



EXCELSIOR GERMAN CENTER

Oakland, December 18, 2020

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Dear EGC members,

It's the end of December and the year 2020 is – finally – coming to an end. Winter in California never bothered me before. Usually, we get mild weather in the Bay Area and the rain is welcomed in this relatively dry place of the earth. There were so many celebrations, concerts, parties, holiday markets, theater and new movies coming out, that we barely had time to think how fast these days went by. I can't wait to welcome these times back into my life – I believe we'll have them back next year.

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There are still festive events being planned, most of them online, of course. We will get an opportunity to watch a Weihnachtskonzert movie on December 20, and available online until the end of this year. It was organized by the German Consulate in Washington D.C., and with it the performers also celebrated Beethoven's 250th birthday this month. Thanks to Otti Kiraly and Anthony Schaller we will get to watch a New Year's concert video from highlights of the last years. Please stay tuned, more information on those events is being distributed as I write this letter. We will ensure that those of you who are not checking emails frequently will receive it in addition to this letter, in the regular mail.

2020 has indeed been a very challenging year, for all of us. But now, at the end of this year, we are finally seeing the light at the end of the tunnel. We will have effective vaccines without major side effects, competence is finally moving back into our government, and if we act responsibly on our part, and do not mingle in the coming holiday season we may get out of the most restrictive lockdown before the Californian sun will dry out our lawns again. We may not quite be ready for a Maifest 2021, but how about we plan to celebrate a "Sommerfest 2021" instead?

Our organization came through this year without major hiccups. Yes, we had to send all members written reports, we could not have any membership meetings. Yes, we could not celebrate our beloved Maifest, for the first time in about 130 years, followed by cancelled concerts, Oktoberfest celebrations, Christmas markets and more. But we also tried some online events, our radio show kept going, we managed to send regularly letters and tried to stay in contact with each other via phone. Nothing of that was perfect, yet we made it through the year, and I am certain, we will have a successful restart some time in 2021, once it is safe to meet again.

The whole board of directors at the Excelsior German Center wishes you and your loved ones a very Merry Christmas and Happy Hannukah, and a healthy start into the New Year 2021. May this New Year bring back all our cherished traditions and let us meet with all our friends and family members again. May the experiences of the year 2020 make us a bit wiser, and cherish what we have. Let us remain alert, so we will be better prepared for the challenges ahead, and let us never take for granted, nevertheless enjoy to the fullest our German-rooted traditions.

On to 2021, together!



(Petra Specht, President of the Excelsior German Center)



(EGC board of directors, December 2019, back, from left to right: Otti Kiraly, Marlene Feuerstraeter, Hannelore Avalos, Hilde Lorentz, Michael Willis, Baerbel Steensen, front: Anthony Schaller, Petra Specht, not in the picture: Petra Kubler)

