

Going Dutch



2015
December

In
this
issue

Women in Need

Using GroupSpaces

Prinsjesdag Luncheon

Nighttime Travel Photography

American Women's Club of The Hague



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Going Dutch

December 2015

**The Magazine of the
American Women's Club
of The Hague**



6

The crowds outside had to use umbrellas, but we were nice and dry with wonderful views of all the action during our annual Prinsjesdag Luncheon



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You won't need to wait until the next lunar eclipse to practice your nighttime photography skills after reading these tips



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Learning about Dutch cheese and wines wasn't just educational. It was also a lot of fun!

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Women with Dutch Partners Open

AWC Purpose Statement

The AWC of The Hague is an association formed to provide social and educational activities for American women living in the Netherlands and to promote amicable relations among people of all nations as well as acquiring funds for general public interest. The association does not endeavor to make a profit.



Prinsjesdag Luncheon



Message from the President

by Becky Failor

The days are getting shorter, the weather is getting colder, so why I am feeling all bright and warm about the American Women's Club of The Hague? Let me share with you a few reasons.

Huge hugs and heaps of praise go to **Ginny Mees, Barbara Bremer** and all their Holiday Bazaar team for the great success they had. The Holiday Bazaar is critical to AWC fundraising and helps make everything else we do possible. Working at the Holiday Bazaar in 2010 was my first AWC volunteer experience. I came away all "warm and fuzzy." I had fun and new friends. I thank **Laurie Martecchini** for organizing all the volunteers once again. I thank each of you who volunteered and hope you enjoyed your experience.

Laurie has been working on a new system to more easily share the volunteer opportunities with you. She explained a bit about this at the November General Meeting. Whereas I have met people by participating in AWC activities, it is through AWC volunteering that I have made deep friendships. Perhaps this works the same for you?

Sue Merrick, Vice President, **Jan de Vries**, Treasurer, **Sunita Menon**, Secretary, **Karla Kahn**, Club and Community Relations, **Rebecca Fry**, Communications, **Dominique Duysens**, Clubhouse Administrator, **Laurie Martecchini**, Board Member at Large and Volunteer Coordinator, and **Jessie Rodell**, Board Advisor have been working

so hard as your AWC Board Officers. So much of what they do has been behind the scenes. And, that is the way it should be. Our job, as your Board, is to make the Club business run smoothly so you

can enjoy your Club experience.

In August, **Celeste Brown**, led a Board Team Building and Training Session for us. We completed that training by setting four goals for our Board.



- Identify and manage our diverse membership demographics, meeting their needs and offering them opportunities
- Improve our Club management, organization and documentation
 - includes existing systems and what needs to be developed
 - includes Club documents and processes
- Make the AWC a welcoming environment and atmosphere
 - includes aesthetics of the Club
 - includes Member behavior and attitudes
- Increase Club Members' enthusiasm for philanthropy and community service

As I type these I realize what a challenge we have set for ourselves. If any of these goals spark your interest please let me or any Board Member know.

You may have noticed I listed Dominique Duysens as the Clubhouse Administrator. I am honored that Dominique has accepted this position and serves as the very first Associate Member on the AWC Board. She will oversee the monthly meeting Programs, the operation of our front desk, all the operations of the Clubhouse, including maintenance and supplies, Clubhouse rentals, and many more details. It is a big job that **Rachel Koppers** held for two years. I came to >>51



December General Meeting

by Mary Brotherton and Roberta Enschede

Sharing The Holiday Joy

Join us to celebrate the joys of December with a celebration of goodwill and friendship. We'll have a choir and the music of Christmas and Hanukkah as well as a sing-along. Perhaps you'd like to tell a favorite holiday story, or bring a guitar or other instrument you play to make our sing-along even more fun.

If you would like to bake some Christmas cookies, that would be wonderful. For those of you who make potato *latkes* (pancakes) for Hanukkah, you are welcome to share them with everyone as well. In addition, we will be hosting a catered luncheon. Details, including cost, can be found in eNews and on GroupSpaces.

Childcare will be available if it is requested for more than two children. Requests must be submitted to Becky Failor at awcthehague.president@gmail.com no later than December 2.



Thursday, December 10

Coffee: 10 a.m.

Meeting: 10:30 a.m.

www.groupspaces.com/AWCTheHague/item/990024

December Birthdays

Anita Deal 1
Jane Choy 3
Sara Crabtree 5
Annette Mosher 6
Jane Schiff 11
Jo van Kalveen 13
Rita Sunden 14
Carol Slootweg 15
Michelle Oliel 16
Kay van der Made 19
Suzanne Dundas 20
Karla Kavanaugh 20
Gail van der Feltz 20
Kristin Anderson 23
Pamela Schellekens 25
Saskia Wenge 25
Kathy DeBest 28
Agatha Zwaan 28
Nicole Baran O'Connell 29

Welcome New Members!

April Carter
Amber Gatewood
Krystel Manier

Happy Holidays!
The AWC Clubhouse
will be closed from
December 18
to January 4

Ramblings from the Editor

by Melissa White

When I went to bed on November 13, the details were still fuzzy. I knew that there had been several shootings in Paris and at least 40 people had been killed at two restaurants and a concert hall in what appeared to be a terrorist attack. Perhaps I was in denial, but I still hoped that these were isolated incidents and not a concerted effort to terrorize the innocent people of that beautiful city.

I believe we owe it to the victims of this act not to let the terrorists win by being terrorized.

~ Rick Steves

Of course, you already know that I was wrong. By the time I woke up, there was no denying that this was a terrorist attack. The number of dead was up to 120, and still rising, across 6 locations in the worst attack on French soil since World War II. I feel guilty that my first thoughts were selfish: I was glad that all my friends and family were accounted for. I hope your loved ones were also safe.

Considering our proximity to Paris, it's likely that nearly everyone reading this article has been to Paris at least once. I was there in July for three nights to meet up with my parents while my father was touring with a jazz band. We stayed in the Montparnasse area, an area that I didn't know well at all. We had a great time exploring the local street market, sidewalk cafés and parks as well as taking a cruise on the Seine. The more time I spend in Paris, the more I like the city. I am deeply saddened about what happened.

My heart goes out to all those impacted by these horrible crimes. I feel confident that those responsible for the planning of these events will be brought to justice. In the meantime, it is sad to think that people might be having second thoughts about visiting Paris or even Europe. Of course, everyone has to



AWC Walkie Talkies brought flowers to the French Embassy in The Hague

determine for themselves how to balance fear versus risk, i.e. the fear that something horrible might happen versus the actual risk of occurrence. On Friday, I was thinking of asking my daughter not to attend a climate change march in London later in the month. Having thought it over further, not only will I encourage her to still attend, but my husband and I will attend a similar march in Amsterdam. We can't change how we live or the terrorists win.

Now is the perfect time to reach out to others in our own community. The AWC is working on several projects this month (see page 25 for Sinterklaas Gift Bag Filling and Making Gingerbread Houses) as well as a TLC (Tender Loving Care) Dinner for Women in Need in February (see page 24).

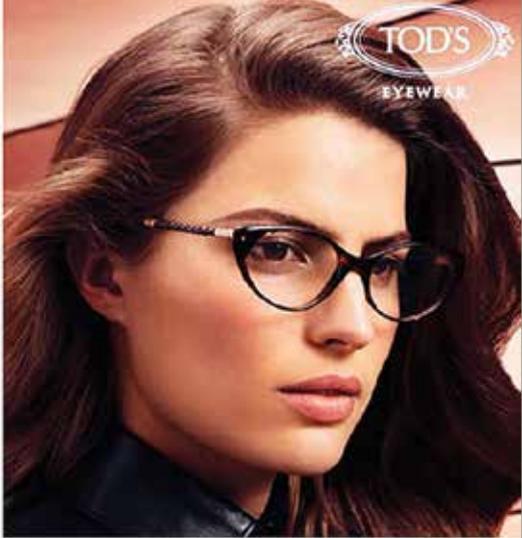
Rather than rambling on further, I'll leave you with the words of John Lennon:

*Imagine there's no countries
It isn't hard to do
Nothing to kill or die for
And no religion too
Imagine all the people living life in peace.*

*You may say I'm a dreamer
But I'm not the only one
I hope someday you'll join us
And the world will be as one.*

Happy Holidays!
Peace on Earth!

the Art of Seeing



- eye examination
- prescription sunglasses
- prescription glasses
- contact lenses
- eye pressure



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Meet our New Club Administrator

by Dominique Duysens

My name is Dominique Duysens. I am Dutch, and was born in The Hague, but I grew up in Limburg near Maastricht, including seven years in Margraten. I moved back to The Hague in 1995.

I studied geography for a few years, then switched to a two-year course to become a secretary. I worked as a secretary for many years at law offices in Utrecht and The Hague. In 2001, I started studying law in the evenings in Leiden. I earned a Bachelor's Degree and then a Master's in Law Philosophy. Since then I have tried to find a job in the legal field, which has proven really difficult, especially because of the economy.

So... nothing to do, you might think. Perhaps the perfect reason to become a member of the AWC? Actually, that is not the reason I became a Member. I am always busy. I am interested in many things, especially in people. I like tennis and golf, sing in a marvelous choir, love languages and reading, and have some very good friends whom I like to spend time with.

One grey Sunday afternoon, I walked past the Carlton Ambassador. Upon hearing a lot of noise and excitement, I decided to enter the hotel. The first person I met was **Johanna Dishongh**. She was there with a lot of other women, and the atmosphere was hilarious. It turned out to be the end of the AWC Holiday Bazaar. I was very touched/moved/thrilled by the energy and the spirit I found there. I had never found this spirit of "just doing it" in any Dutch or other club. Johanna told me some things about the AWC. I thought: well, nice if you are American, but of course I would never be admitted to this Club. Johanna

answered "Of course you can! Just go to the Clubhouse, speak with some Members, and there you are."

I was excited, and a few weeks later I went to the old Clubhouse in Scheveningen. It was again a very grey day. I entered and there were **Jan Essad** and **Jan de Vries** decorating gingerbread houses. Seeing that, who can resist becoming a Member! And so it happened. I have been an AWC Member since 2012, and I have never regretted joining. This Club is fantastic! The spirit and the energy here are beyond compare.



When **Becky Failor** asked me some weeks ago if I was willing to take on a role on the Board, I felt very happy! I was also very surprised and wondered if I could actually be of any help

to the Club. After discussing the things I could do, I am very enthusiastic and very motivated. I now think that if I can contribute to this atmosphere of spirit and energy by looking after the Clubhouse and all that is connected with it, I will do that with great pleasure!

Of course, this can in no way be done without your help (as much help from you as possible). If you might feel inspired by this story and want to be a volunteer – for example, to (wo)man the Front Desk for one or more days per month – feel free to let me know. If you would like to talk to me, you can often find me in the Clubhouse, at Book Club or at Walkie Talkies; of course, you can also send me an email at awcthehague.2ndvp@gmail.com.

Looking forward to working with the Board and taking a more active role in this wonderful Club.

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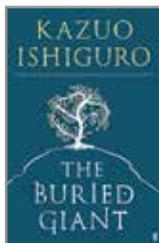
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Ongoing Activities

Book Club: Daytime

The AWC Book Clubs are open to all book lovers and are always open to new Members. There is no obligation to attend every meeting or lead a discussion. We take turns bringing a snack. If you've always wanted to try out a book club, you have two options per month. You can now register yourself for either (or both!) Book Clubs on the AWC *GroupSpaces.com* website. Any questions? Please email **Teresa Mahoney** for the daytime group or **Rebecca Fry** for the evening group at awcthehague.bookclub@gmail.com. Happy reading!

The December Daytime Book Club selection is *The Buried Giant* by Kazuo Ishiguro:



An elderly couple sets off on a journey in search of their son despite a mist of forgetfulness covering the land. Along the way, they are drawn toward the comfort and burden of the power of memory. This fantasy set after the reign of the legendary King Arthur is the first novel written in a decade by the Booker Prize-winning author of *The Remains of the Day*.

Wednesday, December 16
11 a.m. (Note: different time and venue to celebrate our Christmas party)
Potluck Lunch at Teresa's House, RSVP for details
FREE

Daytime Book Club Planning Ahead:

Thursday, January 28: *A Spool of Blue Thread* by Anne Tyler
 Thursday, February 25: *My Brilliant Friend* by Elena Ferante
 Thursday, March 24: *The Farm* by Tom Rob Smith

Recap of the October Discussion

Living in Bookstrap America: Economic mobility works both ways as shown by Linda Tirado when she shares her experiences with downward mobility. This book is an insightful glimpse into the lives of America's working poor. It's a life of uncertainty, exhaustion and invisibility. (How many of us have really seen, really interacted on a human level with the woman behind the drive-through window?) Tirado's take on the everyday life of the working class, battered by the legacy of Reagan's egregiously misnamed "trickled down economics" is effective, but impressionistic, short on statistics and long on curse words. She's clearly an intelligent, funny woman, but she is also angry and unabashed. Her final chapter savaging us—whom she dismisses as "rich people"—angered us in turn. Still, this book made for a great discussion and led us to reexamine our own attitudes and habits, thus it is recommended.

Book Club: Evening

The December Evening Book Club selection is *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers* by Tom Rachman:

This book is a mystery, but not in the conventional sense since there's no dead body. The real mystery is who is Tooty, the main character who was raised as a third-culture

kid, since she doesn't even seem to know herself. Over the course of flashbacks and fast-forward escapades, Tooty gradually pieces together the jigsaw of her unusual life to confront a complete picture that isn't always comforting.

Wednesday, December 9
7:30 p.m.
AWC Clubhouse
FREE



Recap of the October Discussion

The Light Between Oceans: Sometimes a work of literature sparks a serious, robust debate about ethics, morality and foreseeable consequences. That is exactly what happened this month. What would you do if you discovered the presumably foundling child you told the world was your own was in fact not an orphan and the child's despairing mother wanted her baby back? Intrigued? Read this thought-provoking, compelling novel and perhaps challenge your notions of "the right thing to do."

Chat, Crafts & Cake

Let's get creative! The AWC is open to all crafters. If you've been looking for an open space large enough to lay out that king-size quilt, or need more table space to organize your photo albums or scrapbooks, or just need an excuse to stitch, pack up your

supplies and bring them to the Clubhouse so you can chat with fellow AWC Members while you work. You might even be able to pick up some suggestions from a fresh pair of eyes. Each week, a different Member will bring a cake made from a never-before-tried recipe for tasting and critiquing. We're sorry, but babysitting is not available and thus we can't accommodate children. Questions? Contact: **Suzanne Dundas** at awcthehague.crafts@gmail.com

Tuesdays
10 a.m. – Noon
AWC Clubhouse
FREE

Cranium Night

Everyone is good at something and Cranium is an adult team game that gives everyone a chance to be a "game hero." Up to four teams compete using charades, puppeteering, sculpting, drawing, word play and trivia—14 skills in all. It's fast-paced, lively and a lot of fun. And, it's perfect for the AWC because "the more the merrier." We've designated the second Friday of each month as Cranium Night. Come alone or bring a partner, but please be on time—we'll begin promptly. Contact **Suzanne Dundas** if you have any questions.

Friday, December 11
7:30 p.m.
AWC Clubhouse
Free
www.groupspaces.com/AWCTheHague/item/999569

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Evening Book Club Planning Ahead:

Wednesday, January 20: *The Buried Giant* by Kazuo Ishiguro
 Wednesday, February 17: *The Blazing World* by Siri Hustvedt
 Wednesday, March 16: *Song of the Shank* by Jeffrey Renard Allen
 Wednesday, April 20: *The Harder They Come* by TC Boyle
 Wednesday, May 18: *Early Warning* by Jane Smiley
 Wednesday, June 8: *Amnesia* by Peter Carey

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Ongoing Activities (cont.)

Continued from page 15

Dinner Club

Sign up to share dinner at home with AWC friends and spouses/partners. **Kathy Tombllyn** will set the dates, place couples (or individuals) randomly, and assign the hostess. Then each hostess will set a theme and guests will be asked to prepare a dish. For example, if the theme is Italian, then one person might bring antipasto, one brings bread, one brings Italian wine, etc. The hostess may choose to cook the main course or do it all, but then you might be asked to contribute some money towards the cost. It will be up to each hostess how they want to structure the meal. You may be asked to host one dinner for eight, six or four guests (depending on your space at home) and then you will be a guest at someone else's home the next time. This is a fun way to share an evening with new AWC friends while enjoying a great dinner. No need to worry as you don't have to be a gourmet chef! Mark your calendar for future dates: Saturdays, April 30 and July 2. Contact **Kathy** at kthdsgns@aol.com to join in the fun.

Saturday, January 23

Locations and Meals Vary

Sign-up deadline: January 15

www.groupspaces.com/AWCTheHague/item/991386

Heart Pillow Project

The AWC is in its 8th year of making heart-shaped pillows to support the arms of breast cancer patients in local hospitals. Each pillow is made with tender loving care, wrapped in a plastic bag tied with a beautiful bow and a message signed by a volunteer. No sewing skills are needed; just the ability to cut and stuff! What a wonderful way to meet new friends while contributing to a worthy cause. The emails we receive are so touching and show that women are linked everywhere to this terrible disease. We are proud to provide women with something not only practical, but comforting as well. If you can cut fabric, stuff fiberfill, thread a needle or tie a bow, we need you! No sign-up is necessary. For more information, contact **Eileen Baker** at awcthehague.heartpillow@gmail.com.

Tuesday, December 15

Noon – 2 p.m.

AWC Clubhouse

FREE

Visitors Welcome

www.groupspaces.com/AWCTheHague/item/996307

Out To Lunch Bunch

If you're interested in making new friends and exploring new restaurants throughout The Hague, then this is the group for you! Rather than setting one specific day of the month, we will change our days each month in order to accommodate a variety of schedules. Once we have decided on the date and restaurant for that month, the details will be posted on the AWC Facebook Group and in eNews, and registration will open on GroupSpaces. If you have a favorite restaurant in your neighborhood you'd like to share with the group, please contact **Kathy DeBest** at debestjk@comcast.net

Tennis League

The AWC Tennis Group plays doubles every Tuesday in Warmond. Ladies move up and down the courts according to a ladder tennis system. The emphasis is on having fun! The league is available for all levels except true beginners. If you are interested in being placed on the waiting list to become a regular player or would like to be on the sub list, contact **Molly Boed** at mollyboed@yahoo.com.

Tuesdays (except specific holidays)

1 – 3 p.m.

AWC Guest Policy

Guests are welcome to participate in AWC activities and tours on a limited basis. As a nonmember, a guest is limited to attend two functions per calendar year and will be charged an additional nonmember fee. Only Members are entitled to use babysitting services.



Dekker Tennis Courts

Veerpolder 14, Warmond

€ 275 Members (€ 325 nonmembers)

Walkie Talkies

Taking a walk with friends is the perfect way to start your week! Join us for an energetic walk and talk. We meet in front of the Clubhouse each week and then walk to a variety of destinations between the beach, woods and city. Occasionally, we take longer walks which we announce on the AWC Facebook Group. Sign up for this group on GroupSpaces.com to get email updates or email **Emily van Eerten** at vaneerten@gmail.com or **Greetje Engelsman** at awcthehague.newcomers@gmail.com.

Mondays

9:30 a.m.

FREE

Walky Barky

Walky Barky is the dog-version of Walkie Talkies. Join us with your pooch for walks in the woods or for some fun outings where we can bring our dogs along. We have started a closed Facebook Group which all AWC Members with dogs are invited to join: www.facebook.com/groups/walkybarky. Since we are a new group, we'd really appreciate your input on how often you'd like to join in as well as suggestions for dog-friendly places to walk.



Wassenaar Coffee & Conversation

Do you live in Wassenaar and want to get together with other AWC Members, but don't want to journey to the Clubhouse? Or maybe you would like to go to Wassenaar for a change of pace? Here is your chance! **Ramona Oswald** hosts a coffee at her home in Wassenaar on the first Thursday of every month for Members and prospective Members. Ramona will provide directions to her house when you sign-up.

Thursday, December 3

9 – 11 a.m.

Ramona's House

FREE

www.groupspaces.com/AWCTheHague/item/785299



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One-of-a-Kind Activities

by Mallory Clarke

Holiday Ornament Exchange



For those AWC Members who are still in town, let's get together for some holiday fun and raise some money for a good cause (fee to be donated to charity). Bring a wrapped ornament to exchange (€ 10 or less).

Thursday, December 17

10 a.m. – Noon

AWC Clubhouse

€ 5 Members PLUS one gift-wrapped ornament

www.groupspaces.com/AWCTheHague/item/1001880

Museum of Bags & Purses

This will be a "Don't Miss" day out! The Tassen Museum, located in a lovely 17th century canal house in the heart of Amsterdam, houses the largest purse and bag collection in the world with over 5,000 items. The tour of this extensive collection will take us through the history and evolution of the handbag from the utilitarian Middle Ages to present-day high fashion. Our private tour of the museum will be followed by a delicious *Stijlkammer* Lunch of soup, quiche and *étagères* filled with a variety of sandwiches, savorys and sweets along with coffee, tea or juice to be served in a period room dating from the Dutch Golden Age. After lunch, we'll have a little more time to explore on our own. Truly a perfect way to spend a cold winter afternoon.

We will meet at Den Haag Central Sta-



tion (DHCS) to train and tram to the museum (meeting time still to be determined). You may want to have a few extra euros to spend in the award-winning museum gift shop where you just may find something utterly charming, whimsically fun or stunningly stylish that you can't live without. Grab your favorite handbag and join us on this fun day out. Don't forget to tuck your *OV-chipkaart* and *Museumkaart* in the hidden pocket!

Thursday, January 14

Meet at DHCS for train to Amsterdam

9:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Tassen Museum

Herengracht 573, Amsterdam

Tour and Lunch: € 30 Members (€ 35 nonmembers)

PLUS Museum Entrance Fee (€ 12.50 or free with *Museumkaart*)

Maximum 12

Cancellation deadline: January 3

www.groupspaces.com/AWCTheHague/item/1017183

7th Annual Chili Cook-Off

It's time for the 7th Annual AWC Chili Cook-Off! This is serious business as contenders vie for the coveted award of the Best Chili in the AWC. If you think you have the best chili in town, "bring it on!" This is one tasty event you won't want to miss. If you're interested in being a contestant, just let us know mighty quickly. You could be the next to wear the Best Chili Crown! Bring a six-pack of beer or your favorite beverage and a good appetite.

Save the Date: Saturday, February 6

RSVP directly on [AWC GroupSpaces.com](http://AWCGroupSpaces.com).

Direct any questions to

awcthehague.activities@gmail.com.

Payment must be made within 5 calendar days of reserving or your name will be moved to a waitlist. Payment can be made in the Front Office by PIN or by bank transfer to the AWC account NL42ABNA0431421757.

Tours

by Seanette Meserole

Iceland Luxury Adventure

Join us as we explore Reykjavik, Iceland, and the surrounding countryside to see waterfalls, glaciers, volcanoes, spas and the Northern Lights (if we're lucky). Pack your bag with your winter coat, swimsuit, and good camera for this amazing five-night small-group luxury tour of Iceland's natural splendor. We'll be traveling in style to areas where tour buses can't reach because we'll be in our own custom four-wheel drive SUV with a private driver/guide and staying in different hotels along the way. So exciting!

Our package will include: Airfare with airport transfers, five nights of double occupancy accommodation with breakfast, private driver/guide for four days, entrance fees to spas including the infamous Blue Lagoon, and gratuities. See page 45 for the itinerary.

Not included: Massages or treatments at spas, afternoon or evening meals, and optional activities such as snowmobiling, horseback riding or ATV rides.

Thursday, March 3 – Tuesday, March 8

€ 1,998 Members or Spouses

(€ 2,075 nonmembers)

Single Supplement: € 310

RSVP for all tours directly on

[AWC GroupSpaces.com](http://AWCGroupSpaces.com).

Direct any questions to

awcthehague.tours@gmail.com

Minimum 9 / Maximum 14

www.groupspaces.com/AWCTheHague/item/1014346

Cancellation deadline: February 1

Itinerary continued on page 45

>>45



Payment for all tours must be made within 5 calendar days of reserving or your name will be moved to a waitlist. Payment can be made in the Front Office by PIN or by bank transfer to the AWC account NL42ABNA0431421757.

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AWC and the Arts

by Jane Choy

Visit to Munch: Van Gogh

During the Van Gogh Year 2015, the Van Gogh Museum is presenting Munch: Van Gogh, the long-awaited exhibition that brings together work by Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890) and Edvard Munch (1863-1944) for the first time in history. Their visions on life and art are closely related, despite the fact that they never met. Their work is colorful, intense, expressive and radical. Their lives are remarkably similar in many ways. They both focused on the strong emotions that govern human existence: love, fear, spirituality and death. This exhibition focuses on the common ground between the work of these two artists, featuring 80 paintings and 30 works on paper. This is the very first exhibition to be held in the museum's reopened exhibition wing, and includes iconic pictures that are rarely loaned out, such as Munch's *The Scream* and Van Gogh's *Starry Night over the Rhone*. Please join us for a guided tour through this special exhibit.

Wednesday, December 9
11:30 a.m.

Van Gogh Museum
Museumplein 6, Amsterdam
€ 10 Members (€ 12.50 nonmembers)
PLUS Museum Entrance Fee (€ 17 or free with Museumkaart)
Minimum 12 / Maximum 15
Non-refundable
www.groupspaces.com/AWCTheHague/item/1018344

Left: Edvard Munch, *The Scream*, 1893. Munch Museum, Oslo. Right: Vincent van Gogh, *The Bridge at Trinquetaille*, 1888. Private collection



RSVP for all Arts Activities directly on [AWC GroupSpaces.com](http://AWCGroupSpaces.com).
Direct any questions to jechoy@me.com

A Tour of Fashion and Food

Two interesting exhibits opened during the autumn in the Gemeentemuseum in The Hague and we will have guided tours through them both! For those interested, we can have lunch at the museum café (at own expense) following the tours.

Ode to Dutch Fashion

Famous names such as Viktor & Rolf, Iris van Herpen and Jan Taminiau have put Holland on the map in regard to fashion. Did you know that next to the Met in New York, the Louvre in Paris and the V&A in London, the Gemeentemuseum has one of the most important fashion collections in the world? Never before has such a major exhibition showcasing the history of Dutch fashion been presented in the Netherlands.

The first fashion designers to work under their own name in the Netherlands, like Joan Praetorius in the 1920s, followed the lead of Parisian couture for a long time. After World War II, a whole generation of Dutch designers emerged. In the 1960s they turned their attention away from Paris, developing their own distinct style, featuring lots of black-and-white, a keen eye for line and shape, and also explosions

Frans Molenaar, 2013
Photo by Sabrina Bongiovanni



of color and idiosyncratic touches. Fashion design courses in the Netherlands, particularly in Arnhem, turned their focus to concept. This resulted in a host of creative designers, who put conceptual Dutch design firmly on the international map in the 1990s. Anyone who saw King Willem-Alexander's coronation cannot fail to recall the dazzling blue creation – a Jan Taminiau design – worn by Queen Máxima. Designers with their own strong signature have been particularly successful at rising above the crowd and gaining a strong reputation. Join us for a guided tour through this exhibit featuring more than 100 creations from the history of fashion in the Netherlands from 1900 to 2015.

Dutch Dining: Four Centuries of Table Settings

Eating is an essential part of life. And as soon as people sit down to eat together, dining becomes a social activity with connotations of communication, display and social status. Fine dining is a form of sensory seduction. It operates not only via the taste buds, but also via the visual appeal of the food and table setting. Beautiful porcelain and silverware, glittering crystal, fine damask and extravagant table ornaments all have a part

to play. This exhibition uses a spectacular display of complete table settings, complemented by drawings, paintings and liveries, to bring the history of formal dining among the Netherlands' wealthy elite, ruling class and royal house to vivid life. An exclusive peek inside the royal porcelain and silverware cabinet will transport visitors right to the heart of the Noordeinde Palace. Stars of the show are two complete table services on loan from the collection of the Dutch Royal House.

Wednesday, January 27
11:15 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.
Gemeentemuseum
Stadhouderslaan 41, The Hague
€ 10 Members (€ 12.50 nonmembers)
PLUS Museum Entrance Fee (€ 13.50 or free with Museumkaart)
Minimum 15 / Maximum 20
Cancellation deadline: January 15
www.groupspaces.com/AWCTheHague/item/1018855



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FOR SHELL PEOPLE WE DRIVE WITH SHELL RULES

Finding Members on GroupSpaces

by Becky Failor

You have just met a nice Member at an AWC event. You remember her first name is Jane, but do not remember her last name. You thought it would be fun to invite her to join you for lunch or a trip to a museum. How do you find her phone number or email?

You can look through the Membership Directory that was sent to you by email in November. This is a list of Members' names, addresses and phone numbers, current as of November 1. If you desire, you can pick up a hardcopy of this at the AWC Front Office.

Using GroupSpaces is an even faster way to find Member information and it is kept current by our Membership Chair, **Rebecca Niles-Pourier**. This is a short "tutorial" on using GroupSpaces to find Member information and how to keep your Member information current, including adding your own picture.

The AWC uses GroupSpaces to help manage our Membership and activities. Every Member has an account on GroupSpaces' AWC Group. You sign on to www.groupspaces.com/AWCTheHague with your email (the same email address you use for any AWC communications) and your password. You will see one of two screens. If you see a screen like this, click on "View" on the left side.



This should take you to the home screen shown below. Normally when you log in, you will go directly to the home screen.



To find a Member, click on the "Members" tab on the home screen. You will then see the screen below. Type the name of the Member in the search box and click on "Search Members." You do not need the full name; the first name will suffice. You will get a list of all the Members who meet your selection.



This is where having Member photos in GroupSpaces is so useful. We have four Members named Jane. If the Jane you are searching for has put her picture into GroupSpaces, it would show up with the search so you can be sure that you have the right "Jane."

Personally, I think this



is much more valuable than this.



Inserting Your Picture into GroupSpaces

1. Log-in to your AWC GroupSpaces account at www.groupspaces.com/AWCTheHague
2. At the very top of the page, you will see your name and a black down arrow. Click on it.

3. Click on "My Groups."
4. On the right side, you will see "My account," a place for your picture and your name. If you click on the picture area, it will allow you to upload a picture of yourself. You must click the box that says you have right to distribute the picture.

Now everyone can see your picture when they look you up in GroupSpaces. You might just get that friendly invitation for lunch or a visit to the museum.

Updating Membership Information

You can edit your other Membership Information in GroupSpaces (phone numbers, address and email) from the homepage by clicking on the "Edit Membership" box on the right. It is from this information that the mailing list for this magazine is generated, so be sure to keep it updated if you move.



Cancellation Policy

Members may reserve a spot for an AWC tour, activity or event in advance. Payment is required within five business days of the reservation or before the deadline date (whichever is sooner) otherwise your name will be moved to a waitlist. It is the responsibility of the Member to notify the Club at awcthehague.finance@gmail.com to cancel a reservation prior to the cancellation deadline. Please note that there will be NO REFUNDS (no exceptions) after the cancellation deadline. Members may find a substitute in lieu of cancellation provided that arrangements are made with the tour, activity or event organizer. Members shall be held responsible for their guest reservations in accordance with this policy.

Women in Need

by Pamela Pruis

Being a Member of the American Women's Club of The Hague is something many of us take for granted. We enjoy the benefits of fun activities, trips, networking and friendships without realizing what a privilege it is. Did you know there are many women living all around us under very different circumstances, who due to illness, divorce and loss of jobs are struggling and in need? The AWC is well known for its generosity and assistance to charitable organizations. Every year we raise money through our Holiday Bazaar, Gala and other activities to help support those in need. In some activities you can personally reach out to help others: making Heart Pillows for women with breast

desperate and unable to make ends meet and to pay her rent. In the mysterious way that things happen, my tragedy opened the door to help her by having her move into my home as she recovers.

This experience has now made me aware that there are many women in similar circumstances who are struggling in a multitude of ways. One woman recently lost her husband after a short battle with cancer and is left in Holland alone; still another has been counting each euro for years due to the difficulty her husband has had finding a job; yet another lives in a one-room apartment with four children struggling to survive.

It has become clear that there is a wonderful opportunity for our Club to reach out to show these women they are not forgotten.

cancer, making gingerbread houses to bring joy to those less fortunate, and filling Easter baskets in the spring are just a few of our community service projects. This year we would like to expand our personal interaction and host a meal in the Clubhouse for women who have financial needs, have experienced loss, are overwhelmed by caring for a loved one or have been sick themselves.

In 2013 my world was turned upside down when my Dutch husband suddenly left me. Through the encouragement of a friend, I joined the AWC to make new friends, get involved and focus my energy on something other than my own tragedy. I am fortunate that I can afford to volunteer my time and enjoy many of the activities the Club has to offer – but I have a friend with a very different story. In 2010 she went through a similar trauma but was left financially in need. Through much hard work on her part and the generosity of others, she was able to provide for herself and her daughter for several years. Suddenly last year she fell ill and was unable to work. Being self-employed and uninsured for such a situation, she was

After discussing these situations with other Members, it has become clear that there is a wonderful opportunity for our Club to reach out to show these women they are not forgotten. The idea is to invite around 35 women for a festive evening meal at the Clubhouse in February just to offer a bit of TLC. If you know of anyone whom you feel could benefit from such an evening, please submit to me as soon as possible her name along with a bit of her story. Our committee will review the information and send these women an invitation.

We are also looking for people who would like to make a monetary donation, help serve on the evening itself, decorate the Clubhouse, source gifts and fill gift bags. If you want to get involved, please contact me at 062 003 1983 or awcthehague.philanthropy@gmail.com.

**Saturday, February 13
5 – 10 p.m.
AWC Clubhouse
Guest by Invite Only
Volunteers Needed**

Philanthropy Projects

by Karla Khan

Making Gingerbread Houses

Catch the Spirit!

Two FREE workshops are available for your convenience.

Join us for a fun and meaningful way to get into the Christmas spirit by creating authentic homemade German gingerbread houses. We will joyfully mix and bake dough, then construct the houses with icing and colorful peppermint, chocolate and gumdrop candy, including stained glass windows made with red gelatin. The finished houses will be donated to local organizations, including Bronovo Hospital's oncology, labor, and children's wards and the Leger des Heils (Salvation Army) Women & Children's Shelter.

Before we can decorate, we need volunteers to bake the roofs and walls of the gingerbread houses in their homes prior to December 11. Even if you can't make it to either workshop, please let us know if you would like to

help by contacting **Pam Pruijs-Bott**, AWC Community Service Coordinator at awcthehague.philanthropy@gmail.com to get the recipe and pattern for the house.

**Tuesday, December 8
7 – 9 p.m.**

www.groupspaces.com/AWCTheHague/item/999575

**or
Friday, December 11
10:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.**

www.groupspaces.com/AWCTheHague/item/662913

**AWC Clubhouse
FREE
Min 6 / Max 16**



Sinterklaas Gift Bag Filling

The Philanthropy Committee is pleased to have the opportunity to help 130 families in The Hague by contributing to the Oase Food Bank for Sinterklaas. As you hopefully saw in eNews, we asked for donations of toiletry items and children's gifts to be delivered to the Clubhouse by December 1. Please help us to prepare the generous donations of our Members for delivery.

Thursday, December 3

9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

AWC Clubhouse

Free

St James
Voorschoten
the international Anglican Church in the Leiden area

every Sunday
Church Service

10:30 am
BSN Senior School
Voorschoten

with children's &
youth programme

Contact:
Ruan Crew (chaplain)
chaplain@stjames.nl
071-5613020

Tim Carroll (youth minister)
youthminister@stjames.nl
06-46697651

www.stjames.nl

Women with Dutch Partners

by Karla Khan

WWDP New Year Gift Swap

Oh, no! There's no WWDP Dames' Christmas Party this year! BUT we can't let our holiday fun go by completely.

So, what is a New Year Gift Swap? Everyone gets a Christmas gift during the holiday season that isn't exactly the gift of your dreams (we've heard the tales during past WWDP events!), so this is your chance to rewrap it and "regift" it in a fun way. Everyone is asked to bring one wrapped gift that will be redistributed in a unique way with your WWDP compatriots.

Dinner will be "hearty appetizers" so in addition to your gift, you are asked to bring something for the food buffet. Any appetizer you love to make and serve will be appreciated. Come share the fun!

Wednesday January 6

6:30 p.m. until ?

Celeste Brown's home in Oegstgeest
www.groupspaces.com/AWCTheHague/item/1017197



**FAWCO
FOUNDATION**



**BACKING
WOMEN**

NEW MATCHING GRANT!

INDIVIDUAL DONOR CHALLENGE

MATCHING POT OF \$3,000

We are so proud of our Member Clubs' commitment to donate bras to help women rescued from human trafficking through the FAWCO Target Project.

Now we need your help to get our donated bras to the women who need them most. Did you know that it only costs \$20 to ship a carton of 200 bras from Free The Girl's central collection point in Indiana to one of the three countries with active programs?

Offer Ends December 31, 2015

www.fawcofoundation.org

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

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DECEMBER 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 Dusseldorf Christmas Market 8 a.m. Chat, Crafts'n Cake 10 a.m. AWC Tennis 1 p.m.	2	3 Wassenaar Coffee and Conversation 9 a.m. Sinterklaas Holiday Toiletries Drive 9 a.m. AWC Board Meeting 10:30 a.m.	4	5
6 Happy Hanukkah	7 Walkie Talkies 9:30 a.m.	8 Chat, Crafts'n Cake 10 a.m. AWC Tennis 1 p.m. Gingerbread House Workshop 7 p.m.	9 Visit to Munch: Van Gogh 11 a.m. Evening Book Club 7:30 p.m.	10 Coffee 10 a.m. General Meeting 10:30 a.m.	11 Gingerbread House Workshop 10:30 a.m. Cranium Night 7:30 p.m.	12
13	14 Walkie Talkies 9:30 a.m.	15 Chat, Crafts'n Cake 10 a.m. Heart Pillow Workshop Noon AWC Tennis 1 p.m.	16 Daytime Book Club (offsite) 11 a.m.	17 Holiday Ornament Exchange 10 a.m.	18 Clubhouse Closed December 18 to January 4	19
20	21	22	23	24	25 Merry Christmas	26
Clubhouse Closed December 18 to January 4						
27	28	29	30	31	Looking Forward to a Busy Winter: Jan 14: Tour of Museum of Bags & Purses Jan 20 & 21: Kick Off Jan 27: Ode to Dutch Fashion Museum Tour Feb 13: Women in Need "TLC" Dinner	
Clubhouse Closed December 18 to January 4						



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DO GOOD THINGS!

Visit The FAWCO Foundation's online **Backing Women Boutique** to support "Free the Girls" which provides help for women and girls rescued from sex trafficking in developing countries. Net proceeds will be donated to the project.



FIND THE BOUTIQUE ON WWW.FAWCOFOUNDATION.ORG/BACKINGWOMENBOUTIQUE

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www.access-nl.org

FAWCO Corner



by Elizabeth Kennedy

Federation of American Women's Clubs Overseas, a United Nations NGO with consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council www.fawco.org.

Save the Date!
Celebrating 85 Years of FAWCO
March 11 - 13, 2016

FAWCO will hold its Interim Meeting in March 2016 near Frankfurt, Germany. Designed to be more streamlined and more affordable than Interim Conferences held in past years between Biennial Conferences, this 48-hour meeting will focus on FAWCO business and member club development. On the agenda are FAWCO's Annual General Meeting as well as presentations on FAWCO's core activities and workshops designed to help club officers and members to be as effective as possible. FAWCO will celebrate its 85th anniversary during the Interim Meeting, and The FAWCO Foundation will also hold its annual Fun(d)raising evening with the theme *Wind Beneath My Wings*.

Register by December 15 to take advantage of a limited time discounted offer for € 270. After December 15, the registration fee will increase to the full price of € 300. For more details on the program and hotel please go to the FAWCO website (www.fawco.org). Please note that as an AWC Member, you are automatically a member of FAWCO, but you must first register to use the website in order to register online for the meeting.



FAWCO Symposium

FAWCO and The FAWCO Foundation will present a jointly sponsored Symposium on October 7 - 9, 2016 at the International Press Club of The Hague dedicated to the sustainable rescue of victims of human trafficking. AWC Members **Johanna Dishongh** and **Mary Adams** are the Symposium organizers. They are designing the Symposium to include education and awareness of human trafficking as a critical world issue. The goal is to provide motivation and tools for participants to become "every day heroes" by Backing Women. They see a future for survivors to return to their communities with their dignity, health and job skills. They also want to raise FAWCO's international profile as an organization that connects women to build a better world for each other and for all children. The Symposium will be open to the public in an effort for FAWCO to reach out to organizations, activists, governments, the press and potential new members with what we have learned from our philanthropy projects. Each one of us can make a difference, and together we can make change. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact either Johanna or Mary.

Backing Women Boutique

The Target Program continues to raise funds to support the project Free The Girls until February 2016. One of the ways that we can all contribute to this wonderful cause is by visiting the FAWCO Foundation website at www.fawcofoundation.org and shopping at the online boutique. Are you looking for new ideas for Christmas presents this year? This is a wonderful way to give to both a loved one and The Target Program. The boutique offers an array of bags, earrings and other items with the Backing Women logo.

The Dutch Daily

by Eileen Harloff

There is Nothing Like a Tree

I have always been fond of trees, except when their roots have pushed up the pavement to a dangerous level for the pedestrian. We had many trees in my home town. One big oak on Main Street was about a century old and was a favorite place for us school children to join hands and see how many of us it took to completely encircle it. When the state took over the widening and maintaining of Main Street, all the trees along it were taken down. After that the walk along the street was suddenly bare and ugly, and has remained so ever since. We had two maple trees in our backyard. I used to spend quite a bit of time in the bigger one, where I would retreat with a book and spend my time reading without distraction. The other maple was in the middle of the yard and had grown from a seedling that had been blown there by the wind and taken root. It was particularly glorious in the autumn when its leaves turned bright red; standing under its branches and looking upward was pure delight.

For the past couple of years, trees have been very much in the limelight in my neighborhood here in The Hague. When the city government planned to chop down many trees and replace them with parking spaces, the residents joined forces to fight for their preser-



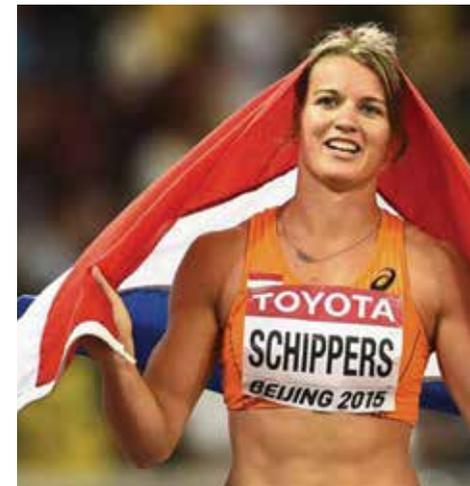
vation using a number of modern advertising techniques to get their point across. I had been out of the country when the campaign began, and upon my return I was shocked to see that all the houses in two blocks on the Laan van Meerdervoort were up for sale, signs being posted on windows on all floors. The trees were encircled with posters pleading for the rescue of the trees, and later ones featured the backs of children figuratively embracing the trees and urging that they be saved. I'm happy to report that the campaign was successful; the court decided that the trees should remain and that parking space should be found elsewhere. With this success, the trees were once again covered with posters thanking all those who had supported their campaign.

And now, a recent item in a newspaper warns that within two years, 800 poplar trees will be taken down. In the past few years, a significant number of beautiful historic trees have been removed because of illness or just old age, including the row of chestnut trees along the Hofvijver in the center of The Hague next to the Houses of Parliament. Many of the old elm trees have contracted "Dutch elm disease" (the Dutch sometimes refer to it as the Canadian or American elm disease), where a fungus infects the tree's water-conducting system, thereby preventing water from reaching the crown of the tree, which then wilts and dies. At present there are 116,000 trees in The Hague – this number does not include trees that are in various city parks – and this is the number that the city is required to maintain. From time to time one can see a yellow X on a tree, which means that it is marked for destruction. From the citizen's point of view, the marked tree may appear to be healthy and worthy of a long life, despite all the car exhaust fumes that it faces

every day, whereas in fact it may be dried out on the inside and at the end of its natural life. If it is not trimmed or completely removed, it might be that without any warning or as a result of a windstorm branches could fall off or the whole tree be uprooted. At present 800 poplars are to be removed within the city, beginning with Scheveningen and Haagse Hout. The local government is now tasked with informing the people in those neighborhoods of the necessity of removing the trees, and to give them an opportunity to ask questions and voice their concerns.

Kudos

Dafne Schippers has once more been named the European Athlete of the Year. She is the first woman to win this title for two consecutive years. She was also named World Champion of the 200-meter race in Peking this year, won silver for the 100-meter race in Peking, and won gold for the 60-meter race at the European Indoor Championship.



HanTing Cuisine, a Michelin-starred restaurant on the Prinsestraat in The Hague, was named the Best Restaurant of Europe in 2015 in the category *Fine Dining* by TripAdvisor and is ranked 14th worldwide.

Restaurant Pearl in the Hilton The Hague won the *Gouden Pollepel* (Golden Ladle) Prize for excellent cuisine at a reasonable price. A second Golden Ladle Prize went to Indigo, an organic restaurant in Schipluiden.



Anything Goes, a Dutch film about an 11-year-old boy wanting to become a majorette, won an Emmy at the International Emmy Kids Awards in New York in the category Best TV Movie.

Two Dutch Marines, whose names were withheld for security reasons, won high military honors for saving several lives while under attack by pirates off the coast of Somalia.

Twenty-two students from the Technical University of Eindhoven won the Best Technology Achievement Awards at the Crunchie Awards in San Francisco for the revolutionary sun-driven car they developed. This technology award is equal to an Oscar in the film world.



Announcements

Winter Fair

From December 2 to December 6, the Ahoj in Rotterdam will be transformed into a winter wonderland. In a cozy atmosphere, you can be inspired by specialists or get in the mood for the holidays with booths featuring home decorations, wellness and travel. There will also be fashion shows, workshops and an extensive entertainment program. www.winter-fair.nl



Salt Market on the Pier

The reopened Scheveningen Pier hosts markets on a regular basis. This month, enjoy music, snacks and unique products as enthusiastic exhibitors use creative ways to offer their wares and contribute to the coziness of the day. Free admission.

Sunday, December 6

10 a.m. – 8 p.m.

www.pierscheveningen.com

DFAS Art Lecture

The Founders and Treasures of the Wallace Collection

This superb late 18th century London house has been a national museum since 1900. This truly outstanding array of paintings, furniture, porcelain and armor were all brought together by five generations of one family between 1780 and 1880. Together they bought some of the finest paintings in Europe. Learn more about this collection from lecturer Stephen

Duffy, the curator of the 19th Century Paintings and Exhibitions of the Wallace Collection.

Tuesday, December 8

Doors open at 7:30 p.m.

Lecture begins at 8 p.m.

Cultural Centrum Warear

Kerkstraat 75, Wassenaar

Non-DFAS member fee is € 12

www.dfas.nl



Lighting of Christmas Trees

Delft: From 4 p.m. on Tuesday, December 8, there will be Christmas stalls and musicians in the main square. At 7 p.m., the Christmas tree will be lit to give light to the Dark Days of Delft. You can get warmed up with hot chocolate, *gluhwein* (spiced mulled wine) and *erwtensoep* (split pea soup). www.delft.nl

Gouda: During the impressive illumination festival *Gouda by Candlelight* on Friday, December 11 at 7 p.m. over 1,500 candles will be lit in Gouda's historic city hall, while thousands more are aglow behind the windows of the picturesque buildings surrounding Market Square. Street and shop lighting are switched off, lending a fairytale quality to this spectacle. Various choirs will be performing Christmas carols and the audience is encouraged to sing along. www.goudabijkaarslicht.nl

A Christmas Carol

Ashley Ramsden, the world famous storyteller from Great Britain, returns to perform this Christmas favorite on multiple dates between December 16 – 23 at the Paul Steenberg Foyer in the Koninklijke Schouwburg in The



Hague. He performs the story single-handed, which shows his formidable talents as a storyteller and actor. The program embraces the original masterpiece, transporting audiences back to Victorian England and conjuring up the sinister back alleys, cobblestone streets and ghostly apparitions that are the story's hallmarks. www.theenglishtheatre.nl

Christmas Concerts



Cecilia International Choir, a mixed voice group of 70 singers, will perform two Christmas Carol Concerts between December 15 – 17 in The Hague. In addition to the popular carols and audience support in the most familiar ones, this year will feature Zoltán Kodály's composition *Adventi ének (Veni, veni Emmanuel)* and the five-part interpretation of the *Magnificat* by Francesco Durante. To further enhance the Christmas atmosphere, seasonal refreshments are included in the admission price. www.cecilia-choir.com

Nutcracker on Ice

As midnight strikes on a magical Christmas

Eve, a toy Nutcracker comes to life, sweeping young Marie to a world of enchantment where she meets the Mouse King, the Nutcracker Prince and, of course, the Sugar Plum Fairy. Set against a backdrop of colorful projections, opulent costumes, sumptuous sets, magic tricks and special effects, the cast of championship-level ice skaters dance to Tchaikovsky's glorious score performed by a live orchestra at the Nieuwe Luxor Theater in Rotterdam from December 15 – 27. www.luxortheater.nl

Royal Christmas Fair



After the success of the first edition in 2014, the Royal Christmas Fair is back this year. The twinkling lights and 50 charming stalls along the Hofvijver in The Hague are sure to help get you in the Christmas mood. Enjoy some *gluhwein* and *flammkuchen* while shopping for unique items. Entertainment will include performances by children's choirs, theater groups and storytellers.

Thursday, December 17 –

Wednesday, December 23

Noon – 9 p.m.

Lange Vijverberg, Den Haag

www.royalchristmasfair.nl

Dickens Festival

A 19th century English city of Charles Dickens' days will live again in full glory during the 25th edition Dickens Festival in Deventer the weekend of December 19 – 20. Some 950 characters will come to life from Dickens' celebrated books, including Scrooge, Oliver Twist and David Copperfield. Even Queen Victoria attends, along with Christmas carolers, orphans, drunkards and distinguished citizens. >> 36

Announcements (cont.)

Continued from page 35



Over 150,000 visitors are anticipated for this free festival, so expect to wait approximately 1.5 hours at the entrance. www.dickensfestijn.nl

Amsterdam Light Festival

A unique experience in the darkest months of the year! Amsterdam will host this festival for the fourth year with a theme of *Friendship*. Created by international artists, works include projections on historical buildings, installations on the street or in public parks, or works that require visitor participation. The self-guided walking route winds through the city center past 20 light artworks from December 10 through January 3. Running through January 17, the boat route will take visitors past artworks along Amsterdam's canals and the Amstel. www.amsterdamlightfestival.com



Christmas Markets

Keukenhof Castle: This free Christmas fair at the castle next to the Keukenhof Gardens in Lisse takes place over two weekends. The first weekend, December 5 – 6, will have a Diwali theme, while the weekend of December 12 – 13 will have a Dickensian twist. Enjoy the cozy atmosphere, the open stage, the Christmas market, children's activities and much more. www.kerstoplangoedkeukenhof.nl

Leiden: From December 11 – 20, Leiden host's the only floating Christmas market in the Netherlands. Entrance is free into the Winter Wonderland Village on the water of the Nieuwe Rijn with 70 attractively decorated chalets filled with winter products, delicacies and fun Christmas gifts as well as snacks and warm drinks. You will also find a ice skating rink on the canal. www.visitleiden.nl

Dordrecht: From December 11 – 13, Dordrecht will host the largest Christmas market in the Netherlands with 200 stalls. In addition, there will be hot treats, live entertainment and an ice skating rink. www.kerstmarktdordrecht.nl

Rotterdam: You can find all the essential ingredients of a Christmas market, but with a twist: all you can taste or buy at this festival is 100% vegan. From December 18 – 20, an assortment of trendy food trucks and caravans can be found at Anthoniestraat 2. www.vlyfoodfestival.nl

Valkenburg: Running until December 23, the Christmas Market in the Velvet Cave is the Netherlands' most popular indoor Christmas event. This unique experience is a shopper's delight with fairytale decor, seasonal music and a large variety of handmade local and international gifts. www.kasteelvalkenburg.nl

Countrywide: During December you will find other various Christmas markets throughout the Netherlands. For listings, go to www.hollandsemarkten.nl and click on *Kerstmarkten*.

Christmas Circuses

There is no doubt that Christmas Circuses must be quite popular in the Netherlands as our region hosts two. Both feature spectacular acrobatics and hilarious clowns;



for those curious, circuses are no longer allowed per Dutch law to feature wild animals.

Rotterdam: December 19 through December 28 at the Ahoy. www.kerstcircus.nl

The Hague: December 19 through January 3 at the Malieveld. www.kerstcircusdenhaag.nl

Dancing in a Winter Wonderland

De Dutch Don't Dance Division presents a production for the whole family filled with Christmas traditions and winter stories from around the world accompanied by the Residentie Orkest with music from world-famous composers such as Bach, Vivaldi and Strauss. Amateur and professional dancers between 5 and 65



years old shine on the stage in dance styles varying from classical ballet to the can-can.

Friday, December 25 –

Monday, December 28

Zuiderstrandtheater, Den Haag

www.ddddd.nu

New Year's Dive

The Netherlands boasts more than 60 locations where you can jump into the sea or a lake on New Year's Day at Noon. The largest dive is held at the beach at Scheveningen, where well over 10,000 people plunge into the sea each year. This spectacle is also great to watch from the sidelines. Which of our AWC Members will brave the cold waters this year? Registration closes no later than December 5: www.unox.nl/nl/event/nieuwjaarsduik

Save the Date: MLK Dinner

Mark your calendars to bring the whole family to the annual Dr. Martin Luther King Tribute and Dinner. Look for further details in the January issue.

Sunday, January 31

5:30 p.m.

Hotel Den Haag - Wassenaar

Zijdegeweg 54, Wassenaar

Registration is Open for The Hague's Biggest Race

If you like to run, be sure not to miss The Hague's 42nd CPC Loop on Sunday, March 6 starting at the Malieveld. There will be 45,000 runners including professionals and amateurs for distances ranging from 1K for kids to a half marathon. Don't hesitate to register, as this event fills up every year: www.cpcloopenhaag.nl

Did you know
that any English-
speaking woman may
join the AWC?



Invite your English-speaking friends
from other countries who have an
affinity for Americans to join us
today!

FAWCO Region 4 Meeting

by Mary Adams and Karla Kahn

Leave the Ladder Standing: Women Together Reaching Heights

AWC Brussels hosted the Benelux region FAWCO meeting in early October with participation from AWC Amsterdam, AWC Antwerp, AWC Brussels, AWC The Hague and AWC Luxembourg at their beautiful clubhouse near Waterloo.

Why was the ladder chosen as the theme? Our regional representative, Susan Ailleris, was in the audience at the FAWCO Conference in Bern in 2013 when keynote speaker Betty King, US Ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva, explained her role as an advocate for women on a wide range of issues. She spoke about initiatives that empowered the lives of women and girls and ended her address with: *If we all leave the ladder standing after we have climbed it, we would all make significant contributions to the improvement of the lives of women across the world.*

The agenda was packed with opportunities for us as individuals, members and clubs. Friday night dinner was hosted at the clubhouse and prepared by resident Chef Keith. Anne Reunis-de Rechter, the 15-year-old daughter of an AWC Antwerp member, described her experiences as a FAWCO Youth Cultural Volunteer in Mumbai.

The regional meeting started with a healthy breakfast and nutritional tips from a holistic health consultant. AWC Brussels President Stacy Shedivy kicked off the meeting by introducing the ladder as an active listening tool that fosters better communication. Members got to hear from the Presidents of FAWCO and The FAWCO Foundation to better understand the rich diversity of programs offered to all club members, including personal updates from members who went to United Nations sessions in Geneva and New York to support human rights for women.



It was eye-opening to learn how successful Region 4 Clubs have been in nominating local charities and members for Foundation funding. Since 1974, Region 4 has received \$80,250 in Development Grants and Education Awards. Of those monies, AWC The Hague has received \$12,000 to give to four selected charities and a whopping 13 Education Awards (\$45,000) to members and their children for studies. Let's keep a good thing going! Don't forget that the next round of grants and education awards are online at www.fawcofoundation.org.

We had two guest speakers on the topic of human trafficking. Stop the Traffik, who passionately explained their efforts to build resilient communities to enable sustainable rescue with dignity and The Samilia Foundation, who shared their insights and projects about how everyone can make a difference. Between the sessions, members had a chance to network and share best practices in four sessions: Fundraising, Volunteerism, Activities, Collaboration, FAWCO, and Club Management. Soon, we will be receiving the top three recommendations and insights from each session.

Target Chairwoman and AWC Member **Johanna Dishongh** gave an update on progress to attain our financial goal for Free The Girls. Sales from the Backing Women Boutique onsite were over €300. With

this target program ending in early 2016, Johanna mentioned that if every FAWCO member would contribute only €3, we would make our goal. AWC Amsterdam and AWC Luxembourg took that challenge back to their general meetings. **Mary Adams**, Vice President of Fundraising for The FAWCO Foundation, reminded everyone that up until December 31, The Foundation will match individual donations up to a reserve of €3,000.

In retrospect, all our discussions came back to the ladder: how we can climb the rungs of opportunities that our local, regional and international FAWCO clubs offer for both personal and female empowerment; how we can learn to climb down the ladder to better communicate with friends, families, co-workers and club members; and finally, how important it is that we understand that how our local charities and international philanthropy based on women's rights will enable future generations to climb even higher when we leave the ladder standing.





Essentials for Nighttime Travel Photography

by Veronica White

“It’s dark out” is no excuse to put your camera away. Nighttime photo safaris are an exciting way to explore a destination whilst at the same time capturing some amazing photos.

Whenever I travel, I often take at least one night during the trip to go on a “nighttime photo safari.” I love walking around big cities with my camera or exploring nature with the night sky above me. Here, I’ve put together some essentials for taking Instagram-worthy travel photos under the night skies that I’ve learned in the last few years. While most of these tips are aimed at DSLR users, the general rules still apply to people shooting with point-and-shoot cameras or phones. Before we start, however, a quick safety note: whenever I go out to take pictures at night in an unfamiliar place, I always make sure I have a friend (safety in numbers) and a fully charged phone (in case I get lost). Now it’s time to grab your camera and get out there after the sun has set to take some awesome photos!

Shoot in RAW Mode

One of the most important things to do before you start your nighttime photo safari is to switch from shooting in “JPEG” mode to shooting in “RAW.” Unlike JPEG photos, RAW photos are uncompressed and therefore give you much more room to make adjustments in post-production. Some of the aspects I almost always correct in post-production include contrast, highlights, shadows, sharpness and white balance.

Bring a Tripod

One of the most frequent reasons for blurry night photos is camera movement. This can drastically be reduced if you use a tripod. Attach your camera to the tripod, carefully press the shutter release button and then **do not** touch the camera again until the photo has finished being taken. To further reduce any camera shake, you can use a remote to take the photo so as to avoid touching the camera at all. You don’t have to worry about lugging around a bulky tripod, as there are many foldable ones that are perfect for travelling!



Light trails on the Brooklyn Bridge in New York City, USA. Shutter speed - 1.3 seconds.

Shoot in Manual

Before you attempt to do a photo safari after the sun has set, make sure you know your camera – one of the most annoying things is trying to change settings on your camera when you can’t even see the buttons! By shooting in manual mode instead

of automatic, you have full control of all the settings. These are the three most important settings you need to pay attention to:

Aperture: use a low f-stop (= high aperture) in order to let a lot of light into the camera and produce a nice blurred background

ISO: while you may be tempted to use a very high ISO as a way to increase the overall exposure in your photo, this will cause the final result to be very grainy, so try to stick to ISO 800 or lower.

Shutter speed: refers to the amount of time which the shutter is open – a longer shutter speed will let more light onto the sensor and, therefore, the photo will have a higher exposure. At night, when there isn’t much light, play around with longer shutter speeds until you find one that best suits the situation you are in. For example, if you are looking to capture light trails from moving traffic, shutter speeds of over two seconds usually work best.

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Light trails from a bus in front of Big Ben in London, England. Shutter speed- 5 seconds.



Nighttime Photography (cont.)

Continued from page 41



Changing the camera angle on Tower Bridge in London, England. Shutter speed - 4 seconds.

Find a Unique Angle

The cliché shots of iconic landmarks have all been taken before, so it's up to you to find a unique viewpoint or angle to add your own touch to the photo. To add some spice to your photograph, try getting down low and looking up, finding somewhere tall to stand on, placing something unusual in the foreground of the photo or just simply changing the angle in which you are holding the camera.

Bring a Flashlight

When I go out to shoot at night, I always make sure I bring along a flashlight for two main reasons. First, having a flashlight handy



Star trails in the dark skies of Zakopane, Poland. Shutter speed - 11 minutes.

will help when setting up the shot. You can use the extra light to help scout out a location for your tripod and change settings on your camera. Second, instead of using the camera's flash, I often use an external flashlight to "paint" away the shadows for photos with long exposures. In the photo below, I lit up the trees using a flashlight so that their detail can be seen in the final image.

Get Up High

Try to find a location with a higher elevation than the city in order to capture nighttime cityscapes. This can be from a nearby hill, viewing point or even a tall building in the city. While this suggestion doesn't only apply to night photography, views with sparkling city lights are often times more dramatic than daytime shots.

Be Patient

The perfect nighttime shot isn't something you are going to get right on the first try; it may take a few attempts before you get the exposure and motion blur correct. Whilst it may be frustrating repeating the same shot over and over again to get everything right, don't give up! I know this sounds cheesy, but it's completely true: the more you practice, the better you'll understand the camera settings and the quicker you'll be able to set up your next shot.

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Looking out over the city of Lucerne, Switzerland just after dusk. Shutter speed - 10 seconds.



One of my coldest nighttime photo safaris in the mountains of Austria in February. Shutter speed - 30 seconds.

Nighttime Photography (cont.)

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Dress Warm!

One of the most annoying things that has happened to me during a nighttime photo safari was being absolutely freezing while shooting. Not only is it uncomfortable, but attempting to change the settings on your camera while your fingers are completely numb is not an easy task. Although daytime temperatures may be warm where you are, temperatures can suddenly drop at night, and you may get cold while waiting around for the pictures to take. During winter make sure to bring a decent pair of gloves to keep your fingers warm in between shots.

Fun Night Photo Shoots to Try

Painting with light: using a long shutter speed, move a light source within the photo frame in any way you want, whether that be to write your name, draw a heart or just scribble on the photo. Common ways of light painting are with sparklers and flashlights.

Star trails: these require a lot of time and patience as the shutter has to be open for a long period of time to get a good sense of movement in the stars. While it's possible to see a slight blur with even just a 30-second shutter speed, to capture actual trails, set the camera on "Time," click once to open the shutter, wait at least 5 minutes and then click again to close the shutter. To take the middle photo below, I had the shutter open for about 12 minutes! This technique takes some experimentation, so don't expect to get a great photo the first time you try.

Carnivals and amusement parks: shooting at a carnival or amusement park is lots of fun.

Left: Painting with light in an abandoned cooling tower outside Charleroi, Belgium. Shutter speed - 20 seconds Middle: Star trails and the Milky Way in Gredos, Spain. Shutter speed - 12 minutes. Right: Fun light trails at Luna Park in the South of France. Shutter speed - 2.5 seconds.



Tours (cont.)

Continued from page 19

Iceland Luxury Adventure Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival in Reykjavik

After the private transfer to our hotel, we will stroll downtown for dinner, and then visit the Laugar Spa (www.laugarspa.is/spa).

Accommodation: Fosshotel Lind
www.fosshotel.is

Day 2: Husafell Area and Golden Circle

We will drive north through scenic Hvalfjordur (Whale Fjord) and visit Iceland's most powerful geothermal spring: Deildartungihver. We will visit Thingvellir National Park, where a crevice has formed between the Eurasian and North American tectonic plates, and Gullfoss Waterfalls, above which a rainbow often forms on sunny days. Driving further on we will see the Langjokull Glacier and visit Geysir, where the English word geyser gets its meaning, to see the Strokkur Geyser spouting boiling water 65 feet (20 meters) in the air every five to ten minutes with occasional bursts up to 130 feet (40 meters).

Accommodation: Hotel Grimsborgir
www.grimsborgir.com



Day 3: Laugarvatn Fontana Spa and South Shore

We will start the day with a visit to Laugarvatn Fontana Spa Center (www.fontana.is) to relax in the geothermal pool and natural steam rooms. Afterwards, we will drive toward Eyjafjallajokull, the volcano that erupted in 2010, and then visit Seljalandsfoll and Skogafoss Waterfalls and the Myrdalsjokull Glacier. We will explore black volcanic sand beaches and lava formations at Dyrholaey Peninsula.

Accommodation: Hotel Skaftafell
www.hotelskaftafell.is

Day 4: Skaftafell National Park and Jokulsarlon Glacier Lagoon

We will visit Skaftafell National Park and Svartifoss Waterfall, which flows down black basalt rock.

Accommodation: Iceland Air Hotel Vik
www.icelandairhotels.com

Day 5: Reykjanes Peninsula Lunar Landscape and Blue Lagoon

We will visit the lava fields of the peninsula and bubbling mud pits of Lake Kleifarvatn, Seltun and Krysuvik.

Our final destination is the amazing Blue Lagoon (www.bluelagoon.com), where we will relax in the geothermal water surrounded by snow and lava formations.

Accommodation: In Keflavik, near the airport



Rules of the Road

by Mary Adams

I believe in rules. I like to know where the boundaries are so that I do not unintentionally stand in violation. I think my early kindergarten training put me in this frame of mind: with order and rules, you are safe. This must explain my eagerness to learn the rules and boundaries of my new Dutch cultural environment. It is not always compatible with my American mindset, but at least I am trying to adapt. In the US, for example, cyclists ride on paths not really developed for bikes. Most cars either give them a wide berth or come perilously close to their spokes. In the Netherlands, since bicycles are a major mode of transportation, cyclists rule the road. Bike paths are everywhere and it doesn't matter if you are driving or walking: cyclists get priority. They stare haughtily at you as they pass by. This "bicycle priority" syndrome took a while for me to accept. Someone had to explain the rules to me before I quit yelling and honking as I tried to beat a biker through the intersection. After that I noticed other differences on the road – trams, pedestrian crosswalks, trains, horses, mopeds, motorcycles, no overtaking on the right, excessive parallel parking – and I decided that if the Netherlands was to be my home, I needed to understand and apply the rules of the road. I decided to get a Dutch driver's license.

I did a tiny bit of Internet and phone research and learned that I could drive on my US license for six months after moving to the country. After that, I could simply exchange my US license for a Dutch one and I could pick up a drivers' information booklet at the US Embassy to read about the road rules. That sounded great to me.

When I started the exchange process, I was told that the driving rules had changed for US citizens. "What is the

change?" I asked the clerk. "You must take the examination." My stomach shrank. "You mean a driving test?" I asked. "You must go to a driving school and speak with the examiner. They have all the paperwork and can explain the process." My stomach sank some more. All I could picture was my 1976 driver's ed class in Houston. We all met after lunch in the temporary buildings behind the school, where we watched films on car safety and took written tests. "Thanks for the information," I gulped, and hastily hung up the phone.

I spent the next few weeks trying to find other ways to get my license. My six months weren't up until December, so I still had four months to figure something out. I asked an American girlfriend about her license status. Her husband works for Shell and I noticed that she drove a sports utility vehicle with confidence. "Oh that," she said, "I'm not switching." I pointed out that she'd already been here a year, "What if you get stopped?" "I'll just tell them that I'm an American citizen. Besides, I don't expect to get stopped." I mulled that over. Tech-



nically, she and her family were on expatriate status. My situation was a bit different as I had applied for residency.

The next person I asked was another American friend who had married a Dutch woman and successfully immigrated to the Netherlands. He was a bountiful resource of how to get around Dutch processes. His reply was not what I wanted to hear: "Find a driving school and good luck! The Dutch are very serious about their driving."

Finally, I went to my husband Jerry. "I have to find a driving school," I muttered. "This is ridiculous. I am a good driver. I have been driving since 1978!" I protested. He nodded, and then reached for his cell phone. "Who are you calling?" I asked, while dread filled my stomach. "My Dad," he replied. After a short conversation, he hung up and announced, "Mr. Verhoeff will call you. The same guy who taught my brother and me how to drive. He still lives in the same place close to my parents. My Dad helped him out with some Web stuff and they have kept in touch. Don't worry, he speaks pretty good English." When Jerry let me drive to practice, he was constantly pointing and asking the meaning of signs or shaking his head and saying, "that is not allowed!"

I began to notice a lot of cars on the road with a big "L" sign displayed on the roof. Learners. They were everywhere! Jerry leaned over and said, "My father ordered you the Dutch driving manual in English. Don't worry." One night at about 11 p.m., my phone rang. It was Mr. Verhoeff. My first lesson was scheduled for September 9.

A Mazda 323 from Autorijschool Verhoeff showed up at our apartment, with the gigantic "L" on top. A portly gentleman got out of the car and politely extended his hand. He gallantly swept his arm in the direction of the car. "It is all yours." Mr. Verhoeff spoke good English. He settled himself in the passenger seat and explained the procedure for the *buitenlands rijbewijs*. He suggested I buy some courses from him so he could advise me of the Dutch laws and prepare me for the test. He handed me the English driving manual and somberly advised, "Please read this thoroughly." He pointed out the brake on the passenger side that he would

use in case of emergencies. He smiled and said, "Let's go!" I started the engine and eased out of the parking lot.

Right away he found fault with my driving. "Now I know that you have been driving a long time," he said. I nervously nodded. "And you have picked up some bad habits!" My eyes glanced down to my lap and my feet. I was slouched in the driver's seat, one hand in my lap. "You must pay attention," he advised. "You must show the examiner that you are alert. Two hands on the wheel." I jerked my hand from my lap and placed it on the steering wheel. Since we were approaching a stop sign, I braked. "No!" he exclaimed. "You must always look in the rear view mirror before you brake." My eyes raced to the mirror. "Turn left here." I made the turn. "No!" he exclaimed. "You must always check your mirrors: First the rear view, then the side mirror, then over your shoulder. One, two, three." My head started to bob, making exaggerated movements. "Good, good," he purred. For the next hour and a half, I drove and he gave all manner of sage advice and warnings mixed in with illustrative stories of accidents, his health situation, his family, and other students. I was a student, confidante and driver. By the time we arrived to pick up the next student, I was exhausted. "Good job," Mr. Verhoeff said as I pulled into the parking lot. "When is our next lesson?" he inquired. As I handed over the € 55 for the lesson, I said, "Two weeks?"

The next week, during a three-hour train ride, I flipped open the driving manual and begin to peruse the pages: technical, full of information. There was a workbook tucked in the sleeve, with 400 questions in series of 50 questions each. I decided to forego the laborious text and go straight to the questions to assess my skill. >> 48



Rules of the Road (cont.)

Continued from page 47

The first question read, “You are driving with a roof rack fitted. Does this require more fuel?” Hmmm, I guess yes. The next question showed a picture of an intersection with a cyclist, car and tram, and asked, “In which sequence do the drivers cross the junction?” I scratched my head and took a sip of tea. The very little I read in the manual said trams always go first, so it must be tram, cyclist then the lowly automobile.

“The Dutch are a tricky bunch,” I told myself.

The next question showed a picture of a car on the side of a road and asked, “You stop here to consult a map. May you do that?” Oh boy, this was going to be a tricky test! I peered at the picture, sipped more tea and thought about it. Was it about the right to consult a map or the position of the car? I scrutinized the picture again and saw that the car was stopped in front of an exit. I checked “Nee.” On I galloped through the remaining 47 questions. Then I checked my score: ten wrong and five that I didn’t know enough to even guess. This would take some study after all. I opened the book and fell asleep.

On September 27, the Verhoeff-mobile pulled into my apartment lot again. This time, another student was driving. She moved to the back seat while I assumed the driving position. Mr. Verhoeff guided me to her apartment, where we dropped her off and my lesson began. Again he gently chided me on watchfulness, gave me hints on what the examiners would look for and asked if I were studying the manual. I smiled, “Oh yes, I have started to read the book. Those questions can be quite tricky!” Mr. Verhoeff smiled, “They are designed to make sure that you are always looking and thinking,” and off we went around town. As I attempted parallel parking again and again, poor Mr. Verhoeff sighed. He would open his door and measure the distance between the car and the curb. “Once again,” he would suggest, or he would bring out his little booklet that showed the proper alignment in diagrams. I told him that this was very good practice for me, as I had consciously avoided any type of parallel

parking since my original driving test in 1977. He just smiled.

At the end of the lesson, we drove to the next student’s house. As I whipped into the parking place nose first, Mr. Verhoeff shuddered and said, “No, that was not correct. You must look before, check all the mirrors and back into place.” I shrugged, “Next time, I will remem-

ber.” Any thoughts that I was an inferior driver disappeared as the other student lurched through traffic and scraped through all the gear positions. Mr. Verhoeff had to stomp on his brake pedal once or twice. By the time we limped to my apartment, I was certain that I was an excellent driver. As I forked over another € 55, I told Mr. Verhoeff that I would call him about the next lesson.

Later in the week, I called and explained that I didn’t want any more lessons as I was ready for the exam. “Are you sure?” he nervously asked. “Definitely,” I said. “I have to make the appointment with the examiners for the foreigners,” he explained, and said he would call me back. In a few days, he did call. “Good news! They can take you on November 29.” “But that is two months away!” I exclaimed. “Some people have to wait six months. Do you want this appointment?” I said yes and thought how I must start my study again. Where did I put that book?

Part of my mindset is that I cannot achieve true independence and mobility unless I have a car of my own. This is especially true in America, but could be modified in Europe. In Paris, I had no trouble with the metro system and never missed not having a car. In the Netherlands, I had a combination of the loan of Jerry’s car, the metro and the train. The problem was accessibility and walking distance to metro and train stops. I had been thinking about buying a car since the summer. I couldn’t make up my mind between using a lease car through the

company or buying a used car. One morning in September, I woke up with a feeling that I would buy a car that day. When I told Jerry, he was excited. “What kind of car?” he wanted to know. “I don’t know!” “How can we look for a car if you don’t know what you want?” he asked. “Oh, I’ll know it when I see it. Just take me around to some places.” He looked at me like I was nuts, but he agreed. About an hour later, I saw a 1996 Fiat Barchetta with gleaming black exterior and leather interior. My intuition prickled and I thought to myself, “This is it!” but I didn’t say anything. What if my intuition were wrong? Jerry and I walked around the car; while he kicked and poked, I just admired. We spent the rest of the day looking at car lots.

Nothing compared to the Fiat. I did see one Citroen Snook that almost shook my faith, but it was an older car, a slimy citron green color, and expensive. It was almost 5 p.m. “Well, I guess you’re not getting a car today,” Jerry commented. I tugged at his sleeve, “I want to go back and test drive the Fiat.” “The Fiat from the first place this morning?” he asked incredulously. “Yes. I think that is the car.” And so, in quick order came the test drive, the bargaining and a cup of coffee, and the deal was made. I had a chic, sleek black convertible sports car sitting in the parking lot during my last lesson with Mr. Verhoeff, and I was determined to get that license.

October passed and November flew by. My Fiat still held me in thrall. My American driver’s license was still valid. Not even the Dutch traffic could dampen my spirits. Jerry soon started asking me, “When are you going to study for your exam?” “Soon, very soon,” I assured him. The phone rang about 11 p.m. one night. “Are you ready for your driving test?” It



was Mr. Verhoeff. “Oh, yes sir!” I stammered. “I’ll pick you up the day after tomorrow at 10 a.m.” he said. When I hung up the phone, my knuckles were white. Where was that book?

Once I found the book, I started the tests again. I did all 400 questions; I always missed about 12 to 15 questions, always the same priority-crossing questions. Jerry started to help me. I whined and moaned. I accused the Dutch of being not only tricky, but devious. We went over and over the book. Later that evening, we went to practice parallel parking. That night, I lay in bed with a whisky and went through all 400 questions again. With Jerry’s coaching, I figured out the priority crossing rules. At 9 a.m. on the morning of the test, Jerry thumbed through the test questions and gave me a pop quiz. At exactly 10 a.m., Mr. Verhoeff showed up with another student in the back seat. My nerves were shot. “Good morning!” he boomed. “Are you ready? Just relax.”

Before the test, he took me for one last test drive. He again warned me to be relaxed, but attentive, alert, but not frantic. “The examiners are very good. Depending on the one you get, he might try to trick you.” I felt a strange relaxation coming over me as I was listening and driving. All of a sudden I heard Mr. Verhoeff say, “Can you drive here?” I looked around. “Yes.” He shook his head and pointed at the no entry sign on the street I was about to enter. “You must be aware of all signs!” he cautioned. Relaxed but vigilant, I warned myself.

The driving examiners congregate in a small park at a café. It is away from traffic, hidden among the trees. Inside the café, a man rose to greet us. “Let me get you a cup of coffee,” he offered. So we all sat around the table and sipped our cups and nibbled some biscuits. Then the examiner, a slight Indonesian man with a warm smile, said, “Now let’s take a look at some of my vacation pictures.” He said it in such a way that I fully expected to see pictures of Sumatra or Bali in the book he proffered. I jerked to attention when I saw the small pictures of the driving manual questions. He flipped open to a page. He tapped on a picture with his finger. “May you drive like this?” he asked and smiled. I stared at the picture. It was a white car parked in the snow. His finger tapped. I looked harder. “Let me see. Are his lights on?” I queried. “Yes.” >> 50

Rules of the Road (cont.)

Continued from page 49

I stared again, feeling a lump in my throat, “No, he cannot drive like that,” I proclaimed. “Why not?” asked the examiner. “Because he does not have a mirror extension,” I said. “Why would he need that?” asked the examiner with a slight frown. “Well, the rear window is full of snow and without the extension he cannot see behind him,” I answered. Mr. Verhoeff and the examiner laughed, “Right answer, but wrong reason! Relax. The answer was just no, not until he cleans the snow from the rear mirror.” “Oh,” I said as I took a tiny sip of coffee. The examiner turned the page. A priority-crossing question. I heard Mr. Verhoeff’s quick intake of breath... “the driver on the right has priority!” I yelled. “Correct!” they said. Of a quick series of questions, the snow-covered car was the only one I missed. The examiner snapped the book shut. “Good. Now, let’s go for a ride.” He smiled.

As we walked to the car, the examiner said, “Just relax. Pretend that I am a tourist and that you are showing me around.” I smiled, “Well, since I’ve had a US license since 1977, my problem is not to relax, but to stay alert!” He laughed. As I started the engine and carefully drove through the park, the examiner asked me a series of personal questions about why I was taking the driving test. I explained my intention to live and work in the Netherlands, which encompassed my ideals about following and knowing the rules. We drove on. He paused now and then to tell me to turn right or left. He asked about my job, where I had lived, and so on. I was talking about Paris when I noticed that this route looked familiar to me; Mr. Verhoeff had taken me here just before the test. Here was that pesky no entry sign! Well, I knew what to do as I turned to the right. “Why did you do that?” the examiner asked. I pointed to the sign and quietly replied, “I can’t go in there!” “Cor-

rect,” he answered. “God bless Mr. Verhoeff,” I thought to myself.

Somehow, the examiner and I got on to the subject of food, wine and whisky. Soon we were laughing and exchanging stories on wine tasting.

Then he said, “You can go a bit faster here.” I looked at my speed: 30 kilometers per hour in a 50-kilometer zone. “Now I must stop talking to you and concentrate on my driving,” I said, sorely embarrassed. “Of course,” he replied. “Get on the highway here.” We passed a few moments in silence before he said, “What do you think about the Spanish red wines?” and the conversation started anew. After about 20 minutes, we were back at the café. “Is that it?” I asked. He laughed, “Mary, you are a great driver and an interesting person.” He clapped his hands. “Of course you passed! Let’s go inside and do the paperwork.” I did a little car dance and raced for the café door, where Mr. Verhoeff looked worried at our early return. “I passed!” I exclaimed joyously. That same day I went to City Hall and got my *rijbewijs*, my official pink Dutch driver’s license. Later, I realized that the examiner had never requested that I parallel park or turn in the middle of the street. I smiled at the pink paper, gunned the motor of the Fiat and sped home.

The next time I was driving with Jerry, he made a driver error. I quickly pointed out that he was NOT the priority driver in this situation. He smiled, “I know.” I was astonished. “Then you know that you are not allowed to do what you just did?” He nodded yes; I frowned. “But when I did that, you told me that it was not allowed. Mr. Verhoeff would be disappointed in you!” I insisted. He nodded again, “The difference is that now, like me, you know what the rules are. Now you can break them!” I sat back in my seat and strapped on my seatbelt. “The Dutch are a tricky bunch,” I told myself.



Message from the President (cont.)

Continued from page 8

understand the magnitude and importance of this job as I tried to do it for a few months. So thank you to Rachel for her past efforts and Dominique for her future ones. You can learn more about Dominique by reading the article about her on page 12.

As the winter months set in if you feel the need for companionship click www.groupspaces.com/AWCTheHague/calendar/ and see what there is to do. Or

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Wishing you a happy holiday season,

Becky


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