

Happy Trails

Notizen von Unterwegs

03. October 2017 Vol. 28

WHAT A SUMMIMER

FOUR EXCITING MONTHS IN THE FAST RUN



Best greetings from the Black Hills of South Dakota! We are currently enjoying a wonderful autumn with lovely daytime temperatures and refreshingly cool nights. No trace of the terrible natural forces in the south of the USA or the devastating forest fires in California, Oregon and Canada. We live up here in paradise and can not imagine a better place on earth. As much as we love to actual travel, it is also nice to stay longer in the same place. If we heading out here in early October, we were here for 4 months! Much, yes very much has happened in these months / since our last newsletter in our lives: mainly beautiful and unique, a lot of effort, but unfortunately also endlessly sad things. Even nomads can't escape from that! Life is just a roller coaster ride.

Already for the third time we are in the Black Hills. As previously reported, the first experiences were, of course, dedicated to the Presidential Heads at Mount Rushmore, the Crazy Horse Memorial, and the buffaloes at Custer State Park. This summer, we will experience much more details, discover beautiful oases away from the tourist streams, intensify the contact with friends who are living/working here or sort out our belongings, as we have decided to simplify our lives even further and got rid of 80% of our stuff! Here, we had the peace to subject each part of our belongings to a close scrutiny: usable in the camper – usable in a retirement home – can it be made into money? – can we donate it or does it immediately go to the garbage? And that's exactly what we did for 4 weeks. Thanks to the owner of our campground, Nancy and Dave, we could use his shop building for storage and sorting. Dick and Rob helped a lot with all the moving of stuff. You guys were awesome! Thank you! Now we are relieved in the truest sense of the word. Very few things have "survived". Melancholy? I think Beate and I have never felt so liberated. Simplify your life – we did it!



2017/R. Gefek





Main contributor to our 3-week vacation in Germany in June / July was undisputed Lillien. Keeping these bliss in your arms is an indescribable feeling. Always smiling, she had me and Beate from the first moment firmly under her control. Great, that there is Internet and Anna, our daughter in law ==> every morning we got fresh photos and videos of our grandchild. Nevertheless, we totally miss our princess.



Germany was also wonderful, because we could once again meet, hug and kiss all family members at the same time. Sebastian had flown in from Dallas, the Grandma came from Bielefeld and we went to Soest and then to Sennestadt, our birthplace. Family totally!





With 89 years still totally robust! We are so happy to be able to experience Beate's mother vital and enthusiastically during her short vacation in Unkel at the river Rhine.



Aaron, Leah-Marie und Joram





As always, the time with Rudy's sister Andrea in Soest was too short. There was so much to talk about: godchild Leah-Marie had just passed her Highschool diploma, nephew Aaron is a gifted goalkeeper and Joram creates impressive video short films. In addition, they are successfully involved in the integration of refugees from Syria. A lot of talking besides drinking, eating drinking and eating again!. Of course we did not miss the stroll through the historic old town of Soest.



You did it!!





Hotel Senfleben



And again we were treated like royals by our friends Andrea and Uwe for 3 weeks. What a great, open and loving family. All-round support incl. Cologne old town tour ==> They are simply the best! Even dream-weather had been ordered for us. Thank you very much.



sorry my American friends

This is what we call a supermarket bread, meat and cheese department



this is Leberkaes and Currywurst



Rolf Berger 1959 - 2017

Only a few comrades have shaped my professional life as socially as Colonel Rolf Berger. Over 30 years, our roads have crossed over and over again: in the United States, in the humid tent of Norway, in Husum/Germany when I was his deputy officer, on the unforgettable September 11th 2001 in Sicily or on Crete, his most beloved official last resort . No matter what crap I produced, Rolf always stood guarding in front of me. The "Anschiss" came behind closed doors. But he also gave me the advice and the important tips.. This early morning, always grim and shivering comrade, who answered stereotypically to a "good morning" with "What is good to this morning?", thawed however fast at a cup of coffee sweetened with 8 (or were it really 12?) pieces of sugar. The many nights we spent in various battlefields, our common menudo experiences in El Paso, the many emptied bottles of noble fire water from the monastery Agia Triada on Crete and and and. Rolf, you're missed! Thank you for a great time with you!

Until we meet again ...





We met a lot of friends in Germany. By far not all, who had ask us to . But 3 weeks are a very short period of time! So, we will do our best to visit the rest on our next trip.



EIN Tag
mit Freunden,
leckerem
Essen und Trinken,
das IST EIN
guter Tag!



KOBLENZ with Sebastian





With a lot of sadness, we leave after three great weeks in Germany. Farewell to the enchanting granddaughter Lillien, our beloved children and to our beautiful Germany! Thanks to the Internet, we could daily witness the progress made by our princess. Thank you Germany!



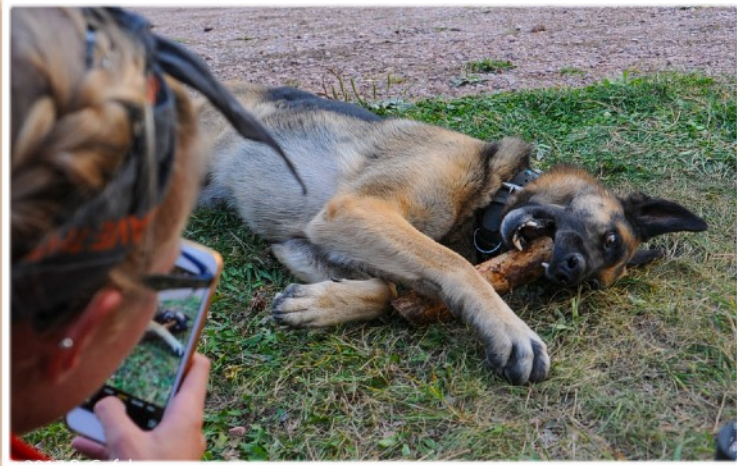
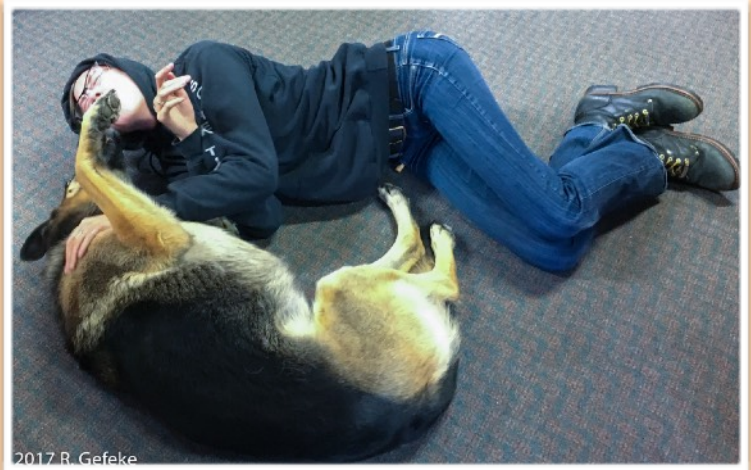
With bags full of coffee, chocolate, cheese, fish and even more chocolate, we make our way home.
Noah is waiting!





We love ya!





During our absence, our four-legged friend Noah was not only well taken care of, but was literally overwhelmed with love and affection by our friends Dick and Lou, his Forster-parents. If you want to know a rotten spoiled German Shepard ==> Noah is the best example. The next three month he patrolled between ours and their motorhome to protect his family! Visitors welcome, but to be screened first! During the day always outside, every day at least 3 hours of hikes in the wild, everywhere chipmunks and squirrels and young women, who roll with him on the ground ==> what a dog life !!!!



No treads from Dick & Lou - he picked something out of the woods!



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The group BRULE is making a point of notifying us of the still uneducated native Indians in the USA through free concerts. A breathtaking experience.



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Also this year the Black Hills enchanted us. The nature with flora and fauna, the views, the history, the weather phenomena, the National Monuments, but especially the great people living/working up here do not let us regret a moment to have spent the summer here again. And more summers to come!



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Our calendar is overfull: numerous visitors from Germany, El Paso or the East Coast visit us, the city of Custer has almost every week a festival, a car show or a balloon contest. And as a quasi-fellow citizen, Gefeke's have to attend.



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Gefeke



the hard living
on Custer Mountain Cabin & RV

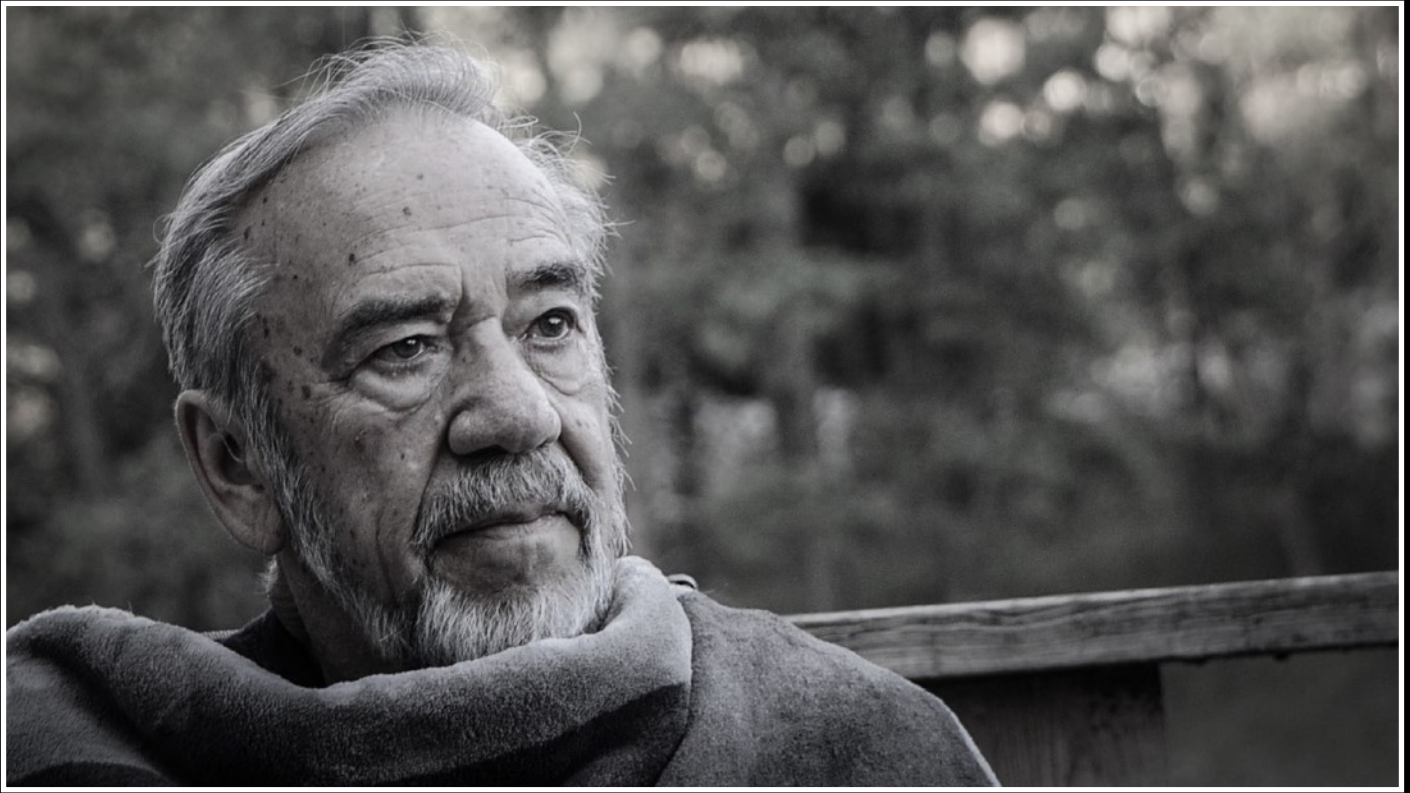


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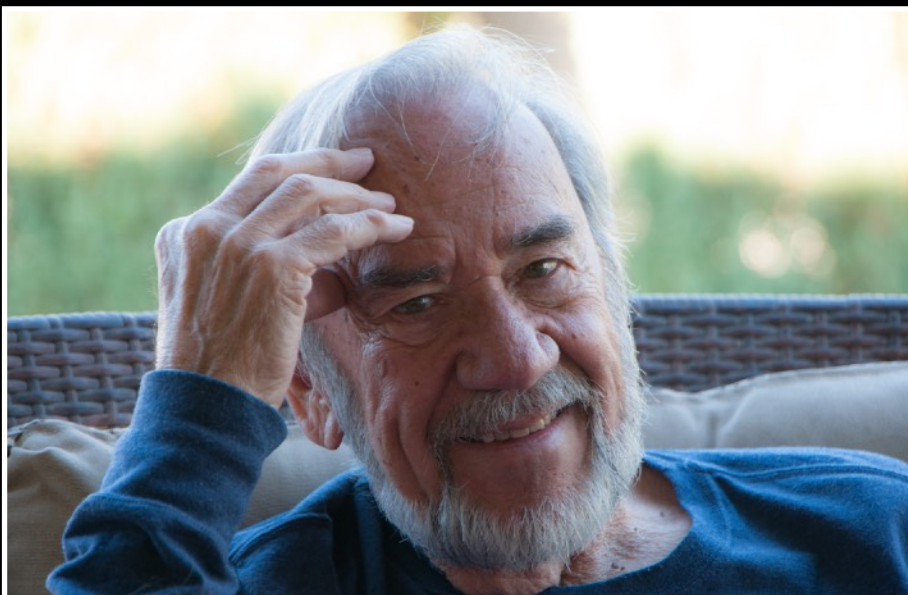
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Larry McCormick 1941 - 2017

Much too late in our lives we met this incredibly great man. In South Dakota, as a neighbor at the campsite, we first met him two years ago, exchanged telephone numbers and then drove in opposite directions. But a few months later we crossed our paths again. This has resulted in a very close friendship in a short time. Moreover, in the few weeks that we could spend with him in our lives, love and affection have arisen. Deeply rooted in the Christian faith, Larry was the most positive person we ever could experience. Always humorous, but also profound and questioning, we have been philosophizing about God and the world for hours. Very interested in the opinion of a German, especially the political situation in the US and the world was discussed. He was always happy about the other point of view. With the renouncement of Chemo, he and his strong wife Lee-Ann successfully fought a few years against the f...ing cancer and thus against the pharmaceutical / hospital industry. Better short as long and agonizing! For us very moving was his last visit to the Black Hills. Visibly close to death, he took again all the hardships three weeks before his death and visited his closest friends here in Custer. So we were able to enjoy wonderful moments with him. Positive and never groaning to the end! Larry is for Beate and me in so many ways a real model!



Larry, you are still with us.

Forever.



Solar Eclipse 2017

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This natural event lasted only 2 minutes 37 seconds. And yet they are one of the most memorable in our lives. Simply indescribable, when it is almost dark, the sky turns 360 ° orange and you cast a shadow anyway!

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Girls, Bikes and Beer - of course, that you find Rudy there. The Sturgis Bike Week in August is always a blast. For 14 days, thousands of motorcycles roar through our otherwise so quiet Black Hills. Everything is about motorcycles, beer and Crazy people - crazy motorcycles. Everything. Awesome. Within a radius of 100 miles you won't find a free hotel room or campsite.

P.S.: Sorry my American friends, but the dirty pictures are for dirty Germans only!



Visitors 2017



Lee-Ann & Larry



Lüttge family



Gabi & Kurt



Sylvia & Steven



Bikers from El Paso & Lawton



Timo, Jedi & Eddy



what a great summer



We leave the Black Hills with certainty, that we will spend the next summer here again. And we look forward to it already. But now, we are drawn to the south, before the winter is here, because Wintercamping is not our thing. Our next destination: The Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta, the world's largest hot air balloon event. We have registered as navigators for 15 days. Together with members of our motorhome club, we hope to have a great time together in New Mexico. We'll report. And then? No plans yet , except that we want to spend Christmas together with son Sebastian on the Mississippi. Let's see, were the wind blows.

We wish you a good time and enjoy Life!
Would love hearing from you!



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That*s it for today . We are traveling now
for 801 days.

all the best to you

Your 3 Gefeke's

