



2021

AND STILL NO END IN SIGHT

6 months have already passed this year! In August our seventh year as a full-time camper starts here in the USA. Two years were planned to get to know all 50 states of the USA. Well, we are still here and enjoy every day anew. Despite COVID restrictions, our lives are always characterized by beautiful events, fascinating landscapes, nice people and joint activities with great friends. And as always, there is a lot to report that is worth telling.



As already reported, we spent this winter in Yuma again. A stroke of luck in several respects: mostly fantastic weather at 60 - 70 F, the best friends you could wish for and a state that implemented the COVID vaccination extremely quickly and professionally. Beate and I had our two BioNTech injections at the end of March. In a drugstore around the corner - no formalities - in 5 minutes - done!

Despite immunization, we continue to try to use common sense. Better safe than sorry. And to be honest, our camping life is hardly affected by the COVID measures that still exist here: we still make our own coffee in the morning and don't need Starbucks & Co, have always been more impressed with our own cooking skills than with fast food and expensive restaurants, very seldom do we find friends in pubs, bars and casinos and our wild disco nights are far, far back!

So: business as usual.

Our winter domicile is becoming more comfortable from year to year. Susan and Dale have invested heavily in making their property more livable. Various sun sails, an open-air cinema and an outdoor kitchen have been added this winter. The neighboring property was also acquired with two additional parking spaces and a small apartment. This means that friends and family members who do not have a camper can also stay overnight in the immediate vicinity. The two just think of everything!



Our quiet neighborhood is about 15 miles east of Yuma and is surrounded by several golf courses. As long as the temperatures do not exceed 90F (no exception from April) you can endure it here just fine.



Our months together with Susan and Dale were once again a gift. Both have truly become family members to us. Great excursions and hikes, daily dinner together, tinkering with the motorhome or the property, help with technical problems for friends and neighbors and trips to neighboring Mexico ...



picnic with friends



movie night





Despite all the restrictions brought by the pandemic, the four of us had fun and joy in the southwest corner of Arizona. 5 months no boredom and no frustration. Satisfaction with what you have, can and want.





visit from our Custer crew



ALFA neighbors Skip and Richard



surprise party



visit from California



chef Hans
from Austria



great evenings at Deb and Curts place
with Sally and Toni





Lillien



Hopefully we can take her in our arms in
September
Germany, here we come!





Yes, and then came the unbelievable. On March 20, 2021, completely unexpectedly and forever, our beloved Noah crossed the rainbow. Stunned, pain, sadness and emptiness in our otherwise colorful and loud life!



Noah was part of us.

There were always three of us to be found. Noah was with us wherever it was allowed. He loved these new tasks, riding a cable car, crossing a suspension bridge, climbing over snow and ice, riding a speedboat or hiking in dark tunnels. It was important for him not to have to do or experience the same thing every day. With that we could really help him. Especially in the last 6 years we have lived with him 24 hours a day, hiked, partied, weathered hurricanes, tornadoes and snowstorms, bathed in the world's oceans, attended two Super Bowl events together, marveled at Independence Hall in Philadelphia, hiked the deserts of the southwest or gasped for oxygen together at an altitude of over 13.000 feet. The first to greet us in the morning and the last to receive a good night greeting.





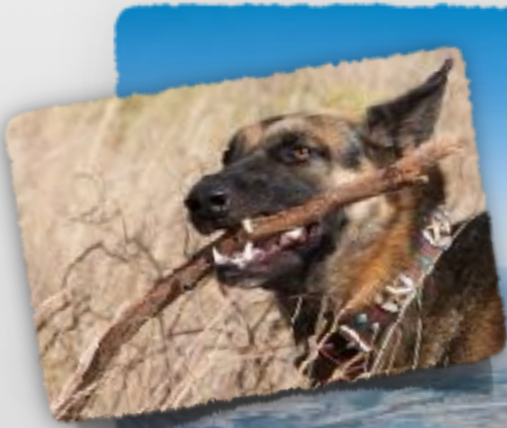
But Noah was also a gift.

So much was already "built in" with him. First of all, his protective instinct. Especially when it came to Beate, even in the darkest corners of some big cities, I could let my team go for a walk alone. Whether in Vegas, Memphis or St Louis, Noah was always attentive and alert. And then his absolute obedience. One whistle, one word and he was with you! Whether on the hunt for squirrels, rabbits or lizards. Allways, Noah paused, broke off his plan, and returned immediately. Since he never went hiking alone either, i.e. never left our house, our motorhome, our parking space or our hiking group, we could always lead him without a leash as long as local regulations or small children did not speak against it. Yes, the latter were, however, a thorn in his side: small, fast, unpredictable and loud - he didn't love that.



F.R.I.E.N.D.S





Noah, Ella und Giulia.

But we always connect the two females Ella and Giulia with Noah. These two ladies helped Noah regain trust in people in his first few months. When Beate released Noah from the animal shelter in 2011, our darling was totally distraught and barely accessible. A lot of time together and holidays with Ella, the valuable help of our friend and dog trainer Elke Graves and Beates' tireless patience, consistency and love made Noah the German Shepherd we all valued and loved so much.



with Ella in Fort Bliss



Shortly after Noah's
death, Ella crossed also
the

Rainbow

We will never forget you
either Ella!

[15]



Elke and Giulia

Life goes on

Even months after Noah's death, not a day goes by that we don't think of our "stinker" in any way: the sloppy water next to the water bowl, the infinite number of hairs in all nooks and crannies, the "heavy air" in front of the TV, the cold wet snout ... oh, what do we miss you!



But there will be another dog in our midst, Beate and I are sure of that. Maybe after our visit to Germany a homeless four-legged friend will run over our feet again.

Wednesday after Easter we left our beautiful winter quarters in Yuma and signed up to visit Jeannie and Detlef in Surprise. On the way there, however, we took the opportunity to visit our ALFA friend Major (Steven) and his future wife Jan in Salome, Arizona. The special thing about it: Major lives in an air park, so he can get on his plane in the garage directly from his living room and take off after a short taxiway (which is also his residential street) and make the air unsafe. He owns several aircraft at once!





Once again we enjoyed the days with Jeannie and Detlef: a terrific pool, simply great food, good conversations and even more tequila. I also helped Detlef to replace a post on his patio and to install a couple of mega televisions. Surprise is always our place to go to stash beer, wine and groceries, because we can hardly get our products cheaper than here for the next few months. Some are even only available here.

And Detlef knows every price and every offer.



bye - bye and thank you



The overnight stay was free of charge at a guarded interstate rest area above Las Cruces, where there is also an oversized roadrunner. We are back in our old homeland. Lots of good memories. After all, Iwe lived around here for 25 years! Like in the old days: Breakfast at the White Sands National Monument!



The unavailability of our beloved parking space in El Paso, the still existing restrictions regarding COVID and violent spring storms with a lot of wind and dust meant that we did not move to our hometown on the Rio Grande, but to Ruidoso. Our friends were informed of our stay there and almost all of them visited us in the mountains of New Mexico. Renate, Heinz and June even stayed with us for several days. Super nice of you! What a lovely week, especially since I didn't have to celebrate my birthday alone.





WhatsUp and ZOOM Family Meet 2021



Yes, ZOOM and WhatsUp have already become an integral part of our family life. Weekly calls to our

granddaughter, the almost daily conversations with our son in Dallas, but also our weekly Roadrunner RV Club happy hour brings family and friends to our four walls. When I think of the fact that 15 years ago I was allowed to get to know such programs for the first time in the Air Force, but encountered resistance everywhere. Bandwidths for data transmission were simply not available. I am pleased today, that I can connect us almost everywhere with a few clicks with the world.

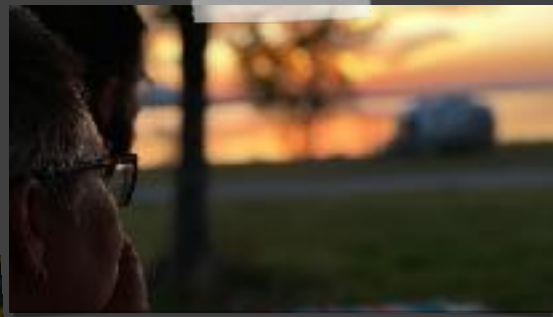


The next stop was Lubbock, Texas, as our two US driver's licenses had to be renewed. A nearby city park offered free accommodation with electricity and water. Who could say no to that? An icy wind made progress difficult, however, and for the first time in 17 months thick windbreakers had to be found and brought to daylight. Oh, are we spoiled. Thanks to COVID and appointment allocation, we had our new driver's license after 30 minutes and the journey to Oklahoma could be continued.

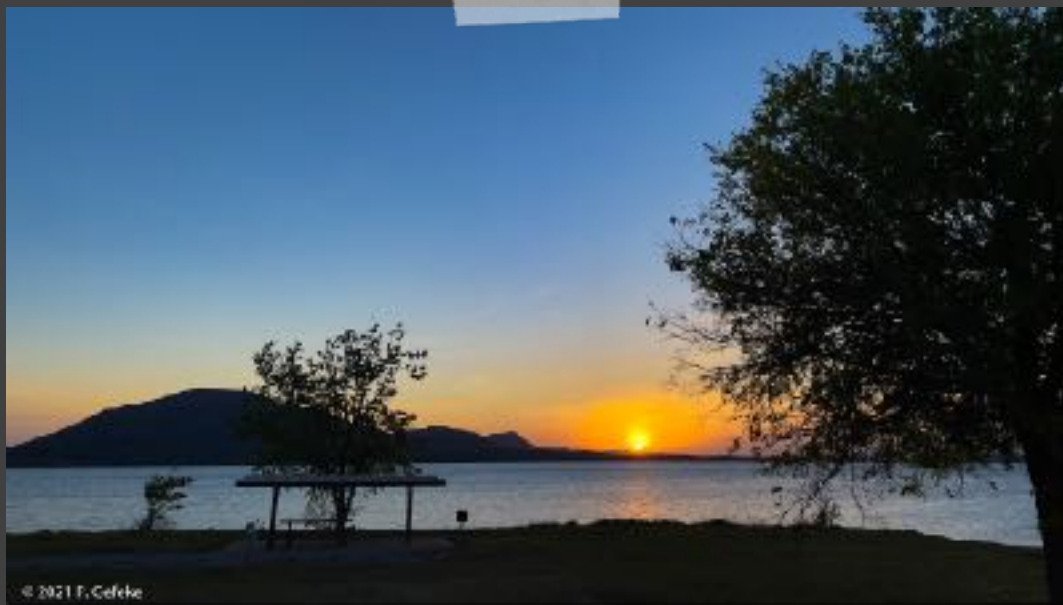


The landscape of the Texas Panhandle is not particularly attractive in spring. Harvested dry fields and oil pumps up to the horizon.





On the other hand, our parking space for the next 8 days at Lake Lawtonka is fantastically located. Also a city park with water and 50A electricity for 17 dollars! It couldn't be better.



The evening view from our veranda makes up for the many expensive campsites where you have to stand tightly on concrete and gravel.

Sun shade, grill and seating complete the picture of this great campsite. And the space to the neighbor ... at least 150 feet.





Martina and Ingo Scharschmidt

Grund für unsere Stippvisite in Oklahoma:
Sohnemann Sebastian hatte sich für ein
paar Tage zu Besuch angemeldet und
Beate und ich konnten nochmals ein paar
Kameraden und deren Familien besuchen,
solange diese hier noch stationiert sind.



Christiane and Dennis Nadolny



on Mount Scott above Medicine Park, OK



and their sweet girls



Of course Ingo's Tequila collection had to
be tested



the boy had wanted lasagna ...

In addition to great dinner invitations by both families, the provision of a Jeep Wrangler for a few days (my Jeep was not running since Yuma), reminiscing about the "good old days", visiting the Holy City of the Wichitas, we were able to enjoy wonderful days hiking in the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge with our friends and our son.



The buildings of Jerusalem, which look like old ruins, are the venue for the annual Passion Festival.

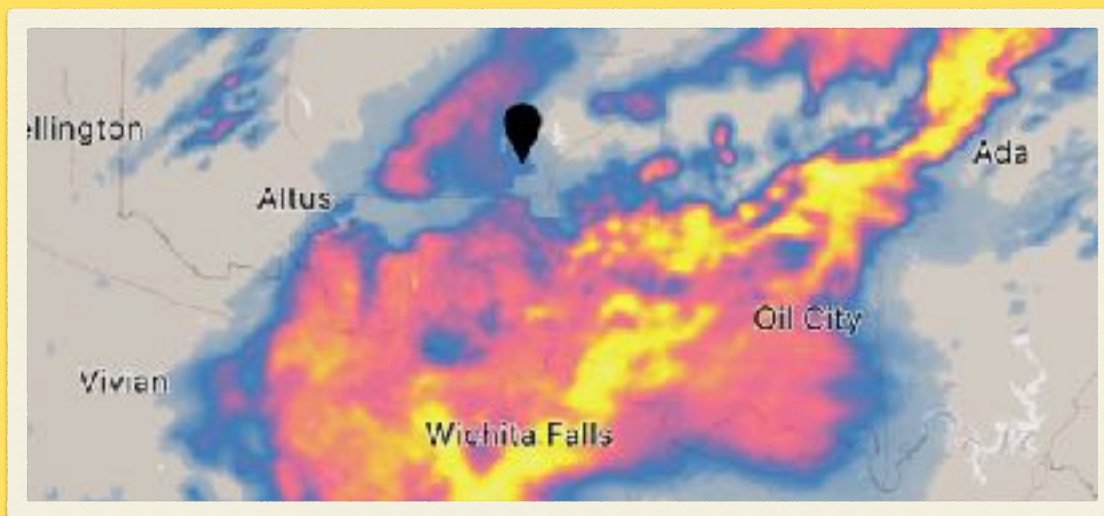
The recreated holy land includes places such as the Court Hall of Pilate, Herod's Court, the Garden of Gethsemane, the Upper Room, and a series of towers and walls.



We wish the 4 Nodolnys a good flight home and a quick "settling in" in Good Old Germany. We are sure to follow your further path and will meet you again sometime and somewhere. You are just a great family! Yes, and we will surely see the two Scharschmidts again here in the States! There is still so much to talk about. Many thanks to all of you for your great hospitality!



And again we have to flee from thunderstorms and tornadoes. Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas in spring are simply a disaster and nothing for RV travelers. The risk of hail, flooding, storm damage, etc. is simply too great. Not to mention tornadoes. But our phones rang again and the television interrupted its program. So full throttle and head north. I hope we will learn in the future and only will visit this beautiful part of the USA in fall.



However, it is still too early to take a direct trip to Custer: ice and snow are in the forecast for the next two weeks. So we decide without further ado to accept an invitation to Kansas City. On the way there we stop by chance in the beautiful town of Bartlesville, Oklahoma. Once again we realize how many interesting things there is to discover, off the beaten track.



On our tour of the city we come across the faithful replica of the first commercial oil well in Oklahoma. However, it is a great coincidence that we can attend a rare demonstration that shows how the "Nellie Johnstone No. 1" here in 1897 first blew black gold into the sky. An impressive spectacle. Attracted by the oil boom, Frank and L.E. Phillips to Bartlesville in 1904. Both founded the Phillips Petroleum Company (Phillips 66 or JET in Germany) in 1917, one of the country's leading oil companies. We visit their company headquarters with an impressive museum that documents the history and development of the company in an impressive way.



Klappenschränk oder
Fernsprech-Handvermittlungseinrichtung

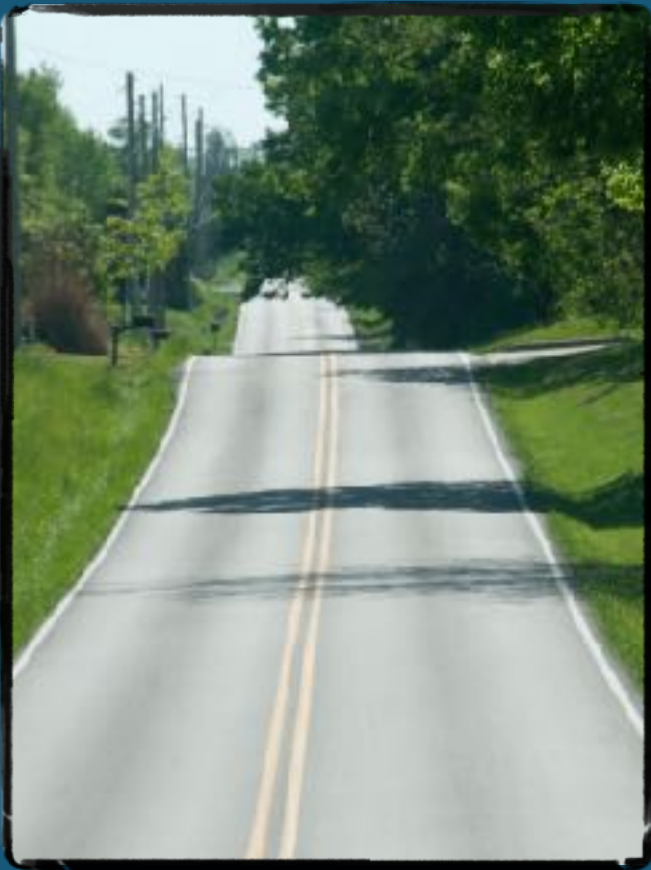


alter Tresor der Firma



erster Tankwagen





roadside
impressions





Kansas City

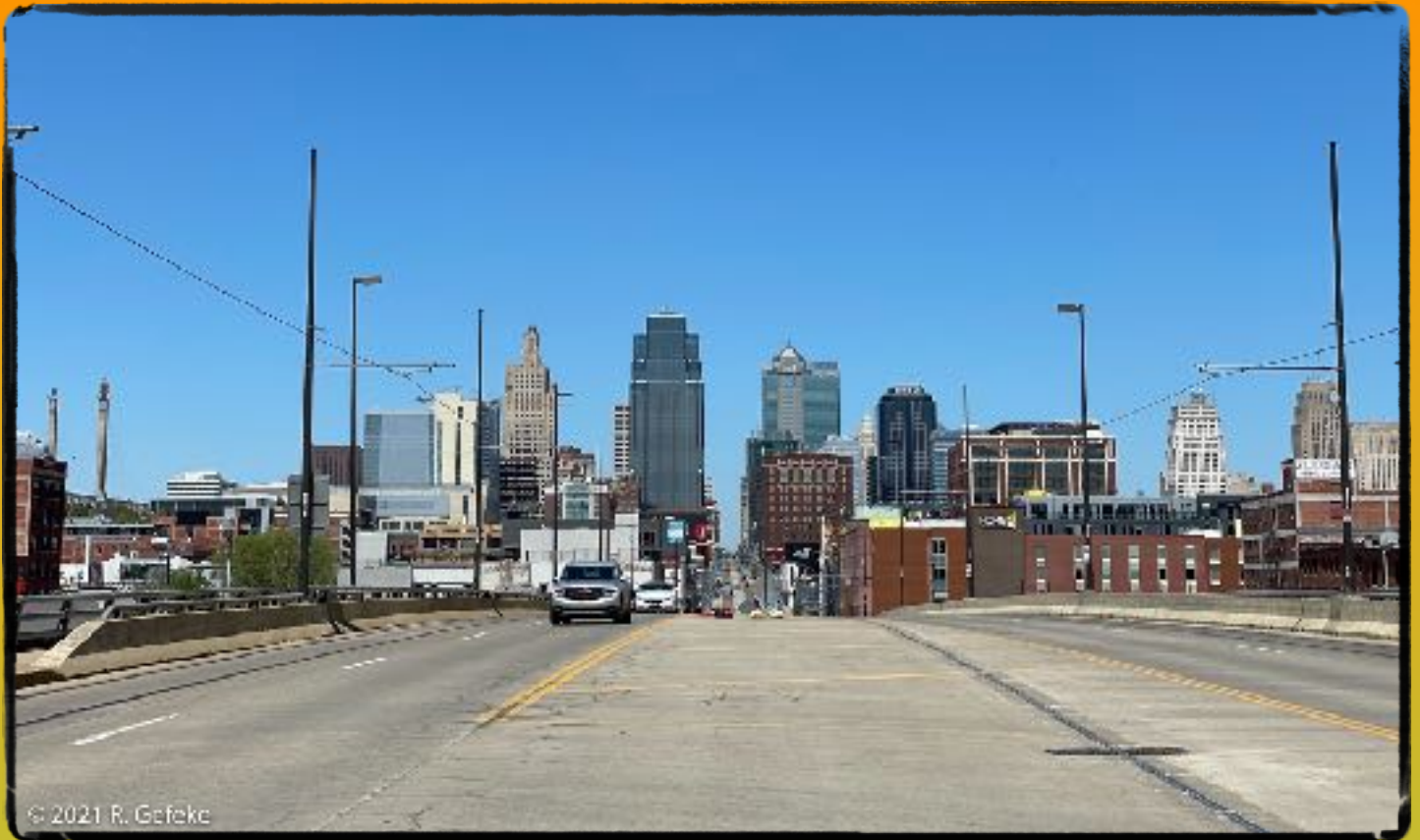
Last summer we met Bettina and Norbert Muehlich in Custer. The two Germans have lived in Kansas City, Missouri for 25 years and offered to give us a closer look at their city. For us it means "All Inclusive" for the next 6 days.



25 years ago, Norbert set up the German subsidiary of Weber Maschinenbau GmbH (Breidenbach) in the USA and made it the leading provider of sliced meat applications in the food processing industry. No slice of sausage or cheese here in the states that Norbert didn't have one of his knives on! But more on that later.

Norbert also served in the Air Force in the 1980s. At AirDefense Battalion 22 in Burbach in the Contact Team. We never bumped into each other since his training took place in Huntsville, Alabama. But in many conversation we found out, that we both know many comrades. What a small world!





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The colorful and lively city on the Missouri River casts a spell over us. Both parking spaces and public transport are free in the center,





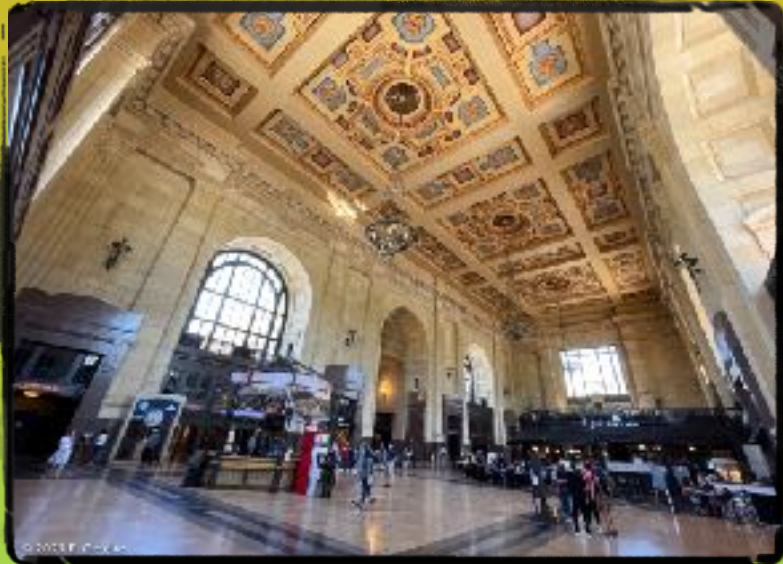
We enjoy the green parts of the city on the outskirts, the hardly noticeable traffic even on weekdays and the mix of old and new buildings in the city center.



modern architecture (Kauffmann Center)



Bars and restaurants in old warehouses



the second largest Train Station in the USA
UNION STATION



Reception hall in the train station



[31] Electric cars were already here in 1914!

A visit to the World War I Museum is an absolute must. The war in Europe and America's role in it is illuminated in a very impressive way. Without a raised index finger, very factual and informative.



In Flanders Fields

*In Flanders fields, the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.*

*We are Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved, and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.*

*Take up our quarrel with the foe;
To you from failing hand we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We should not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.*

~ John McCrae ~



I think of my father, who lived through this war starving as a little boy, while my grandfathers fought for survival on the Somme in mud and dirt, putrefaction and gas alarm or cooped up in a submarine somewhere in the Atlantic ...

Kansas City means BBQ. And Norbert shows us how to prepare smoked ribs as a resident of this city: juicy, tender and super aromatic in taste. There is no need for sauce. Thanks to the "Pit Master".

In general, Bettina and Norbert spoiled us with sumptuous meals and cozy evenings at their fireplace.

Thank you for your great hospitality! Problem for you: we'll be back!



♥ *Lichen
Dont!*



Ana



And when we're not feasting, they both show us their beautiful city.



Another highlight for me was the tour of the company that Norbert has built up here over the past 25 years: Weber Maschinenbau GmbH, Kansas City

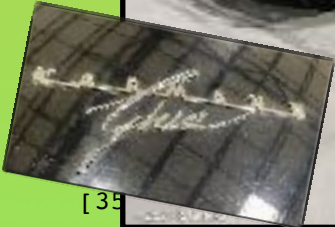
The fine mechanical processing of the stainless steel, the electro-pneumatic control, the size of the cutting knife and the breathtaking speed (2000 slices per minute) with which e.g. a 15 feet long salami is cut are really remarkable. German mechanical engineering at it's best!

example:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1UDQxkkn2ew>



Norbert's passion includes these two vintage cars that he cherishes and cares for. It's good if the garage he parks them in, is big enough to be used for test drives!



In Custer the weather promises to be much better, so we continue our spring tour. But of course not without making a detour to our friends in Friend, Nebraska. Sharon and Dwight Tisdale are the reason we're so well integrated at the Roadrunner Motorhome Club. Both of them talked us into the club years ago, under the influence of alcohol and payment for the first two years!

Both live on the children's farm in the best farmland of Nebraska during the summer months. An oasis of calm and seclusion. Time for good conversation, good food and pleasant hours with good friends ==> priceless.



Once again, the time is far too short. In addition, heavy hail thunderstorms are approaching on the horizon and Custer is waiting for us. Sharon, Dwight, Kim and Andy: Thank you for your hospitality. We always feel very well received by you. Next time we will stop by in autumn, when the fields are ripe for harvest (Nebraska's sweet corn is unique) and there is no risk of thunderstorms or tornadoes.

Back in Custer, South Dakota

We have now been at our summer location in the Black Hills for 8 weeks. The campground is packed. America has rediscovered camping since Covid. We are happy to see how whole families with several generations are drawn to nature for a few days. Our campground is certainly not a resort, but offers a variety of play opportunities in the great outdoors, especially for children. But also the lovers of all-terrain vehicles have discovered us for themselves, as we have a lot of space for their "toys" and our area is located directly on the extensive trail network of the national forest. Not to mention the many motorcyclists. Business is booming and Beate and I have to work properly, which is really fun (we wouldn't be here otherwise) and we are filled with joy and satisfaction. We spend the rest of the day with our friends from all over the USA who spend the summer here every year. So far there are 8 couples here, and we expect 7 more in August. The place is then more or less in private hands and so we have always a reason to celebrate almost every day.



friends at Independence Day 2021



Time and a dry place for jeep repairs



the shop



Hope und Paul, co-worker



I love mowing lawn



Rob



concert with Lou and Dick



Linda and Jeff (neighbors from Yuma) work at a park next door



when my love does magic ...



Our life here almost always takes place in the fresh air and only severe thunderstorms force us into the motorhome. Campfires with friends and dinners together are the order of the day.

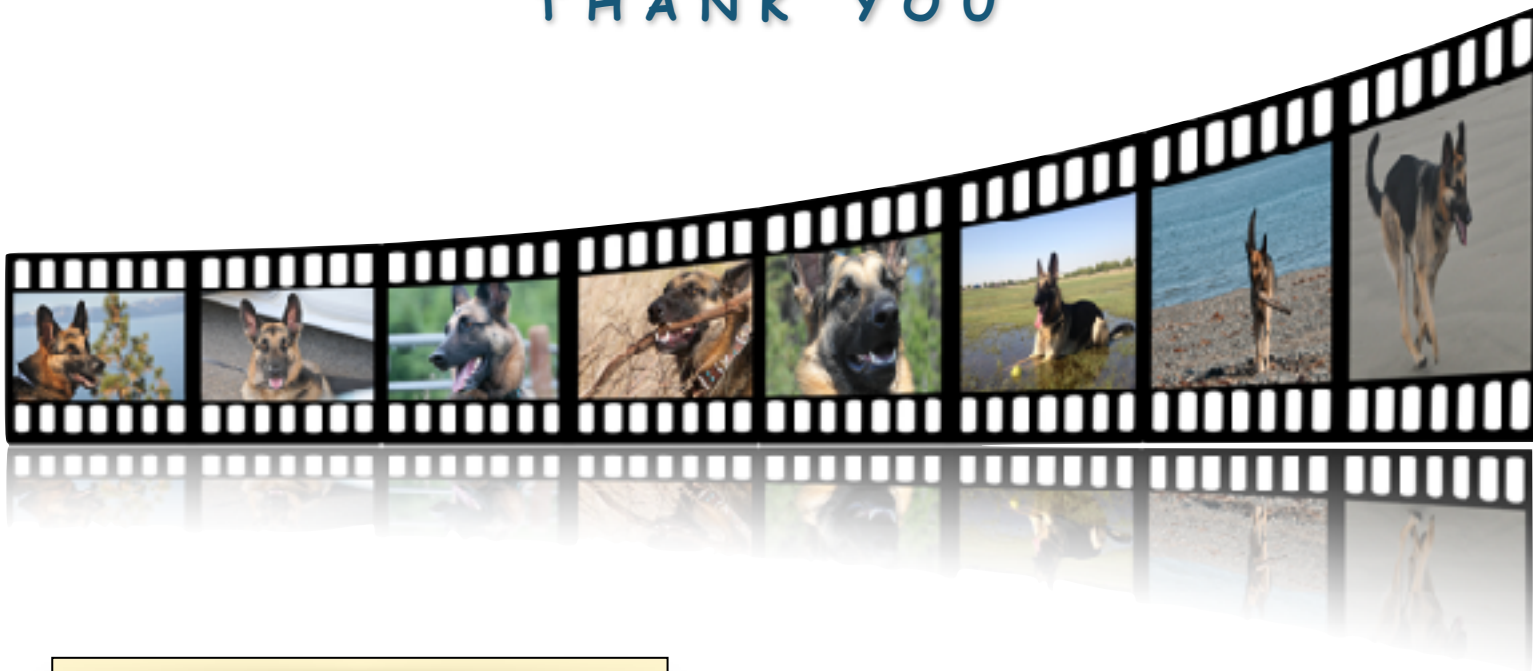


Exciting two more months are now waiting for us. The motorcycle rally in Sturges, further visits from friends and the nature around us won't leave us bored.

Yes, and then we look forward to a 3 week holiday in Germany in September.

Before I finish, I would like to thank everyone who continues to stay in touch with us: through letters on birthdays, Facebook posts, video chats, phone calls and e-mails.

T H A N K Y O U



reach us:

gefeke@freenet.de

(915) 667 - 0501 or (915) 667 - 0595

Facebook

Whatsapp

That`s it for today. We have been on the road for 2168 days now.

Beate and Rudy

