

What's Up?

The English-Speaking Community Newsletter



Have an impro for Christmas!

It is this time of year again, when we look back at what we have done during the last 12 months and wonder how fast we got here! I will not stress enough how unusual 2021 has been. Your committee and other organisers among the members have tried to offer you a variety of events and activities, sometimes online when it wasn't possible to do otherwise. We had often to use our imagination and creativity to keep you informed and entertained.

New ideas have recently emerged, and the last in line is the impro evening suggested by one of our new members, Nikki Michaelson. A pilot session will be run on Tuesday, 21st December. This is a typical example of how members can be part of our community.

So come and share your ideas with us. We'd love to help you make them happen! And don't forget to renew your membership in January. We still have a long way to go together...

Wish you all a fantastic Christmas!

Joëlle Glore, President

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new ESC contacts

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

Upcoming events

Apéro at Le Social Bar

FRIDAY 10 DECEMBER 2021: 6.30 pm

It's apéro time again! Meet us at Le Social Bar from 6.30 onwards on Friday 10th December to meet old friends and make new ones. The usual formula is that everybody pays upon being served for their drinks and complementary sides while the ESC provides some nibbles.

Directions: 69, rue du Faubourg de Pierre (buses L3, 20 or 2).

As usual, the Pass Sanitaire will be required.



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Monthly coffee morning at l'Escale

THURSDAY 16 DECEMBER: 9.30 - 11.30 am

Come and visit our free coffee morning at the Escale community centre (78 rue du Docteur François, la Robertsau - tram E). As usual you can drop by anytime from 9.30 to 11.30. Coffee, tea and cakes will be waiting for you.

A selection of books will be on display. We have some new ones, so surely you will find something you want to take home. The next meeting dates are: 13/01, 3/02, 3/03, 7/04, 12/05, 16/06.

We will be checking your Pass Sanitaire.

For further details, contact Maggie at mvautheny@esc-alsace.org.



New! Come and Impro with us!

TUESDAY 21 DECEMBER 2021: 7.00 - 9.00 pm

For those of you who wonder what impro is about, this is a fun activity aiming to reboot your brain through role-playing exercises.

A typical session would start with a series of warm-up games to stimulate creativity, followed by exercises in which everybody is encouraged to play a number of different characters with an emphasis on spontaneity and an acceptance and respect for the ideas of others in the group.

Remember we are all budding artists, geniuses and poets! There is only one condition: be ready to have fun!

Pilot session on Tuesday 21st December starting at 7.00 pm.

Venue: Catherine Manini's home (tram A/D, stop Etoile-Bourse or Porte de l'Hôpital)

For details, directions and signing-up, please contact Nikki at nikki.lynn.michaelson@gmail.com



Save the date! for a *galette des rois* family party

SUNDAY 9 JANUARY 2022 at 4:30 pm

Breaking news! On their long journey, the Three Wise Men will be visiting Alsace and they will leave a special box in the custody of the ESC with a small gift to be given to the children - or grand-children - of the ESC members and friends. Please hold the date and plan to join us to listen to their story.

We will share the traditional *Galette des Rois* served with soft drinks - and *Crémant* for the grown-ups - sponsored by the ESC.

Check your Inbox during the holidays, signing-up details will be sent in a separate email. You are welcome to express interest to Maggie at mvautheny@esc-alsace.org.

Cost: 5€ for ESC members, 8€ for guests, free for children under 12.



Conversation groups

The organisation of each group is specific.
Please get the details of the dates and locations of the next meetings directly from the group leaders listed below:



English conversation group

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

French conversation group

If you are interested in joining, please contact Colette at fredericka06@yahoo.fr - 03 88 20 21 17

Spanish conversation group

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

German conversation group

If you are interested in joining, please contact Bronwyn at bharrowfield@esc-alsace.org - 06 85 33 11 24

Past event

A Saturday morning in Schillick

When we arrived in Strasbourg 8 years ago and started looking for properties, I didn't know much about the different neighbourhoods of the city nor the villages around. I had a hard time making sense of the areas used by the relocation agent, and names such as Schiltigheim, Bischheim, Hoenheim, Reichstett, Mundolsheim, Vendenheim... sounded all alien to me. My favourite was Souffelweyersheim. It took us some while to be able to pronounce it properly.



We ended up, happily enough, settling in Robertsau having somehow ruled out Schiltigheim quite early and clearly. So, when Fabienne Martin and Adrian Butler proposed to offer a cultural visit of the town, I thought this would be an opportunity to know more about it. Despite the unhelpful background of a wet November morning, it was fascinating to discover the traditional Alsatian houses, among which the former *Ferme Linck* on rue d'Adelshoffen, one of the oldest streets in Schiltigheim. This is also known as the *Maison du Patrimoine*, home to the permanent exhibition of the history of Schiltigheim from 1860 to 1939.

The town has also a strong connection with the beer industry and organises every year the very popular *Fête de la Bière*. The House of Debus displays the brewery star, a symbol made of the 4 elements: air, ground, fire and water, known as the fundamental elements to produce beer.

The emblem of the Town Hall, the three ducks known as "*merlettes*", was given to Schiltigheim by Louis XIV when Strasbourg became French after 1681. The ducks have no beak, no leg, probably a strong message from the French to the *Schilikois* who should better keep quiet and stay still!



As for the other gems of the visit, you should have been there!

Joëlle

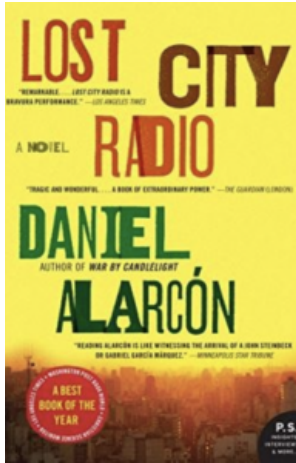
<< Membership runs from 1st January to 31st December.
It's now time to renew your registration with the ESC >>

ESC Membership / Registration 2022: [Join us at esc-alsace.org/Join2022](https://esc-alsace.org/Join2022)

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

Book club review

“Lost City Radio” by Daniel Alarcón



“ The questions that Daniel Alarcón raises in his book is that of achieving a real and everlasting democracy in our societies. ”

Peruvian-American author, Daniel Alarcón, has written this brilliant piece of dystopian literature, which remind us of works such as '1984' or 'A Brave New World'.

The novel, set in an unnamed South American country, tells the story of radio show host Norma, her husband Rey, and eleven-year old Victor, a boy who leaves his home town in the jungle. Ten years have gone by since the end of the civil war between the government and the insurgents, but Norma is still trying to trace the whereabouts of Rey, disappeared just after the government defeated the rebels.

Places and landscapes described in the book bear a clear resemblance to the ones in Peru. Therefore it is very likely that the author draws much of his inspiration from the armed conflict between the Peruvian government and the Maoist insurgent group Shining Path, which caused great suffering and destruction in that country from 1980 until 1994.

However, beyond any discussion about similarities to a specific country or any period of its history, the questions that Daniel Alarcón raises in his book is that of achieving a real and everlasting democracy in our societies.



Daniel Alarcón is a writer and journalist born in 1977 in Lima, Peru and raised in the US. He wrote four books of fiction, *War by Candlelight* (2005), *Lost City Radio* (2007), *At Night We Walk in Circles* (2013) and *The King Is Always Above the People*, 2017 finalist for the National Book Award. His works are inspired by armed conflicts and migration in Latin America.

Daniel Alarcón is host and executive producer of *Radio Ambulante*, a podcast in Spanish which covers Latin America for The New Yorker: (follow link: <https://radioambulante.org/en>).

Interested in joining the book club? Contact Joëlle at bookclub@esc-alsace.org

The next books for discussion are:

“ On Chapel Sands ” by Laura Cumming on 13th December 2021,

“ Oh William! ” by Elizabeth Strout on 10th January 2022.

Cooking corner

A book club monthly meeting is another occasion to socialise over food and drinks in sharing treats served by the host. After the November literary discussion, Ivan Jorge Segura presented a popular dish from his home country, a Peruvian appetiser called *Papa a la Huancaína* (Huancayo-style potatoes). It was enjoyed as another testimony of the variety of the cultural exchanges that the ESC has to offer, a blend of our worldwide influences.

Peruvian delicacies such as *Papa a la Huancaína* (Huancayo-style potatoes) speak volumes about peoples' culture and history. Its ingredients tells the story of a cultural mix between the Incas and the Europeans.

But the origin of the appetiser itself dates back to the late nineteenth century. This was the time of a railway construction in Peru, in order to link Lima to the city of Huancayo in the Central Andes. It is said that food for workers was prepared by women coming from this Andean city. They used to serve boiled potatoes topped with a cheese and yellow chili sauce. Over time, the dish became popular among all social classes in Peru.

Nowadays anybody can prepare and taste this Peruvian starter. The only kitchen appliance to be used is a blender to mix all the ingredients.

Ingredients for the sauce

- 2 tablespoons of Peruvian yellow chili paste "*Ají amarillo*" (can be replaced with Harissa)
- 2 tablespoons of vegetable oil
- 4 or 5 saltine crackers
- 8 oz. of *queso fresco* (it can be replaced with feta cheese)
- 1 cup of evaporated milk
- a pinch of salt

Other ingredients

- Potatoes, boiled and peeled
- Lettuce leaves
- Pitted black olives
- Hard-boiled eggs



Instructions

- First, put a few lettuce leaves on a plate, and then the potatoes,
- Pour the *huancaína* sauce on top,
- Garnish with black olives and slices of hard-boiled eggs.

Ivan Jorge Segura

Farewell, farewell

After nearly 20 years in Bas-Rhin, Alasdair and Elizabeth Hunter will be leaving Strasbourg at the end of the year, to return to the UK. They have been shining ambassadors for their native Scotland, leaving behind, with those of us remaining, outstanding memories of solidarity, friendship and humour.

In their first move away from the UK, the couple arrived in 2002 for Alasdair to take up a position with Dow Chemicals involving managing sites on both sides of the Rhine. Offendorf served as a convenient home base, and this unremarkable village was soon to become notorious as the epicentre of that celtic *baccanale*, the Burns Supper- a wildly popular event taking place in the village hall each January until the pandemic struck. Alasdair, resplendent in kilt delivering Burnsian speeches, and Elizabeth adept enthusiast of Scottish country dancing, were pivotal to this success.

The move to France posed some educational challenges for the three daughters. Teenagers Stephanie and Rebecca stayed (mainly) in boarding school in the UK while 5-year-old Fiona was to traverse the French system, becoming the go-to for advice on the intricacies of language and culture. Alasdair remembers ruefully the occasion when a mechanic told Fiona (aged 6) what was wrong with the car so that she could explain it to her dad. Elizabeth recounts similar embarrassments at the doctors.

Professionally, things worked out well and Elizabeth was offered a job at the Council of Europe just as she was concluding despondently that there might be more to life than clearing out the bathroom cabinet. Alasdair spent 3 years commuting to Speyer along the way and then, for a proposed posting in Saudi Arabia, endured a protracted and frustrating experience with an impenetrable bureaucracy before returning to the relative sanity of Europe – though the Offendorf house had been sold beforehand. The last few years have been based in a pleasant 8th floor flat in Neudorf - with balcony perfectly located for watching the sunset and taking in the panorama of New Year's Eve fireworks.

The next move will take the Hunters back not to Scotland but to Hull, on the east coast of England – a reasonable compromise since the family, including grandchildren is somewhat scattered: Stephanie lives in Hull, Rebecca in Sale and Fiona in Stirling.

They will take away many fond memories of the time spent in Alsace, with the 14 years in Offendorf having provided a fascinating entrée into village life. In culinary terms, *tartes flambées* and Alsatian wines (with the exception of Pinot Noir) were great discoveries, while *choucroute* never really appealed. The magnificent scenery on both sides of the border has been much appreciated, particularly for the hiking opportunities offered. The distance from the sea is regrettable (and the long road back from Calais definitely won't be missed) but the numerous possibilities of exploration around Europe have largely compensated.

So, good luck and *au revoir les Hunters*, and rather than letting your lum reek, maybe you should consider getting a heat pump. Just a thought...

Mike



Your ESC Committee



Joëlle Glore
President



Maggie Vautheny
Vice-President



Mike Wraith
Treasurer



Jonathan Crow
Secretary/Digital Strategist



Catherine Manini
Newsletter Editor



Fabienne Martin
Events Coordinator



Véronique Heller-Clauss
Communication/Strategy
Coordinator

We were gathered for our Annual General Meeting only last June. Considering the health situation, the next AGM will not be convened in January but in March 2022. Spring time will hopefully offer safer gathering opportunities. Stay tuned for further information.

Newsletter Publication

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. We plan to issue the next newsletters on the first Monday of the month (please excuse possible organisational delays).

Deadline for next copy is Sunday 29/12/2021 - 6.00 pm (guidelines can be sent upon request)

Thanks to Joëlle Glore for the Cover picture