



# The American-Austrian Cultural Society

June 2008

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## From the Editor:

*Dear Members and Friends,  
It's the time of the year when many of us are going on vacation; and soon, I will be heading for Austria, visiting friends and family, plus facing even higher gasoline costs than in the US, but hoping for good weather. Before I buckle the seat belt on the plane to overseas, I will have made sure that my work as Treasurer, a position I held for the past two years, is cleared to be*

*passed on to my successor, Donal Donovan. Now, as I am saying good bye to you as the keeper of membership records, finances and budget, I know you will be in good hands again.*

*With my very best wishes for a wonderful summer I remain yours,*

*Gerda Merwald*

## The American-Austrian Cultural Society Elects New Treasurer

*By Ulrike Wiesner*

On behalf of the Society's Executive Committee, I would like to express our sincere thanks to **Gerda Merwald** for having done a superb job as our Treasurer for the past two years. Effective the beginning of the new Fiscal Year 2008-09 on October 1, 2008, Gerda, who will continue as a director and contribute in many different areas of the Society's work, will hand the baton to her successor, Donal Donovan, to whom we bid a cordial welcome.

Donal, who is Irish, has had a long-standing personal connection to, and deep interest in, Austria and is a keen



*Donal  
Donovan*

student of the German language at the local Goethe Institute. In addition to outstanding academic qualifications, he earned his doctorate in Economics from the University of British Columbia, Donal brings a wealth of managerial and academic experience to the job. He had a long and distinguished career at

the International Monetary Fund and is currently serving as an adjunct professor of economics and is a visiting Lecturer at universities in Ireland.

Donal, his wife Paula and their three children live in Great Falls, Virginia.



## Corporate Sponsor: Austria's Finest, Naturally®

Christa and John-Paul Cook of Helco, Ltd. offer an array of all natural Austrian grown imports including pure pumpkinseed oil, and a breathtaking variety of fruit and balsamic wine vinegars, juices, jellies and honey. **NEW!** Helmut Sachers Kaffee.

Visit their Web site at [www.austrianpumpkinoil.com](http://www.austrianpumpkinoil.com)

John-Paul offers discounts for members of the American-Austrian Society.

## From the Executive Committee and Board of Directors

We would like to bring to your attention the following decisions that were made by the Society's Executive Committee and Board of Directors:

### Change of Fiscal Year

Due to practical considerations it was decided to change the Society's Fiscal Year from July 1 through June 30 to October 1 through September 30.

### Membership Fees and Applications

#### Fees for Fiscal Year 2008/2009

Single membership:	\$25.00
Family membership:	\$35.00
Contributor [unchanged]:	\$50 – \$99
Patron [unchanged]:	\$100 – \$499
Benefactor/Corporate Sponsor [unchanged]:	\$500 or more

Auslandsösterreicher Weltbund membership:	\$15.00
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#### Membership Applications

Membership Application/Renewal forms will be sent out in late summer. The new forms will contain a section asking you to indicate who in your household is to be considered a voting member of the American-Austrian Cultural Society in order to avoid future confusion on this matter.

### Appointment of Managing Director

Due to the increasing need to coordinate and oversee the many ongoing, and especially the new cultural and other anticipated organizational efforts of the new Society, the Executive Committee and Board of Directors at their meeting on April 24, 2008 agreed to nominate Ms. Ulrike Wiesner to the position as Managing Director, which was subsequently approved at the Annual Meeting.

### Annual Meeting Information

The First Annual Meeting of the newly founded American-Austrian Cultural Society was held on Wednesday, May 14, 2008, at the Embassy of Austria.

Written invitations to the Annual Meeting, including mail ballots for those unable to attend in person, were

mailed to the membership two weeks ahead of the meeting. The mailing was followed up by reminders via e-mail and telephone.

Despite our best efforts, the membership's response and turnout at the Annual Meeting were somewhat disappointing. We hope that we can continue to improve membership participation and attendance at meetings and thank you for your continued support of our cultural society!

*Ulrike Wiesner*



### Election Results:

#### New slate of Officers for the Fiscal Year 2008 / 2009:

<b>President:</b>	Ambassador Hugh Montgomery	(one-year term)
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Vice President:</b>	Mrs. Lynn Rhomberg	(one-year term)
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President:</b>	Mr. Boris Mussienko	(two-year term)
<b>Managing Director:</b>	Ms. Ulrike Wiesner	(indefinite term)
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Mr. Donal Donovan	(two-year term)
<b>Secretary:</b>	Ms. Ulrike Wiesner	(two-year term)
<b>Director:</b>	Dr. Peter Evans	(one-year term)
<b>Director:</b>	Ms. Gerda Merwald	(two-year term)
<b>Director:</b>	Prof. Alfred Obernberger	(two-year term)

### Celebrating U.S. Independence

The 4th of July has been an important holiday but today, more and more people do not know why we actually celebrate this day. If you are not up to date on your history of the United States, July 4, 1776 is the day that the colonies decided to declare themselves independent of Britain by signing The Declaration of Independence.

By writing this very detailed decree, the colonists decided that they no longer wanted to be governed by the English monarchy that had been so very unjust to the colonists in the years before.



On July 4, with the signing of this document, the United States of America was born. We call the 4th of July Independence Day because this day was the day the colonists declared their independence from Great Britain and formed their own government.

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## News from Austria

### Federal President Fischer Signed EU Reform Treaty

Austria has completed ratification of the EU Reform Treaty of Lisbon. The signature of Federal President Heinz Fischer on 28 April 2008 was the last stage of ratification according to the Austrian Constitution. Based on a press release of the President's Office, Fischer signed the Treaty "after thorough examination of all aspects". A referendum was not necessary in Austria as the Treaty of Lisbon did not entail a complete change of the Austrian Constitution. ?

### EU Lifts Austria's Import Ban on GMO Maize

Austria's anti-genetic engineering policy has suffered another defeat. The EU Commission in Brussels lifted the import ban on the two genetically

modified maize varieties MON810 and T25 with immediate effect. The prohibition to cultivate GMO maize may for the time being remain in force. Domestic environmental organizations were dismayed, Minister of Agriculture Josef Pröll was "disappointed" about the EU institution, as a spokesman said.

Pröll expressed his regret about the decision of the European Commission. However, it had been ensured that the prohibition of cultivating GMO maize types was upheld. Brussels was expected to submit proposals for the coexistence of common and genetically modified plants. Key questions remained unsolved.

### New Roman Museum in Vienna

From the late 2<sup>nd</sup> to the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century about 30,000 locals and people from all parts of the Roman Empire

lived in Vindobona, the Roman name of Vienna.

During the Whitsun weekend a new Roman Museum, the "Römermuseum," was opened in Vienna. It is situated at Hoher Markt (1<sup>st</sup> district of Vienna), where almost 2,000 years ago the dwellings of Roman officers were located. The ruins, which are considered the most important remains of the Roman period in Vienna, were already shown in the basement of this wing of the building. Now about 300 archaeological finds such as utensils, cult objects, figures, toys and statues of gods, are on display. The former Roman settlement is visualized with the aid of 3-D technology.

Vienna Museum invested in its new outpost approximately 780,000 euros. About 30,000 visitors are expected annually.

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## Sugar: The Big Energy Thief

From the Presentation by Dr. Moayad Presented At the Annual Meeting on May 14, 2008

Did you know that the average American consumes around 30 teaspoons of sugar per day, equaling to around 150 to 200 lbs of sugar per year? Did you also know that only 100 years ago the average American only consumed 3 to 5 lbs of sugar per year?

What has happened to cause this explosion of sugar consumption in such a short period of time? The short but bitter answer is: processed foods such as candy bars, breakfast cereals and other packaged, as well as soda drinks. Believe it or not, in every soda, whether labeled as diet or not, and in every processed meal, whether labeled as light, reduced calorie, etc. or not, there is added sugar in some shape or form! And why?! Because it makes the drink or food taste better, and having a drug like effect, it makes you want more - that's why!

Bad news is that sugar has no nutrients in it whatsoever! Quite the contrary, it actually depletes the body's energy causing all sorts of ailments and health problems such as elevated blood pressure, hypoglycemia,

diabetes, obesity, cancer, heart issues and osteoporosis.

Sugar is extracted most commonly from the sugar cane or sugar beets.

After a long and winding process literally all fiber is removed from the plant to extract the juice, which is further stripped of almost all nutrients, vitamins, minerals and fiber, to then end up on the market as sucrose also known as granular table sugar.

Because there is no fiber in sugar there are no nutrients, thus when eating it, our body needs to tap into its very own pool of vitamins and minerals to be able to digest the sugar, which in effect means that we are robbing ourselves of our stored nutrients. In other words we (in) voluntarily are harming ourselves every time we put sugar into our mouth, with the long term effects being the ones I described in brief above.



Additionally we are robbing ourselves of energy as our bodies treat sugar like a drug that needs to be detoxified from our system - symptoms for classifying a substance as a drug are: 1) when you take it once you want more of it and 2) when not taking it one suffers from withdrawal symptoms such as dizziness, headache, sweaty palms and lack of focus.

The insulin-glucose rollercoaster: upon eating sweets our blood sugar levels (foreign intruders) begin to rise, to counter this, our pancreas (aircraft carrier) sends off insulin (fighter jets) to bring down the amount of sugar in our bloodstream and to quickly distribute it to our cells.

Unfortunately though, after many years of excessive consumption of sweets our pancreas begins releasing too much insulin which causes our blood sugar level to sink too fast triggering a hypoglycemic state (too little sugar in our blood) which could cause mental confusion, hunger, insomnia, irritability and light-

*Continued on Page 4*



## Past Events

### “Humor in der Deutschen Sprache”

On June 12, 2008, about 35 of our members and two visitors from Vienna, Austria, were gathered at the Old Europe Restaurant’s “Rathskeller” for a delightful evening of conviviality and readings of humorous passages from the works of the likes of Christian Morgenstern, Joachim Ringelnatz, Wilhelm Busch, Ludwig Thoma, Friedrich Torberg and Josef Weinheber.

The readings were presented by our Board members Professor Fred Obernberger and Ulli Wiesner. The event was extremely well received, and plans are underway for a possible repeat performance.

## 2008 Calendar of Events

Mark your calendar for the following exciting events, both by The American-Austrian Society and around our area. Please also watch for e-mail announcements.

### Upcoming Events

#### Sunday, June 29, 2008

**European Soccer Championship 2008:** the final match will be broadcast live from Vienna, and shown at the Austrian Embassy at 3 p.m. Washington soccer fans are invited to attend the event, which will be accompanied by a buffet and drinks.

#### Sunday, October 5, 2008

The Society’s honorary member, Lambert Orkis (piano), will perform with Nurit Bar-Josef and Natasha Bogachek (violins); Daniel Foster (viola); David Hardy (cello), The Kennedy Center Chamber Players. The concert includes works by Shostakovich: Piano Trio No. 1 in c minor, Op. 8 (1923); and Piano Quintet in g minor, Op. 57 (1940).

Ticket information: 202-467-4600, 1-800-444-1234; [www.kennedy-center.org](http://www.kennedy-center.org).

#### Saturday, November 15, 2008 [Save the date]

Notice on behalf of the National Society of Arts and Letters: **Viennese Ball** at the Cosmos Club in Washington, DC; more information to follow.

### Planned Events (Dates to be announced)

**Traditional Kaffeehaus Jause** at Clark House

**Traditional Heurigen**

Following a successful literary event “Humor in the German Language” on June 12, we are looking into the possibility of organizing a similar event under the motto “**Humor in the English Language.**” Your ideas and comments would be most welcome!

### Overseas Event

Among the numerous festivals in Austria, one of them to mention is the Lehar Festival program in Bad Ischl: “Gypsy Baron,” or “The Tsarevitch.”

For more information, visit the Web site [www.leharfestival.at](http://www.leharfestival.at) or email: [info@leharfestival.at](mailto:info@leharfestival.at).

## Santa Fe Opera

One shouldn’t focus on music festivals in Austria only, I just as much enjoyed many extraordinary performances at the Santa Fe Opera!

*Gerda Merwald*



“From the unlikelyst of beginnings-an opera company located hundreds of miles from any major city, featuring American singers in a wide-ranging and challenging repertory, and treating theatrical and musical values as equally important in its productions-The Santa Fe Opera has grown to become recognized as one of the world’s leading cultural festivals.

Every July and August since 1957, opera lovers have been drawn to the magnificent northern New Mexico mountains to enjoy productions by one of America’s premier summer opera festivals. Here, The Santa Fe Opera’s dramatic adobe theater blends harmoniously with the high desert landscape. It is this fusion of nature and art that leaves such an enduring impression on all who come. More than half the audience of 85,000 comes from outside New Mexico, representing every state in the union as well as 25 to 30 foreign countries.”

### Continued from Page 3: Sugar

headedness. To alleviate these symptoms our body sends out a hunger signal (although we just had some food!!) prompting us to crave sweets, thus repeating the vicious cycle!

“How can we ever come out of this seemingly never ending cycle?” you might ask yourself. The answer is pretty simple: eat complex carbohydrates such as whole grains, vegetables and fruits and avoid simple carbohydrates such as cookies, donuts and pastries, whenever possible. By eating unrefined and complex carbohydrates, we are giving our body time to digest and release the food into the blood stream. As this is a gradual process there is no spike in our blood sugar levels and that is why our pancreas does not see a reason to send off a lot of insulin resulting in a more stable blood sugar and energy level.

**Q Moayad, Ph.D** is a certified holistic health counselor and lifestyle coach and works with students across the nation and internationally. He currently lives in Old Town Alexandria, VA and can be reached at (703) 505-8593 or [info@vivapura.com](mailto:info@vivapura.com).

*Disclaimer: this article is meant as an introduction to the topic of healthy eating habits and does not claim to be complete.*

