

## He left the Swiss Alps

# Ex-skier joins vet staff

By BECKY DOBSON  
Battalion Reporter

To ski or not to ski, that was the question.

As Dr. Joerg Auer mulled over his career plans, he had to decide if he wanted to ski from the peaks of the Swiss Alps or work at the feet of crippled horses.

Auer was attending the School of Veterinary Medicine in Zurich, Switzerland, and competing on the university's ski team when he was chosen as a candidate for Switzerland's national ski team in 1970.

The Switzerland native had trained for two years to make the team. He had to make a choice between staying in school or joining the country's ski team.

"I was getting farther and farther behind in school and I didn't want to forfeit all the time and money I had invested," Auer said.

Auer finished vet school in 1973 as a top student in one of the biggest classes ever to graduate.

Auer is now an associate professor in large animal surgery at Texas A&M's College of Veterinary Medicine, a post he accepted a month ago.

"Vet school is completely different there (Zurich)," Auer said. "It is no problem to get in, but it is harder to stay in."

Applicants must complete one year of pre-medical study before they are qualified for acceptance into vet school. When accepted, they must follow a particular curriculum for one year. No grades or

tests are ever given.

At the end of the year one comprehensive exam is given. Students that pass the exam begin a second year of study. Those that fail must take the first year over. This process continues for three years.

"Students there don't gain the same clinical and practical ability as they do here," Auer said. "Instruction is basically all theoretical. Most students never even get a chance to give an injection."

While attending vet school Auer worked closely with the head assistant of equine surgery at Zurich. Through this work Auer said he gained the practical ability lacking in the vet school curriculum.

After completing three years of vet school, a graduate can set up his own veterinary practice although he is not entitled to a doctorate degree. To receive the degree, the student must complete one more year of graduate study.

After receiving his Ph.D Auer came to America.

"I wanted to see it with my own eyes," Auer said, "not just through the Western movies."

Auer studied in a research fellowship in equine anesthesia at the University of Missouri for one year. He spent the last two years serving his residency in large animal surgery at the University of Pennsylvania.

The Swiss surgeon takes a special interest in horses both professionally and as a hobby. He is a judge for the North American Trailriders'

Conference. This requires him to evaluate horsemen as they compete in trailrides.

He also enjoys a sport popularly known in Switzerland as skijoring. This requires competitors to race across frozen lakes on skis behind racehorses.

When asked if this was dangerous Auer replied, "Of course, but it's great fun."

Auer said he plans to become a certified surgeon and is working under Dr. David Hanselka, associate professor of large animal medicine and surgery, to fulfill the certification requirements. After two years of work with Hanselka, Auer will be examined by the surgical board and be granted or rejected his certification.



Battalion photo by Susan Wolfenberger

Dr. Joerg Auer checks one of his patients at the Texas A&M University vet school. Auer is the associate professor of large animal surgery.

## Repair frauds top Texas list

United Press International

HOUSTON — Auto repair complaints are the most common gripe among Texans, a member of the attorney general's office has told a U.S. House subcommittee hearing.

David F. Bragg, chief of the consumer protection division, said his office received 2,000 complaints annually on cases involving alleged fraudulent or incompetent repair work.

He made the remarks before a consumer protection and finance subcommittee hearing held by Rep. Bob Eckhardt, D-Houston. Eckhardt said consumers nationally are spending \$20 billion for unnecessary, avoidable repairs.

Bragg said the formal complaints represented about 10 percent of the problems actually encountered by owners.

He said one solution to auto repair abuses was a city ordinance, such as one adopted in Dallas four years ago. The ordinance used licensing to eliminate fraudulent repair shops from the industry.

Eckhardt and Bragg agreed that regulating repair shops should be left up to state and local officials and not the federal government.

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