



## Frankfurt Impressions

Newsletter 1 – March 2013

**The Frankfurter Verband für Alten- und Behindertenhilfe e.V.** is the largest provider of social services for elderly people in Frankfurt. It operates seven nursing homes, a home care service, nearly 50 residential facilities, senior services in the section "Offene Seniorendienste" and approx. 60 locations in Frankfurt with different activities. In addition, it supports and funds volunteer projects, such as Pflegebegleiter (care attendants) and the network new neighbourhood called "Netzwerk Neue Nachbarschaften". The main objective, in addition to a dignified support and care for the elderly, is to enable people to live as long as possible self-determined and independent in their own environment.

The Organisation creates activities and circumstances to avoid people's isolation and enable the seniors to participate in public and social life. The activities normally have a prophylactic character. All facilities of the Frankfurter Verband are open to all seniors in Frankfurt. We respect the biographical character, the religious, social and cultural needs, sexual identity and everything that makes up the personality. The Frankfurter Verband maintains 14 meeting and service centers, another 8 meeting places and various venues in each borough. In the facilities are offered regular exercise classes, especially to avoid falls by education with lectures, language courses, visits to the theater, opera, etc. To maintain or expand the memory capacity, memory trainings and biography courses are offered regularly. In our 4 Internet cafés, Computer and Internet courses for seniors by seniors are offered. Both current operating systems are also permanently part of trainings such as Word and Excel. In addition, according to the wishes of the visitors, more classes are regularly updated and offered, such as googling, surfing, image editing, skypeing and social networks such as facebook. To maintain and extend the creativity, manual work of any kind like sewing and knitting, woodwork or pottery is available in our creative workshop (Kreativwerkstatt). Drumming and senior orchestras are also popular in our repertoire.

Particularly popular is the expanding excursion and holiday program. Excursions in Frankfurt itself or in the local area (up to 150 km) and concentrated 14-day vacations are part of the program. The excursions will also serve the mobility and learning about local history. In the exercise program the Frankfurter Verband is partner in the Frankfurt network "Aktiv bis 100" (active to 100). It offers yoga and exercise classes, bicycle rides and so on. Regularly, on various days of the week and in different boroughs dance-tees are offered. The Frankfurter Verband cooperates with and supports the following volunteer projects: The "Netzwerk Neue Nachbarschaften" (network new neighborhoods), a growing coalition of seniors who build up a social neighborhood network, which integrates the people in a cycle of give-and-take in the borough. The "Pflegebegeleiterinitiative", an initiative that supports family caregivers and friends to relieve themselves mentally, physically and financially. These help care attendants –that means Volunteers– are qualified and prepared for this task.

In the following articles, you will find collected impressions about Frankfurt, written by the participants of our project.

## Frankfurt and its turbulent history

### The Cathedral – called *Kaiserdom Sankt Bartholomäus*



The Frankfurt cathedral is a Roman Catholic Gothic church, located in the centre of the old city, dedicated to St. Bartholomew, one of the disciples of Jesus. It was built between 1250 and 1514 on the foundations of a church from the Merovingian period.

In earlier times, German kings were crowned as kings of the Romans in Aachen, northwestern Germany. To become Holy Roman Emperor of the German Nation the king and his entourage had to cross the Alps and travel to Rome in order to be crowned there by the Pope.

From 1562 onwards, the kings as well as emperors were crowned in Frankfurt.

The cathedral has never been a bishop's seat. Its role in the imperial politics made it one of the most important churches of imperial history and consequently justified the use of the term "Kaiserdom".

The coronations were followed by banquets held in the city hall nearby, the *Römer*.

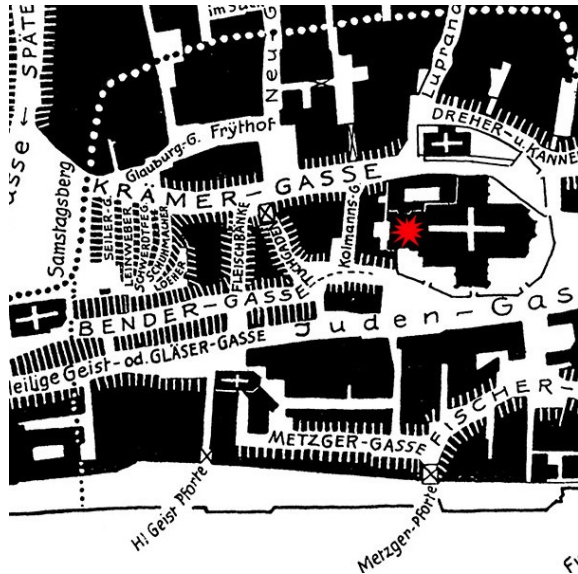
Despite numerous structural alterations and extensive damage during the war, the *Römer* is still one of the most interesting secular German buildings. The entire three-storey building, consisting of nine buildings with a total of 6000 square metres, encloses six courtyards.

The *Römer* has been the city hall for 600 years now. Today it is not a museum but is used by the city for special events, for example weddings. The "Kaisersaal" (Emperor Hall), located on the second floor, is well known for its unique collection of 19<sup>th</sup> century portraits of all Roman Holy Emperors. Nowadays the "Kaisersaal" is a VIP room for special guest visiting Frankfurt, e.g. the Dalai Lama, John F. Kennedy, Rudolf Giuliani, the mayor of New York or the winners of the Women World Cup 2003. They all signed their names in the visitor's book.



On the map below, one can see the location of the *Dom* in the old city of Frankfurt. All street-names refer to the artisans who lived and worked in this part of the old city. Furthermore, we find names that tell us something about the auctions held there, close to the *Dom*. The whole area is adjacent to the river Main.





The location where once numerous emperors were crowned has meanwhile developed into a very modern city with many high-rises, which give it a distinctive skyline. Frankfurt is the only city in Germany, which allowed the building of skyscrapers in the city centre. The skyline has become a landmark for the city and a symbol for prosperity and future-orientation. Therefore, it is often compared to New York's centre Manhattan and has been given the nickname *Mainhattan*. It is possibly the most American city in Europe, a flourishing city at the heart of European finance and service industries.

Trude Dorscht und Edeltraud Thobe

## The Theater scene in Frankfurt

The first theater opened in Frankfurt in the year 1782 and was until 1902 the Theater Frankfurt. The house was in a spot which is called the "Rathenauplatz" today and does not exist anymore.

The theater scenery has changed a lot since then! Today one can choose from a wide range of theatrical entertainment. Not only do we have a municipal theater which shows classical and modern plays and operas. Quite often they have plays by Goethe and Schiller on their agenda, (Goethe was born in Frankfurt am Main). We also have extra comedy theatres, cabaret houses and up till now had a theater, which played all the classical dramas and comedies in Frankfurt dialect. Unfortunately this little theatre – placed in the old part of our city – will close due to financial problems. But we also have *Die Alte Oper*, which was rebuild in the place and style of the old opera house. And it was only thanks to the protestation and donation of lots of Frankfurt citizens that die *Alte Oper* was not demolished but rebuild. Here they have a wide range of entertainment from classical to rock, pop and folk concerts. Very often bands play there on their concert tours. I will not forget to mention the theatres, where plays are put on in the original language of the playwright (i.e. the English Theatre). I know the English Theatre quite well because my son plays in the Drama Club of this theatre. I have just seen him as Cassio in a play about Othello by Shakespeare I like to go to the theater and I am glad that I can choose from this wide range of entertainment.



Ursula Marklove

## Open Bookcases - Unusual Public Institutions



In some parts of Frankfurt, you can find the so-called *Open Bookcases* (about 12). This means, in different places, streets, parks and even in the buildings of two public swimming pools you can already find the *Open Bookcases*. The idea of them is, to offer a public bookcase with literature of any kind, so that people can get or exchange books easily and free of charge. The bookcase is open day and night. Everyone can bring books and put them onto the shelves, and everyone can also take and enjoy reading them. Some bookcases are specialized in crime literature, others contain novels, non-fiction and children books; the contents of these *Open Bookcases* depends on the people living nearby. The bookcases are designed by an architect and always given free of charge by the city council.

The books are gifts from citizens for citizens with the aim of increasing the pleasure of reading. I'll show you the bookcase in the suburb of "Rödelheim", where the first two of your group will stay. This *Open Cupboard* is inside the building of a public swimming pool called the "Hausener Bad". It's my favorite swimming pool therefore, I initiated this bookcase. Children of a school nearby painted it and the public library of Rödelheim donated the books for adults and children. The "Hausener Bad" already opens at Easter. It is heated by solar energy.

Inside Rödelheim pool □



The water is quite warm, about 28 degrees. The pool itself is not so big, but it has a very beautiful location in a park. The Russian Church is in its neighbourhood. So, when you come at the right time, you can hear the bells ringing while swimming. Sometimes even ducks may accompany you! Take your bathing costume with you and you will have an excellent place to combine swimming with reading.

Wera Rohowski

## Architecture for All Generations

Growing older, we have to think about housing in the last period of our life. I cannot imagine living in a special residence only for elderly people. Isn't it much better to live in a multi-generation house or to stay in the neighbourhood I am used to?

To find some answers to my questions I went to a newly opened exhibition in the German Museum of Architecture in Frankfurt about architecture for all generations "Network Living".

Multigeneration house in Darmstadt  
35km south of Frankfurt



35 examples from Europe demonstrate innovative approaches, including building conversion to suit the elderly in Switzerland and assisted living in Luxembourg. Further projects include renovations in Germany and a revitalized mountain village in Italy. There are some very

high priced family houses in Japan with interesting vanguard architecture – but far away from being affordable for average earnings.



Multigeneration house in Bremen,  
northern Germany

All residential buildings presented show that, ideally, housing for the elderly should enable residents to continue their lifestyle and habits. At the same time, the social opportunities are highlighted. Be it people living alone in a detached house, living together with others in a communal housing project or living in an

apartment in a multi-storey block in a district with self-organized neighbourhood assistance, the topic of housing for the elderly is architecturally diverse.

Going home, I decided to stay in my multi-storey house, which is situated in a very lively neighbourhood with young families, singles, younger and elderly couples. In addition, our house needs no heating and this will be very important in the future, because costs for energy will rise dramatically. This technology is called *Passive House*. If you are interested, I can tell you something more about it in the next Newsletter.

Melanie Hartlaub

## New design in the 30<sup>th</sup> – the "Frankfurter Küche"



At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Frankfurt had spread far beyond the borders of the old town. After the First World War, housing estates for the working population were built. This had to be affordable living space for workers and their families. A personality in connection with this development in the 1920<sup>th</sup> was the architect and city developer Ernst May. Between 1925 and 1930, about 15.000 flats and houses in 27 housing estates for about 50.000 people were built under his construction management. The ones best known to this day are Römerstadt, Praunheim, Raimundstrasse and Miquelallee. In about 10.000 of these flats and houses, the kitchens were something special and very important. Ernst May had asked the Austrian woman architect Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky to develop a standardized build in kitchen, the so-called "Frankfurter Küche". This kitchen was about 1.87m wide and 3.44 m long. In this minimum U-shaped

space everything was very practically integrated, with on the wall hanging cupboards and built in cupboards underneath. The showing wooden parts were painted blue and green. Everything was very handy and easy to reach and was created to save long ways in the kitchen. A specialty were transparent containers for rice, sugar salt and so on, which were fitted underneath the fitted cupboards. This kitchen was produced in two sizes, according to the space available. Strictly speaking, this kitchen was the forerunner of today's fitted kitchen.

Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky died in the year 2000, a few days before her 103<sup>rd</sup> birthday. Some of her kitchens are still to be seen in the Historical Museum in Frankfurt and the Museum of Modern Art in New York.



Monika Picka



## Das Ostend - a district changes

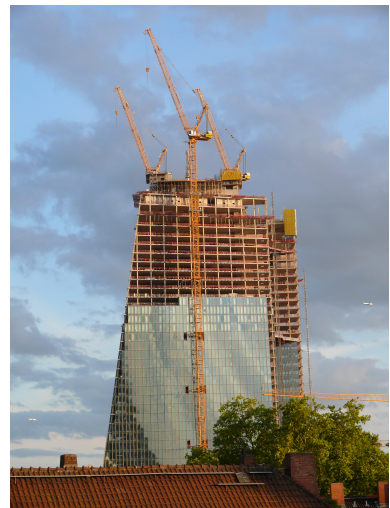
At present, the eastern part of Frankfurt (das Ostend) is subject to far-reaching structural changes and is the most important urban development district of the city. Previously a working-class neighbourhood and little esteemed quarter by the population. Nevertheless, signs of new beginnings, new buildings and modernisation can be seen throughout the quarter.

As part of the renewal of the district, which already started in the mid-nineties along the Eastern Harbour on old industrial sites, one of the most innovative services and commercial districts of the city is being developed. Due to the actions undertaken in new construction, renovation activities and persisting structural changes to a service sector, the district has become more and more attractive. Where once factories, industries, small businesses and wasteland dominated the scene, chic, lively quarters for living and working are emerging. Old niches are increasingly disappearing. Alongside the river Main high-priced living quarters have been built. There is a spirit of optimism. On the other hand, there is skepticism towards all the renewals and misgivings the new environment may drive out the old established, that the cost of living might increase, especially rents. The disadvantages cannot be dismissed but no doubt, the comfort and the quality of life will also improve.

The zenith of this development will be the movement of the European Central Bank (short ECB) in 2014 from the city center to this area. This will add additional value to the whole district. With its typical silhouette the 2 towers, 45 and 43 floors high, will complete the visual impression of Frankfurt as the so-called city of "Mainhattan".

My daily view of the ECB ☐

I myself have lived for 8 years in the Ostend now. For the past year, I have been watching the construction of the ECB literally from my living-room window. From the 14th floor onwards up to the roof, I was able to follow the building process. Unfortunately, it has diminished my free and open view somewhat. However, I can also say: With my eyes and in my mind I was part of the development of this district.



The property on which the new ECB is being built has a long exciting background. I will tell you more about this in one of the next newsletters.

Edeltraud Thobe and Trude Dorscht



# Wesolego Alleluja!