

AUSTRIAN-CANADIANS FROM COAST TO COAST/ LES AUSTRO-CANADIENS D'UN OCÉAN À L'AUTRE

Special Supplement to  CULURE

Dear fellow Austrian-Canadian: It gives me great pleasure to announce the publication of the Newsletter of the ACC which is intended to help us share information about our clubs' and our members' activities. If you have entries for the next issue please send them to Dr. K. Fürst, c/o ACC, 1391 Cavendish Road, Ottawa, ON K1H 6B8.

Roland Pirker, President

Gerhard W. Bonner

Any organization can only succeed through the work and dedicated efforts of committed members. One such person is Gerhard Bonner whose activities have been instrumental in furthering Austrian cultural organizations in Canada.

Gerhard Bonner arrived in Canada at the age of 20, in October 1951, and settled in Kingston, Ontario. His attachment to the Austrian cultural heritage brought him in contact with other German-speaking immigrants, and soon a soccer club was organized. Gerhard Bonner was not only involved in the founding of the club, but contributed something very practical: he bought the first set of uniforms for the team. The soccer club evolved into a general social club called Rheingold.

As the name indicates, the Austrian International Club catered to people from many lands, but also provided an "Austrian flavor". This became apparent in the architecture of the club house which was built after the club was incorporated in 1969. The popularity of the club can be seen in the fact that it soon had

over 500 members and a waiting list. In this period, the Austrian International Club also became a founding member of the Kingston and District Folk Arts Council. Gerhard Bonner was the Austrian representative on this new council, and later he became its Director of Communication and Publicity.



Gerhard (Gary) Bonner receives the Decoration of Merit in Gold of the Republic of Austria from Ambassador Dr. Walther Lichem on October 26, 1999 in Ottawa. Photo credits: Rollframe, R. Pirker

Over the next 20 years, he was a guiding light in the many programs of the club. He initiated the formation of the A.I.C. Trachtenverein Enzian which performed Austrian folk dances in the community and the Annual Folk Festival. Later he initiated a carnival society modelled after the practice in Carinthia. With authentic costumes and paraphernalia and a *Funkengarde*, the

club competed on a national level for a number of years. Since 1972 Gerhard Bonner has served a number of times as the president of the Austrian International Club.

When the Austrian-Canadian Council was created, Gerhard Bonner, being one of the four founding directors, became its first president, and in this capacity he helped launch this organization and its first exciting projects. He also became largely responsible for the creation of a close working relationship with the Austrian-American and Austrian-Mexican Council.

Through his tireless work and personal commitment, Gerhard Bonner has brought the many aspects of Austrian culture, such as music, viticulture, sport, ceramics, industry and trade, literature and tourism to thousands of Canadians.

On October 26, 1999, Austria's National Holiday, his many contributions found their well-deserved reward. His Excellency, Ambassador Dr. Walter Lichem presented him with the Decoration of Merit in Gold of the Republic of Austria.

Dr. Kurt Fürst

Please note!

New date for the **2nd Austrian Music Workshop for Youth!** It will take place on July 27 to July 30, 2000 at the University of Ottawa. If you are interested and between the ages of 9-30 please apply to Roland K. Pirker, ACC President. There are no workshop fees for participants, and the ACC will pay for the participants' accommodation and meals!

Ossi Treutler

A well-known Austrian personality in the town of Banff is Ossi Treutler. Born in Althofen in the province of Carinthia he apprenticed in the *Gastgewerbe* and gained his experience in Switzerland, Germany, Turkey, and as a steward on the Holland America Line. He left for Canada in 1956. Emigrating to a land with few formalities, or so he thought, he left tuxedo and tails behind. However, when he landed his first job in Quebec City as the butler of Lt. Governor Gaspard Pauteux, he found himself again in formal dress! In the Governor's official residence, the Bois de Coulonge, he came in contact with many prominent Quebec politicians, among them St. Laurent, Duplessis, Castonguay and Lévesque. He also had the opportunity to serve King Hussein of Jordan, Chancellor Figl of Austria, Prime Minister Diefenbaker, Prince Philip, and many lesser mortals.

Ossi's adventurous nature saw him soon managing a cafeteria in Goose Bay and a hotel in Seven Islands. Soon afterwards he purchased a restaurant—sight unseen!—and moved to Banff. Hard work, endurance, and learning from mistakes, as well as working for the community have been the formulae for his success. Success is now visible in a shopping mall with a variety of stores and restaurants and foreign exchange offices across Canada with a staff of more than 150.

Ossi Treutler has now been in Banff for 37 years. He is married to Freya; both their two sons, Ossi Jr. and Tony, are working in the family enterprises. He has been very active in the town council and is very proud of having been instrumental in the town's incorporation. Banff now has its own mayor, and Ossi thinks it is well-run with perhaps fewer economic, but greater social problems. As a tireless promoter of Banff he is well-known and respected. His political involvement and his business interests still leave him time and



Ossi Treutler and wife Freya were hosting 13 members of the Austrian-Canadian Council at their home in Banff on September 10, 1998. Photo credits: Rollframe, R. Pirker.

energy to chair the local Board of Health, to be a member of several philanthropic organizations, and to sit on the board of the Austrian-Canadian Society, which has built a marvellous club house in Calgary.

Fiercely Canadian and proud of his Austrian heritage and culture, he still sees Canada as a land of unlimited opportunities and wishes that European immigration would be more encouraged than is the case now. Those of us who came in the 50's and 60's are—well, to put it mildly—getting slightly older. We therefore need another young group to inject new vigour not only into this great country of ours, but also into

our Austrian associations with their efforts to maintain our cultural heritage. While the incentives or reasons for coming here, in the light of the current European prosperity, might not be the same which the 50's or 60's group experienced, adventure, opportunities, an uncomplicated, friendly people, unlimited space, and nature at its best should be enough incentives for young Europeans, he believes.

Hospitality is high on the Treutler's agenda, and many have indeed enjoyed it at their residence, House Carinthia. One such memorable visit was made by the 13 members of the Austrian-Canadian Council on September 10, 1998.

Dr. Kurt Fürst

Activities at the Continental Austrian Club in Burlington, Ont.

As in previous years, we celebrated the establishment of the Continental Austrian Club in Burlington with a festive Dinner Dance in June. This year we look back on 34 years of happy memories in a successful, family-oriented club. We have attempted to uphold our cherished traditions and, at the same time, to find a place for ourselves in a new environment. We have seen our children become adults and we must prepare for the continuing existence of this club in the years to come. We realize that the younger generation will one day carry our banner and we know that we must also be willing to adapt to new requirements. One of those is to allow the English language more prominence for the various activities in our club. This required a revision of the Club's constitution. In April of this year we

achieved, after a healthy debate, a seventy-four percent approval of the change by our membership. We see this as an important step in the direction of better supporting our younger members who might not be as fluent in German but who certainly are not lacking in ideas and energies.

We started our new season after



Continental Austrian Club, Burlington, Ontario prepares for its "Valentintanz". Left to right: Inge Semianiw, President Franz Zaunscherb and Elfriede Blasco. Photo credits: Franz Zaunscherb

the summer break with a *Heimat-abend* on September 11, 1999.

An exciting New Year's party is in the planning stage, and we hope that all members of our Club, our friends in other clubs, and neighbours from other communities will, with the beginning the new millennium, find a new desire for achieving more tolerance and understanding among people, leading to lasting peace in this world.

Franz Zaunscherb
President

Alberta Austrian Week, September 5 -13, 1998



Participants at the Annual Austrian Canadian Council meeting at the University of Alberta, September 7, 1998. From left to right: 1st row: Dr. Harald Schwarz, Dr. Franz Szabo, Dr. Walther Lichem, Joe Niederleitner. 2nd row: Josef Helbich, Walter Schachenhofer, Gerhard Bonner holding the Certificate of Proclamation of the Austrian Week from the City of Edmonton, Frank Meixner, Elfriede Foidl. 3rd row: J. Peter Jaras, Mrs. Schwarz, Christine Meyer, Trudy Duller, Hans Raschke, Helmut Jandrisits, Ing. Oskar Tankovitz, Franz Zaunscherb, Peter Strausz. 4th row: Anny Leeb, Otmar Lähm, Gertrud Lähm, Dr. J. R. Kandler, Dipl. Ing. Walter Leeb, August Engelbrecht and Roland K. Pirker. Photo credits: Rollframe, R. Pirker.



Some of the participants after the opening of the Canadian Center for Austrian and Central European Studies at the University of Alberta, September 8, 1998. Left to right: Freda Niederleitner, Gus Engelbrecht, Otmar Lähm, Gertrud Lähm, Karl Maru, Joe Niederleitner, Josef Steinlechner, Edith Brezina, Elisabeth Steinlechner, Christine Meyer, Franz Zaunscherb, Gerlinde and Karl Mayer, Valerie Schirmaier, Walburga and Roland K. Pirker. Photo credits: Rollframe, R. Pirker.



Thirteen happy Austrians from Ottawa and Toronto on top of the world. Banff, Alberta, September 10, 1998. Front row left to right: Franz Zaunscherb, Gerhard Bonner, Gerlinde and Karl Mayer. Back row: Francis Raschke, Emmy Straschek, Hans Raschke, Theresia Szabo, Edith Brezina, Josef and Elisabeth Steinlechner, Walburga and Roland K. Pirker. Photo credits: Rollframe, R. Pirker.

Dear member of the Austrian community in Canada:

You may have heard of the ambitious project which I am undertaking on behalf of the Austrian-Canadian Council, namely a **Biographical Dictionary of Austrians in Canada**, which will provide details about the personal and professional lives of the thousands of Austrians who have made Canada their home.

The project. You probably own a copy of the book *A History of the Austrian Migration to Canada*, which was compiled and published two years ago as part of the Austrian Millennium celebrations, and you may have remarked to your friends that the chapter on contributions by Austrians to Canadian culture seemed to focus primarily on doctors, artists and professors. The authors were keenly aware of these shortcomings of the chapter and offered apologies to those who could not be included because of publication deadlines.

Well, this project is partly in response to such comments made by Austrian-Canadians from all walks of life. Its intent is to provide as comprehensive a reference book as possible to "Who is who in Canada in the Austrian community": in other words, this Dictionary is not limited to those who have made a "splash" in Canadian society. Every Austrian-Canadian has made a contribution in his or her own way, and each and every one should be acknowledged for it, be it in the trades, in business, in the arts, or in academe. In particular, women who might feel that they "haven't really done anything worth writing down" are encouraged to send in an entry for themselves or their family members. Of

course, there are many Austrian women who have had their own career, but then there are countless others who have established businesses with their husbands, have helped in clubs and in public and social events, have given birth to and brought up children with Austrian values, and in innumerable ways have left their mark as Canadians of Austrian origin. We hope that this *Dictionary* will include literally thousands of Austrian-Canadians!

Please feel included! And please do not worry about "style" - making sure that the style is evened out across all entries is the editor's (my!) job. If you prefer, just send the information to me in "Schlagwortform".

A **sample entry** might read like this:

Novak, Johanna, daughter of Josef Richter and Maria Schlosser, née Würzer, was born on March 21, 1932 in Langenlois, Lower Austria. She went to the *Volks-* and *Hauptschule* in Tulln, Lower Austria where she also completed her apprenticeship as a law book salesclerk and spent four years as a journeyman salesperson. During this time she attended various courses at night school at the local high school; this is where she learned English and completed her matriculation. She joined a mixed choir and worked as an assistant swimming instructor with the Girl Guides. In response to a newspaper ad seeking domestic help in Canada she emigrated in 1953 and took a job with a family in Edmonton. In 1956 she married Joe Novak, a Canadian-born carpenter of Czech origin, and quit her job to look after her two children who were born within two years of her marriage.

The Novaks bought a city lot in Edmonton in 1960 and built their own house within the next year. Johanna stayed at home with the children until the oldest was 14 years old. During this time she joined the YMCA and volunteered as a swimming instructor. This position provided her with an opportunity to introduce an exercise program which benefited the swimmers, resulting in two of her students winning local champions hips—a first

for that branch of the "Y". Through self-study in the field of sanitary pool management and by attending courses at the University of Alberta she became the local expert in drafting guidelines for pool maintenance. These guidelines were eventually implemented in all city pools. Her expertise helped her in landing a job with the Government of Alberta as a health inspector, just when her children were old enough to take care of themselves. She was the first and only Austrian health inspector with the Alberta government.

Johanna retired in 1962; both children have become teachers. Johanna is still active, now as a fundraiser for the Austrian ladies' choir where she has been a member ever since she came to Edmonton. While Johanna has many friends in the Austrian community, others come from many walks of life and include her neighbours, mostly people born in Canada as well as immigrants from other countries.

There are *no costs* involved for you when you send in *your* entry! This is a project by Austrians in Canada for Austrians in Canada.

How can you get your biographical information to me? Send me a note, an e-mail message, a fax; give me a phone call, etc. I would send you the questionnaire (let me know how many questionnaires you will need for you and your family!) by return mail. And please tell your Austrian friends about this project as well. There are some 25,000 Canadians of Austrian origin!

Manfred Prokop
Phone and fax: 780/467-6273

E-mail:
Manfred.Prokop@Ualberta.ca

Address: 422-52313 Range Road
232, Sherwood Park, AB, T8B 1B7

I hope to hear from you soon!