



The American-Austrian Society

November — December 2006

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From the Editor:

Dear Members & Friends:

Being in Austria for three months is exciting. You see friends and family; you drive around the country; you love to feel “at home” and make yourself familiar with Austrian news, politics and discover “Neudeutsch.” Oh yes, nobody seems to remember that “Der Event” used to be

called “Die Veranstaltung.”

To be honest, the moment comes when I feel like returning to my U.S. residence again. Don't envy anybody who has to travel and pass airport security checks. At one point I felt like I walked through a shower cabin but it was

Continued on Page 4

Introducing Our Newly-Elected President: Ambassador Hugh Montgomery

Amb. Montgomery born in Massachusetts and educated at Harvard College and Harvard University, where he received the A.B. (1947), an M.A. (1948) and a PhD (1952). He was elected to Phi Beta Kappa as an undergraduate.

In 1942 he enlisted in the U.S. Army, and served in the European theater of operations with the Office of Strategic Services until 1946. He received a direct commission in the field and retired from the military reserve in 1975 as a colonel in the Intelligence Branch.

After completing his education and teaching modern languages at Harvard, he joined the Foreign

Service in 1952, serving in a variety of Eastern and Western European posts. He was selected by then Secretary of State Haig to be the Director of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research until 1985,

when he was appointed as the Alternate United States Representative to the United Nations for Special Political Affairs with the rank of Ambassador.

In 1991 he returned to Washington and has served in a variety of assignments, most recently as Senior Advisor to the Director of CIA.

Ambassador Montgomery is married to the former Annemarie Janak of Vienna, Austria. They have a son and a daughter.



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John-Paul offers discounts for members of the American-Austrian Society.



People in the News: Hannes Gschwentner, Deputy Governor of Tyrol By Ulrike Wiesner

For more than 60 years, the U.S. Depart-

ment of State has sponsored a program aimed at fostering better understanding between nations called "The International Visitor Leadership Program". Every year, this program invites up to 4,000 visitors from abroad, often individuals who are in politics or other venues of public life, to offer them a three-week orientation trip through the United States.

The purpose of these trips is to present the visitors with as diverse and differentiated a picture of the United States as possible and to dispel stereotypical notions about the country. The visitors are accompanied throughout the trip and during all their meetings by an escort interpreter who functions not only as the "language bridge" but also as an informational guide on the history, civics and geography of the United States.

Many distinguished European individuals are "graduates" of this program, such as Chancellor Dr. Wolfgang Schüssel and Dr. Alfred Gusenbauer of Austria.

In September 2004, I was fortunate to be chosen as the escort interpreter for Hannes Gschwentner, the Deputy Governor of Tyrol (Landeshauptmann-stellvertreter) and Chairman of the Social Democratic Party in Tyrol.

Our travels took us from Washington, DC, to Colorado, Oregon, Michigan and Vermont. Gschwentner was especially interested in the environment, public transport, sports and programs for inner-city youths.

During my recent visit to Innsbruck, I had the opportunity to interview Hannes Gschwentner about the impressions he took with him from his trip.

Q: "Hannes, what were some the important impressions your trip left you with?"

A: "On a previous occasion, a few years ago I had already had the opportunity to visit New York City as part of a delegation of Austrian mayors. At that time, I was struck by the sheer enormity of everything, the buildings, the infrastructure.. It all seemed grandiose, overwhelming, hardly manageable.

"On arrival at Dulles Airport in Washington DC, my first impression was quite negative: I had come with the notion that the USA is a country of immigrants that welcomes newcomers. Furthermore, I thought of Americans as being the most individualist and free of all people, and I was struck by the extremely strict manner of the immigration officials: a severe tone of command prevailed, not to mention the 'yellow line' that must not be crossed.

"If one considers, however, the sheer order of magnitude of the task, in addition to the precarious security situation the country faces, one begins to understand that a strict and orderly system must prevail.

"On the other hand, I was fascinated when I saw how openly people in the U.S.A. display their ethnicity and their different orientations with regard to religion, individual lifestyle and the like. This is really impressive. One can observe it everywhere.

"I got an invaluable first-hand impression of the incredible geographic, ethnic, cultural and economic diversity of the country: from the wide avenues, the stately government buildings and art galleries of Washington, DC – a veritable chessboard design – to the splendid Rocky Mountains in Colorado and the breathtakingly beautiful Oregon coastline, to Montpelier, Vermont's

tiny, placid capital of about 7,000 inhabitants, the site of the country's only environmental court.

"I also witnessed striking contrasts in attitudes – from the highly liberal to the extremely conservative and fiercely protective of private property, for example. Moreover, it was fascinating to get a first-hand view of the political campaign leading up to the presidential election of 2004 and to see how much the American style of campaigning has already made its mark on Austrian politics.

"Lastly, I was able to observe a great deal of difference when it comes to sports: it seems to me that people in Austria in general are much more involved in leisure time sports. While team sports are very popular in the US, I think the country is facing a major challenge in motivating people in general to get more exercise and to be more physically active.

"Overall, this was a marvelous opportunity to experience the enormous diversity of this great country and to see how different groups of immigrants have been able to integrate their respective strengths and traditions into this ever-evolving pluralistic society, the United States of North America. It is also good to know that there are so many Austrians living in the United States who have been highly successful in their chosen professions and who are enriching the cultural landscape of this great country."

PS: Hannes Gschwentner is planning another trip to the United States with his family soon.

Ulrike Wiesner is a member of the American-Austrian Society's Executive Committee and a free-lance translator and interpreter.

Auslandsösterreicher-Weltbund — a Brief Overview:

The “Weltbund” is a worldwide non-profit umbrella organization of all associations and societies representing Austrians living abroad. It was founded in 1952 with the idea of providing a common forum for all such organizations.

Today, almost 160 member associations worldwide belong to the Weltbund and make it a strong voice representing Austrians living abroad vis-à-vis relevant government authorities and other important economic, cultural and political interlocutors.

The Weltbund aims to foster and strengthen a worldwide sense of community and friendship among Austrians and former Austrians, “Herzens-österreicher,” living abroad, in addition to friends of Austria. By its own indication, the Weltbund currently counts approximately 10,000 members.

The organization serves to:

- Cultivate a sense of Austrian identity and culture
- Represent the interests of Austrians living abroad vis-à-vis both Austria and other countries

- Foster the relationship between Austria and other countries
- Support the formation of associations and societies of Austrians living abroad
- Support the contacts among various associations of Austrians abroad
- Collaborate with authorities both in Austria and abroad, the Austrian Bundesländer and BURGENLÄNDISCHEN GEMEINSCHAFT
- Provide information on Austria to Austrians living abroad, through inter alia the publication of the magazine “Rot-Weiss-Rot”
- Provide information about issues affecting Austrians living abroad, both concerning Austria and their respective countries of residence
- Represent the interests of Austria on a bipartisan basis; and to support the idea of a free, independent and democratic Austria in the spirit of the International Convention on Human Rights.

American-Austrian Society Membership Renewal 2006/2007 (July 1, 2006 – June 30, 2007)

American-Austrian Society (A-AS) members receive the A-AS Newsletter, invitations to events that are open only to members and their friends, early notification of invitations to all sponsored and co-sponsored A-AS events, discounted admission to A-AS events that require cost contributions. A-AS members are automatically notified of cultural programs sponsored by the Embassy of Austria.

WELTBUND Members receive the *Weltbund Advantage Card* and the German-language quarterly magazine Rot-Weiss-Rot.

Last name(s): _____ First name(s): _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Tel. (H): _____ Tel. (O): _____ Mobile: _____

E-mail address: _____

Single membership \$20

Family membership \$30

Contributor \$ 50 to \$99

Patron \$100 to \$499

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Weltbund membership \$13

Weltbund der Österreicher im Ausland Advantage Card, and Rot-Weiss-Rot Magazine, quarterly **in German**.

Please indicate **one** name for the card: _____

I am willing to **volunteer**. Please contact me about the following opportunities:

Krampus Ball Kaffeehausjause Newsletter Mailings Other: _____

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Enclosed is a check payable to **American-Austrian Society** in the amount of \$ _____

Please send to: American-Austrian Society, c/o Mrs. Ulrike Wiesner, 5618 Dover Ct., Alexandria, VA 22312

Continued from Page 1

only was some sort of new device to detect dangerous new weapons. In other words, it is stressful to cross the ocean. Was it nice in Austria? Of course yes. Never mind the never ending rainy days last August.

In early September I headed for Klagenfurt to attend the Auslandsösterreicher-Weltbund Annual Meeting. It was a special experience to meet 450 participants from all over the world – and everybody spoke German! They arrived from Australia, Brazil, Mexico, Canada, the USA and numerous European countries. Find out more about the Weltbund and its importance of our umbrella organization in an overview on page 3.

*We, the newly elected Executive Board, will try our best to move the Society into a new era of events, encourage discussions, sharing interests and be there for you. **We also welcome your contribution of ideas and suggestions very much. Please write to us!***

Warmly,

Gerda Merwald

2006/2007 events:

- November Heuriger (4th)
event postponed to spring 2007
- December St.Nikolaus & Krampus Children's
Afternoon (3rd)
- March 5th: Special Concert by Members of the
Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra [planned]

**Officers Elected at Annual Meeting
of the American-Austrian Society**

At the Annual Meeting of the American-Austrian Society on May 24th, 2006, the society elected the following officers to serve from July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2007:

- Ambassador Hugh Montgomery, President
- Dr. Peter Evans, First Vice President
- Mr. Boris Mussienko, Second Vice President
- Ms. Gerda Merwald, Treasurer
- Ms. Ulrike Wiesner, Secretary

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