

## VACATIONS – CHAPTER TWENTY

as of 9/30/2011

### 2009 – GERMANY – Isabel, Bill, Kate and Sarah

June 25-July 2, 2009

Philadelphia on USAir Airbus A-333 at 4:15 pm to Frankfurt at 6:10 am then departed 11:25 am Lufthansa to Hamburg, Germany arriving at 12:35 pm.

Return from Hamburg at 8:15 am on Lufthansa to Frankfurt at 9:25 am, then Frankfurt at 12:56 pm on USAir to Philadelphia at 3:15 pm.



Isabel – Kate – Sarah – Bill

This trip was planned by our granddaughter Sarah Vesper who wanted to visit the home and parents of a college classmate who lived in Graal-Muritz, Germany. The tiny town is located on the shore of the Ostsee, otherwise known to most Americans as the Baltic Sea.

It was there that Katja Otto lived with her parents before coming to the United States to study at West Chester University in Pennsylvania. She married an American and stayed here, but was planning a visit home and suggested that Sarah meet her there.

When Sarah decided to go, she suggested that Isabel and I go too. Always wanting to go back to Germany, and never having been so far north, we decided to go. Sarah's sister Kate also went along. This arrangement was particularly inviting to me at age 82, for it meant that as in the last three trips, there would be someone else to drive.

So off we went, the four of us on a very enjoyable vacation.

### Thursday, June 25, 2009

Leaving our home in Richland, PA we met Sarah at her home in King of Prussia, then met Bev at the Wayne store for hoagies. She drove us to meet Kate in Wallingford, and finally to the Philly airport.

Sarah's husband-to-be, Jeff Newton, an airline pilot with (USAir-Piedmont), met us to say goodbye. This was the second trip that Sarah and Kate took with us to Germany; the first being in 2002. (See Chapter Thirteen). We took off at 4:15 pm for our seven-hour Trans-Atlantic flight.

### Friday, June 26, 2009

Arrived at Frankfurt Airport at 6:10 am with five hours to kill before leaving for Hamburg. The news of the day was the death of Michael Jackson.

At 11:25 am we left Frankfurt on Lufthansa. We arrived in Hamburg at 12:35, went to the Hotel Ibis, then took a shuttle back to the airport for the subway (S) to the center-city Hauptbahnhof (main train station) in Hamburg.



What a bustling place with plenty of shops and eating places. After a spaghetti supper we went back to the Ibis for the night. The first day is always a tiresome one until catching up on sleep and adjusting to a new time zone.



Sarah with Isabel holding up post in Hamburg

**Saturday, June 27, 2009**



Bill wanting for a ride in a Hamburg Taxi

Sarah had wisely decided that we should spend the day sight-seeing in Hamburg before going on to Graal-Muritz. Taking the hotel shuttle to the airport again, we caught the subway back to Hamburg Hauptbahnhof and then went to the Model Railroad Museum, the largest in the world.



There were four floors of model trains in an old warehouse with many, many train models depicting various sites of the world and exhibits of waterfronts, airports, mining towns, high mountains covering two-floor levels, with trains going across ravines and crisscrossing each other. There were scenes of rock concerts, street festivals, and sites too numerous to describe. There were thousands upon thousands of little people figures, soldiers, etc. The descriptive leaflet hardly tells the story. Amazing!

The weather has been great with temperatures 65 to 70 degrees with occasional overcast skies.

After we returned to the hotel, Kate and Sarah decided it was too early to turn in, and took the subway back to the city. But before bed-time they showed up for a late evening snack with us.

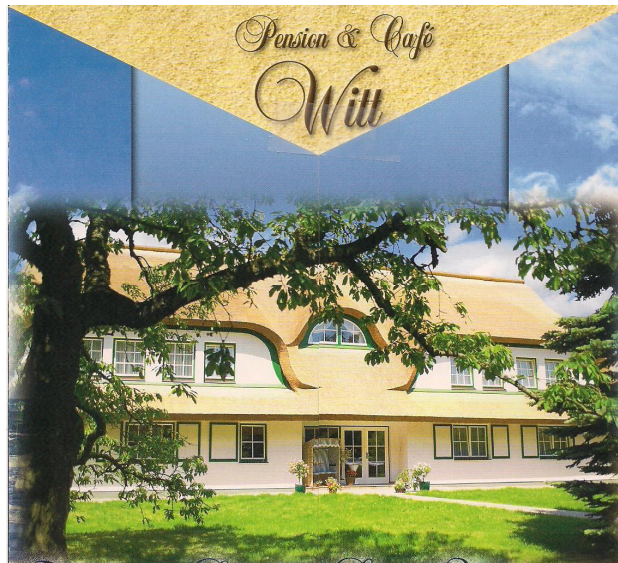
### **Sunday, June 28, 2009**

After breakfast at Hotel Ibis, we took the shuttle back to Hamburg Airport in order to rent a car for the rest of our trip. Sarah drove the Avis - KIA on the good old Autobahn with speed-limits posted only around towns or exits, otherwise its pedal-to-the-floor (145 kilometers per hour).

Arriving at 1:30 pm in Graal-Muritz, the girls dropped us off at Pension Café Witt, a most interesting and inviting motel. The one or two-floor buildings are covered with thatch-like roofs - very quaint and old-country like.



Isabel and Bill, Breakfast at Witt Pension



Isabel and Bill at Pension-Café Witt



Sarah, Isabel and Katja look at Thatch-roofs



While waiting for Sarah's girlfriend to arrive from the States, we drove to Seebrucke on the beach at the Ostsee. The Seebrucke is like our boardwalk at the New Jersey shore except that it runs directly out over the water, rather than along the beach. It is similar to our fishing piers except it has benches and lanterns along the side. Fishing is

allowed only late in the evening after people have finished their promenading, or very early in the morning. Before going onto the Seebrücke there are two or three small shops as well as a restaurant where we went a couple of times.



Mr. & Mrs Otto, Sarah, Kate, Bill, Katja, Isabel

On the beautiful beach there are many small wicker-type cabanas almost like a half shell with room for two people to sit with a cover overhead. They can be easily moved around so that at one time you might choose to face the water, or face the sun or the get out of the wind. Most of the time there seemed to be very little wind. And because it is a closed sea, the tides are so minimal that the cabanas are left there overnight without any damage. Apparently the cabanas are rented on a daily basis, I don't know, but at the end of the day, a worker turns all of them in one direction away from the water. Also, the beaches are kept clean daily. The water of the Baltic Sea also has a very low saline content. It is usually cold because it comes from the high mountains to the north.



This is the location we see every morning on our Web-Cam



Wicker Cabanas on beach at Graal-Muritz

Kate had a room at Pension Idyll-Mittleweg a short distance from our Pension. Sarah was to stay with Katja at her parent's place. Isabel and I settled in at the Pension Cafe Witt.

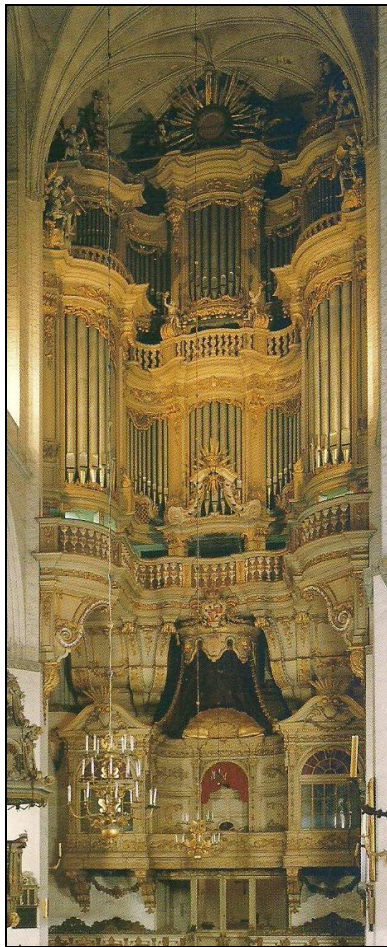
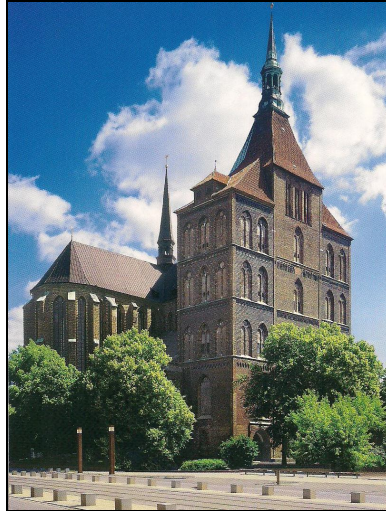


Isabel in the Baltic Sea

**Monday, June 29, 2009**

Cool, 65 degrees, clear and calm.

Katja and her father Wolfgang Otto, came to meet us this morning. We then drove to the city of Rostock and did some sight-seeing at St. Marien Protestant Church, the Rathouse (City Hall) and center square and shopping area. In the church, we saw another Astronomical Clock – built in 1472 – similar but smaller than the one at the Strasbourg Cathedral in France. Interesting, nevertheless!



St. Marien's Kirche



Astronomical Clock in Kirche

We also visited St. Peter's Church and climbed the tower overlooking the area. Also, there was a pictorial display depicting the horrors of World War II. This area is very close to the German/Poland border and during the Cold War was in East

Germany under the control of the Russians. Mr. Otto told us a bit about his military service during that time when he was on border-patrol watching the Sea for enemy ships.

For supper, we went to the Otto's home, met Katja's mother who served us a very delicious meal cooked by her dad on their outside grill on the flat roof over their garage. Her parents were very cordial to us in their small, second floor apartment with patio. HERE HE IS.



Wolfgang Otto at his home

After going back to the Pension, and realizing that the sun sets late in that northern area, Isabel, Kate, and I drove to the Seebrucke and had an ice-cream snack.

**Tuesday, June 30, 2009**

After Fruhstuck (breakfast) at Pension Café Witt, we met Kate, Sarah, Katja and Wolfgang for a drive to Warnemunde, another city on the Baltic. This is a major port for both shipping and cruise ships. In 2008, more than 171,000 passengers sailed from here. It connects many ports in Finland, Scandanavia and Russia.



Wolfgang Otto, Katja Otto, Sarah, Isabel, Kate





Ships on the Baltic (Ostsee)



This is a Dry-dock Ship - see ramp in middle

We took a five minute trip on a small ferry-boat to another side of the harbor and walked and walked past many shops, boats of all sizes and many people. Very touristy. Boarding another two-deck ferry, we took a forty-five minute tour of the harbor past two light-houses, ships and boats of all proportions, a huge ship-building crane, and ships departing or arriving for other ports on the sea. Denmark is within sight. There were three very large cruise ships at dock. We had refreshments on board the ferry and returned to our car and back to our Pension.

Later in the day, Kate, Sarah, Isabel and I drove to the Seebrucke and had supper at the Ostweewoge (East Sea Waves – Breakers) restaurant, and walked the sea promenade again.

Leaving the area, I stuck my head into the gift shop where we had all purchased souvenirs, and spoke with the German-proprietor who spoke very good English. When I said, “Its time to go home”, he gave me a souvenir photo book and inscribed it with his name – another sign of the typical cordiality we have found throughout Germany. Am I partial? I wrote a note of thanks to him when we returned home.

### **Wednesday, July 1, 2009**

Isabel and I spent most of the day by ourselves after another short visit to the Seebrucke pier with Sarah and Kate for morning snacks.

Driving out of town, we toured the area, stopping at a couple of other beaches, and wished that we had more time to enjoy this new area of Germany – quite different

from where we had gone on previous trips. We also wished that we had had sufficient time to take the ferry boat to Denmark.

Stopping along the remote country-side road, we found a wood-carver operating out of his home, and we purchased a small hand-carved wooden owl as our favorite souvenir.



### **Thursday, July 2, 2009**

After saying goodbye to Katja and her parents it was time for us to drive back to Hamburg – to the Ibis Hotel – return the car to the airport and be ready for our flight home on Friday. Again, Sarah was our driver. We did not realize it at the time, but apparently her foot was too heavy on the gas as we passed through one community. Some weeks after we returned home I received a traffic violation ticket with fine of 11.90 Euros (\$16.85) from Avis Auto. We inquired as to what the violation was but never received an answer. It was not worth pursuing further. Whatever it was it happened at August-Bebel-Str, 3,D 18209 Bad Doberan, a little town we passed through after leaving Graal-Muritz.

Arriving back in Hamburg, we turned in the car, and the four of us had supper together at the hotel Ibis.

### **Friday, July 3, 2009**

Our last day here. 5:00 am in Hamburg, we are ready to catch the hotel shuttle van to the Hamburg Airport for our flight at 9:30 am. Sarah, with her husband-to-be USA pilot's help, was on a low-fare (or no fare) standby ticket and had to be there earlier. Katy joined her, but we thought we might get on the same plane in Frankfurt. No luck even as we left there at 3:30 pm. So, Isabel and I were on our own. Neither did we connect or know what happened to them until Bev picked us up at the Philadelphia Airport. They had arrived home earlier and went right to bed, exhausted.

Flying home 35,000 feet over the Atlantic Ocean, it was interesting to look out the window of the plane and see another one not too far away – maybe not far enough at the speed we were traveling. I am told that way out over the Atlantic there are no ATC (Air Traffic Controllers). Pilots fly pre-determined routes and must keep in radio contact with other planes themselves.



Over Atlantic, my photo from plane on left - see other plane at 35,000'

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This would be our last trip to Germany, the country that we have enjoyed during fifteen trips since 1990, the year I retired from Eastern University. It not only has been so enjoyable, but very educational as well. It was also been a delight to have so many members of our family (two daughters, two sons-in-law, seven grandchildren-one with wife) travel with us at different times and to introduce them to several different countries and areas that we all can talk about now. We made several wonderful friendships, not the least was with Ulrich Knorr, the very accomplished organist at St. Jakob's Lutheran Church in Rothenburg.

What a privilege we've had!

Places visited on this trip

- Frankfurt - Hamburg - Graal Muritz - Warnemunde - Rostock

**THE END OF CHAPTER TWENTY-**  
**THAT'S ALL FOLKS - ITS BEEN A GREAT JOURNEY**