

# Travel Scene



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## Elderhostel takes after youth travel

(AP) — John and Barbara Sell are sold on the concept of Elderhostel.

The Sells, who are both retired — he's 68, she's 65 — like the camaraderie and the travel. But, most of all, they like the laughs. Laughs, they said, that make the learning all the more fun.

The Sells are veteran participants of Elderhostel, an international continuing-education program available for those 60 and older. The Sells have studied sailing in Maine, environmental issues in New York and photography in West Virginia.

The couple got an extra bargain, however, when they signed up for Berry College's Elderhostel in Georgia. Here, they said, they learned firsthand about Southern hospitality.

"The thing I've learned here that I haven't learned anywhere else," Mrs. Sell said, "is that the South really has managed to keep its storytelling tradition alive, and that's just wonderful."

The Sells, who hail from Milwaukee, Wis., were doubly impressed with the Berry College campus itself.

"This is just a beautiful place to visit and to learn," she said.

The Sells' experience here perhaps illustrates why Elderhostel has become big business for Georgia. Georgia is now No. 2 in the nation — second only to Arizona — in the number of senior citizens it attracts to its Elderhostel programs. Elderhostels are held on 42 sites, including college campuses, convention centers and state parks, across the state.

GENE CLARK, director of Berry College's Office of Continuing Education, has been largely responsible for that success. He estimates that "a little more than" 10,000 senior citizens attended Elderhostel programs in Georgia last year. This year, he said, officials are predicting that attendance will surpass 11,000.

The Elderhostel that concluded March 24 at Berry College drew 22 participants from across the country. It was the third of four week-long sessions the college will sponsor this year. Participants took classes in history, human sexuality, aquarology and aerobics.

Elderhostel, founded 14 years ago, takes its name from the youth hostels famous in Europe. According to Clark, about 650 colleges in the United States offer Elderhostel programs, as do many foreign countries. Clark emphasizes that the only qualification for Elderhostel is age.

The "History of the South" class, taught by Rome historian Forrest Shropshire, illustrated the somewhat informal nature of the Elderhostel learning process. Shropshire, in front of his class, seemed a cross between a college professor and a stand-up comedian. His lectures about history were punctuated throughout with humor.

"History can be so dull sometimes," he said. "I try to do something to keep the class lively."

During one class, he even asked the class to tell him the secret to staying young. One Elderhostel student said he had sampled Florida's legendary Fountain of Youth, and claimed that drink worked for him.

Shropshire, though, knew the answer to his own question — an answer he believes sums up what Elderhostel is all about. Age, says the 75-year-old Shropshire, pointing to his temples, is "all between the ears."



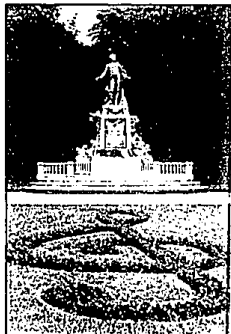
Austrian homes in Durnstein are surrounded by cliffs and mountains offering scenic views of the countryside.

MICKY JONES

## VIVID MEMORIES Of An Elegant Austria

By Audra Hendrickson  
special writer

We cross the border from Liechtenstein into Austria at Feldkirch near the El River.



MICKY JONES

The Wolfgang Mozart statue and garden welcomes visitors in Vienna.

and can hardly tell we've left one country and entered another. The scenery and the buildings are so similar, the same red tile roofs, the same stone.

The population of Austria is 7.5 million, 90 percent Catholic. The initials we see here and there — AEIOU — stand for "Austria est imperator o universer" or "Austria shall rule the world." I say they stand for vowels.

Everywhere are little chapels and shrines. Byzantine onion steeples and towers are common.

We enter Arlberg province, a popular ski area, stopping in St. Anton for lunch.

**THE ROAD** to the Arlberg Pass winds around a cliff face and a long steep drop to the River Inn far below us. We see peasant women working in the fields. There are tall churches with thin-shingled spires on both sides of the valley wherever there is a clutch of houses and many high perfectly tended green meadows with chalets sprinkled about.

We are on our way to Sunny Salzburg. During the afternoon we cross into Germany briefly, then back into Austria. Salzburg (Salt Fort) is on the banks of the River Salz.

Our hotel is the Ausperg. It treats us to comfortable twin beds, thick, warm comforters and warm radiators. We begin to thaw. Ich bleibe hier! I will stay here!

IT'S COLD, foggy and damp outside. We tramp through a tiny cemetery where ev-

erybody who was anybody is buried. Fresh flowers adorn many of the tombs. Not all the bodies are beneath the stones which bear their names. It was the custom in other days to bury the head of an important person such as a monarch or saint in one church or churchyard and bury various other body parts at other sites. We see the catacombs dug into the face of a cliff near the ancient cemetery, and we see the castle on the hilltop. We see St. Peter's Cathedral, the original of which dated from 690 A.D. We see Mozart's birthplace and the dwelling of an archbishop who had a mistress and 15 children.

Finally, cold and tired, we board the coach and leave for Vienna. There are wayside shrines along the roads and highways: a crucifix, a statue of the Virgin Mary, a statue of St. Joseph — each in its little roofed niche. There are fewer red tiled roofs. They are grey now, laid in diamond patterns or vertical rows, like sheets of corrugated aluminum.

We cross the Danube, the second largest river in Europe. We saw it first in the Black Forest where it rises for its run to the Black Sea. We pass through Durnstein, where Richard Lionheart was incarcerated after the First Crusade. Richard's prison on a pinnacle overlooking Durnstein is, like the Lionheart himself, now in ruins. There are terraced bluffs along the way, with thick grape vines.

and beautifully gravel — banked on both sides. In the distance are rugged, rocky mountains. As we approach Vienna they moderate to rolling hills and the valleys, woods and meadows.

The Vienna Woods surround Vienna, a city of 1.5 million. We drive through the trees to our Tourotel in the suburb of Ob-erria. We decided to eat in the hotel dining room. It is a warm, cozy place where tall correct waiters with completely correct manners take orders and then disappear for what must be the correct amount of time — hours, it seems to us — before returning with cool drinks, hot dishes and large bills, all presented with perfection.

Many, many minutes later the waiter returns, having taught us, why those in his line of work are called "waiters" though I believe the diners are the "waiters" and the servers are the "waited-for." He is wheeling a serving cart piled high with the main course and various accompaniments. All heads turn to watch as our "waited-for" lifts a plate, spoons a side dish, brandishes a knife, twirls a fork, stirs a sauce.

ON ALL Hallows' Day we go into the city of Wien for a tour of St. Stephen's Cathedral, which is so dark that hardly anything can be seen. Our guide, a neat, well-dressed Austrian woman of some 30 years, brooks no nonsense. Her English is precise. Her manner is that of an im-

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THE DANUBE is tranquil, slow, wide

## Earth Day welcomes animal views

By Iris Sanderson Jones  
staff writer

David Barker will look at the earth from the point of view of a snake this week. Earth Day has a special meaning if every living thing is out to get you and you are only one-inch high.

I'll celebrate the occasion from the point of view of an orangutan. I had tea with an orangutan recently and his viewpoint cannot be ignored by anyone interested in Planet Earth.

Barker is the Curator of Education for the Gladys Porter Zoo in Brownsville, Texas, and he loves to tell visitors how scary the world looks to a snake.

"Snakes may be six feet long but they're only an inch tall, with the same structure and organs that we have but no arms or legs. And they're slow," Barker said. "The fastest snake measured in the U.S. moved at 3.5 mph, but the average is only 2.5 mph."

"There are about 3,000 different kinds of snakes in the world, most of them very tiny," Barker said. "From the snake's point of view



crossroads

Iris  
Jones

there are four kinds of animals: Small ones he can eat, small ones he can't eat, big ones that eat him and big ones that hurt him.

"So what can a snake do? He hides, stands motionless, runs very slowly, and fights creatively by inflating himself, flaring his head, hissing, wriggling, defecating and striking."

Barker has got us his audience now, so he slips into his real subject: you.

He talks about the ways that you and I and 5.1 billion other people affect the ecosystems that support our lifestyle. About the DDT in every living system, including the penguins of Antarctica. About what people do to the last major rain forest, which is six times the size of Texas.

The green snake he photographed in a healthy ecosystem in Mexico is extinct now. Ninety-nine percent of the species that existed on earth are extinct now. Fifty forms of life become extinct every day, according to my "snake man."

Zoos are on the front line of the war against those of us who terrorize the planet. They fight the same war on the other side of the world in Singapore Zoological Gardens, known as the Open Zoo because animals live in natural settings surrounded by jungle and moats.

Kids love to watch the daily shows featuring elephants and seals. Biologists bring about endangered species: the golden lion tamarins (only 200 left in the mountain forests of Brazil); and the Komodo dragon of Indonesia, the largest living lizard in the world.

The Komodo dragon is a lot bigger than a snake — six feet long and 70 pounds — and he eats things as big and strong as wild deer and wild pigs, but he still only survives on Komodo Island and the Lesser Sunda Islands.

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MICKY JONES

The orangutan, "Wolfgang," finds comfort with zookeeper "Ram," but other visitors at the Singapore Zoo don't feel the same.