

VACATIONS – CHAPTER SIXTEEN

as of 9/19/2011

2005 – GERMANY, FRANCE, SWITZERLAND, AUSTRIA, LICHTENSTEIN –

Isabel, Bill, Jimmy, Ellie

October 19 – November 1, 2005

October 19 Depart Philadelphia 4:50 pm USAir # 782 to Frankfurt, Germany

October 20 Arrive Frankfurt, Germany 7:00 am

November 1 Depart Frankfurt at 12:05 pm. Arrive Philadelphia 2:55pm.



Wednesday, October 19, 2005

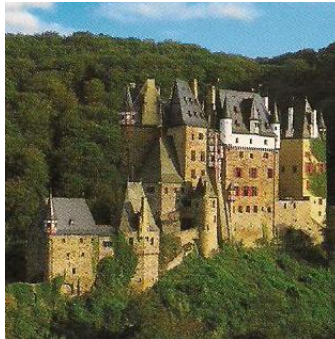
Our grandson Jim Mellon, his wife Ellie (married June 11th), Isabel and I left Richland at 11:00 am and drove to Bev's who as usual had sandwiches for us and drove us to Philly Airport, keeping our car while we were away. This is Jim's third trip with us - 1997, 1998, and the first for Ellie. ((They joined us again in 2007 and 2008.)

We departed on USAir at 4:50 pm and had a good flight, smooth flying. Isabel and I had two seats by the window with Jim and Ellie directly behind us. Because there were few people on board, Ellie moved to the center four seats and stretched out for a nap. Almost like first class! Hardly!

Thursday, October 20, 2005

Arriving at 7:00am we got on the Thrifty Auto white van to take us to Morfelden/Waldorf where we rented a Mercedes Van-type Vaneo with lots of room. I drove to St. Goar on the Rhine River where it was very foggy and misty. We drove up the hill to Rheinfels Castle after a light snack on the shopping street, closed to automobiles. This is quite the place with its high stone walls, large inside courtyard, and many, many rooms. The museum of old guns and items from the Middle Ages was fascinating. There is also a gift shop, and a small restaurant where we ate last year.

We then drove to Castle Eltz on the Mosel River. Another 12th Century Castle updated with old period furniture, tapestries, guns, bows and small cannon on display. We didn't have a lot of time here because of the late hour.



Castle Eltz

Moving on we drove to Coblenz and St. Goarhausen where we stopped to have an Italian supper, and then to Dorscheid at the Gasthaus Blucher where we stayed last year with Beth, Jim, Chris and Debbie, and with Kate and Sarah in 2002.

Friday, October 21, 2005

Here at Dorscheid at 7 am it is cool, 50 degrees and foggy. After an excellent fruhstuck in a very nice dining room. I called Jens Kloos, one of the young boys we met on our 2002 river cruise, and invited him to breakfast. He lives just a few miles away, but had to go to school - 9th or 10th grade now.

The owners of the gast-haus - Fetz Family - also operate a very large winery here. One of the Fetz sons, forty-three years old, showed us the whole operation, taking us into the area of the wine-presses as well as the wine-cellar. They ship wine everywhere and enjoy a great reputation. We met other members of the family including the father who established the business and who enjoys hunting wild-boar in the mountains. (one of his boar carpets or rugs was in the room where we stayed in 2002- see Chapter 13). One son is the chef in the restaurant, and his wife is the head waitress

Our next venture was a two hour cruise on the Rhine from Rudeshiem to St. Goar where we walked the shopping street, had lunch at a sidewalk cafe, and visited the Evangelical Church, open for visitors. The return trip against the fast-moving waters of the Rhine took us three hours to get back to Rudesheim. Of course, Jim was having a great time taking photos of all the castles we passed, as well as the variety of tug boats, cruise ships, and barges. We checked in at Hotel Felsenkeller on Drosselgasse.



Jim on board Rhine Cruise ship - German flag

Saturday, October 22, 2005

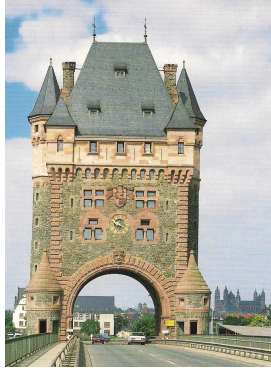
After fruhstuck here at Felsenkeller in Rudesheim, Jim, Ellie and I rode the Seilbahn (ski-lift) to the Niederwald Monument at the top of the mountain, looking down upon the vineyards where we have walked in past tours.



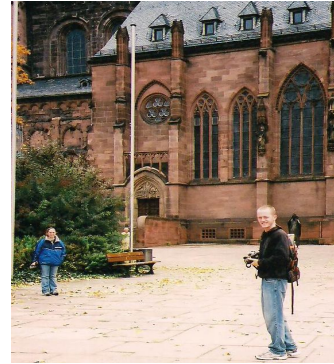
Rudesheim Seilbahn and Shops



Going back to meet Isabel at the Kathe Wohlfahrt Shop on Drosselgasse Street, we left the area, rode across the Rhine on a ferry and arrived at Worm's Cathedral at noon. We toured this magnificent Cathedral made so famous because of Martin Luther's heresy trial and his stand against the authority and practices of the Roman Catholic Church. A very small memorial stone has been placed in the walkway approaching the cathedral, and a very large memorial with statues of several Protestant Reformers is a block away. We also went into the catacomb under the chancel where several important religious and political leaders have been buried in stone sarcophagi.



Bridge over Rhine into Worms - note Cathedral at right



Ellie in blue and Jim at Worms Cathedral

We ate lunch in a nearby street cafe and started toward Strasbourg, France, crossed the Rhine on a very small uncovered ferry - same as last year - at Ratstat and tried to find the Maginot Line. Not finding it, we ended up at Roi Soleil Hotel in Mondesheim, France for the night. We couldn't understand French signs and couldn't find a restaurant, so we ended up in an ice-cream parlor where the proprietor gave us special treatment - along with laughs.

Sunday, October 23, 2005

On this overcast morning with the temperature about 60 degrees we left Mondesheim, France and arrived at Strasbourg, parked about three blocks from the Cathedral and went immediately to the Sunday Mass. Though we couldn't understand the language, we enjoyed the organ and singing, and just being with other Christians on this day of worship. Jimmy and Ellie then walked to the top of the Cathedral tower which we had done several times before, while Isabel and I had a snack.

We then enjoyed a very special and different experience as the four of us took an hour's boat-tour on the canal that wends its way through Strasbourg. How interesting!



Strasbourg Canal boat-ride - Cathedral in background

Mid-afternoon we were on our way back across the Rhine River over the bridge to Germany on Route 28 headed to Bad Peterstahl/Griesbach. We stopped for the night at Hotel Forellengasthof Waldeck in Isenburg, near Horb. This is a very small town, out of the way, quiet, and just a short walk across a waterway into a shopping area. We ate supper there and returned to the gaste-haus. Our two rooms look out the back over the balcony to two enclosed fish ponds covered with wire fencing. A blue-heron was standing, watching, but sure to be frustrated by the enclosure. It is here that the restaurant has its own supply of fresh fish. We found out about this too late to enjoy.



Gasthaus Waldeck with its own fresh fish pond

Monday, October 24, 2005

Here at Waldeck it is cold and clearing. Before noon we arrived at Castle Hohenzollern high on the mountain-top. While we were on the highway still many miles away, we could see the castle in the distance. We parked, took the small bus to the castle entrance and took the guided tour inside while wearing large felt slippers provided for us to wear over our shoes. Though the castle is so beautiful, there are no surrounding gardens such as at Linderhof Castle. We ate a snack at the outdoor terrace snack-bar and returned to our van.

While on the Autobahn en-route to Lauterbrunnen, Switzerland, we were stopped because of an accident ahead. We sat there for almost an hour as emergency vehicles passed us. (Interesting here - all the cars or other vehicles pull to the right or left sides of the highway leaving the center open for ambulances, etc.) As we waited, a highway patrol car pulled alongside and instructed us to turn around and head back to the entrance ramp. Of course, at the end of the ramp we had to adjust so that we would be going in the right direction. Fortunately, an officer was there to direct and I was glad that Jim was driving. One more thing we could learn to do here in the USA.

Driving through Zurich and then Luzerne, we finally ended up at Landgasthof Zollhaus at Sarner-on-the-Lake, the lake being Sarnersee. This was at one time a toll-house - zoll meaning toll / customs - and operated by a very friendly woman, 5th generation who owned it. Though it was after 9 pm, she served us a very great supper.



Zollhaus on Sarner



Tuesday, October 25, 2005

The early-morning view across the lake was beautiful but we had to keep moving. At about 10:45 we arrived at Lauterbrunnen, Switzerland just in time to catch the train up

to Kleine Scheidegg where we switched to the cog-railway. It went up through the mountain-tunnel (4 1/2 miles long) to Jungfrau-hoch, the highest tourist site and highest train station in Switzerland 11,332 feet. The train stopped twice en-route with everyone de-boarding to small rooms in the mountain with large windows looking out over the glacier. It is the longest river of ice in the Alps. Then at the top, at the two-level building, there was a food counter, lounge, and gift shop. One exit led to the ice-tunnel through the glacier to the outside, the point called "The Sphinx." Sliding along the tunnel with a hand-rail we viewed several ice sculptures such as Mickey Mouse and other animals and figures. Jim, of course, enjoyed so much being at the very top, standing on ice, and protected from sliding away into eternity by a small cable strung along the edge on three-foot high posts - seemingly not much help if you start to slide.

Getting back on the train to descend, Jim and I went to the very front and were invited by the engineer to enter the control room and stand alongside him as we slowly returned to Kleine Scheidegg. It was a unique experience. At one spot, there were workmen in the tunnel, and the engineer stopped while they got on board and joined us at the front. Apparently, they were finished working for the day.

Cog-rail train engineers in Jungfrau with JIM MELLON



Cog Rail-way up Jungfrau

Back at Lauterbrunnen we got two rooms at the Schutzen Hotel/Restaurant where we stayed last year with Beth, Jim, Chris, and Debbie. We had supper there in their very nice restaurant. What a nice but very long day. Looking back, one marvels at the thrill of all this, wondering how few really have had such a privilege and opportunity. How grateful and thankful we are.



Waterfalls and Schützen Hotel - Lauterbrunnen, Switzerland

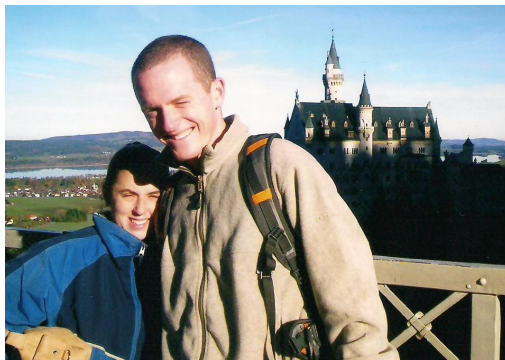
Wednesday, October 26, 2005

Leaving the Schützen Hotel in Lauterbrunnen in 60 degree cool and clear weather, we drove to Brienz where we wanted to go to the wood shop, but it was closed. We bought food for a later lunch, and drove on to Vaduz, Lichtenstein for a quick shopping tour.



Castle at Vaduz, Lichtenstein

and drove on to the Helmer Gasthaus in Schwangau, once more at the same place we stayed last year. We ate in a nearby Italian restaurant and walked around this small village that is just a short distance from Castle Neuschwanstein. We can see it in the distance, high on the mountain. There it is in the background below.



Ellie and Jim on Marien Bridge



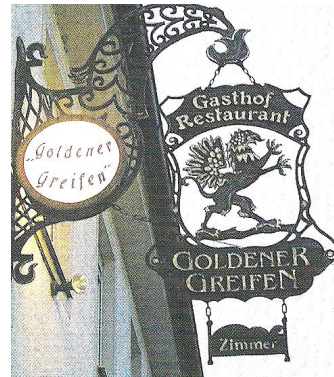
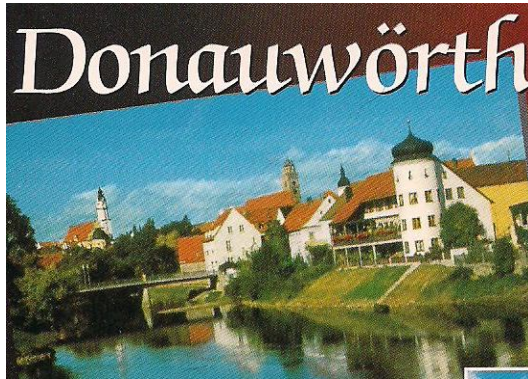
Jim and Pop Pop on hill-top beyond bridge

Thursday, October 27, 2005

After breakfast we drove to the parking lot below the castle, purchased timed tickets for Jim, Ellie, and me, while Isabel stayed at the shops. She had been here several times before, but this was the first visit for Ellie, and I wanted to share it with her. On our recent trips we have been visiting places where Isabel and I have been, but for me it is never old, and I enjoy watching and listening to our children and grandchildren as they take it all in. After our tour inside the castle we returned to have lunch with Isabel and then drove to the prison camp at Dachau.

It is always sad to remember what took place in this camp where so many were cruelly treated and many lost their lives. There is always a very somber feeling here as everyone walks around in silence looking at the various buildings and displays with horrible photographs and written comments by the prisoners.

As we headed toward our next planned stop at Rothenburg, it began to rain, got dark, and it was getting late. So we pulled into the Goldener Greifen in Donauwörth, GE.



The hotel looks just like other buildings from the outside but the guest rooms and the restaurant were very nice. After supper in the restaurant, Jim and I walked around town and across the bridge over a stream which runs right through the center.

Friday, October 28, 2005

Leaving Donauwörth we went through Nordlingen and stopped in Dinkelsbühl at a small gift shop operated by an elderly Jewish man. I wish we could have gotten him to relate his early childhood memories when Hitler was in control. Isabel purchased a tablecloth from him - Bernard Olinek.

Moving on, we arrived at Rothenburg, got rooms at the Meistertrunk Hotel, one of the best. Isabel and I had a front room, with Jim and Ellie at the back. Isabel and I found a hairdresser/barber shop nearby which pleased us both. I called Ulrich Knorr, our friend the organist at St. Jakob's Cathedral and agreed to meet together at the hotel the next morning.



Meistertrunk Hotel

Rothenburg



Rothenburg



Jim, Ellie, Isabel

We had supper at one of our favorite Restaurants - Italian, of course, where each of us had a wide choice. The others don't share my enthusiasm about German food.

Saturday, October 29, 2005

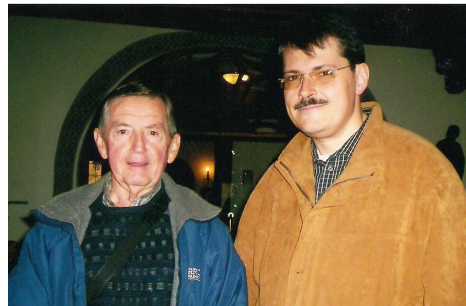
Here at the Meistertrunk Gasthaus, Isabel and I have a very nice large room with TV - good for CNN in English. After Fruhstuck - good and large variety - we spent the morning walking about town and going into all the shops. Rothenburg has so much to offer, it is a wonder that we keep going to other cities, and so few people here. Jim, Ellie and I climbed the City Hall Tower.



Ellie, Jim, Pop Pop on Tower



At 11:00 am Ulrich Knorr met us in the Hotel lobby. As we talked over coffee together, we discussed the changes in the church and how there seems to be a loss of spiritual dignity and reverence, and how so much centers upon us, the people, rather than upon God and his majesty. We both agreed that the music of the church had changed so much from worship to entertainment.



Bill and organist Ulrich Knorr

In the evening we attended an Organ Concert at St. Jakob's Cathedral with Ulrich at the console. Our seats were placed in the chancel facing the congregation and the organ above on the balcony at the rear of the sanctuary.

After an ice cream treat we returned to the hotel and remembered to turn our clocks back one hour, the end of Daylight Saving Time.

Sunday, October 30, 2005

Here at the Meistertrunk we watched Robert Schuler on "The Hour of Power" from California, with everything translated into German. His interview was with someone named Bill, but we missed the last name and had wanted to look it up later.

We then went to Sunday morning worship at St. Jakob's Cathedral, a Protestant Lutheran Church as is so common throughout Germany, though a Roman Catholic Church is nearby. Whenever we come here, we marvel at the beautiful Gothic structure of this large stone church which dates to Medieval times. One does not usually think of a building like this to be Protestant. Though we didn't understand the German-speaking clergyman, we knew the music and were glad to be among other Christians in worship on this Reformation Sunday.

After the service, Ulrich suggested that we watch TV for the Consecration Service of Fraukirchen (LadyChurch) in Desdren rebuilt sixty years after its WWII destruction in 1945, and forty-five years under Communist Russian rule. This is a story worth watching from time to time, to realize that the Christian Church may be attacked and persecuted, but always rises again.

Later in the day, Jim and I walked around the old city to find areas pictured on postcards showing the World War II destruction and noting how everything had been rebuilt to its former likeness. Remarkable. Feelings of sadness came over me as I realized that we - the Allies - had to wreak so much destruction in order to win the War against Hitler and Nazism and help the people resume a meaningful life.



The Alte Schiede and wall in 2005



As it was after the bombing in 1945

Monday, October 31, 2005

Still here at the Meistertrunk Hotel for our third day, we started off with fruhstuck, met the owner, Mrs. Gackstatter, paid our bill and drove to Langenberg for lunch on the terrace of a restaurant in this quaint town.



Frau Gackstatter and Bill



Jim at center at Frau Gasckstatter's house behind Inn

Our next stop was at the Castle in Heidelberg, a place that always fascinates the tourist. High above the city, overlooking the Tauber River as it wends its way to Rothenburg, the castle was a part of the musical movie, "Student Prince" by Sigmund Romberg. Within the walls of the Castle, and deep in the basement of one area is a restaurant facing two enormous wine vats that provided all the wine needed for a year. Climbing up ten or twelve steps, we walked across the tops of the wine vats and down the wood steps on the other side. Someone has determined that the larger of the two casks held about 50,000 gallons.



Heidelberg Castle - Grounds - The Large Wine Cask

Departing, we drove to the NH Hotel at Morfelden/Waldorf, turned in the auto and had supper in the hotel. It was another long, but pleasant day.

Tuesday, November 1, 2005

This morning, after pastry, coffee and tea in the restaurant, we hopped onto the hotel limo to take us to the Frankfurt Airport for our noon-day departure. Expecting to arrive at about 3:00 pm, Beverly plans to meet us and after dropping her off at her home, we will return to Richland. Fortunately for me, Jim has been doing the driving throughout this trip.

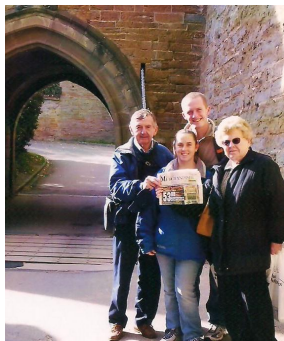
It was a very good trip having both Jim and Ellie joining us. Since arriving home, we have been able to talk about our shared experiences. So often, after returning from a trip and telling someone else about it, they listen for a very few minutes and that is all. But that won't happen here.



Hotel Felsenkeller at Rudesheim on Rhein



Isabel, Jim, Ellie cafe at Langenburg



At entrance to Hohenzollern Castle



Gate at Dachau Prison Camp

Places visited on this trip

- Frankfurt - St. Goar - Rheinfels Castle - Burg Eltz - Dorscheid
- Rudesheim - Strasbourg, France - Isenburg, Germany - Hohenzollern Castle
- Sarnen, Switzerland - Jungfrau, Switzerland - Lauterbrunnen, Switzerland
- Brienz, Switzerland - Vaduz, Lichtenstein - Schwangau - Neuschwanstein
- Dachau Prison Camp - Donauworth - Dinkelsbuhl - Rothenburg
- Heidelberg Castle - Morfelden/Waldorf

THE END OF CHAPTER SIXTEEN