

VACATIONS – CHAPTER NINETEEN

as of 9/30/2011

2008 – GERMANY – Isabel, Bill, Jimmy and Ellie

December 3-11, 2008

Depart Philadelphia 4:30 pm US Airbus to Frankfurt 6:00 am

Return Frankfurt USAir Airbus 330 – 12:45 pm – Philly 3:50 pm

Wednesday, December 3, 2008



Isabel – Ellie – Jim - Bill

Isabel and I were joined again with grandson Jimmy Mellon and his wife Ellie for another trip together.

Leaving Philadelphia at 4:30 pm on a US Air airbus 330 we headed toward Frankfurt, Germany. A bit bumpy, flying 39,000 feet high – almost eight miles up.



Bill in Plane eating and enjoying TV

Thursday, December 4, 2008

Arriving at Frankfurt airport at 6:00 am, we rented a nice four-door sedan from Thrifty Autos and headed directly toward Rudesheim on the Rhine. This is one of our favorite places at any time of the year, but particularly during the Christmas season for the Weihnachtsfest. We had made reservations via e-mail at the Linderwert Hotel which is right in the center of the town.



Jim - Rudesheim



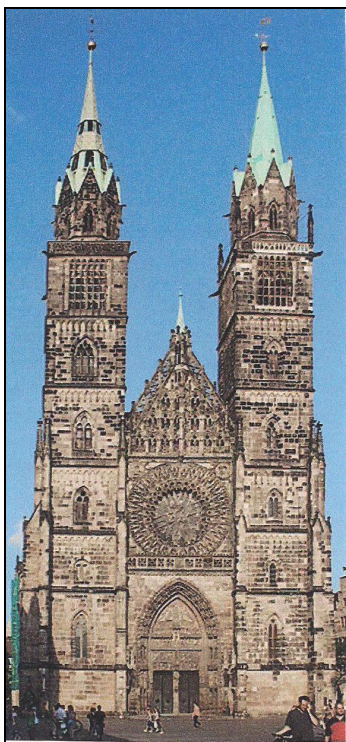
The Weihnachfest during the Advent season is exciting with all the various Festival Booths filled with everything imaginable – candy, crafts, Christmas toys, and all kinds of food. After walking, walking, walking and shopping, followed by a nap or resting time, we went to a nice restaurant for supper.

Friday, December 5, 2008

After Fruhstuck (breakfast) at the Lindewert Hotel we started the long drive toward Nuremberg for their Weihnachfest. Enroute on the Autobahn we stopped for a snack at McDonalds, soooo ordinary! - not at all German I personally prefer to eat only at German restaurants but this was the only place available in that location. Here as in some other places, there was a charge of .50 euros for each person to use the restroom.



Nuremberg Weihnachfest



Cathedral and choir



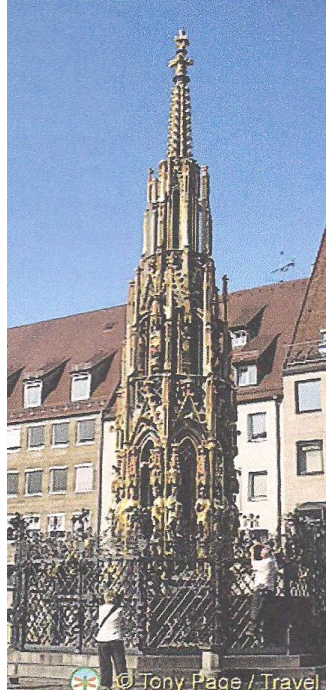
Arriving in the center Nuremberg we found a free parking spot with the help of a friendly policeman just two blocks from the Festival Square in front of Nuremberg Cathedral where at least a hundred decorative booths were set up and open. Deciding to stay in Nuremberg for the night, Jim and Ellie found one available room in a hotel right on the square and insisted that Isabel and I stay there while they looked for another. It was the Hotel Am Schönen Brunnen (Hotel at the Beautiful Fountain) – It was expensive (140.Euro - \$190.70) and more than we usually paid, but it was so convenient and we wanted to spend more time at the festival. During WW II the hotel and adjoining area was destroyed by the Allied Bombing. It was also the birthplace of the German artist Albrecht Durer in 1471, whose painting of “Praying Hands” is so well known by Christians.

Fortunately, Jim found another hotel a few blocks away where he and Ellie stayed.

Across the street from our hotel was the square with all the festival booths and the St. Lorenz Cathedral. We met together for supper – standing in the market eating a sausage sandwich – delicious.- after which we walked some more around the festival booths.

In front of the Cathedral, a large platform or stage had been set up for the performances of different choirs and musical groups. We listened to a couple. The great bells of the Cathedral rang out on the hour.

In the corner of the square is the “Beautiful Fountain” with the golden ring. Legend says that a suitor for the King’s daughter had to produce a ring without solder. The ring is imbedded in the fountain ironworks and anyone who turns it all around is sure to have all wishes come true.



The Beautiful Fountain with Ring

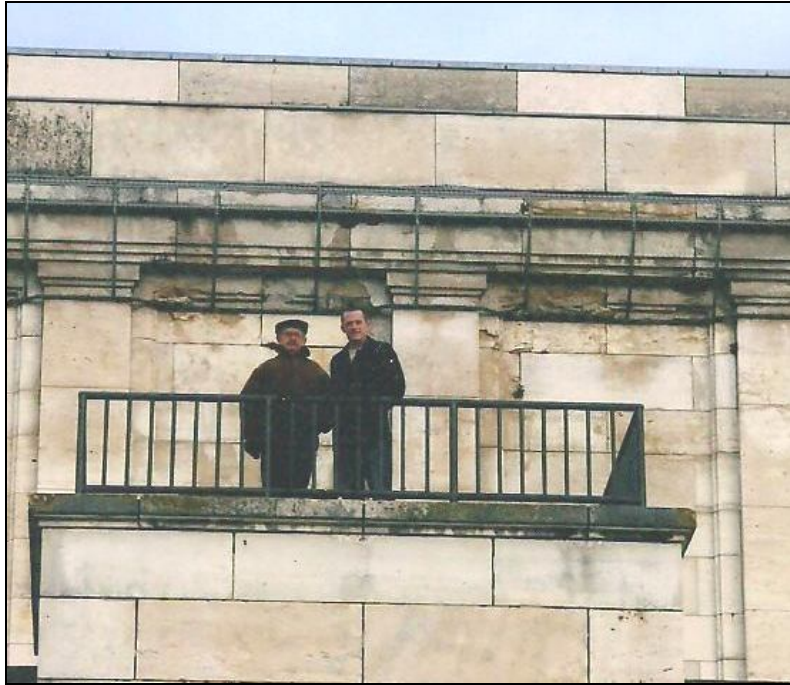
Saturday, December 6, 2008

Still here at Am Schonen Brunnen where we viewed the very unusual memorial statue right in front of the hotel at the central plaza or square, and saw the ring.

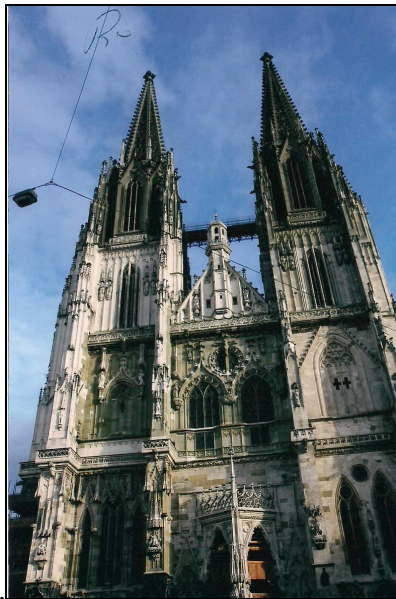
Leaving mid-morning, we drove on toward Regensburg for another Weihnachtsfestival. While leaving Nuremburg we went to Zeppelin Field where Hitler held his large Nationalist Socialist Party Rallies. Named after Count Zeppelin where one of his airships had landed, the huge stadium was an impressive sight with its grandstand constructed of large lime slabs and concrete. Jim and I climbed to the top where Hitler stood listening to the acclaim "Heil Hitler." Though the large swastika on top was blasted away by American troops in 1945, the rest remains and is used for rock concerts and the like. It gives one a very eerie feeling, realizing the terrible results of Hitler's rule.



Zeppelin Field Nuremburg – Notice swastika on top center
Jim and I stand where Hitler stood



When we arrived in Regensburg and thinking that we were a block or two away from the MarktPlatz - usually the central square, Jim suggested that Isabel and I get out while he and Ellie looked for a place to park. We intended to meet in the Plaza. As Isabel and I walked to the first Church, there was no festival. We kept on walking to a second church and finally arrived at the third church and the fair. But then, we were alone. Jim and Ellie could not locate us and time went on before we finally connected. The fair was so crowded that we actually had difficulty walking around. It was not fun at all.



St. Peter's Cathedral and Lutheran Church - Regensburg

Leaving Regensburg we drove on to Rothenburg where we had made reservations at the Klosterstuble.



It was a longer drive than we anticipated, it got dark and started to rain. But finally we got to our very nice Guest House. After settling in, we went to a very nice Italian restaurant where we had eaten in previous years, had a great supper and went to bed.

Sunday, December 7, 2008

After fruhstuck we went to worship at 9:30 am at the St Jakob's Lutheran Cathedral where our friend Ulrich Knorr is the organist and choir director. Disappointingly, however, the service was led by an ensemble of four guitar players and no organ. There was a woman minister who prayed and preached.



Bill-Isabel-Ellie-Jim at Rothenburg



Bill and Organist Ulrich Knorr

But then we walked two blocks away to St. Francis Church for a service at 10:00 am where Ulrich played and the service was traditional. We met Ulrich after the service and made plans for coffee together on Tuesday at our hotel.

We spent the afternoon walking around and taking a nap before the Bach Cantata back at St. Jakob's Church with 80 voices, 15 instrumentalists, the magnificent organ and Ulrich Knorr conducting. The churches in Germany are unheated, and we sat there

buttoned up in winter coats, scarf and gloves. We then had supper at the Klosterstuble Hotel before turning in for the night. – Waitresses Kirsten, Diana, Lisa, Erica and Christiana – who have treated us royally.



Monday, December 8, 2008

Cold and foggy this morning. After fruhstuck at Hotel Klosterstuble and a morning of relaxation, the four of us took another walk through the festival. Jim and I then climbed to the top of City Hall tower, a beautiful sight across the city and the Tauber Valley. The climb to the top is very interesting. Walking up to the second floor and through the large open meeting hall, there is a very, very old wooden stairway that wends its way upward.



Rothenburg Tower



Bill showing steps to the tower

Wide enough for just one, with a very thin railing on one side, it becomes necessary to squeeze to the side to allow someone else to descend. Upon reaching a higher lever, there is a small gathering room large enough for about four people. In the corner is a small desk or table at which an attendant is seated. A very small fee is paid and then he lets one person at a time climb a ladder with about ten rungs to the exit to the top of the tower. At the top of the ladder it is necessary to crawl on one's knees onto the

floor of the walkway that circles the top. Fortunately, there is a very strong metal railing about six feet high, and there is ample room for one person to walk completely around the top. But, about eight or nine people have been allowed up, squeezing past each other. The best thing is to move around slowly waiting for the person ahead to move first. Then there is the problem of getting down. Kneeling again on the floor, one must back down the ladder feet first. A lot of fun and unforgettable to be sure. The view from the top across the city is fantastic.



View from top of Tower Rothenburg

Back in the room, we relaxed with soda, coffee and apple strudel brought up to us by Erica one of the waitresses.

At 5 pm, we went back to the St. Francis Church for a concert by a woman's choir from Australia. Of course they sang "Waltzing Mathilda" which I remember we used to sing when I was young, but I didn't know it was an Australian story and song.

Having dinner at the Hotel Baumeisterhaus, we went back to the hotel to watch CNN news and a soccer game.

Tuesday, December 9, 2008

This morning Ulrich Knorr, organist at St. Jakob's Cathedral joined us for coffee at our hotel. We gave him a gift of a Amish doll – a man, his horse and buggy. In turn, and unexpected, he gave us a Rothenburg picture-calendar like the ones I have had for several years. Showing him my collection of the St. Jakob's musical schedules from 1998 to 2008, he said that I could soon expect to receive the 2009 one when printed. (He not only sent that one to me but also the 2010 and 2011 calendars).

Though it was very cold that afternoon, Jim and I took a long walk into the Tauber Valley. So picturesque.



Isabel and Bill sharing one Wurst Dog – Ellie Watching

Twice during the late afternoon we stood in the MarktPlatz opposite the town clock where the web-cam pictures are taken constantly. When we arrived home, Barb told us that she had identified us standing there.

Supper was very nice in the hotel dining room.

Wednesday, December 10, 2008

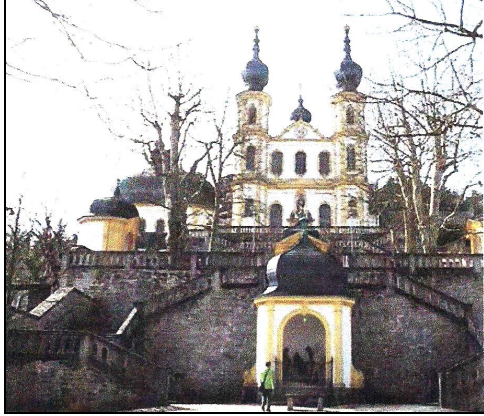


Bill-Isabel Weikersheim Gardens - Jim in background

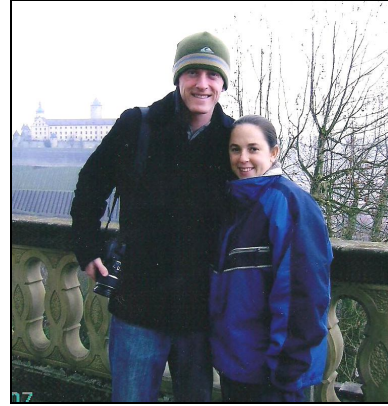


Jim at pond - Weikersheim Castle

We really hated to leave Rothenburg with all our great memories of so many visits and such delightful friendships. We drove on to Weikersheim and got only a “half-tour” of the castle because of their schedule. After lunch at the Hotel/Café Laurentius we drove on to Wurzburg and visited the famous Catholic Church “Kappele” high on a hill overlooking the city and the river.



"Kappelle" at Wurzburg



Jim & Ellie Wurzburg "Kapp[elle]"

Driving on to Morfelden, a suburb of Frankfurt on this last day in Germany, we turned in the car and went to Hotel NH, a very nice modern hotel close enough to the airport that we can hop onto a van-shuttle in the morning for our homeward journey.

Thursday, December 11, 2008



Jim at NH Hotel- Morfelden

Homeward bound from Frankfurt airport we took off at 1:00 pm for a beginning bumpy ride. Arriving in Philadelphia we connected with Jessie Mellon who had flown in from Le Tourneau University in Texas. Bev had left our car at the airport earlier in the day so that Jim could drive us straight home – being real late.

This was another wonderful trip. Visiting Germany for the past several years has been a delight. I wonder how my life would have been different if we had started this when we were younger. Be that as it may, it has been very enjoyable, informative and educational – highly recommended to others. We are glad that so many of our family have shared several of our trips with us.

Places visited on this trip

- Frankfurt - Rudesheim - Nuremburg - Regensburg - Rothenburg
- Weikersheim - Wurzburg - Morfelden/Waldorf

END OF CHAPTER NINETEEN