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On Wednesday, July 20 we had arranged for an informal abend with Trachtenverein D'Fuchsbergler e.V. of Stoffen and Heimat und Trachtenverein D'Ammertaler Diessen – St. Georgen. We are deeply indebted to Toni Auer, 1.Vorstand of D'Fuchsbergler for organizing it at the Trommlerhütte in Diessen. A most wonderful welcome greeted us with beer, schnapps, and buffet. We were also greeted by our dear Trachtenkamerad of long standing Sepp Kaindl of D'Ammertaler, past 1.Vorstand of the Huosigauverband, and by Andreas Huber, 1.Vorstand of D'Ammertaler Diessen, and other officers from both Vereine.

this project through. We are aware that the Gauverband Nordamerika's financial and technical contributions were significant, but recognize that its "Zimmer" still needs some work, particularly in the artistic sphere and perhaps some tender loving care. Wolfgang showed us how much work Michael Olk did and we are humbled to acknowledge his expert contribution.



Above: Our evening with friends from Diessen and Stoffen.

Right: Toni Auer, Andreas Huber, Florian Vief, 1. Gauvorstand of Huosigau, and Scarlett Russell



Ottawa and our hosts performed several Goasslschnalzer outside, and many Schuhplattler inside their Vereinsheim. Throughout the evening, Sepp Kaindl and Erech played Volks-



musik together. Earlier in the week, the Augsburgener Allgemeine's Beate Bentele produced the photo (left) which epitomizes two long-time Trachtenfreunde having a good time.

On Thursday, July 21, Wolfgang Gensberger received us for a tour of the Bayerischer Kulturzentrum, a must-see for Trachtler travelling to Bayern. We commend all those who have worked and contributed to see

Zum Lacha

**A Busserl von dir, schmeckt besser als Bier,
Schmeckt besser als Brantwein, als Kaas und Klischtier.**

What Edelweiss Denver's Youth Did on Their Summer Vacation

What did you do on your Summer Vacation? Who can remember that infamous writing assignment from your elementary school teacher? The one where you're supposed to write all the exciting things you did over the summer which is great if you actually did something exciting, but awful when all you did was hang around your house. For 18 of TEV Edelweiss Denver's Schuhplattler youth, the summer of 2016 was a busy and exciting one as they traveled to Diessen, Bavaria as participants of the 2016 Jugend Austausch (youth exchange) with our Huosigau Patenverein, Heimat- und Trachtenverein D'Ammertaler Diessen-St. Georgen. The youth ranged in age from seven to twenty. Another 37 people (friends, family, and club members) traveled along during the months of July and August in support of Edelweiss Denver both for the Bayerischer Löwe and for the Austausch.

Edelweiss Denver is privileged to not only be a member of Gauverband Nordamerika, we are also long time members of the Huosigau and we are honored to be Patenkind of D'Ammertaler Diessen. The Austausch began decades ago in order to facilitate lasting relationships between the two clubs even though we are on opposite sides of the world. The biennial youth exchange between D'Ammertaler Diessen and TEV Edelweiss Denver ("Double D Trachtenverein" when we're together) has become a highlight for the youth in both clubs with hosting duties alternating between the two groups. The event typically takes place in August as both groups try to work around the school year end in Bavaria and staggered school year starts in Denver. This is not always easy, but we try to make it work. To be sure, the favorite parts of exchanges on either side of the pond are the times where both groups Schuhplattl together. Whether it's a dance both groups know or one group is teaching the other, those moments are savored by all. The last exchange in Denver had the groups dancing in the chilly, thin air at the top of Pikes Peak! No lederhosen, no accordion, just plattling in jeans and shorts to the loud and hearty singing of "la la la" to the standard melody. (What we lacked in vocal quality we made up for in volume!)

After a few days of participants arriving in Diessen, the official start of the exchange began with the kids playing games at the lake as a way of getting to know each other. Things started tame enough, but it wasn't long before they were pitching each

other off the dock into the lake! It was an awesome day for Double D youth to make introductions and renew friendships. The swimming was followed by a good old-fashioned American BBQ at the Hütte in the evening; an enthusiastic gathering of nearly 100 Trachtlers. Somehow 106 American steaks magically appeared at the Hütte for grilling on what had to be the largest grill ever (built by a Diessener of course). So large in fact that literally a blow torch was used to heat the Holzkohle! The Diesseners supplied the corn on the cob and potato salad. Jeff Jensen and Rex Lane, grill meisters extraordinaire, prepared perfect steaks one right after the other while simultaneously grilling their own stomachs! It was also a night to present Edelweiss Denver Ehrenmitglied plaques to Diesseners Sepp and Leni Kaindl in appreciation for everything they've done for us over the past few decades.

Day two began bright and early with everyone meeting at the bus dressed in Tracht. The kids riding in the back of the bus had a ball singing songs and playing games all the way to Schloß Linderhof; Imogene Lohre-Fields' favorite because this castle was finished. "I loved the castles! They were unique and different from each other. One small, one large..." After completing the tour, everyone hustled back to the bus in order to reach Neuschwanstein in time for the group's reserved English tour. The Diesseners even organized carriage rides for everyone up the hill to the castle (which was great for everyone over 25). While it is not too unusual to see Tracht in and around Bavaria, seeing so many people in Tracht was definitely a bonus attraction for the other tourists at the castle. Repeated requests for photos were common. Juliana Jensen's favorite moment of the day "Sitting at the top of Neuschwanstein with all of us in Tracht, I enjoyed being a secondary tourist attraction with all the pictures we had taken of us by fellow tourists, but the best part was Hayden (Lane, who was 8 years old at the time) looking over the edge of the wall at the gorge down below and calmly saying "Ya know, if I fell from here, I'd probably only hurt my spleen." From Neuschwanstein, the group continued to Landsberg for a nighttime tour of the historic city. Adam Taylor found it interesting "that the oldest building in the town was the clock tower, which was located on the Romanec Road and was part of the original outer wall of the city."

The next day had the group taking a walking tour of Munich. Wandering the Fußgängerzone to the Rathaus and Glockenspiel, shopping, climbing to the top of some church tower and having lunch at the Hofbräuhaus. The evening was spent at the Hütte (a very popular night for the kids). First eating Leberkäse and Kartoffelsalat, then teaching the girls how to make beaded Haarnadel while the Double D men/boys plattled. This was Kevin Rase's favorite night "...we exchanged our versions of plattlers and also everyone danced on their tiny floor together."

The next four days had most of the Double D youth at Holzhausen as participants and supervisors of a youth camp hosted by and for members of the Huosigau. As Denver is the only American club with Huosigau membership, our kids were the first and only Americans to attend this camp! Spaulding Goetze III recalls "We all started the first day arriving by bus. For us, the Americans, not knowing much German or just a few words made it a little nerve racking when it came to communicating with other Germans and understanding what was going on; we all got over that later on in the trip though...(we) got into groups and

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played our welcome games to get to know the other kids. It was really hot in the sun and after four hours of trying to learn 100 other kids' names, we were finally done. At this point we were all really tired but they had brought out a kiddie pool. Not knowing what was about to happen we all just sat there and waited. The young kids all started to swim. Then someone had the bright idea to throw someone in and that was it!!! It was a free for all. Kyle had gone into the tent for a nap, but that didn't last long, when Wolfgang and I decided to pick him up while he was asleep and throw him in. What a great idea! That really got everyone going, the Germans were throwing in the Americans and vice versa. This lasted for about an hour, and then it was time for dinner. We



ended the night by sitting by the fire and learning songs in German (plus we can't forget the kids burning all their school work). That night it started to rain and ohhhh did it ruin!" TJ Jensen recalls "the river of water that ran along the edge of our tent while we were sleeping. We all just moved in the middle of the tent out of the water. The river didn't seem to bother the two exhausted Bavarian guys who stumbled into the tent and plopped down on the floor and went right to sleep with the water running right next to their heads if not on their heads." Each club participating in the camp was required to put on a workshop, so Edelweiss Denver pulled out the handanas and the country music and taught the Bavarians how to line dance. They'd never heard country music but they learned that they loved it. The highlight of the camp was the Tanzabend on Saturday night. "Dancing with the other kids and seeing their Tracht and how they wear it was pretty cool..." remarked Lily Goetze. Another bus ride brought the Double D youth back to Diessen, where they jumped back into Tracht and then off for Pizzas Abend at the Hütte followed by more dancing—Auf Tanz, Boarishem, Sautanz and more.



Monday had a literal bus-full of folks headed for the Königsee/Berchtesgaden area with a

stop at the Salzbergwerk. Let the men have their beer, the Diessener ladies know how to travel in style—champagne for breakfast! It is no small feat to get 65 people into coveralls and on the mining train but the Diesseners can manage anything including herding a bunch of cats (which is kind of how Denver travels) and so off we went. I seem to recall a lot of oo-ing and ah-ing, some licking of the salt on the walls (ew!) and some serious squealing going down the slides. Then off to the Königsee where some went walking along the trails, some shopped, some had ice cream and some found beer.

With rain threatening on Thursday, the Double D youth traveled by Ammersee Railway to Utting. In America, we see corn mazes fairly frequently, near Diessen there are sunflower mazes. This particular sunflower maze has a different theme each year. This year the theme was "the solar system" and so planets were built in the maze. The kids had to search out riddles as they went through the maze. Many cats live in the maze. ...and do you know what cats eat? Mice! Not a very pretty sight to be sure, but everyone made it through the maze and began walking down the road before the sky opened and the rain fell in earnest. The Diessener lunch mobile met them on the road near a roadside eatery that happened to be closed for the day. Fifty empty picnic tables, but in the pouring rain the kids huddled under the vendor's hut eating sausage, pretzels, and cheese. They sang songs and line danced again. Even had a request for the Cotton-eyed Joe! From here everyone then hopped the Ammersee Dampfer for a boat ride across the Ammersee to Herrsching. Traveling either on the steamer "Augsburg" or the steamer "Diessen," the youth met in Herrsching and then hiked through the pouring rain through the romantic Kiental up to the Holy Mountain in Andechs where the Diesseners set up a lavish late lunch. Some of the American adults cheated that day and just drove to Andechs and enjoyed the celebration.



Rain on the final day prompted a change in plans resulting in a spur of the moment trip to Landsberg for a tour of an award-winning chocolate factory Schokoladenfabrik Hallinger. The factory doesn't make and sell just chocolate but pralines, cakes and exclusive coffees and teas. Upon returning to Diessen, it was time to throw things in suitcases for the return home before heading one final time to the Hütte for a farewell BBQ. This time the Diesseners grilled! Great friends, delicious food, and of course plenty of dancing. What a perfect way to end an exchange. There were plenty of tears at the end of the evening, but we didn't leave without promises of meeting again in 2018 when Diessen travels to Denver for the next exchange and to help us celebrate our 60th anniversary.

Once we returned to Denver and had a chance to catch our breath, I asked our youth ages 7 to 20 for

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their thoughts about the exchange. To be sure the 10 days of events went by in a blur but each participant came away with an appreciation of the similarities and differences between Denver Schuhplattlers and other Schuhplattlers who live in Bavaria and made some awesome friends along the way.

My favorite parts of the exchange was getting to see all the Diesseners again and getting to see what the museum in Holzhausen looked like finished compared to what it looked like my first exchange. ~Adam

I had a lot of fun with the Diesseners. They made everything so much fun. We developed amazing friendships. It was great seeing all the fascinating sites; I can't pick one because each holds a special place in my memory and an incredible opportunity to understand the Bavarian culture. The entire experience was pretty amazing! ~Auna

I felt happy and at home in Germany. I was nervous but felt comfortable right away. I learned a lot. ~Hayden

I really liked going to the salt mine, and learning how they built it, and the history from a long time ago. ~Sparrow

I like how we became such good friends with the Germans and had the inside joke of humming the theme for "Jurassic World" before any of the tours and adventures we went on. ~Sawyer

I love Germany because I learned how to speak German. I also got to meet lots of people. Germany was fun. ~Kimmie

I liked going to the camp and dancing with all the different dancers... Everyone had different dancing styles. ~Kristen

The Hussigau Zelllager (the German camp) was one of my favorite parts of the trip. I also enjoyed the great day trips to other cities, Andechs and Königsee. A good time was had by all. ~Spaulding

I really enjoyed the day visiting all around Munich and the interesting tours of the castles and salt mine. ~Kendal

This year's Austausch was amazing! I loved getting to create memories with our Diessener sister club and experiencing and learning so many new things. ~Emily

Going to Germany has taught me so much, but what stuck to me the most was how the German boys at the camp were always so polite in walking the girls back to their tables after dancing with them. ~ Kyle



My favorite part was the BBQ on the first night when everyone was having fun. The food was great too. I especially liked learning the Gauschlag from the Diesseners. ~TJ

Going on the exchange to Diessen Germany was a great experience. I want to give a huge thanks to the Diesseners for all they did for us

while over there! Looking back at this exchange, one memory that will stick with me the most, would have to be going to the Hülle and getting to dance together. I also enjoyed learning how to make German hair pins by hand. ~Lily

I loved the castles! They were unique and different from each other. One small, one large. My favorite was Linderhof as it was finished.

The best part was the peacock throne room. On my trip I met four friends whose names were Izabella, Cosima, Helena and Paulina. I am keeping in touch with all of them. ~Imogene

My favorite part of my trip to Germany was going to see the castles and camp. We met lots of new kids at camp. The boat ride to Andechs was fun too. ~Grace

I love Germany because I got stuff that you couldn't get here. I learned a new German dance and made new friends. Germany was fun. ~Dakota

My favorite memory of the youth exchange was the day we went to see Linderhof and Neuschwanstein. The bus rides were fun we played cards and joked around. The castle tours were very cool to see again and experience with the group. ~Kevin

While most of the group was at camp, Adam and I had the opportunity to dance with the Diesseners at a gig for international students.

The Diesseners included us in every dance and I had a blast showing these kids from all over the world what American Schuhplattlers can do. ~Juliana

We cannot thank the Diesseners enough for their incredible hospitality. They opened their homes and their hearts in some cases to old friends, but in many cases to strangers from America. They planned the "perfect Austausch" one our kids will be talking about for some time to come. Additionally, the Diesseners included all the parents, grandparents and friends of the Denver youth in as many events as possible. So while we weren't able to "camp" we were instead treated to a special tour of Holzhausen graciously arranged by Sepp Kaindl. We were able to tour almost all the facilities including the museum, the Hussigau and the Gauverband Nordamerika guest rooms, the Augustiner Stadt and the camp facilities. We even had a chance to say hello to our kids while we were there! Those of us who had previously visited Holzhausen were curious to see the end result and we were definitely not disappointed. Truly, Holzhausen is a beautiful, awe-inspiring place, and we were overwhelmed by the finished product and grateful to those with the vision and who labored so hard for such a worthwhile purpose. We had an awesome summer vacation! What'd you do on yours?

—Terry Jensen

