

NACHWEIHNACHTSZEIT / POST-CHRISTMAS SEASON

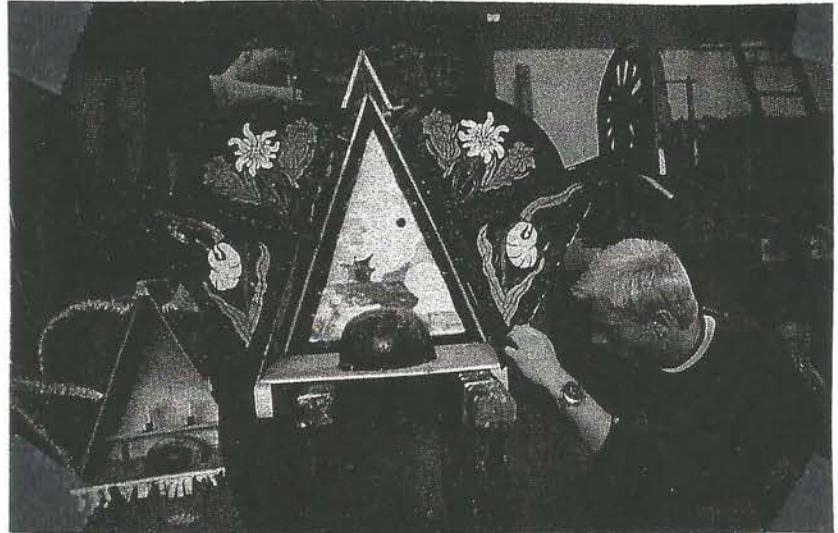
zwölf Heilige Abende / 12 Holy Nights

\$500. The visuals used on the *Kappe* come from various sources including religious as well as secular references.

Traditions (the custom, specific to the *Ebenseer*) of capturing wild birds in winter to set them free in spring, is assuredly the strangest of them all. Legends and tales (Hänsel and Gretel, Frau Holle, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs and others), crafts and rural activities, flora and fauna, the Christmas Crib, and the Passion of Christ, mountains and landscapes, traditional costumes, and regional historical events are the visuals most often depicted amidst avalanches of floral and geometric motifs and arabesques.

Until late that night when the streets have long been deserted, the *Glöckler* will relentlessly pursue their exhausting marathon, driving the evil spirits away from the town.

The next day, the most beautiful of the *Kappen* (each group is allowed to select three of them) will be exhibited in the community hall, and the most outstanding of them will be awarded prizes. And yet another age-old tradition lives to see another year—bringing hopes for spring and a bountiful harvest in the coming year.



**Clockwise from left:** Hundreds of hours of work can go into the creation of the elaborate head-dresses or *Kappe*. Here two *Glöckler* work on a child's *Kappe*. Courtesy Matias Tugores Martorell. A village of eight thousand seven hundred people, *Ebensee* sits in the heart of Austria's *Salzkammergut* region known for its history of salt mining and breathtaking landscapes. Courtesy Matias Tugores Martorell. *Kappe* can weigh close to fifty pounds and measure over eleven feet in length. Courtesy Matias Tugores Martorell. The *Glöcklerlauf* take a break from their march in front of a pension.

