

DANUBE RIVERBOAT & BIKE TOUR 2016

BY RITA CARDENAS AND LEYLA OZKARDESH

Talk about a fantastic trip from start to finish! We believe this trip will go down in history as one of the best TSC trips. TSC was able to secure the entire boat for over 130 Texas participants. This adventure started with a pre-trip to Budapest. Jim Hodges, Marina Wang,



team of bike mechanics ready to help us with any adjustments of our touring bikes. Our tour began at the town of Mauthausen – Grein, Austria where we enjoyed the natural state of the meadow landscape. Some of the bikers visited the medieval village and former concentration camp at Mauthausen. Many of us were challenged with the map and took a few wrong turns along the route but somehow managed to make it back to the boat at the end of the day.



Marsha Lutz and Linda Farley enjoyed the beautiful sites. They joined our group as we boarded the My Story



boat on Sunday, September 25th. We started our sail down the Danube from the dock in Passau, Germany. The highlight of our first night was celebration of Cindy Moore's birthday with a special "sparkling dessert" served by the attentive staff and lights down low for the presentation. Way to start the trip Cindy!



Day 3, we were in Devin and Bratislava, Slovakia. Devin follows



Day 2 was our first day of biking. The goal was to bike 20-35 miles per day during the 7-8 hour allotted time. We loved how they had a



the former 'Iron Curtain', crosses the former border and the Baroque Palace of Schlosshof with its beautifully terraced gardens. Tom and Anne Thomas apparently got an eye full with cycling uponwell...shall we say a romantic couple while back tracking to find the right route. The evening was an exceptional tour of the capital of Slovakia, Bratislava located at the slopes of the Little Carpathians along the border of Austria and Hungary.

Day 4 was scenic Vienna. Most of us toured the city by bus and our more adventurous ones, Wanda Callaghan and Robert Rowley, toured by bike. St. Stephens Cathedral was a highlight to see. Many of the group enjoyed the evening Strauss and Mozart concert. Did I mention the weather was perfect every-



day along the Danube!

Day 5, the towns were Wachau, Krems and Melk. Despite best attempts to follow the map, Rita and Leyla took the wrong route and ended up touring with the Clear Lake Ski Club girls. They had no better sense of direction as we still ended up on the wrong side of the river and had to catch a boat to make it to the Wine Tasting. The route was full of small dreamy towns, apricot trees, vineyards, castles and ruins. Most of the group ended up at the wine tasting in Weissenkirchen. Jim, Marina, Barry, Mary Ann, Bernie, Kate, Linda, Joe and Ellen, just to name a few. Everyone enjoys din-



ner together every evening. The boat crew had a Pirates night theme with skits and dancing in the main room.



Day 6, most of us took advantage of the opportunity to visit the gorgeous baroque monastery of the Benedictine brethren of Melk. The final destination of the day was the city of Grein, home of Austria's oldest city theatre.



Day 7 was the amazing Great Danube Loop. We cycled through the Danube Valley and many picturesque villages. The hike up the small steep walking trail to the lookout high above the Danube Loop was definitely worth the effort. What a breathtaking panoramic view of the Danube Valley! Barry gave us a geography lesson about the loop at the end of the day, over wine of course.



We were heading back to Passau on Day 8. The last night on the boat was the Captain's night which included a celebration dinner. We had a fabulous 80's night dance party in the bar and main lounge after dinner.



The boat staff provided 80's inspired clothing and disco music for our final night of fun.

On Sunday October 2nd, most of the group headed back home but a few of us made their way to Passau, Munich and the last day of Oktoberfest. Leyla Ozkardesh, Rita Cardenas, Robert Rowley, Barry Casper, John Flatten, Linda Casanova, Mary Ann Harrell, Jim Hodges and Marian Wang checked off another adventure off their bucket list. Oktoberfest is hard to describe in words, but a lot of beer, German food and plenty of people come to mind.



The Danube River Boat and Bike trip was such a wonderful, exciting and scenic trip. We hope this trip will be offered again in the future as it will be talked about for years to come.

