

VACATIONS – CHAPTER TWELVE

As of 9/20/2011

2001 – SWITZERLAND AND GERMANY – Isabel and Bill

May 17-29, 2001

May 17 - Newark NJ Airport – Swiss Air #113 - 9:15 pm to Zurich, Switzerland – Friday, arrival 11:15 am

Return – May 29 - Zurich, Switzerland – Swiss Air # 112 4:25 pm to Newark, NJ 7:15 pm

Auto Europe –Volkswagen Passat 1.8

Thursday, May 17, 2001

Leaving our home at 134 Poplar Avenue, Wayne, PA, my sister Betty drove us to the King of Prussia Mall to get the Trinity Shuttle Service van to Newark Airport, Arriving at 5:15 pm, we boarded Swiss Air Flight 113 departing at 9:15 pm for Zurich, Switzerland. We had a very smooth flight with side seats at the window. Supper at 11:30 was not the best but breakfast at about 3:00 am was better. We arrived at 11:15 am Zurich time, a long flight. We flew at 29,000 feet, outside temperature at - 67 degrees, traveling at 575 mph.

After securing Swiss francs at the bank in the airport, we got a VW Passat, 4-foot stick shift sedan. Traveling through the country-side, we came across a road-stand selling fried chicken in Otelfingen, near Regensburg. So inviting and so tasty. On the top of the stand was a replica of chicken legs.



Bill at Road-side Chicken Stand – see Chicken leg on top

Our first stop was at the small town of Turgi west of Zurich at the Krone Hotel, a block away from the Bahnhof. After supper nearby, we watched CNN before turning in for the night after a long, long day of travel.

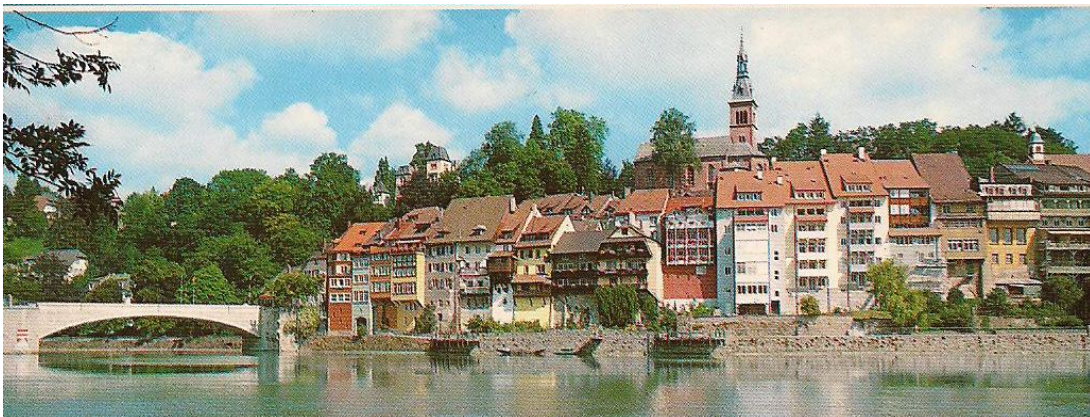
Saturday, May 19, 2001

At fruhstuck here at the Krone Hotel, we were the only ones eating. There are some other men in an adjoining bar, but the fruhstuck room is separate here as in most other guesthouses.

We then drove on to the German border, crossed the Rhine and stayed at the Rebstock Hotel in a tiny town – Laufenberg. What a delightful place.



Laufenberg, Germany at top - Rhine River - Laufenberg, Switzerland at bottom



Laufenberg, Germany on the Upper Rhine River – Our hotel at right of “Yellow” one

Our second floor room overlooks the Rhine with the small town of Laufenberg, Switzerland on the other side of the Rhine. The two towns - originally one – were divided by Napoleon and are now connected by two bridges. Our hotel is a block from the bridge. On this our first visit, there were border guards on the German side. As many people cross the bridge on foot as by car. Having fun with the friendly Border Guard, he made believe that he was handcuffing me in a photo I treasure.



Bill being handcuffed by border guard between German and Switzerland

On the Swiss side there is a swim club at the river's edge, and a beautiful church on the hill. Twice we walked across the bridge and also took photos of the church.

Here on the German side, there is a stone walkway that borders the river and a park-like setting for strolling. The two-level auto garage is a few feet away from the hotel and has the typical parking meters so common throughout Germany. When you park your car, you then go to the meter, put coins in for the length of time desired, get the print-out receipt and place it on the dashboard with the expiration time showing. If a policeman or parking attendant checks it, he can see who violates the time and issue a parking ticket fine. There is usually a meter within the distance of five or six cars but not one for every car as here in the USA. It is another indication of German frugality as well as the evidence of the honor system which seldom seems broken.

Because there was not much to see or do here, we took a drive to Feldberg, Germany through the Black Forest. Here there is a weather station at the top of the mountain, the same place where we went with Jimmy in 1998. Traveling along the narrow roads across the mountains, we were the only car for at least ten miles or more. Beautiful weather, sunny, cool, sweater-weather all day and a jacket after supper.

Sunday, May 20, 2001

Beautiful, sunny Sunday here at the Rebstock Hotel in Laufenburg, Germany as I sit on the deck outside our second floor room watching strollers and bicyclers on the river path below.

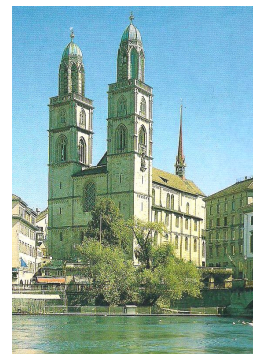
We drove across the Rhine to Laufenburg, Switzerland to use our Swiss Railroad pass to Zurich.



Isabel at Zurich Hauptbahnhof



Tour bus in Zurich



Zwingli's Church

We then went on a two-hour bus tour of the city before going to the Gross Munster (Great Cathedral) where Ulrich Zwingli set the Protestant Reformation in motion in Switzerland. Built in the early 1200's, it became famous when Zwingli removed all statues and relics and even encouraged priests to marry, and opposed the ruling of the Catholic Church and the Pope. Though killed during a conflict between Protestants and Roman Catholics, his words remained: "They may kill the body, but not the soul."

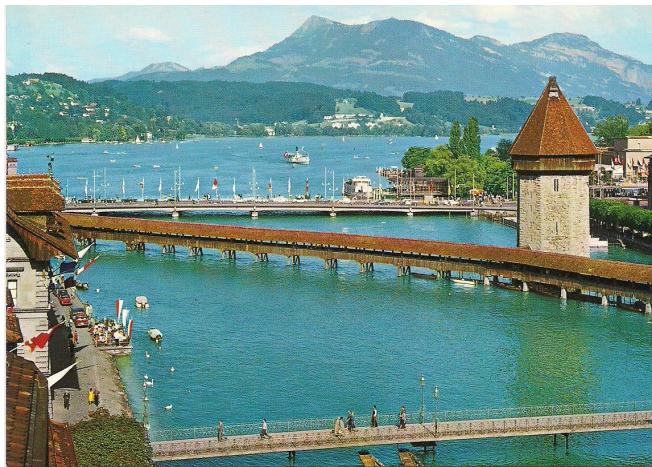
The Cathedral is very plain inside, unlike Roman Catholic churches. I climbed one of the two high towers that overlook the city and the river. Next to the Cathedral is a Protestant (Evangelisch) Seminary.

Catching the train back to Frick and the bus to Laufenburg, we had a delicious supper at a restaurant nearby and called it a very enjoyable and enlightening day.

Monday, May 21, 2001

Up early in Laufenburg to put money in the parking meter, we then walked over the bridge to the Swiss side and visited the beautiful church. Unfortunately, I twisted my back and could hardly get back to the hotel where we spent most of the day relaxing – not the best way to spend a day in Europe.

Tuesday, May 22, 2001



Luzern, Switzerland

We left early driving on to Luzern, Switzerland and parked at the Bahnhof (Railroad Station) watched the boats on Lake Luzerne and then started our drive toward Interlaken. We found the small Swiss chalet "Edelweiss" at Iseltwald where Walt and Miriam had stayed several years before. Going to the Strand Hotel we had lunch while overlooking the Brienz Lake, so beautiful and peaceful. Can't believe we are here. We then drove on to Interlaken and walked around the town that has been so famous.

Wednesday, May 23, 2001

After frunstick here at Iseltwelt, we took at bus to Interlaken and then the train to JungFrauhoch, an all day trip to the highest accessible mountain in Europe – 11,333'.



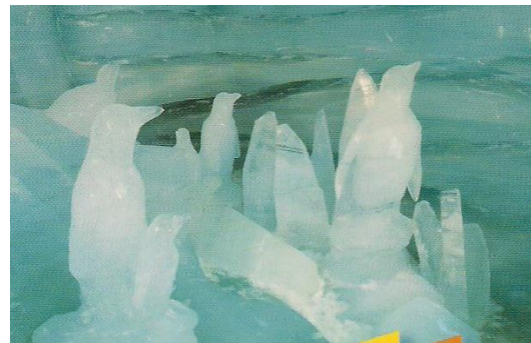
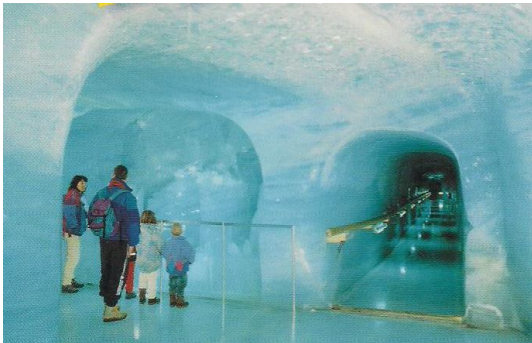
Train to Jungfrau



Top of Jungfrau

The mountain is snow covered of course, and accessible only by a special cog-railway tunnel through the mountain. This was the first of four trips that we were to make, one by just Isabel and me, one with Jimmy and Ellie, one with Chris and Jessie, and another with Chris, Debbie, Jim and Beth. (See Chapters Fourteen, Fifteen and Sixteen – 2003, 2004, and 2005.)

Part way up the tunnel, the train stops and everyone debarks into various rooms with large picture windows out over the glaciers and the sloping mountain. Arriving at the top of Jungfrau, there is a very large three-story building with a restaurant, snack bar, gift shop and lounging areas. In addition, there is a walk-through tunnel in the glacier with hand-rails and several ice displays cut into the walls like small rooms or small exhibits. You have to hold onto the railing and slide your feet along because you are totally surrounded in an ice-cube. At the end of the tunnel, there is an open area on top of the mountain roped in for safety. An elevator or stairway descends to the reception area and the train. Quite a fascinating experience.



Inside Glacier Tunnel and Ice Sculptures – Jungfrau



Isabel and Bill Inside Glacier Tunnel - Jungfrau

Taking the train down, we returned to Interlaken, then the bus to Iseltwald. For supper we went to another hotel, the Chalet Dulac where there was a 12-piece brass band and enjoyed the view across the lake with a train snaking along its shores.

Thursday, May 24, 2001



Iseltwald on the Brienz Sea, Switzerland

Here at Iseltwald at 7:30 am it is cloudy, misty, and it has started to rain. We then got the ferry boat to Interlaken and walked the mile-long street of shops and beautiful hotels. Going back the same way, we decided to stay on the ferry for a longer ride and enjoyed the beauty surrounding the Brienz Sea. A relaxing and uneventful day.



On the Brienzee Ship, Iseltwald, Switzerland

Friday, May 25, 2001

After three nights here it is time to move on, traveling across the Uri Mountains. What an unexpected marvelous sight. After being closed during the winter snows the roads opened again just two weeks ago.



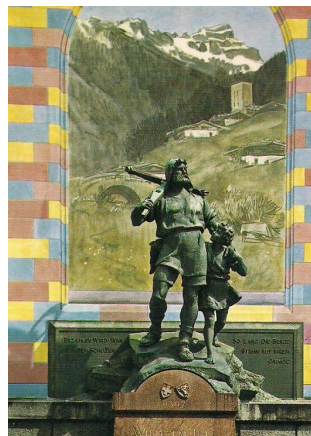
Twisting Mountain Road – Gotthard Tunnel

Still there are high snow drifts along the very winding road with many hairpin curves. Reaching the top at 1,900 meters and a 50 degree temperature, we stopped at the only hotel here for hot soup.



Hotel Klausen-Passhöhe – Not much had changed except the age of the vehicles

Driving on we reached Aldorf and the William Tell bronze statue at the center square. Spending an hour or so, we ate lunch and checked out a couple of gift shops. We sat on the patio seen at the front of the hotel.



William Tell Monument

Finally, we reached our destination of Walenstadt on the Wallensee and found a very nice small hotel – Curfirsten Hotel - 1st class.



Curfirsten Hotel – Walenstadt, Switzerland

The town is very small and is located at the Eastern end of the sea with high mountains surrounding it. The desert we had before turning in for the night was an ice cream delight, quite unique.

Saturday, May 26, 2001

While Isabel was at the hairdressers I went to the park by the sea. We then drove on to Heidiland at Maienfeld, walked around and had lunch.



Heidi's Grandfather's House

Driving farther, we went to Vaduz in Lichtenstein and back to the Curfirsten. Life here seems to be so casual for everyone and particularly for us. Delightful weather and surroundings.

Sunday, May 27, 2001

We went to the Reformed Evangelisch Kirche across the street from the hotel for the 9:30 service but no one was around. We then found out that this was a parish-type church that shares the pastor – but no service at this location on this Sunday.

We drove to the next town and got on a small – passengers only, no cars -boat that took us across the lake to Quinten, a little picturesque hamlet on the mountain side of the Wallensee, that is accessible only by boat. There are no roads to it. The streets are limited to the town that has just a few gift-type stores and very few homes with a population of just 41. There are three restaurants, however.



.When leaving Quinten we got on the wrong boat which was not going back to our car, so we got off at the next port and changed plans. We took the next train and went to Rapperswill, Switzerland and spent awhile walking around the medieval-type Altstadt village and up the hill to the old church.. This was an unplanned, unexpected treat. We then got the train back to our car and on to the Curfirsten Hotel.

Monday, May 28, 2001

Today is another anniversary – the 57th - of that day when I gave my life to Christ at the little Methodist Church in Millville, NJ. Little could I have imagined then that we would be celebrating it here in Switzerland. Such are the surprises of life.

Staying here at this wonderful Curfirsten Hotel, we enjoyed another great fruhstuck. So many of these German hotels are unlike anything we se in the US. Most are family owned and operated. They are like a large private home, some with additions, and many accommodating as few as four or five guests while others can accommodate forty or fifty. Generally, they are two or three floors, but seldom more. The interior rooms are beautiful with wood paneling - even .the ceiling. Stairways are generally stone or marble. Very rarely do they use wallpaper. Art work is plentiful. The exterior surroundings seem always to abound with flowers of all sorts. Cleanliness and orderliness are natural.

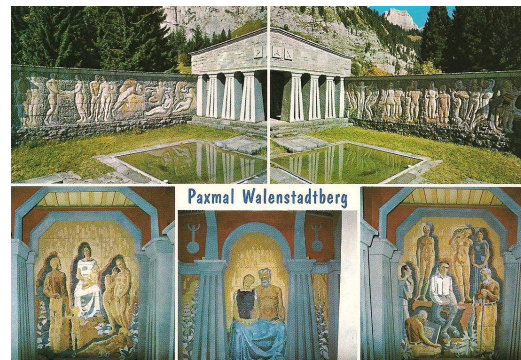
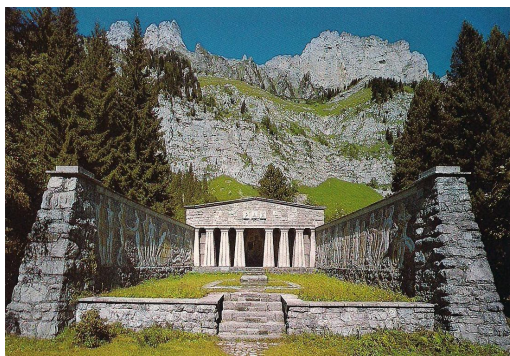
Here at the Curfirsten, operated by a young man George, we understand that his mother owns the place. At supper last evening we met his lady frienf Judy Minella who just came from Florida, but use to live at Chesterbrook, not too far from our home in

Wayne. She said that she often bought sandwiches from John's Village Market. She is divorced. (In a later-year visit we heard that she and George had married and that they were living in Florida.)

This afternoon we drove up the mountain to Wallenstadt Berg via the twisting, hairpin curves and narrow roads hardly wide enough for two vehicles to pass. We had read of an artist who had created very large mosaics in a temple-like structure on the side of the mountain. What a sight.



View from Wallenstadtberg down the Mountain down to Wallenstadt



Here at the PAXMAL, there must be thirty or more like-size mosaic figures of men, women, children and animals on the stand-alone walls of an open three-sided structure without a roof. The back wall is with Greek-style columns. The Peace Memorial – PAXMAL – at WALENSTADTBURG, was created by Von Karl Bickel between 1927 and 1949, and he died in 1982. From what we understood, very few people make it to the top of the mountain to see this fantastic memorial.

As we parked the car about five minutes away from the memorial, we encountered three parachutists (Hang-gliding or Para-gliding) ready to run down the mountain-side, catch the wind, and float down to the valley. Two of the men succeeded, but the woman said that it was too windy. Quite a sight.

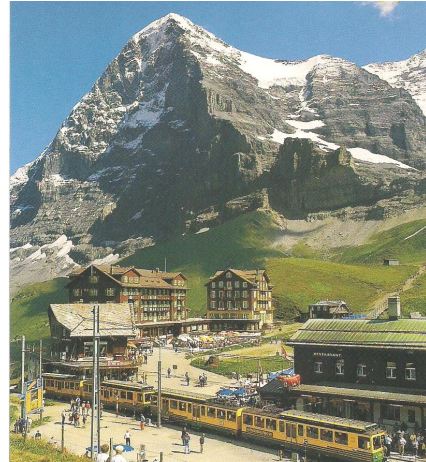
Our dinner at the hotel was wonderful, followed by a late snack sitting on the patio under the huge buttonwood trees.

Tuesday, May 29, 2001

Today is our last day of our very wonderful vacation, again in Europe. We have covered a lot of territory and experienced a lot of new things. Leaving Walenstadt we drove to the Zurich Airport then to the Newark Airport where Jimmy and Ellie met us. Home and in bed in Wayne at 10:30 pm – another long day of travel.



Bill at World Map on Ground in Zurich



Kleine Scheidegg at foot of Jungfrau



Isabel at Rebstock Hotel in Laufenburg, Germany on Rhine

Places visited on this trip:

Zurich, Switzerland - Turgi - Otelfingen - Laufenburg, Germany and Switzerland - Murg - Passhöhe - Gotthard Tunnel - Uri Mountains - Vaduz, Lichtenstein Quinten, Switzerland - Interlaken - Luzern - Altdorf, William Tell - Jungfrau hoch - Feldberg - Walenstadt, Switzerland - Heidiland, Maienfeld - Rapperswil PAXMAL - Peace Memorial at Walenstadtberg

THE END