



**Hinterbrand Lodge
Outdoor Education Center
Part I**

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Outdoor Education Center
My Outdoor Education Journey
By Jimmie Jeffcoat

My outdoor education history began when Drew Record came from the Turkey District Office to organize a trip for Incirlik High School students. We organized a weekend trip which included overnight in tents and a long rappel. Part of the orientation included information about Project Bold. A female student and I applied for and were accepted to the summer program. We both attended Project Bold the following summer. She returned to Turkey at the end of the session, but I moved to Bitburg Middle School, Germany. The Middle School already had applied to take a group of thirty students to the Lodge during the school year. I was able to join Steve and Helen in organizing and accompanying the students to the Lodge. The following summer, I returned to the lodge to work in summer program. The following year, the staff and facility of BMS organized a school wide outdoor education activity for the whole school. At the semester break in 1982, I accepted a transfer to Berchtesgaden to work at the Lodge to replace Marlene who received a compassionate transfer. I worked as an instructor until the end of the 1983-84 school year when I was selected as Director. I continued to direct the school year and summer program until the end of the 1989-90 school year. While not being directly involved in the Lodge program in several years, I was able to organize and support "Charm School", a High School/Middle School, all female mentoring, self-image improvement activity at Vicenza High School. In the following pages I will address only the times when I was an instructor there or Director of the Lodge or Outdoor Education activities in which I was involved.

Turkey 1974.



1982 - 1984.



1984 - 1990



Hinterbrand Lodge
Outdoor Education Center
Hinterbrand Lodge Program Overview
By Jimmie Jeffcoat

The Hinterbrand Lodge schedule was divided into two parts: school year and summer. The school year portion was longer and more diverse in its offerings, but the summer experience was longer (21 days) and more physically challenging.

The Outdoor Education school year program had to fit into the DoDDS published school year calendar. For maximum use of the facility, each school week should have five days. Unfortunately, the reality was several three and four day weeks scattered throughout the school year calendar. We could sometimes customize a four day week for a school group that could arrive and start earlier than normal. The shorter weeks were filled with special programs or used for equipment maintenance or logistical preparation.

Although the two experiences happened at different times of the year, it is impossible to separate them completely. First, the staff members both required an identical set of skills. Not only the lodge staff, but the visiting sponsors and adult volunteers required lodge experience or intense familiarization with lodge facilities and policies.

Finding educators with the required skills, commitment and desire to work at the Lodge was often challenging. Berchtesgaden is a beautiful place, but it is quite isolated from any large US community and support facilities. Staff members were expected to work teacher weekends, special program weeks, and provide logistical support for all of programs. Usually at least one staff member was present anytime the lodge was occupied. In



addition to working during the school year schedule, most lodge staff members worked at Project Bold five of their seven or eight weeks of summer break. Days at the Hinterbrand Lodge were normally physical, long and often intense.

Randy welcoming Frankfurt High School to the Hinterbrand Lodge. During the school year the instructor staff consisted of a Director (administrator) and three Instructors, all of

whom were qualified classroom teachers. The summer program, Project Bold, staff was much larger. Each summer there was a two week staff training session followed by two, three week sessions with student participants. All three sessions required the following: a Course Director, House Manager, Nurse, Technical Instructor, Technical Instructor Assistant, four Instructors, an assistant for each of the instructors. An Assistant instructor

could be a teacher or student who had completed the Project Bold program and been recommended by their instructors, Student instructor assistants were commonly referred to as “Sherpas”. All summer staff were on duty 24 hours per day for every day of the session. There were no substitutes for the positions for the school year or for the summer session.

Hinterbrand Lodge Staff

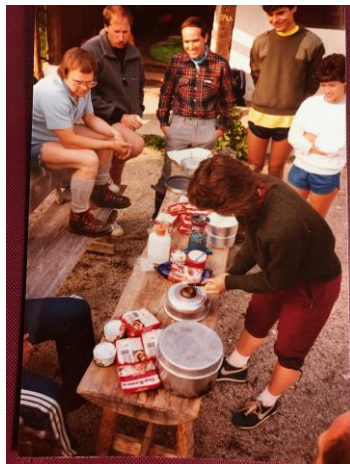


Project Bold Staff Training

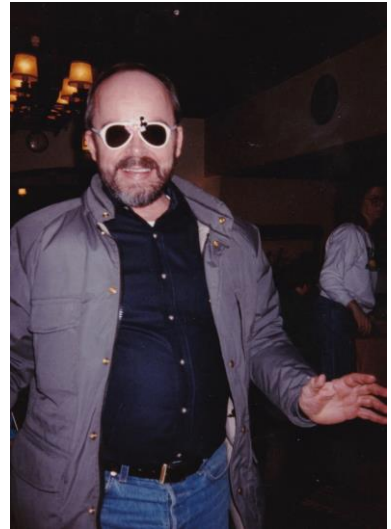


Project Bold Staff

Bill



Sherpas



**Hinterbrand Lodge
Outdoor Education Program
By Jimmie Jeffcoat and Vince Bachert**

Hinterbrand Lodge Staff 1981-82

Richard Gordon, Director

Karen Thompson, Instructor

Peter Reynolds, Instructor

Jimmie Jeffcoat, Instructor (Replacing Marlene Knudsen at mid-year)

(*I was only present after mid-term 1981-82)

Hinterbrand Lodge Staff 1982-84

Richard Gordon, Director

Jimmie Jeffcoat, Instructor

Jill Stein/Storm, Instructor

Mike Murray, Instructor

Hinterbrand Lodge Staff 1984-86

Jimmie Jeffcoat, Director

Mike Murray, Instructor

Vince Bachert, Instructor

Bill Daniels, Instructor

Hinterbrand Lodge Staff 1986-87

Jimmie Jeffcoat, Director

Bill Daniels, Instructor

Vince Bachert, Instructor

Roger Preuss, Instructor

Hinterbrand Lodge Staff 1987-90

Jimmie Jeffcoat, Director

Randy Parson, Instructor

Jackie Thayer, Instructor

Bud Foutz, Instructor

Outdoor Education Center
Hinterbrand Lodge
School Year Instructors
By Jimmie Jeffcoat

There have been many instructions before and after me. I will address only the instructors who worked at the lodge when I was there. Instructors are the backbone of the Outdoor Education program. There are no substitute teachers at the Lodge. If one of the instructors was missing for whatever reason, we just compensated. We just did it, no matter what it took. Working at the Lodge was often grueling, physically and mentally challenging, but it did not seem important. Every instructor shared with the other instructors. The Lodge was staffed with talented, hardworking, dedicated teachers who were willing to share their talents.

I will only address the history of the Lodge during the time that was there. When I came to work at the Lodge, **Richard Gordon** was the Director, I replaced **Marlene Knudsen**. **Peter Reynolds** and **Karen Thompson** were the other two instructors. The clerk was a new, temporary hire. The Lodge instructors were outstanding educators with individual strengths. **Peter** is quietly intelligent and physically strong. He was an Outward Bound instructor in the US before working at the Lodge. **Karen** is one of the most organized people I have ever known. She has an excellent grasp of nutrition and food. **Richard** is caring, kind and understanding. I enjoyed every day that we worked together. These are the other instructors who worked at the Lodge when I was there. These are my personal observations of my colleagues. **Mike Murray** seemed to be the most talented instructor in the most areas. He often taught new things about the Berchtesgaden area in staff meetings. He produced a booklet (Silver Thistle) and a film about the Hinterbrand Lodge program which still exists on YouTube. **Vince Bachert** was an incredible teacher, always smiling with a great sense of humor. He worked tirelessly, bringing vast reserves of energy and talent to the job. **Roger Pruess** was always smiling. He possessed a very quick wit and a laid back-perspective. **Bill Daniels** was a strong, talented, technical climber. He spoke German and was often thought to be quiet and shy. I think he was just observing the rest of us. In addition to being multi-talented, **Jill Storm** was also very strong and quick witted. No assignment was too large or too small. She usually ran or biked several miles to work, then worked. **Randy Parson** was another quiet, strong instructor. He drew on his spelunking background to quickly develop his climbing skills. **Jackie Thayer's** Kindergarten background seemed unusual in the beginning, but she

added a fresh perspective and was a great role model. The most enthusiastic instructor was probably **Bud Foutz**. Bud is a real people person. He loved climbing and was always searching for new challenges to add to the Lodge offerings. I think he holds the record for the working longest at the Lodge.



Left: Bud, Jackie, Jimmie, Randy
Right: Jimmie, Randy, Jim, Kari, Unknown,
Jackie, Bud



Jimmie, Mike, Dr. John Ed Lee, Bill, Vince



Roger

Maria Koller was our clerk. She learned quickly how to deal with the many, varied duties required in her job. She was very well connected to the local community



and made many connections for us in the local community.

Magic” Maria Koller

A rare photo of Bill inside the Lodge office



after the group leaves,
Vince, Maria, Roger.

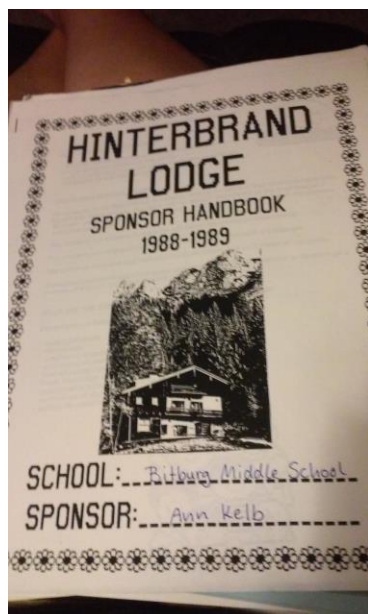


Richard receiving an award

Hinterbrand Lodge
Outdoor Education Center
Sponsor Preparation
By Jimmie Jeffcoat

A **key component** of any successful school year program at the Hinterbrand Lodge is the school sponsor. We provided the school sponsors with a detailed time line for the student's preparation as well as a journal for each student to document his/her preparation for and experience while at the Lodge. Every sponsor was required to have at least one experience at the Lodge. These experiences include having attended any one of the following: a Teacher Weekend, a student week as a non-sponsor, a special themed (i.e. writing or other subject matter) experience or an administrative meeting at the Lodge.

Teachers who qualify and wish to sponsor a group in the following school year had to submit a completed, standard application, signed by the school administrator, by the published deadline in the spring. These applications were reviewed by the Lodge staff and the following school year schedule was completed and approved by the District Superintendent or the appropriate Regional Office administrator. The school sponsor and school administrator were notified of the schools selection.



When the selections were complete and the calendar filled, each staff member was assigned a school sponsor. The staff member was responsible for all coordination with that school's sponsor. Materials for the visiting school were shipped by the staff to each school sponsor. We, the Lodge staff members, tried to be as available as possible to the school sponsors, especially first time sponsors. One would think that having a single point of contact at each end of the line, an experienced sponsor and a detailed sponsor's guidebook would ensure smooth and problem-free experience: however, sometimes Murphy did show up. The resulting problem, no matter how sudden or seemingly severe, was resolved somehow and the students all had a good experience.

**Hinterbrand Lodge
Outdoor Education Center
School Week Schedule**
By Jimmie Jeffcoat



Dip.

A five day week provides the best framework for a school group outdoor experience. Four day experiences can be modified to provide an acceptable experience if the group could arrive early in the day. Three day weeks were filled with logistical tasks or special activities. School groups were normally divided into three small groups or crews of eight to ten students. Each crew had an instructor and a school sponsor. We planned to provide each group with a similar experience, but not at the same time. The result was a carefully choreographed dance through the activities guided by the instructors while keeping the student groups separated. Over the years, some activities evolved and devolved, but the students' experience remained consistently positive. Every day the students at the Lodge were awakened, got dressed, met outside for group stretching and a run and dip. In winter, a Snow Angel activity was sometimes substituted for Run and

- Monday: meet group, issue equipment, student orientation, sponsors go to Lodge for sponsor orientation, (supervised) students find way to Lodge, explain and begin students' meal time activities rotation, evening activities and bedtime rules.
- Tuesday: Run and Dip or Snow Angels, breakfast mealtime activities, trust fall, group problem solving activities (initiatives), ropes course, orienteering, lunch outside, proper return to the Lodge, evening meal activities, evening activities, including reflections, discussions and journal writing. Possible star gazing or trust walk.
- Wednesday: Seasonal choice. Warm weather: circuitous hike, hike to a "Hutte" for an overnight. Cold weather: cross country skiing, tubing, sledding, or snowshoeing.
- Thursday: Ropes course, initiatives and rappel and Rif Climbing Tower in Austria or a Luge ride.
- Friday: Run and Dip, meal prep, Breakfast, Lodge clean up and prep for next school group, load the bus and walk down to meet the bus to return home.



On paper, the activities that were planned may seem static, but that was not the case. Each week was different because of the age of the group, the thoroughness of students' preparation and skill, experience and dedication of the school sponsors. Each school sponsor was given a detailed guide with a specific timeline to prepare the students for the Outdoor Education program experience. Each school sponsor had a specific Lodge staff member with whom to coordinate and ask questions. The staff met every morning to prepare for the day's activities and on Friday afternoon, after the school group had gone, we met again to examine the quality of the just completed program



and prepare for the next week's program. The staff worked together to deliver the best possible program to the students and worked tirelessly to support the teacher sponsors with the evening activities.

Hinterbrand Lodge Outdoor Education Center School Year Program

by Jimmie Jeffcoat and Vince Bachert

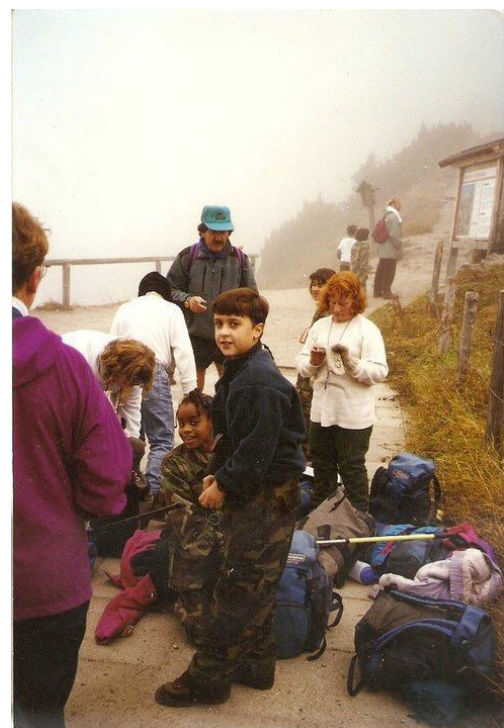
Are we there yet?

In a typical, five day week at the Lodge during the school year, early Monday mornings were spent getting ready for the new groups, and time permitting, we would check the loaded student backpacks and then put them in the van. Two or three of the staff would drive down to meet the group in the Alpine Inn or Jenner Bahn parking lot. Going out to the Jenner Bahn parking lot gave many more options to choose the "wrong path" to find the Lodge. This happened on a regular basis.

Because Berchtesgaden is a great distance from most of the schools that we served, we wanted the students to begin the program immediately and expend some energy as well. After meeting the Lodge staff, one Lodge instructor gave a brief orientation followed by issuing each student a backpack with equipment. The group chose a student leader for the "walk up" and the entire group began their first challenge, finding the way to Lodge. Most student "walk up" experiences were remarkably similar. During the hike, student groups usually struggled with keeping the students together, following instructions from a student leader, being loud, littering and staying on the trail. The biggest surprise for each student came when they realized that the Lodge instructor would not show them the way to the Lodge.

The hike from the Jenner Bahn parking lot to the Hinterbrand Lodge should take a normal hiker a half hour. Student groups usually took about two hours. The unofficial record holder for the longest hike (time and maybe distance) to the Lodge belongs to one of Vince Bachert's middle school groups his first year at the Lodge. Quite near the Jenner Bahn parking lot is the valley terminal for the Jenner Bahn. The Hinterbrand Lodge is also near the middle station of the Jenner Bahn. The students decided to follow the straight line of the Jenner Bahn (Ski Lift) instead of the shorter, curved line of the walking path. The lines on the map were very similar, but the Ski Lift was marked "Jenner Bahn". Following the trail under the Jenner Bahn looked easy....at first. The students stuck with their original decision as long as possible, finally stymied by some very steep, high cliffs. They finally made it to the Lodge some four hours late.

During the time the students were trying to find the Lodge, the other Lodge staff members were orienting the visiting teacher to the Lodge, the Lodge rules and programs. The students were then placed into two or three groups and assigned sleeping rooms. The Instructor who did the "walk-up" usually stayed with the group, did the evening Lodge orientation, shared dinner with the students, slept overnight, and did the "run & dip" in the morning. Then he or she went home at noon after being on duty all night and the following morning.



The photo is Bud Foutz with very young group at the Jenner Bahn parking lot to begin their Outdoor Education week program at the Hinterbrand Lodge.

Hinterbrand Lodge Outdoor Education Center
School Week Schedule Components
By Jimmie Jeffcoat

Run and Dip

The most talked about component of the all OE programs has to be the Run and Dip. During the entire time I worked at the Lodge when we had students, we did the run and dip. Each morning after waking up, a bit of stretching and a short run to warm up, everyone would dip in the water. The only exception was the occasional snow angel. Even when the weather was warm, the water was cold. That program component was simple, dramatic, and memorable! It was also universally dreaded! So why do it? The exercise is physically not challenging, but mentally usually quite difficult. It illustrated to everyone that attitude plays an integral part in the ability to succeed. Since everyone did the run and dip every time, it also clearly illustrated that the success of group depended on everyone fully participating and helping the group members who might be struggling.

The Hinterbrand Lodge staff rotated staying overnight in the Lodge each week. Thus, each morning a different instructor was responsible for Run and Dip. We did not want the students to become bored with one dip pool: so we found several different places for the dip. With so many variables, there was a myriad of experiences and lots of stories! I must give my friend and colleague, Mike Murray, credit for initiating this special twist on the classic Run and Dip activity. Imagine the mountain environment in winter. When the streams and ponds were frozen and there was snow on the ground, the students expected to make “Snow Angels” each day instead of dipping in water. However, Mike had other plans. After stretching and a run to the classic dip pond, the students gathered around the edge of the pool. Mike walked out onto the frozen surface of the pool. Immediately the students began to rejoice because the pool was too

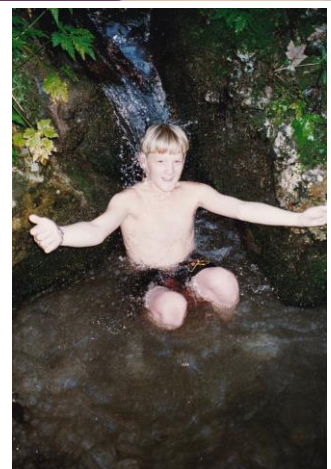


frozen to enter. Their joy disappeared as they watched Mike remove an ice ax from his backpack and chop a hole in the ice. He then slipped the big pieces of ice underneath the remaining ice, and began his orientation to the Hinterbrand Lodge version of the Polar Bear Plunge. Needless to say, the students’ reactions were universally uniform. They all said that they weren’t going to jump into the water, but they all took the plunge. They all eased into but quickly exited the icy water. It was probably the most talked about

activity of the week. The photo to the left is courtesy of Randy Taylor. There are many more examples of the Run and Dip in different places and different weather conditions. Do you have a favorite?



This shows the dip pond, the fire reservoir, and a running



stream, and there are more places! Yes, that is a hole in the ice in the last photo! I can't remember if Steve and Dennis are there to help me in case I slip or to ensure that I actually go in!

Outdoor Education Center
Hinterbrand Lodge
Adventure Ropes Course
By Jimmie Jeffcoat

The ropes course is divided into two parts: lower and upper. Both parts are permanently installed and co-located conveniently near the Lodge. Although the lower ropes portion requires a lower skill level, it is still challenging for Middle School and most High School aged students. The ropes course is designed to be challenging and stressful, but it must also be safe. Most of the components of the lower ropes course can be secured by spotting (having students constantly prepared to break the fall of the participant). Any component in the course where the participant's feet are more than three feet off the ground should be belayed or anchored. Helmets are required for any activity in the ropes course. The Lodge ropes course is semi-permanently installed. Ropes course components should always be constructed and maintained by competent, experienced personnel. Here are some examples of our students in the high and low ropes course:

Low ropes



Not easy!



Small Step



Two Rope Crawl

High Ropes

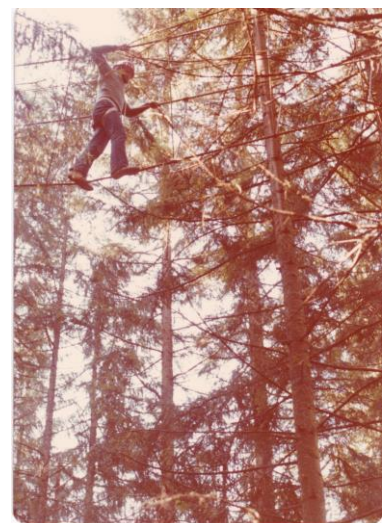
Ladder to Bridges



Two rope bridge



Three rope bridge





Drop and Go!



Zip!



Climb down!

Outdoor Education Center Hinterbrand Lodge Initiatives

By Jimmie Jeffcoat

Initiatives are problems designed to challenge small groups. Any good initiative is both physically and mentally challenging. It should highlight a specific goal. The solution must be safely achievable. It should be fun. Participants often had to be reminded not to share the solution with others. The initiatives most used were:

The Gordian Knot: Participants stand close together. They reach in and join hands without looking. Each hand should grasp the hand of another person. Without letting go of hands, the group must untie the knot.

The Trolley: two 4x4 beams with ropes attached are provided. The group must cross an area with only the beam touching the ground.

The Raft: all members of the group must be supported on the surface of a 2'x2' slightly elevated platform. For smaller groups additional complications can be introduced, such as a bag, backpack, or coiled rope.

Peanut Butter Gorge: Participants are directed to cross a simulated peanut butter gorge, a suspended tire. All participants pass from one side of the gorge to the other without anyone returning to the original side, except to spot (safety) the last person going through.

Electric Griddle: all participants must cross a specified area with only two long boards and three small logs. If anyone touches the "griddle" the crew must start over.

The Wall: Crew members must scale a 12' wall. Only 2 crew members are allowed on top to aid other participants. Helpers at the top must rotate so that everyone gets a turn at the top. After getting over the wall, participants may return the front to spot, but not to help.

Helmets are required for the last three initiatives.



to

**Outdoor Education Center
Hinterbrand Lodge
Leadership, Task Completion and Processing**

By Jimmie Jeffcoat

In addition to orienteering and route finding, our goal was to get students to practice questioning techniques and to expand their ability to communicate effectively in a small group setting. Each group had a designated student leader. The mantle of leadership was often a new experience for the leader. We explained that the adults were there for safety, not to make decisions. The instructor would only intervene if the the students were in danger. Having an adult there who refused to tell them what to do when they floundered was an unexpected and unfamiliar experience. Some group problems were often caused by: a reluctant leader, uninterested group members, lack of attention to detail and expecting to be rescued by an adult. When the group stopped functioning, the instructor would stop the group, form a circle and discuss what happened. **The students** had to take turns, giving each group member an opportunity to state his/her opinion on the matter, until a decision was made by the students. The group continued until they achieved their goal or another group meeting was required. Whenever a goal was accomplished or an activity ended, the group formed a circle and discussed (processed) what happened during the activity. The after-action discussions were key for increasing effective personal and interpersonal communication, personal growth and interpersonal relationships. Rotation of student responsibilities, especially leadership roles, and encouraging every individual to participate in every discussion seemed to increase meaningful involvement in the decision making process. The increase in effective communication skills, combined with the successful completion of challenging activities, such as the run and dip, ropes course, and a rappel, seemed to increase each student's confidence and self esteem. It was most interesting to observe the changes occur in such a relatively short time



— a few days.

**Hinterbrand Lodge
Outdoor Education Center
Snowshoeing to Königsbachalm
By Jimmie Jeffcoat**

In my opinion the best part of the program drove away from Berchtesgaden most Friday afternoons during the school year and at the end of every session of Project Bold. That is when the participants returned to their homes a bit different as a result of the “Hinterbrand Lodge “ experience. I think that we owe it to ourselves and others who did not attend to share our experience, whether it is humorous, inspirational or just hard to believe. Here is an example.

I’m pretty sure that the school group was from Patch High School and it was late January or February. It was Wednesday and the weather was heavy. It had snowed most of the day and we were going to experience something very special: an overnight at a genuine “Alm Hutte” meadow hut. Many of our students did overnight in a “manned” hut, Such as the “Stahl Haus” or “Schneibstein Haus”. Only a few groups were ever allowed this privilege. The students struggled with the hike on snowshoes. It was a strenuous hike. When we arrived at the Königsbachalm Hutte, the students were happy to be indoors and reluctant to venture outdoors again. After snowing steadily during dinner time, the weather cleared. There was not a cloud in the sky. We were miles from any electric lights, but with a full moon on a huge meadow of undisturbed, new fallen snow, it was bright as day! I have no words to describe how spectacular that scene was.



After considerable effort, I convinced the group that they would not freeze and die if they went outside again that evening. (It might have been 7:30 or 8 pm). The rules for the outing were: I place each student and they remain there until I return for them. No talking. Look. Listen. Be ready to describe your experience. We only stayed out for ten or fifteen minutes, but it was simply one of the most beautiful experiences that I had while at the Hinterbrand Lodge. Königsbachalm in summer!