

Contents

Currents Vol.XXVII No.5

FEATURES

- 4 How do I cope...
- 5 My Bucket List
- 6 Beating the Wintertime Blues
- 6 The Winter of my Discontent
- 7 How I make it past Christmas

ACTIVITY REVIEWS

- 8 - 9 AWCH's Celebration of Membership
- 10 An Evening with Jeffry Eugenides
- 11 French Cuisine Course Part Deux
- 12 Thanksgivings Potluck at DESY
- 17 New Membership Event

FAWCO

- 19 FAWCO News
- 20 ITWDP Watershed Update
- 21 Region 5 Rocks
- 22 An American Weekend in Berlin

MEMBERSHIP

- 13 Getting To Know You
- 14 Activity Calendar January/February
- 15 Calendar January/February
- 16 On-Going Activities
- 17 Invitation HH-Helpers Event
- 18 Congratulations
- 18 Invitation AWCH's Celebration of Membership

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

- 23 Art Preview
- 24-26 At the Movies

INFO

- 20 Recipe
- 27 Danke!Danke! Danke!
- 27 AWCH Contacts

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Letter from the next Content Editor



Kara Wahn

Thanks everyone for the wonderful contributions you sent to Elizabeth B. Because there were too many articles to fit into one issue, the March/April issue will be the second part of the Hamburg neighborhood series. However, we still need your reviews from the December Christmas and January activities, any book and restaurant reviews. Please send what you may have to me by the **January 30th deadline**.

Proofreading I: Tuesday, February 7, 19:30 at Doris' Diner

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How do I cope with the long and dark Winter Month?



by Birgit Schrumpf

to my family: to my daughters and my grandchildren. This either involves heading off to Brisbane, Australia, to visit Natascha or to Tanja in Cape Town, South Africa. Since I retired I have been spending up to two months away from Hamburg, leaving in December and coming back in February. Therefore, Christmas time means summer time – in Australia as well as in South Africa.

This year it will be different. I am staying in Hamburg for the winter season – and I am actually looking forward to it. It's such a special time with all the twinkling lights and decorations. One can wander from one



Christmas market to the next, sample Glühwein and enjoy the relaxed atmosphere. Everyone seems friendly, and I often get involved chatting to strangers (locals or tourists) when standing in line to get a drink or some of the delicious smelling

Christmas specialties.

This year I will also be able to attend the traditional AWC Cookie Exchange for the first time, the White Elephant Trash gift exchange, and the yearly Hamburg Helper event which is always arranged for early January. I am looking forward to spending some fun time with friends from the Club.

During the winter season there are so many events that I would like to go to. I have a hard time deciding on interesting exhibitions (Kunsthalle, Deichtorhallen, Bucerius, etc.), lectures and book readings, concerts in churches and plays at a handful of small theatres that I've never been to. The English Theatre and Rover Theatre have performances in English.



But, I also like staying at home when icy winds are howling outside. I am grateful for my warm and cosy flat, thanks to the luxury of "Zentralheizung" (unheard of in Cape Town where I lived for many years through rainy winters of 5-10°C). It's bliss to put up my feet, lazing on the sofa, sipping hot chocolate – or red wine – and reading my book. I am not sure how I'll feel by the end of February but by that time the days will be getting longer and spring will not be far away.

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My Bucket List



by Susan Stanley Witt

When the days are dark, wet and cold I tend to flee indoors where it is warm and cozy. I love to cuddle up with a good movie or book and a cup of piping hot tea. If my children don't interrupt me, which is seldom the case, I can sit there for hours. I use these long dark days for contemplation. Last year, which was icy and cold, I used this time to make my bucket list. You know, the list of stuff you want to get done before you kick the bucket.



If you are 30 perhaps this is not so urgent, but for someone who just turned 50 mortality kind of gives you a kick in the pants. Wake up... I'm are going to be at retirement age in a few years and my kids are making jokes about how they will be picking out my retirement home. At the top of my list was learning to tap dance. I really don't know why I wanted to learn to tap. Yes, I had loved the old Fred Astaire musicals and Gene Kelly singing in the rain but it was more than that. I had never had dance lessons as a child. No one forced me to go to ballet every week. But now, as an adult, interest was piqued. I could purchase those leather shoes with the metal plates on the bottom.

Shortly thereafter there was an ad on the front page of my local newspaper advertising for beginning tap classes. It was a sign. No more procrastinating. The school was also close to my house in Stresemannstrasse next to *Graceland*, the restaurant. Time to start crossing stuff off my bucket list so off I went. A few months later, my teacher Thomas, announced that the school would be performing at *Kampnagel Fabrik* and we beginners could be in the finale if we wanted. Most of the group immediately found something on the floor which required their attention but my hand was up in the air. After the lesson my only thought was I had turned into a crazy person and was taking this bucket list too seriously. I had had twenty-five lessons and had the arrogance to

believe I could perform in front of people.

The next week I went to Thomas and asked him if this whole *Kampnagel* thing was for real. He gave me one of these German "of course it is; otherwise, I would not have said it" looks. I then asked if I would make a big fool of myself performing in front of people. He told me to practice. Time went by and *Kampnagel* neared. When we went there for the last rehearsals before our two big nights we got special performer passes allowing us a reduction on food and drinks at the bar. I felt pretty special and was sure everyone was staring and thinking "she's one of the performers". I was so proud

On our first night's performance I was terrified, thinking evil thoughts about bucket lists. Thinking "thank God my family wasn't coming until the second night". I was sure I would be calmer then. The problem with stage fright is your mind goes blank. I had no clue what my feet were supposed to do. I figured I could hide in the back where no one would see me. The first few beats of the song I felt a rising panic. I forced myself to calm down and kept repeating "you can do this, you can do this". The first couple of steps hiccupped but then it got better. At the end I was having fun and felt euphoric. I was tap dancing in front of an audience, with stage lights and the works. We even made it into YouTube. Luckily they filmed the second night. Months later I am still going to classes, making progress and thinking about what is next on my bucket list. During the cold dark days to come I am going to give it some thought



Beating the Wintertime Blues



Luckily, Hamburg's cold weather is no match for the bitter Detroit winters I grew up with. Smartly, my parents were proactive and to keep my sister and me from getting the wintertime blues they always had a long list of winter activities to keep us occupied. Many of these traditions have stuck and now, though we are an ocean apart, my sister and I still know just what to do to ward off the blizzard blues. From watching *The Christmas Story* on repeat under fleece blankets to making an endless supply of hot chocolate first thing in the morning (I add cinnamon and cayenne pepper to mine now that I'm a grown up), to watching *White Christmas* on Christmas Eve--every year I'm away I realize more and more that participating in our annual rituals not only helps me to ward off wintertime blues, but it helps us to keep getting closer every year, even though we are apart. - **Lauren Dean**

One of the things that gets me through the long winter days is planning my summer vacation. Our family spends six weeks on the East coast staying with family and friends, and part of our time there is spent on the Outer Banks of North Carolina. Perusing the multiple real estate agencies looking over hundreds of beach houses we might potentially stay at always helps to brighten my spirits. Thinking of the good times ahead with my family and friends always warms my heart. - **Lori Dove**



The Winter of My Discontent

By Catherine Conner



When I first came to Hamburg, the color I saw was green. Nobody warned me that by November Hamburg's colors fade to grey! Winter here affects me more adversely than anywhere else I've ever lived. The sun sets early and rises late – if you see the sun at all. Most days the clouds just lighten to pale grey before darkening again to black by 4:30pm. Even the weather itself seems apathetic and colorless: it's "kinda" cold, "kinda" raining, "kinda" windy. Everything takes on a greyish tinge. You find yourself wishing for a bit of snow that would at least

brighten up the place a bit!

I wouldn't say that I actually manage to banish my winter blues, but since it's the environment that's the cause, that's where I try to fight back. I use the following tricks to artificially engage my senses until nature springs back into action:

1. Light, light, and more light. Every light anywhere close to me is on. As much ambient light as I can provide myself, I do.
 2. Candles. They provide light, but in a warmer, more natural, comforting way than electric lighting. They can also do double duty as part of item 3....
 3. Scent. This is a big one for me. Candles or heated oil, preferably with natural aromas of flowers or spices. Favorites include cinnamon, lavender, and lemon grass. (One at a time, of course!)
 4. Cooking. This also can be considered part of item 3 – I think the smell of something baking, or soup simmering on the stove, is as invigorating to me as actually eating it.
 5. Plants. Lots of living greenery in the house is healthy all year round, but in winter it's even more important to me. Fresh flowers on occasion bring in some new color and scents.
 6. Music. Anything that gets my blood pumping – no blues or requiems.
 7. Laughter. Comedy, in video or audio form. Standup, movies, albums, podcasts....anything that makes me laugh.
- So that's my arsenal – perhaps a bit underpowered to take on such a huge enemy. Once in a while, winter wins – then it's under the covers with a good book. Preferably until spring.



How I make it past Christmas

If I am to be honest with myself, I don't really handle the long northern German winter well. Oh, I am okay up until about mid January and then things start to go bad and I just resign myself that it is going to be a long hard road to spring. Actually, October gets me in the mood for winter. I love fall, so I do begin winter in the best of moods. November comes and although some say it is a horrible months with lots of wind and rain storms, I kind of like it. I light candles and enjoy the rainy days by being warm and dry inside. I like to puzzle so I set up a table in our spare room and work on 1500 and 2000 piece puzzles. Since I discovered NPR podcasts about 2 years ago, I like listening to and learning about a variety of subjects while I fumble with those d*** monotone blue sky pieces.

In addition to the puzzles I love watching movies. I use late January and early February to catch up on the Oscar nominated films I haven't seen yet before the Academy Awards. I wind up watching just as many films that weren't nominated just because I have the time and well, the weather is too cold and dreary to leave the house. When else can you put your jammies on at four o'clock in the afternoon and drink a hot chocolate in front of the TV without feeling guilty about not going out to work in the garden?

I do pray for snow. I know that many people would strangle me with my winter scarf if they heard that, but I love it when it



snows. I love shoveling my front walkway and even the long one that goes the entire length of your garden down the side street. Just racking up those burned calories and smelling that special smell that only falling snow brings. I love the fact that noises are muted during a snowfall and the sound of snow crunching under my boots seems

amplified. Plus, when everything is covered by snow, the day is brighter and not so grey and dreary.

I also call my family a lot more during the colder months. I don't spend as much time running around as I do in the warmer months and an hour long conversation with my sister or mom is not unusual.

Other than complain a lot and find excuses to meet up with friends, I find I am able to get through Hamburg winters. I do listen carefully, though, for those first trills and tweets from birds signaling the first signs of spring.



Here are a few ways I am planning to get through this Hamburg winter:

- 1) Keep repeating to myself, "at least there is not so much snow as back home in the U.S."
- 2) December - Christmas market
- 3) January - New Year's, and how about a quick weekend trip to Berlin?
- 4) February - our 10-year wedding anniversary!
- 5) March - Hamburg's early 2 vacation weeks
- 6) Going to Opera Club (a shameless Club promotion!!)

- Elizabeth Reifke





AWCH's CELEBRATION OF MEMBERSHIP



by *Lauren Dean*

Certainly, there are few moments in our life that touch us in a way that leave us feeling satisfied and inspired simultaneously. Our Celebration of Membership, held September 29th in the stunning US Consulate, provided one of these unique experiences that left me feeling ready to take on the world.

I enjoyed the evening with 66 other guests: brand new members, members that joined AWC over thirty years ago, potential members, and guests, all equally positive and inspirational, and all who added to the beauty of the evening. We enjoyed delicious appetizers and beverages during our reception hour, then were honored to hear seven personal testimonies from the familiar faces of Nancy Tilitz, Dr. Emilia Jucker, Susan Stanley-Witt, Becky Tan, Sus Ewing-Bolke, and Frauke Rademacher-Heidemann. These ladies shared their personal experiences, all which revolved around the crucial support they've received from fellow members. Then, with big smiles and teary eyes, we listened to the perfectly hilarious and unbelievably talented pianist Robin Meloy Goldsby (AIWC Cologne) as she graced us with an hour-long, unforgettable performance. She shared stories from her hysterically funny book, *Waltz of the Asparagus People*, and played lovely music from her album of the same title. After several rounds of applause, guests scooped up her supply of CDs and books, and spent the rest of the evening complimenting her performance.

After the clean-up and the thank yous to our caterer and the helpful Consulate staff, I walked home feeling satisfied, inspired, and very, very grateful. The prospect of meeting such welcoming, worldly, and philosophical women is exactly why I so willingly made the move to Hamburg fifteen months ago. This realization brought on a rush of pure satisfaction, as I hope it did for the slew of fabulous people that joined us.

Reflections from members: What did you enjoy the most about the evening?

"It was a tie between talking with so many beautiful women and absorbing Robin Meloy Goldsby's superb presentation!"

Sandra Stapela, joined in 1986

"Cocktail hour and catching up with old friends."

Mary Wienke, joined in 1995

"Robin didn't disappoint: her music was beautiful and her stories were both touching and funny. An especially funny moment for me was watching my husband squirm: he had had to work late and arrived just in time for Robin's sauna story! The real gems of the evening were the short presentations by the longstanding members of this club. Their accounts of the "highs and lows" of moving abroad were moving, and the strength they found in themselves and in one another through this club was inspiring."

Allison Marseille, joined in 2011



"Talking with old friends and the performance. I am glad I accepted the personal invitation from our president."

Heidi Kaekenmeister, joined in 1978

"Robin Meloy Goldsby's hilarious performance! It was nice seeing so many new and familiar faces."

Sus Ewing Bölke, joined in 1999

"Robin Meloy Goldsby was definitely the highlight of the evening. Not only is she a wonderful pianist, but also incredibly funny. Her stories were great. It was nice to have an evening event with so many members participating and having time to meet new members. The stories from long time members and, of course, being able to share this event together in the beautiful American Consulate were very special."

Kathy Temps, joined in 1998

"It was an honor to be at the US Consulate during my first visit to Germany. It was a perfect setting for a gathering of brilliant women and men, who I was pleased to spend the evening with. Robin was simply a delight. Plus, I was honored to be the official photographer!"

Julie Dean, guest of Lauren Dean



“The event was truly brilliant.”
Becky Tan, joined in 1977

“Very emotional and personal anecdotes by our long-term members.”

Tina Grieben, joined in 2009

Personal testimonies from members unable to speak on Thursday, but who wanted to share their stories:

“I have to thank AWCH for kick-starting my career again. We moved to the States in the 1980's because my husband worked for an American company. We moved to Hamburg in 2000 because he was asked to work for a German company. The company's PR person told him about the AWC, so I made a contact and attended a luncheon. There I met Becky Tan and when catastrophe struck she rescued me by suggesting I get in touch with the International School Hamburg because they are usually in need of substitutes. I took her advice, started teaching there full-time in 2001, and have been there ever since. So, thank you, AWCH, for my career here and for all of my lovely AWCH friends.”

Jenny Mather, joined in 2000



“When I first joined the AWCH, it was as a newlywed back in 1968. My Hamburg-born husband and I reluctantly moved away for some 6+ years, and then happily returned in 1977. One of the first things I did was to rejoin the AWC! Yes, I was on the Board, wrote a monthly newsletter column, and was involved in many activities. But I received many times over friendship and knowledge in return. And this I truly mean. My husband said

that “if the AWC hadn't existed, he would have had to invent it” – how's that for a supportive spouse?! Even though we no longer live in Hamburg, I enjoy reading Currents, and marvel at the content, the members, and the activities. And I'd sign up for the class on how to be savvy regarding my laptop! With the very best of wishes to everyone!”

Carol Battenfeld, joined in 1968 and again in 1977



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An Evening with Jeffery Eugenides



by Pat Frickey

"Berlin ist arm aber sexy. Hamburg ist nicht so sexy, aber reich!" So began Jeffery Eugenides' charm offensive in the NDR Rolf-Liebermann-Studio on Thursday, November 10th. After all, he knows about Berlin because he had lived there for five years between 1999 and 2004. Not that he had to dazzle an already reverent audience. Eugenides, David-Niven-dashing in a conservative dark grey suit and black and white floral printed shirt, had come to promote his newest novel *The Marriage Plot*. The reading was sponsored jointly by the *Literaturhaus* and NDR *Kultur*. Eugenides is the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of two renowned novels *The Virgin Suicides* and *Middlesex*. During the evening Eugenides read a chapter from *The Marriage Plot* in English; Heiko De Groot from the Thalia Theater read another chapter in German. Interspersed between the readings was what the audience had really come for, the interview of a gracious and learned man. Journalist and author Felicitas von Lovenberg deftly moderated, transitioning seamlessly between German and English. Eugenides explained that his newest novel *The Marriage Plot* is based on the structure of Henry James' *Portrait of a Lady*, the traditional love story theme about who gets the girl (the marriage plot). He used the narrative device of a woman, with many choices, in search of a husband. He expressed regret that it is no longer possible to write such a romantic novel today. His main female character Madeleine is so aware of the cliché of falling in love, she is unable to do so. Madeleine is a student of English literature at Brown University in the early 80s when semiotics as championed by Roland Barthes — the study of symbols and signs — is just beginning to gain a foothold in the English Department. Eugenides, too, had studied English literature at Brown in the early 80s. He disclosed

he had read nothing romantic at Brown; his view of romantic love had come entirely from the fairy tales he had ingested as a young child. Eugenides admitted that this was the first time he could write completely from a female point of view. In *The Virgin Suicides* he didn't try, however in *Middlesex* he had started. In *The Marriage Plot* he was able to find commonalities with Madeleine, and joked that as a "serial monogamist" he had picked up a lot of women's secrets....like that *Ocean Spray* cranberry juice helps with urinary tract infections. Then once again he became serious and revealed that he feels emotional sympathy with his characters, that is why he can get in their heads. Eugenides denied staying up for sleep deprived nights to write about Leonard, the manic-depressive philosophy student and second character in Madeleine's love triangle. Writing about Leonard demanded experimental writing and not putting himself in to a self-induced maniacal state. Eugenides admitted that Mitchell, Madeleine's other admirer and a religious scholar from Detroit who travels

to India to work with Mother Teresa, is partially autobiographical. In a moment of self-deprecation, he thanked the moderator for including Mitchell's full head of curly hair in his own description (see photo). Like Mitchell, Eugenides did volunteer with Mother Teresa in India. He explained that when he went to Brown he had had no background at all in religion, but today finds religion as important as love. Eugenides confided he didn't know how he feels about the



fact that 60% of his books being sold in the USA are e-books. He is a bit alarmed by an offer made to him recently for a new product, an e-book with sound which could become like a TV. He explained that reading should be creating pictures in your own head, you don't need music added. When asked which book he would like people to read today, he reassured the audience that *Anna Karenina* would be the one.

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French Cuisine Cooking Course Part Deux:

Soufflé Secrets by Mary Wienke



My favorite cuisine is French. I have experimented with many popular dishes, but never have new recipes for old favorites tasted so delicious! After the first cooking class held at the International School, a second class to

learn the secrets of soufflés was requested. Alexandra invited the six of us to her lovely home where we managed to use every available surface of her luxurious eat-in kitchen to create salads and soufflés under her and Nathalie's careful direction. We attempted pumpkin soup with chestnuts, cheese soufflé, endive salad, cheese and ham soufflé with the best saved for last – a dessert soufflé with orange zest and Grand Marnier, all served in the cozy dining room with great wines. Since my local French res-

changed ownership, recreate the family nier soufflé. *Soufflés Nathalie* were truly eaten! I used the night for my mom, we both devoured



taurant in Orlando I have been trying to favorite Grand Mar-au grand Marnier a la the best I have ever recipe again the next and she agreed as seconds.



Merci beaucoup Alexandra and Nathalie!



by Elizabeth Reifke

The Opera Club concluded its *Zauberflöte* season with an entertaining outing to the Staatsoper. Our group started off at neighboring Gänsemarkt for our first *Glühwein* of the season and then moved on to the opera house. We enjoyed a most curious version of *Die Zauberflöte* complete with a voluptuous snake, a purse-toting pig,

the largest hand ever seen on an opera stage, and a puzzling twist ending. A post-performance stop at the Ristorante Opera for great food and sightings of opera singers rounded out a satisfying evening.

After spending a lot of time with Rossini and Mozart, the Opera Club is now moving on to Giuseppe Verdi and his exquisite opera *La Traviata*. Verdi is one of the most famous and beloved opera composers of all time, and *La Traviata* is certainly his best-known and most-performed work. Generations of opera fans have been fascinated by the stirring music that tells the story of sympathetic, tragic Violetta.

Have you always been curious about opera but feel intimidated by the subject material? Would you like to see an opera but you don't want to be bored? Then join us for Opera Club. We welcome newcomers, work with the basics, and help each other get to know an opera well before attending a performance.

Our next meeting will be on Monday, January 9 at 10:30 a.m. at Elizabeth R.'s home in Poppenbüttel. For more information, contact us at opera@awchamburg.org.



by Cat Conner

AWCH Member Ulrike Henn recently showed off her beautiful photography in the exhibition "Wanderer...". The exhibition, done in collaboration with fellow artist Johanna Wunderlich, opened on November 11 at the *Photo.Kunst.Raum*. in Altona. Several members of the AWCH attended opening night, where visitors

were treated to drinks and personal tours of the exhibition by the artists. The fantastic collection of photographs and art pieces inspired by the theme "wanderer" were displayed to full advantage in a unique exhibit design; cloud photos, for example, were placed high on the walls near the ceiling, while more "earthy"-themed works were mounted lower towards the floor. A thoroughly enjoyable cultural experience – and another chance to celebrate the creative talent found in our club!



Thanksgivings Potluck at DESY -

How wonderful it was ...



by Elizabeth Reifke

much work for the organizers, I'd love to do that again in the future." – **Jennifer Crawford**

"The brownie and the mashed potatoes!" – **Sophie Einfeldt** (daughter of Jennifer Crawford and Sönke Einfeldt)

"I greatly enjoyed the company, as always with the AWC. The food was really good, and it tasted 'right'. I appreciate German restaurants' sincere attempts to make Thanksgiving food, but it's never quite the same! Susan Stanley Witt's sons, Sammy, are one of the most charming, persuasive salesmen I have ever met and Niklas, is incredibly patient with lively, excited small boys!"

– **Elizabeth Reifke**

"Described the dinner in three sentences: The babysitters were great. The games were fun. The food was good." – **Jonas Reifke**

"After enjoying ourselves tremendously at this event I can't think of a better way to celebrate

"There is nothing better than eating Thanksgiving dishes prepared by fully-qualified Americans! I enjoyed the various takes on stuffing, sweet potatoes, and more. Everything was delicious, and it felt like a throwback to my childhood to participate in a good old-fashioned potluck. If it's not too

Thanksgiving than with a potluck! The delicious dinner and dessert contributions were a wonderful way to enjoy the evening with so many members. I can't say enough about our incredibly tasty catered turkeys and gravy! We ate, talked, and laughed all evening and were sad to leave when the night finally came to an end. Many thanks to the many helping hands that made this event a success!"

– **Lauren Dean**

"The potluck this year for Thanksgiving was a great idea! The food was fantastic. Along with the turkey from the caterer it made a wonderful meal. The board had the room beautifully decorated and put everyone in a festive mood. Thanks for the best Thanksgiving!"

– **Tina Grieben**

"There were nice people, good authentic, American food and we all had an amazing time. I enjoyed helping people in India by selling raffle tickets." – **Sammy Witt**

"I liked the food and the people were very nice. I had a lot of fun babysitting the small kids and playing games." – **Niklas Witt**

"Susan's brownies!!" – **Rebecca Moede**

"I liked the food that everybody brought. It was nice that everyone was celebrating an American holiday together in Germany."

– **Allison Moede**



Thanksgiving Cranberry Salad

from Marisa Rast

1/2 cup HOT water

1 small package cherry Jello

1/2 cup sugar

1- 8 oz or 236 g can crushed pineapple, drained but save 1/2 cup juice or add water to make 1/2 cup

1 can whole cranberry sauce

2 tsp lemon juice

1 cup chopped celery

1 orange, seeded and ground up in blender

1/2 cup chopped nuts, pecans or walnuts

Dissolve Jello and sugar in 1/2 cup HOT water.

Add pineapple juice, lemon juice, and chill until partially set.

Add pineapple, orange, celery, nuts and can of cranberry sauce.

Chill overnight.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

Welcome our new Members...



Sylvia Dong and Family

What shall I write about myself? When people ask me where I am from, I don't always know what to answer. I am originally from South Korea; I was born in Germany but left Germany 16 years ago. I spent one year in Chicago, then three years in the Netherlands to study, six months Flagstaff, Arizona and another 11 1/2 years in Paris where I got married, although my German husband and I met in the Netherlands and had my two little kids, now two and four years old. Now my life is centered mostly around them and I am trying to find friends for my four year old son. In Paris Felix had so many friends and we had play dates almost every day. Other than that I love movies, I like reading a good book and having people over for some Korean food. We had a knitting group in Paris so I am happy to go to and host Stitch'n Bitch, although all I can do is a scarf!

My name is **Erin Merrihew** and I was born and raised in Seattle, WA. I just graduated from the University of Washington in June with a degree in Sociology and Spanish. It was an impulsive solo trip to Guadalajara, Mexico in 2009 that eventually brought me here to Hamburg. There I met my boyfriend Inti, a half-Bolivian half-German, who has lived in Germany for about a decade and works for Mercedes



Benz here in Hamburg. I spent the past two summers here, finally moved in October, and will be sticking around until March 2012 when we plan to relocate to Bolivia and open a youth hostel there. I spend my days teaching English to adorable tiny children, serving drinks at an Irish pub, and exploring the city. I love being outdoors, doing yoga, traveling, speaking Spanish (and broken German), good music & dancing. I also dedicate much of my free time to creating and consuming yummy vegetarian food. Right now my favorite hobby is *Weihnachtsmarkt*-browsing!



Janine Tomlinson here, hailing from sunny Tampa, Florida by way of the even sunnier island of Antigua. My husband Brian and I relocated to Hamburg two months ago from Atlanta, Georgia. Brian is working on a six month project with Hapag-Lloyd. However, we love it so much here we're exploring the possibilities of staying longer.

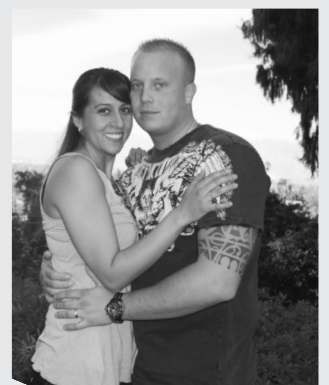
I'm proud to say that I am an entrepreneur and we operate an online marketing business as

well as a travel business. Traveling is a huge part of my life and I am intrigued to learn about new cultures. I love meeting new people and helping others in any way I can.

My stay in Hamburg so far has been nothing short of amazing. My husband and I have met so many awesome people and have explored many places that it would take me forever to name them all. The good thing is that we're no where close to being done. We do miss our family and friends back in US, but that is easily overcome by the experiences and people that have come into our lives. I look forward to meeting everyone soon!

Moin, my name is **Marisa Rast**. I was born and raised in Southern California and grew up in Redlands, a smaller town about 60 miles east of L.A. I received my Bachelor's in Criminal Justice from California State University San Bernardino. After graduating, I joined the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department as a Deputy Sheriff. The first time I came to Hamburg was with an international police exchange program. U.S. law enforcement officers and officers from the Polizei Hamburg visit each other's departments learning about the nuts and bolts of the different departments and also stay as guests in their hosts' homes. Well, to make a long story short, when I came to Hamburg on my trip I met my now husband, Rolan. He is a detective with Polizei Hamburg and we chose to start our lives together here in Hamburg. I became a "Gemerican" in April 2011.

Since coming to Hamburg I have been taking German classes and adapting to life here and my new profession as a housewife. Rolan and I enjoy going to the gym, meeting and cooking with friends regularly and going to the movies in both English and German. We try to go to as many concerts and sporting events as we can. We also like to travel and explore different areas. We do not have any children yet. I love Hamburg, and it seems like I see something new every time I make it into the city. When the weather is good I enjoy going with our dog, Cali, an imported Chihuahua and Rolan to the Elbe, enjoying some fresh fruit, and walking or just sitting and watching the boats come and go



ACTIVITY CALENDAR JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2012

This isn't all! Sometimes special events come up after the Currents deadline. In this case we will use **evites** and our newsletter to notify members. Check your email and our online calendar for the most up-to-date event information.

Stitch 'n Bitch

Tuesday, January 10, 24 anytime after 19.00

Tuesday, February 07, 21 anytime after 19.00

Where: Beth G.'s home, Lutterothstrasse 76

Contact: Beth G.'s at snb@awchamburg.org

Otherwise known as Portable Hobby Night, and yes, wine tasting counts as a hobby. Come join us for lots of laughs and snacks, a glass of wine (or two), and maybe some crafting.

Badminton

Where: Netzwerk Badminton Sportsbar, Ohlsdorfer Str. 37a (Winterhude) <http://www.netzwerkbadminton.de/>

RSVP to Tina at badminton@awchamburg.org

Cost: € 12 per court per hour. Indoor court shoes are required: available for rent for € 3 or check Amazon for cheap court shoes (and buy through the AWC Amazon link to generate a little revenue for the club, too!). Rackets are available for purchase (around € 15) or rent (€ 3).

Join Tina and Beth on Tuesday afternoons for badminton and laughs! All skill levels are welcome. We don't play for points - just for fun!

Mutti-Kind Café Morning

Wednesday, January 11, 10.30

Where: SternChance Café, Schröderstiftstr. 7

RSVP to Liz E. by January 9 lfanska@yahoo.com or call/text at 01635693422.

A "Mutti-Meeting" at the SternChance Café with the kiddos to share ideas and interests for the upcoming Mutti-Kind year. Let's use this get-together to see what you mothers are really interested in doing this year and hopefully help this group grow and get the kiddos together more often! The kiddos can play indoors, or weather permitting, outdoors in this kid-friendly café while we enjoy coffee or breakfast. Bring your child(ren) and ideas and come along to meet the others in this group. Pay what you order. www.sternchance.de.

Opera Club

Monday, January 9, 10.30

Where: Elizabeth's home in Poppenbüttel.

Contact: Elizabeth at opera@awchamburg.org

Hamburger Helper Get Together

Tuesday, January 17, 18.30

Where: Abaton Bistro, Allende Platz

All current and potential Hamburger helpers are welcome to join us for a lovely evening of conversation and program information.

Would you like to offer assistance to a newcomer in Hamburg? You, too, could be a Hamburger Helper! Our team of Hamburger Helpers is here to serve our new club members. The Hamburger Helpers assess which particular area or topic newcomers need assistance and also introduce them to other AWC Club Members.

Contact: RSVP by January 15 to hhelpers@awchamburg.org

Cost: Your order

Coffee Break

When: **Every Wednesday at 11:30**

Where: Loft EspressoBar, Ohlsdorfer Straße 30

Come and caffeinate at The Loft in Winterhude.

Girls' Night Out at the Spielbank

When: **Friday, January 20, 20.00**

Where: Casino Esplanade, Stephansplatz 10. We will meet downstairs at the

entrance.

RSVP by January 19 via evite or to Tina at ads@awchamburg.org

"Faites vos jeux" and "Rien ne plus" are those two famous words when it comes to casinos. Let's enjoy a night at the splendid casino in the great location on Esplanade. The lovely 1,288-square meter facility offers nine roulette, eight poker, and three black jack tables. Plus 140 machines on the ground floor. We will have a blast! If you don't feel like gambling, enjoy a drink in the bar, the terrace or in the lounge! Please no jeans or sneakers and remember to bring your ID.

Cost: Your gambling and drinks

Annual General Meeting

When: **Thursday, January 26, 14.00-17.00**

Where: US Consulate, Alsterufer 27

RSVP by January 23 via Evite or to activities@awchamburg.org

All members are invited to join us for our anticipated Annual General Meeting. A guided tour of our handsome consulate will kick-off the event, followed by sweet treats created by Nathalie and Alexandra of O Petit Chef. Seasonal fruit tarts, chocolate macarons, and "verrine" dulce are among the list of delicious desserts that will be served as we mingle with our co-members. Our annual silent auction to benefit FAWCO will be held prior to the meeting as well as an English book sale. This is the perfect opportunity for new members to discover what our club is all about! We look forward to seeing you there!

Books or auction goods or services to donate? Please contact activities@awchamburg.org

Cost: € 14,00 per person

Ice Skating in Planten un Blomen

When: **Thursday, February 2, 17.00 - 19.30**

Where: Indoor Eisarena, Holstenwall 30, we will meet at the cash register.

RSVP by February 1 via Evite or to Tina at ads@awchamburg.org

Let's enjoy a couple of hours on Europe's biggest artificial ice skating rink! In Planten un Blomen – Hamburg's centrally located park—is a colourful, lit ice skating rink. Never skated before?! No problem! Festive music and "Glühwein" make it a night for everyone! Rental skates are available.

Cost: €4,50 plus skates (if needed) for €4,90

Saint Valentine French Cuisine Course

When: **Wednesday, February 8, 17.00-21.00**

Where: Dependent upon class size: ISH kitchens OR Alexandra's home in Othmarschen

RSVP by February 4 via evite or to activities@awchamburg.org

Our club's favorite French chefs, Nathalie and Alexandra, have prepared a lovely menu for our Valentine's Day cooking course. We have had two delicious and very successful classes with them already and are looking forward to our third. We look forward to seeing you there! Guests welcome.

Our menu:

"Verrine" of salmon and avocado mousse • Valentine Soup and Parmesan lace Trio of fish on "fondue de poireaux" • Chocolate delights served with champagne

Cost: € 45 per person, which includes champagne, red and white wine, and water

Bunco Fundraiser for AWC Water Project

When: **Saturday, February 11, 2012 19.00 - 22.00**

Where: DESY, Notkestrasse 85 in our conference room in building 3

RSVP by February 7 via Evite or to Tracy at fawcorep@awchamburg.org or 040 / 55 69 37 90

Bunco is a fast, action packed and fun dice game. It is played with six teams of two people each and is quite unusual because both the winner and the loser get to take home a prize! Come join us for an evening you will never regret! We are playing two games running simultaneously so only 24 people can play. Reserve your spot now!

Cost: € 10 to be donated to the ITWDP watershed project in Nepal, plus one small side dish or drink for the social portion of the evening.

ACTIVITY CALENDAR JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2012

*Please check with activity leaders to confirm meeting times and places. More details on all meetings can be found in the membership section and on our AWC website: www.awchamburg.org/activitycalendar

January

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9 Opera Club	10 Stitch'n Bitch Beth G.	11 Mutti-Kind Group	12	13	14
15	16	17 Hamburger Helper Get Together	18 Books & Booze	19	20 Girls' Night Out	21
22	23	24 Stitch'n Bitch Beth G	25	26 AGM	27	28
29	30	31				

February

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2 Ice Skating	3	4
5	6	7 Stitch'n Bitch Beth G	8 St Valentine French Cuisine Course Books & Booze	9	10	11 Bunco Fundraiser
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21 Stitch'n Bitch Beth G	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29			

ON-GOING ACTIVITIES

Cancer Support Group

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

Couples and Family Outings

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

Contact Lauren at familyfunctions@awchamburg.org

Cultural Subsidy

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

Fabulous Females of Food and Fiction

...is a new book club that meets every odd month. For more information please contact Kara at bookstoo@awchamburg.org

Film Reviewers' Group

The film group attends free press showings of films slated to open in Hamburg and writes reviews for *Currents* and other media. Communication is via email or fax. For more information, contact Becky Tan at filmgroup@awchamburg.org

Girls' Night Out

Seeking women thirsty for cultural exchange and a refreshing adult drink, meeting up at hot spots around Hamburg. Contact Lauren at activities@awchamburg.org

HH Helper

This group helps new AWCH Club Members to live the good life in Hamburg! If you have recently joined our club and need some assistance, you are encouraged to contact Regina Daumann. She will not only give you details about the next New Members' Event but also refer you to the HH Helper in your area and to the groups and committees that might interest you. If you have already been a club member for some time and are interested in assisting new members in your area, please let us know. We are looking for more HH Helpers – especially in the western and southern parts of Hamburg. Contact Regina at hhelpers@awchamburg.org

Mutti-Kind Group

We are looking for moms and kids who like to get out and about! If you are interested in getting together, not just for playgroups, but for mother/child-friendly activities, please contact Silke at muttikind@awchamburg.org

The Hamburg Explorers

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

Proofreading Group

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

Stitch 'n' Bitch

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

Scrapbooking/Paper Crafting Group

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

Opera Club

At the monthly meetings of the Opera Club, we are discovering opera one masterwork at a time. We meet several times to get to know a selected opera and then attend a performance together. Beginners are particularly welcome! Meetings are held Monday mornings in Hamburg-Poppenbüttel. Contact Elizabeth R. at opera@awchamburg.org



BUY T-SHIRTS

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

AWC Cancellation Policy: All events for which participants must reserve in advance and pay at the door must be paid for whether or not the person attends the event. However, if the cancellation is called in before the sign-up deadline, there will be no charge. If a person cancels after the sign-up deadline, she need not pay if a confirmed substitute can be found.



by Regina Daumann

The New Members' Event on October 19 started with coffee and cake for 17 participants in the bistro at the *Galerie der Gegenwart* at the *Hamburger Kunsthalle*. Afterwards we had a tour, in English, of the exhibition **Max Liebermann Pioneer of Modern Art** on view through **Feb 19**, given by Jeffrey Turek.

Max Liebermann was born in 1847, the son of a Jewish businessman in Berlin, he first studied law and philosophy at the University of Berlin, but later studied painting and drawing in Weimar, Paris and the Netherlands. He was married to Martha Liebermann (1858-1943) and they had a daughter, Marianne (1885-1952). They lived in the splendid Palais Liebermann, right next to the *Brandenburg Gate*. Later, in 1909, the artist bought a lakeside villa in the Wannsee district of Berlin and the garden became one of his favourite motifs in the years to come.

From 1899 to 1911 Max Liebermann led the premier avant-garde formation in Germany, the Berlin Secession and in 1920 he was appointed President of the Prussian Academy of Arts. On January 30, 1933, Adolf Hitler was appointed chancellor. Max Liebermann resigned from the Prussian Academy of Arts when the Academy decided to no longer exhibit works by Jewish artists.

The exhibition "Max Liebermann. Pioneer of Modern Art" consists of more than a hundred works. Our very knowledgeable guide, Jeff Turek, led us through the exhibition for one and a half hours. We very much enjoyed Jeff's explanations of Max Liebermann's works and his humorous anecdotes and imaginative ideas. The first picture of the exhibition is called "Self-portrait with Kitchen Still life" (1873). This cheerful painting provided a very nice start to the exhibition!

Influenced by the Hungarian painter Mihály von Munkácsy (1844-1900) and the French artist Jean-Francois Millet (1814-1875), Max Liebermann concentrated on painting workers and farmers in Holland, for example: "Women cleaning vegetables" (1880), "The Flax Barn at Laren" (1887) and of course the famous picture "Net Mender Women" (1888/89.) The sketches of girls in an orphanage were also done in the Netherlands: "Amsterdam Orphan Girls in the Park" (1892).

The wonderful picture "Old Men's Alms House" (1880) became his trademark. In this special painting Liebermann used the beautiful lighting effects for the first time that later became so typical for him.

These special lighting effects can also be seen in the pictures with motifs of bourgeois pastimes, for example: "Terrace of Restaurant Jacob in Nienstedten on the Elbe" (1902) or "Garden Restaurant on the Havel – Nikolskoe" (1916). Spots of the afternoon sun are also very beautiful in "The Parrot Man" (1902). Liebermann connected spots of light with colour and created

energy and brightness in the whole picture – also on the floor. We also admired the sensitive, contemplative portraits of his wife and daughter, his self portraits and portraits of many eminent figures of society. Another very likeable picture is the one of Liebermann's *dachshund*: "Sleeping Dachshund in an Armchair" (1915). Max Liebermann took his dog for long walks near his beloved summerhouse. The painter/sculptor Max Beckmann (1884-1950) – who had a very different view on art from Liebermann – lived just around the corner with his Pekingese. It would be interesting to know whether the artists and dogs sometimes met on their walks. That is a good question, isn't it? I have two more for you: Did you know that the lady in the front-center of



Max Liebermann (1847 -1935) Abend am Uhlenhorster Fährhaus, 1910, Öl auf Leinwand, 77 x 96 cm, © Hamburger Kunsthalle / bpk, Photo: Elke Walford

the picture "Evening at the Uhlenhorst Ferry" (1910) is Liebermann's daughter, Marianne? And why did Alfred Lichtwark (first director of the *Hamburg Kunsthalle*) think that Marianne was wearing the wrong hat?

This secret is shared only among the participants of the tour. But if you are dying to know, there is hope for you: I am sure that our charming new members will tell you if you ask them!

So please make sure that you meet Courtney, Denise, Erin, Huong and Margitta at one of the next Club activities!

Places to see more of Max Liebermann's art:

Liebermann-Villa • <http://www.max-liebermann.de>

The *Liebermann Palais* next to the *Brandenburg Gate* was destroyed and the new "Max Liebermann Haus" - was rebuilt on the site. The owner, the foundation "Stiftung Brandenburger Tor", is located there and organizes exhibitions, conferences, talks and discussions. <http://www.brandenburgertor.de>

And, by the way, dear ladies, right vis-à-vis to the *Max Liebermann Haus* and opposite the *Hotel Adlon* at Pariser Platz in Berlin is the Kennedy Museum. Photos and items of John F. and Jacqueline Kennedy's lives are on display. You can also watch a film about J.F. Kennedy's visit to Berlin in 1963 and listen to the speeches of Willy Brandt and J.F. Kennedy, "Ich bin ein Berliner". The large photographs on display are beautiful. So don't miss the museum on one of your next visits to Berlin. <http://www.thekennedys.de/>

www.kfo-rotherbaum.de



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CONGRATULATIONS

Reminder: For membership and directory updates, please see your weekly e-Newsletter.



Congratulations to Marcia Franzen Hintze and her husband, on the birth of their first grandchild, Franz Caspar Hintze. He was born on Sept. 26, 2011 and arrived at 7 lbs 11 oz and 20.5 inches. His parents are Julia Dörfler and Benjamin Hintze. You can already tell what team he will be rooting for!



Congratulations to member Sylvia Tospann on her recent marriage to Wolfram Tospann. They were married in Essex, NY over the summer.

Holidays

New Year's Day Jan 01
Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Jan 16
President's Day Feb 20

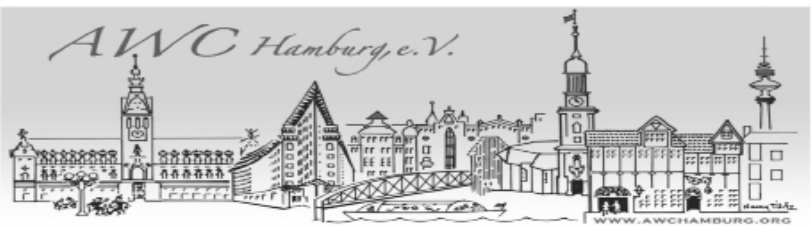


Congratulations! Birthday Girls

January	February
Jennifer C. 07	Sus E. B. 01
Nina T. 10	Maria R. 04
Ashley A. 15	Barbara H. M. 05
Anja K. 16	Vicki F. M. 12
Birgit S. 09	Regina D. 16
Isabell N. 21	Mary C. K. 18
Elaine S. 27	Lauren D. 21
Kirstan B. 29	
Venita K. 31	

School Holidays

Hamburg Winter Break	Dec 23 to Jan 06
Schleswig-Holstein Winter Break	Dec 23 to Jan 06
Niedersachsen Winter Break	Dec 23 to Jan 04
Int. School Winter Break	Dec 23 to Jan 06
Int. School Mid-Year Break	Feb 20 to Feb 24



Invitation

Hamburger Helper Get-Together

Tuesday, January 17, 2012, 18:30 hrs

**Location : Abaton Bistro, Allende Platz, Grindelhof 14a,
20146 Hamburg, <http://www.abaton-bistro.de/>**

Cost: Your order at the Abaton Bistro

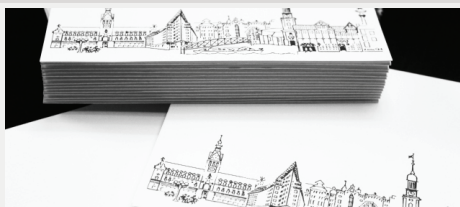


**Would you like to offer assistance to a newcomer in Hamburg?
You, too, could be a Hamburger Helper!**

Our team of Hamburger Helpers is here to serve our new club members. The Hamburger Helpers assess on which particular area or topic newcomers need assistance and also introduce them to other AWC Club Members.

**If you are interested in learning more, please join us for the next evening get-together.
The AWC Hamburger Helper Team is looking forward to meeting you!**

Please reply by Sunday, January 15th, to: hhelpers@awchamburg.org



Going Fast!

AWC Hamburg note cards and notepads

Set of 10 note cards & envelopes for € 8
Notepad - 100 sheets for € 4,50

Contact Tracy Moede
fawcorep@awchamburg.org



*written and compiled by
Tracy Moede*

Important US Banking Update from Lucy Laederich, FAWCO US Liason

US bank-issued debit cards - changes affecting cardholders in nine countries

and MasterCard can charge for processing debit card transactions) has triggered some clamping down in other areas such as ensuring more systematic compliance with US Banking Regulations.

As a result and to ensure compliance, if a US-bank debit card holder living in one of nine countries (see list below) abroad does not have a US Social Security number and a US address on record, his/her debit card will be terminated on January 30, 2012, and will not be valid after that date.

The cards will no longer be available for purchases or ATM withdrawals, abroad or in the United States. Note that this concerns only debit cards issued by a US bank, not credit cards. The nine countries concerned are: Australia, France, India, Japan, Monaco, the Netherlands, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan. People who live in other countries abroad will not have their debit cards cancelled but will no longer be able to use them when traveling in any of those nine countries unless that same information is on record for their account.

Debit card holders living in those nine countries should make certain their US banks have that information for them so as not to be reduced to using only more expensive credit cards.

Dublin 2012 - A Hundred Thousand Welcomes
From March 21-24, FAWCO will hold its annual conference in Dublin, Ireland.

The conference will take place at the Burlington Hotel, where a special rate of €110 single room / €130 double room inclusive of full Irish breakfast is being offered. Conference fees for Dublin are € 525.

The Conference promises to be informative and inspiring with captivating speakers, high-impact panels and workshops. Evening events include a fun Irish Shindig at the Jameson Distillery and beautiful dinner at the Dublin Castle, as well the Foundation's night and a casual night out.

Perhaps you will be the lucky winner of the AWCH FAWCO conference fees raffle. Buy your raffle tickets from Tracy Moede, fawcorep@awchamburg.org.

Emergency Relief Fund (ERF) - Japan

FAWCO is pleased to announce our contribution of \$5,430.41 to Second Harvest Japan. Deepest appreciation go to two member clubs - The American International Club of Cologne and the American Women's Club of Brussels, in association with the

International Study Group (ISG). We would also like to thank many of the individual donors, as well.

Relative to FAWCO's past efforts, contributions to ERF Japan were modest; however, we have chosen a beneficiary organization, Second Harvest Japan, where even our small donation is very much needed to continue their work. Second Harvest Japan collects food from corporations and individuals and distributes the food to those in need at charitable agencies. Second Harvest Japan is the first food bank in Japan.

Changes to FAWCO ERF Process

In reviewing FAWCO's process for initiating an ERF, the FAWCO Board has made the following changes:

The fund is renamed to Disaster Relief Fund - alleviating the "emergency" requirement and allowing for support of recovery and rebuilding projects as well. As before, the Board will vote to initiate a DRF at the request of a member club. However, there are a few new requirements of the member club submitting the request:

1. This request must have full support of the club's Board.
2. The requesting member club will be asked to contribute to the Fund.
3. The requesting member club will be asked to research and suggest at least one recipient organization/ project.
4. The requesting member club (or one of its members) should have a personal connection with the disaster or the recipient organization. This ensures credibility and long term feedback on the recipient. The Board feels that FAWCO would not add much value if our recipient organization is a well-known international organization (eg. Red Cross, Doctors without Borders) as our members could make these donations directly.

Target Water Project raised \$50,000 so far!

As of today, our thermometer is at about \$49,000 - more than half way to our goal of \$80,000. This does not include, however, AWC Düsseldorf's donation of 3000 Euros to the Target Water Project through Tabitha's affiliated organization LOTUS e.V. - this would bring our total to over \$50,000. This is the first time that a German club could make a direct donation to our Target Water Project (due to tax restrictions). FAWCO has set up this new channel to accept donations from the German clubs, and we are thankful to AWC Düsseldorf for pioneering the way.

FAWCO is actively searching for corporate sponsor(s) to match our funds raised on a global level, and we encourage our clubs to also look for local corporate matching grants. For example, AWG Paris has found a company to match what they raise up to 3000 Euro.

So far, FAWCO has donated 123 Family Wells and 83 Field Wells for a total of 206 wells.

FAWCO is changing the flow one well at a time!



AWC Tote-bag only € 15

ITWDP- Paregaon-Khurd Watershed Project

Funded by American Women's Club of Hamburg, Düsseldorf, Cologne

ITWDP- Paregaon-khurd Watershed Project Update Report

Reported by Father Robert D'Costa of ITWDP, Sep 2011 (edited by Tracy Moede)

We personally went to the village Paregaon-khurd and saw their pathetic and pitiable conditions. We felt like helping them immediately. With the donations of the **American Women's Clubs** in Germany that we had just received end of last year we felt we had the means to take on this project. So we called a meeting with villagers. In the very first meeting we solved the problems about their land and they willingly accepted our approach and us. That's how we began to implement the watershed project and got the support of village leaders. As we began the watershed treatment we convinced them of the benefits of collective farming. So they showed a lot of interest and willingness in this new venture.

In the month of April we began the work on a well for their farming. It is still half way, but after seeing water in it the people have shown lot of enthusiasm towards our project. In the rainy season they began to plant of nilgiri, bamboo and fruit trees.



Project facts, Paregaon-khurd:

- A watershed program was started in a village called Paregaon-khurd, Sangamner, District, Ahmednagar, State, Maharashtra, Country, India. The village is located 15km from Sangamner and can be found on Google earth.
- 35 Tribal families (275 people, including 30 kids under 8 years) live in this village.
- On 12th Jan 2011 Community contribution (Shramdan).
- The actual work - 70 hectares -started, 1st Feb 2011 and includes:
FB (Farm bunding = 2048 Rm (running meter)
CCT (Continuous control trenches) = 1300 Rm
- To date, 3 hectares of land have been cultivated with bajra, which is used for preparing bread.
- 512 glirisideas stumps, 205 pomegranate plants, 200 nilgiri plants and 100 bamboo plants have been planted.

What are the next steps?

- Continuing watershed treatments
- Electricity work for irrigation purposes
- Wells
- Drip and Sprinkler irrigation systems

- Education
- Leveling of the land
- New houses
- Livestock
- Drinking water tank and pipe line

Summary:

In a very a short time the Paregaon Tribals have seen a transformation taking place on their land and in their lives. They are eagerly waiting for the first fruit of the cultivation of their own land. They are also looking forward to getting more hands-on support from ITWDP. They have been very grateful to us and to those who are supporting it. They even put up a sign to show their gratitude.



Ferrero Rocher Torte

Torte:

- 150g margarine
- 150g sugar
- 1 package Vanillezucker
- 4 eggs
- 200g crushed hazelnuts
- 1 tsp Backpulver

by Marisa Rast

Mix the above ingredients and put in spring form pan with baking paper on the bottom. Bake at 180 for about 30 to 40 minutes. Allow to cool in pan.

Frosting:

- 32 Ferrero Rocher chocolates, set 8 aside for decoration.
- 500 ml whipping cream (Schlagsahne), 300 ml is for frosting and 200 ml is for sides and decoration.
- 2 packets Sahnesteif
- 2 packets Vanillezucker

Whip the whipping cream, Sahnesteif and Vanillezucker until thick enough to form on the torte.

Set 200ml of mixture aside.

Crush 24 of the Roche bonbons and mix into the 300 ml of whipped cream.

When cool, cover the torte with the 300 ml Roche whipped cream mixture.

Remove from the spring form pan and use the 200 ml whipped cream to cover the sides of torte.

Decorate top with leftover cream. Cut the remaining Rocher chocolates into halves and place on top of the torte.

Region 5 Rocks



by RC5 Frauke
Rademacher-Heidemann

FAWCO 2011 Region 5 Meeting, November 11-13 in Berlin

All eight clubs in Region 5 participated in our annual Regional Meeting, this time in Berlin, where the AWC of Berlin hosted and planned a perfect program with high concentration on FAWCO's work mixed with highlights of life in Berlin.

32 FAWCO Club-Reps, -presidents, members joined by the FAWCO President and Board gathered in

Berlin's Filmhotel *Hollywood Media Hotel*, almost next door to the *Hard Rock Café* in the center of the city. Reason enough to choose topics that 'rock the US Expat's life like new Tax and Banking issues', FAWCO's world wide Target Program on Water, and exchange of club activities and experiences.

Each club had prepared reports on Club Profiles, Best Practices, and Issues and Concerns ahead of the meeting, allowing us to make best use of our time.

Our 2nd VP plans to make the club data available on our FAWCO Website as benchmark data to be shared worldwide.

A key topic was 'Understanding US-German (and other countries) Cross Border Tax and Banking Issues plus Estate Planning'. Margaret Spethmann from Hamburg presented information she collected in her long term intense research and provided detailed but compact documentation

Margaret, seated on the left, offered her support to the clubs and the FAWCO Board on a voluntary basis. Our appreciation and thanks go out to Margaret. Her future help will be highly valued.

Cat Connor (AWC Hamburg) is FAWCO's Web specialist. Cat

answered questions on website technology and security issues. Thanks to Cat for volunteering her knowledge and support.

FAWCO was formed in Berlin, 80 years ago. The AWC of Berlin was the host then and now invited us to celebrate the 80th birthday of the 'old lady of Berlin', who has remained remarkably young and vibrant.

On our way to the party Angelika MacLarren, President of AWC, gave us a grand tour through the city, with a walk through the *Brandenburger Tor* and down the glamorous avenue *Unter den Linden*. We stopped to visit the *Berlin Wall Memorial* at Bernauer Strasse.

The birthday cake honoring the AWC was waiting for us at the Berlin *Ronald McDonald House* which the AWC has sponsored for several years. The RMDH team does impressive host work for children with cardiac disease or other medical condition requiring close relatives to accompany the children.

Detailed work on the club reports took place the next morning. Managed by Susanne Hirschberg (AWC Duesseldorf), the clubs exchanged experiences, ideas, and recommendations to be shared by everyone:



Special highlights of the meeting were the pre- and post conference activities. On Thursday evening Robin Goldberg (AIW Cologne) gave a wonderful piano concert at the Steinway-Haus. On Sunday afternoon several of us visited the opera house with a performance of *CANDIDE* by Leonard Bernstein.

Region 5 thanks Angelika McLarren and her team from the AWC Berlin for a professional and wonderful meeting! We parted with the announcement of 'Next Year in Augsburg' as the location for our Region 5 Meeting, Nov 2012. Our newest member club in Region 5, the AIWA Augsburg, has offered to be our host in 2012.



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An American Weekend in Berlin



by Susan Stanley Witt

On a cold Friday in November I met Tracy Moede at Altona train station to travel to Berlin. It was my first trip on an ICE and my second regional FAWCO meeting after last year's in Munich. Region 5 is made up of seven German clubs (Berlin, Hamburg, Düsseldorf, Taunus, Cologne, Munich and the newest member to FAWCO, Augsburg) and one Austrian club in Vienna. FAWCO, as well as the Berlin club, celebrated their 80th anniversary this year. Due to this, the whole FAWCO board was in Berlin with us, ladies from all over Europe.

I am a person who will most likely spend the rest of my life here in Germany and I feel it is very important to keep up to date on what is going on with tax issues and citizens right abroad as well as to have someone represent me at the UN and in Washington. FAWCO, with the support of its member clubs, does these things and more. I am grateful for all they do. At the meeting it was also really informative as well as downright interesting to hear what is going on at other clubs in our region. Women from the other clubs are just like us: living in a foreign country and trying to help and support their fellow Americans.

Margaret Nelson Spethmann, from the AWCH, held a valuable workshop on banking, investment and wills/trusts, based on her personal research. The other clubs in turn pass on information to us which they have learned. To celebrate AWC Berlin's 80th anniversary, we took an extended bus tour of the city, with an entertaining commentary from AWCB President Angelika MacLarren. It was really neat to hear about the city from a real Berliner who had has experienced Berlin before, during and after the wall.

The excellent tour ended with a visit to the *Ronald McDonald House*, a charity which supports the families of sick children when they are in the hospital. The AWCB donates money as well as their time helping the families of children with Leukemia and heart problems. It was really interesting to see first-hand all that this club has achieved. We also went to the *Hard Rock Café*, where I bought T-shirts for my boys for Christmas and went shopping at *Kaufhaus des Westens*, or *KaDeWe*, the biggest

department store in Europe after Harrods in London. *KaDeWe* has a big American food section so we shopped till we dropped.

The *Hollywood Media Hotel* on the Kurfurstendamm, smack dab in the center of Berlin, was also excellent. It has a movie theme and each room is personified with a movie star. This made Becky Tan, who heads the AWCH film group, happy. Yes, the weekend had something for everyone and a good time was had by all. I, for one, had a super time and am looking forward to our next regional in Augsburg where I can see my new found friends again



Suffering from Winter Blues? Just visit one of Hamburg's Great Museums!



by Ulrike Henn

Modern Art is on view through **Feb 19**. (For more information read Regina Daumann's activity review on page 17).

The most exciting show of the year 2012 will surely be **Louise Bourgeois. Passage dangereux** on view at *Hamburger Kunst-halle* **Feb 10** through **June 17**. On the occasion of her 100th birthday, the *Hamburger Kunst-halle* will be honoring Louise Bourgeois (1911-2010) by showing sculptures, installations, etchings, tapestries and works made of fabric from the last 15 years of her life. This work by one of the most important and influential artists of our age manifests a very exceptional formal and material language. It deals with existential subject matter and at the same time very personal experiences that Bourgeois tirelessly pursued throughout her life and practice: fear, dependency, memory, sexuality, love and death. The famous *Maman* (1999) – a 9 meter high, oversized spider in bronze, steel and marble – will stand outside between *Galerie der Gegenwart* and the main building of *Hamburger Kunst-halle*.



Hamburger Kunst-halle also features **MÜDE HELDEN - EXHAUSTED HEROES** **Ferdinand Hodler - Aleksandr Dejneka - Neo Rauch** from **Feb 17** through **May 13** at *Galerie der Gegenwart*. For the first time the oeuvre of Neo Rauch, the internationally renowned representative of the *Leipzig School* of painting, is presented from historical and art-historical perspectives. Moreover, the exhibition offers a singular opportunity to discover the oeuvre of Aleksandr Dejneka, a painter very highly-esteemed in Russia, who is represented by a large number of important works that have never before been shown in Germany. In thematically ordered references to the large number of works by their



Art preview compiled by Ulrike Henn

modern predecessor, Ferdinand Hodler, the exhibition presents a historical development from the 'New Man' around 1900 to the contemporary figure of a 'Tired Hero'.

Works by Ferdinand Hodler can also be seen in the show **Ferdinand Hodler and Cuno Amiet** at *Bucerius Kunstforum* **Jan 28** through **May 1**. Artistic friendships have always been an exciting mixture of friendship and rivalry. For the first time, an exhibition is being dedicated to the artistic interaction between Ferdinand Hodler (1853-1918) and Cuno Amiet (1868-1961). These were the two artists who shaped the Europe-wide advent of the art nouveau movement in Switzerland.



If you have not seen the amazing and enchanting show **Wunder, KUNST - RELIGION - WISSENSCHAFT - TECHNIK** at the *Deichtorhallen* yet, there is still a chance until Feb 5. And how about a final glance at **Eyes of Paris? Paris in Photography** is still on view through **Jan 8** at *Deichtorhallen - Haus der Photographie*. (See review in *Currents* Nov/Dec.)

After the huge success of the Lillian Bassman and Paul Himmelpretre retrospective, another master photographer of the 20th Century, **SAUL LEITER**, is on view at the *Haus der Photographie Deichtorhallen* **Feb 3** through **April 15**. It is his first world wide retrospective that honors born American painter and photographer.



At *Kunstverein* the show **Gert & Uwe Tobias** by brothers Gert & Uwe Tobias (born 1973 in Brasov, Romania, now living in Cologne) is on view **Jan 28** through **Nov 18**. The twins have been working together on drawings, ceramics and woodcuts, which they assemble to form installations that are often held together by colored walls and interventions in space.

photo bylines: *left, 2nd from top*: Louise Bourgeois, *Maman*, 1999, Guggenheim Bilbao, bronze, marble, stainless steel, 895 x 980 x 1,160 cm, Edition 2/6 + A.P., Photo: Ulrike Henn *bottom, left*: Neo Rauch (*1960), *Weiche*, 1999, Öl auf Papier, 215 x 190 cm, Sammlung Deutsche Bank © courtesy Galerie EIGEN + ART Leipzig/Berlin und David Zwirner, New York; VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2011, Photo: Uwe Wälder *right, top*: Ferdinand Hodler (1853-1918), *Entzücktes Weib*, 1911, Kunstmuseum Solothurn, Dübi-Müller-Stiftung *right, 2nd from top*: Julia Kissina: *Spiel aus dem Werkzyklus "Ich sehe was, was du nicht siehst"*, 2008. © Julia Kissina *right, 3rd from top*: Saul Leiter: *Joanna*, ca. 1947 © Saul Leiter Courtesy: Saul Leiter, Howard Greenberg Gallery, New York *bottom, right*: Gert und Uwe Tobias, *Ohne Titel*, 2010, Farbiges Holzschnitt auf Papier, 246 x 195 cm, Courtesy Contemporary Fine Arts, Berlin



compiled by Becky Tan

At the Movies



For a complete list of reviews, consult our on-line reports:
www.awchamburg.org or www.KinoCritics.com.

MOVIE RATING SYSTEM

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

Chicken with Plums (Huhn mit Pflaumen) ****

Starts: January 5

Original language: French

Teheran in the 1950s, Nasser Ali Khan (**Mathieu Amalric**) wants to die when his beloved violin is smashed in anger by his frustrated wife (**Maria de Medeiros**) and cannot be replaced. What is life without his music? He draws the curtains, lies down on his bed, musingly smokes his cigarette and awaits death. During the next eight days his mind travels back into the past, mourning his lost sweetheart (**Golshifteh Farahani**), skipping into an imagined future of his children and even envisioning a naked Sophia Loren. When the angel of death visits him, he gets scared and involves him in long arguments.

After her world-wide success of *Persepolis* (2007) the French-Iranian director and writer **Marjane Satrapi** is again teaming up with Vincent Paronnaud for an adaptation of her graphic



novel *Chicken with Plums*. This tragicomic tale is inspired by her own childhood and her musician uncle but is more live-action than animated. It still has Satrapi's distinctive, visual and bold flair. It is a pleasure to watch the international team of actors, including Isabella Rossellini and Chiara Mastroianni. Be prepared for a deliciously bitter-sweet romance, an unconventional mix of dreams and reality. (Birgit Schrumpf)

Mein liebster Alptraum (Mon pire cauchemar, My Worst Nightmare) *

Starts January 12

Original language: French

Agathe (**Isabelle Huppert**) and Francois (**André Dussollier**) are a rich couple who live in a beautiful apartment in Paris with their pre-teen son Adrian. Repairman Patrick (**Benoît Poel-**

voorde) and his (also pre-teen) son Tony infiltrate the lives of these well-to-do, but cold and withdrawn people, practically moving in with them. Through Patrick, Francois meets Julie (**Virginie Efira**), a beautiful, warm, young woman, just the opposite of his wife; they begin an affair.



This is supposed to be a comedy and perhaps there are a few opportunities to chuckle. But, whether watching Patrick repair holes in the walls or well-dressed art fans stroll through Agathe's gallery or Julie analyze Patrick's fatherly skills at Social Services one is not amused. Perhaps Francois fearfully hugging a tree in order to impress Julie, the true tree hugger, is funny. In summary, this is about a patchwork family of six – two couples and two children, with one more child on the way – and how they adjust to the situation for the good of all involved, including even shopping at IKEA. The focus should be on the children who bring the adults together, but it's not. The French sure do drink a lot of wine, which seems to be necessary to nudge the plot along. See the film, if you want to know what a female aquarium is. (Becky Tan)

The Descendants ***

Starts January 19

Original language: English



Matt (**George Clooney**) is in over his head: an emotionally absent father for at least the past seven years, suddenly 10-year-old Scottie (**Amara Miller**) is totally his responsibility. Desperate, he takes 17-year-old Alexandra (**Shailene Woodley**) out of an exclusive boarding school to help. Insistent that her friend Sid (**Nick Krause**) be there as an ally, Alex concedes her flawed family is facing a catastrophe. Following a speedboat accident Elizabeth, wife and mother, is in a coma.

The parallel storyline involves the King family: direct descendants of Hawaiian royalty since the 1860s, they own 25,000 acres of pristine coastal land on Kauai, protected by a land trust set to expire in seven years due to a recently passed law. Since his father's death, Matt is the Trustee and although some of the many cousins do not want to sell the land, the more profligate members do. Of the many sharks circling to purchase the property, the family is leaning toward a homegrown land-development company.

Matt insisted, as his father had, the family live within their means, much to Liz's chagrin. This comes back to haunt him as his father-in-law Scott (**Robert Forster**) expresses his grief. Alex turns on Matt, belatedly realizing he is clueless that Liz has been having an affair; their best friends Kai (**Mary Birdsong**) and Mark (**Rob Huebel**) tell him the "other guy" is real estate broker Brian (**Matthew Lillard**). With his daughters and Sid in tow, they fly from Oahu to Kauai where Matt plans to confront Brian, and, he inadvertently discovers Brian works for the Kauai-based development company. From that point on, events escalate.

Based on a novel by Kauai Hart Hemmings, director **Alexander Payne** (*Sideways*) did not make the decision which storyline to focus on, effectively eliminating a single conflict's climax necessary for a good yarn: the resolutions are anticlimactic. With solid support from Phedon Papamichael's cinematography and Kevin Tent's editing, Payne does, however, massage the finesse of facial and physical nuances from the thespians. The betrayals, and truths told are best conveyed through such subtlety, wherefore *The Descendants* does not descend into indulgent melodrama. (Marinell Haegelin)



The Descendants * (second opinion)

Hell can reach you in paradise: Matt King (**Clooney**), a successful lawyer is living a privileged life on a picture perfect estate on Hawaii, when a boating accident leaves his wife in a vegetative state. All at once he has to face taking her off life support and finding out that she cheated on him, and that his busy life had not only estranged him from her but also from his two daughters, 10-year-old Scottie (**Miller**) and 17-year-old Alex (**Woodley**).

This theme has been central to more than one movie or soap;

Unfortunately this version – after a book by Kauai Hart Hemmings – has nothing meaningful to add. The new twist here is that he tracks down his wife's lover with the help of his older daughter, which is neither probable nor convincing as a "bonding experience". But it's only a movie: Matt and his outwardly abrasive teenage daughter lay the groundwork for a new beginning. All the while Matt is dealing with his truly terrifying kids, Alex's friend tags along, "with his broad grin and demeanor unflatteringly like a young Schwarzenegger". He also has to tend to the business of being the sole trustee of a large property on Kauai, that he and his cousins - all descendants of Hawaiian royalty - inherited. In deciding whether to keep the land or sell it for a tremendous profit, he realizes that it is not only important to repair his connection with the present, but also with the past.

Clooney is convincing except for a few scenes in which he is misdirected to act like a clown, when he stalks the ex-lover of his wife. Woodley – much like a young Laura Linney – is worth watching. (Carola Amsinck)

African Cats (Im Reich der Raubkatzen)****

Starts February 2

Original language: English



The world of Disney collaborates with several seasoned artists to bring to the silver screen the latest saga in the DisneyNature adventure *African Cats*. The Disney Studios continue to be the leader of the pack with their nature preservation emphasis and renewed branding in DisneyNature.

In April 2008, over fifty years later, The Walt Disney Studios refreshed their heritage of True-Life Adventure films and coined the project DisneyNature. The Studio's project now brings the world's top nature filmmakers together to share a wide variety of wildlife subjects and creates real stories with theatrical balance. The Walt Disney Studios nature-feature documentary "Earth" opened in 2009, and was the first to premiere under the new DisneyNature label. In 2010, "Oceans" appeared on the silver screen and was the third highest grossing feature-length nature film in history.

Filmmakers, **Keith Scholey** and Alastair Fothergill join with narrator, **Samuel L. Jackson** to take the film audience on a mesmerizing nature safari in *African Cats*. It's more than a movie; it's a true-to-life close-up and a moving tale of the survival-of-the-fittest on the African savanna. *African Cats* was filmed in Masai Mara, Kenya, over a two-year period observing the lifestyle of a variety of African cats. The diversity of these species lives in a hierarchical world where the lion is the king. He rules over many animals of the African wild but his pride is the pack of lionesses that follow him day and night. The story with this lot of furry animals begins with crisp cinematography of a real live antelope



herd making their seasonal trek. Their travel at racing speeds will draw on your imagination of the visuals in the Disney animation feature-film *The Lion King*. The scenes are incredibly similar, though one is the animation copy of the other's reality. Their movement is absolutely stunning. The beginning to the *African Cats* story is due to the herds' movement. The herd is generally the cats' source of nutrient. So, when the herd moves, the cats try to follow but they end up in a different part of the savanna tundra where they are not in control. Each breed of the big African cats must manage to survive on foreign soil searching for food and water, as well as a safe environment for their young.

African Cats is a magical account that follows the true-life adventures of Layla, a strong River Pride lioness and her daughter, Mara; Fang, leader of the River Pride lions; the single cheetah mother, Sita and her five cubs; as well as the Lion King of the North River, Kali and his four burly sons, as they journey where deadly foe and life dragons dwell.*

For educational purposes and a fun activity that you can do with your kids go to the Disney Nature website and link <http://www.disney.go.com/disneynature/africancats> and download the guide. You will engage in conversation with your kids to answer questions such as: How does the African savanna compare to where I live? Or, what is in an African savanna? Or, what jobs do living things have on the savanna?

*Rated: G, but a very slow moving film with up-close and personal cinematography not necessarily appropriate for the very young in some scenes. (Karen Pecota)

What's Your Number (Der perfekte Ex) **

Starts February 16 2012

Original language: English



Ally Darling (**Anna Faris**) reads a magazine article that states that women who have been with more than 20 sexual partners have a 96 % chance of ending up alone. Ally has hit this un-magical number. To avoid ending up alone, Ally decides to revisit her ex-boyfriends. Ally hopes that one has changed for the better, and can turn out to be Mr. Right. Ally enlists the help of her womanizing neighbor, Colin (**Chris Evans**), to track down as many of her exes as she can. The movie follows Ally on her quest to find Mr. Right. But, could Ally's Mr. Right be closer than she thinks? Although there are some funny one-liners and scenes in the adaptation of Karen Bosnak's book *20 Times A Lady*, *What's Your Number* is a predictable romantic comedy, which is best seen on video. I found that the role played by Faris was dull, and somewhat uncomfortably annoying at times. If you are

in the mood for a mindless and predictable comedy, this will be a good movie to rent. (Mary Lindgren)

Unsichtbar (Cracks in the Shell) *****

Starts February 9

Original language: German



Young acting students lead difficult lives. They are friends, but also rivals for top jobs; they support each other, but each is on his own. Josephine, called Fine, (**Stine Fischer Christensen**) is one of these students, just 21, but introverted and lonesome. She lives with her single mother and her handicapped sister Juliane. Director Kaspar Friedmann (**Ulrich Noethen**) comes to town and selects a cast for a new version of *Camille*. Everyone, including Fine, is surprised when she gets the lead. Slowly she meshes into the role and takes it over into her private life. She wears the blond wig from the play on the subway, flirts mercilessly with a stranger with whom she becomes intimate, begins to cut herself surreptitiously. At first helpful at home with the difficult sister, she begins to demand more attention from her already overworked mother.

In this excellent film we see the development of the play *Camille* within the play/film. On stage Fine also grows into an aggressive person. She visits the director at home and it leads to an affair. We don't recognize her any more; she has lost herself – the good and the bad – to become someone else. Who is really invisible here? Throughout the film, I never thought that Christensen could play a bad actress and in the end, she was marvelous, especially considering that she comes from Denmark and had to learn German for the part. Christina Drechsler as the handicapped Juliane is also excellent. In fact the entire cast carries the film along, low key, but building forward piece by piece until there is a grande finale reminiscent of *A Star is Born* or *Billy Elliott*. All my colleagues at the press showing agreed that we need to run home and read Alexandre Dumas' *The Lady of the Camellias* once more – or see *La Traviata* or perhaps John Neumeier's ballet *Kamiliendame*, although this movie is a perfect entity by itself. Perhaps it borrows something from *Camille* but, in the end, it transcends it, making the original unimportant. Highly recommended if you speak German well enough. Directed by **Christian Schwochow**, who wrote the script with his mother **Heide Schwochow**. (Becky Tan)

Thank you **Becky Tan, Brigit Schrumpf, Karen Pecota, Carola Amsinck, Pat Frickey, Christa Greif, Marinell Haegelin, Jenny Mather, Nancy Tilitz, Mary Wienke** for two wonderful, information filled *Currents' Film Specials*