

Happy Trails

Notizen von Unterwegs

November 2021 Vol. 41

GERMANY TRIP 2021

AND WHAT ELSE HAPPENED

Once again, it pays to have two citizenships. The travel restrictions of the pandemic had meant that planned visits could not be carried out last and this year. With a German passport, an American green card and two COVID vaccinations in the arm, there were no longer any obstacles in the way. So - off to Germany - off to granddaughter Lillien!



Before that, we had to say goodbye once again: Our Custer family had accompanied us since May and once again had a wonderful summer with us. As always, there was no boredom at Custer Mountain Campground. In addition to our “work”, social interaction was once again the top priority. And we celebrated a lot! However, we hiked very little this summer, because we simply missed our companion Noah and every path, every alley and every meadow was full of memories of him.

Still, we more than enjoyed our time in the Black Hills. And we will come back again: in 2022, hopefully together with our children and friends from Germany, who have already announced their visits. All of you stay healthy & happy!



our CUSTER family

Beate and I consider ourselves lucky to be able to call these people
from all parts of the USA our friends!





Rob



Winnie & Paul



Hope

Paul



Emily

Dick

Most of our well-being, however, was due to these comrades-in-arms who made our life so pleasant again this year. Always helpful and there for us! Great people, who are like family members to us. We love you guys!



Dick



Lee Ann

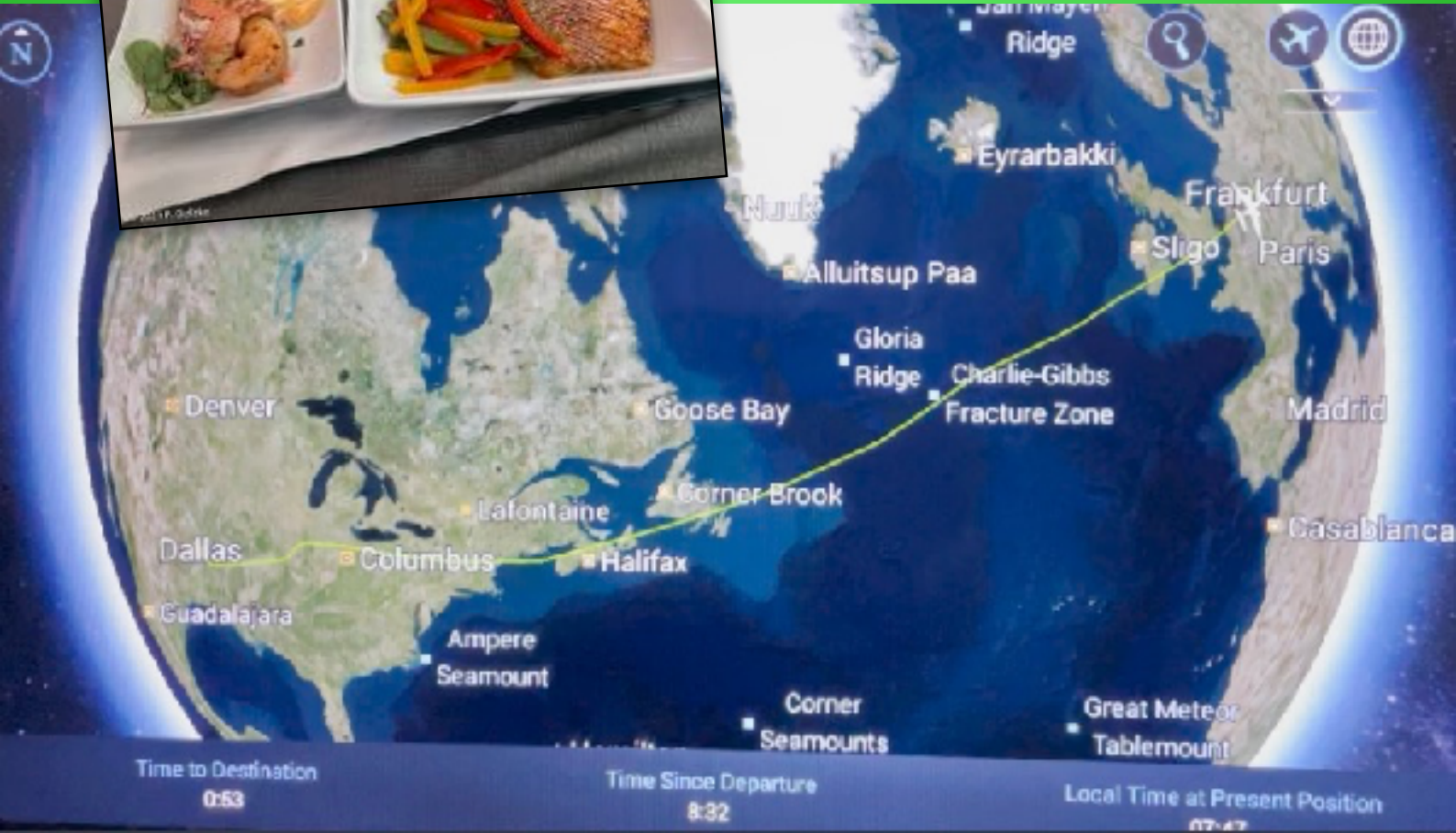




some of our VISITORS 2021



At the end of August the time has come: after two years, we will finally visit Germany again. The desire to see, kiss, smell and cuddle our granddaughter Lillie has just become unbearable. Inexpensive tickets including business class made the trip even more enjoyable. With suitcases full of American groceries, 10 kg of peanut butter, steak sauces, various sweets, t-shirts, jeans and hundreds of gifts for our granddaughter, our friends Lou and Dick took us to the airport in Rapid City at 6:00 a.m.





After the long flight, we first strengthen ourselves and then Lillien inspect the contents of our suitcases. In addition, we will be introduced to the first games that we will have to play every day from now on! The German wheat beer is simply delicious, I don't need to mention this at this point. Nice to be here.





Is there anything better than being woken up by your granddaughter at 5:30 a.m.? Thanks to jet lag, there was no problem for us. And cuddling is always possible!

Because of just beautiful weather we went directly to the pampering program: for Lillien there was a carousel, ice cream and cotton candy, for Beate and me bread, rolls, cheese and cold cuts. Germany, land of milk and honey.







The first days ...



... pass in a flash. Everything revolves around our grandchild, of course. But we also use the time to get to know the new woman at Johannes' side better. We have known Katrin (Kati) for two years, but only from our various ZOOM phone calls. Now she is here - live and in color. A really great woman with a wit and a sense of humor. tSoon we took her to our hearts. It's also nice that she drinks no beer and only sugar-sweet wine; so she doesn't get in our way 🤔😂 !!!!





The next stop is with my sister's family in the historic city of Soest.



As always, we enjoy spending time with the family, always having good conversations, a fantastic atmosphere and great food. It's especially nice to see how the niece Leah and the nephews Aaron and Joram have blossomed into adults! The big one is studying in the Netherlands and came extra to see us 🥰. The middle one is about to go to Cologne to study Management Economics & Social Science. Yes, and the junior is currently waiting impatiently to be able to officially drink beer from mass mugs in the near future! 🍺 🥰 🍺





The joint visit to the Wewelsburg near Büren was particularly interesting. Countless times in my life we've passed it in close proximity, but never stopped. There is so much historically interesting to discover.



↓↓↓ please watch the video ↓↓↓



As one of the few German castles with a triangular floor plan, the Wewelsburg was built around 1123. It owes its current appearance to a renovation around 1605, which turned the castle into a hunting lodge in the Renaissance style of the Bishop of Paderborn.

Less glorious, however, was the period from 1934 to 1945 when the SS under Heinrich Himmler redesigned the complex into an SS

castle. Obergruppenführer (generals) should be trained here. An adjacent sub-camp of the Sachsenhausen concentration camp "supplied" the castle with workers. Today a memorial, with extensive exhibitions on the ideology and terror of the SS. A very dark time: the Nazi time in my homeland. This visit has shown once again how important it is to never forget what injustice was done to other people back then and how easy normal people can be manipulated because of spreading lies, fear and darkness, even without sozial media! Never forget!



Beth
birth place



Bielefeld -
Sennestadt

Short visit to Beates mother to take her to the Moselle. With best summer weather we enjoy the great garden and the get-together with Beates brother Bruno and his family. Of course, nephew Marc was not to be missed.



Traditionally, when the weather is good, you sit under the giant cherry tree - with coffee and home made cake, of course



When we were planning the trip to Germany, Katrin, Johannes' partner, quickly came up with the idea of renting a holiday home together. One was quickly found on the beautiful Moselle. Located above Traben-Trarbach on top of Mont Royal, she found a beautiful and very modern house with enough bedrooms, bathrooms and a sauna. The large terrace with a lot of green space offered great play opportunities for grandpa, grandma and Lillien!

So Beate and I picked up the 93-year-old great-grandmother from Sennestadt, Johannes, Kati and Lillien came from Eitorf, a long-time friend from Pforzheim had to take out his Tesla car, our Eifel friends Karen and Reimer came on a short visit and ultimately nephew Marc visited us for a few days, who then took the great-grandma back home.



time together with our granddaughter





We particularly enjoyed the time together with the still completely sprightly 93-year-old great-grand-grandma Leni, who insisted on accompanying us on all tours on the Moselle. Whether on walks through the old Moselle towns, whether up to an old tower from Roman times or a 7km long circular route through a wildlife park: Great-grandma was always there. Respect and appreciation!



at the wildlife park



Traben-Trarbach



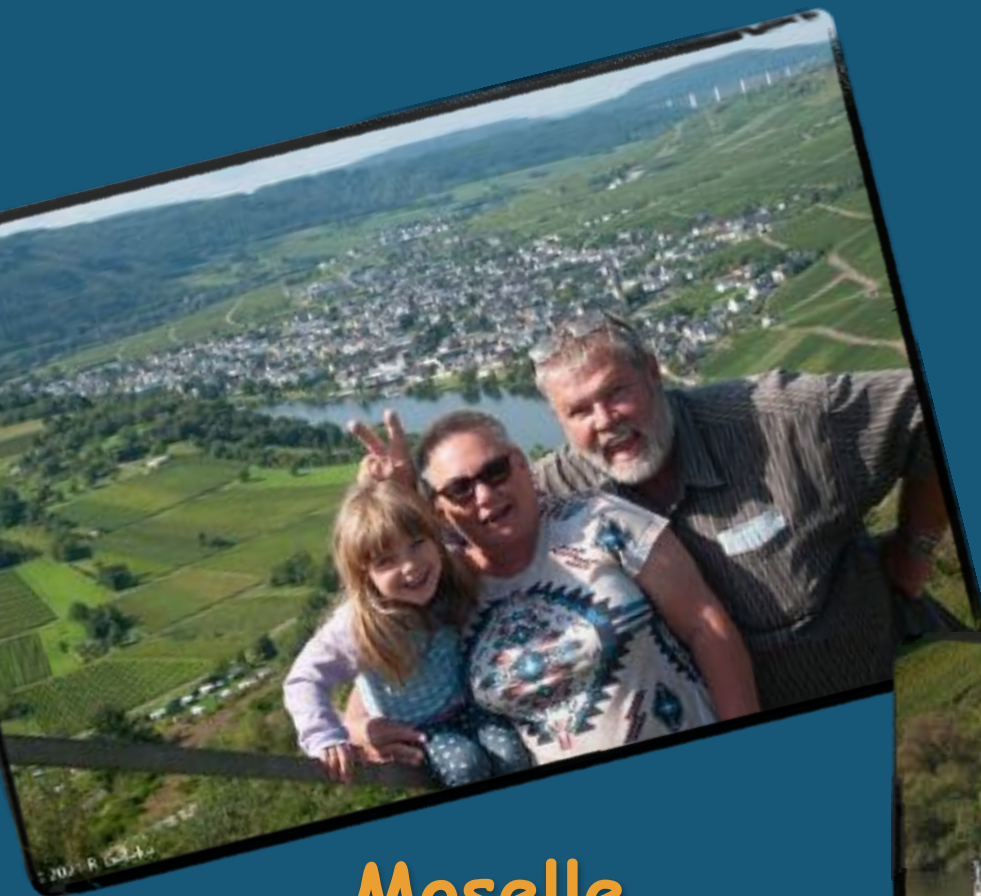
tower from 1350



Bernkastel-Kues

400 year old market square in Bernkastel-Kues





Moselle
2021





On our return trip, of course, we didn't forget to visit the hidden Eltz Castle. This fairytale-like castle, built in 1157, is not only completely intact, but has been in the same family for 33 generations, that is 850 years! Lillie and I went in every room to find Cinderella or Sleeping Beauty - unfortunately without success.





Our last week in Germany. We stay with our friends Andrea & Uwe, who not only offer us accommodation, but once again spoil us with culinary delights. Whether a Bavarian evening or a richly laid breakfast table: always a pleasure.



Bonn

♥ Lichen
Dant!



Great surprise: on Bonn's Münsterplatz we meet General Dierk-Peter Merklingshaus, him and his wife Paola are always very interested in our travel reports and who write to us regularly. We hope to see you again in El Paso soon! And Paola, have a good recovery! 🥰



Buying the souvenirs for the USA



Visit to Marianne,
our former neighbor



We had a beautiful
Day tour on the Rhine river
together with Lillien's mom
Anna and her new partner Sascha.



The last days begin. As a souvenir of our visit, we seal our great love for one another with three locks that we attach to the suspension bridge of the Sieg near Lilliens home.





Farewell hurts! But Beate and I are now looking forward to her visit in the USA in 2022. We know Lilli is in the best hands that grandparents could wish for and are happy about every photo or video call from Kati, Anna or Johannes, who have so wonderfully provided grandma and grandpa from America with it in the past. It was a great time with y'all.



*Wir lieben
Euch!*

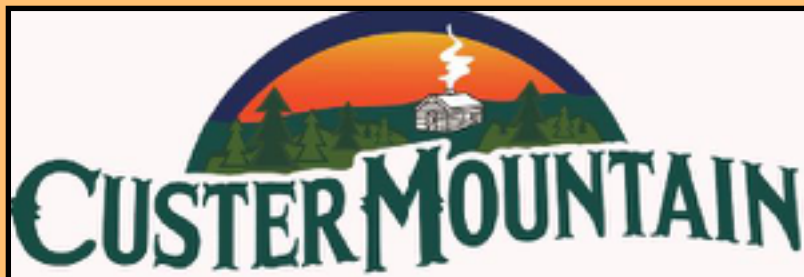


Back in Custer, South Dakota

We only have a few days to leave our summer quarters. The Balloon Fiesta in Albuquerque, New Mexico is waiting for us. A quick "goodbye dear friends" and

... boom, suddenly there is a tree in it the way, or rather, lean on our white Berta! No forwards or backwards without damaging the roof.

For 7 years I have driven around this pine - this year I have not seen it. With a 2 hour delay and thanks to the active technical support from Rob and Dave, we set off south with Jeff and Linda Venable.



Lou & Richard (Dick)

Many thanks for your help and support. We wish you wonderful experiences and a great time with Lee-Ann and Bill. Have a safe trip back home and greetings to your lovely family!



unterwegs in Colorado

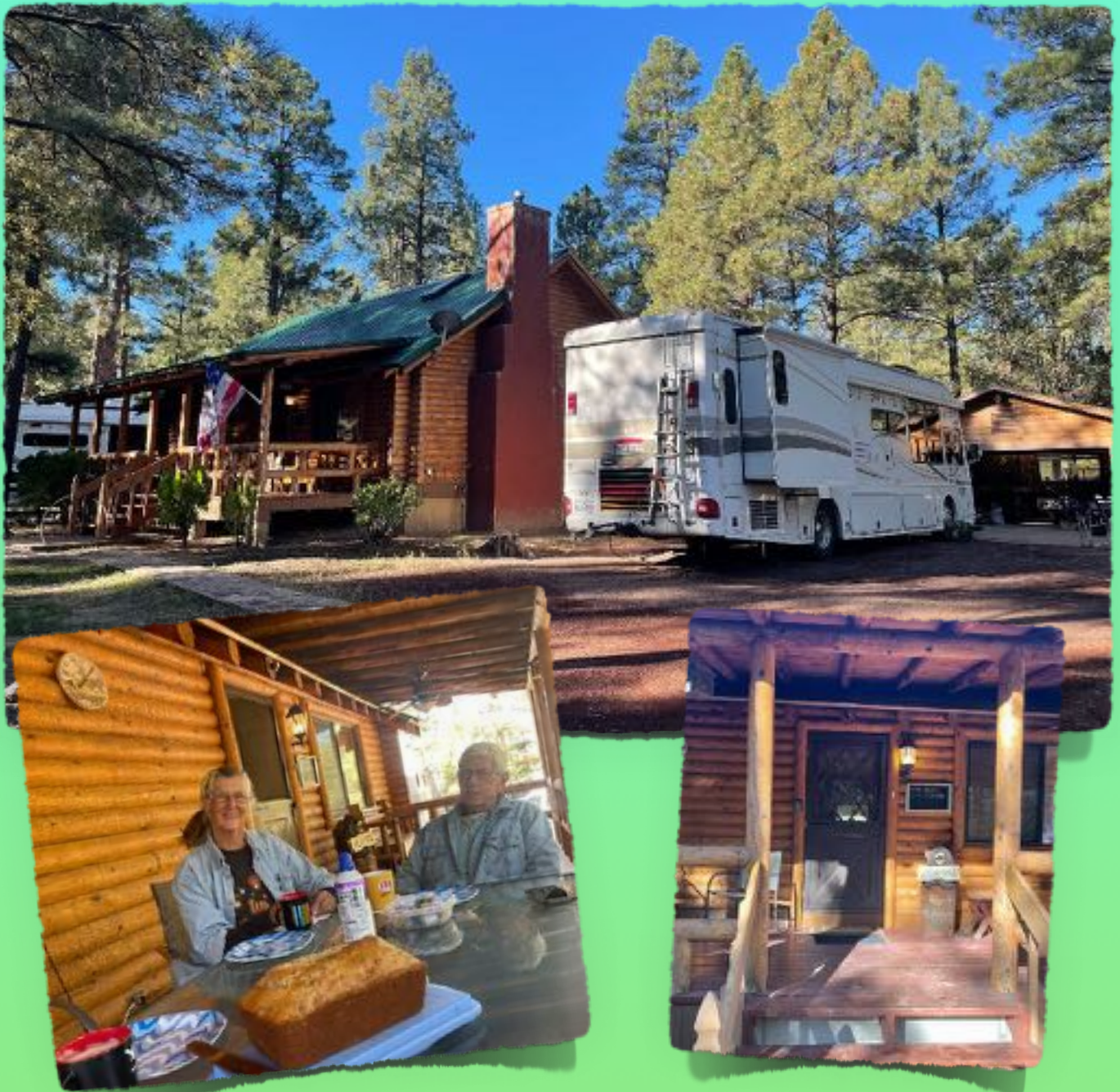
The balloon fiesta was once again a special experience in our course of the year. As in previous years, we are impressed by the colorful world of hot air balloons and the friendliness of the pilots, visitors and volunteers.





What is special for us: as voluntary helpers (navigators), we are always right in the middle. In the morning, at noon and in the evening we can experience everything up close, or better said, feel, because you can hear, see and smell the more than 500 balloons!





Susan and Dale have bought property in the Arizona mountains with a fabulous log home. After months of remodeling and renovation work, it was time to introduce us to the "Happy Cabin". Of course, Dale and Susan had made sure that we had a full hook-up with water, electricity and sewer connections. Camping at the highest level! Both have created a real jewel in which to live wonderfully should both of them have to give up motorhome travel one day. With great attention to details, they have turned this rustic house into a real gem. Since the location in the mountains east of Phoenix invites you to hike, we will certainly not have been here for the last time.



Henna



Yippy, we have offspring! Her name is Henna, she is a pure-bred German Shepherd, 10 months young and comes from a breed that is exclusively intended for guide dogs. Unfortunately, our little one did not meet the strict health requirements of a guide dog and was therefore available for adoption. Birgit and Jim Walker, friends from Phoenix-Laveen, worked as dog trainers and made contact with the dog school. On October 17th we got to know Henna for the first time - love and affection at first sight.



Birgit and Jim not only made the connection, but also accommodated us on their property for almost two weeks. Fenced in and supplied with electricity and water, we could take care of Henna completely. In addition, Birgit insisted on showing us the beauties of the area around Laveen several times. Thank you for your wonderful hospitality!



The two are professional dog trainers, write books and very successfully run various blogs, websites and podcasts. Check them out, it's worth it!

<https://www.youtube.com/c/ModernCanineVlog>

<https://mcs.dog/index.html>



Our special thanks goes out to Carrie Hobbs (left) from the the Eye Dog Foundation, who allowed us to adopt Henna, and to Connie Degerness (right) who has raised and trained Henna over the past 8 months. Thanks to her, our dog lady is well educated and is already very strong in character. Connie, Henna and we are very thankful for your love and care. You will always be informed in her future adventures and once or twice a year we will visit you!



After only two days, the bond between my two girls was so great that I had nothing to say again. Henna, already Beate's shadow.



Now we are back in Yuma Arizona, our winter quarters.
The other winter migratory birds in our Roadrunner motorhome group are also slowly arriving.
A reunion with good friends every day. The winter can come.



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That's it again. Today we have been on
the road for 2289 days.

your Gefeke's

