



Gong Xi Fatt Cai

After years of living in Asia I always get nostalgic at this time of year as my Facebook page gets filled with Chinese New Year greetings. I have lots of memories of going off to market to buy cherry blossom and forsythia branches to decorate the house and wondering if I really need to get any more red and gold ornaments.

It is a pleasure to see the joy of Singaporeans as they prepare for their family gatherings. The airport is busy, as everyone tries to get home for the occasion. They also look forward to a few days off - a rarity in a country that works 24 hours, seven days a week. The city is full of lights and resounds to the sound of Lion dances as the bad spirits are driven out and houses are spick and span ready for the new year.

This year is the year of the Ox, which means it's my granddaughter's year and she will be twelve soon. So, special greetings to any Ox people amongst our members - as the Chinese signs are on a 12 year cycle - that would include people who are 24, 36, 48, etc. years old.

I have put up my decorations and my special Chinese New Year quilt so just need to get out the wok and cook up a storm.

Wishing you all health and prosperity for the Year of the Ox!

Maggie Vautheny, 12.02.2021



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new ESC contacts

- General: contact@esc-alsace.org
- Newsletter: newsletter@esc-alsace.org
- Events: events@esc-alsace.org

Upcoming activities

Online February Apéro meeting

FRIDAY 26 FEBRUARY: 6.30 - 8.30 pm

Until we can safely meet in town, *apéros* will be organised by the committee online on Teams, on the following dates: 26/02, 26/03, 16/04, 28/05, 25/6, 23/7.

Have a glass of something interesting and some nibbles at the ready, settle into your cosiest armchair and click on the link you will have received a few days before, to join us any time between 6.30 and 8.30 pm.



Online March Coffee meeting

THURSDAY 18 MARCH 2021: 9.30 - 11.30 am

Until the health situation enables in-person meetings and the Escale community centre opens again, the coffee mornings will be offered by the committee, online on Teams, on the dates previously announced: 22/4, 20/5, 17/6, 13/7.

Watch out for a reminder by email with the suitable link.



English Conversation Group

FRIDAYS, 2.30 pm

The English conversation group currently organises weekly online meetings on Zoom on Friday afternoons - one week it is a simple conversation, the following week a more structured session with presentations on various topics of the participants' choosing.

Zoom sessions ID & passcodes are sent once you have registered with the group. If you are interested in joining, please contact Nigel at nigelpermaul@gmail.com - 06 75 63 89 98.

French conversation group

MONDAYS, 4.00 pm

The French conversation group currently gathers fortnightly on Mondays at 4.00 pm for online meetings on Zoom. If you are interested in joining, please contact Martin Pickford: pickfordmartin@gmail.com.

Among participants are two native French speakers and one member each from UK, Russia, Italy, USA and Australia. "We make lots of mistakes but we have a good laugh too" says Martin. Although those sessions are not quite a class, they give an opportunity to correct grammar mistakes or suggest vocabulary when needed.

Spanish conversation group 🇪🇸: trying new ways

MONDAY 22 MARCH, 1.00 pm

If you are a Spanish speaker, both native and non-native, and you would like to converse with fellow members in a casual way, Maria kindly invites you to write to her at mtremoureux@esc-alsace.org. These sessions will be online, until it is possible to meet in person again.

A first trial session will be organised on Monday 22nd March at 1.00 till 2.00 pm to schedule monthly meetings.

German conversation group 🇩🇪: starting afresh

The German conversation group used to meet every 2 weeks in Kehl for an interesting session led by Bernard Greiner, in which we usually studied, and discussed, a short text lifted from (usually) the German DNA supplement.

Alas, lounging about in a German cafe is no longer on the agenda, the free, daily German DNA supplement is now defunct, and Bernard wishes to relinquish the organisation of the group, after many years of unfailingly organising us.

Personally, I found this fortnightly German practice very useful, as we usually had Bernard and at least one other fluent German speaker around the table. Their presence around the table and patience with our efforts was much appreciated. In effect, our meetings sometimes ended up being trilingual, with French or English explanations available.

Helpfully, the DNA is now publishing, weekly, a small German supplement entitled *Rheinblick*, which, while not free, could be a source of pertinent articles for us to study. I have an abonnement to this supplement, and I think it would be useful.

Are there people who would be interested in forming a group to resurrect our German skills? (I use the word loosely!) German speakers as well as those of us hoping to improve our German would all be welcome.

If you are interested, please contact me (*see details below*) so that we can organise a preliminary online meeting. As you probably know, the ESC uses Teams for online meetings, and they can direct you to help if you have difficulty with this.

[Bronwyn Harrowfield](#)

06 85 33 11 24 - bharrowfield@esc-alsace.org

Book club's monthly reading

Members of the ESC book club meet on the second Monday of the month at 6:30 pm (possible change of date during holidays). The member who has chosen the book will host the meeting and is invited to write a review for the newsletter (which is published in the following issue).

Interested in joining the book club? Contact Joëlle: joelle.glore@gmail.com

These are the next books for discussion:

"The Beekeeper of Aleppo" by Christy Lefteri, on 8th March

"Chances Are" by Richard Russo, on 12th April

Curfew screens: feedback needed

In case the curfew continues, we thought you might share some of your favourite programmes to get us through the remaining dark nights (but of course afternoons also, for those who have the time!)

If possible, give us a link but otherwise, tell us the films, series, documentaries you have loved, something that makes the feature memorable and what network we can find them on.

Here are some ideas you might enjoy:

Disney+ (together with Pixar, Marvel, Star Wars, National Geographic): I personally am a great fan of everything Pixar produces : the Toy Story collection, my favorites: Wall-E, Ratatouille, Monsters & Co etc. All of their animated films are so multilayered, they all have something for every age and are so beautifully made.

Amazon Prime: of course the wonderful This is Us: Seasons 1 to 5 can be caught up, the second half of Season 6 is now at the same time as in the US and available for viewing on Canal Plus on Wednesdays ; I can also recommend the series Fleabag, The Wonderful Mrs. Maisel, The Office, The Handmaid's

Tale, Mum, the incredible "Tchernobyl", Little Fires Everywhere ... I could go on and on!

I cannot as yet recommend anything from Netflix as I'm not subscribed, but they have a huge catalogue.

Apart from the commercial paying platforms (let's not forget the excellent French Canal Plus!), of course Arte and French national television channels France•tv (2,3,5 and Culture Box on channel 19) also offer excellent programmes : documentaries, films, talk-shows, concerts pop and classic, which all come with replay. The films usually can be watched in their original version, with subtitles (in French of course).

I look forward to your feedback !

Christine Secouet

You're invited to send your suggestions to Christine Secouet at [csecouet@esc-alsace.org]

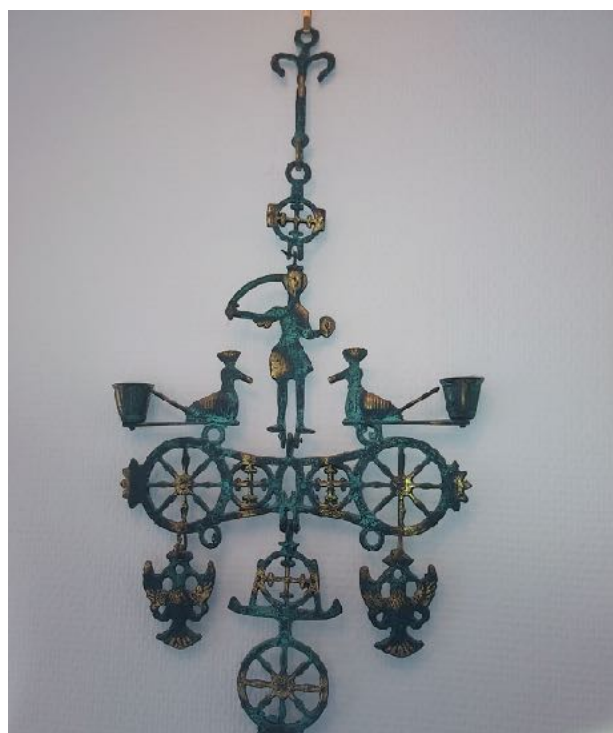
They will be put on a document to be enriched, week after week, with your contributions and be accessible permanently through a link which you will find in every newsletter.

Personal request: Would you know what this is?

I brought this back from Crete a few years ago and forgot to write out the significance of all the symbols.

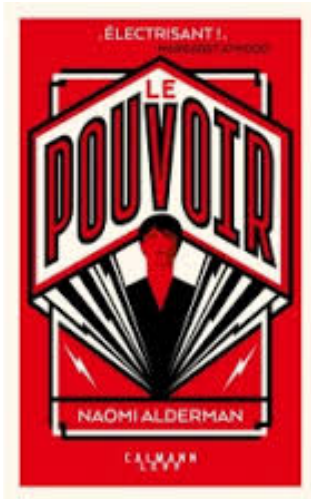
I'm hoping fellow members could help me solve the mystery.

Christine Secouet [csecouet@esc-alsace.org]



Book club review

"The Power" by Naomi Alderman



“ All over the world women are discovering they have power. With a flick of the fingers they inflict terrible pain – even death. Suddenly, every man on the planet finds they’ve lost control. The day of the girls has arrived – but where will it end? ”

My book choice, Naomi Alderman’s novel, *The Power*, is an ‘electrifying’ work of speculative fiction. Neil Adam Armon (an anagram of Naomi Alderman’s name) is the fictional author of this ‘historical novel’ which is (meant to be) set in the future and, according to Justine Jordan of the Guardian, ‘dares to question how the natural dominance of women over men might have developed’.

At the outset, we are just ten years away from a ‘cataclysm’ and every new chapter brings the reader closer to it. Young women around the world discover they have a striated muscle across the collarbone, a skein, and when they touch people with their fingertips, the electric shocks generated can maim, even kill those they touch.

The status quo is thrown into chaos, geopolitical upheavals abound, women run riot in Saudi Arabia and cause the government to fall, camps for young women to train and master their skeins are set up and there are even single-sex schools to ensure ‘boys’ remain safe.

Not all members of the book club bought into this ‘speculative dystopia’ but the discussion was vibrant, many of the assumptions underlying the mechanisms that drive relationships between women and men were questioned and to cite Justine Jordan once again, ‘Why do people abuse power? The novel can’t offer any answer beyond the one already found in our world: because they can.’

Terence Boyle



Naomi Alderman (born in London in 1974) read Philosophy, Politics and Economics at Lincoln College, Oxford. Author of three previous novels: *Disobedience*, *The Lessons* and *The Liars’ Gospel*, she has won the Orange Award for New Writers and the Sunday Times Young Writer of the Year Award. ‘*The Power*’ won Naomi Alderman the Baileys Women’s Prize for Fiction, 2017.

Information, Ads and Requests

Beautiful property south of Siena To rent - Tuscany:

The house is a beautiful country-maisonette (19th century-villa) located 12 km south of Siena, 1 hour from Florence, Pisa, Volterra, San Gimignano or Lucca, 50 km from the sea and about 2 km from the next village or rivers to swim in.

It has 4 large bright rooms which are nicely furnished in a country style fashion and which sleep a max. of 6 people plus a big Cantina (former wine cellar) with a summer kitchen and a second living room with a sleeping sofa bed for 1 or 2 people. The main living room has a library, there are two bathrooms, two toilets, two kitchens, a nice spacious entrance hall, fireplace, telephone, Wi-Fi, washing machine, courtyard, woodlands near by. We have a beautiful garden within a typically Tuscan landscape next to a quiet road and between two villages. The local countryside offers a range of activities for all interests. Churches and chapels, many cool rivers, lakes, a public swimming pool, supermarkets, post office, good restaurants, bars and farmers where you can buy wine, olive oil, honey or rent horses.

Price: 560€ /week (June/July/August 630€ /week) for 4 persons.

Call for information: Birgit Meyer, 45, Rue du Maréchal Foch, F-67000 Strasbourg
Tel: 0033 388 36 1991 (home) – 0049 172 6202 371 (mobile)
email: Birgitmeyer2@gmx.de

Views on: www.bella-tuscany.net

We are also on Airbnb: www.poggioallupo.com



Final call to renew your membership!

This will be your last copy if we haven't received your subscription.

In March, the distribution lists will be updated.

Franco-American theater company looking for premises

In the midst of the health turmoil, the Young Actors Theater Strasbourg (YATS), a Franco-American company, has just lost its rehearsal facilities. While preparing the next project « Oklahoma » with Alsatian middle and high school students, the troupe is looking for new premises and a good supporter.

Last season their production "Grease" was a resounding success at the Théâtre du Point d'Eau. Confident, the Strasbourg company dared to consider a stint on the big stage of the theater next season. Health crisis obliges, the new production, "Oklahoma" to shift. And, as if the current context were not anxiety-provoking enough, the troupe can no longer rehearse at the Collège International de l'Esplanade. Indeed, a collaboration contract with the Strasbourg establishment provided them with a rehearsal room for several years with, in return, performing arts lessons for the establishment's students. Before the change of management, the association benefitted from this type of contract but were then dismissed.

With the mission of offering young people in the Strasbourg community opportunities to discover theatrical culture through plays, musicals and educational programs similar to theatrical experiences of an American high school, YATS provides these courses thanks to the voluntary commitment of several American artists living in France. Playing, singing, dancing, the training offered by YATS to students of the Eurometropolis, complete, meeting the standards of Broadway productions.

This requirement is at the heart of the new production "Oklahoma", a musical created for Broadway by Oscar Hammerstein II and Richard Rodgers in 1943, based on a play by Lynn Riggs, Green Grow the Lilacs published in 1931. Rehearsals take place in the premises loaned by a Strasbourg language school, but unfortunately the technical conditions do not quite correspond to the needs of the company. A working group within YATS is currently looking for a venue with a high ceiling and multiple spaces to host rehearsals, storage of sets, costumes and administrative offices. Depending on the evolution of the health situation, "Oklahoma" could be presented to the public next summer.

Young Actors Theater Strasbourg (YATS),

Contact for available premises: info@yatstrasbourg.com



« Grease » by YATS, in the service of middle school and high school students in Alsace

Newsletter Publication

We'll publish your announcements/advertisements each month, space permitting and limited to 100 words. Advertisements will be repeated twice only and please let the Editor know if you need your ad repeated. This service is free to ESC Members, €40 for non-members and businesses, which should be included with submission. Items for publication should be in English.

Please forward items by e-mail to Catherine Manini at newsletter@esc-alsace.org

The deadline for next copy is Sunday 07/03/2021 - 6 pm (guidelines can be sent upon request)

Cover picture: La Petite France lock, Strasbourg - CM 02.2021

