

# ALSACE NEW YORK

News Bulletin of L'Union Alsacienne of New York  
and the Friends of Alsace in America

## STAY HOME. STAY SAFE.

Dear Friends and Members of L'Union Alsacienne of New York:

We are very concerned about the health and well-being of our members, their families and friends in these unprecedented times of the Covid-19 pandemic.

All previously scheduled events for April and May are hereby canceled and the election of the new Board Committee has been postponed until further notice. As the situation evolves, we shall notify you of activities for June and beyond.

However, as an organization whose goal is to promote friendship within the Alsatian community and this, through

social activities, the Board Committee and I have discussed how we might continue to fulfill our mission in these times of "social distancing". So, please do

### L'Union Alsacienne



**Founded February 18, 1871.  
Incorporated December 4, 1936  
in New York State.**

not hesitate to contact one of us if you need assistance. Also if you have suggestion for our consideration, please feel free to reach out to us.

Since its inception, almost 150 years ago, the Union Alsacienne of New York has witnessed and survived many hardships. Despite adversity, we continued to enjoy great happiness, success and enjoyable events. We look forward to the days we can again be together!

Keep safe and healthy.

Francis G. Dubois  
Acting President



*Xavier Ritsch is holding up on his rooftop with a Picon bier!*

### How are you holding up?

**In Alsace and around the world, Alsatians are sheltering in.  
Share with us how you are dealing with it!**

**by email: [contact@alsace.nyc](mailto:contact@alsace.nyc)  
On our facebook page: [Union Alsacienne of New York](#)**

**Air Schmutz ! from L'Union Alsacienne of New York !**



# CHRISTMAS LUNCH

The Christmas season is always a wonderful time for Alsatians, which begins on December 1, with the decorative preparation of houses and which is enriched over the months with various traditions such as Advent, Saint Nicolas, etc.

This year, in New York, the holiday season was marked by an exceptional event: the (first) Alsatian Christmas market at Bowling Green was opened the day before the traditional UnAI Christmas lunch.

On Saturday December 7, in the heart of the Upper East Side, at the Bohemian Spirit restaurant, a Central European eatery, more than 65 guests gathered to celebrate this magical moment. The guests were welcomed by a glass of Pinot Noir Reserve 2017 offered by the winemaker Trimbach, which they could enjoy while listening to the sound of traditional Alsatian music by the band Les Comparses composed of the duo Jacques Hund and Suzanne Klein! Each guest was then presented with the UnAI biannual newsletter, as well as a bag of Bredele made by committee members.

Among the guests, the UnAI was proud to welcome important personalities like: Ms. Anne-Claire Legendre, Consul General of France in New York, Ms. Ganter, Regional Advisor, Deputy Mayor of Colmar, Mr. Patrice Geny, Director of the NY Christmas Market and Director of the Tourist Office of Strasbourg, Mr. Jean-Jacques Gsell, President of the Tourist Office of Strasbourg and Strasbourg elected town official, Mr. Lenhardt, owner of the famous restaurant Maison Des Tanneurs - Gerwerstüb in Strasbourg.

The meal was accompanied by Christmas carols in French, English and German without forgetting the famous D'r Hans im Schnockloch, vigorously intoned by Vice-President Liliane Rubin-Braesch! A raffle also enlivened this moment with extraordinary prizes such as an S-Cruise, a meal at Jean-George Vongerichten, a meal at Little Frog, etc.

The meal ended with an excellent Strudel prepared by the Bohemian Spirit restaurant and succulent and colorful Christmas logs generously offered by Maison Kayser.

*By Capucine Bourcart*



*Pinot Noir Reserve 2017 - Maison Trimbach*



*Pinot Noir Reserve 2017 - Maison Trimbach*



*Pinot Noir Reserve 2017 - Maison Trimbach*



*Board members Marc Seybold, Andrea Markson and Liliane Rubin welcoming the guests*



*UnAI board members with Anne-Claire Legendre French Consul General*



*Dessert from Maison Kayser*



## FIRST ALSATIAN CHRISTMAS MARKET IN NEW YORK!



The Alsace Christmas Market transformed Bowling Green in lower Manhattan into an enchanted Christmas village with the traditional decorations, dazzling light displays, and imported wooden chalets selling authentic French handicrafts and delicacies.

Founded in 1570 and with over two million visitors each year, the Marché de Noël de Strasbourg in Alsace is Europe's oldest and most beautiful Christmas market. To welcome it in New York was quite an extraordinary event.

Thirty authentic wooden chalets were selling handicraft gifts and Christmas ornament from Alsace, genuine artisanal pottery, find table linens, fragrant gingerbread, jams and chocolates. Gastronomic specialties such as choucroute, Tarte Flambée, bredela, hot mulled glühwein, Alsatian craft beers and high-quality family wines were served.



Two musicians Jacques Hund and Suzanne Klein, from Mulhouse entertained the market to the joy of all the visitors.

The Alsace Christmas Market was organized by the cities of Strasbourg, Colmar and Mulhouse and the Alsace region of France. It was inaugurated on November 21, 2019, in the presence of HE Philippe Etienne, French Ambassador to the United States, the Honorable Anne-Claire Legendre, Consul General of New York, several dignitaries from Strasbourg, Colmar and Mulhouse and members of the Union Alsacienne of New York, the eldest French club in the city. An event to be remembered for a long time!

*By Francis G. Dubois*



## Medal to Liliane Braesch Rubin

At its annual end-of-year cocktail party, the Committee of French Associations awarded two medals to recognize the efforts made by exceptional women within the Franco-American community. The ceremony took place at the French



*Liliane Braesch-Rubin, Vice President of l'UnAl and Anne-Claire Legendre French Consul General*

Consulate on **December 9, 2019**.

Dr. Gérard Epelbaum, President of the Committee, pinned the medals on our beloved and super-active Vice-President Liliane Rubin-Braesch and our fabulous and innovative-Consul General Anne Claire Legendre. The awards were made in recognition of their outstanding service to the French-American community of New York.

Members of Liliane's family and many of her friends and colleagues with whom she volunteers were present at this moving ceremony. Liliane spoke from the heart in thanking everyone for their support and collaboration.

UnAl is proud to have such a distinguished Vice-President on its board, and we can never thank Liliane enough for all the effort, energy, passion, and kindness that she devotes to our cause! In addition to being Vice-President of the Alsatian Union, of which she has been a member for almost 30 years. Liliane Rubin is also

an active member of the l'Age d'Or team, and within the association Accueil New York, for which she created the Monday morning walking group called Les Perdrix.

Congratulations from all members of the l'Union Alsacienne!

*By Capucine Bourcart*



*Medal of Liliane Braesch-Rubin*



## TRIBUTE TO TOMI UNGERER !

On Thursday February 13, l'UNAL organized in partnership with the Paris American Club, an event honoring the life and work of Tomi Ungerer, on the first anniversary of his death.

This event, organized under the auspices and in the magnificent setting of the National Arts Club of New York, was fortunate to have as guest of honor, Mr. Robert Walter, Secretary General of the International Association of Friends of Tomi Ungerer.

Mr. Walter spoke to over 60 guests about the artist and his friend: from his birth in Alsace, at the beginning of his vocation as an artist, to his

New York and then Irish years, Mr Walter allowed the public present to better understand the personality and the work of one of the most famous Alsatians of the 20th century.

Many lithographs available for sale by Mr. Walter appealed to the participants and many left cheerfully with, a piece of Tomi's work tucked with care under their arms and close to their hearts.

*By Jérôme Degreve*



*Francis Dubois, Mary Louise Burke, Robert Walter, Liliane Rubin and Xavier Ritsch*



*Robert Walter, giving the conference about Tomi Ungerer at the National Arts Club*

## Portrait of Alain Dick

I joined the Union Alsacienne in 1970, when we only had a few members. The men were meeting in one room, the women in another, so my first act was to have gender equality and ask the women to join the men. As a result, we later had great women Presidents of the Union.

Another act was to ask the City Hall of the City of New York to have a yearly official proclamation "STATUE of LIBERTY DAY". Furthermore, in 1976, we contacted the Mayor of Colmar, the US Department of the Interior and the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as The French Ministry of Culture. With their help, l'Union Alsacienne coordinated within the Statue of Liberty, an exhibit commemorating the birth of this great American symbol. In recognition of our efforts, at the entrance of the exhibit, there was a statement thanking the sons of Alsace for their achievement. This exhibit became the official exhibit of the Bicentennial. It is a great reward for me to see that the Presidents of the Union Alsacienne who follow me are doing even greater achievements.

But I want now to come back to 1970. Some of the old timers remembered World War II when packages were sent to our dear province occupied by the Nazis. I

recall reading in the archives a letter which a young girl sent, thanking us for such packages and especially for the wonderful pencils with erasers. Such an ordinary object of today became the symbol of these very unfortunate times. So, let us not forget what l'Union Alsacienne has done since 1871, and how much assistance it provided to our country men who fled our dear Province.



*Alain Dick and his wife*

While we are celebrating 150 years of this wonderful Club, I would like to pay tribute to George and Margaret Ittel, (Georges was as a pilot in the Cigogne Patrol), Bruno Kaiser and his spouse, Marcel and Germaine Chandelier, André Soltner, Françoise Cestac and so many more who helped me lead the Union Alsacienne.

In parallel to my role with the Union, I had a successful career within the United Nations. First, as a manager for ten years in the Finance Division, then as Deputy Chief of Protocol for the Secretary General for

the following decade. I was then appointed Chief of Staff for the United Nations Director Général in Geneva and retired in 2000. Or so I thought, but one day, the United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan, called me back to duty and appointed me Chief of Protocol for the transition to Independence of East Timor. There, the Head of State and Nobel Peace Prize Jose Ramos Horta appointed me as their Head of their embassy, Chargé d'affaires, in Geneva until 2009. I remained as his Senior Advisor and Special Envoy until now.

I live near Geneva, spend the summer there and the winter in the Philippines with my wonderful Filipina wife whom I married 40 years ago.

My son Jean-Christophe Dick lives in Los Angeles where he is an airport consultant and has developed a hobby in photography.

I spend much of my time working for Operations Smile which is changing the faces of disfigured children in the entire world.

I am also heavily involved in climate change and renewable energies. My old farm in Divonne-les-Bains is now a model of fuel energy free and environment friendly. Check it out: [www.les-pralies.com](http://www.les-pralies.com)

Life has been good !  
Vive l'Union Alsacienne !

*By Alain Dick*



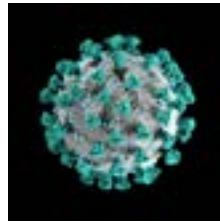
## UNDER CONFINEMENT Explanations + tips

For ten days and more recently with the federal establishment of the emergency plan across the United States, many of us are sheltered at home in quarantine. During the month of December 2019, the beginnings of the Corona (COVID-19)virus appeared in China, in city of Wuhan located in the Hubei Region.

At that time and across the globe, we were all watching and sympathizing with the conditions that seemed so far removed from the U.S. and rest of the world. It has become a strong memory but perhaps an example of better days to come, as we experience the early stage of the outbreak and implications it has on our respective lives. Reality has caught up with us and our lifestyles are now disrupted. The innumerable benefits of globalization, allows trade/travel/work all over the world, in such short periods of time. Unfortunately for perhaps the first time in history, this has become a negative side effect of globalization by contributing to the rapid spread of what is now considered one of the worst global pandemics since the Spanish Flu of 1918.

With currently more than a third of the world's population in government mandated quarantine, it is hard to predict the full extent of implications to our health and overall global economy. However, unlike the last Great Recession of 2008, which was a financial crisis, this time we face a healthcare crisis. Yet with lessons from these events, Global fiscal and monetary response have been swift to provide relief where possible, and healthcare responders are working tirelessly to provide the support, infrastructure, and treatments necessary to defeat this silent enemy. It's

while attempting to predict the timeline to when we return to normal or the full extent of implications may be an anxiety inducing and perhaps futile task, China's early timeline and trajectory presents a model of recovery. Meanwhile, we can contribute to this virus' defeat through our own controlled measures.



In this context, we thought it would be helpful to highlight some suggestions to perhaps bring a sense of control and positive contribution to our family and the community at large: Practice suggested healthcare techniques to aid in preventative efforts against the virus, including:

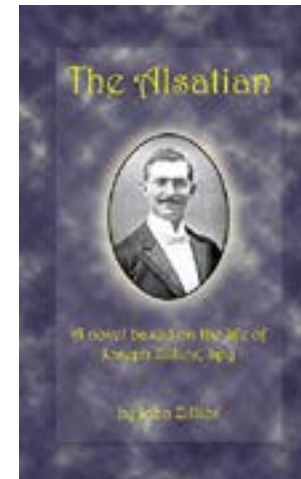
- o While in quarantine, try limiting the frequency of outdoor trips for essentials (supermarket, pharmacy, etc.)
- o If maintaining an outdoor exercise routine, try maintaining a minimum 10ft distance from others and try to keep it solitary
- o As soon as you return indoors, try changing clothes and wash at least your hands before coming in contact with family/other members at home, including wiping down any packages before others come in contact with them
- o Avoid unnecessary physical contact when interacting with external person(s) and (no hug, handshake, kisses)
- o Define and set a daily schedule or routine to help reduce anxiety of the unknown
- o Try new ways of indoor exercise or mindful meditation to help maintain mental and physical health
- o For those with kids, there are sev-

- eral publicly available resources for continued education and activity to maintain their levels (i.e. Khan Academy has free online educational programs for pre-school to 12 th grade)
- o Keep in touch with your older relatives and be prepared to help them during the next weeks with essential runs if necessary, but please avoid any contact, even a hug or up-close conversation can unfortunately spread the virus
- o Treat yourself with simple pleasures of food and drink but as always in moderation (i.e. schedule a virtual happy-hour with friends) as stave the amount of weight naturally gained from quarantine
- o For those who are working from home, allow yourself flexibility without guilt in your daily schedule, it is normal to make time for family and pets while trying to remain productive during work hours, you might even find yourself more productive with the occasional break interspersed
- o Lastly, with extra time saved from commuting, try taking up those leisure activities at home that we do not often have time for in our normal daily routines (i.e. cooking that difficult meal, baking, starting one of the books on your wishful reading list, listening to a new podcast, try journaling your thoughts, board games with the family, cuddles and games with your furry family members, etc.)

The human existence is a story of unpredictable turns and changes, but our resilience is evident throughout history. Regardless, of this highly unpredictable and unprecedented event, maintain your positivity and joyfulness and remember that we are all in this together.

By Jérôme Degreve

## THE ALSATIAN A novel by John Zilliox



We are delighted today to be able to highlight one of our oldest and dearest members, Mr. John Zilliox.

Mr. Zilliox was born in 1928 in Buffalo, NY and like his father before him, spent his entire career as an Optician. Father of four children, he has always had a passion for genealogy, history, but also writing.

Let's delve into this first hobby, genealogy, which gives us a deeper understanding to the link that unites John with Alsace and the rest of the story. His great-grandfather, Jean-Philippe was born in Weyersheim, Alsace and arrived in the United States in 1852 at the age of 22.

John developed this passion for genealogy at a young age. In 1941, while still living in his family home in Buffalo, NY, a customer of his father, Mrs. Butler paid them an unexpected visit. She proceeded to tell them about a book, "The Secrets of the White Lady," that contains several chapters speaking about a spy

during the First World War.

His name is Joseph Zilliox.

Could this elude to the possibility of a spy in the family? This piqued the curiosity of little John, 13 years old at the time. He promises himself to acquire this book at all cost. He embarks on a relentless search but will have to wait almost 10 years before he can finally hold the coveted book in his hands.

While reading it John learns more about this famous Joseph. He is likely a relative originally from Alsace and more precisely from Offendorf, which is a village close to Weyersheim. They undoubtedly have similar family origins and common ancestors. However, the three chapters of the book devoted to Joseph, leave several open questions and John decides that he will crack the mystery of Joseph's story himself.

For many years, with limited free time (giving his responsibilities to his family and a demanding profession) John researched and gathered everything accessible about Joseph. In 1987 during a trip to Europe with his wife, Joan, he went to Liège and reflected at the barracks of Chartreuse, where Joseph was executed as a resistance fighter by the Germans in July 1917, 70 years earlier.

In 1999, John finally retired and decides to fully embark on this project which was long postponed. He commenced to collect and or-

ganizes all the information he has gleaned over the years. In 2008, he published a book under the title "The Alsatian" paying tribute to this "Forgotten hero of the First World Wa" as described by Belgium national media (RTBF).



The purpose of this book for John apart from paying tribute, is to use the story of this heroic family figure to teach the Zilliox youngsters about this period of history during which many men and women like Joseph, paid the higher price for their commitments and values.

More info on Joseph Zilliox, a forgotten hero of the First World War (Belgian national media):

[https://www.rtbef.be/info/regions/detail\\_vise-va-honorer-joseph-zilliox-un-heros-de-la-premiere-guerre-mondiale?id=9468447](https://www.rtbef.be/info/regions/detail_vise-va-honorer-joseph-zilliox-un-heros-de-la-premiere-guerre-mondiale?id=9468447)

If you want to buy the book "The Alsatian":

<https://www.amazon.com/Alsatian-novel-based-Joseph-Zilliox-ebook/dp/B018QZB6VW>

By Jérôme Degreve



**Jean-Marie HAESSLE**

Our artist member **Jean-Marie Haessle**, whose art is abstract and semi-abstract is having a Solo show at the Galerie KEUMSAN in Seoul, Korea and another Solo show at the Galerie MIZUMA, KIPS & WADA ART | 324 Grand st. (Grand & Orchard st) ground floor, NY 10002. *Galerie MIZUMA, KIPS & WADA ART, opening reception on May 6th 2020 @ 6PM.*



**Bernard ROS**



**April 11, 1945 - January 23, 2020**

Bernard ROS was the chef and owner of Pa-name NYC. He kindly welcomed the Union Alsacienne for the Christmas Lunch in December 2017.



**Lea ZIELINSKI**

**October 23, 1929 - March 14, 2020**

Lea Zielinski was the mother of Gisele Zielinski. Gisele lived for 30 years in New Jersey. She was the secretary of l'Union Alsacienne of New York for 8 years and now serves as a trustee. Gisele went back to Alsace to be close to her Mother and her two children who work and live in London. Lea was in great shape from the age of 80. She enjoyed coming with her husband 20 times to New Jersey to visit Gisele and her family. But in-

**NEW MEMBERS**

**Yannick PASSEMART**



Born in Strasbourg, Yannick Passemart lived in Alsace until he was 19 years old and has been living in the US ever since. His family still resides in Strasbourg, and in the surrounding region, and he returns annually to Alsace. He currently lives in Connecticut but works regularly in New York.

**Anne-Sophie FRIEDEL**

Anne Sophie is 37 years old and was born in Strasbourg. She lived in Mutzig and Strasbourg and left Alsace when she was 19 to study at HEC Paris. Her parents still live in

Strasbourg "L' Orangerie. She met her husband, Guillaume, while they were both studying at HEC. Guillaume's family originally comes from Alsace too, as per his very alsatian last name "Friedel! Anne Sophie worked in digital marketing and strategy in the TV & entertainment industries in NYC, London and Paris before taking a break to take care of their three young children and focus on her various interests (blogging, painting..). She worked in the headquarters of Unicef France as a volunteer before coming back to NYC. The family is very excited to be back in NYC and can't wait to meet all the members.



Sylviane, Simon and Gisele. The entire UNAL team expresses its sincere condolences to Gisele and her family.



**Cécile LEVI**



**The Swallow from Mamaroneck**

In an article for the DNA (Derniers Nouvelles d'Alsace, May 13 th , 2012) Cécile claims: "Oh you know I'm not an exceptional person; I never did anything extraordinary." I love birds and like them I dreamt of flying away to faraway places ... and here I am.

Cécile grew up in Strasbourg, spoiled and happy. Her Dad from Scharrachbergheim had 11 siblings who all moved away: to Paris, to Galveston, Texas. Her Mom was from Duttlenheim and her Grand-ma's house smelled at all time of



**Cécile Levi**

left us quietly on 9 April at her home in Mamaroneck, New York. I met her a few years ago at the Union Alsacienne

of New York: we discovered that we lived in the same town. I found her home and knocked at her door, just to say hello: we said goodbye three hours later. That was the beginning of a beautiful friendship, lasting many years .

Cécile was an active member of the Union Alsacienne of New York. I always looked forward to hearing her stories about the formal dinners , cocktail parties and other social events of the Club.

In her kitchen, she created a mini

Kougelopf or any other typical Alsatian dish.

We used to picnic on the Scharrachberg. People in the Jewish community were talking about leaving, but she adds: " We were all very attached to Alsace." After being evacuated from German-occupied Alsace, the Galveston family helped them to migrate to the US.

She met her husband, who was an officer in the American army, a Jewish man from Frankfurt who had left Germany before the war. They settled in New York where her husband imported goat skins, coco, cashew nuts, and essential oils.

When they traveled abroad, they always went back to Alsace. Hap-

winstube, with Alsatian chairs and benches, always convivial, although not particularly comfortable. The table was covered with a traditional Alsatian tablecloth, embroidered by her mother.

Her garden was very colorful, full of geranium, reminiscent of the Alsatian window boxes.

Cécile had a sweet tooth: every year, when I would travel to Alsace, she would ask me to bring her back bredela, gingerbread and one or two good bottles of Gewurtztraminer from Eguisheim...These treats would put a lovely smile on her face.

She lived life to its fullest: she was always ready to go out to restaurants, to the Opera. She enjoyed dancing and two years ago, at a Memorial Day party, she entranced a

pily settled in New York, she joined the Alsatian Union. Not only did she attend all our events as well as organizing an annual Choucroute Dinner. It was not an easy task but she was thankful to the Upper East Side German butcher Shaller & Weber, where you still can find real frankfurters (or In French saucisses de Strasbourg).

At her house in Mamaroneck, Cécile has also recreated a little winstub. With Alsatian dishes from Betschdorf, Soufflenheim, Loux, and Hansi on the walls along with pictures of Alsace. But for Cécile Alsace was a lost paradise. She lived in Mamaroneck like a passing bird.

*By Liliane Rubin-Braesch*

young Frenchman with her charm. She also loved to travel once or twice a year back to Europe, especially to Alsace and to Switzerland.

She moved to Montréal where I visited her twice or three times a year. We chatted weekly by phone. And every year, I was graciously welcomed by her and her friends Gérard, Odile, Anne, Jean-Pierre to partake in their Thanksgiving dinner. These friends, together with Graziella, attended to her during her final years.

We offer our condolences to her son Philippe, his wife Renée, her grand daughter Elizabeth and her husband, and especially her devoted Graziella.

*By Isabelle Baumann-Lenot*

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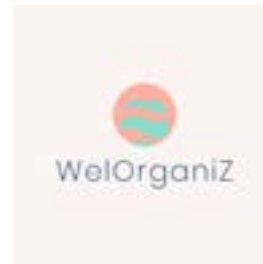
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Acting President Francis Dubois - Editors: Capucine Bourcart, Francis Dubois, Jerome Degreve, Liliane Rubin-Braesch  
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