AYA Austria Alumni Newsletter
Spring 2013

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From 2012-2013 Director Dr. Stefan Fritsch

It is with great pleasure that I send some news about the activities of our AYA 2013 group. The fall semester was – as always – quite busy. Arriving in Salzburg, settling in, dealing with the Austrian and university bureaucracy, registering for classes and finally beginning the academic year went smoothly for everybody. The students quickly adapted to the new environment. Together with our geography instructors Fritz Baier and Ute we started the semester with the traditional excursions in the city of Salzburg and onto the Gaisberg.

At the end of October we made our weekend Vienna excursion and visited many highlights, such as the whole first district, Schloss Schönbrunn as well as the Belvedere palace, which hosted an enlarged special exhibition on Gustav Klimt.

The students proved their cooking abilities for Thanksgiving. Two (for Austrian standards) massive turkeys became a challenge in the rather small Austrian ovens. However, the party ended up being a culinary feast with lots of turkey, stuffing, casseroles, mac n’ cheese and pies.

On a bitter cold, but sunny day in early December our group also visited the concentration camp Mauthausen in Upper Austria. This was followed by a city tour in my former hometown of Linz. We ended the daytrip with the Christmas market at the Hauptplatz with a cup of Glühmost.

We were extremely lucky with the weather for our snowshoeing excursion in late January. Until Christmas, the winter had been unusually mild with little snow. After New Year’s we got hit with quite some snow and finally experienced adequate temperatures. On excursion day, we had “Kaiserwetter”. Lots of wind and very low temperatures made the hike definitely a challenge.

Currently, we enjoy the month long semester break. Sadly, we had to say goodbye to the students who returned to the US at the end of January. I am quite sure that most of them wanted to stay on! And we are looking forward to the new arrivals in late February, just in time for the start of the spring semester.

So far, the year has been a success. Being a native Austrian, I am proud of my students for mastering the small and big challenges that come with living and studying abroad. I watch them grow and learn and that is a wonderful reward.
On the Albertina terrace with the Staatsoper in the background (Photo from Dr. Fritsch)

The snowshoeing excursion in the Nationalpark Hohe Tauern (near Mittersill) was very impressive and physically demanding. (Photo from Dr. Fritsch)

**45th Anniversary Austria Alumni Reunion in Salzburg**

Mark your calendars to join BGSU faculty and alumni to celebrate the AYA Salzburg 45th Anniversary Reunion from 16–22 June 2013 in Salzburg. There will be plenty of time to see old sights and to re-connect with your fellow classmates. And the week includes dinner Monday night at a “Meet the President” reception with BGSU President Dr. Mary Ellen Mazey, who has made study abroad a priority for the university. Look for regular updates about the reunion on the Bowling Green German Alumni Facebook group. Join the group to get connected and make plans for joining us in Salzburg! For more information about the reunion program, call Doreen Bateson in the BGSU Alumni Office at (419) 372-8103.

Kirk Ross, BGSU Office of Development

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**Thanks to Alumni**

…who have generously given to the Dzidra Shllaku Scholarship Fund. Former students of Professor Dzidra Shllaku started the fund in 1998 to help BGSU undergraduates in any major take part in the AYA Austria program. Their donations and the many contributions of other program alumni have increased the fund. It was endowed in 2003. The current endowed balance is approximately $120,000; the non-endowed balance is about $9,000 before scholarship awards for 2011–12. Current donations are increasing the endowed fund.

Members of the Department of German, Russian & EAL contribute to the Shllaku fund. Like alumni, they realize that it may be difficult to afford study abroad, probably the most transformative experience of one’s education.
Dzidra Shllaku Fund
collectors:
Mrs. Amy L. Ahrens
Mr. Todd M. Ahrens
Mr. Eugene L. Aufderhaar
Mrs. Kathleen E. Aufderhaar
Mr. Gerald L. Baker
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Mrs. Sherry L. Wagner
Ms. Andrea D. Weatherman
Dr. William L. Weis
Mr. Glenn R. Wieringa
Mrs. Rita A. Myers-Wieringa

You may contribute to the fund on the BGSU website or at the Department of German, Russian and East Asian Languages at 103 Shatziel Hall, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH 43403.

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The Foell International Travel Award in memory of Margaret Kaesmann Foell

This financial award, designated to students from any university, United States or foreign country who have been accepted to the AYA Salzburg program, was created by Darrell and Sally Foell to honor his mother, Margaret Kaesmann Foell.

Applicants must be an undergraduate student who will be studying abroad for a minimum of one semester. Applicants should have a minimum GPA of 3.0 and have demonstrated future promise.

Students who wish to be considered for this award must complete the AYA Salzburg funding application. We thank the Foells (parents of Kristie Foell, associate professor of German) for their continued support of our students and this program.

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From Dr. Manfred Mittermayer, academic director

As you will have heard, I have left the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute and been appointed Head of a new Literary Archive here in Salzburg. We have moved into the rooms where the Institute of Art History had been before they left for our new Unipark in Nonntal. So we really had a good start in April when we opened our new archive, and we could present the most
interesting items of our collection in a small but quite comprehensive exhibition. As Peter Handke, perhaps the most famous living male author from Austria, celebrated his 70th birthday in December, we continued with another exhibition about his years in Salzburg; we have some interesting manuscripts in our archive, and we could also contribute a few further evenings to the number of events in honor of Handke.

Another important date was the opening of the new Thomas Bernhard Office in the same building in the Kapitelgasse. The International Thomas Bernhard Society has been situated in Salzburg since February this year, and we have started an intensive cooperation with the Thomas Bernhard Archive in Gmunden. The edition of Bernhard's works is still going on; I am just trying to finish my contributions to vol. 22, the final and longest part of this edition.

Of course, I am still very pleased to be with the BGSU program. I am very much looking forward to our celebration of the 45th anniversary of BGSU in Salzburg.

Dr. Manfred Mittermayer

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**From Professor Joseph Gray III**

I've been living in Lakewood, OH for the past five plus years following the passing of Pamela.

It's a great community just west of Cleveland, and I was delighted to find so much theater, art, and music in the area. To stay out of trouble, I've been volunteering in our local GED/ESL program and at our local food pantry. Our older son Jason works in development at the Case School of Medicine, and Jonathan is busy as a bee with a charity he founded called "Trials for Hope."

Would love to hear from anyone who feels like writing at prof111@aol.com. Visitors welcome, too; we have guest suites in our building.

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In memoriam

All of us have had people who come in and go out of our lives—and many of them are forgotten. But there are some who never leave us, who make our hearts smile for thinking of them, though it’s been years since we last saw them.

For many of us, Oscar Retterer was one of those. As one of our 1980-81 AYA group—and again in 1982-83 as a graduate student—he could be counted on for a laugh and a good time. We all have wonderful memories of those days! He loved exploring Austria and the world, and returned to Austria with his family on several occasions. He completed his MA in German at BGSU, then his PhD in Educational Technology at UT. He worked as the Director of Instructional and Emerging Technologies at Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster, PA.

In August 2010, Oscar and his family went to the Washington, DC, area for a reunion with Susi and Christian Strobl and their daughter, Bettina, and her family. For some of us, it was the first time in a long time that we saw each other again. A month or so later, they hosted a weekend reunion for the 1980-81 group in Lititz, PA. It’s great to think back on those happy times!

Sadly, at the end of October 2012, Oscar was diagnosed with Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease, a rare, incurable, and fatal brain disease. After 2-1/2 months, on January 16, we lost him to it. One of the most touching tributes to Oscar came from a colleague of his at F&M: single red roses and cards with his name, placed at various locations around the campus on the day he died. A Celebration of Life for family and close friends was held in Lititz and also in BG, as well as a reception in BG. The reception was full and diverse: AYA members, others from BGSU, and many alumni of the BG High School Class of 1973 came from as far as Minnesota, Colorado, and California, as well as from BG. It’s clear that Oscar meant a lot to a lot of people.

Those of us who knew Oscar already miss him terribly. But we can be happy we knew him, and we can be happy he had such a loving family—Celeste, his wife; Claire, Ella, and Olivia, his daughters; his parents (his father died a while back), and his sisters and their families. You can go to the webpage here to read what others have written, or to leave your own comments if you like. A formal obituary is available here. If you’d like to make a financial contribution in Oscar’s memory, his family suggests the National Prion Disease PSC or National Prion Disease Pathology Surveillance Center, Case Western Reserve University, 2085 Adelbert Road, Room 419, Cleveland, OH 44106-4907. You could also make your AYA contribution in Oscar's memory.

Oscar was, among other things, a teacher. So what can we learn from him? Quite simply: laugh, live, love—family, friends, life itself. Quite a legacy to leave us with.

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From the AYA Austria Alumni Board

On October 13 2012, several members of “die Gruppe” met with Geoff Howes and Kirk Ross to explore alternatives for raising the participation level for contributions to the AYA Shllaku Scholarship Fund, and to discuss programming and promotions strategies for the upcoming June 2013 “Return to Salzburg” program. In addition to AYA Alumni Board members Larry Snavley, Steve Harris and Bill Weis, other “die Gruppe” members in attendance included D.J. Hamidinia, Sue Mendizza, Lana Chadwick and Mara Shllaku Bereksi. All agreed that we should energetically solicit a wider participation rate in donating to the Shllaku Fund, and should use the promotional efforts for the “Return to Salzburg” trip as a way of reconnecting with the 45 years of AYA alumni. The group also talked about recent overtures to
Red Bull (headquartered near Wolfgangsee) and to the Austrian Embassy, specifically with the new ambassador Hans Peter Manz and the new cultural counselor Andreas Pawlitschek.

We reviewed the results of the “Return to Salzburg” preference survey, which showed enthusiasm for providing ample time at the reunion for exploring old haunts, reconnecting with classmates, and attending cultural events. Of those responding, 27 percent wanted to support the Shllaku Fund. We hope to move this giving percentage up with the enhanced visibility surrounding the “Return to Salzburg” publicity.

Subsequent to our meeting in October, BGSU President Mary Ellen Mazey confirmed that she will be attending the Monday reception and dinner at the Salzburg Reunion, lending her support to the celebration of 45 years of BGSU students studying in Salzburg.

Bill Weis, board member

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**Austrian Cultural Forum Washington**

The Austrian Cultural Forum Washington (ACF) was created with the objective of serving as a focus of cultural exchange between Austrians/Europeans and Americans. It is an agency of the Austrian Ministry for European and International Affairs and integrated into the Austrian Embassy in Washington, D.C. In particular, the ACF aims at presenting contemporary, innovative artistic and scientific achievements in a broad range of disciplines. Also, it provides a platform for presentations of emerging artists who have their life and career centered in Austria. It acts as a forum for dialogue and discourse on relevant issues in culture and politics and promotes and highlights cultural and scientific contributions from or about Austria. Throughout the whole year the ACF organizes and supports various events (concerts, film screenings, exhibitions, theatre, lectures, panel discussions, symposia), most of which take place in the Atrium of the Austrian Embassy. Mostly they are free of charge and open to the public.

For further information on our events visit the Austrian Cultural Forum’s [webpage](#) or subscribe to our newsletter.

Andreas Pawlitschek, director
Austrian Cultural Forum Washington

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**Alumni News**

Bradford Goodwin (2004–2005, M.A. 2007): I'm now in Berlin learning how to code (websites, that is) and freelancing as a copywriter. I left my wonderful wife (Margarethe Karl-Goodwin, whom I met at BGSU!) behind in Innsbruck until she can find work in Berlin, which won't take much longer, I hope. I am thrilled to be living in this very vibrant city and intend to stick around a while. Hard to believe that Margarethe and I will celebrate our seventh anniversary this year. I am in Berlin thanks in part to the generous financial support of my former employer (Swarovski, whose internal magazine, “1895,” I co-edited for a few years.) Alumni might be interested to know that the market for multilingual voice artists is thriving; I help make ends meet by doing voice work in German and English. If you ever find yourself in the area, please get in touch.

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Kyle Greetham (AYA 2005-06, 2007-08; BA 2007; MA 2009) is currently working in the Atlanta, Georgia, area as Communications Manager for [WolfVision](#), an Austrian company headquartered in Klaus, Vorarlberg, with sales offices around the world. WolfVision manufactures state-of-the-art presentation tools called “Visualizers.” Kyle will be visiting Austria on business in April 2013.

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Steven Harris (Salzburg 1970) AYA and BGSU alumnus, and AYA Alumni Advisory Board member has written a historical novel based on true events during the Civil War. "Faded Lines of Gray" is the story of one of the Civil War's most daring exploits: free rebel prisoners and capture the only US warship on the Great Lakes.

Steve will hold a book signing at Grounds for Thought Coffee Shop and Bookstore in Bowling Green on Sunday, April 7, 2013, 2:00-3:30 pm. The event is free and open to the public.

Visit the "Faded Lines of Gray" Facebook community.

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Send your own alumni news items to us at austria@bgsu.edu.