

ALSACE NEW YORK

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

L'Union Alsacienne of New York
wishes you



Happy
Holidays

150 YEARS OF ALSATIAN SOLIDARITY



In 2021, the Alsation Union of New York will celebrate its 150th birthday. To mark this grand occasion, we are organizing various events, for which you will find a program enclosed in this edition of our newsletter.

In 1871, the UA was established in New York. At the time, most of the Alsatian emigrants entered the country through the ports of New York and New Orleans. During the period between 1815-1870 an estimated 45,000 Alsatians emigrated into this young nation, some of them running from persecution, others just looking for a better life in this "New World".

From the start, the main mission of the UA was to help these Alsatian immigrants by providing assistance, information and probably housing at times. We cannot forget that for many of them, New York was only a temporary stopover, before further migration into new territory and states across the country, like Texas, where many of them have finally settled at the end of their journey.

This mission for mutual aid between Alsatian immigrants remains unchanged... Although time and the world has changed in the last 150 years, this purpose remains consistent for the UA.

2020 has presented all of us with incredible challenges and unprecedented disruption. However, please remember the UA has withstood all of the global events that took place over the past 150 years and will continue to be here for you in both good and bad times because that is what we call friendship.

A big part of endurance and success is thanks to you, dear members, thank you for your unwavering commitment and your friendship. This 150th birthday is also yours!

By Jérôme Degreve

L'Union Alsacienne of New York
 Founded February 18, 1871
 Incorporated December 4, 1936 in New York State

2021 CALENDAR

To celebrate its 150 years, l'Union Alsacienne is pleased to invite you to participate in the following events

JANUARY
 Opening Concert
 Galette des Rois

MAY
 Malgré-Nous

NOVEMBER
 New York Marathon
 Thanksgiving

FEBRUARY
 Art Event

JUNE
 Lafayette
 Alsace Fan Day

DECEMBER
 Christmas Lunch
 Christmas Market

MARCH
 Spring lunch

SEPTEMBER
 Charles Munch

APRIL
 Confrérie Saint Etienne

OCTOBER
 Charity Gala for the 150th
 Anniversary of l'UnAI



The Christmas tree ornaments from 16th century until today



For most of us, 2020 has been a year full of challenges: the pandemic covered our faces, turned our lives upside down, kept us away from our families, friends, and sometimes, sadly, took them away. Christmas is that period of the year where, at the heart of the winter, we cling to the hope of renewal. We wanted to share some of our beloved Christmas traditions hoping to bring some of its magic to you. We have included in this Christmas package: a few bredeles (christmas cookies), gluhwein spices, a christmas decoration to hang to your tree and a kelsh (alsatian traditional fabric) heart to perfume your home or simply to decorate it.



While mention of the Christmas tree tradition can be traced back to ancient Pagan tradition, the oldest known written reference to the Christmas tree can be found in Strasbourg in 1492.

With its magical aura and its appeal to both Pagan and Christians, the evergreen tree was central to

all wishes, the focus of gatherings and reconciliations between friends and family. The way it was decorated developed over the course of history and is documented in Alsatian literature.

In the 16th Century, Christian families replaced the branches used in Pagan tradition with young trees. Conifers were obviously best suited to this practice due to the fact that they were evergreens; their green needles conveyed hope in renewed life at the beginning of winter.

The Christmas tree decoration becomes "official" and they start appearing on squares in front of Churches and town halls. The trees were initially decorated with apples. In the 17th century, roses and other flowers made from multi-

coloured paper joined the hosts and apples on the trees. In the 18th Century, these decorations were then followed by «Zischgold», a decoration made of metal reduced into fine golden leaves or strips, bringing more of a sparkle to the finery.

In the 19th Century, Christian references started to fade away. The apples disappeared and were replaced by round sweetmeats such as stuffed walnuts. The oublies were replaced by «bredele», waffles, gingerbread, gold and silver nuts, confectionery and sweets of all sorts. The forms of these sweets became more and more varied. The trees were then hung to the ceiling to avoid rodents! Towards the end of the century, children were encouraged to shake the Christmas tree as soon as Epiphany had passed. All the children, of course, were happy to join in the fun to sate their sweet tooth!

In 1870, Alsace became a Prussian territory. Alsatians wishing to remain French needed to leave and subsequently spread the tradition of the Christmas tree across France: "wherever there is an Alsatian family, you will find a Christmas tree...". Angels dressed in gold or silver painted paper also joined the wide range of decorations. Golden pine cones were used along with stars made from white Bristol board or gold straw. The new trend was to illuminate this decoration, despite the risks, and from then on candles were widely used.

In the 20th century, fear of fires was not as great as it had been, and so candles became a common sight, as did sparklers. In 1858, according to folklore, nature did not provide when a great drought deprived the inhabitants of the region of numerous fruits, including the apple. A craftsman expert in the art of glass blowing and with a creative imagination, decided to imitate the fruits of nature which were so sorely missed. All his efforts bore magnificent sparkling fruit. The Christmas bauble was born...

Today people around the world keep this tradition of the Christmas tree alive that remains a symbol of hope and renewal.

By Xavier Ritsch



**CHRISTMAS PACKAGE
from l'Union Alsacienne**



L'Union Alsacienne is pleased to send you a package which includes:

- * Bredeles (christmas cookies)
- * Gluhwein spices
- * Christmas decoration to hang to your tree and a
- * Kelsh (alsatian traditional fabric) heart to perfume your home or simply to decorate it



Schwowebredele Recipe



Préparation 90 minutes / cuisson 15 minutes
Preparation 90 minutes / cooking time 15mn

INGREDIENTS

PREPARATION

- *Farine (flour) 500 g
- *Sucre fin (fine sugar) 250 g
- *Beurre (butter) 250 g
- *Ecorse d'orange confite et hachée (finely chopped orange confit, store bought or homemade) 150 g
- *Poudre d'amandes (almond flour) 250 g
- *Zeste d' 1/4 de citron rapé (zest of 1/4 lemon)
- *2 or 3 jaunes d'oeufs (2 or 3 egg yolks)
- *Cannelle en poudre (powdered cinnamon) 5 g

Sift flour, make a fountain. Cut the butter into the flour, add sugar, cinnamon, oranges confites, almond flour, lemon zest, and 2 egg yolks. Mix well.

Add 3rd yolk if dough is too dry. Let rest in a cool place to get firm.

Roll out dough 3 mm thick. Use cookie cutters, stars, hearts, xmas tree, etc. Place on a cookie sheet, brush w/ egg yoke. Cook in a medium oven (350F). It is best to prepare the dough 1 or 2 days before. It keeps well for 2 or 3 days in the refrigerator.

By Marc Seybold



**Warmer Vin-chaud-wyn
Zimtglüwein Recipe**



INGREDIENTS

PREPARATION

- *1 liter (4cups) of red or white wine (Alsatian Gewürztraminer, Tokay, Pinot Blanc or Pinot Rouge)
- *1 liter (4cups) of water
- * 200 gr of sugar (1 cup)
- * 2 cinnamon sticks
- *4/5 Star Anis
- *1 lemon, 1 orange (cut in slices)
- *1/2 cloves
- *A pinch of ginger root (optional)
- *A pinch of nutmeg (optional)

Bring water spices and sugar to a boil, then add wine and slices of lemon and orange. Simmer for 3 min. And serve...with Bredele...Sehr Guet. (très bon)

By Liliane Braesch-Rubin



THANKS!

To Au p'tit bonheur
for the wooden Christmas ornament
www.auptitbonheur.fr

To Christiane Koch
for the heart in Kelsch



Pandemic Election Update

No, not the one in Washington D.C.! As with many other things, the pandemic forced us to improvise. The current Bureau, is a combination of hold overs from the last election and appointed members. There is an amazing amount of work needed to keep the organization going. Working via Zoom meetings, Facebook, our Website UA is still here and getting ready to celebrate 150 years of continuous existence.

So let's give them all a big thank you for an outstanding job in a year that has tested all of us: Francis Dubois, Andrea Markson, Lilliane Braesch-Rubin, Xavier Ritsch, Lauren Zoebelein, Marc Seybold. And to two members who have contributed to almost all meetings: Capucine Boucart newsletter and website wizard and Jérôme Degreve, who has lent a hand wherever needed.

With things returning to some sense of normalcy this spring, we will be holding delayed elections at our first in person

event currently scheduled for April. As well, our Bylaws will be put to the membership for revision. They haven't been updated in years and need modernizing for things like electronic elections and new classes of membership.



Anyone interested in running for office, please send a short note to the Chair of the election committee (marc.seybold@gmail.com) asking to be added to the ballot. Positions are : President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary and (3) Trustees.

We also have room for unelected members who want to contribute: event planning, PR, Web/FB maintenance, even

doodles for our different media, staffing booths, ... We'll find something that's a match for any volunteer.



By Marc Seybold

Annual Meeting of Alsatian leaders throughout the world August 21st, 2020

On Friday August 21st 2020, Acting President Andréa Markson and I, Lilliane Rubin as Vice President, attended the yearly meeting of all the heads of Alsatian organizations around the world. This year, it was held at the illustrious Town Hall of Strasbourg. The building is majestic and stately and for me very special to my heart since I was married in one of its beautiful salons 50 years ago. Gérard Staedel, President of L'Union International des Alsaciens welcomed all of us. He declared that 2021 was going to be a big year with several big celebrations.

L'UIA itself is turning 40 years old, and l'UAs in three cities will celebrate 150 years—New York, Lausanne and Paris. Fearing Prussian oppression following the Franco-Prussian War in 1870, many Alsatians fled, giving birth to associations of Alsatians in these three and other cities. Fabulous festivities are planned in order to celebrate those birthdays. UIA has already organized a very enticing three-day cruise on the Rhine river, from August 27 through the 29th. Andréa and I plan to partake of this adventure and to enjoy a once-in-a-lifetime trip with Alsatians from all around the world. As for the three cities, they are presently researching their past history to assemble photos and souvenirs of past Union Alsacienne events. All three associations are proud to have been active for such a long time.

In spite of Covid 19, Gérard Staedel did a wonderful job organizing this year's annual event. He was able to make sure it was attended by a large

number of politicians and business people, the goal being to promote Alsace throughout the world. Among important politicians we can now count a cabinet minister, Brigitte Klinkert. She affirmed that she is sure to mention Alsace to President Macron whenever she meets him. She also told us that she ordered some Alsatian wine for the cellar of the Hotel Matignon! Also present were Frederique Bierry, the new director



Liliane Braesch-Rubin (in orange) and Andrea Markson far right

of the CEA (Collectivité Européenne d'Alsace), the new mayor of Strasbourg, Claudine Ganter, her predecessor Roland Riess, and Justin Vogel president of l'OLCA. This year's annual godmother was Manou Massenez, CEO of Eaux de Vie Massenez. There were speeches, slide shows and a short movie tracing the history and displaying the magnificence of Strasbourg. Andréa and I met many wonderful and interesting people from all around the world.

The aperitif was offered by the City of Strasbourg. It was delicious bubbly crémant, courtesy of Cattin, with warm fresh pretzels and kouglopf. Lunch was an elegant buffet in the noble courtyard of the city hall. During lunch I was surprised to see an old friend, the journalist Anne-Camille Beckelynck

who was reporting on our meeting for the DNA (Dernières Nouvelles d'Alsace). She was busy interviewing as many of those wonderful and interesting attendees as she could. Among the many stories, several told about their experience of the pandemic. Some were stuck at their parents' house, where they stayed while visiting France. Others related the long and twisted ordeal they went through in order to be present at the gathering. She also interviewed our new president Andréa and myself, and a beautiful picture of the two of us was to be seen the next day in the DNA newspaper.

During the afternoon there were more meetings, during which we learned about the Rhine trip and several other planned celebratory events. Dinner was another trip "down memory lane" for me personally since it was held at the classic villa of the Cercle Européen. My husband joined me because it was at that very place that we had our reception following

the official wedding ceremony at the Hotel de Ville. (Our wedding luncheon was in the Orangerie Garden at the famous Burehiesel, which is presently run by the son of our UA friend, the star chef Antoine Westermann.) Again, at the Cercle Européen, which has maintained its elegance, the food was exquisite and the company brilliant. Let me conclude that I wish for all members of l'UA de New York to one day be able to visit Alsace at the end of August and partake in these wonderful gatherings where we make new friends from across the world, exchange ideas and return home even more proud of our ancestral region. VIVE L'ALSACE!

By Liliane Braesch-Rubin

Christmas News: Biodynamic wines from Domaine Achillée, Scherwiller and the Hebinger Family, Eguisheim hit New York City on the first modern Cargo Sailboat

Located in Sherwiller, the Dietrich vineyard has been in the family for over 60 years, producing organic grapes for 20 years and applying a biodynamic philosophy since 2003. In 2016, Jean & Pierre joined their father Yves to switch from selling grapes to the coop to create their own estate (I am not sure what you mean here by the coop to create...), Achillée, from



the name of the flower known for sharing sunrays equitably, was born!

They started by building a completely natural bioclimatic wine cellar from straw, which enables the temperature to stay around 15°C year round. Then they launch a brand new range of wines from their 18 hectares highlighting their plots & terroirs through what's inside and outside the bottles from classic Alsatian "Gentil", Terroir-driven Sherwiller Riesling, Zero dosage Crémant to a unique Plums Pet'Nat "Quetsches Alors". According to Pierre, "Working

with the future of shipping, the future we choose to design, to offer the best of our grapes in the Big Apple is so exciting for us. New York is the most living wine scene in the world and we are more than proud to get our wines there!"

Located in Eguisheim, Domaine Hebinger is a true family affair. Organic since 2011 and Biodynamic since 2016, Christian, Véronique and their son Denis are big ambassadors of permanent grassing (what does this mean), no pesticides, no herbicides, and agroforestry, as it is the obvious way to farm for them. Denis is the fourth generation owner of this estate and if one thing is sure, it's that he perfectly represents the new scene of young Alsatian winemakers who are always experimenting and proud of their terroirs that he, and a group of young winemakers, have spent 4 years mapping on the www.jeunesvignerons.alsace/cartographie.



Grain de Sail sailboat

Denis is truly avant-garde, very versatile, and so are his wines like the Riesling Grand Cru Hengst or the Skin-contact "Au-dessus des Nuages". In Denis' words, "To get our wines to cross the ocean with the lowest impact on the environment possible is totally



coherent with our minimalist and engaged philosophy. New York being the most open-minded, vanguardist and dynamic city of the world, it's an honor for us to be part of this project there."



THE WINES THAT SAIL

Grain de Sail Wines ships specially curated organic and biodynamic French wines from France to New York City on the world's first modern cargo sailboat. For more information, please visit www.graindesailwines.com.

By Laurent Corbel

Virginie Striebel: The fulfilled life of an Alsatian writer



Virginie Striebel grew up in the historic city of Sélestat. After studying international business for a period of time that brought her to study in China, Poland, and Sweden, Virginie decide to move to India where she lived for almost four years completing numerous spiritual retreats and having studied yoga. In 2009, after living in a dozen countries, she relocated to North

America, and has since mostly split her time between Calgary and Houston. Virginie occupied various leading business positions roles including Director of the French American Chamber of Commerce (FACC). Driven by her passions, in 2018 she founded her company Infix, with the goal of instilling meditation techniques to guide and assist companies' executives and employees to perform at their finest. On top of her professional accomplishments, Virginie is an avid writer and continues her childhood customs of scattering notebooks all around her homes, providing a collection of her thoughts and ideas as they cross her mind. Somewhat a polyglot, she writes in French, Spanish and English, selecting an appropriate one to best express her

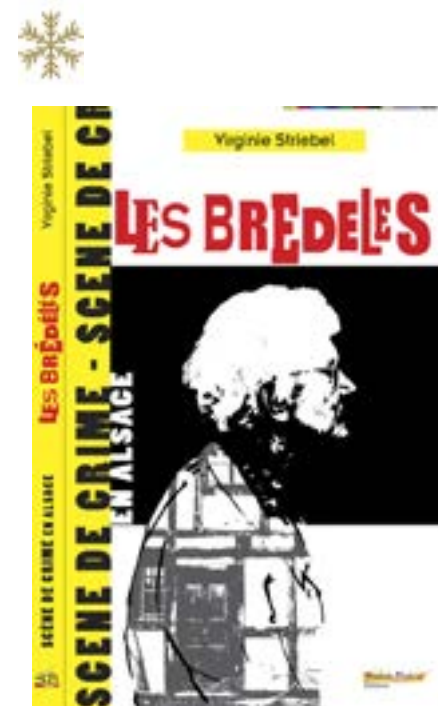
thoughts and emotions As an avid reader, she has a weakness for crime novels, with favorite writers including Andrea Camilleri, Pierre Lemaitre, Henning Mankell and Robert Crais. She admits that when she enjoys an author, she tries to accumulate their bodies of work chronologically, probably to see the evolution of the writer's craft. In 2010 Virginie linked those two passions, reading and writing, to publish her first novel, "Les Bredeles"- Editions Saint-Brice. The story is inspired by the life of Virginie's grandmother. A sequel book is in the works with half of it already completed, all while Virginie balances a rich and engaging personal and professional life.



By Jérôme Degreve

Synopsis of "Les Bredeles" by Virginie Striebel:

Eugène Hassenfratz, Alsatian police commissioner, has returned from a five-year sabbatical, spent mainly in India and while on a personal spiritual quest. During this stay, he did many ashram retreats, learned yoga, and studied Ayurveda. As a great lover of cooking, he is passionate about both traditional Alsatian gastronomy and alternative wellness cuisine. He is also passionate about tea, music, cinema, and the arts. A few months after returning



to his commissioner position in the fictional small town of Ärschtaschtätala, an elderly lady is found dead in her home, obviously murdered. Eugène Hassenfratz, with the help of his team of colorful characters, is leading the investigation. While all the usual leads must be ruled out, it is the "spiritual flair"; of Eugène Hassenfratz that will allow the mystery to be solved. In the background, emerges a dilemma gnaws at Eugène Hassenfratz, who is now stateless: stay in Alsace, his roots, or leave forever.

PORTRAIT FRANÇOISE CESTAC



as former Director of the Translation Division.

After the United Nations engaged her in New York in 1977, a young man walked into her office and introduced himself by saying : *" I am Alain Dick, the President of the Alsatian Club of New York, and I understand that you are of Alsatian descent, despite your name"*. The response was: *"my maiden name is Haeffelin, my Father came from Wettolsheim, in the Haut Rhin, and my Mother's name was Schiele from Eguisheim."* She did not hesitate to join the Club and rapidly became Vice -President, next to Alain Dick, then to Jean-Pierre Schmitt.

Thanks to the Union Alsacienne, she developed strong friendships with Germaine Chandelier, Jean-Pierre and Maria Stoehr, Robert Muller, and

Francis Dubois, among others. The Union Alsacienne has become a family and for that she is very grateful.

Mme Cestac likes to remind us of her dear Father, Paul-Martial Haeffelin, publisher, artist, designer whose work can be found in the Musée Moderne de Saint Etienne, in Basel, Poland, Italy and at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France. He played a very important role in her upbringing.

Mme Cestac shared her life with Colonel Cestac, a hero of the Alsace campaign, before his untimely and tragic death. Now, she shares her life with Prof Clément M'Bom whose received part of his education from the jesuits, some of them being from Alsace.

By Francis Dubois

† Justin Jungman, the Alsatian cowboy

It is with great sorrow that we learned of the passing of Justin Jungman in May of this year. Justin was 81 years old.

This famous Alsatian cowboy from Texas with a mischievous smile who represented the very embodiment of the Alsatian heritage of Castroville and one of the last to speak Alsatian in this Texan village held a special place in the heart of the Union Alsacienne.

The first time I met Justin Jungman was in the spring of 2011. There were about ten of us from the Alsatian Union on a pilgrimage to Castroville to discover this little Alsace and meet his Alsatian descendants. Justin was our guide,



our link with the community of this small town founded in 1844 by Henri Castro.

His blue eyes and blond hair, the allure and outfit of an American cowboy, when he began to speak we felt propelled into another time and place! He spoke English with a very strong Alsatian accent!

Born in 1939, Justin was the son of dairy farmers whose ancestors

came from Oderen, an Alsatian village they left in the mid-19th century to escape famine. He was a rancher as well as a store manager for Medina Valley Seed and Fertilizer.

He looked like a cowboy, but he was a full-fledged Alsatian, so proud of his Alsatian identity. Beginning in 1998, Justin started making yearly trips to Alsace. He became known as the "Alsatian Cowboy of Texas". He met relatives and made many new friends. Each year he would travel right before the grape harvest to help some of his friends. He also came regularly to New York, although he did so less frequently. He was the guest of honor for the 140th anniversary of the Union Alsacienne .

By Capucine Bourcart

Henry Alex Rubin and Sarah Michler wedding



Hear ye ! Hear ye ! 2020 the year of the COVID Wedding. 50 real guests and about 250 virtual guests attended via zoom this wonderful and wordly intimate affair.

It was held at the childhood house of the bride, Sarah Michler. The ceremony took place outdoors in front of the tallest tree in the neighborhood. The libation

continued under a large tent. The groom is Henry Alex Rubin son of our VP Liliane Braesch-Rubin.



A feature of the wedding was a specially labeled Alsatian wine!

† Homage to Claude Vigée



Claude Vigée, a notable figure of French poetry and Alsatian Jewish, culture passed away in early October at the age of 99. We have decided to

devote an article to pay tribute to this great figure of French and Alsatian poetry.

Originally from Bischwiller, he was born in 1921 under the name Claude André Strauss, into an Alsatian Jewish family. During the first years of his life, he only spoke Alsatian, until he entered school where learning French was mandatory, but the link to his childhood language would never be broken.

Claude was displaced from Alsace by the invasion of the Germans in 1940 and found refuge in Toulouse in the "Free zone". There he began his studies in medicine before joining the Resistance. In 1942, he published, in collaboration with one of his friends,

Pierre Seghers, an up an coming publisher, his first collection of poems under the name of Claude Vigée in the underground magazine "Poésie 42".

In 1943, he fled with his mother to the US and continued his studies until he obtained his doctorate in Romance Language and Literature in 1947. He subsequently taught French Language and Literature at Ohio State University, Wellesley College and then at Brandeis University. From 1960 to 2001 he lived in Israel, where he taught at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem until his retirement in 1983.

Since 1950, Claude Vigée regularly published his poetry in both French and Alsatian languages. Among other subjects, Vigée's poetry discusses the suffering of the Jews, the Alsatis, and the Alsatian Jews, however, he also addressed the beauty and the decline of the simple rural heritage.



Recognition and praise of his works translated into a multitude of prizes: Prix Pierre-de-Régnier from the Académie Française Johann-Peter-Hebel-Preis (Baden-Württemberg), the Grand Prix de Poésie de la Société des Gens de Lettres de France, Grand Prix de Poésie de l'Académie Française and, more recently, in 2013, the National Grand Prix for Poetry . His hometown, Bischwiller also honored him in 2000 with the inauguration of the Claude Vigée Cultural Center.

In honor of Claude Vigée, the City of Strasbourg decided to devote a special segment during the January 2021 event "Les Bibliothèques Idéales" to the Alsatian poet and writer. The tribute is a dedication to his contributions and accomplishments through a selection of readings, meetings, and exchanges, thereby, allowing the public to have a better understanding of the importance of Claude Vigée's work.

By Jérôme Degreve

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Alsace-New York, news bulletin of L'UnionAlsacienne of New York since Feb 21, 1871
Acting President Andréa Markson - Editors: Capucine Bourcart, Francis Dubois, Jérôme Degreve,
Liliane Rubin-Braesch, Xavier Ritsch, Marc Seybold and Lauren Zoebelein
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