

*English at Gutenberg University, Mainz, Germany* Germany Teaching Apr 23 May 28 2010 (This trip is a humanitarian mission to guest teach English at Gutenberg University, Mainz, Germany.) Fri Apr 23, after much uncertainty regarding departure from Charleston, McGuire, etc. and regarding when the volcanic cloud would clear from European skies, we decided on Charleston and departure on 4/23/10, because of historic frequency of flights to Ramstein from there, and the Reserve shuttle(Chas-MacDill-Hmstd-Jax-Chas). So we drove to MacDill, arriving around 2 PM, to find that we had been given an erroneous show time of 1500. The actual show time was 1800. No problem, as I was used to the flexibility required of space-a. There were lots of seats on the C-17, but I was unable to get a reservation at the Charleston VOQ, so we were prepared to sleep in the Pax terminal if necessary at Chas. Upon arrival at Chas, we found there was a 0130 roll call Sat morn for Ramstein. Sat Apr 24, luck was with us, as a family of 5 was a no-show.

Originally we did not make the cut for the flight (53 seats), but the no-shows opened up 5 more seats. Fortunately I had signed up for space a about 45 days ahead. We boarded the plane, but it was full, with full cargo load and every seat taken. So much for being able to stretch out and sleep on the floor. Arrived Ramstein around 1900 local time, after a 2 hr stopover at Gander, Newfoundland. We couldn't get a room at the Ramstein hotel just across from the terminal, but fortunately we were able to stay at the General Cannon Hotel for Distinguished Visitors. But it is way out nowhere. The only place easy to get to is the 24 hr shoppette. Sun Apr 25, couldn't even walk to chapel so we missed church. At least the weather was nice and sunny. Mon Apr 26 we were picked up by a driver from Gutenberg U, Mainz and taken to the Gastprofessorenhaus for visiting professors. Nice little, 1 bedr bath, kitchen,& LR apt, Spartan, but adequate. Spent the day getting over jet lag. Because we arrived much earlier than expected, we have til Tues May 3 when I start teaching.

Tues Apr 27, explored Altstadt Mainz(old section of town) including Dom (cathedral), several historic 'platz' (old town plazas), and purchased week tickets for unlimited bus use. Pleasantly surprised to find that the bus system includes Weisbaden.

Wed Apr 28, took bus to American Arms Hotel (US Army hotel) in downtown Weisbaden, had lunch, checked out BX and Comm (can't use), and went to Kurhaus (famous casino in heart of Weisbaden).

Thurs Apr 29 continued walking tour of Mainz, finding famous statues by Hans Beckoffen, foremost sculptor of 16th century.

Fri Apr 30 rainy day. Went to Romisch-German Zentral Museum to see excellent artifacts from Roman period. Mainz was the fortified frontier of the Roman Empire on the West bank of the Rhine, known as Moguntiacum.

Sat May 1, another rainy day. Went to Mainz-Kastel on East bank of Rhine, to catch military shuttle bus, an orientation to all the Weisbaden military bases. Ate lunch at BX, shopped at shoppette.

Sun May 2, another rainy day. Attended Mass at Catholic Student Center just off campus, and had coffee with some friendly parishioners, then went to Mainz Zitadel, high over Mainz, to Stadthistorisches Museum and monument to Druses (Roman military hero). Got really wet in the process.

Mon May 3, rainy again. We took the bus to Weisbaden, had lunch again in the American Arms Hotel, and took the bus to Neroberg, a commanding view of the city, with an old cog water-driven railroad to the park at the top, where we toured a beautiful Russian Orthodox chapel built to commemorate the childbirth-death of a young Russian princess. Apparently the Russians frequented Weisbaden as a gambling resort. In the evening we went to shopping center Real with Dr. Sonja Kokott, a lawyer staying at the Gastprofessorenhaus. Just like US shopping centers. Bought groceries, including some German bratwurst and 4 different kinds of German bier.

Tues May 4, started teaching my class today. 8 students, all faculty, including 4 Phds. Went to German restaurant Fleh Leppo for local German food.

Wed May 5, second day teaching. Went well. Stayed home and chilled for the rest of the day. Visited HI Hostel in Mainz, but manager not present. Took short self-tour as best we could. Located at the rear of VolksPark.

Thurs May 6, teaching Lesson 3 about Democrats and Republicans. I am teaching Montag-Donnerstag (Monday-Thursday) from 0830-1030. Students very interested and had spirited discussions. In evening went to Catholic Student Center to Film Club. Saw 2005 film

“War of the Worlds” in English with German subtitles, including wine and snacks.

Friday May 7, Went to Heidleberg with Dr. Kokott and her friend. Kokott has been very kind, inviting us with her and taking us to the Real. Thess and I walked the Philosopher's Way and got some photos from the best viewpoint of the city. Then we took a self guided walking tour, but it turned out not too good. The highlight was when we ate at the Marstall, now the Heidelberg University canteen and bar, formerly the Royal Stables! The walking tour turned out too long, and mostly architecture. Thess ended up with a sore foot.

Sat May 8, Thess rested her sore foot all day. I went to the Rewi grocery store nearby, then toured the University botanical gardens and sports facilities.

Sun May 9 Attended 1100 Mass at nearby Catholic Student Center then went to Mainz Natural History Museum. Observed Mainz Marathon with lots of marathon runners, on the way to the museum. Had difficulty getting a bus back to University because of the Marathon.

Mon May 10, Teaching day, continuing Lesson 3 about Democrats and Republicans. Had students split into Dems, Repubs, and Voters. Dems and Repub gave presentations on their platforms, Voters asked questions and voted. Repubs won. Good discussions and conversation. Started Lesson 4 about Media. Had lunch with Dr. Stadlbauer at German Restaurant on Campus. To celebrate Mother's Day and our 7th wedding anniversary, Thess and I went to Weisbaden, to the American Arms Hotel, and had a nice Italian meal.

Tues May 11 The students must like the class as they got together and brought a breakfast of meats, hams, wurst, cheeses, jams, and breads. We continued discussion with students about US and German Media, especially hand held media, a new revolution, and multi-tasking. Lesson 4 discussion was about Different types of music, and the differences between German and American music. Each student brought favorite American and German music. We played them and discussed them. We went to lunch with Dr. Kokott (neighbor in Gastprofessorenhaus) at the Mensa (Student Activity Bldg). Evening, Rode with Co-Chair Rosita Eckl to English Round Table at Restaurant in Volkspark. Gathering of Germans who want to practice English. Only one American ex-pat was there, besides us, Co-chairman Jeff Wells.

Wed May 12 Continued playing music and discussing. Began Lesson 5 Copyrights and music,

main issue is free downloading vs protection. Divided into teams for and against copyright protection, and a jury.

Thurs May 13, a holiday (Ascension Day), no class, everything closed. Made plans for Frankfurt Friday and Trier Saturday. Rode bus to Bischofsheim and back as a dry run for the trip to Frankfurt.

Friday May 14 Bought special all inclusive Bus/Rail tickets to go to Frankfurt, and discovered that the month bus tickets we already have include local rail also. All those 45 minute bus rides to Weisbaden could have been 10 minute rail rides. The train passed over the Main River, through Bischofsheim, past the Frankfurt Flughafen (airport), to the Frankfurt-Main Hauptbahnhof. We first went to the Romerplatz in the Altstadt (Old town center) and saw the many historic buildings in the large square, including the famous Rathaus (town hall, appropriately called Rat House) and Gerechtigkeitsbrunnen (Justice Fountain). We then went to the Dom, (main cathedral of the town), St. Bartholomaeus and saw the Crucifixion sculpture by Mainz sculptor Hans Backoffen. We then went across the Main River to Sachsenhausen, first to the Communications Museum, then to Apfelweinwirtschaft Adolf Wagner (apple wine tavern) where Thess had goulash and I had a local dish made from strong cheese and onions marinated in vinegar and olive oil. Of course I had a couple of glasses of Apfelwein (apple wine), which is very hard cider, so hard I could feel the effect of 2 of them. By that time it was late afternoon so we took the train back to Mainz.

Sat May 15, got up very early, went to the train station and met the challenge of buying a 1 day group regional ticket that allows travel to all of Rhineland-Palatinate and Saarland. It was the least expensive way to get to Trier on the German/Luxembourg border. Trier was a Roman Capital, and is considered the oldest city in Germany. The train ride was very scenic, along the Rhine wine growing district to Koblenz, then along the Mosel wine growing district to Trier. It was great to see the steep vineyards and river traffic along the way. The trip was worth it just for the scenic train ride. Trier is known for its Roman ruins, and as the home of Constantine, the Roman emperor that converted to Christianity and stopped the slaughter of Christians around 300 AD. We were not disappointed, when we saw the huge city gate Porta Negra, then the Konstantinbasilika (Constantine Basilica), which is now a church, but in Roman times was Constantine's throne hall. We then went to the Rheinisches Landesmuseum which houses the best collection of Roman relics outside of Italy. We ran out of time and didn't get to see the Roman Baths and Amphitheater. The trip back was again very scenic, with late afternoon lighting and a different perspective of the two river valleys. It was a long but enjoyable trip, 3 ½ hours by train each way, and about 7 hours in Trier.

Sun May 16 After the long Trier trip, we slept in and then went to a museum on the east side of the Rhein in Mainz-Kastel. What a surprise! The gem of a museum, in a German Citadel built in 1832, is only open from 1030-1230 on Sundays. It includes exhibits from Roman times through the present, and has a very friendly staff. The exhibits are outstanding, include many Roman artifacts, and an area concerning Kastel during and after WWII. The Kastel people are still upset by an arbitrary decision after WWII which placed them under the jurisdiction of Weisbaden, because they are on the East side of the Rhein. Throughout history they were part of Mainz and still consider themselves as part of Mainz. The history mentions that August Busch, founder of Anheiser-Busch Breweries and Budweiser beer, was born in Mainz-Kastel. The Kastel museum system also includes the remains of a Triumphal Arch built to honor Germanicus. The foundations of the arch are in the basement of a private home, and were discovered when trying to enlarge the home. The owner no longer has the use of his basement, due to the presence of huge Roman stone blocks the size of tables. Sunday evening we went to the Mainz Stadttheater for a performance of selected songs by a young opera star.

Mon May 17 cold and rainy. Had a nice class this morn, but received a phone bill after returning to our apartment. Its a funny miscommunication story. The building manager here at the Gastprofessorenhaus told me how to call back to the states, and told me all calls were free. So Thess and I made a few calls back to the US, and Thess called the Philippines. I was shocked a few days ago when I got a phone bill for 3 calls in April, for 0,0991 euros! So I called and the university phone person couldn't speak any English, but she did tell me that it was only 0.0991 euros, or less than 10 cents. But I was still worried because of all the calls we had made, so I talked to the building manager. She said she had meant that all calls to university numbers were free! I got her to call the university phone person and get our bill to date. It was only 19 euros, but we ran up a phone bill we didn't know about.

Monday evening We had Dr. Sonja Kokott over for dinner of Filipino adobo and wine. She's a Phd in law, about 30 years old, is staying in the Gastprofessorenhaus, and has been very helpful to us. Thess doesn't drink, but Sonja and I managed to finish one bottle of wine and make a good dent in another.

Tues May 18, cold and rainy. Had another nice class with such pleasant students. In the afternoon, we took the train to Weisbaden (had been taking the bus there frequently, but found out our month tickets also included local trains.) The bus ride was 40 minutes and the train only 10. We walked around Weisbaden til it rained, then bought ice cream to get out of the rain, and when it stopped, went back at 1700 to the Weisbaden Hauptbahnhof, and back to Mainz. We met an American couple on the train that were having some difficulty with the conductor because they couldn't find their tickets. We helped them then talked a little. They were on a hectic tour, having just gotten off a Rhein cruise boat, and were headed to Heidelberg, then Munich. Some of us Americans have unrealistic expectations on our trips. The husband asked

me if they could see Heidleberg in an hour, then make it to Munich that night! It made me glad that Thess likes to do things a little slower. Heidleberg is a 2 hour train ride, then a full 1 or 2 day tour.

Wed 19 May, cold and rainy. Nice class today, discussing American Culture, selecting items of interest from the internet to discuss. At noon time we went to a Latin jazz jam session at the music building next door on campus. In the afternoon, Sonja Kokott helped me purchase RR tickets to Wurzburg, our weekend destination, on the web.

Thurs 20 May, cold and rainy again. It's a good thing the English conversation classes are going well, or I would be depressed by the weather. Anyway, good class today about American idioms and slang. We went to the Student cafeteria for lunch, split pasta for lunch, and it cost us 7 euros! We are doing something wrong, for such a bad meal to cost 7€.

Fri 21 May Continued class today about American idioms and slang. In the afternoon, we traveled by auto with Tobias Rolfe and his girlfriend Verena to the Rheingau, the nearby wine growing region, and visited the charming wine town of Rudesheim, right on the Rhein River. Strolling through the quaint town, and having coffee and Black Forest Chocolate cake was fascinating. Then we motored up a nearby mountain to the River overview at the Germania Monument. What a view! The afternoon was topped off by a picnic at a local weinstube (wine, sausages, cheese, fruits), then another trip to a fantastic view of some vine-yards and the River.

Sat 22 May went to Landesmuseum in Mainz. It was supposed to have one of the best collections of Roman Antiquities in Germany, but I didn't see any on the tour, so I asked and found that that section of the museum is under construction, and can't be seen again until 2014! So much for the purpose of my visit.

Sun 23 May With the rail tickets I purchased with the help of our neighbor Sonja Kokott we took the 3 hour trainride to Wurzburg, and checked into a private room at the HI hostel, right below an awesome medieval fortress (Marienberg) on the Main River. What a scenic spot, and excellent hostel, only 55 €. In the afternoon we visited the "Residenz", palace of the Prince Bishops of Wurzburg, constructed in 1719. Above the famous entry staircase is the largest fresco in Europe, painted on a vaulted ceiling that uninformed architects were predicting would collapse in a few years, but it even held up against bombing in WWII. The palace compares favorably to Versailles or Schönbrunn Palace in Vienna. Afterwards we went to weinstube Burgerspital for Spargel (asparagus) and bratwurst.

Mon 24 May Took a long hike up a steep hill to the impregnable fortress Festung Marienberg, which was the home of the prince bishops from 1253 to 1719 when the seat of power was moved to the Residenz we toured Sat. It was quite a steep hike, but the tour was worth it, and the view of Wurzburg was outstanding. It was huge, covering many acres, containing several museums, the prince bishop quarters, and even a large chapel. Our hostel was directly below it. It looked really close on the map, but maps don't take elevation into account. We walked back down in early afternoon, and Thess rested at the hostel while I walked the bridge into the altstadt, town square area. In late afternoon Sonja Kokott picked us up for the auto ride back to Mainz.

Tues May 25 field trip with students. We walked around the botanical gardens adjacent to the University, led by scientist Rolfe Essman, Phd, one of my students. In the afternoon I finally toured the Johannes Gutenberg Museum, which I had been saving for the day of the Venes family visit. Since they never were able to schedule the visit, I toured the museum myself. There were two copies of the first book printed in 1453 with metal movable type, the Bible. Approximately 800 copies were printed, but only 2 copies survive. Gutenberg didn't invent printing, but invented metal movable type, and the production methods that made mass production of books possible. It was the most significant revolution in information in the middle ages.

Wed May 26, last class. We had breakfast of meats, hams, wurst, cheeses, jams, breads all brought by the students. I gave them a short summary of our travels while in Mainz. I was surprised when they gave me gifts, including a pen, coffee mug, and a Gutenberg U baseball cap. What a great class! They learned a lot, and it was emotionally fulfilling for me to see them grow during the class.

In the afternoon Mr. Knoob, the Chancellor's driver, took us the 100 Km from Mainz to Ramstein. As it was pouring rain when we arrived at 1530, he waited patiently while I went to the passenger terminal and sorted out what we would do. We were a few minutes late for the Wednesday afternoon flight to Baltimore-Washington International Airport (BWI), but it was full anyway. The next flight to BWI was Thursday morn. So I called billeting was finally able to obtain a room after 2 days of requesting. I went to the front desk, checked in, then Mr. Knoob helped us get our bags to our room, which was about 3 km further inside the base. Then I accompanied Mr. Knoob to the front gate, thanked him and said goodbye. I then hiked to the billeting front desk in the rain, but they were gracious enough to provide me transportation to our room at 1830. So we settled in for the night with an 0630 roll call Thursday morning for our flight, and no transportation to get the 3 km to the passenger terminal.

Thurs May 27 I had calculated that if we got up at 0430, and hiked 1 km to a bus stop by 0600 we could make it to the terminal on time. But it was pouring rain again. We struggled the 1 km with our bags to the bus stop, then a female Army soldier was dropped off nearby by her husband, and graciously offered to have her husband drop us at the passenger terminal. So we made it to the terminal well before the 0630 roll call. By 10 AM we were selected for the flight, received our boarding passes, checked our luggage, and were seated on the Boeing 767 airplane, and 8 hours later landed at BWI. Good luck again! By 1400 we had our bags, and had passed through immigration and customs. The next leg of our trip was BWI to Jacksonville Naval Air Station (Jax NAS), at 0600 Friday morning. So we settled into the USO at BWI, rather than face the hassle of going from the airport to a hotel and back by 0400 roll call on Friday.

Fri May 28 The USO was very comfortable, with snacks, drinks, large screen TV, even a sleeping room with large reclining chairs. So we got a little sleep, and at 0330 went to the USAF Air Mobility Command desk to check in. To our surprise they immediately gave us boarding passes and checked our bags. Apparently very few people take the 100 seats for the flight to Jax. Good luck again! At 0600 we boarded the MD80 aircraft, and 2 hours later we were in Jax. A fellow "space available" user who lives in Jax picked us up and took us to the Greyhound bus station, where we boarded a bus at 1230 for Orlando. Although the bus ran late, we arrived Orlando finally at 1630, then took local buses to get to Fern Park, FL, where a neighbor picked us up and brought us home, arriving at 1815 in Altamonte Springs. It was a long day, but we were finally home! Now to recover from jet lag, and cut the knee high weeds in my yard.