

LOCAL NEWS

Shining through From Austrian Alps to South America.

By MANDY MARTIN
STAFF WRITER

From Austria, to Canada via Switzerland to the jungles of South America, Henry Buchegger has finally had the time to record some of the incredible experiences and events in his 71 years. Last year, he sat down to sort through the photos, the thoughts and memories. The result is a 120-page self-published book, brim-full of photos, alive with conviction and often gut-wrenching reality.

While the book is a personal memoir, it is Henry's wife Joyce and the couple's six children who are the earthly angels of the tale. As a family, they were 11 years in the jungles of South America, serving with a mission to the Ayores Indians. The meeting and seemingly incongruous meshing of two very different cultures is clear in the factual relaying of events.

And there are all the other 61 years to place in one family's context, too. Theirs is an adventure few dare to consider, let alone undertake.

Today, Henry and Joyce Buchegger are retired, living in Castleton, attending Eddystone Baptist Church and participate in numerous community and church events. Welcoming, open-

minded and generous, they are alive with curiosity and interest in everyone else. Ask them about their own lives, they are abashed and self-effacing. The wonder, the Bucheggers maintain, is the gift of life itself.

Henry's Memories is a fascinating read.

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"Not much is really known about the history of the Ayores except for some records discovered in the Museum of Natural History in Paris. The Ayores were a nomadic people roaming the jungles of southeastern Bolivia and northwestern Paraguay. They were a robust and healthy people because no one with mental or physical defects was allowed to survive. To become a chief, a man had to prove himself both as a killer and a practicing witch doctor. This was the ambition of most of the young men and resulted in their going off on the warpath against enemy groups two or three times a year.

The Ayores first contact with the white man was in the 1600s when Jesuit missionaries tried and partially succeeded in evangelizing them. One of the Jesuit missionaries with 12 of his converts to Christianity went south from Bolivia into the area that is now known as Paraguay attempting to befriend southern groups.



ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF HENRY BUCHEGGER Joyce Buchegger served as camp nurse. Much eye infection was caused by the custom of removing eyelashes and eyebrows.

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