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Sexuality, Eroticism and Gender in Austrian Literature & Culture

CULTURAL EVENTS

THE BELLE OF THE BALL 2007

AUSTRIAN JEWISH REFUGEES COMMEMORATED

DELEGATION FROM THE BURGENLAND VISITS TORONTO

AUSTRIAN LITERATURE ASSOCIATION MEETS IN CANADA

ACC AWARDS FOR CANADIAN-AUSTRIAN SOCIETY OF TORONTO

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Austrian Embassy, Ottawa: <http://www.austro.org/>

Cultural events in the Austrian-Canadian Community: <http://www.austro.org/>, then click on "Kulturforum Ottawa" and then "Veranstaltungen"

Wirth Institute for Austrian and Central European Studies: <http://www.arts.ualberta.ca/wi/>

Austrian Trade Commission, Toronto: <http://www.austriantrade.org>

Canadian Embassy, Vienna: <http://www.kanada.at/>

What's on: Canadian events in Austria: http://geo.international.gc.ca/canada-Europa/austria/embassy/Canadian_Events-en.asp

OeCulture On-line: <http://www.oeculture.ca>

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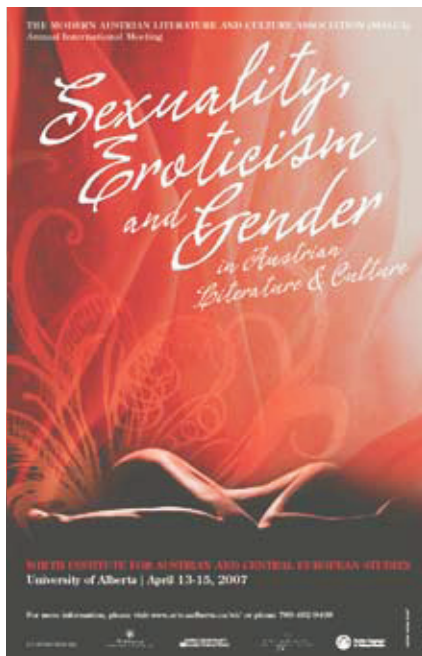
Editor/Editeur: Manfred Prokop
209 Tucker Boulevard
Okotoks, AB, T1S 2K1
Tel./Fax: 403/995-0321
E-mail: Manfred.Prokop@Ualberta.ca

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Austrian Literature Association meets in Canada

The Modern Austrian Literature and Culture Association held its annual meeting for the first time in Canada last April 13-15. Organizer and host of the conference was the Wirth Institute for Austrian and Central European Studies at the University of Alberta in Edmonton.



MALCA Conference poster

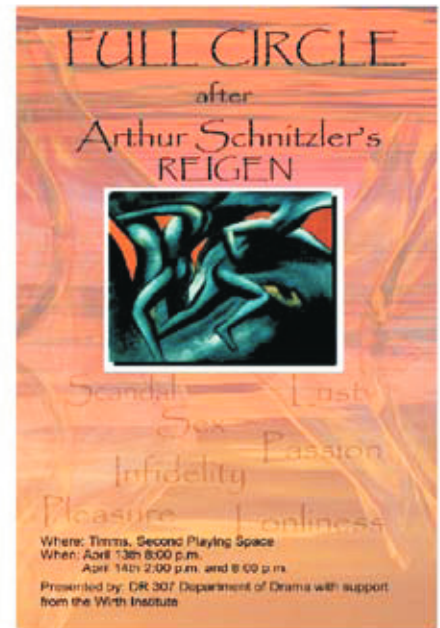
The theme of this year's conference, "Sexuality, Eroticism and Gender in Austrian Literature and Culture", attracted wide interest and generated very lively discussions. Some 60 participants from Europe and North America covered a wide range of topics in literature, cultural studies, history, art history and sociology, while the noted Austrian writer Gabriele Petricek presented a reading from her latest work. A number of prominent scholars from Austria attended the conference, but sadly, it marked the last appearance at an international scholarly event of the University of Vienna's venerable Prof.

Alfred Ebenbauer, who passed away on August 11. In conjunction with the conference, the students of the University of Alberta's Department of Drama presented a production of Arthur Schnitzler's *Reigen*.

Perhaps not surprisingly, given the theme of the conference, the literary figure that drew the most attention was Schnitzler: two full sessions and eight papers were devoted to him. Following hot on Schnitzler's heels was the recent Nobel laureate, Elfriede Jelinek, with five papers. The only other individual author who drew the attention of an entire session was Robert Musil, with three papers. Otherwise a wide range of Austrian literary figures was covered with papers on H. C. Artmann, Ingeborg Bachmann, Richard Beer-Hofmann, Thomas Bernhard, Hermann Broch, Albert Drach, Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach, Egon Erwin, Johannes Freumbichler, Gerhard Fritsch, Otto Gross, Marlen Haushofer, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Friedrich S. Krauss, Karl Kraus, Christine Lavant, Josefine Mutzenbacher, Rainer Maria Rilke, Peter Rosei, Joseph Roth, Ulrich Seidl, Otto Weininger, Ernst Weiß, and Josef Winkler. Lesbian themes were covered in a paper on *fin-de-siècle* Austrian women writers, while another paper focused on homosexual themes in the *Vormärz*. The perennial gender questions surrounding Franz Schubert were addressed in one presentation, while another analyzed the political erotics of the Mayerling affair.

In the field of the visual arts, Gustav Klimt drew the attention of two presenters and was also the subject of the keynote address. Originally scheduled to be delivered by Stephan

Koja, the Curator of the 19th century and modern collection of the Austrian Gallery Belvedere, a last-minute illness forced a change of speaker. At the suggestion of Dr. Koja, the Director of the Wirth Institute, Dr. Franz Szabo, delivered the address based on his article recently published in a



Announcement for the performances of Schnitzler's *Reigen*

collection devoted to Klimt's Beethoven Frieze that was edited by Koja. The address was entitled "The feminization of male sensibilities in the work of Gustav Klimt." Other visual arts papers included an iconography of Empress Elizabeth's hair fetish, a discussion of the art of Valie Export and of Adolf Loos. Conventional film was addressed in one paper on Austrofascist film and in another on the notorious Austrian film maker Michael Haneke.

The University of Alberta student production of Arthur Schnitzler's *Reigen* that was mounted specifically for the MALCA conference was also a

resounding success. Presented in a newly-adapted English translation under the title *Full Circle* by students from the University's Department of Drama, the play was given a more starkly modern and North American setting by the directors, Professor Piet Defraeye of the University of Alberta's Department of Drama and Professor Clemens Ruthner, Austrian Visiting Professor in the University's Department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies (2003-2008). However, the agony and sexual anxiety of the

The database contains bibliographic records describing the law collection of the Library of the Archiepiscopal Seminary of Salzburg (Bibliothek des Erzbischöflichen Priesterseminars zu Salzburg, Jura Sammlung) acquired by the University of Alberta Library in 1963. The collection includes over 2,800 titles, published between 1488 and the early 1960's. The subject focus of the Collection is canon law, but it covers other aspects of law (criminal, civil, commercial, and constitutional), as



MALCA Conference participants assemble in front of the Arts Building at the University of Alberta relationships depicted by Schnitzler were well preserved by the producers, while the modern English adaptation made many aspects of the play clearer to the North American audience than might otherwise have been the case. The play was presented three times during the MALCA conference weekend and was filled to capacity on each occasion.

Also on the occasion of the MALCA conference, the University of Alberta Library formally launched a web-based database for its famous Archbishop of Salzburg collection.

well as law history and philosophy of law. Also included are books documenting the history, politics and culture of the Habsburg Empire, of the Holy Roman Empire, and of other European countries, regions and societies throughout the centuries of the Early Modern and Modern eras.

The database can be accessed by the general public on the University's website at <http://repository.Library.Ualberta.ca/salzburg/>.

Dr. Franz A. J. Szabo

Klagenfurt and Laval are partner cities

During one of the wonderful celebrations of the "Bal Viennois de Laval," Austrian Consul General Ulrike Billard asked the Mayor of the City of Laval, Mr. Gilles Vaillancourt, if he would be interested in forming a partnership with a city in Austria.



Laval's mayor, Gilles Vaillancourt, and Klagenfurt's mayor, Dipl. Kfm. Harald Scheucher with their designated aldermen, and Austria's Honourary Consul General, Mrs. Ulrike Billard

As a result of this conversation, City Councillor Jean-Jacques Bédie took this matter into his hands, and his and his wife Margarethe's dedication and efforts helped finalize the partnership between the cities of Laval and Klagenfurt, the capital of the province of Carinthia.



Laval's mayor Gilles Vaillancourt receives Carinthian jacket from the mayor of Klagenfurt, Dipl. Kfm. Harald Scheucher.

During a visit to Laval by the Mayor of Klagenfurt, Dipl. Kfm. Harald Scheucher, in the summer of 2005,

Continued on p. 11

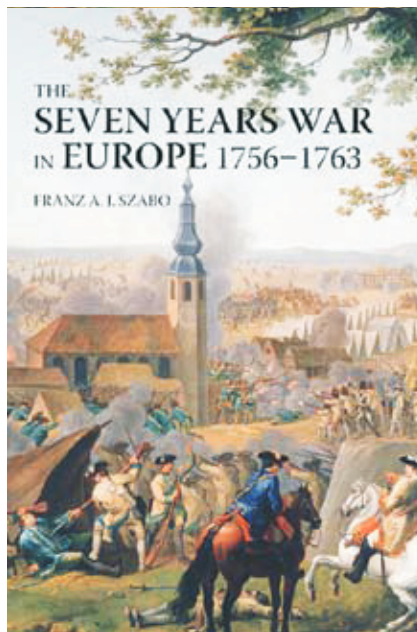
Wirth Institute Director honoured in Austria

The Director of the Wirth Institute for Austrian and Central European Studies at the University of Alberta, Professor Franz A.J. Szabo, was recently given the singular honour of being invited jointly by the Historical Commission of the Austrian Academy of Sciences and the Austrian State Archives to give a public lecture. The lecture, delivered in German, was given to an overflow, standing-room only audience in the lecture hall of the *Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv* on the Minoritenplatz in central Vienna on October 11, 2007. The theme of Professor Szabo's lecture was "A disturbed relationship: the Austrians and the Habsburg Monarchy" ("Ein gestörtes Verhältnis: Die Österreicher und die Habsburgermonarchie"), in which he argued that all too many Austrians had not yet come to terms with the legacy of the old Austrian Empire, or with the significance of that empire in the construction of the post-1945 Austrian identity.

In his lecture, Professor Szabo reviewed some of the historical debates on whether Austria was a nation on its own or was part of a German nation, and showed how the construction of nations in the 19th and 20th centuries was in fact a general phenomenon. The modern Second and Third German Reichs as well as the Federal Republic of Germany were as much new constructs as modern Austria, he argued, and although both had roots in the old Holy Roman Empire, continuity of that polity was decisively broken for both Austria and Germany by what he called the first "zero hour" of 1866.

Thrown on to the necessity of

redefining themselves, Austrians in the First Republic saw themselves as "German" with a decidedly German mission in Central Europe. However, after 1945, they rediscovered and recovered their own specific Austrian identity.



Professor Szabo showed how many of the characteristics of that identity - both positive and negative - were actually carry-overs from the Austro-Hungarian Empire and represented contributions to European civilization not only of German-speaking Austrians, but of all the other peoples of the old Monarchy. The problem, as Professor Szabo saw it, was that most Austrians nowadays, while happy to appropriate positive characteristics of the Empire, were reluctant to accept both their relationship and debt to the former fellow-citizens of the Monarchy and their now eastern neighbours. Polls show that Austrians by and large lack a sense of being "Central European," and still see themselves in Cold War terms as

the eastern periphery of Western Europe. They thus fail to imbibe the principal legacy of the Monarchy, namely the acceptance of pluralism. "Many of the highpoints of Austrian culture," Professor Szabo said, "were attained due to the prevalence of pluralism in their society, and are also characterized by these pluralistic features."

If the Austrian identity is determined in large measure by basking in this achievement, he suggested, then that pride is contingent on the recognition of the kinship with Austria's eastern neighbours that created it.

Two weeks after this lecture, the Institute of East European History at the University of Vienna further honoured Professor Szabo by organizing a launch for his latest book, *The Seven Years War in Europe, 1756-1763*, published by Pearson-Longman in Britain this past August. In this groundbreaking new work, based on a thorough re-reading of primary sources and new research in the Austrian State Archives, Professor Szabo presents a scholarly but eminently readable and stimulating reassessment of the continental war.

In the first such survey in nearly a century, Professor Szabo challenges the well-established myth that the Seven Years War was won through the military skill and tenacity of the King of Prussia, often styled "Frederick the Great." Instead he argues that Prussia did not win but merely survived the Seven Years War and did so despite, and not because of, the actions and decisions of its king. In addition to de-mythologizing Frederick of Prussia, he also shows that

despite the disappointing outcome for the Habsburg Monarchy, the Austrian performance in the war, for all its faults, was far better than is generally credited. While Austria clearly failed in its objective of crippling the Prussian threat permanently, Prussia was certainly rendered incapable of offensive military action for the immediate decades following the war. While Frederick of Prussia did not give up his dreams of further amputations of Austrian territory, he was ren-

dered powerless to carry them out. Not surprisingly, the cover illustration of the volume shows the Austrian victory at the battle of Hochkirch in October 1758.

Professor Szabo further shows that the Seven Years War was not the small-scale, civilized “cabinet war” that history has written it to be, but a war that drove all participants to near collapse and, in doing so, changed the face of Europe. With balanced attention to all the major participants

and to all conflict zones on the European continent, this volume describes the strategies and tactics of the military leaders on all sides, analyzes all the major battles of the war and illuminates the diplomatic, political and financial aspects of the conflict. It thus offers a new perspective on the war as a whole.

*Univ.-Prof. Dr. Arnold Suppan
Institut für Osteuropäische Geschichte
University of Vienna*

Delegation from the Province of Burgenland visited Toronto

On April 22, 2007 about 400 persons from the Burgenländer Club Toronto and the Donauschwaben Club greeted a delegation from the Burgenland at the Donauschwaben Club in Toronto. Otto Novakovics, President of the Burgenländer Club; Andy Mora, President of the Donauschwaben Club; and Helmut Jandrisits, President of the Burgenländische Gemeinschaft Kanada, serving as the master of ceremonies, welcomed the Austrian dignitaries: the Deputy Premier from the Burgenland, Mag. Franz Steindl, Landesrat Verena Dunst, Landesrat Mag. Michaela Resetar, and Prof. Dr. Walter Dujmovits.

The delegation came to North America to reconnect with the expatriate community of the Burgenland, which constitutes the largest group of Austrian emigrants, most of whom live near Chicago and Toronto.

During their visit to Canada, the group was escorted by Austrian Ambassador Dr. Otto Ditz and Vice-Consul and Deputy Trade Commis-

sioner Drazen Miletic. The visitors were accompanied by a 45-member brass band from the Musikverein Siegendorf in the Burgenland. During the ceremonies the band played folk music from the home country, which was a big hit with the audience and caused many tears to flow all afternoon.



Dignitaries (left to right): Roland K. Pirker, President, ACC; Vice-Consul and Deputy Trade Commissioner Drazen Miletic; Prof. Dr. Walter Dujmovits, President, Burgenländische Gemeinschaft; Helmut Jandrisits, Master of Ceremonies and President, Burgenländische Gemeinschaft Kanada; Landesrat Verena Dunst; the Deputy Premier from the province of Burgenland, Mag. Franz Steindl, Otto Novakovics, President of the Burgenländer Club Toronto; and Austrian Ambassador Dr. Otto Ditz. Photo: Ernst Kroiss

In the course of the festivities, which included a lavish meal with dancing to the folk music, the Austrian-Canadian Council took the opportunity to recognize and award medals to three members of the Burgenland communities. Roland K. Pirker, the President of the Austrian-Canadian Council, presented Medals of Merit in Gold to Otto Novakovics, Helmut Jandrisits, and Prof. Dr. Walter Dujmovits, the world-body president of the Burgenländische Gemeinschaft, for giving their unwavering support to the Burgenland communities.

Roland K. Pirker



Helmut Jandrisits, Roland K. Pirker, Prof. Dr. Walter Dujmovits, and Otto Novakovics. Photo: Ernst Kroiss

ACC Awards for the Canadian-Austrian Society of Toronto

On April 21, 2007 Roland K. Pirker, President of the Austrian-Canadian Council, honoured several members of the Canadian Austrian Society of Toronto, by bestowing on them a Medal of Merit in Gold for their outstanding commitment to the Society. The celebration took place at the home of the Society's President, Christine Meyer.

President Pirker opened the celebration by welcoming first the guests in attendance, among them Deputy Trade Commissioner Consul Drazen Miletic, Honourary National ACC Chairperson Dr. Alfred Wirth, ACC Vice-President Hans Raschke and Rosemarie Meyer, Managing Editor of the "Deutsche Presse". The ACC President then elaborated on the achievements of the Austrian-Canadian Council and explained the mandate of his organization, which honours individuals for their long-term services to the Austrian community, like Honourary Consul General Fritz Istl, Mrs. Inge Bibersteiner and Mrs. Maria Piller, who over the years have contributed greatly to bringing Austrian customs, music and culture to Canada.

Fritz Istl arrived here via a somewhat circuitous route. His father, a prisoner of war, at the end of WW I found himself in China. After finishing school, young Fritz joined him there as the representative of a number of Austrian companies. Fifteen years later, he moved to Canada as president of a Swiss manufacturer of ball bearings; later, he became the representative of Boehler Steel and successfully introduced the firm's products to the Canadian market. Another client was Steyr Daimler Puch, a car

manufacturer that was later acquired by Magna.

However, Fritz Istl's contributions to Canada went far beyond any

Toronto, with Mr. Istl assuming the position of Honourary Consul General with his usual aplomb and generosity.

The office issued visas for Cana-



Left to right front: Medal recipients Maria Piller, HCG Fritz Istl and Inge Bibersteiner. Standing: Dr. Alfred Wirth, Christine Meyer, Hans Raschke, Dr. Jutta Szep-Kroath and Roland K. Pirker. Photo: Ernst Kroiss

impact from commercial engagements. Shortly after arriving in Toronto, he realized the need for Austrian immigrants to support each other and keep alive fond memories of their first country; out of that, in 1967, the Canadian Austrian Society was born, with Fritz as co-founder and its first president.

At the same time, he also realized that the efforts of Austria's Trade Commissioner should be complemented by cultural events that would not only engage ex-Austrians, but also be of interest to Canadians, who at that time did not know a great deal about Austria, its history, its scientific and cultural achievements, not even about its music. To remedy that, in 1970, a Consulate General was established in

dians wanting to visit Austria, provided information about events abroad, such as festivals, great skiing and where to find culinary specialities, but it also encouraged get-togethers, from small informal parties to Grand Balls in the Austrian tradition. With official financial support of such events rather moderate, Fritz often chose to supplement expenses from his own pocket, with Elisabeth, his wife of now 58 years, joining him in the social functions and making her own contribution to the success of the office.

For his patriotic efforts, HCG Fritz Istl was awarded the Decoration of Merit in Gold of the Republic of Austria, which he proudly wears.

Speaking of Grand Balls, which kept growing in popularity, they were

arranged in the most exquisite manner by another of the honorées, Mrs. Inge Bibersteiner, who for more years than she cares to remember was the heart and soul of those events. With tact and an unerring sense of *savoir faire*, she knew precisely what was correct and desirable, and what was to be frowned upon - perhaps even discouraged - at any social occasion. A quiet rumour has it that, among her ancestors, there might have been someone, somewhere, who was responsible for the entertainment, ceremonies and etiquette at the Habsburg Court during the 1814 Congress of Vienna, which hosted delegates from about 200 countries; Inge could easily have coped with such a multitude of nationalities.

Born in Silesia of Viennese parents in what was then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and after finishing school, Inge went to work for the Austrian Chancellery in Vienna, the central office of the Austrian government. Together with her husband Georg, Inge emigrated to Canada in 1953; their home quickly became a centre for Austrians who sought to continue and nurture links with their countrymen and women. When the Canadian Austrian Society was incorporated in 1967, she became a Director and has remained so ever since.

During her career as Manager of the German-Canadian Chamber of Commerce, she organized many activities and social functions, which also gave her the chance to meet many German-speaking business people and diplomats. Transferring her talents to the Canadian Austrian Society, Inge organized the Austrian Balls as well as numerous professional events with flair and charm. Each annual Grand Ball had a differ-

ent theme, such as Austrian anniversaries, success stories, music, etc.

In 1997, the President of the Republic of Austria recognized her dedication and achievements and awarded her the Decoration of Merit of the Republic of Austria.

The third distinguished member of the Canadian Austrian Society to be honoured last spring was Mrs. Maria Piller, also a recipient of the Decoration of Merit of the Republic of Austria for her many years of service to Austrian matters in Canada. Frau Piller, or *Mutti* - little mother, matercula - as she is called by many members, soon after the founding of the Canadian Austrian Society became the Vice President in Charge of Memberships; as such, she not only took care of membership matters, but, which is very important for an organization not blessed with bottomless finances, kept track of entrance fees for the special occasions. With her little metal box, *Mutti* always sat close to the door of the event venues, collecting money, handing out tickets and change and subsequently diligently presenting an accurate accounting at the next directors' meeting.

Mrs. Piller not only kept the paperwork in perfect order, she also had connections with the artistic community. If anything special was required, she usually knew not only the right person for any particular job, but also managed to talk them into either volunteering or working for financial remuneration that was within the Society's budget.

With her four children, Maria Piller had emigrated to Canada in 1954, where she soon established a home and her roots. Over a half-century later and in spite of her advancing years, she is still regarded as the back-

bone of the Canadian Austrian Society.

Maria's home was always open to members, usually offering food and libation to immigrants who were just getting started and trying to cope with the new world and the new language.

Mrs. Piller is also the "living historical memory" of the Society: there is little she does not know about practically everyone: who was sick, who was well, who was successful and happy, and who was going through difficult times, professionally or personally; for those, she often had an encouraging word - or better.

Blending into Canadian society, the Austrian community, of varied backgrounds, has a lot to offer, some of which is visible, some of which is not publicly known. There is much more to Austria than a Strauss waltz and chocolate cake *mit Schlag* - although it would be foolish to disregard both.

Dita Vadron

Canadian opera singers honoured

On March 27, 2007 two Canadian opera singers received the coveted title "Kammersänger" from the Austrian government, soprano Adrienne Pieczonka and tenor Michael Schade. They were last heard in Vienna in March in leading roles in Strauss' opera "Arabella." This title is only bestowed on artists who have a long-standing relationship with the Vienna State Opera and is considered a great honour for the singers as well as their home country.

MP

The Belle of the Ball 2007

A major goal of the Austrian Embassy/Cultural Forum is the promotion of outstanding young Austrian and Canadian artists. The Viennese Winter Ball is a great occasion to present these musicians to the Canadian public. This concept was successfully implemented at the Viennese



Johanna Pichlmair (violin) and Jean Desmarais (piano) give a recital in Rockcliffe at the residence of the Austrian Ambassador, Dr. Otto Ditz. Photo: Roland K. Pirker - Rollframe

Winter Ball 2007 with the generous support of the President of the Austrian-Canadian Council (ACC), Roland Pirker, and of Dr. Peter Sommerer.



After the recital: Otto Heberlein, Johanna Pichlmair and Roland Pirker. Photo: Lois Siegel

The "Belle of the Ball" was 17-year old Johanna Pichlmair, a charming virtuoso with great potential. She was introduced to the Canadian press during a reception at the residence of the Austrian Ambassador, Otto Ditz. Everyone was swept away by the young violinist's charm and talent. Among the guests was the assistant of Maestro Zukerman, who invited her to participate in Zuker-

man's Young Artists Program.

Johanna Pichlmair's performance also left a big impression with the Austrian media. As a result she



Johanna Pichlmair gives her first North American performance at the Viennese Winter Ball in Ottawa with the Thirteen Strings orchestra on February 3, 2007. Photo: Lois Siegel

was invited to perform at the Wiener Konzerthaus on December 11, 2007. The Austrian Embassy/Cultural Forum is proud to have been able to make a small contribution to the career of a rising world class violinist.

Johanna Pichlmair grew up in Styria, Austria, as the sheltered daughter of a veterinarian. At the age of six, she decided that she wanted to play the violin, a wish that was respected and supported by her parents over the years. Since then she has practiced tirelessly for several hours every day. Johanna's energy, determination, and talent are impressive. She has learned to balance her high school duties with her other obligations, such as concerts and competitions.

Last year, Johanna suffered a terrible blow when her father died in a car accident. Her love for music and the violin helped her to cope with this tragic loss.



After the concert, Johanna Pichlmair is congratulated by the conductor of the Thirteen Strings' Orchestra, Winston Webber. Photo: Roland K. Pirker - Rollframe

Johanna Pichlmair will graduate from high school next year, but she has already been accepted by the Vienna Conservatory/Private University, an institution which will provide her with first-class professional development. The Austrian Embassy/Cultural Forum wishes her all the best



Left to right: Roland K. Pirker and Jean Desmarais. Photo: Lois Siegel

and great success in her further career.

*Helene Brabec-Steiner
Austrian Cultural Forum*

Austrian Jewish refugees commemorated

The Austrian Embassy in conjunction with the Wirth Institute for Austrian and Central European Studies and the Austrian-Canadian Council hosted an afternoon mini-symposium devoted to commemorating Austrian victims of the Holocaust and honoring Austrian Jewish refugees from the Nazi regime. Held at the Austrian Embassy residence and entitled "Exile and Dispersion of a Culture: The Austrian Experience," the symposium was occasioned in part by the recent publication of the autobiography of Dr. Hans Reichenfeld, who was also the guest of honour and one of the participants at the symposium.

The symposium was opened by the Austrian ambassador, His Excellency Dr. Otto Ditz, who stressed the importance of acknowledging and commemorating the enormity of the harm done to the Austrian Jewish population after the *Anschluss* of 1938, as well as the steps now being taken in Austria to come to terms with this tragic past. The Ambassador then introduced the five speakers of the afternoon.

The first presentation was delivered by Dr. Franz A.J. Szabo, Professor of Austrian History and Director of the Wirth Institute at the University of Alberta. Professor Szabo briefly sketched the rise of modern anti-Semitism in Austria from the 1880s to the 1930s, described the inter-war conditions in Austria that led to the *Anschluss* and detailed the

tragic effects it had on the Jewish population of Austria. In the second part of his presentation, Professor Szabo traced the fate of the more than 125,000 Austrian Jews that managed to escape the Holocaust, with particular emphasis on Austrian Jewish refugees in Canada. One of the least



Left to right: Ambassador Otto Ditz, Hannah Lessing, Hans Reichenfeld, Franz Szabo, Eleonore Lappin. Photo: Sam Garcia

hospitable countries for persecuted Jews during World War II, Canada eventually became the home of many Austrian Jewish refugees after the war.

The second presentation was by Ludwig Laher, one of contemporary Austria's leading writers. Focusing on "Austrian Culture in Exile", Laher sought to convey "the emotional background" of the exile experience by focusing on some individual cases. As a mere 8,000 Jewish refugees returned to Austria after the war, he emphasized how devastating "the loss of intellectual capacity and creative talent" was for the country. As a representative of the post-war generation, Laher spared no criticism for the cultural climate in immediate

post-war Austria, which he regarded as one of "stifling restoration" that "frowned on looking back" and failed to come to terms with Austrian complicity in the Holocaust.

In the third presentation of the afternoon, Hans Reichenfeld recounted his own experiences as a refugee from Nazi persecution in Vienna. Fleeing successfully to Britain, he was one of the 27,000 German and Austrian males over the age of 16 who in the summer of 1940 were suddenly deemed 'enemy aliens.' Reichenfeld was one of the 2,400 of these that were transported to Canada and interned there. He described his experiences in the camp in New Brunswick where he and 590 other refugees were interned,

reflecting well the amazing adaptability of the young in such trying situations. Though Reichenfeld was sent back to England in February 1941 and joined the RAF there, he eventually emigrated to Canada again where he established a successful academic career. Reichenfeld also amusingly recounted his post-war flirtation with communism, which was permanently disillusioned by the crushing of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956.

The fourth speaker was Hanna Lessing, the head of the "National Fund of the Republic of Austria for Victims of National Socialism." Her presentation focused on the role of the National Fund that she administers in coming to grips with the events of the Nazi period. Lessing acknowledged that "no payment can make up for the losses" which Austrian Jews sustained, but maintained that com-

pensating victims at least shows that Austria“ has started to assume its part of the moral responsibility in the crimes perpetrated by the Nazi regime.” Lessing then described the size, scope and objective of Austria's National Fund, pointing out that since 1995, more than 150 million euros have been paid out to some 30,000 individuals. The National Fund is also active in the field of restitution of Nazi-looted art works, initiating a database that makes it possible for victims of the National Socialist art theft all over the world to search for specific works of art which have been confiscated and which are suitable for restitution. The main concern of the National Fund, “apart from providing support to the survivors through empathy and unbureaucratic assistance,” Lessing asserted, was to ensure that National

Socialism would never happen again.

The final presentation was made by Dr. Eleonore Lappin of the Austrian Institute for the History of Jews in Austria. Dr. Lappin's paper was devoted to “The Revival of Jewish Culture in Post-War Austria.” The Jewish community, which had shrunk to less than 4,000 members after the war has now more than doubled in size. Many Austrian Jews who returned and stayed wanted to contribute to the rebuilding of Austrian democracy and its culture, and have made substantial contributions in this regard. Lappin itemized numerous Jewish cultural figures of contemporary Austria, including such literary figures as Ernst Lothar, Friedrich Torberg, Elisabeth Freundlich and Hilde Spiel, as well as writers of the stature of Elfriede Jelinek and Anna Mit-

gutsch who 'discovered' their Jewish descent only much later. She also pointed to the increased commemoration of the Austrian Jewish past through the Jewish museums in Eisenstadt in the Burgenland, Hohenems in Vorarlberg, and in Vienna, and through Austrian research institutions such as the 'Austrian Resistance Archive' (Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes), founded in 1963, and the Institute for the History of Jews in Austria, established in 1988.

The afternoon was concluded by a personal tribute to Hans Reichenfeld by a long-time colleague from Queens University, Julio Arboleda-Florez, and by a reception hosted by Ambassador Ditz.

Dr. Franz A. J. Szabo

Laval and Klagenfurt

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the partnership document was signed. This “Jumelage” resulted in June of 2006 in a participation of the “Singkreis Seltenheim” in the Festival “Le Mondial Choral Loto-Québec”, which takes place in Laval in cooperation with the City of Laval. It was a great success for the Austrian choir, which sang before a full house and received standing ovations from the



Laval mayor Gilles Vaillancourt and the mayor of Klagenfurt, Dipl. Kfm. Harald Scheucher, with joint city crest on glass

enthusiastic public that could not get enough of the wonderful performance.

In September 2007, Mayor Vaillancourt visited Klagenfurt and several industrial enterprises, among them the Lakeside Technopark. In turn, this led to a visit by the Director of Laval Technopole to Klagenfurt in May 2007, thus opening interesting venues for future cooperation. The partnership between the cities of Laval and Klagenfurt thus is already bearing fruit in the areas of economy and culture.

The mayors of the two cities formed an immediate bond with each other. It is hoped that this partnership will bring the people of the two cities in close contact, even if an ocean separates them.

Honourary Consul General Ulrike Ballard

Cirque du Soleil in Vienna

As part of its European tour, the Cirque du Soleil stopped off in Vienna with its production “Delirium” from October 22 to 24, 2007 in Vienna's Stadthalle. It premiered in Montreal in 2006 and has since been seen by more than a million enthusiastic spectators.

The Cirque will be back in Vienna with “Varekai” opening on September 26, 2008 under the Grand Chapiteau, Rotundenplatz – Messe Wien.

Deep within a forest, at the summit of a volcano, exists an extraordinary world - a world where something else is possible. A world called Varekai.

The word “varekai” means “wherever” in the Romany language of the gypsies the universal wanderers. This production pays tribute to the nomadic soul, to the spirit and art of the circus tradition, and to the infinite passion of those whose quest takes them along the path that leads to Varekai.

Symposium in honour of Manfred Prokop

On August 19, 2007, Professor Manfred Prokop, Canada's leading expert on the teaching of German in the classroom, celebrated his 65th birthday. As professor at the University of Alberta from 1969 until his early retirement in 1998 he was mentor,



Participants in the Symposium. Left to right: Dr. Diana Spokiene, Dr. John Plews, Dr. Manfred Prokop and Dr. Jennifer Daily-O'Cain. Photo: Jackie Doig

teacher and friend to many students who have since themselves earned reputations in the academic world. Many of these students and friends gathered at the University of Alberta on September 24 in a symposium in Prokop's honour, entitled "Intercultural Literacies and German in the Classroom." The symposium was hosted by the Wirth Institute for Austrian and Central European Studies and by the University of Alberta's Department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies, with both of which Manfred Prokop has had long-standing ties.

The symposium had been planned for some time by former Prokop students Caroline Rieger (now at the University of British Columbia), Christoph Lorey (now at the University of New Brunswick) and John Plews (now at St. Mary's University in Halifax), and as a result, they and many other students and colleagues were able to contribute to a

Festschrift that was published in Germany (at the Gunter Narr Verlag in Tübingen) this past summer, and was formally presented to Prokop at the banquet following the conference. The 436-page bilingual volume of collected essays, under the same title as the symposium (*Interkulturelle Kompetenzen im Fremdsprachenunterricht* in German), was published as part of the Giessener Beiträge zur Fremdsprachendidaktik, and although not all its contributors could also participate in the symposium



Dr. Manfred Prokop reading in the *Festschrift* dedicated to him. Photo: Jackie Doig

and surrounding festivities, the full-day symposium reflected well the broad range of interest Prokop had awakened among his students over the years. A long *Tabula Gratulatoria* in the *Festschrift* also echoed the gratitude of a wide circle of friends and colleagues with whom Prokop had worked.

Manfred Prokop was born in Vienna in 1942 and earned a translator's certificate at the University of Vienna before moving to the United

States to study at the University of Notre Dame. He earned both an M.A. in German Applied Linguistics and a Ph. D. in Education there, moving to Edmonton in 1969 to begin a long teaching career in what was then the University of Alberta's Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures. During his active teaching years he distinguished himself as an outstanding educator, earning recognition through such awards as The University of Alberta Faculty of Arts Undergraduate Teaching Award (1987), the Rutherford Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching (1987) and the prestigious 3M Teaching Fellowship (1989). His work was also recognized in his receipt of the Hermann Böschenstein Award for Contributions to German Studies in Canada (1998), the ACC's Gold



Two of the editors of the *Festschrift*, Dr. Caroline Rieger and Dr. John Plews (Dr. Chris Lorey was unable to attend). Photo: Jackie Doig

Medal (2005), the German-Canadian Friendship Award (2007) and by his elevation to Honorary Life Memberships in both the Modern Language Council of Alberta Teachers' Association and the Alberta Association of Teachers of German. The many honours were capped by his being awarded the Austrian Order of

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Hans Ockermueller: Businessman and diplomat

At first glance, Hans Ockermueller, a retired insurance broker living quietly in Victoria on the west coast of Vancouver Island, betrays little of what led him to become an Austrian consular official in Alberta with many honours for his service there for 38 years. You might be intrigued during a conversation to hear his impeccable Chinese accent when saying a few words in the Shanghai dialect... But what's that got to do with Austria? Besides, Hans only lived there briefly as a young man of 18 years.

But take a closer look and his consular career seems predestined. For starters, Hans was the son of an Austrian diplomat, Heinrich Ludwig Ockermueller, a decorated former pilot in command of a flying company on the Eastern front in World War I. After the war, Commander Ockermueller went to Shanghai to do business as an exporter and was soon appointed as Austrian consul general for all of China and Hong Kong. Hans was born in Shanghai in 1931. Among his earliest memories are the elegantly dressed guests picking him up and fussing over him at consular parties when he was only three or four years old.

Then, tragically, Hans' father died of cancer in 1937. His mother Maria Victoria decided to stay in Shanghai because of unsettled conditions in pre-war Europe. Although the Japanese occupied China at that time, they took a hands-off attitude to Shanghai's international settlement until 1941. Even then they left the Ockermuellers alone because they considered Austrians, who had become Germans during the war, as allies. Without other resources after

her husband's untimely death, Hans' mother took in students from other diplomatic families and the children of business and professional people from around the world, continuing Hans' association with the diplomatic world. Hans stayed in China until



Hans and Lesley Ockermueller

1949 and was able to graduate with his senior matriculation from the Shanghai American High School in 1949, fluent in English, German and Shanghai dialect Chinese. His friends and fellow students were the children of diplomatic officers and business and professional people from around the world who were stationed in Shanghai.

After high school, Hans went "home" to Vienna, Austria, where he studied chemistry at the University of Vienna and worked as a translator for British troops at night. Hans stayed with an uncle in post-war Vienna. Russian influence in Austria was slowing the country's recovery and reintegra-

tion into Western Europe, and Hans was attracted to opportunities in North America. The family had connections in Calgary, and Hans ended up in Alberta, working as a shift chemist for a year at a cement plant 50 miles west of Calgary.

But Hans is a people person, "a go-between sort of a guy," as he puts it, and when an insurance broker offered him a job in 1953, Hans took the opportunity and built on it, eventually becoming the owner of his own general insurance brokerage company. Along with business success came recognition in the Austrian-Canadian community. In 1963, Austria's ambassador visited Calgary and met with members of Calgary's Austrian community. Subsequently, the ambassador offered Hans Ockermueller the job of Austrian Vice Consul for Calgary. The appointment was honorary, but for Hans it was something more, perhaps having to do with his father. As Hans puts it: "It was the fulfillment of something... Just serving people."

These were busy years. Besides building a successful business, Hans served as an informal counselor for new Austrian-Canadians coping with the disorientation of being in a strange culture. His tall, fatherly presence was a calming influence in stressful situations, and people came to rely on him.

Hans also helped at the Austrian Pavilion at Expo 67 in Montreal, connecting nationally and internationally with other Austrians and Austrian-Canadians. In 1970, the Austrian Consul for Calgary resigned, and Hans was appointed to take his place.

Again the job was honorary, but

Hans worked at it, even as he continued to run a successful insurance brokerage company in Calgary. He says that his accomplishments during these busy years would not have been possible without the support of his wife Lesley, whom he married in 1983. He initiated the establishment of Austrian-Canadian clubs in Calgary and later in Edmonton, renting halls, inviting Austrians and Austrian-Canadians, showing a film or two about Austria, then proposing forming a club.

Hans assisted in the establishment of a branch of the Austrian Oil Company in Alberta, which sold oil to Alberta refineries, and in 1974 he accepted a challenge from Emil von Neudegg, business manager of the Banff School of Advanced Management to set up an exchange program of professors with Austria's Graz University at Eggenberg. Hans was also able to play a small part in the establishment in 1998 of a Centre for Austrian and Central European Studies at the University of Alberta in Edmonton.

At some time in this busy life,

Hans managed to become a member of the Canadian Ski Patrol, volunteering in the mountains every winter. He was also an active member of the Hiking and Backpacking group of the Calgary Ski Club, which also went on canoe trips and played tennis.



In 1986, Hans was appointed Austria's Honourary Consul General for all of Alberta in time to assist with Austria's participation in the 1988 Winter Olympic Games in Calgary. It was a whirlwind time with Hans acting as host and escort to many of the Austrian VIPs who came to Calgary during the Games. This may have been the time when Lesley's support meant the

most. "I couldn't have done it without her," Hans says.

Honours began to flow to Hans for the work he was doing, among them the Great Austrian Medal of Honour for his work during the Olympics, the Austrian-Canadian Cultural Association's Gold Medal for all his work as Consul General and the Great Golden Cross of Styria for his work setting up the exchange program between the University of Graz (Eggenberg) and the Banff School of Advanced Management. Most important to Hans is the face-to-face personal commendation he once received from the Austrian Foreign Minister for taking initiatives to cut red tape in order to serve people better.

The Ockermuellers retired in 2001 and moved to Victoria. They enjoy a waterfront home together and make boating trips to the Okanagan in summer. Hans continues to give back to the community in Victoria as a member of the Rotary Club of Oak Bay, where he helps out on various committees.

Giles Bixler

Prokop honoured

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Merit in Silver for Services to the Republic of Austria (*Silbernes Ehrenzeichen für Verdienste um die Republik Österreich*).

In addition to his teaching activities Prokop is also a distinguished scholar and researcher. He was one of the most important participants in the 1994-1996 "Austrian Immigration to Canada" research project, and served as both contributor and co-editor of the volume that resulted from it: *A History of the Austrian Migration to Canada* (1996). Continuing work on

the same theme in subsequent years, he compiled the indispensable *Biographical Dictionary of Austrians in Canada* (2002), which for some years was also available updated on line. All Austrians in Canada are especially indebted to Prokop for his unflagging dedication to this magazine, of which he has served as editor since its foundation in 1998. Beyond his services to Austrians in Canada, Prokop has also published widely in the field of German language training and linguistics, including *Learning Strategies for Second Language Users: An Analytical Appraisal with Case Studies* (1989), *The German Language in*

Alberta: Maintenance and Teaching (1990), *Annotated Bibliography of the Cultural History of the German-speaking Community in Alberta, 1882-2000* (2000), and, together with Gerhard Bassler, *German Language Maintenance across Canada: A Handbook* (2004). His most recent work, just published in 2007, is the two-volume *History of Alberta's German-speaking Communities*. Prokop has been unfailingly supported in his work by his wife of over 40 years, the Viennese-born Christiane Prokop (née Stur).

Dr. Franz A.J. Szabo

AÖWB gathering in Austria's most westerly province

On September 6, 2007 about 400 Austrians from around the world gathered in Bregenz, the capital of Vorarlberg, for the annual *Auslands-österreicher-Weltbund* (AÖWB) meeting. Bordering Switzerland and Germany, Vorarlberg - Austria's most westerly province - has received world attention not only for its strong economy, but is also well known for its classical summer theater, "The Bregenzer Festspiele".



Opening of the Kedl exhibition at the Landhaus on September 6, 2007. Left to right: Dipl. Ing. Alban Vigelius (Director, AÖWB Archive), Gretl and Eugen Kedl, and Dr. Günter Dürigl (Editor, RotWeissRot magazine). Photo: Roland K. Pirker

During the four-day visit, the participants attended meetings and were invited on a boat cruise on the Lake Konstanz and a guided tour of the city of Bregenz. They visited the Wolford company and the Rolls-Royce Museum in Dornbirn, spent a cultural evening at the Festspielhaus in Bregenz, and went on a special tour behind the technical facilities of Austria's biggest open-air theater. The stage which hosted this year's (and will do so again next year) performance of Puccini's "Tosca", is not only built on the water but is totally surrounded by it, giving the more than 100,000 spectators, who come here annually to watch a play, a memorable experience. Unfortunately, this



Opening of the Kedl exhibition at the Landhaus. Left to right: Dipl. Ing. Alban Vigelius (Director, AÖWB Archive) and Eugen Kedl. Photo: Roland K. Pirker

year the weather was rather on the cool side due to an unexpectedly early snowfall the day before which had covered mountains and valleys down to an elevation of 1,000 meters.



AÖWB Press Conference at the Landhaus, Bregenz, on September 6, 2007. Left to right: Dr. Jürgen Em (Vice-President, AÖWB), Mag. Markus Wallner (from the provincial government), Dkfm. Ing. Gustav Chlestil (President, AÖWB), Dr. Georg Schoiswohl (Vice-President, AÖWB), Mag. Michael Rauth (from the municipal government), and speaker Dr. Günter Dürigl (Editor, RotWeissRot Magazine) and in the foreground Gretl and Eugen Kedl. Photo: Roland K. Pirker

At the AÖWB gathering in the Landhaus in Bregenz, the public had a chance to view an exhibition on "Austria's 10th province" and to admire the achievements of the expatriate community. Included was an exhibition of Eugen Kedl's photographs and twelve of his books. Thirteen Austrian-Canadians participated in all meetings and functions. They came from

Edmonton (Walter Schachenhofer), Ottawa (Heidi Temelie, Franz Plangger, Roland and Burgie Pirker), Montreal (Dr. Sepp Froeschl), Quebec City (Eugen and Gretl Kedl), Burlington (Arno and Gisela Risse, Fred and Helga Schopf), and from St. Catharines (Leo Duess).



Canadian delegation after the ceremony at the Festspielhaus on September 8, 2007. Left to right: Franz Plangger, Roland K. Pirker (President, ACC and Board of Directors, AÖWB), Gretl and Eugen Kedl, Heidi Temelie and Dr. Sepp Froeschl. Missing in the photo: Leo Duess (President, Social Club Heidelberg in St. Catharines), Burgie Pirker, Gisela and Arno Risse (President, Continental Austrian Club Burlington), Walter Schachenhofer and Fred and Helga Schopf. Photo: Alexandra Serra

To the delight of the Canadian and Burgenland delegations, the honour of being chosen Expatriate Member of the Year went to Eugen Kedl. In the mid-1950's, Eugen and Gretl Kedl had moved from the Burgenland to Quebec City where he established himself as one of Canada's foremost photographers. He has more than 15 photography books to his credit and has shown his work in numerous large photo exhibitions that have been displayed from Quebec City and Ottawa to Rome and Moscow. Kedl has received over fourteen awards, among them the Order of Canada.

Eugen Kedl was honoured at Saturday's Gala, held at the Festspielhaus, by the President of the



Gretl and Eugen Kedl after the ceremony with the Certificate of Expatriate Member of the Year on September 8, 2007. Photo: Roland K. Pirker

AÖWB, Gustav Chlestil. Dignitaries, such as Mag. Michael Rauth from the municipal government, Mag. Markus Wallner from the province, and Dr. Hans Winkler from the Austrian Federal Government, were present. In their speeches, they acknowledged and thanked the members of the expatriate community for their important contributions.

Roland K. Pirker



After the ceremony on September 8, 2007. Left to right: Mag. Michael Rauth, Fred and Helga Schopf. Photo: Roland K. Pirker.

Karl Gyaki: Ambassador of Austrian wine to Canada

"No, I never take a nap after lunch. I might get used to it, and it is such a waste of time," says Karl Gyaki, the man who once imported each year 2 million bottles of wine and 6 million bottles of European beers and spirits into Canada. A lively octogenarian, Karl Gyaki still has a full day, divided between hours with friends in a coffee shop in Toronto's Bayview Mall, cooking, and working out at the YMCA. There is no time for a nap that in his eyes means giving in to age. Karl Gyaki has never given in.

The better I got to know Karl Gyaki the more I became impressed with this slender, unassuming man. Without him noticing it, everything Karl Gyaki told me about his life seemed to be rooted in a strong sense of discipline, responsibility and loyalty.

He is one of the special people who can be loyal to several countries on two continents and faithful not only to his close family, but also to his multilingual communities and to a wide circle of friends. It comes naturally to him, no questions asked; loyalty is not a concept upon which he dwells. He feels loyalty and acts accordingly.

He found his own way to express

his way of thinking: anonymous philanthropy. Out of the limelight, Karl Gyaki pays back what he received from the countries that touched his life. Ever since he could afford it he devoted his energy and means toward numerous causes, may they be support for Austrian social clubs in Toronto or for juvenile soccer teams in Hungary. And that is what he does till today, he lives loyalty.



Preparation meeting for the Austrian Immigration to Canada Symposium on May 20, 1994 at Carleton University (Ottawa). Left to right: Dr. Karin MacHardy (University of Waterloo), H. E. Dr. Walther Lichem (Austrian Ambassador), Karl Gyaki, Dr. Jutta Szep-Kroath (Austrian Consul, Toronto), Dr. Frederick Engelmann (University of Alberta) and Dr. Franz Szabo (Carleton University). Photo: Roland K. Pirker - Rollframe

Karl Gyaki's is the proverbial story of an immigrant, who, through diligence, ambition and energy, made good and in the process con-

tributed to the social life of his adopted country. In Gyaki's case it was the opening up of Canadians to the art of Central European living. "Live and let live" - an old Austrian proverb synonymous with a certain lifestyle found entrance into Canada not the least via Karl Gyaki's wine import business. Numerous are the Canadian wine connoisseurs whom Karl Gyaki taught how to appreciate wine, how to store it and in which glasses to serve it. Many Torontonians have fond memories of dinners at the Austrian Club Edelweiss where they enjoyed the special Austrian atmosphere, Austrian cuisine and Gyaki wines. Karl Gyaki was a member of the club ever since he arrived in Toronto, serving as its director for years and donating time, energy and money as long as the club existed.

But he never forgot his childhood in the Burgenland, the easternmost province of post WWI Austria. During the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy this part belonged to Hungary, which explains the large Hungarian population there. The Iron Curtain interrupted the lively exchange between Hungarians and Austrians that had

existed for centuries. In a time of considerable political differences and animosities Karl Gyaki worked hard to restore friendship and exchange of students across the border between Austria's Burgenland and Hungary.

His life-long enthusiasm for soccer helped him to achieve this goal. Long before the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989, Karl Gyaki pierced holes into the wall, and through these holes entire soccer teams would slip unbeknownst to the authorities and compete against each other: Hungarian students played against Austrian students, and a year later the Austrians would venture into Hungary to do battle with their friends on their home turf.



Left to right: H. E. Dr. Walther Lichem (Austrian Ambassador), Karl Gyaki and Dr. Jutta Szep-Kroath (Austrian Consul, Toronto).
Photo: Roland K. Pirker - Rollframe

Karl Gyaki was and is always there with the boys, financing the meetings, handing out the trophies and encouraging them to continue their studies, learn languages, keep friendships across the border, and never to let political circumstances prevent individual understanding and tolerance. Gyaki is a European of the first hour although he never thought of himself in these terms. For him these cross-border activities originated in a never contested question of his personal loyalties and of his undying devotion to soccer. Pictures of class after class of "his" young soccer

teams still adorn walls and tables in Gyaki's home.

Neighbourhood spirit is only as good as the communications between the neighbours, especially when the neighbours are being kept apart by guarded borders and different languages. Hungarian is not a language that comes easily to non-Hungarians, and Karl Gyaki provided the youngsters on the Austrian side of the border with a head start: He established and financed printing presses and had Hungarian language books and newspapers printed and distributed. Whoever wanted to learn the Hungarian language could do so. Thanks to Karl Gyaki, the bilingual tradition in this part of Austria continued and the youth of Oberwart and its environs was able to learn German and Hungarian in reading and writing, an invaluable advantage once the Iron Curtain fell and tourism and trade complemented the existing pre-war family ties.

He wanted these educational activities to continue when he would no longer be able to give impulses, and transferred part of his fortune into a foundation established in the Burgenland. It is the mandate of the foundation to carry the torch and realize Gyaki's goals in the foreseeable future. He wants to ensure that his ideals live on.

There is a guiding principle in Karl Gyaki's life: Be true to your past, never abandon your country of origin or your mother tongue, and always remember what you received from family and friends. In Gyaki's case the forefathers were Hungarian, his mother tongue was Hungarian and till today his Hungarian is as flawless as are his German and his English.

It took the experience of war and emigration to make Karl Gyaki aware of his loyalties, but also of the opportunities the post-war era offered. After his return from the Second World War he became a master tailor in his native town, Oberwart. It did not take long and the small town of Oberwart appeared to him too narrow and limiting. Like generations before him he



Left to right: Helmut Jandrisits, Gaby Schick and Karl Gyaki (with hat), surrounded by the brass band from the Burgenland's "Bauernkapelle St. Georgen". It played in Toronto at the "Musikantenstadl" on May 26, 1994.

went abroad to try his luck. Switzerland was his first stop, but then it was the proverbial uncle in America who lured him to Canada: he provided passage and immigration papers and in 1951 Karl Gyaki set foot onto Canadian soil in Halifax. It was not a promising start: Custom officers seized his smoked hams and hot sausages, meant to ease him into his new life. Like all immigrants in these days Gyaki was assigned for one year as a farm hand. Only in 1952 could he settle in Toronto and work his trade. He worked hard beside his day-job as tailor to augment his income, and by the mid-fifties Gyaki had bought a house, was joined by his parents and happily married to Helen Medics.

Restless and ambitious, Karl Gyaki was looking for a niche in business: Austrian wines were not available in Ontario, and so he set out to import them. A non-cooperative

Liquor Control Board and hesitant Austrian winegrowers who were not easily convinced of the financial gains to be made in Canada, presented obstacles in the path to success. But Gyaki's enthusiasm and the good



First meeting at the Burgenländer Club Toronto with then Austrian Ambassador Dr. Lichem in 1994. Left to right: Joe Waldner, Helmut Jandrisits, Dr. Jutta Szep-Kroath (Austrian Consul, Toronto), Karl Gyaki and H. E. Dr. Walther Lichem.

taste of his wife - she picked the first two Austrian wines to be imported: Grinzinger Kabinett and Kremser Lump - eventually succeeded. In 1959 the first Austrian wines entered the Canadian market. It was a major victory, but for the Gyakis it was only the beginning of a trying phase in their life.

From then on Karl Gyaki criss-crossed the country in his old, beat-up Volkswagen, his wine samples in the trunk and undeterred by bureaucracy and slow sales. He still smiles when he talks about this time, when he washed in lakes and shaved using the car's side mirror as a shaving mirror because he could not afford hotel accommodation. But he made friends for life and got to know his new country almost like nobody else, from coast to coast to the Arctic Circle. He sold Austrian wines even north of the Arctic Circle, in Inuvik. For eight years he was his company's sole salesman, while Helen was supporting the struggling young business by holding a job in a bank in Toronto and doing the fledgling company's books.

After this extended warm-up period, Gyaki's imports took off and customers began to request Austrian wines. Eventually the reluctant purchase managers of the liquor control boards and the vintners in Austria were convinced of the existence of a Canadian market for Austrian wines, and after the difficult beginning Karl Gyaki's wine import business flourished. Millions of bottles from Hungary, Italy, France, Spain, Bulgaria, Germany and Yugoslavia complemented Austrian products, and the company soon had distribution centers in each Canadian province.

highly appreciated as "Ambassador of Wine" - a title he cherishes above the many public honors that were bestowed upon him in the years to follow. Numerous tributes, acknowledgements and orders are displayed on two "walls of fame" in a cozy room in the Gyakis' home's basement, right next to an original Austrian Trinkstube and wine cellar. The private Gyaki wine cellar existed long before it became fashionable in luxury condominiums to include a well-tempered wine cellar. Karl Gyaki was always a trail blazer.

After many years of success in



Reception on May 21, 1994 for the Austrian Immigration to Canada Symposium at the residence of the Austrian Ambassador. Left to right: Karl Gyaki, Dr. Oliver Rathkolb, Roland K. Pirker, Dr. Frederick Engelmann, Mag. Anita-Maria Pichler, Dr. Gabrielle Tyrnauer, H. E. Dr. Walther Lichem, Mag. Maria-Teresa Lichem, Dr. Franz Szabo, Dr. Jutta Szep-Kroath, HCG Friedrich Istl, Dr. Karin MacHardy, Dr. Peter Suschnigg, HCG Ulrike Billard-Florian, and Dr. Ernst Waengler. Photo: Roland K. Pirker - Rollframe

"Gyaki wines" became a seal of quality and reliable delivery, of good taste and openness to new trends. Ever resourceful, Gyaki organized wine tastings in cooperation with Austrian Riedel Glas, Riedel's first exposure to the Canadian market. Today Riedel glasses are represented in many exclusive china and glass stores in Canada.

Karl Gyaki became known and

his business Karl Gyaki retired, passing "Gyaki and Cosmopolitan Wine Agencies" on to younger hands. He still keeps a rigorous schedule, not allowing himself rest or slowing down because "it may become a habit". He misses his business that became a vocation. Always working 12 hours a day he had lived a life dedicated to family, business and his favorite causes. Today, although lonely and

just a little resigned he is the doyen of the Gyaki clan whose advice is being sought and followed. Karl Gyaki loves Canada, takes pride in his success, and enjoys financial independence and public appreciation.

He is surrounded by friends, tends to his philanthropic endeavors, he makes regular trips to the Burgenland to attend his beloved soccer games, and there is the Gyaki foundation. Karl Gyaki is a busy and disciplined man. It is no coincidence that he is included in a book by Magda Zalan, "Stubborn People". It includes essays on 12 remarkable men and women of Hungarian origin who came to Canada and contributed in an extraordinary manner to our Canadian life. One has to be determined and sometimes stubborn in pursuing a dream to make it come true. Karl Gyaki succeeded.

Dr. Jutta Szep

Editor's note: The newsletter of the "Gunners Oberwart Soccer Club" of September 2, 2005 ran an article on Karl Gyaki's visit to Oberwart. It briefly recounted Karl Gyaki's emigration to Canada and his success as a businessman there. It emphasized that Gyaki had never forgotten his hometown and had set up the Gyaki Foundation to support financially young players in Oberwart's soccer clubs. Everything had begun with one soccer club, but in the



Wirth Institute to celebrate 10th anniversary

The Wirth Institute for Austrian and Central European Studies will be celebrating its 10th anniversary this coming September. The Austrian Federal Minister of Science and Research, Dr. Johannes Hahn, as well as the Director General of the International Department of the same Ministry, Dr. Peter Kowalski, as well as numerous other dignitaries, will be attending the anniversary celebration, which will be held at the University of Alberta's Convocation Hall on the afternoon of Friday, September 5, 2008.

Opened formally as the "Canadian Center for Austrian and Central European Studies" on September 8, 1998 by the then Austrian Federal Minister of the Sciences, Dr. Caspar Einem, the Canadian Secretary of State for Science, Research and Development, the late Hon. Ronald Duhamel, the Alberta Minister of Advanced Education and Career Development, the Hon. Clint Dunford, and the President of the University of Alberta, Dr. Roderick C. Fraser it was re-named "Wirth Institute" in 2003 as a result of a transformative endowment donated by the late Dr. Manfred Wirth and his son, Dr. Alfred Wirth. The Institute is also supported by the governments

of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia. It has been led since its foundation by Professor Franz A. J. Szabo, one of Canada's leading scholars of Austrian history.



The Arts Building at the University of Alberta, home of the Wirth Institute for Austrian and Central European Studies

All friends of Austria and central Europe are invited to attend the anniversary celebrations. Full details will be available on the Institute's website in the spring of 2008 at www.arts.Ualberta.ca/wi/. For information on accommodation in Edmonton, please contact the Institute's executive assistant, Ms. Sylwia Adam-Ross, either by phone (780/492-9408) or by e-mail at smadam@ualberta.ca.

meantime UBC Stahlbau Oberwart's young players have also received financial assistance. For this, Mr. Gyaki received profound expressions of gratitude from the Gunners' players and management. He was presented with a photo of that successful mU19 team which wore his dress. He was also given several samples of wines from southern Burgenland as well as the club's honorary pin. Gyaki was moved by the

presents and explained that he wanted to support Austrian soccer teams to further international understanding by allowing them to participate in international competitions. The club gave Mr. Gyaki their best wishes for his upcoming 80th birthday and hoped to see him again soon in his hometown of Oberwart. (Source: http://www.gunners.at/php/newsneu1.php?Article_id=204&fpage=111)

Eugen Kedl opens picture exhibition to commemorate 399th anniversary of Quebec City



Eugen Kedl's exhibition commemorating 400 years of Quebec City. Photo: André Kedl, Les Photographes KEDL



A proud moment. Eugen and Gretl Kedl and Madame Andrée P. Boucher. Photo: André Kedl, Les Photographes KEDL



Austrian Ambassador Dr. Ditz congratulates Eugen Kedl at the opening of the exhibition. Photo: André Kedl, Les Photographes KEDL

On July 3, 2007, the 399th birthday of Quebec City, Mr. Eugène Kedl, a long-time resident of that city, helped celebrate this occasion with an opening of a year-long exhibition entitled "Québec Seen by Kedl - 400 Years of Passion", which gives a pictorial overview of the city's history over the past four centuries. The exhibition of original and unique photos pays tribute to the work of photographer Eugène Kedl. Some 60 inspirational photos illustrate great eras of Québec's history, religious, military and urban heritage, and the legacy of four centuries of existence.

Mr. Kedl, who had moved to Quebec City in the mid 1950's from the Burgenland, Austria, has become a prominent figure in photography in that city. For his outstanding humanitarian and pictorial contributions to Quebec City, Mr. Kedl was recognized and presented with a medal by the city's mayor, Her Worship Madame Andrée P. Boucher, during a special ceremony at City Hall. Many dignitaries took part in the day-long celebrations, among them the Austrian Ambassador, Dr. Otto Ditz, Lena Brabec from the Austrian Cultural Forum, the President of the Austrian-Canadian Council, Roland K. Pirker and his wife Burgie Pirker.

The official opening of the Exhibition took place at the Observatoire de la Capitale. It can be seen by visitors until October 2008.

Roland K. Pirker



Eugen Kedl signing the guest book after having received an award from Quebec City's mayor, Madame Andrée P. Boucher. Photo: André Kedl, Les Photographes KEDL

Männerquintett Klagenfurt - Ponfeld hosted by Kitchener's Alpine Dancers

In 2005, the Männerquintett Klagenfurt-Ponfeld, along with the Alpine Dancers and Heinz Czescutti and his band, performed at the Austrian International Celebrations/Ottawa Tulip Festival in Ottawa. Two years later, the Quintet was invited to perform at a Sangerfest in Laval, Q.C. and welcomed the opportunity to travel on to Ottawa to visit with the Austrian Ambassador, Dr. Otto Ditz, and the President of the Austrian Society, Mr. Roland K. Pirker. They also wanted to meet again with the Alpine Dancers in Kitchener and to spend some time with them from June 28 to July 1, 2007.

And so they did. Upon their arrival in Kitchener, the Alpine Dancers met them for dinner at a German Club and then welcomed them to stay with members of the dance group during their visit to Kitchener. The sightseeing tour through and around Kitchener on June 29 proved to be very interesting for the Quintet. Some of the highlights were the Pioneer Tower, St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church, the Rotunda of the City Hall of Kitchener, the 2,000 thumb prints in bronze of the citizens of Kitchener and Berlin, Germany, the University of Waterloo and Wilfred Laurier University, St. Jacobs, the Mennonites, and the Covered Bridge in West Montrose. The group spent the evening at the Austrian Club in Burlington where the Quintet performed some of their beautiful songs. The audience was delighted and showed their gratitude with generous applause.

The following Saturday morning was set aside for a visit to St. Jacobs Farmers' Market where the Quintet

was especially intrigued by the horse auctions. Although impressed with the auctioneers' babble, our guests marveled at the low prices for which the beautiful horses were sold. With a great party at a Club member's home featuring roast pork, salads, desserts and refreshments, as well as songs and music, a memorable day ended.

The members of the Mannerquintett Klagenfurt-Ponfeld were greatly impressed by our observance of German and Austrian culture and

dinner at the home of the president of the Alpine Dancers, Ms. Lore Kump.

The members of the Mannerquintett Klagenfurt-Ponfeld are: Erich Krassnitzer, bass and leader of the Quintet; Thomas Muhleisen, tenor; Gerold Krassnig, tenor; Gottfried Scharf, baritone, and Karl Klavacek, bass. The official photographer and reporter for the Quintet, and also the "reserve singer", was Peter Dextl, tenor.



social life in Kitchener. One of the highlights of their stay here was the German High Mass on July 1, 2007 at St. Mary's Church, where they sang several Austrian religious songs. Their extremely sensitive and harmonious sound brought many tears to the eyes of the parishioners. This performance was a truly exquisite conclusion to their visit with the Alpine Dancers. Before the group left for the Toronto Airport for their flight home to Austria, the Quintet was treated to a Sunday

Stay well, dear friends, und auf Wiedersehen! We are looking forward to our next meeting! Lebt wohl, unsere lieben Freunde, und Gutes Lied!

*Hans Kroisenbrunner
for the Alpine Dancers, Kitchener*

Websites:
www.quintett.at
www.alpineclub.ca

CULTURAL EVENTS/MANIFESTATIONS CULTURELLES

Ottawa

February 2
Grand Ball
Viennese Winterball
National Gallery of Canada

July 5
Concert
Kärntner Doppelsextett
Christchurch Cathedral

Toronto

July 12
Concert
Kärntner Doppelsextett
Vereinigung der Donauschwaben
Toronto
1686 Ellesmere Road

QUEBEC

Montreal

January 1, 2:30 p.m.
New Year's Concert "Salute to Vienna"
Strauss Symphony of Montreal, conducted by Stefanos Tsialis (Vienna), with dancers from the Budapest Ballet
Place des Arts

January 13, 2:30 p.m.
New Year's Concert
Ensemble Strauss-Lanner de Montreal, conducted by Jean Deschenes
Ecole de musique Vincent-D'Indy

January 31, February 1-3, 7:30 p.m.
Opera
W.A. Mozart, "Cosi Fan Tutti"
Opera McGill, conducted by Julian Wachner
Pollack Hall, Schulich School of Music

February 10, 11:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m.
Concert
Ensemble Transatlantique Schrammel, conducted by Jean Deschenes, with Viennese accordionist Barbara Faast
Butte St. Jacques

February 24, 8:00 p.m.
Concert
Montreal Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Kent Nagano with pianist Alfred Brendel in a Beethoven and Schumann program
Salle Wilfrid Pelletier
Place des Arts

March 8-9, 8:00 p.m.
Concert
McGill Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Alexis Hauser in a program of classical music
Pollack Hall, Schulich School of Music

March 9, 8:00 p.m.
Concert
"Une Schubertiade" - an evening of music by Franz Schubert
Les Violons du Roy, conducted by Bernard Labadie
Centre Pierre Peladeau, Salle Pierre Mercure

March 6-16
26th Festival du Film sur l'Art
Including Austrian films
Centre Ex-Centris

April 12, 8:00 p.m.
Concert
Benjamin Britten's War Requiem with McGill Choir and Les Petits Chanteurs du Mont Royal
McGill Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Alexis Hauser
Eglise St. Jean Baptiste

April 27, 3:00 p.m.
Concert

Ensemble Transatlantique Schrammel, conducted by Jean Deschenes, with Austrian soprano Monika Hana and baritone Peter Hana
Theatre Lionel Groulx
Ste. Therese

May 7, 10:00 a.m.
Concert
W.A. Mozart's overture from "Die Entführung aus dem Serail"; C.M. von Weber, Franz Berwald, Jan Sibelius.
Montreal Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Alexis Hauser
Salle Wilfrid Pelletier, Place des Arts

May 11, 2:30 p.m.
Concert
Ensemble Transatlantique Schrammel, conducted by Jean Deschenes
Butte St. Jacques

May 12, 7.30 p.m.
Concert
Gustav Mahler Symphony No. 7
Orchestre Metropolitain, conducted by Yannik Nezet-Seguin
Salle Wilfrid Pelletier, Place des Arts

End of June
Concerts by two Carinthian choirs, the Kärntner Doppelsextett and a choir from Klagenfurt at the "Le Mondial Choral de Lotto Quebec" in churches in Laval

September 20, 7:00 p.m.
The Austrian Society of Montreal's "Heurigen" evening with buffet and live band
Dorval Community Centre

CULTURAL EVENTS/MANIFESTATIONS CULTURELLES

October 8-18
Festival du Nouveau Cinema
including Austrian films
Centre Ex-Centris

November 16, 7:00 p.m.
Grand Ball
50th Annual Gala Ball of the Austrian
Society of Montreal
Hotel Marriott-Chateau Champlain

December
Austrian Christmas tree at the
Musee des Beaux Arts de Montreal

Permanent exhibitions of Austrian artists
Friedensreich Hundertwasser and
Christoph Kiefhaber
Dominion Gallery

Celebrating 400 Years of Canada: Clichés and Reality

zentrum für
kanadastudien



In October 2007, the Canadian Studies Centre at the University of Innsbruck, began to offer a series of twelve 90-minute weekly lectures by renowned Canadian and European specialists on various aspects of Canadian history and culture. Among the topics addressed were the following: nature, the environment and urban development; immigration policies then and now; federalism in government with special reference to Quebec and Nunavut; bilingualism; anglophone and francophone literature; Canada's peace-keeping role; icons of modernity; and the role of professional and amateur sports. The lecture series was directed by Univ.-Prof. Dr. Ursula Moser.

The course was open to students in all fields of study. For more detail see <http://www.uibk.ac.at/canada/>.

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CULTURAL EVENTS/MANIFESTATIONS CULTURELLES

Please consult the Austrian Embassy's Cultural Events Calendar page at http://www.bmeia.gv.at/view.php3?f_id=9161&LNG=de&version= for a Canada-wide listing of cultural events and entertainment at Austrian clubs.

ALBERTA

Edmonton

January 13, 6:00 p.m.

Recital

The Johann Strauss Foundation presents the Annual Recital by previous scholarship winners
Convocation Hall
University of Alberta

February 16, 6:00 p.m.

Grand Ball

33rd Johann Strauss Ball
Westin Hotel

April 4-5, 9:00 p.m.

Concert

"Requiem" by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. The Edmonton Opera, Alberta Ballet and The Richard Eaton Singers come together to present one of music's great masterpieces
Northern Alberta Jubilee Auditorium

May 9-10

International conference

"Sites of Indifference to Nation in Habsburg Central Europe"
Wirth Institute for Austrian and Central European Studies
University of Alberta

ONTARIO

Burlington

July 13

Concert

Kärntner Doppelsextett
Continental Austrian Club Inc.
664 Spring Garden Road

Kitchener

July 10

Concert

Kärntner Doppelsextett
Alpine Club of Kitchener-Waterloo
464 Maple Ave

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 CULTURE

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1391 Cavendish Road
Ottawa, K1H 6B8**

