

Das Blatt

The American Goethe Society's Electronic Newsletter

Barbara W. Alsip, Editor

March 2005

WINTER 2005 UPDATE

Although snowy weather prevented the AGS luncheon and the dramatic reading in January from occurring, we kept active nonetheless.

On Tuesday, February 1, the dramatic reading group met at the home of AGS vice-president Barbara Alsip to watch the video of *Prinz Friedrich von Homburg*. The assembly enjoyed Glühwein and cookies offered by AGS officers and delectable smoked salmon canapés provided by Sherie Day.

On Saturday, February 12, a dozen AGS members and guests met at the Café Mozart for the monthly luncheon. Attendees followed the practice begun in 2004 of bringing a poem to recite in German, according to a theme chosen in advance by President Irmgard Wagner (the February theme was, of course, "Winter"), a lunch "mit Lyrik," so to speak. Attendees have been enthusiastic about participating. It gives us an opportunity to speak German and an occasion to resurrect a nearly lost art, that of poetry recitation. If ever there was a communion of like minds, this is it!

The drama reading group had its first meeting of the year on Wednesday, February 16, at the Dolley Madison Library in McLean. They read Act I of Dürrenmatt's *Der Besuch der Alten Dame*. They loved dramatizing the gullible citizens of Gullen in their shattering first encounter with the ominous billionaire who is supposed to save the town from ruin.

Snow on February 24 has caused us to reschedule the book conversation on Kant's *Zum ewigen Frieden*. The conversation will now take place at the Goethe-Institut on Tuesday, March 8 at 6:45pm. (Nonetheless, we were delighted to find that this event was listed in the February 20, 2005, *Washington Post*'s "Sunday Source.")

A SNAPSHOT OF THE AGS TREASURER

John E. Loth became fascinated with German language and culture when he was stationed at Ramstein AFB as a young GI in the 1960s. He took German from an administrator at the base. He was invited to meet the family, and from then on had his lessons at the family apartment. He says, "We went from *der, die, das* to *Faust I!*"

Mr. Loth received his BA in German with Honors at the University of Maryland, with a minor in French and comp lit. He received his MA in German from Ohio State University.

Now retired, Mr. Loth spent 30 years as a convention and trade show exposition director for various national and international associations. He has also served as treasurer for two volunteer organizations.

A trip to Austria a few years ago made him realize that he had not forgotten his German, and he is now able to pursue his hobbies, including relearning and rereading German literature. He much enjoys speaking German with AGS members. He attends classes at both GMU and the Goethe-Institut in German culture, language, and literature. A book collector of German literature and language texts, he also has a special interest in Gustave Flaubert and editions of *Madame Bovary*.

COMING EVENTS

AGS Events

Saturday, March 12: Small Group Luncheon. Bistro Europa, Old Town Alexandria, VA, 1pm.

Wednesday, March 16: Dramatic Reading.

Dürrenmatt's *Der Besuch der Alten Dame*, Dolley Madison Library, McLean, VA, 7:30pm.

Thursday, March 31: Lecture. "The Relevance of Kant for American Philosophy Today." Prof. Ted Kinnaman, GMU, Goethe-Institut, 6:45pm.

Saturday, April 9: Small Group Luncheon, Restaurant to be determined 1pm..

Wednesday, April 20: Dramatic Reading.

Dürrenmatt's *Der Besuch der Alten Dame*, Dolley Madison Library, McLean, VA, 7:30pm.

Thursday, April 28: Book Conversation. Ernst Jünger's *In Stahlgewittern (Storm of Steel)*. Goethe-Institut, Washington, DC, 6:45pm.

Thursday, May 12: Annual business meeting.

Goethe-Institut, Washington, DC, 6pm to 6:45pm. (Refreshments will be served.)

Thursday, May 12: Lecture. "German Graphic Artists and Culture: From Holbein to Heckel" by Prof. Marion Deshmukh, GMU, in conjunction with the National Gallery of Art exhibit entitled "Six Centuries of Prints and Drawings: Recent Acquisitions."

Goethe-Institut, Washington, DC, 6:45pm.

Wednesday, May 18: Dramatic Reading. Schiller's *Kabale und Liebe*, Dolley Madison Library, McLean, VA, 7:30pm.

Saturday, May 21: Small Group Luncheon.

Restaurant to be determined, 1pm.

Wednesday, June 15: Dramatic Reading. Schiller's *Kabale und Liebe*. Dolley Madison Library, McLean, VA, 7:30pm.

Other Events

Saturday, March 26: Tchaikovsky's *The Maid of Orleans*, based on Schiller's *Die Jungfrau von Orleans*, Kennedy Center Opera House, 7pm.

Saturday, April 2: Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*. Kennedy Center Opera House, 7pm.

Friday, April 22 and Sunday, April 24: The Virginia Opera presents Gounod's *Faust* at the George Mason University Center for the Arts, 8pm and 2pm, respectively.

Sunday, April 24: Our Faustfest Finale" at Brion's Grill in the University Mall across from the GMU campus after the opera. Special thanks to AGS member Bonnie Becker, who organized this event.

Saturday, May 14: Haydn's *Die Schöpfung*, George Mason University Singers, Kreeger Museum, 8pm.

Thursday, May 19: Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem*, Kennedy Center Concert Hall, 8pm.

Continuing through May 31, 2005: The National Gallery of Art exhibit of "Six Centuries of Prints and Drawings: Recent Acquisitions."

Sunday, June 5: Verdi's *Luisa Miller* (based on Schiller's *Kabale und Liebe*). Washington Concert Opera, Lisner Auditorium, 6pm.

NB- *Schultze Gets the Blues*, the story of a forced-into-retirement salt miner who has a passion for zydeco (Louisiana Cajun-style) music, opens at the E Street Theater on March 2. Most of the action takes place in Texas and Louisiana. Irmgard Wagner and Barbara Alsip saw *Schultze* at the E Street Theater in January and found the movie touching and sad and funny. We don't know the dates and movie houses yet, but *Der Untergang* (*Downfall*), which is about Hitler's last days in the bunker, is to open in an area theater soon.

CULTURAL NEWS FROM GERMANY

Theater. In one week alone, as reported by *Die Zeit*, there were thirteen dramatic and one poetry performances ("Balladenabend") of Friedrich Schiller's work. Following were Lessing with eight, Goethe with six, and Kleist with five.

Film. Nearly 37 million people went to see a German film in 2004. Also, German productions numbered 121 out of 430 movies shown in Germany. (The United States had 179.)

----The February 11, 2005, *The Week in Germany* has an interview with Michael Schorr on *Schultze Gets the Blues*. Of filming in New Braunfels, Texas, he noted "[W]e filmed a live festival of German folk music. ... [W]e just set up our camera and filmed what was happening....It's a weird experience to be confronted with your own culture—and to have it celebrated in such a way in a foreign country. We even met a lot of younger people down there who spoke German and who are active in promoting their town's traditional culture."

---- *Sophie Scholl—Die Letzten Tage* features the young woman who, with her brother Hans, led the White Rose Nazi resistance movement. They produced leaflets condemning the Nazis and calling for a restoration of democracy. Reported to the Gestapo, the pair were tried, convicted, and sentenced to death by guillotine. The "last days" refers to evidence that has been until recently withheld by East German officials. (Julia Jentsch, who plays the title role, has also been seen in *Die Edukators* and *Der Untergang*.)

Recordings. In 2004, for the first time, VHS and DVD for the home market surpassed EUR100 million (USD160 million).

Public Art Installation. Germany had a hand, quite literally, in Christo and Jeanne-Claude's "The Gates" in Central Park. Stephen Schilgen's weaving workshop in Emsdetten produced the vinyl fabric sheets, and a German plant near Leipzig, Bieri Zeltaplin, processed and sewed the fabric. (The latter also worked on the Reichstag wrapping.)

Exhibition. A Gerhard Richter retrospective is currently on view in Düsseldorf. The exhibit includes over 110 paintings and sculptures, many of which have never before been seen. Gerhard Richter recently gave the first permanent larger collection of his works to an art museum in Dresden, his birthplace.

THE BOOK CORNER

Steven Ozment, *A Mighty Fortress: A New History of the German People*. First published in 2004, the book is now out in paperback. (Perennial Paperbacks, 2005, \$14.95)

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