

LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT

November 2021

Dear Franconians,

We're not out of the pandemic woods yet, but let's hope we are getting there. Our oft postponed AGM will take place on Wednesday 17th November at 6pm, an important one as we have to elect a new committee. Of course, we'll let everyone know the results as soon as we can, but the quickest way to be informed is to come to the meeting. And do remember that you have to register in advance of the AGM.

The last couple of months have been rather quiet, but we did have a good turnout for our Quiz Evening, for which we have to thank Yvonne for an abundance of challenging questions, and Becky, who supplied the prizes. Becky told me that it would have been Paul's birthday that day and that she was sure he would have heartily approved.

Our ever-active handicrafts group will be more and more in evidence as we approach the Christmas season, and I wanted to thank them in advance for all the hard work they put into their activities. Let's be honest about this, they have long become a major source of funds for our charity work. Nor will they be put off by the covid virus! They once again intend to use our website (thanks to Friedrich now up and running again) as a platform for their sales.

It has struck me that we have had a number of evenings lately with good attendance figures. Clearly people have been missing the opportunity to have a decent chat with those they have known for many years and now that the vast majority of us have been double-jabbed, or in some cases even thrice-jabbed, the fear of meeting up with others and being infected has become most unlikely. Today I received a letter from a long-standing member who would dearly love to attend our meetings but, owing perhaps to advancing age, lower mobility, and above all location, finds it virtually impossible to come along to our gatherings. Would we know of a member, she wrote, who lives relatively close and who could pick her up and bring her to our meetings? The location in this case is Spardorf, but it could easily be northern Nuremberg, Tennenlohe or Eltersdorf. Surely there must be a solution to this problem. It doesn't take too

much effort to organize a pick-up point. And think of the joy you are giving someone who rarely gets out and about. Please write to me if you yourself are a person who would appreciate being picked up, or if you are a kind soul who wouldn't mind sharing a car-ride to the Turnerbund and back.

We've had some pretty windy weather of late and the golden leaves of autumn are lying all about waiting to be raked up and used for compost. And we've had the first frosts of early winter, a reminder that it's time to rescue the plants that can stand a little cold, but only a smidgen. They need a place inside now, a snug home until another spring sets them stirring again. Yes, it's autumn, or as Americans say, rather sensibly, "fall". The green leaves of spring have turned a wonderful rusty colour, and on a quiet sunny day we stare at them tumbling one by one to the ground below. Or on a windy day we watch them being whisked up high into the sky, whirling around in a vortex of red and yellow and russet brown. This is, of course, a perfect time to curl up on a sofa and read a birthday present book as yet unread. The other day I discovered next to my armchair a volume of stories entitled *Outsiders* written by Sheila Gutknecht, one of our longest-standing members. I knew she could sing well, but I wasn't aware she could also write so wonderfully. And the more I read, the more I felt I should let everyone know that *Outsiders* is a book we could all profit from. It's a group of vignettes drawn from her own life in Northern Ireland and from her encounters with refugees faced with the uphill struggle to integrate and be integrated. Outsiders all. They were invariably touching and heart-felt stories, and told in a very gentle manner, a large part of their charm. I do recommend it.

Since we are now on a literary note, perhaps I should end with one, short seasonal poem written by a lesser-known American poet, ADELAIDE CRAPSEY. She was born in New York in 1878 and died in Rochester in 1914. It is very much in the tradition of the Japanese haiku, which, in turn, was much en vogue at the beginning of the last century. Brevity and not a word wasted...

November Night

Listen. .

With faint dry sound,

Like steps of passing ghosts,

The leaves, frost-crisp'd, break from the trees

And fall.

Enjoy the coming of the winter season and take care and stay safe.

Frank