



Kalgi

From Brampton to Austria

"I've learned something new every single day"

Well, I can't believe I'm writing these words but, I am! This is my very last Beaver Tale! Wow, time has flown by really fast!!! I'm just so thankful for a new experience, new language, new friends, new adventures and a new life! It's been quite a heck of a ride and I've enjoyed every moment of it. There are only two and half months left in my exchange and I'm going to make the best of it!

I got the chance to meet an exchange student from Austria who came to Canada for her exchange and it was really nice seeing her after a year. She showed me around her city and I met her family. It was strange meeting them because I was so used to her being an exchange student that I hadn't really thought about the fact that she has a family. They were all really hospitable and so friendly with me. It was also very strange to speak with her in German when just a year ago I had no German knowledge. We had always spoken in English and now we were just speaking German! It really hit me there how much I had learned and I'm just so lucky! We walked around in Vienna and saw other things in the city I hadn't gotten the chance to see with Rotary; it was really nice to spend some time out in a different part of Austria. It was nice to see that she was doing really well with her life in Austria and I'm really glad to know such a friendly person and a friendly family.

Easter was also amazing to see; in Austria we get one week break to celebrate the festive season. There were decorations of eggs and rabbits everywhere and the fairs opened up to the little kids who wanted to ride on Chu-Chu Trains and it was really nice to join in on the fun. It was also eye-opening to see how many people showed up to Mass on the Sunday before the Easter Weekend. The first half of the Mass was outdoors and the second half was indoors. I really enjoyed the ceremonies that followed Easter because it really showed a part of the Austrian culture I had never seen before. A time of togetherness and sharing and caring; I've only ever seen this behaviour during the Christmas Season and it was nice to have a change. Easter Sunday was spent with my

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first host family. We went on a 35km bike ride and had a picnic with Easter food and a scenic background. I really enjoyed spending time with my first host family again and the family friends from that side. Seeing all the different coloured eggs were also nice and cool to see....blue, green, orange, pink, yellow, red, purple.... Every single colour was in that bowl full of eggs. I also took part in an egg Easter hunt to find chocolate and other eggs. It was nice to feel like a kid again and to feel the Easter season still there and evident despite how old you were.

My birthday also passed and I celebrated it with another girl who had the same birthday as me. She turned nineteen and I turned seventeen and it was one of the best birthday parties I've ever had! I've never had a joint birthday party but, it was really cool! We wore the same things except in different colours and we were always jumping up and down and how exciting and cool it was to have a joint birthday party. We even had a homemade Sacher Torte made especially for us with coloured whip cream on the top. It was definitely a night to remember and I will always be thankful to those who helped us plan it. We really couldn't have pulled it off without them! The party was on Saturday May 7th and on the 8th (our actual birthdays) I stayed with my third host family and they too made me a huge Sacher Torte and gave me wonderful gifts. They gave me a picture book about Austria and a special Austrian soda called Almdudler in a HUGE six pack! I was so happy! I really love Almdudler and I'm going to miss it when I go back to Canada. My birthday was filled with happiness and joy and again, I'm so grateful to the amount of friends and people that care about me here because without them, I wouldn't have nearly the amount of fun that I do have if they weren't in my life.

I've created such a grand routine here; Mondays are free after school, Tuesdays I have Hip-Hop class, Wednesdays I have an exercise class, Thursdays I have choir, Fridays I play in a band that plays famous songs and gets together to play for fun, and Saturdays and Sundays are either spent with friends or spent with the host family. It's going to be strange to leave this routine in a couple of months and it's going to be really weird not speaking in German all the time! I'm sure I've probably made mistakes writing this Beaver Tale but, I can't help it when German is the only language I speak. I think it's safe to say that I have absolutely, whole heartedly fallen in love with the German language. I love speaking it, I love understanding it, and I love reading it.....EVERYTHING!!!!!! I don't want to leave, I've never really felt homesick since I've been here and I think when I leave, I'm going to feel homesick for Austria. I can't believe how this country has grabbed such a hold on me! It kind of makes me upset to write this Beaver Tale in English when I really want to be writing it in German but, in German we say "So ist das Leben"...."That's life." I've really enjoyed my year here; I've had no regrets and I've learned something new every single day, whether it was a new word or a moral to a story. I'm not sure how to continue with this but, the point is, I have lived it to the fullest; I look back and I'm content with myself and the amount I have done; I'm happy, and that's all that counts! Last Beaver Tale....I really still can't believe this at all....but, like I said, I'm going to make the best of the last two and a half months I have

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left.

Thank you Rotary 7080 and Rotary 1910 for making this possible for me and helping me become someone new.

Liebe Grüße!!!!!!

Kalzi

Austria