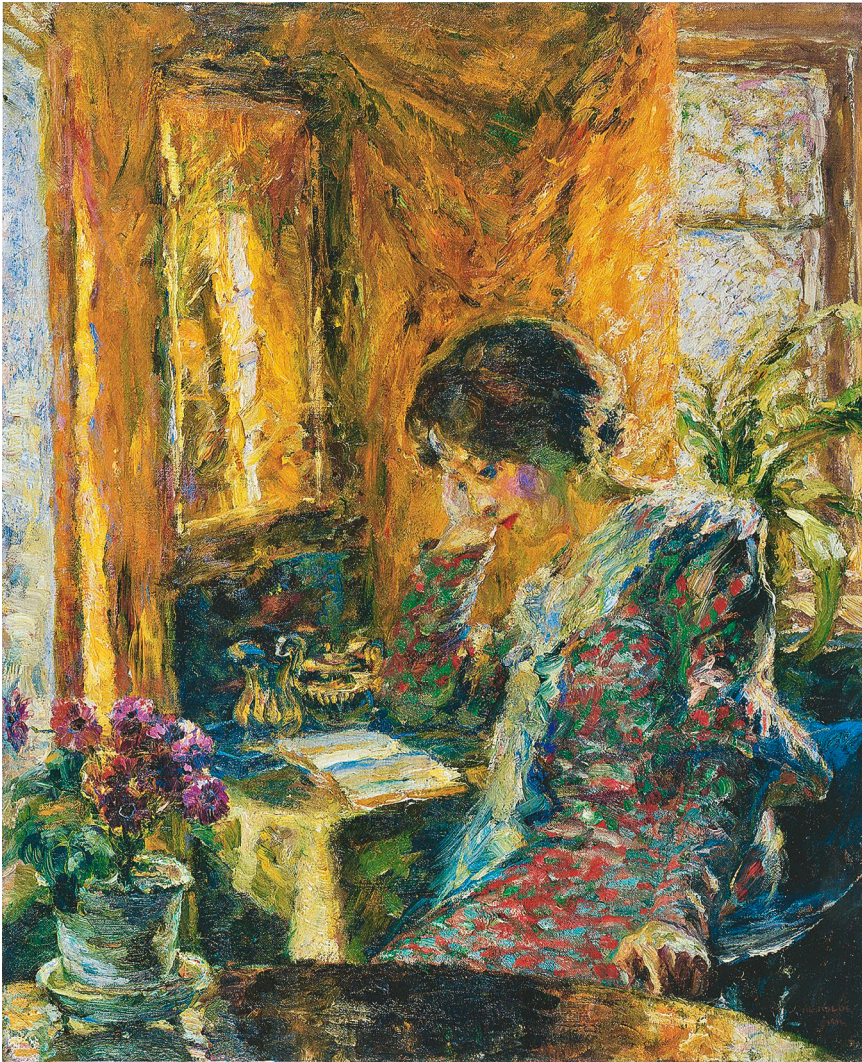
With his colorful, primally gestural paintings a far cry from the traditionally classical art prized by the Third Reich, Emil Nolde (1867-1956) was a poster child for what Hitler condemned as “degenerate art.”

In 1968, Siegfried Lenz made Nolde’s story the basis of his novel *German Lesson (Deutschstunde)*, and, aided by this international bestseller, the artist came to epitomize

the suppressed creative victim of Nazi Germany. In 2014, it was discovered that the artist himself had fueled this myth and that in fact Nolde was a staunch Nazi and anti-Semite. At the time of a Berlin exhibition documenting the deception in 2019, Angela Merkel removed two well-known paintings by Nolde from her office.

Exhibiting Emil Nolde’s art these days has

become tricky business. So it is somewhat surprising that two concurrent Nolde exhibitions are showing in Hamburg at the moment. Both of these nicely focused shows address aspects of Nolde’s art deserving exploration. *I Usually Prime with Chalk...* at the Hamburger Kunsthalle, which literally sheds light on Nolde’s painting techniques, is the more nerdily scientific. Yet here we



Frühling im Zimmer, 1904
oil on canvas, 88.5 x 73.5 cm.
© Nolde Stiftung Seebüll

Photo:
Fotowerkstatt Elke Walford, Hamburg,
and Dirk Dunkelberg, Berlin

Zwei am Meeresstrand, 1903
oil on canvas, 73.5 x 88.5 cm.
© Nolde Stiftung Seebüll

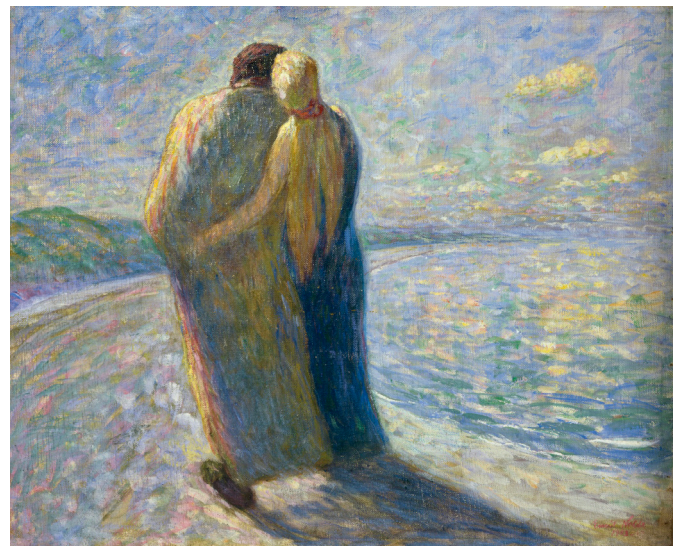
Photo:
Fotowerkstatt Elke Walford, Hamburg,
and Dirk Dunkelberg, Berlin

encounter the more familiar masterpieces that have made Nolde, in spite of his contemptible character, one of the great early twentieth-century modernist artists—gorgeously painted flowers, vibrant scenes from contemporary life, and deeply felt religious narratives, all coloristic and painterly tours de force. Restorers used a variety of technologies to investigate Nolde’s manner of painting: x-rays, UV fluorescence, infrared reflectography, and analytic mapping. With the help of smartphones or on tablets provided by the museum, viewers can “see through” various layers of Nolde’s paintings and follow his rapid and intuitive creative process from grounding his canvases in brilliant hues through sketchy pencil underdrawing to quick brushings of unmixed tube colors generating spontaneous departures from the underdrawing.

Nolde and the North at the Bucerius Kunst Forum refers to Nolde’s birthplace near the German-Danish border as well as to Copenhagen, where he studied in 1900-01, and to the Danish coast and islands he frequented well into the 1920s. The roughly thematic organization shows how Nolde drew on Danish artists he revered, including Willem Hammershoi and Viggo Johansen, and includes inviting interiors and beautiful coastal landscapes by these and other Scandinavian contemporaries. How Nolde transformed similar subjects into something radically new under the influence of French Post-Impressionism and especially Vincent Van Gogh is

nice demonstrated. The other major focus of the exhibition has to do with Nolde’s relationship to his Danish wife, Ada Vilstrup, and the couple’s shared love of a good story as expressed in the artist’s frequent painting of scurrilous figures and fantastic creatures. Both exhibitions are cooperative ventures involving the Nolde museum and study center at the artist’s former home in Seebüll.

Tip: Check out *Kunst und Kalkül: Der ganze Nolde* (German only) in the Arte Mediathek and buy a “combi-ticket” to both shows.



A New Approach to Impressionism at the Kunsthalle

BY HOLLY T.

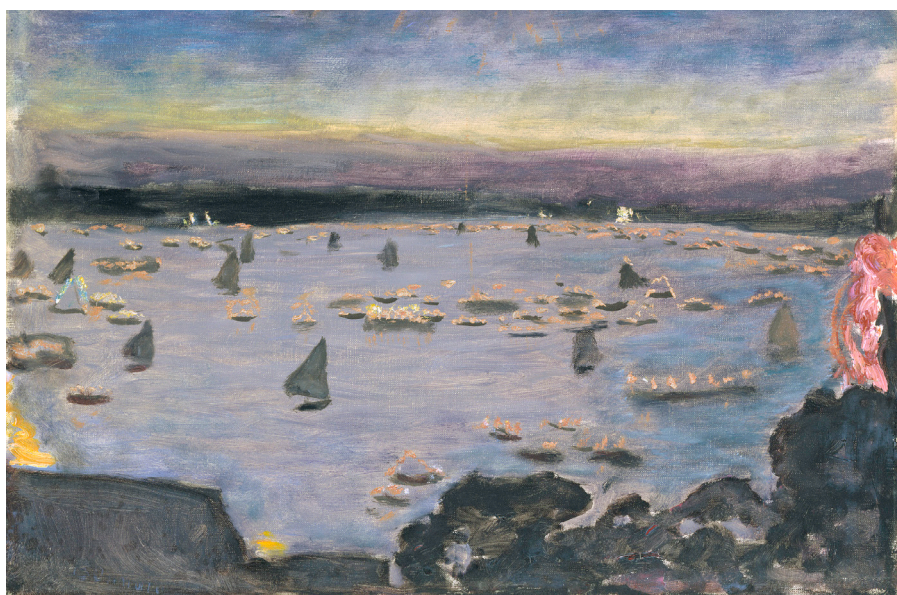
Many of our members have been happy to encounter works by Manet, Renoir, and Pissarro in the collection of the Hamburger Kunsthalle. But few of us from the USA and other countries know much about the numerous works by German painters which also make up the museum's considerable holdings of Impressionist art.

A new thematic arrangement of the Impressionist galleries hangs French and German artists side-by-side in an attempt to show how French Impressionists influenced their somewhat later German counterparts and how they differ in interests and approach. Works by Gretchen Wohlwill, Alma de Banco, and Victoria Dubourg are given new prominence here, enriching the presentation. A special treat are the many scenes of Hamburg by Pierre Bonnard, Édouard Vuillard, and others who were invited to come paint our city by the first director of the museum, Alfred Lichtwark, for the Collection of Pictures from Hamburg he founded.

A telling comparison is drawn between urban river scenes by the German Lovis Corinth and Claude Monet. With crisp brushstrokes and strong contrasts, Corinth conveys the startling proximity of the noisy working Hamburg harbor to the leafy riverside parks across the Elbe. Monet similarly focuses on the encroachment of industry on modern life, rendering thick smog blanketing the crowded Waterloo bridge in London and distant smokestacks in a skein of short strokes of purples and blues and greens and pinks. This is one of 42 paintings of the same subject by Monet, each a unique exploration of the particular light and atmospheric conditions. Such intense investigation of purely sensual visual experience interested German painters less, but modern life and in particular the new leisure time enjoyed by the middle classes is a common denominator. Scenes of theatrical



Claude Monet (1840–1926)
Die Waterloo-Brücke, 1902, oil on canvas, 65 x 100 cm
© Hamburger Kunsthalle / bpk Photo: Elke Walford



Pierre Bonnard (1867–1947)
Detail from Lampionkorso auf der Außenalster, 1913, oil on canvas, 37.5 x 47.5 cm
© Hamburger Kunsthalle / bpk Photo: Elke Walford

or musical performances, parks and zoos, outdoor cafés and waterside activities abound on both sides of the Rhine. Though fascinated by the immediacy evoked by painters like Degas or Manet, their German counterparts for the most part eschewed the unusual compositional cropping and innovative color contrasts that so aptly conveyed the elegance of Parisian city dwellers. Yet Corinth's blustery staging or Max Liebermann's straightforward monochrome distillations of character to momentary postures, gestures, or expressions hold their own when capturing modern personalities of their time.

Monet's Waterloo Bridge was given to the museum in 1927 by the widow of Albert Martin

Wolffson (1847-1913), a Hamburg lawyer who had collected paintings, drawings, and prints by his contemporaries from the Impressionist period. A rough reconstruction of the collection, which was rediscovered when the problematic Gurlitt "hoard" was found in Munich in 2012, can be viewed on the lower level of the museum. Along with a Liebermann portrait of the collector from 1906, a set of six "proto-impressionist" Impressionist drawings by the draftsman Adolf Menzel are highlights of this small exhibition. These, and numerous works the family was forced to sell in the Nazi era, were recently restituted to the heirs who have given them to the Kunsthalle on permanent loan.



One Misstep in Scotland Will Mean Lights Out

by Marinell Haegelin

***The 39 Steps*, a comedy thriller by Patrick Barlow, presented by the English Theatre of Hamburg with Paul Glaser directing**

The English Theatre has come roaring back with a tour de force to delight audiences with two hours of laugh-out-loud fun. *The 39 Steps* is British playwright Patrick Barlow's 2005 fast-paced, ridiculously exaggerated, and inventive whodunit that has twice won the Tony and Drama Desk Award. Barlow's parody is adapted from Alfred Hitchcock's 1935 film, which added two major female figures, Annabella and Pamela, to John Buchan's 1915 spy novel. Four incredibly gifted actors' exuberant portrayals of villains, troupers, sweetheart, and a spy—150 characters in total—bring it to uproarious life.

London, 1935, Cockney Music Hall: hoping to relieve his boredom, Richard Hannay is watching "Mr. Memory's" memorable performance when a gorgeous dish sits down—only seconds prior to a gunshot. During the ensuing

chaos, Annabella persuades Richard to shelter her from two men tailing her. At his flat, Annabella admits to counter-spying against a foreign power's secret agent who is dead-set on stealing British military top secrets. He's head of the organized spy ring "The 39 Steps" and, she fears, onto her. Annabella describes his give-away physical defect, warning Richard that he's exceedingly dangerous, then borrows a Scotland map while plotting a plan. In the wee hours, she abruptly awakens Richard, alarmed after spotting danger lurking on the street corner. Then, quick as a flash, Annabella falls across Richard's armchair, dead. Aghast, he deduces that the criminal gang knows where he lives and he'd better find Annabella's man in Scotland—fast. Boarding a train, once it's clear the coppers are searching for him, he unsuspectingly brings Pamela into the game. With the criminal gang also in hot pursuit, Richard spends the night at the farm of Crofter and his young wife, Margaret. The pace speeds up as Richard dodges

bullets, jumps through windows, joins a political rally, and bumps into Pamela again; together they escape the police and end up at Hotel McGarrigle. Only in Scotland can he prove he's innocent. So long as he doesn't make a misstep, and his luck holds.

ETH is Hamburg's bridge to London: 550 actors applied for roles in this production, 60 were invited to London auditions, 20 were called back, and, of these, director/choreographer Paul Glaser chose the four thespians currently guesting in Hamburg. What a multi-talented cast: James Killeen plays Richard Hannay throughout; Madeleine Hutchins plays Annabella, Pamela, and Margaret; Charlie McCullagh as Man 1 and Jonny Magnanti as Man 2 perform the many other characters. Glaser has focused on balance: honoring the story and choreographing the slapstick. An extra week of rehearsals was required for coordinating characters' movements while moving props and changing costumes, makeup, etc.—each actor uses 3-5 accents and heaps of hats and wigs. Their scintillating pantomiming—fantastic facial expressions—pull audiences emotionally into the transitions.

Are you ready for some fun? With its witty humor, zany depictions, and romantic romp, *The 39 Steps* is not your run-of-the-mill thriller. It's truly a must-see. ETH is following Hamburg's 2G COVID guidelines for performances.

THE 39 STEPS runs through January 29, 2022. John Patrick Shanley's romantic comedy, *OUTSIDE MULLINGAR* premieres February 11 and runs through April 10, 2022. Evening/matinee performances; tickets online or at the theater: <https://eth-hamburg.de/>. ETH, Lerchenfeld 14, 22081 Hamburg, Tel: 040-227 70 89: U-Bahn Mundsburg.

From left, Madeleine Hutchins, Charlie McCullagh, James Killeen, and Jonny Magnanti driving. Credit: © Kock, ETH

Film Reviews, Winter 2021



© Tobis Film

Ein Festtag (*Mothering Sunday*)****

UK 2021
Opened December 23, 2021

Director: Eva Husson
Writing credits:
screenplay by Alice Birch, based on a novel by Graham Swift
Principle actors: Odessa Young, Josh O'Connor, Sope Dirisu, Olivia Colman, Colin Firth

On a beautiful mild spring day in March, 1924, Jane Fairchild (**Odessa Young**), a young maid, has her day off. While her employers, Mr. and Mrs. Nivens (**Colin Firth** and **Olivia Colman**), meet up with the local gentry for a picnic, Jane sneaks off to visit with the son of one of these neighboring families, Paul Sheringham (**Josh O'Connor**), while his parents attend the picnic. The young couple spends an intoxicating few hours together, most of it naked in Paul's bedroom. When Paul leaves to finally join the picnic, Jane has the run of his

family's house to herself, where she wanders, still naked, through the beautiful rooms filled with possessions she can only dream of having. It is the last time Jane will ever see Paul, and she's already grieving the loss of their secret relationship, though that grief will be transformed by the end of the day.

This is a movie very focused on grief: the Nivens and the Sheringhams have lost their sons in the First World War, and their collective pain is best articulated by Mrs. Nivens, whose rage balances out her husband's bumbling befuddlement in the face of loss. Jane wants to be a writer, and the movie flashes forward in time to reveal how she manages to turn these stories—and her place in them—into successful novels. *Mothering Sunday* is filmed in a lush and careful way, taking time to linger on details and moments that stretch out into posterity. It's a slow film, but it's never dull. Jane's future accomplishments as a writer stem from the events of this single day, from the love affair with Paul to the miserable advice Mrs. Niven bestows upon her, beseeching her to turn her disadvantages in life into advantages. So director **Eva Husson** takes the time to capture this day from all its angles, richly examining the hours of Jane's life so that she can juxtapose them against moments in Jane's later relationships and experiences. The result is a beautifully rich and moving film. (Diana Perry Schnelle)

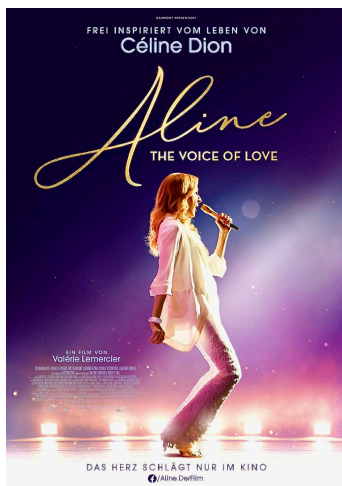


Sing—Die Show Deines Lebens (*Sing 2*) ****

France/Japan/USA 2021
Opening January 20, 2022

Director: Garth Jennings
Writing credits: Garth Jennings
Principal actors:
animation (original English actors over-dubbed in Germany)

Buster Moon and his team of musicians Meena, Gunter, Rosita, Johnny, and Ash, arrive at the office of Crystal Entertainment, hoping to impress Mr. Jimmy Crystal. They claim to include a famous performer, Clay Calloway. By chance, they finagle a gig in Mr. Crystal's theater. He even arranges for them to reside in his fancy Crystal Tower Hotel. They begin staging for their musical *Not of This World*. They practice dancing with Nooshi, who has creative ideas. Newcomer Darius works with Meena on a duet. The biggest surprise is Porsha, the daughter of Mr. Crystal, who joins the troupe, singing



© Weltkino Filmverleih

Aline, The Voice of Love (Aline) *****

France/Canada/Belgium
2020
Opened December 23,
2021

Director: Valérie Lemer-
cier
Writing credits: Brigitte
Buc, Valérie Lemercier
Principal actors:
Valérie Lemercier,
Sylvain Marcel, Danielle
Fichaud, Roc Lafortune,
Antoine Vézina, Pascale
Desrochers, Jean-Noël
Brouté, Victoria Sio

It's 1932 in Quebec; young Sylvette (**Danielle Fichaud**) and Anglomard (**Roc LaFortuna**) are getting married. Anglomard says he "doesn't want any children but plans to concentrate all his love on dear Sylvette." They live in a small house near a forest, where Anglomard works until he takes over a small hotel. About 35 years later, their fourteenth and last child, daughter Aline, is born. She grows up in the large, 57-member, musical Dieu family, where all play various instruments and sing, even accompanying events as a band. Her brothers' first names are always "Jean" with second names such as Jean-Bobin, Jean-Claudin, or Jean-Sylvain. At age 12, Aline sings a solo at yet another wedding. The family recognizes that there is a future for her in music. Mother Sylvette and brother Jean-Bobin (**Antoine Vézina**) write a song for her and send it via cassette to music producer Guy-Claude Kamar (**Sylvain Marcel**). Kamar also recognizes this new talent and provides her with possibilities to perform; this young career takes off. Kamar's advice: don't act cocky or self-confident. Pretend to be worried and insecure; fans

will admire you more. As a teenager, she, having grown up speaking French, takes a break to improve her English and also to have her crooked teeth adjusted. By age 20, Aline Dieu is at the top of the charts and performing throughout Canada and Europe, including at a song contest in Dublin. She is always accompanied by her mother. Aline confesses her love for manager Guy-Claude Kamar. In spite of Sylvette's resistance, the ties between Aline and Guy end in marriage; they have a son named Junior and later twins. Her immense income provides residency in a huge villa. As Guy, slowly too old for the job, remains at home, she shares her stories on the road with her make-up artist, Fred (**Jean-Noël Brouté**).

Aline, The Voice of Love opens with "this is fiction based on the life of Céline Dion." Research shows that this basic story is actually very factual. She WAS born in Canada, the youngest of 14 siblings. Her mother and brother did write a song for her, which went to a producer. Her career did take off at a young age; she toured the world, married her manager, had three sons, including twins, and won many awards. Fictitious in the film are the names and perhaps small details added to carry the plot. **Valérie Lemercier** directs and plays the lead of Aline Dieu. Considering that she is also a singer, one wonders why she did not sing the songs herself. In the end, however, they were perfectly presented, via voiceover by **Victoria Sio**. I counted 41 songs in the credits and recognized many of them during the film such as "My Heart Will Go On" and "What a Wonderful World." There is one version of "Love Me Tender" as a tribute to Elvis Presley, who died when she was very young, but with whom she had a close artistic connection. Céline Dion, at age 53, is still performing, although perhaps travelling less. If you missed an opportunity to enjoy her on stage, then do not miss this film with 128 minutes of inspiring music and an extraordinary career. (Becky Tan)

and dancing. Mr. Crystal is less enthused when he learns that the famous Clay Calloway, long since retired, has never heard of them. Perhaps it's time to locate Calloway and set up a connection. Miss Crawly drives out to find him.

Everyone who saw the first *Sing*, which opened in 2016, knows, of course, that each character is an animated animal: mouse, elephant, pig, lion, gorilla, bull, chameleon, fox, rabbit. You name it. Naturally, they are a fantastic success, with no need to depend on Jimmy Crystal (who is a fox). This won-

derful sequel in dazzling colorful animation features everyone's favorite songs such as Prince's "Let's Go Crazy" or U2's "But I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For," all performed by animals, who are fashionably dressed, holding on to their mobile phones. This is much fun for the whole family of all ages. In the end, as the credits scrolled down, my nine-year-old guest said, "I want to see the film again!" Don't miss this new *Sing*—especially awesome for viewers in Hamburg, which is the third biggest musical city after London and New York City. (Becky Tan)



© Sony Pictures

Parallele Mütter (Madres Paralelas/ Parallel Mothers) ****
Spain 2021
Opening January 6, 2022

Director: Pedro Almodóvar
Writing credits: Pedro Almodóvar
Principal actors: Penélope Cruz, Milena Smit, Rossy de Palma, Israel Elejalde, Aitana Sánchez Gijón and Julietta Serrano

This latest work by **Pedro Almodóvar** opened the Venice Film Festival in September and was very well received. It is not an “over-the-top” movie, like so many of his previous films, but a serious piece, celebrating motherhood, the solidarity of women, and the importance of family history. The film has many unexpected twists and turns with very dramatic moments, and completely draws you in.

Penélope Cruz, in her seventh collaboration with Almodóvar, is perfectly cast as Janis (yes, named after Janis Joplin by her hippie mother), a successful photographer, who, at 40, finds herself pregnant. Arturo (**Israel Elejalde**), the baby’s father, is married to a wife who is battling cancer, and Janis knows that she will be a single mother. Still, she is overjoyed

by her pregnancy, unlike Ana (**Milena Smit**), whose pregnancy was everything but deliberate, and who is terrified by it. The two women, seemingly as different as could be, meet in the hospital’s maternity ward, pass time together while waiting for their babies to arrive, and literally give birth at about the same moment. Encouraged by Janis, Ana becomes less frightened of her future, even if she is very much left alone by her own mother, Teresa (**Aitana Sánchez Gijón**), a rather self-centered actress who leaves town to follow her acting ambitions rather than support her teenage daughter. Before they leave the hospital, the two women exchange their contact details and promise to stay in touch. Arturo, who comes to visit Janis and to see the baby, makes an insulting comment to Janis, doubting his fatherhood of the child. However, the more Janis thinks about it, the more doubt grows in her as well, and what follows, will change the life of everybody...

This is only one level of the movie. There is another, political, aspect, which plays an equally important part in the movie. Arturo is a forensic anthropologist and a member of a foundation which tries to uncover the whereabouts of more than 100,000 “missing” victims of the Spanish Civil War and the merciless Franco regime. Janis’s grandfather was one of those victims, and Janis has asked Arturo to oversee the excavation of a gravesite in the small village where her grandparents lived. Follow Almodóvar as he masterfully links these two parts of the story. (Ulrike Lemke)



Belfast ****
UK 2021
Opening February 24, 2022

Director: Kenneth Branagh
Writing credits: Kenneth Branagh
Principal actors: Caitríona Balfe, Judi Dench, Jamie Dornan, Ciarán Hinds, Jude Hill



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Wanda, Mein Wunder (My Wonderful Wanda)

Switzerland 2020
Opening January 13,
2022

Director: Bettina Oberli
Writing credits: Cooky
Ziesche, Bettina Oberli
Principal actors:
Agnieszka Grochowska,
Marthe Keller, André
Jung, Birgit Minichmayr,
Jacob Matschenz,
Anatole Taubman

Wanda (**Agnieszka Grochowska**) is the caregiver of Josef (**André Jung**), who must keep to his bed. She is 35 years old and comes from Poland, where she has left her two small sons, Tomasz (**Bruno Rajski**) and Jakub (**Iwo Rajski**), in the care of her own parents. In Switzerland, she lives in the basement of a big family house, along with Joseph's wife, Elsa (**Marthe Keller**), and their grown son, Gregi (**Jacob Matschenz**). Their daughter, Sophie (**Birgit Minichmayr**), visits with her husband, Manfred (**Anatole Taubman**). Eventually, the cleaning lady quits; Wanda is persuaded to take over these additional responsibilities for a higher salary, making her even more essential to the family. AND Joseph secretly pays her well to sleep with him—all just income for the good of the Polish family. Naturally, this is soon revealed and Elsa, accompanied by Gregi and Sophie, demand an ex-

planation. The situation explodes, and Wanda returns to Poland, and life continues as before. But does it? She is pregnant, and Joseph is the father, although Elsa had convinced him that he couldn't have more children.

My Wonderful Wanda presents excellent possibilities to sort through problems from different aspects. Joseph is proud to know that he can still “do” it. Elsa is considering divorce. Perhaps Sophie and Manfred should be the parents. How about Gregi? Will Wanda give up the child? How about €100,000 to take over the new baby (who is soon born)? But they are Catholic and, anyway, “the Poles only want our money.” Filmed on the shores of a beautiful lake, the participants sit on the shore or on a boat. Gregi, designated to become the head of the family company, loves to observe birds, and can copy each bird's song perfectly. Joseph celebrates his seventieth birthday with many guests and gradually leaves his bed to become more independent. Son-in-law Manfred thinks he knows all the answers. Wanda's family arrives, unexpectedly, with its own opinions, reviving the conflict, which was supposedly already solved. And then there is the cow.

This is not a film for short-term entertainment, but one to think about, discuss, and consider in light of one's own solutions to problems. The film is divided into three parts, each beginning with Wanda getting off the bus from Poland; it ends with a short epilogue. *My Wonderful Wanda* was filmed in Warsaw, Poland, and Stäfa and Horgen in Switzerland. It played in eight film festivals, including the 2020 Tribeca Film Festival. It opened the 2020 Zurich Film Festival. It was nominated for thirteen prizes and won four. (Becky Tan)

Sir Kenneth Branagh was born in Belfast, Northern Ireland, in 1960, and spent the first nine years of his life there. This semi-autobiographical movie is his most personal project to date, made for those who stayed, those who left, and those who were lost in the tumultuous times of the Northern Ireland conflict. The story is set in August 1969, in a typical working class neighborhood, where, until then, Catholics and Protestants had lived together peacefully. Nine-year-old Buddy (introducing 10-year-old **Jude Hill**) grows up going to movies, collecting matchbox cars, and falling in love for the first time with his classmate. His father (**Jamie Dornan**) is away often, working as a joiner in England, so that Buddy is very close to his mother (**Caitríona Balfe**) and his loving grandparents (**Dame Judi Dench** and **Ciarán Hinds**). When violence erupts in this previously harmonious neighborhood, with Catholic shops being attacked and looted, the Protestant family is threatened with harm if they do not take

sides and participate in the violence, Buddy's parents begin to talk about leaving Belfast. That means leaving the ailing grandfather and the devoted grandmother, but most of all, their home.

Whilst the movie is filmed in black and white, to stress the seriousness of the conflict, and all performances are superb, everything seems a little bit too smooth on the surface, not grimy and dark enough. The mother is too well coiffed, the father too cleanly shaven, everything looks a bit too neat. The music, mostly by Van Morrison, who is also a native of Belfast, changes to the theme song from *High Noon* (“Do Not Forsake Me”) in some critical scenes. However, all this is forgiven, because it is obvious that Kenneth Branagh's work is a labor of love and a tribute to his Northern Irish heritage. (Ulrike Lemke)



Édouard Vuillard (1868–1940)
 Blick auf die Binnenalster, 1913
 Gouache on Cardboard, 74 x 55,2 cm

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