

What's Up?

The English-Speaking Community Newsletter



Garden party at Joëlle's

26 JUNE: 7.00 pm

Private house in La Robertsau

Fully booked. Contact Joëlle at jglore@esc-alsace.org if you'd like to be on the waiting list

Summer recess

No newsletter issued

Possible invitations from conversation groups by email

Coffee morning

9 SEPTEMBER: 9.30 - 11.30 am

At L'Escale - centre socio-culturel de la Robertsau, 78 rue du Docteur François:
Free access, room on first floor

Barbecue

12 SEPTEMBER: 12.00

In the garden of l'Escale - centre socio-culturel de la Robertsau, 78 rue du Docteur François - Tram E L'Escale

Book club

13 SEPTEMBER: 6.30 pm

"American Dirt" by Jeanine Cummins

For full details: bookclub@esc-alsace.org

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new ESC contacts

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

Upcoming activities

Garden party in La Robertsau

SATURDAY 26 JUNE: 7.00 pm

Joëlle and Olivier are inviting you to enjoy the evening in their garden.

This is a members only event, and already fully booked! Please contact Joëlle at jglore@esc-alsace.org if you'd like to be on the waiting list.

We ask you to bring a bottle or a side dish to share, both if you are a couple. The rest of food will be provided with ESC's support.



Coffee morning: back at l'Escale

THURSDAY 9 SEPTEMBER : 9.30 - 11.30 am

Several cosy conversations were successfully organised online via Teams.

We now look forward to in person meetings, starting 9th September, and have booked a room at the Escale community centre, 78 rue du Docteur François in La Robertsau (tram E). Please hold the date in your diaries and watch out for a reminder later in the summer. For details, contact Maggie at: mvautheny@esc-alsace.org



Book club's monthly reading

MONDAY 13 SEPTEMBER: 6:30 pm "American Dirt" by Jeanine Cummins

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 at bookclub@esc-alsace.org



Save the date for the Barbecue

SUNDAY 12 SEPTEMBER

There will not be a rentrée picnic this year but instead, we're planning to hold our annual barbecue on the renewed grounds of the Escale Community center in La Robertsau. Traditionally, we start at noon with an *apéro*, share food partly subsidised by the ESC, and the rest of the afternoon is yours to enjoy to mingle and catch up with fellow members. Full details will be sent by email at the end of the summer.

Please contact Joëlle at jglore@esc-alsace.org if you are able to give a hand to the organisation team.



French conversation group

TUESDAYS, 4.00 pm

The French conversation group currently gathers weekly on Zoom, on Tuesdays at 4.00 pm for approximately one hour. A topic to discuss is chosen by the members but they often end up having just a lively conversation. This gives an opportunity to correct grammar mistakes and explore vocabulary, in the presence of several native French speakers.

Zoom sessions ID & passcodes are sent once you have registered with the group. If you are interested in joining, you are invited to contact Martin Pickford: pickfordmartin@gmail.com.

Spanish conversation group

MONDAYS, 12.45 online

Spanish speakers, both native and non-native, have met online for monthly one-hour sessions using Teams. Topics for conversation are set before the next meeting.

A few members recently gathered and for some, got acquainted, on the terrace of Jardin de l'Orangerie during a pleasant Wednesday lunch. A schedule of in-person and on-line meetings will be tried as from September.

If you are interested in joining, you are invited to contact Maria at mtremoureux@esc-alsace.org.

English conversation group

FRIDAYS, 2.30 pm - next meeting 3 JULY

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.

There will be meetings every two weeks during the summer, in the shade of Maryline & Frederick's garden in Vieux-Cronenbourg (trams A/D stop at Ducs d'Alsace).

If you are interested in joining, please contact Nigel at nigelpermaul@gmail.com - 06 75 63 89 98.

German conversation group

MONDAYS, 2.00 pm in person / 6.00 pm online

At last, an in-person meeting is convened in Café Rapp in Kehl (Hauptstr. 104) on Monday 21st June at 2pm. Under the current German Covid-rules, participants must carry proof of 2 vaccinations (last one older than a fortnight). A much relevant text concerning *Schwarzwaldtorte* was chosen from the DNA's *Rheinblick* section, for reading and commenting.

Another online meeting will be scheduled via Teams for about one hour, so that working members can participate. If you are interested in joining, you are invited to contact Bronwyn: bharrowfield@esc-alsace.org / 06 85 33 11 24

Book club review

"Throw Me to the Wolves" by Patrick McGuinness



“ In his violent diatribe against mental barriers that divide social classes, McGuinness wants to show in a philosophical approach that education as well as good information come first for a democratic society.”

A violent diatribe against mob rule

A young girl has been assassinated and a furious mob is ready to throw the suspected murderer Wolphram to the wolves.

In his partly auto-biographical novel based on the true story of one of his ex-teachers wrongly accused of murder, McGuinness studies the mould that shapes people, birthplace, education, the influence of Internet and media...

The “Prof” as chief detective Andy and Gary, his humorous colleague, cross the lines between their quite different social origins and bridge over their efforts to lead the investigation. They have to face the crazy attacks from the rubbish press against the presumed killer. The cultured hermit is thrown to the wolves as false information nourished by anti-intellectual hatred is gathered by the mad journalist Lynn.

Andy is led into a self-introspection of his own past in the 70’s all-male boarding school in which the boys were mistreated in a stifling

atmosphere of violence and socio-political hatred.

As a poet, an academic writer and a literary critic, Patrick McGuinness uses his many talents in a metaphorical style, integrating philosophical thoughts. In his violent diatribe against mental barriers that divide social classes, McGuinness wants to show in a philosophical approach that education as well as good information come first for a democratic society.

Our group agreed they found it difficult at first to enter the story and identify with the characters, but later we all loved the book for its deep thinking and fine introspect into our contemporary world. It led to interesting discussions about our school experience.

More than the story of a murder, it is a stream of thoughts in which the author analyses the past and the present and points out the dangerous influence of internet and tabloids. Read it! You will go deeper into yourself.

Claudine Marbach



Patrick McGuinness is a British-Belgian writer and academic. Author of two novels, a memoir and two books of poems, he teaches French and Comparative Literature at Oxford. His acclaimed first novel, “The Last Hundred Days”, is a semi-autobiographical account of the last days of the Ceausescu regime in Romania.

THE NEXT MEETING IS ON MONDAY 13 SEPTEMBER discussing "American Dirt" by Jeanine Cummins

Music corner

The Girl From Ipanema

The Girl from Ipanema was the first Bossa Nova song to become popular in Britain and USA in 1964, thanks to an album featuring Joao Gilberto playing guitar and singing in Portuguese, his wife Astrud Gilberto singing in English and Stan Getz on the tenor saxophone. It was composed by Antonio Carlos Jobim with English words by Norman Gimbel.

Bossa Nova is a style of samba developed in the late 1950s and early 60s in Rio de Janeiro, mainly characterised by the introduction of unconventional chords and innovative rhythms. It came to renew samba and contribute to the modernisation of Brazilian music. Bossa nova means new trend or new wave. It is most commonly performed on the classical guitar. It eventually influenced jazz artists and dozens of popular composers.

The Girl from Ipanema is said to be the second most recorded popular song after Yesterday by the Beatles. It has been recorded by Frank Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald and Nat King Cole, among others.

Ipanema is a fashionable neighbourhood and beach in Rio de Janeiro.

The song was inspired by a 17-year old girl called Helo Pinheiro who everyone admires when she passes in front of the café. The song writer describes the girl, "tall and tanned and young and lovely". He smiles at her and longs to tell her that he loves her but she always looks straight ahead and "just doesn't see".

Theresa Collet



Click below to listen here to an exquisite version of the song that will take you to Brazil in the sixties and will, no doubt, put you in the mood for a peaceful summer:

* [Astrud Gilberto & Stan Getz: The Girl From Ipanema - English and Portuguese Lyrics and Translation!](#)

Swans and other birds

This spring, Nigel has been watching a family of swans on the bank of the quai Finkwiller. Many swans have been nesting in and around Strasbourg these last weeks. Their number seems far bigger than the one of our traditional storks. More recently a growing number of *Alopochen aegyptiaca* (Egyptian goose, native to the Nile Valley) have made Alsace their home and can be seen along the waterways. They are not welcomed by nature experts though, because they have a very aggressive reproduction pattern which may be to the detriment of local species.

Two members have joined the birdwatching fun and taken shots which they are happy to share with you:

<http://tinyurl.com/Many-more-swans>

Nigel Permaul in collaboration with Jean Fisch and Evelyne Loeb

Botanical corner

A lot of people call me a weed but I'm a friend and come to help you!

When you see me, remember that I'm the ONLY one who wants and can grow in that particular spot. Because:

Either the soil is too compact / hard / stomped and I want to loosen it for you with my roots.

Or there is too little calcium in the soil - don't worry, I will replenish that for you with the dying of my leaves.

Or the soil is too acidic. But I will also improve that for you if you give me the chance.

Or a mixture of the above reasons, of course.

I'm here because your soil needs my help so best you let me grow without disturbing me! When everything is fixed, I will disappear again, I promise!

Are you trying to remove me prematurely with my root? However meticulous you are, I will return twice as strong! Just until your soil is improved.

You can even tell by my growth at which stage my help is at. If my leaves are flat on the ground then I'm far from ready but if they all reach up then I'm already a long way on my way.

Something completely different is that I am one of the first bloomers in spring so I will announce spring / summer for you.

During the day when it's hot, I open my flowers but in the evening when it cools off I close them again quickly. In fact, if it's not hot enough during the day, I won't open them at all!

My flowers are the first food for insects after hibernation and unlike most other plants, I have pollen AND nectar, not merely one OR the other! And I am generous with them!

My flowers are even delicious for you people by the way, did you know? I used to be called "honey (or gold) of the poor" because my flowers are so sweet in e.g. jam, sauce or salad! The internet is full of recipes - check them out.

But wait until the end of May or later before you start picking and even then, don't pick everything yet! The biodiversity and bees will be very grateful!

And lastly: do you see me standing but instead of yellow petals I have a dandelion clock of fluff? Then make a wish... and blow hard... I'll try to make your wish come true!

Your friend, the dandelion!



Adapted from Paula Kok - De Boer (somewhere on Facebook) and sent by Christine Secouet

Let's Build Back Better

I will say again, how much I have appreciated the companionship of the English-Speaking Community, and the opportunities it has brought me during my decade here in Strasbourg. I only hope I can find a similar community in my next destination, when I leave this summer.

Like many of you, over recent years I have become increasingly aware that it is up to us individually to change the way we live, to take less from this planet, and to nurture it better. With this in mind, I am going to spend my first year of retirement volunteering on permaculture ventures, some farms but more likely smallholdings. The principles of permaculture are about diversity of crops which encourage wildlife and, consequently, reduce the need for fertilisers and pesticides which in their turn deplete nature and

contaminate watercourses. After that year, I hope I will have found one or several places where I can contribute my energy and enthusiasm to spread the word about the 6Rs: Rethink, Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Repair, and that is where I will live (see <https://practicalaction.org> - even 10 Rs at www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org).

As my parting 'gift' to you, I would like to invite you to adopt one or more of the following (as your part of 'Building back better', to make better use of a current UK Conservative mantra 😊). You may of course already be doing many of these things, in which case I ask you to find one more. If you are doing them all, please share something I have missed.

Here are some ideas:

- Avoid using the tumble drier, especially in the summer. Bring back the washing line!
- Could you walk or cycle that trip, instead of taking the car? Alsace is so flat, the air will be fresher, you can enjoy the architecture and flowers;
- Find your nearest Compostra 'club' (<https://compostra.wixsite.com/compostra>) for your vegetable waste;
- Rinse your recyclable items - it's much easier when the ingredients are fresh and wet;
- Buy fresh ingredients from your local dealers and enjoy the cooking process. The simpler, the better.
- This is a goal for me: learn how to preserve fruit and vegetables, rather than buying out of season or freezing. It takes considerably less electricity;
- Take your small recycling items - bottle tops, corks, batteries and refundable bottles - to a recycling hub that you can find in local supermarkets such as my Auchan in La Robertsau;
- Put a bell on your cat, to warn the songbirds of its proximity;
- Use blankets or fleeces instead of outdoor heaters;
- Walk your children to school, chatting on the way, observing seasonal changes, stroke the passing cat, meet school friends;
- Use clothes pegs for better and quicker drying, as the fabric is better aired;
- Use a washable cloth rather than paper towels - just add it to the washing load;
- Just boil the amount of water you need, but save any leftovers for watering plants or your steam iron, as this is better for both of them;
- Descale your kettle with the cheapest vinegar, and rise with water;
- Please don't leave your engine running if you are waiting for someone 😊;
- Offer your unwanted but usable goods on Facebook, give to Emmaüs or Oxfam.



So many of these actions would have been everyday and obvious to our grandparents - except perhaps for the domination of plastic - and we have forgotten how to tread lightly on this planet.

I am very happy to get your feedback about this parting gift - sue@suemoller.com). Over the next year, I am hoping to send you updates from the field, so to speak, so I will be gone, but maybe not forgotten.

Best wishes, Sue Moller

Announcements

Young Actors Theater Strasbourg - YATS



Two fresh news from the beloved local teen musical theatre group:

1) Tickets for the renowned musical *Oklahoma!* (by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II) are now on sale at yatstrasbourg.com. Performances are **9, 10 and 11 July** at Point d'Eau theatre in Ostwald. Tickets typically sell out, so don't delay!

2) Next musical on stage in fall will be *Annie* (music by Charles Strouse, lyrics by Martin Charnin, and book by Thomas Meehan) with kids aged 11-18.

A chance to meet interesting and motivated people interested in art !

Roger Dale will be leading a stage of painting, drawing and colour in a beautiful monastery in the Black Forest from the 12th till the 17th of July. There will be 7 participants from France and 7 participants from Germany. We need only one more person from France to make our quota... No prerequisites required, no age limitations and no knowledge of German necessary.

Contact Roger direct for any questions:
06 78 17 70 59 - rogerdale@wanadoo.fr



ESC Membership / Registration 2021: [link to Register with the ESC-Alsace](#)

Feel free to contact the treasurer at membership@esc-alsace.org. Full details on our website (click on Join Us).

Newsletter Publication: next copy in September

We'll publish your announcements/advertisements each month, space permitting. 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 29/08/2021 - 6 pm (guidelines can be sent upon request)