

Ski Teacher's Diary

6. März 2010

It's 18.00 pm! Everything prepared.....rooms ready, dinner on hold and four anxious ski teachers awaiting the storm. But: The storm ain't coming. At least not for a while. After another 3 hour of waiting the buses pull up in front of the building, spilling out 124 exhausted 8th graders plus a crew of even more exhausted teachers. Still: We are glad they are here safely!

What's next? Dinner. And Austria (i.e. the family Wintersteller) does its very best: Wiener Schnitzel, which imminently improves the mood. Last item on the shortened agenda: Move into the rooms, brush your teeth and lights out. At least that's what the teachers wish for! A neatly ordered house turns into a madhouse first...until sleep finally takes its toll.

7. März 2010

Guten Morgen! 7.00 am, not everybody's favorite time to get up, especially not after a talked through night. However it is SKIING TIME! But there is still an obstacle... 110 eager skiers are without material. So we stop by the local Unterlercher Ski rental for a short hold up. They surrender immediately and render their skies without further violence. Some participants have their first encounter with a Ski boot. They realize: This footwear is not a cosy sneaker. Even to close it up creates insurmountable problems to some. But the desire to cast themselves down a hillside is stronger. Everybody finds a pair and off we are for another short bus trip that takes us to the skiing area.

Not only students have their problems with the material. A colleague unloaded his skies from the car this morning. He was sort of surprised facing a pair of two absolutely incompatible ones. So much for grabbing your gear in a dark cellar and loading it at night. Well, now he's sporting brand new rental equipment....I think I will misplace my gear next year. Everybody realizes: Whow....! These are real mountains and real hillsides with threatening slopes. When putting on the skies, some former enthusiasts get mixed feelings. Another surprise: Lots of lifts and none of them for use because the ski teacher mafia decided to test any student claiming to be "advanced" for their existing skills. A sobering experience to some, a happy ending for others.

The "beginners" also have their first impressions. Not only boots, but also skies and poles to lug around. They are clumsy and heavy and there seems to be no real sense in scooting around with all that gear. Here comes the great moment of the Ski instructor: Enlighten these novices with the spirit of real skiing, i.e. scramble up the mountain. With the newly mounted equipment a real fun experience. But as strange as it seems after 3 hours of instruction, the first snow contact shows results. There might be some sense in this Skiing business after all.

A Lasagne evening dinner and group games conclude an eventful first day, the ski teacher drops to bed dead beaten only to jump up again when the doors slam and another night owl needs to be reminded save the energy for the slopes.

8. März 2010

It is 7.30, time to get up.

No need to be reminded of what I did yesterday. My body tells the tale at each joint: Scrambled up the hillside uncounted times, lifted up beginners about to despair when trying to disengage their entwined skies and /or legs, lugged tons of lunch food around and earned an extra bonus by having my parked car dented by some backing up specialist. So good prospects for today. Glance out of the window.....whow, this is it! Blue skies, -13° C and no cloud in sight. Raises the spirit immediately....so go and get' em . So I do, I am greeted by an enthusiastic yawning of the kids of the room I am in charge of. No mercy here, get up ... breakfast and the slopes are waiting.

The weather seems to convince and we do have a great day out which terminates in the ultimate thrill for the beginner tired of heaving him/herself uphill: The first ride on the "Plate Lift", sort of a solo T-bar. What an achievement, motivation reaches its climax. Especially after the successful return to the bottom of the slope. More or less controlled, everybody completed the first full run that deserves the name. The ski teacher is filled with secret pride which he will never admit to. Anyway: Another bunch ready for overcrowded slopes and long liftlines. Why are we doing this to ourselves?

Easy to tell, just have a look in the faces of those who overcame some worries, who look back up and conclude: I made it down here on my own skies! Mission of day two accomplished. No way. The pleasures of a trip involving 124 students are countless, starts with frozen tea bags on the window sills, continues with broken inventory items and culminates in a dinner at 95 dB which makes me think about health regulations at work. Being a pilot, I can judge noise. I would rate this in the category of a Citation twin jet.

It is 22.00 pm now, time to make the daily electronic device collection round. It is amazing to look at the assembly of electronic gadgets these kids call their own. In order to guarantee a minimum time of sound sleep for them (and us) we hunt them down. So ... here we go. It ain't easy...but the weathered ski teacher is hard to come by.