

LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT May 2021

Dear Members,

It's a wonderful, sunny day outside, one that, I hope, you'll all profit from. The fruit trees are ablossom, and the famous "Ice Saints" (Eisheilige), namely Mamertus, Pankratius and Servatius, will soon be with us. Their feast days fall on May 11, May 12, and May 13 respectively, and one is warned not to plant out anything that is frost-sensitive before they have passed by. Keen, but unprofessional, gardeners like myself are itching to buy geraniums and tomatoes, but a late frost is always a possibility in early May. In fact, St. Sophia, nicknamed Cold Sophia (kalte Sophie), on May 15 can be added to their number, just to be on the safe side.

Yes, it is May again. Nature doesn't care whether we are still struggling to contain corona, it just keeps moving forward, a bit like "Old Man River":

*I gets weary, and sick of trying
I'm tired of livin', but I'm scared of dyin'
But ol' man river, he just keeps rolin' along...*

These are the famous lyrics from the Oscar Hammerstein II and Jerome Kern "Showboat" of 1927. Nature, like the Mississippi, just keeps rolling along. And so does our lock down. But at the end of the day, normality will return.

I am delighted to report that our final "Special Edition" (Easter Edition) of a few weeks ago was well received and I would like to thank all who were involved in its production. My thanks go especially to the editorial team of Bridget, Valerie, Teresa and Becky, but also to the many others who made worthwhile contributions. If for some reason you didn't receive it, please let me know and I'll react promptly.

I received some good news a couple of days ago, namely that Marwa, the young, badly burned refugee from Syria, whom we have been trying to help for so long now (please see the May 2019 Newsletter), has a very good chance of finally receiving treatment this year from Shriners's hospital in Boston. I received notification of this from Liz (Elizabeth Nicholson, of the Erlangen Ausländer- und Integrationsbeirats (AIB)), who has done so much to help coordinate the planning. Marwa is very keen to complete her school year in Erlangen, so a date in August might well be on the cards, especially as the huge visa hurdle of the past (Donald Trump) is no longer a problem. Pandemic issues remain, however, so fingers still have to be crossed that the planning continues to proceed smoothly. We wish Marwa all the very best.

Another piece of good news (see last month's Newsletter) is that Ivan Lavrentev is making progress with his questionnaire about the problems of loneliness sometimes encountered by (older) citizens who have settled in Germany, having grown up elsewhere in a possibly very different culture. He has sent me the following text:

«Dear Members of the Franconian Society! May I draw your attention to an anonymous online questionnaire which I am conducting as part of my master's degree at Erlangen University. One of the goals of this questionnaire is to determine differences between various age cohorts (30's, 40's, 50's...) in relation to a perceived sense of loneliness and social isolation.

Individuals with or without a migration background who are older than 50 and who live in Germany are welcome to take part.

I would be extremely pleased if you could fill in the online questionnaire and pass it on to your friends/acquaintances/relatives.

The link is: <https://www.ipq.phil.fau.de/lime2/index.php/485938?lang=de>

Should you have further questions, do call me at 0178-8077988.

Many thanks,

Ivan Lavrentev

Dear Franconians, my short Newsletter this May has come to a timely end. How I wish we could all sit together "Under the Oak Tree" at the Turnerbund and compare notes and share thoughts on how we have been faring. My daughter in England tells me that life there has now largely returned to normal – shops are open, wining and dining is possible, a manicure and a haircut are in the realm of legality, and foreign travel is on the cards again. Incidentally, I read on April 24th that Ryanair is planning to fly to London (Stansted), starting July 3rd. Well, if that's not a positive note with which to end this Newsletter, what is?

Take care and stay safe.

Frank

