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## WHAT HAS THE IWA-BS BEEN UP TO?

Well, as this is a special but slightly shorter newsletter I am under strict instructions to keep it short and sweet (and for anyone who knows me: you know how difficult it is not to say impossible I find this!!!!).

To be honest I could write a whole page about our crazy weather but I will contain myself .....(can you picture me trying to control my fingers on the keyboard?)

There is not much for me to write about past events as you will find separate articles about all of them further on in the newsletter. So I will take these next few lines to thank everyone at the end of another eventful and productive year in the IWA-BS for their hard work and tireless efforts in developing our association that little bit further every year.

2015 has seen our new website going online, our new charity IWA Helps was born at the beginning of the year and extended tremendously throughout the year plus the planning for a 'young IWA' has started. All these are big steps for a relatively small group run purely by volunteers.

And that brings me to the most important people in this IWA of ours: and that is everyone who contributes something to our programme. Maybe by simply joining in at functions, by running a regular group, organising an event or developing a new project. Without you we would simply not be here. A heartfelt thank you to all of you out there reading this!!!

So that leaves me - in the name of the whole Steering Committee and our President- to wish you all a wonderful, not too stressful and hopefully harmonious Christmas and an exciting and exhilarating start into the New Year 2016. We are all looking forward to catching up with you in the New Year!!!!

Susanne Kendell



Christmas bakery (fruitbread) at Ulrike Troll's house. Thank you for having us!!! picture: A. Reinhart



Heike Hohmann's birthday dance at our Christmas Party picture: A. Reinhart



## Christmas Markets in the Region

Following please find the dates for the regular Christmas Markets in our region:

Braunschweig:	25.11. – 29.12.2015
Wolfenbüttel:	24.11. – 23.12.2015
Goslar:	25.11. – 30.12.2015
Celle:	26.11. – 27.12.2015
Hanover:	25.11. – 22.12.2015
Wolfsburg:	23.11. – 29.12.2015
Wolfsburg Autostadt:	27.11. – 06.01.2016



A lot of historical and interesting places also hold special Advent celebrations or markets on weekends. We have listed some of them for you:

Advent weekend in Schloss Wolfsburg: 05./06.12.2015 from 11.00 to 7.00

Christkindl market in Schloss Oelber: 04.-06.12. and 11.-13.12.2015

Advent celebration in Schloss Salder: 12. and 13.12.2015

Advent weekend in Klostersgut Woeltingerrode: 05. and 06.12.2015

Advent weekend in the old mine Rammelsberg: 12. and 13.12.2015

(An advent weekend of a different kind – experience Christmas stalls and music underground in the old mine of the Unesco World Heritage site Rammelsberg. Tickets can and should be purchased beforehand as it is always very popular!)

Susanne Kendell

picture: Stadtmarketing; Daniel Möller



## International Women's Association

Region Braunschweig e.V.



## Advent Wreath Workshop

One of the joys of the Christmas season is lighting the first candle of advent. This year, Marianne Wandt opened up her lovely home to host the annual wreath-making workshop. Andrea Reinhart co-hosted and taught eight participants how to bundle the pine branches together in a rectangular shape, adorning the greenery with bits, baubles, and candles to create originality to each of our wreaths.

Under Andrea's guidance, I found the process easy, creative and fun. She encouraged each person's imagination to emerge by offering tips and decoration ideas. I left with a sense of accomplishment in my own creativity: Instead of purchasing a generic store bought wreath, I can proudly display my hand-made artistry.

We ended the evening with a glass of bubbly or two along with home made treats of sweets and other edibles. Cheers to a lovely holiday season!

Cheryl Koch

## IWA Helps

Our very own IWA-Helps was invited to a reception on the 25<sup>th</sup> of November 2015 by the Lower Saxony Minister for Social Affairs, Health and Equality, Mrs. Cornelia Rundt, in the old Town Hall. This event was to recognise voluntary help with immigrants and immigration in Braunschweig. Something that is extremely important in our difficult and troubled times. Representing the IWA-Helps were Sabine Behrens-Mayer, Sabine Westphal and Martina Sawalsky who were joined by 200 other guests from different organisations. Our mayor, Mrs. Rohse-Paul, opened the reception by saying how crucial their help was for the region.

Afterwards Mrs. Rundt took to the podium and during her speech talked about the unbearable baiting and negative attitude against immigrants who have already greatly suffered. She said that more than ever it was important to set a good example by recognising those who helped and assisted those in need. She also mentioned that more immigrants were to be expected in Lower Saxony in the future and that she very much hopes that the voluntary work will continue.

This emotional speech was followed by a reading by the author Luc Degla, a foreigner himself, who regularly writes about his very 'German' experiences in the Braunschweig newspaper. The evening finished with a buffet accompanied by music and the chance to have a personal chat with the minister.

Well done IWA-Helps!!! The work you do is invaluable! Thanks to you all!

Martina Sawalsky/Susanne Kendell

## Christmas Party 2015

The motto of this year's Christmas party? IWA eats, drinks, dances, celebrates and makes merry! The setting at the restaurant "La Cupola" was very special indeed – over the roofs of Braunschweig, with the glass dome above our heads – there was definitely a festive sparkle in the room.

In her welcome speech, our president looked back upon the year and outlined the achievements of "IWA helps", which was followed by a few words of appreciation from Martina Krüger of the bureau for Migration Issues for the very dedicated work done so reliably by the IWA ladies. Marianne and Maria then handed out little gifts to the IWA group leaders and the homepage team, thanking them for their time and effort!

This was followed by an "American Auction" to raise money for our charity project – Adalbert Wandt, with Marianne's help, auctioned of a picture by Heike Hidalgo. With this all-pay-auction system, not only the person who wins the bid pays, but everybody keeps contributing relatively small amounts until there's nobody left to outdo the last bid. The process was great fun and Sunshine Kim can now call herself the proud owner of a real Hidalgo!

Our buffet was absolutely delicious and after dinner, as soon as some space was cleared to make room for a dance floor, the real party started! The DJ had a very good sense of what to play and he managed to keep many of the ladies, but also some of our enthusiastic international men on the dance floor for a large part of the evening. We certainly have one or two sparkling movers!

A few minutes before midnight, we formed a big circle and celebrated Heike Hohmann's Birthday! She treated us all to a glass of bubbly and we all gave our best singing Happy Birthday (oh, what a lot of musical talent we have in our association!) at the top of our voices.

Next year, the Christmas Party will also be our 10-Year Anniversary Celebration! Planning's already underway, the date is set (as always – Friday before the 1<sup>st</sup> Advent Sunday, November 25, 2016), so mark that date red in your calendars!

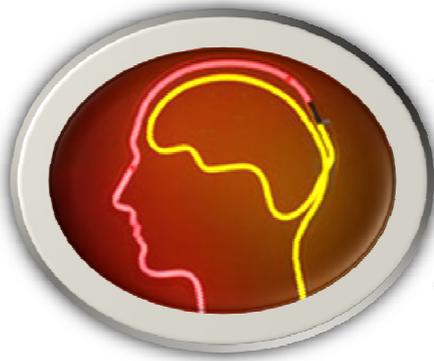
Stephanie Cattell





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During the weeks approaching the holidays, a lot of people tend to reminisce about Christmases past - how the best years were those when the children were small. To see the wonder in their eyes in those years before they stopped believing in ... in what, exactly? This is where the difficulties in an international relationship start!

I, for one, am thrilled that our kids are at an age where there's no more need to come up with absurd and outrageous stories about the division of labor between holiday personnel.

The protagonists: Nikolaus (German), das Christkind (Bavarian), der Weihnachtsmann (German), Father Christmas (British) and dear old Santa Claus (American). Too many chief characters competing for the same task! How do you explain that to children who really, really want to believe in something believable?

Living in Braunschweig, the Nikolaus makes his appearance on the 6<sup>th</sup> of December, the Weihnachtsmann is the man with the presents on the 24<sup>th</sup>. So far, so good! Only slight confusion here, when the Bavarian grandparents kept speaking of the "Christkind" being the bearer of gifts, followed by the English grandparents who would call up and ask what Father Christmas has brought (on the 25<sup>th</sup>...)!

Oh, but that one was easy: we told the kids that the Weihnachtsmann and the Christkind have an agreement - they divided Germany up between the two of them! Logical! Father Christmas is just the English word for the same old Weihnachtsmann and of course he comes to the English children on the 25<sup>th</sup> because he's busy in Germany on Christmas Eve! Now if that's not creative...

It became a bit more challenging when we moved to the US. Our kids cleaned their shoes on the evening of the 5<sup>th</sup>, placed them outside the front door and expected them to be filled with goodies overnight by Nikolaus. The neighbors' kids, of course, were slightly baffled by this! Shoes outside the door? Presents and sweets in them? What a wonderful idea! Needless to say, the American parents in our vicinity were not quite as thrilled, but were coerced to go along with the idea. In a kind of "barter", we adopted Santa Claus and Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer and put out a plate of cookies and some carrots on Christmas Eve.

Can you see what a minefield Christmas is when people with different cultural backgrounds try to find a way to uphold their own traditions and incorporate them into joint holiday rituals and ways of doing things?

I was asked to keep this short, so I'll save my stories about Christmas food and holiday lighting for some other time! Have a wonderful holiday season and celebrate those traditions!

Stephanie Cattell

## Ragtime

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of November, while the first glasses of mulled wine were being served at the Christmas market, a group of IWA Ladies and their partners met at the Staatstheater to see the musical "Ragtime". Sylke Siebenmorgen had organized great tickets in the 3<sup>rd</sup> row - it was so interesting to be so very close to the action and almost too much to take in at once - the actors/singers in their wonderful costumes, backdrop and props, the orchestra, and the German "surtitles" of the English songs.

About the musical: The setting is New York City at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century - the rhythm of ragtime is in the air as the lines of fate of three people and their families meet: a black ragtime pianist, a Jewish immigrant and a lady living elegantly with her family in a noble suburb, all searching for a better future. The choir of the Staatstheater and the guests of the Harlem Ensemble prove themselves in a multitude of roles - vocally as well as theatrically. The scenes depicting the increasingly revolutionary masses of the workers and the unemployed are outstanding and actually sent shivers down my spine!



This was definitely one of the best, if not THE best production I've seen at the Staatstheater so far. Even though Ragtime is set around 100 years ago, the issues dealt with have a very socio-critical and current aspect. If you get the chance, I can only recommend that you go and see this musical while it's still on (there are seven more performances between now and the end of January).

A great big THANK YOU to Sylke and her husband Thomas for the perfect organization of an all-round worry-free theatre evening!

Stephanie Cattell

pictures: Thomas Siebenmorgen



International Women's Association

Region Braunschweig e.V.

## Treve Erdmenger

I got to know Treve more closely when she became a member of the IWA-BS and joined our painting class and also the English Book Club.

Her manner was friendly, unassuming and very knowledgeable. She was always well prepared and enriched our conversations with her well thought out, reflective and thought-provoking contributions about the books we were reading or the ones she suggested.

She will be sorely missed.

Hannelore Kraft



## Upcoming IWA-BS Events

14.01.2016 January	Visit to the Sprengel Museum in Hanover Beauty Event (date and venue to be confirmed)
13.02.2016 End of February	Traditional Curly Cale walk in the Harz Mountains Cross Cooking
March 20.03.2016	Day Trip to Hildesheim (date and venue to be confirmed) Persian New Year Festival with Ferry Wagner

## GENERAL INFORMATION

Please note that the ongoing, regular programme does not continue during the school holidays.

That also includes the Newcomers' Coffee morning. If the first Thursday falls into the school holidays, the Coffee morning will not take place.

Also, the IWA-BS will be officially closed during the holidays. Please note that e-mails and requests will not be answered until after the holidays.

### DATES FOR THE NEWCOMERS' COFFEES 2016 on THURSDAYS will be:

4<sup>st</sup> of February (evening HK)                      3<sup>rd</sup> of March (morning FS)                      7<sup>th</sup> of April (evening HK)

**Please note that the Newcomers' Coffees take place either from 9.30 a.m. – 12.00 p.m. (FS) or 6.30 p.m. To 8.30 p.m. (HK)**

### DATES FOR THE STAMMTISCH AT RESTAURANT "TRESOR" 2016 on THURSDAYS will be:

**Dates are:**                      21<sup>th</sup> of January                      18<sup>th</sup> of February                      17<sup>th</sup> of March

**Stammtisch starts at 07:30 pm**

**Address:** Tresor, Bankplatz 8, 38100 Braunschweig

### The venue for the Newcomers' Coffee Mornings is (unless stated otherwise):

Volkswagen Financial Services AG (FS)

Conference Centre

Room Mars/Venus

Schmalbachstrasse 1

38112 Braunschweig

### The venue for the Newcomers' Coffee Evenings is (unless stated otherwise):

Haus der Kulturen Braunschweig e.V. (HK)

Am Nordbahnhof 1

38106 Braunschweig

### Postal address of the IWA-BS

IWA-BS

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## Newsletter Team (Impressum)

Articles: Susanne Kendell, Stephanie Cattell, Layout: Andrea Reinhart

Please note that we have taken great care to make sure that all information at the time of printing was correct but we can accept no liability for mistakes or printing errors.

As always, we would appreciate any input and ideas for future publications. Anything that you think is important to you. Please inform me (Susanne.Kendell@t-online.de) of any suggestions. Thank you!

