

# 50 YEARS OF AUSTRIAN IMMIGRATION TO CANADA

## Unveiling the Austrian-Canadian Council's and Austrian Society Ottawa's Commemorative Plaque at Pier 21 in Halifax on November 13, 2001

A group of 17 members of the Austrian Society Ottawa decided to travel by train to Halifax for the unveiling of the plaque commemorating 50 years of Austrian migration to Canada. Most of the participants had not been on a train in Canada since their arrival in Halifax and the subsequent



Members of the Austrian Society Ottawa in front of Pier 21. Front row, left to right: Josefine Ott, Barbara Frühwirth, Heidi Temelie, Iris Jurek, Christa Jachan, Emmi Moll, and Garry Bergau. Back row, left to right: Traudl Griesseier, Cecilia Schirgi, Walter Ott, Pepi Frühwirth, Siegfried and Margit Langer, Hans Wyslouzil, Gerda Kozely, Walter Jachan, Hermann Griesseier, and an Austrian lady from Halifax. Photo: Hans Wyslouzil.

trip to Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Winnipeg, or other destinations 50 years ago. At that time, we travelled in Canadian Pacific Railway coaches—no sleeping compartments! Memories came back as we traveled the same tracks. “Do you remember?” was a question that was asked over and over.

After a train ride of 29 hours—we were one hour late—we arrived at the Westin Hotel in Halifax. The secretary of the Honourary Consul in Halifax, Kathy Beaman, was of great help to



Walter Jachan identifies the "Georgic," the ship on which he came to Canada. Photo: Hans Wyslouzil.

us, and she had made reservations for a good seafood dinner. What else would you eat in Halifax? The next day we were invited to a Historical Halifax City Tour, complete with kilted guide. It was a history- and anecdote-filled ride through the streets of Halifax. We heard of the days of rum-running and privateering and the story of the Titanic tragedy when we visited the cemetery where 257 victims of the disaster are buried. We visited the Citadel and learned about the great explosion in Halifax Harbor. The day ended with a visit at Michael Lindthaler's (he is an Austrian) restaurant at Stayner's Wharf.

The next day was a very busy one. In the morning, some of us had interviews with the resource people at Pier 21. We took a tour of the museum, guided by the past president of the Pier 21 Society, Dr. Ruth Goldbloom.

Pier 21 is the place where genera-

tions of immigrants took their first step into their new home country, and now you can witness the stories of these immigrants there. Between 1928 and 1971, more than one million people passed through the dark cavern of brick and steel. It turns out that one in every five Canadians is related to someone who came through this portal. One in every six Canadians in the 20th century was born in another country!

This immigration shed—the only one left in Canada—was the place where many people began a new and better life. But the first few hours in Canada were dark, noisy, confusing,



The unveiling of the Commemorative Plaque donated by the Austrian-Canadian Council and the Austrian Society Ottawa on November 13, 2001 at Pier 21. Left to right: Joseph Saunders, Anna Sperker, Marianna Saunders, Dr. Ruth Goldbloom, Hans Wyslouzil and Austrian Honourary Consul for the Atlantic Provinces, Mr. Michael Novac.

and cold. Paper tags were hung around the immigrants' necks and luggage was taken away. Most people did not speak English well enough to understand why officials seized the sausage which so many had guarded over their long and sometimes difficult journey.

Many museums house things—

pretty, valuable things—but not this one: This is a museum about people and their memories. The exhibition consists, for the most part, of a collection of audio and video recordings of the new Canadians. Its strength lies in the fact that it does not embellish history: it does not make Canada more—or less—than what it is.

The transformation of old Pier 21 into today's museum took the initiative of many dedicated people who have already succeeded in raising nine million dollars for this—still ongoing—restoration. What has been accomplished is remarkable.

The official unveiling of the plaque took place after lunch at Pier 21. Dr. Ruth Goldbloom extended a warm welcome to everyone. Special guests were the Honourary Austrian Consul for the Atlantic Provinces, Consul Michael Novac and his wife, members of the Austrian community in Halifax, and the group from Ottawa. Hans Wyslouzil read out a letter from Roland Pirker, President of the Austrian-Canadian Council and the Aus-

trian Society Ottawa. He and Magister Jan Kickert from the Embassy were unable to attend as they were booked on Canada 3000 flights, which had gone bankrupt two days before the unveiling.



Front row, left to right: Walter and Christa Jachan, Barbara and Pepi Frühwirth, Walter Lehrer. Second row: Hermann and Traudl Griesseier, Emmi Moll, Nelly Novac (wife of the Honourary Consul) and Garry Bergau. Photo: Hans Wyslouzil.

Consul Novac brought greetings and congratulations from the Austrian Ambassador, Dr. Wendelin Etmayer, and expressed the appreciation of the Consulate for this contribution from the Austrian-Canadian Council and the Austrian Society Ottawa to Pier 21. Several grandchildren of Austrian immigrants in Halifax assisted at the unveiling ceremony, and Hans Wyslouzil presented Pier 21 with the plaque.

In the evening, we were invited to a reception at the residence of Consul Novac. A wonderful and varied buffet awaited us with specialties of the province, among them smoked salmon prepared by Hans Langmann, owner of the Austrian Smokehaus. Then Mrs. Novac initiated the Ottawa Group into the oldest social club in North America, the "Order of the Good Time of Nova Scotia, founded 1606," complete with certificate. Hans Wyslouzil thanked the hosts for their hospitality and as a small token of gratitude he presented the Consul with the book *30 Years Austrian Society Ottawa* and a CD by the "Ottawa Alpen trio" and "Stubenmusi". He also invited them to the *Schrammel-nachmittag* in Ottawa the following week.

Next morning it was time to pack the suitcases and leave Halifax. The trip home was very enjoyable, and we arrived in Ottawa full of pleasant memories.

*Hans Wyslouzil  
Austrian Society Ottawa*

## COMMEMORATING OUR ARRIVAL ON PIER 21

I, too, with my 10-year-old daughter Gerhild passed through Pier 21 in Halifax on December 18, 1953. I followed my husband Gerhard who had arrived in Toronto via Montreal in October of the same year. I still have my passenger list from the Holland America Liner "Masdaam," my passport and my landed immigrant visa.

We left Austria on December 8, 1953, boarded the "Masdaam" in Rotterdam on December 10 and

arrived in Halifax on December 18. It was such a relief and exciting time after the stormy eight-day voyage across the Atlantic to see the coast of Labrador! Upon arriving in Halifax and clearance by the immigration authorities, we stepped off the boat. As my feet touched Canadian soil, all my apprehension and fears vanished; I remember the good feeling I had and thought to myself that we will be fine.

We were then led to a building and a great hall. As it was so close to

Christmas, this hall was decorated with hundreds of lights, bows, and a huge Christmas tree. After some speeches by the welcoming committee, we were showered with gifts of all kinds, and when the ladies did not find any more pockets in our coats, they hung soap, candies and oranges around my little girl's neck. I was overwhelmed by the friendliness and generosity of the Canadian people.

This long trip was not over yet as we still had to travel two full days by

train to Toronto, which was very boring and tiring. We were then finally reunited with my husband who waited for us patiently at Union Station.

Christmas 2001 will mark 48 years of our life in Canada, and it has been very busy but great. Gerhard worked at Corning Glass, Massey Harris, General Electric, and in the last twenty years he was very successful in business for himself. Gerhard liked fishing and hunting, and especially loved the northern parts of Canada. Many times I accompanied him on

these trips. I am only deeply saddened about the sudden loss of my dear husband shortly after our 50th anniversary. But as with everything in life, there has to be a balance between sorrow and happiness.

My little girl grew up to be a lovely young lady and married a fine Canadian boy. They have two daughters. These two granddaughters of ours are both married and have four little boys between them. My oldest greatgrandson (4) will be a hockey star for sure! He loves hockey,

takes skating lessons, and does not go anywhere without his hockey stick and shirt. My second greatgrandson (a little more than two years old) is so incredibly smart, what will he be? The two smaller ones are also darling boys, and this makes me a very happy greatgrandmother. I love them all.

I am sure they will all grow up to be great Canadians.

*Emma Straschek  
Alliston, Ontario*

**PLEASE INFORM US OF A CHANGE OF ADDRESS, AND PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR 2002!**

**Membership application and donation form**

I enclose a cheque for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (ACC membership \$ 25.00; donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ ) payable to the Austrian-Canadian Council, 1391 Cavendish Road, Ottawa, ON, K1H 6B8

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City and Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal code: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## AUSTRIAN INTERNATIONAL CLUB KINGSTON AWARDS MEDALS



Group photo of members of the Austrian International Club Kingston at their annual Christmas celebration, including their very own member in the red suit, Mr. Wilhelm (Bill) Ovens, fondly known as Santa for the past 30 years. Photo: Norma Bonner.

On December 9, 2001 Mr. Garry W. Bonner, Past President of the Austrian-Canadian Council, honoured two members of the Austrian International Club Kingston for their dedication and commitment to the Austrian- and German-Canadian community.

### Gold Medal:

Mr. Ferdinand Prohaska, for 40 years of uninterrupted service, a founding member of the Austrian International Club Kingston, member of the Board of Directors, and Austrian cultural representative in the region.

### Silver Medal:

Ms. Walburga Hetzl, for 30 years of uninterrupted service as a member of the Austrian International Club Kingston, well-known to the entire German-speaking community in our region for her untiring charitable work.



Ferdinand Prohaska, Garry W. Bonner and Walburga Hetzl after the ceremony. Photo: Norma Bonner.

## FORMAT AND CONTENT OF Oe CULTURE WELL-LIKED

Dear reader,

A few months ago, the Austrian-Canadian Council developed a questionnaire about *OeCulture* which was distributed with Number 2 (2001).

First of all, I would like to thank the many readers who took the time and returned the questionnaire with suggestions, questions and—what was very important!—with their address changes. We were very happy to read that ninety percent of the returns congratulated us on the content and overall lay-out of the publi-

cation! But there were also a few asking why the magazine does not present more articles with news from Austria, and why there are no articles written in German?

Let me explain the reasons for the editorial direction of *Oe Culture*. At the time of its inception in 1998, the Executive of the Austrian-Canadian Council, the editor of *OeCulture*, and our partner—the Ambassador of Austria and the Austrian Embassy in Ottawa—made the decision to produce a high-quality magazine which would not compete with existing German- or

English-language newspapers and would therefore avoid unnecessary duplication of articles and stories. Instead, we decided to report to our readers on the many-faceted educational and cultural interrelationships between our two countries.

In 1999, the decision was taken to expand *OeCulture* with articles informing our Canadian—and Austrian-Canadian—readers about the many contributions that Austrian immigrants have made to Canadian society. We also wanted to present some interesting stories about Aus-

## AUSTRIA-CANADA: CO-OPERATION

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tured goods (11%), and vehicles (9%). During the first half of 2001, Austrian exports to Canada rose by 17.4%.

Canadian exports to Austria in 2000 reached the same level as imports from that country, namely CAN \$700 million. This figure represents an increase by 73% (!) over the preceding year and was mostly due to the delivery of Bombardier regional jets which constituted 45% of the total imports from Austria. Other significant Canadian export items were vehicle parts (10%), machinery (13%), and raw materials (10.5%).

About 1,000 Austrian companies do business with Canada on a regular basis. 61 Austrian companies have subsidiaries in Canada, among them 24 production sites, 30 sales offices, and seven service providers. In Aus-

tria, we find 20 Canadian companies engaged in business, among them eight production sites, three sales offices, and nine service providers. Companies such as VOEST Alpine, Boehler Uddeholm, Bombardier, and Magna constitute the backbone of our mutual economic relations.

**Co-operation on the international stage.** The common values shared by Austria and Canada form the basis for our co-operation in the international sphere. Our countries share the firm conviction that we have to co-operate to overcome the difficulties in today's world, to envisage a better future, and to help the poor in the developing countries. The Canadian initiative to make Africa a priority during the up-coming G-8 summit is a marvellous example of this attitude and is fully supported by Austria. And what is most important of all: We think that in today's world it is not the power of the state which is the ultimate goal,

but the well-being of each and every individual. This conviction lies at the basis of our human rights policy.

For more than one generation, Austria and Canada have co-operated in peace-keeping operations: from Cyprus to the Golan and from Africa to the Balkans, many personal friendships have been developed and are serving as a basis for more intensive relationships between our countries. We have also co-operated in international development organizations, at the United Nations, and on many other occasions, such as the anti-landmine conference or the agreement concerning an international penal court.

I appreciate having had the opportunity to outline the ideological basis of our bilateral relations in this forum and would like to thank all of you who are working to implement co-operation between Austria and Canada in everyday-life.

## FORMAT AND CONTENT OF OE CULTURE WELL-LIKED

*Continued from p. 7*

trian-Canadians and about the varied activities undertaken by Austrian clubs and societies in Canada.

The Executive of the Austrian-Canadian Council also believes that *OeCulture* should not be a commercial magazine covered from front to back with advertising. Instead, we decided to finance each issue with donations from you, the readers, and the proceeds from various fund-raising events, most of which were undertaken by the Austrian Society Ottawa and the Friends of Austria Ottawa Inc. Of course, we would

also like to acknowledge the generous support provided by the Austrian Embassy for this magazine!

There is a reason why the articles in *Oe Culture* are written only in English and, occasionally, in French. The primary reading clientele for this magazine are anglophone and franco-phonie Canadians who are interested in Austrian-Canadian relationships. Furthermore, we wanted *OeCulture* to become a magazine with historical significance which can be retrieved by Canadians and Austrian-Canadians long after we are gone.

We would be pleased to receive contributions from you about aspects of Canadian-Austrian relations or the activities of Austrians in Canada (and Canadians in Austria). If you have stories to be published, please send them to us by e-mail or on diskette. Images should be sent as high-quality photographs which will become the property of *Oe Culture*.

I hope that you are enjoying this magazine and that you will continue to support it.

*Roland K. Pirker, ACC President*

## CULTURAL EVENTS/MANIFESTATIONS CULTURELLES

Continued from page 20

### TORONTO

March 10, 2002

"Singing Together": Choral Music from nine different cultures with the participation of Toronto's Forget-me-not-family representing Austria  
Cardinal Carter Academy for the Arts Auditorium

March 11, 2002

*Lecture*

"The European Union between Enlargement, Institutional Reform and Constitutional Debate: An Austrian View"  
Ambassador Ernst Sucharipa,  
Director of the Austrian Diplomatic Academy in Vienna and Austrian Special Envoy for Restitution Issues  
Munk Centre for International Studies  
University of Toronto

March 20 - 24, 2002

"Peter Kubelka - A Film Retrospective"  
Cinematheque Ontario

March 22, 2002

"Via Salzburg"

Concert series by the renowned Austrian violinist Mayumi Seiler  
Magic for Contrabass & Orchestra  
Glenn Gould Studio

April 7, 2002

Off Centre's 7th "Annual Schubertiad"  
Glenn Gould Studio

April 20, 2002

*Lecture*

Ines Lobardi (Vienna)  
"Museums After Modernism"  
York University

May 8, 2002

The Aldeburgh Connections: 4th annual "Greta Kraus Schubertiad"  
Glenn Gould Studio

May 11, 2002

"Viennese Ball"  
Toronto Philharmonia  
Royal York Hotel

June 7, 2002

"Via Salzburg"

Concert series by the Austrian violinist Mayumi Seiler  
Glenn Gould Studio

June 21, 2002

"Music by Austrian Composers" (Schubert, Reger, Bruckner, R. Strauss, Cerha, Schönberg)

Performance of the Arnold Schönberg Choir under the umbrella of the Toronto International Choral Festival. Conductor: Erwin Ortner  
George Weston Recital Hall  
Toronto Centre for the Arts

June 22, 2002

Franz Schmidt: *The Book with Seven Seals*

Performance of the Arnold Schönberg Choir. Conductor: Howard Dyck  
Gala Concert of the Toronto International Choral Festival  
Massey Hall

### QUEBEC

#### MONTREAL

March 6, 8 and 10, 2002

*Lecture series* (in French)  
Peter Kubelka, Austrian film director, showing six original versions of his films from the years 1957-1977 ("Adebar," "Schwechater," "Arnulf Rainer," "Mosaik im Vertrauen," "Unsere Afrikareise," "Pause")  
Cinéma-thèque québécoise

March 14, 2002, 16:30 hrs.

*Lecture*

"The European Union between Enlargement, Institutional Reform and Constitutional Debate: An Austrian View"  
Ambassador Ernst Sucharipa,  
Director of the Austrian Diplomatic Academy  
Université de Montréal and McGill University  
Institute for European Studies  
McGill University Faculty Club

March 14, 2002, 19:30 hrs.

*Lecture*

"Revisiting the National Socialist Legacy. Restitution: Why now? The Austrian Experience"  
Ambassador Ernst Sucharipa  
Director of the Austrian Diplomatic Academy  
Montreal Jewish Community Campus

March 17, 2002, 14:30 hrs.

*Concert*

Trio Kaffeehaus  
"Le Choc des Continents"  
Ecole de Musique Vincent D'Indy

March 19, 2002, 20:00 hrs.

*Concert*

Goldberg Quartett (Vienna)  
in cooperation with the Conservatoire de musique de Québec  
Chapelle historique du Bon Pasteur

March - September 2002

Young painters from Vorarlberg will be working in various galleries/ateliers in Montreal and lecture at Concordia University and UQAM. An exhibition will also take place

March 20, 2002

*Lecture*

Christian Lutz (painter)  
UQAM

April 14, 2002, 14:30 hrs.

"Strauss en chair et en os"  
Ensemble Strauss-Lanner de Montréal  
Centre culturel Thérèse de Blainville  
Ste. Thérèse

April 17, 2002, 14:30 hrs.

*Concert*

Trio Kaffeehaus  
"Le Choc des Continents"  
Centre culturel Thérèse de Blainville  
Ste. Thérèse

#### VICTORIANVILLE

May 18, 2002, 15:00 hrs.

Victoriaville Festival: Ensemble "Polwechsel" (jazz, modern music)  
Austrian trio Dafelecker, Moser and Stangl

## CULTURAL EVENTS/MANIFESTATIONS CULTURELLES

### ALBERTA

#### CALGARY

March 23, 2002  
Grand Ball "A Night in Vienna"  
Westin Hotel

March 25, 2002  
Concert evening with a choir from  
Fürstenfeld, Styria  
Austrian-Canadian Society

### BRITISH COLUMBIA

#### VANCOUVER

April 14, 2002  
The Mozarteum Orchestra of Salzburg  
Chan Centre for the Performing Arts  
UBC

October 26, 2002  
"A Salute to Austria" - the Sinfonia  
Orchestra of the North Shore.  
Conductor: Clyde Mitchell.  
Special guest from Austria: pianist

Christopher Hinterhuber  
Centennial Theater  
North Vancouver

### ONTARIO

#### MISSISSAUGA

May 10-13, 2002  
Visit by H.E. Iby, the Bishop of the  
Province of Burgenland, the Premier of  
the Province of Burgenland, Hans Niessl  
and Delegation  
Burgenländer Club

#### OTTAWA

March 13, 2002  
*Lecture*  
"The European Union between  
Enlargement, Institutional Reform and  
Constitutional Debate: An Austrian View"  
Ambassador Ernst Sucharipa,  
Director of the Austrian Diplomatic  
Academy in Vienna and Austrian Special  
Envoy for Restitution Issues  
Carleton University

March 21, 2002  
EU-World Poetry Day  
"P. Celan/Todesfuge, I. Bachmann/  
Reklame"  
National Library

April 24, 2002  
*Lecture*  
"Our Cultural Heritage in a Globalized  
World"  
Monika Kalista, Head of the Cultural/  
Political Section at the Austrian Ministry  
of Foreign Affairs, Vienna  
Carleton University

April 26, 2002  
"Celebrating Austria: Music by  
Brahms/Johann Strauß  
Arrangements by Schönberg/Schubert"  
Concert by the Ottawa Chamber Music  
Society  
Christ Church Cathedral

June 2002  
Ottawa Chamber Music Festival  
Music by Gottfried von Einem

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