

# Soll, Austria - TSC Winter Expedition

By Sean O'Brien



local Austrian beer served at the hotel was large, tasted great, and was relatively inexpensive (definition of heaven for some participants). **Joe Kulpinsky** and **Brett Litell** were the first in line for beer, after seeing how small their hotel room was. **Sherry Outlaw** met us in Soll after a pre-trip to Vienna - where she was able to meet

German. We hoped they were saying good things about us, although they could have been saying, "What the heck are all these Texans doing here?" They must have liked us, since they provided us with an ample supply of free "Gluhwein" (hot wine in English) and we were quite happy. **Kayleen Kill** extended our Texan hospitality, as she presented the Mayor of Soll with a cowboy hat. **Robert Knupp** contemplated climbing up the side of one of the hotels on the square because he thought one of the Texas flags was hanging backwards.

All flights ran on time, no luggage was lost and best of all no serious injuries while skiing. However, **Janell Peyton** got quite a headache from a fall in front of our hotel, but it didn't stop her from parting past 3 a.m. on our final night in Soll. Either she recovered completely or the injury turned her into a wild party woman. Little did we know that while waiting for our departure flights to Soll, the great romantic love story of the trip would begin. We will not mention names, but several un-named reliable club members on the trip have indicated that it involved a high-ranking member of SCSC.

As we left Houston, **Gloria Lopez** pledged not to buy anything new on the trip. She did quite well at purchasing only one scarf on the trip. However, other members on the trip more than made up for whatever **Gloria** chose not to purchase. On the flights to and from Austria, **John Brescian** and **Brent McGibbon** spent their time playing cyber golf for Mozart Balls (popular tourist chocolate in Austria). At last count, **John** owed **Brent** twelve Mozart Balls. **Barbara Brescian** watched this insanity and thought "Oh my God, I am related to these people".

After 15-hours of traveling, combined with a 7-hour time change, we arrived in Munich! Most of us took a power nap during the one-hour bus ride to Soll. This allowed us to start the trip on the right foot by enjoying Austrian spirits in the hotel bar after our check-in. The

her son who lives in England. Latter that evening, the few, the proud, and the exhausted listened to a live band at the Whiskeymuhle Disco and attempted to stay up to watch portions of the Super Bowl with the midnight kickoff time.

While some of us skied on our first day, others took the excursion to Innsbruck and the Swarovsky Crystal Factory. During the visit to the Swarovsky, the competition was on between **Holly Jones**, **Joe Walker** and **Barb** on who would buy the most crystal. **Joe** (a guy no less) won hands down. For those who skied, the mountain tours were excellent! The expanse of mountains to ski in the Ski Wilder Kaiser area was huge! **Charles Kulkarni's** first time ever exposure to a Poma Lift was heard to be amusing. **Margaret Walker** deserted her husband **James Walker** to go skiing while **James** toured the town. Rumor has it **James** had a memorable fall while touring the town.

In the evening, the town of Soll threw a Welcome Party for all of the Texas Ski Clubs. They had a parade through the town with a Brass Band playing traditional Austrian Tyrolian music, instructors from the local ski school carrying torches (over 50 torches), a cannon (it was loud when it went off [multiple times at that]), followed by members of all of the ski clubs. Space City, with its banner in front, proudly led all of the ski clubs in the parade. The event ended with a ceremony in the Town Square. A part of the ceremony was in

The night had only begun, since the ceremony was followed by a Pub-Crawl. **Kimberly Smith**, **Gary Barrett**, **Elaine Sokoloff**, **Richard Sowrey**, **John Rice**, **Kayleen**, **Bill Canfield**, **Suzanne Hegemier**, **Joe Walker**, **Gene Soo**, **Sean O'Brien** and **Barb** crawled very well into many bars in Soll. They ended up in the Salvenstadl Bar. While standing on a large round table - one by one - the bartender shot Peach Schnapps into their mouths, and was most likely the cause of them crawling. **Carmen Mikhail**, **Gloria**, **Brent**, and **Roger Holzman** danced (but also crawled) late into the evening at the Whiskeymuhle Disco.

On Tuesday, the Venice excursion's highlight was ridding Gondola's through the canals - totally awesome! On this day of skiing, **Roger**, **Ky** and **Rhonda Griffin** were partially down a trail and wondered: "Where is **Susan Blome**? She was just skiing with us." They soon found out that, **Susan** was forced by some inexperienced skiers to ski into a ravine. The club has since renamed the ravine "Susan's Gulch". **Susan** fortunately was not injured and two cute Austrians apparently helped her out of the gulch. **Susan**, there are better ways to meet guys. The day ended with our Club's only Open Bar Happy Hour. It was held at the Dorfstadl im Keller Bar in our hotel and was enjoyed by all. Only two members (that we know of) tried out the totally nude spa in our hotel, others are keeping quiet. By the way, the only reason we know it was nude was - we had the brochure.

On our excursion to Salzburg, **Jane**



## Soll, Austria - cont.

**Orr** and **Kimberly** were renegades who broke off from the main tour to sightsee on their own. **John, Barbara, Brent, Carmen** and **Gloria** dined in one of Salzburg's open squares on excellent sausages obtained from a roadside stand. **Maria Tramontin** and **Susan** provided **Sean** with consulting services on buying an Austrian Doll for his niece. **Maria** didn't believe that **Sean** had a niece, since she saw him looking under the doll's dress. Supposedly, he was checking for labels that the doll was not made in Japan or Korea.

A Tyrolian Folklore Mid-Week Party with live music, singing and dancing was held at the Postwirt Hotel. During the audience participation portion, **Holly J.** and **Holly Inkofer** proved that they could yodel while being pinched in the rear-end. **Kayleen** participated in a very interesting Tyrolian dance. She was flipped upside down by a young Austrian Tyrolian dancer and had her behind rubbed. Speaking of dancing, for ladies in the club who think **Ricky Martin** is cute, you obviously have not seen **Roger** "Living La Vida Loca" in a go-go cage at the Whiskeymuhle Disco. Not to be out done, **Holly J.** and **Holly I.** also tried out the go-go cage.

**Edwin Kanyuck** (who was unable to begin the trip with us) met us on our Munich excursion. As opposed to visiting historic sights, Munich involved drinking from large (and we mean LARGE) beer steins at the Hoff Brau while listening to German "oum-pa-pa" music. **Barb** was slow in learning the German word for "No" (Nein) from one of Munich's merchants when she persisted in trying to buy a crystal Lion. (She thought, Nine Marks? - what a deal!) Apparently it was a Swavorski Collector's Piece and was not for sale. Finally, **Bill Bomberger** and **Susan** finally dragged her away from the screaming merchant.

When we got back to Soll, we had a great toboggan pseudo race and party. The adventure consisted of taking a Gondola ride up the mountain after dark, with a small sled that could just barely hold two people. The duties on the sled consisted of

one person to steer and one person to scream. We have some great screamers. Once up on the mountain, there was a two-mile long winding toboggan trail to take us to the bottom of the mountain. **Randy DelMastro** and **Robyn Shaw** finished the course first. **Bill** and **Roger** clearly demonstrated that excellent ability in skiing does not translate into an excellent ability to toboggan. **Sean** thought he would end up hearing impaired from the screams provided by **Valerie Schoenberg**. **Barb** and **Suzanne** finished last. They claimed that this was due to **Barb's** responsibility as TC to make sure that everyone got down the hill safely. Yeah!!! Right!!! To warm us up after the run, ample "Gluhwein" was available at the finish. **Holly J.** and **Holly I.** had the best hats (However; **Barb** could not hold a serious conversation with **Jane** in her Minnie Mouse.) **Gary** and **Ken Zanewich** appeared to be having fun with ladies from other ski clubs. Other tobogganers included **Phillip Vice, Charles, Kimberly, Kayleen, John, Joe, Melanie Morin, Carol Hudson, Carolyn Tompkins, Mildred Jude, and Donna Berglund.**

**Carmen** and **Valerie** deserve the marathon skier award for skiing five full days in Soll. Rumor has it that **Carmen** liked the ski instructor. Friday's excursion led us to the Chiemsee Castle on Lake Chiemsee in Germany. Mad King Ludwig built this castle in an attempt to out do the Palace of Versailles. In the evening, we gathered with the other Texas clubs at the Whiskeymuhle Disco for our Farewell Party. We really danced the night away. **Carolyn** and **Carol** didn't want the evening to end, as they danced until 3 AM.

As some members headed off to Munich to begin their trip home, five members (**Donna, John, Kayleen, Sue Bean** and **Cathey Littell**) began a three-day post trip visit to Venice. Our best tourguide throughout the main trip ("Willy") showed the members a great time around the city.

Seventeen other club members began a four day trip to Budapest and Vienna. In route to Budapest, the group stopped in the

town of Wels. At an Irish Pub, with a sign behind the bar which read "Don't Mess with Texas", **Barb, Sean, and Gai-Lynn Marshall** meet a Houston native who was working in Wels as a translator. He was recognized by his Houston Astros baseball cap. It really is a small world.

In Budapest, we had dinner in a large wine cavern featuring Hungarian wine, music, Gypsy dancing. It was fabulous. **Barb** did her Martha Stewart imitation by preparing a Hungarian rice dish for the entire group at the table. **Brent, Janell, Roger, Joe, Bill, Carmen, Gloria, David George** and **Doris Carter** drank in a way that they will not soon forget. **Christie Burke, Gai-Lynn** and **Barb** were feeling great after a trip to the world famous thermal spas (i.e. Roman Baths) at the Hotel Gellert in Budapest (**Gai-Lynn** had trouble figuring out what the heck the apron they gave us was for).

**Robyn** wins the marathon traveler award. **Robyn** left on the trip ten days before the main trip, did the main trip, the four day post trip to Vienna/Budapest, and one additional day in Vienna at the end (22 days total). We want your job. Well, at least your vacation.

**Susan** deserves credit for the closest timing of a business trip, as a friend met her at the Houston airport, only to give her new luggage so she could immediately board another plane to Las Vegas for a business trip.

All in all, we had a great time and many memorable experiences!