

# Jim and Emmy's European Travel Journal

1970, 1979, 1980, 1983, 1985, 1988, 1989, 1991 and  
1995

This portion of the Journal contains the Prelude and the Postlude from each of the eight trips. The first portion of each year tells about getting ready to leave the US, the second segment tells about our return after the European portion of each trip.

## 1970 Prelude

The 1970 Travel Journal is being reconstructed in March 1985 (and re-edited in January 1992) with details from a few notes made in 1970, but with most of the general information from Jim's memory. We had planned this trip very carefully, as we wanted to do many things and see many places in the one month we would be gone. We planned to sample parts of Europe on our first trip, and gain ideas about what we would want to see in more detail in later years. It was expected our bank account and bodies would be exhausted, but we could not exhaust things to do and see. We took Linda H. and her friend, Linda S., with us.

We purchased a VW camper van for the trip. A man who works at a local Drug Store made arrangements with a VW dealer in Hamburg to have a camper van waiting for us at the airport in Frankfurt, Germany.

We joined the UEAC (United European American Club), and bought round trip tickets from Los Angeles to Frankfurt for \$283 each. It's a charter flight and will stop in Bangor, Maine for refueling on the trip to Europe, and we will stop there on the return trip for fuel and customs processing.

Linda H. has studied the German language for a couple of High School years, and Emmy may remember a few words of German from her childhood. Her parents spoke German once in awhile, especially when they didn't want her to know what they were talking about. Linda S. has had a very little High School French. As for the other languages, who knows what may happen!

As it turned out, Linda H. was of some help, Emmy remembered more German than she could have imagined, Linda S. had no idea what the French people were talking about, and Jim learned enough of each language to drive here and there with a minimum of problems.

The frustrating part then, and it continues to this day, is the difficulty, or impossibility, of getting an answer to a question about something we see, or want to see, when we don't know the language. But it has never been a problem to get from here to there, or to buy what we need to live. Linda H. is now fluent in German, and Emmy can carry on a complete conversation. Jim understands, and can speak more German than expected, but the other dozen or more

languages remain a mystery. Jim always liked Winston Churchill's comment, "The Americans and the British are divided by a common language."

Tracy and Nadine S., with daughter Linda S., arrived at our house about 9:30 AM on August 16, to take the luggage and all of us to the Imperial Blvd. Terminal at the Los Angeles Airport, from where charter flights are operated. Our plane, a DC 8, was supposed to leave at 1:00 PM, but when we arrived at the airport we were told it would be delayed until 4:30.

At 2:00 PM we were told they need a new part of some kind, and we will be delayed until 1:00 AM tomorrow. We can almost see the Douglas Aircraft plant where the plane was built, but the spare part they need is back east somewhere! Finally they took us to the Hacienda Hotel in nearby El Segundo, and at dinner the airline served a nice buffet. A little later we were told it would be 4:00 AM before we could leave. At 12:45 AM they called our room and said we would not leave until 8:00 AM.

They woke us in time, and fed us a good breakfast, and the plane finally left at 8:45 AM on August 17. The flight to Bangor, Maine took the scheduled 5 1/2 hours, and after refueling we flew for 7 hours to Frankfurt. We hope someone knows how to deliver VW campers to people who arrive one day late at the Frankfurt Airport.

We flew on a chartered aircraft, and stopped in Bangor, Maine for fuel on the way to Europe. We visited West Germany, Austria, Italy, Switzerland, France, England, Belgium, The Netherlands, East Germany, and Luxembourg. We stopped in Bangor, Maine for fuel and customs check on the way home.

The parents of Linda S. met us at the airport and we were soon home. The VW arrived a month or so later, and we sold it immediately.

Reinhold had arrived in Hamburg about an hour or so before a ship was leaving, so the VW was loaded immediately with all the dirt and bugs from the trip still covering the front. We had been told they had to be very careful and wash off all the bugs, etc., before it could be sent to the US.

Somewhere along the way someone had ripped the curtains out of the camper, and removed the gas bottle and the water can, but insurance covered that.

The net cost of the vehicle itself, for a month and driving 4,500 miles, plus 17 nights of sleeping, and many meals for four people, was about \$500.

We had heard the stories about "Europe on \$5 per day." That didn't sound too good to us, so we doubled it to \$10, then multiplied by three people and thirty days, and called that \$1,000. Three plane tickets, immunizations, passports, and miscellaneous items, were another \$1,000. The Camper and gasoline, and other miscellaneous items, cost another \$1,000.

We told Linda S's. parents to give us about \$300 for meals, admissions, and miscellaneous expenses we might pay for. We told them we would not keep track of what it cost, but if we felt it was not enough we would ask for more. If we felt it was too much, we would refund some. It seemed just fine, so we let it go at that. She paid her air-fare, and all her spending money.

A very fine beginning to what has become much European travel!!

## 1979 Prelude

Reservations had been made with Icelandic Airlines for a round trip flight from Chicago to Luxembourg. There was a scheduled stop in Reykjavik Iceland, for refueling. We now wish we had made a note of the price of the ticket. Since we went to all the trouble of flying to Chicago to catch the flight, we assume it must have been a bargain!

Along with this flight, they offered a special stop-over in Reykjavik for two nights, at a very low price (bus rides, hotel room, and several meals included), so we will do that on the return, a few months from now.

We flew to Chicago on Continental Airlines DC 10, visited with Helen Y, a friend from the days we lived in Arizona. She joined us for dinner at the restaurant on top of a Holiday Inn.

That evening we drove to Winona Lake arriving about 10:40 PM. Mama (Jim's mother) stayed up beyond her normal bedtime, to welcome us.

During the next few days we continued our visit with Mama in Winona Lake, Indiana, then drove to Flora, Indiana to visit with Jim's sisters Mary, Martha, brother Paul, and spouses.

Our plane was to leave Chicago in the evening. We arrived there with enough time to have lunch with Alice H, an old friend of Emmy's.

When we arrived at the airport we were notified the plane would leave a day late, so the airline supplied a room at the Hotel Howard Johnson near the airport.

The next morning the plane still was not flying, so we were loaded on another flight to Detroit, where we were assured our flight was ready to go.

Finally we were loaded on a plane owned by Evergreen Airlines, a charter airline, and off we went. We got off the plane for an hour and browsed in the Reykjavik airport shops, during refueling, then on to Europe. The Evergreen Airlines Boeing 707 was rather old, and in need of renovation, but we made it the whole way to the Luxembourg Airport with no problem.

We flew Icelandic Airlines to Luxembourg, with a stop in Reykjavik, Iceland for fuel. We visited Luxembourg, West Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Norway, The Netherlands, Belgium, France, Spain, Portugal, Morocco, Monaco, Italy, and Switzerland. Again on Icelandic Airlines, we flew from Luxembourg to Reykjavik. After two nights in Iceland, we flew on to Chicago, then returned to Los Angeles on Continental Airlines.

After our luggage arrived, we asked for a Red Cap's help, and he took our luggage just past the customs officer. Don't know if it helped or not, but they did not bother to look at a thing in any of our many suitcases and carry-on bags.

We had a long walk through the airport to get our flight to Los Angeles from Chicago. When we arrived, we found all was OK in Sherman Oaks.

By the way, we had the camper on 14 ferry boats in various countries during this trip.

## 1980 Prelude

We got up very early and finished packing our usual overstuffed, extra large suitcases and carryons, all containing uncounted unmentionable items, and at 6:20 AM, left for the Los Angeles Airport, to catch a plane to Dallas, Texas. Braniff Airlines had just started flying from Dallas, Texas to Frankfurt, Germany, and had offered a special sale price to get the customers started.

We had called for information, and a tentative reservation, and a day or so later, we heard they were not going to offer these low fares anymore. Jim called and finally the supervisor agreed to let us have the special fare, after all. Can't remember the price, except that it was excellent.

We have to visit Dallas on business (watching our money disappear), so we scheduled this trip to start while we are there on business, and we will conduct more business when we return. (Calling that "fiasco" business, must be the world's greatest oxymoron!)

We spent a couple of days in Dallas, then caught the Braniff flight to Frankfurt, Germany, leaving Dallas at 6:00 PM.

We flew Braniff Airlines from Los Angeles to Dallas, then after a few days of business, flew Braniff to Frankfurt, Germany, with a very short stop and go in London. We visited West Germany, France, Andorra, Spain, Monaco, Italy, Corsica, Sardinia, Sicily, The Vatican, San Marino, Yugoslavia, Austria, Hungary, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, Luxembourg, Belgium, England, Wales, Ireland, Scotland, The Netherlands, and East Germany.

We returned by Braniff from Frankfurt to Dallas, with a stop in London. After a couple more days of business, we returned to Los Angeles, on Braniff Airlines.

We landed in London again for a few minutes, then when we arrived in Dallas, Braniff Airlines unloaded the 747 in a room with enough space for 1/3 that many people, and little room for luggage. We had five large items (including the three-by-four foot package holding the Spindler picture), and a half dozen little carry-on bags. There is a limit of two large suitcases per person, so in Frankfurt Jim had spotted a man with only one suitcase, and had him check one of ours. In later years, with all the airport security problems, probably no one would do that anymore.

We watched the US customs agents looking through suitcases, carry-on bags, ladies handbags, and even wallets. We could just imagine another hour in the Dallas Airport opening and closing our treasure trove, but when it was our turn, they just asked if we were in the art business, then waved us on our way. Wonder what was going on, anyway.

After trying to complete some business in Dallas, we flew on to Los Angeles, and home to Sherman Oaks.

A fantastic trip, but we must and will do it again and again in years to come!

## 1983 Prelude

We got up at 6:00 AM, Tuesday July 5, to finish packing our two large suitcases, one large garment bag, one very big army duffel bag, and three carry on bags. We then loaded our rented Hertz car, and drove from Rancho Mirage to Los Angeles. We stopped at Sees Candy and filled up all the left-over space in a suitcase, and went on to the Imperial Terminal on the far side of the Los Angeles International Airport, where the charter flights depart.

We returned the rented car to Hertz, and were assured World Airways could take off with our 100 pounds of luggage in the DC-10, right on schedule at 12:00 noon. President Reagan wanted to tell us good-bye and wish us "bon voyage," so he waited in Air Force One until we got to the runway, but he insisted on taking off first to clear the air traffic and make sure it was safe for our airplane, or something like that. In Baltimore we changed from one plane right to the other, and took off on schedule.

We flew World Airlines to Baltimore, changed planes and flew to Frankfurt, Germany. We visited West Germany, Luxembourg, France, Belgium, The Netherlands, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Italy, and Austria.

At the end of our stay in Europe, by World Airlines we returned to Baltimore for customs inspection, changed planes, then flew to Los Angeles.

Our World Airways flight was on time, and the stop in Baltimore for customs processing and immigration/passport check, was no problem. Our suitcases were heavily loaded with Villeroy & Boch dishes, and in spite of all the handling, only one cup and one little bowl was broken. (1992—Come to think of it, we have mailed and carried "tons" of that stuff home, and that is all that has been broken in all the years.)

We left Baltimore on time, and Linda and Dan met us at the airport in Los Angeles with our car, and we drove home to Rancho Mirage. Thank goodness East to West jet-lag is not as bad as West to East!

All's well that ends well

## 1985 Prelude

Pan Am Airways settled a strike a few weeks ago, then advertised some very cheap seats to get their business moving again. Jim called a travel agent in Palm Springs and asked them to check with Pan Am and schedule our trip. We didn't hear from them for a few days, so Jim called Pan Am directly and they told him there were only two tickets still existing at that price, for the week we hoped to leave. While the Pan Am agent was checking to make sure he could find no others, he said the two seats he found a minute ago, have now been sold!

At that exact moment our other phone rang. Emmy answered and was told the Palm Springs travel office had just purchased two Pan Am tickets for us. When Jim reported this to the Pan Am agent, he inquired of his computer, and found we had in fact just bought the two tickets he was trying to sell to us! Talk about a coincidence!

Cost was only \$250 one way to Frankfurt. Jim plays tennis with a Pan Am pilot who flies the Los Angeles to Frankfurt route, and he said we weren't even paying for the fuel. That's fine by us as long as there's enough fuel to get us

there! We bought one-way tickets and will worry about the return trip when the time comes. (Best travel decision ever, to see how well that decision turned out, stay tuned for the next 140 pages or so!)

After packing four heavy suitcases and four carry-on bags, we left Rancho Mirage at 7:00 AM Wednesday May 29, for Los Angeles. We stopped at RGB Labs in Hollywood and bought 50 rolls of film, then went on to Linda and Dan's. We had one suitcase that didn't want to stay closed, so exchanged it for one they won't be using when they come to Europe later this year.

At noon, Dan came home from work and drove us to the airport. He brought our car back to their place. Linda needs some repairs on her car, and will use ours for a while, then return it to Rancho Mirage.

The flight left about an hour late, but all was well until we were high over the Atlantic, then we ran into the roughest weather we have ever experienced while on a large airplane. The Pan Am Captain BARKED the order to get seated, and some of the people on board were terrified. It's hard to imagine that a huge airplane with hundreds of people, can be thrown around like that. It was scary! Jim has had much worse conditions in small planes, but not in one this size and at this altitude.

We flew Pan Am Airways, nonstop from Los Angeles to Frankfurt, Germany. We toured West Germany, The Netherlands, Belgium, France, Switzerland, Italy, San Marino, Yugoslavia, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, East Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Luxembourg, and England.

A few months later we crossed the Atlantic on the SS Stefan Batory from Rotterdam to London to Montreal, then drove our camper to California.

The Montreal to Los Angeles portion of the trip is described here.

#### **Atlantic Ocean, Oct 23 to 30, Wed to Wed, SS Stefan Batory**

We passed Lands End (the actual name of the last land we will see for a couple of thousand miles), and were on our way across the Atlantic.

The passage on the ship was pleasant, not plush, but of course we weren't expecting a luxury ship. There were about 350 people on board the Stefan Batory, about half full (the ship, not the people!). A lot of the people are Polish and most do not speak English. There were many people who had been on the ship many times, some as many as 15. This is about the last ship making regular trips between North America and Europe, and these are people who either like ships, or do not like to fly. (A year or so later, this ship quit sailing the Atlantic.)

The meals were OK for most people, but Jim had eggs in one form or another, two or three times most days. He finally convinced the waiter who convinced the Stefan Batory's cook he wanted them just the way the chicken layed them—no onions, potatoes, no nothing, just eggs. They were fried sometimes, and scrambled others. By the way, Jim loves eggs and can eat them three times a day for a long time. Emmy said that while the food wasn't great, she liked some of it, and could stand the rest of it.

We had a little rough sea for only a day or so, and even then there was no problem with dishes sliding around on the table, nor was it a problem to walk around. Emmy was a little queasy for a day or two, but the ship's Doctor gave

her some pills that worked just fine. Several people are using a little medicine-filled patch placed back of the ear, and they say it works fine also.

They had movies each night and Emmy enjoyed most of them, but Jim would just walk around, read, and watch the ocean. A trip, on a ship, he can do forever.

One day we saw a Polish man and his son who were looking at maps of the US. It appeared they were planning a trip across the country. We told a lady who understood both languages, we would like to talk to him. He had a Dodge camper on the ship, and was going to Chicago and expected to work for awhile, and travel for the rest of the year.

At first we were trying to tell him to go south for the winter, then north for the summer. Then we found he had done this trip several times already. Our interest in giving advice stopped immediately. He had a Dodge Van he bought from a man at the US Embassy in Warsaw.

They had to drive to East Germany one weekend to make the deal, as there was no way it could be done in Poland. We later went to the ship's hold and looked at his camper. He had a map painted on the side displaying the fact that he had been to Alaska and all over the US. He had shipped his camper back and forth across the Atlantic on this ship a couple of times before. We wonder how he was able to do this, and where he got the amount of money it must have cost.

The lady who acted as our interpreter was an American who had lived in Poland for a couple of years, and was now returning home. In the meantime her mother had just moved to Phoenix. We told her a move from Chicago to Phoenix was as drastic as a move from Poland to America!

People on the ship were very careful about discussing anything considered politically controversial until they looked around to see who might be able to hear them. The dinner-table conversation was never about a political subject. At dinner time on the last night of the trip, there was a brilliant sight as we sailed up the St. Lawrence River past Quebec City and the beautiful hotel, Chateau Frontenac, high on the hill.

The ship's Purser had received a letter from someone about our claim for the money they kept at the border, but all they were requested to do, is again get copies of everything we had already given to them in Stockholm.

A most interesting passenger was a retired 4-star US Army General. This is his fourth trip. They always check the passports, and he said that by the second time he was on the Stefan Batory, it was obvious they had checked his passport and know who he is. He is now treated with much deference, a change from his first trip on the ship.

Something about the name of this ship caught Jim's eye, and he just knew there was something historically important that he should remember about this ship. The General (mentioned above) remembered something about it also, but it wasn't until 1991 (with the help of a former Congressman) that Jim researched the story, and confirmed what happened. Jim remembered that a certain ship (then named the Batory) was never to sail to the US again, and that must be why this ship went to Montreal instead of New York City. The following is from the May 23, 1949 issue of Time Magazine.

Gerhart Eisler, the head of the US Communist party in the 1940's, was under indictment by Congress, and was free on a \$23,500 bond, money put up by the Communist Party. One day he bought a 25¢ ticket to visit on board a Polish ship, then named the Batory. He hid on the ship, and when it arrived in International waters he came out and identified himself, then paid his fare to Europe. The US Government found out about it and ordered the ship to return to port, but the Captain refused. The US then decreed that this ship could never return to a US port, and that is why we are now going to Montreal! When the ship arrived in England, Eisler was arrested, but later was able to get to East Germany where he continued as a Communist and Anti-American for some years.

### **CDN, Montreal, Oct 31, Thu - SS Stefan Batory**

We arrived at the dock in Montreal at exactly 8:00 AM, and it took three hours to get the vehicles, and all the people unloaded.

Jim took all but one piece of hand luggage to the camper last night so we did not have to carry any heavy things off the ship, and through Canadian customs. This morning he went down to the ship's hold and warmed-up the camper's engine awhile, as it may not run too well after sitting so long.

Canadian customs was no problem, they didn't question our lack of luggage, or ask about the camper. No one was allowed off the ship until everyone had been accounted for, and checked off the list. We then walked into the large building where the camper was by then parked, got in and drove to the first gas station that took the Visa card, as we still had no Canadian money.

We didn't spend much time looking around Montreal today, as we expect to be back here late next year, and we've done a lot of sightseeing the last six months. We are going to drive on the Canadian side of the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River, and cross into the US near Detroit. We liked what we saw of Montreal, except the freeway is not very smooth, and its design is not too good.

We stopped in Cornwell, Ontario at two different supermarkets, and at a Dairy Queen for a taste of home, but found it was closed. We looked in an antique store for awhile and we did look for a 110 V electric heater for the camper. We left the other one at Toni's, as it's 220V and will not work on this side of the Atlantic.

We drove until 7:30 PM and stayed in a motel in Bowmanville, Ontario. Cost \$42 US, and they had a sauna for Jim.

## **November 1985**

### **CDN, Bowmanville, Nov 1, Fri - Motel - 301 - 13,460**

We have beautiful weather this morning, but it's supposed to rain later today. We see campsites along the freeway today, and many of them are open, but yesterday we saw none.

Jim needed a malt "fix" and a taste of home but the Dairy Queen was closed for the day. The freeway we are on, route 401, becomes a 14 to 16 lane freeway part of the time in Toronto. We are not getting off the freeway to sightsee at all, even in this city. For one thing, it's rush hour, for another, we expect to visit here next year. We see some odd shaped buildings. They look like very large Tee Pee's, built of brick.

In London, Ontario we looked around a little, and stopped at the shopping mall. Jim bought a book about Cathedrals in England, and Emmy bought some books for the Grandkids. Jim saw one store had some of the little “red-hots” (candy) that he likes, they had them on sale for a little bit of nothing. He bought some, and the lady gave him 10 times as much as he had ordered. Seems the store is going out of business in a couple of hours, and they will have to throw away everything that has not been sold.

We stopped at an antique store in Windsor and Emmy spent the last of the Canadian money for a pink glass cheese dish with a lid that’s difficult to hold on to, as it’s being removed. Emmy likes it.

We arrived at the US border at 3:00 PM, speedometer reading 64,666, after driving 13,781 miles in 22 different countries in a little over five months. The camper averaged less than 90 miles a day, counting the days it was parked in the hold of the ship, and the days we did very little driving while we were at Toni’s.

Emmy has been worried about US customs. We have a ton of stuff, and it’s all packed so good. If we have to unpack and go through it all, it could take hours. Since the customs people in Detroit don’t know anything about prices of European products, and we had no receipts for most things, how could they arrive at the value? Also, customs duty is not to be paid on antiques, but even though we bought things in antique stores, we are not positive they would actually be considered antiques, thereby creating another possible problem.

Usually when people come to the US with items they bought in Europe, the customs people at the airports have already seen tons of similar things, and know what it cost and where it’s from. But how many sets of Venetian beads and boxes of Villeroy & Boch dishes have Detroit based customs people seen this year?

As we approached the border stations there were four or five customs booths in use. Jim looked and saw a lady with a pony-tail in booth, and decided that was a good line. He watched carefully and noticed each time she was finished talking to the people in a car, she turned around with her back to the door to write something, then turned again to talk to the people in the next car.

Jim made sure we stayed close to the car in front so she could not see the German license plate. When it became our turn, and the US Customs lady turned back to us, all she saw was two Americans in a Dodge.

The conversation went something like this:

Custom’s: Where were you born?

Both: The United States.

C: How long have you been in Canada?

J: Two days,

C: What were you doing there?

J: We went to Montreal on a ship.

C: What ship?

J: Stefan Batory.

C: (looked at a sheet of paper for ship name) What did you buy on the ship?

J: We bought a little wooden box for \$5.

C: What was in the box?

J: Nothing.

C: Did you buy any expensive items like crystal, fur coats, jewelry or anything of great value?

J: No.

And off we went. If she had asked different questions, she would have received different answers and we could have spent an hour at the border. If she had just looked between the front seats she might have wondered what we had in that huge box.

We drove south on the freeway out of Detroit and crossed the border into Ohio at 4:00 PM, speedometer 64,714. We have visited in some countries where Moslems live, and have seen their mosques with minarets. The best looking mosque we have seen is right along the freeway near Toledo. Can't imagine that many Moslems live in this area but they must.

We got off the freeway in Bowling Green, Ohio, ate dinner, then drove through town, past the University. We stopped at K-Mart to buy an electric heater. As we passed through the town of McClure, Ohio we saw a sign that said "The radish capital of the world." It's too late in the day to talk to anyone here, but we must write and ask them about the big radishes in Germany and why they aren't grown in the US.

We are on Route 6, about five miles east of Napoleon, Ohio and we have seen a couple of signs pointing north saying, "Migrant Rest Center 14 Miles." Wonder what that means. Didn't know there would be many migrant workers in this part of the country.

We entered Indiana at 7:00 PM, speedometer 64,818. It has been raining and now it's dark and we don't care to keep driving to Winona Lake, so we stopped at a motel in Fort Wayne.

### **USA, Fort Wayne, Nov 2, Sat - Motel - 443 - 13,903**

We stayed at the Hallmark Motel, nice room for \$26, but \$9 for three phone calls! Stupid and dumb that they could cost so much. We had called Jesse and made arrangements to eat breakfast with them this morning in a restaurant at the edge of Winona Lake.

It rained a little most of the way there, but we met them on time, and talked for an hour or so. They were on their way to Ohio for the day.

We then went to the convalescent home to see Mama (Jim's mother). She was having one of her better days, and seemed to recognize us. We talked to her, and she tried to talk to us. We are sure she is not happy where she is. She didn't seem to be really uncomfortable, but had tubes in her nose and was getting oxygen.

We stayed for an hour or two, then drove to Flora. We visited with Mary and Harold during the afternoon, and drove to Lafayette and had dinner with them in the evening.

**USA, Flora, Nov 3, Sun - Mary - 103**

Today we just visited with Mary and Harold, and with Martha and Don. Maxine and Melvin are out of town, so we did not get a chance to see them, but they did call and we talked by phone on Sunday evening.

**USA, Flora, Nov 4, Mon - Mary - 104 - 131 - 14,034**

For two nights we parked in Mary's driveway and plugged into her electricity. We are more comfortable in our bed than we would have been in a strange bed, and this way she doesn't have to change anything for us.

We have determined this K-Mart heater just will not do. We didn't notice it didn't have a thermostat, so we must leave it on all night and that isn't what we want.

We drove to Indianapolis and stopped to see Uncle Virgil. We talked for 45 minutes, then left, and drove toward St. Louis. We arrived at the Illinois border at 1:00 PM, speedometer 65,123, and the time changed one hour. We stopped at K-Mart and exchanged the heater for what we hope is a better one.

We arrived at the Missouri border at 3:15, speedometer, 65,280. We drove across the bridge and saw the St. Louis Arch on our right, as we went through without a stop.

**USA, Rolla, Mo, Nov 5, Tue - 105 - 424 - 14,458**

Gloriously beautiful day. We just spent our first night in this camper in a US campground. We followed a sign to a small motel with camp facilities in the rear. Cost \$7.50, facilities were not fancy at all, or even nice by most standards. In Europe we have camped many places with better facilities, and many that were worse.

We are driving on the Interstate now, with rolling hills as far as we can see. We also see signs for antique stores, and we have stopped at a couple. In Lebanon we visited a wood working factory outlet store, and bought a couple of things for the Grandkids' Christmas. Emmy liked both the design and the price of a little curio cabinet she saw, but not the size. She wishes she had bought the one in Rothenburg.

At a little before 1:00 PM we arrived in Oklahoma and found we had to ride on their expensive toll road, or nothing. We made a U turn and went into Kansas at 1:00 PM, speedometer 65,597. The road is not too good here. We arrived at the Oklahoma border again at 1:20 PM speedometer 65,606, and drove without the toll.

After a while the road was so bad and we could not find another way to get to the road we wanted to be on, so we had to pay a \$.50 toll after all. This driver dislikes toll roads, anywhere!

We stopped at an antique store in Pryor, and Emmy found a nice blue and white crockery cookie jar complete with lid and handle.

We looked and looked for a camping sign, and found one for a KOA, but then never saw a sign telling where to get off the highway. We stopped at a motel tonight.

**USA, Atoka, Okla. Nov 6, Wed - Motel - 434 - 14,892**

The motel cost \$24 with two queen beds. Left at 7:15 AM and headed for Dallas. We entered Texas at 8:20, speedometer 65,872, and stopped at the border office to get some maps and camping information. Near Dallas we saw a new shopping mall with only discount stores for clothes, shoes, etc., so stopped to kill some time until we meet the Alexanders for lunch.

We then drove on to Dallas, and met them at Cocos. Had a discussion where we heard all the bad news, but nothing good. Aw well. Could think of no reason to stay in Dallas any longer, so left for California. Just west of Fort Worth we stopped at a couple of more antique shops, and managed to spend \$3, or thereabouts.

We drove until we arrived in Abilene at dark, and found a KOA campsite next to the Motel 6 where we have stayed on other trips.

**USA, Abilene, Tex. Nov 7, Thu - 106 - 330 - 15,222**

Most of today has been beautiful weather. The drive is not beautiful, but the road is smooth, there is almost no traffic, and almost nothing to look at while we drive. Certainly different from the European countryside. We left the campsite at 6:00 AM while it was still dark, and with Emmy still in bed.

We ate breakfast while we drove, and stopped for a moment for Emmy to take over the driving. Boy that's some accomplishment, this is the first time she's driven this camper. In West Texas, driving consists of sitting there with the cruise control on, trying to stay awake.

About the most exciting thing we did today, was to change our clocks one hour again, when we were about 100 miles east of El Paso.

Emmy drove for an hour, until we stopped again and filled the tank with gasoline. We passed through El Paso, and as we crossed the border to New Mexico (1:45, speedometer 66,626), Jim needed to stop at the rest room, and we got some maps of New Mexico. We then went on to Las Cruces and got off to buy gasoline again, and Emmy now drove for another hour across New Mexico. While Emmy was driving, Jim was able to get a bite to eat, and stretch out on the couch to rest a while.

It's not as if we are in a hurry, but we have driven this road many times, and while the scenery is beautiful, it does continue for hundreds of miles. There is no need to stop and look at it, just keep driving and you will see the same thing for day after day!

We stopped again long enough to change drivers, and arrived at a KOA campground in Wilcox, Arizona at 5:45 PM. We ate dinner in a nearby restaurant, and bought a few groceries for tomorrow.

**USA, Wilcox, Ariz. Nov 8, Fri - 107 - 689 - 15,911**

The campsite cost \$10.50, and was not the least bit fancy. The facilities were clean, but not special at all.

Yesterday we drove 689 miles, the most we have driven in one day in this camper, nearly six times our normal European daily distance. The speed limit is 55 miles per hour, and we averaged 54.03—wonder what happened to the rest of it.

We stopped for gasoline just past Tucson, and saw where a family had pulled off the freeway with their car on fire about an hour ago. It burned completely with all their possessions, but the people got out OK, and Arizona officials are now taking care of the family.

We had a bite to eat in Phoenix and continued toward California. At milepost 40 in Arizona, on Interstate 10, if we look to the south we can see a hole through the top of the mountain.

We arrived at the California border at 12:30 noon, speedometer says 67,189, and we changed the clocks for the last time. Wonder how many times that has happened on this trip? The California fruit inspection station was open at the border. This is the first time we have seen that one open in many years. Usually the Arizona inspection station is open when we are driving east, but usually there is no stop when we are driving west.

As we came up to the inspector he could see the German license plate, but maybe didn't know, or care, what it was. He asked where we were coming from and Jim said Phoenix, as there is no way to get here except come from Phoenix. He then said, "Have you been east of Phoenix," and Jim said, "Oh yeah, we were in Prague, Warsaw, and several other places." The inspector's jaw dropped, his face glazed, and he waved us on without even asking if we had any fruit, which is the reason he stopped us in the first place. We wonder what he thought, and did he believed us.

When we arrived in Indio we decided we would go to the telephone office and make arrangement to get our phones connected, and save a trip back here on Monday. At the phone booth outside the office we dialed both of our old phone numbers and found neither had been assigned to anyone else.

We asked the girl if we could get the same numbers again and save stationery and the bother of letting people know the new number. At first she said yes, then she left for a few minutes and when she came back, said one of our numbers had been assigned to someone else just a couple of minutes before, but she was able to get it back. Good deal.

We arrived at our home at 3:30 PM, with the speedometer reading 67,305. We have driven 462 miles today, 16,373 miles since we got the camper out of the garage in Mettlach on the first of June, 1985, and 24,325 miles since we bought the camper in 1983.

A great trip, ended just fine.

## 1988 Prelude

We had sold our house in Rancho Mirage in March, and in early June we moved to a one room furnished apartment near Linda's, while we finished with some business problems. For the last week or so Bob and Estelle were on a vacation, and asked us to "house-set" for them—couldn't beat the price, or the accommodations.

We purchased round-trip tickets from Pan Am Airways for about \$1,250 each person. These airline people! A one-way ticket would cost over \$1,500! (In 1985, a one-way Pam Am ticket to Frankfurt was \$250!) The special ticket prices that are generally advertised contain many restrictions, and none of the special prices apply to people who will be gone for more than three months. Jim wrote and called at least 30 different ticket brokers, travel agents and airline companies, and each was more stupid than the last! We made arrangements for car rental in Germany before we left home, and were able to find a special price for a car, and that helps a little.

Linda arrived at Bob and Estelle's at 9:00 AM on Friday July 29, to pick us up, along with an unbelievable load of luggage. We unloaded a couple of things into Linda's garage, and again reviewed her "duties" in taking care of our business. We did all we could to make it simple, but of course things did happen that took more of her time and effort than there was to spare. Somehow Linda gets her "nosie out of joint" when she finds more of our mail in her mailbox, than for her and Dan!

Dan came home from work at 11:00, and off we went to the airport. Jim wanted a sign quoting a well known source, "There wasn't room to take everything I wanted to take!" We had just purchased two new suitcases (the largest size allowed on airplanes), and with two other large suitcases, plus three or four carry-on bags, we had the maximum number allowed, and then some. Each suitcase is allowed to weigh up to 70 pounds, but while ours were all full, they averaged less than 50 pounds each, so there!

At the airport we stood in a long line to check our luggage, then were informed we were to be seated in separate sections in the plane. The plane arrived 20 minutes late, and we were told we would leave in a few minutes. Linda and Dan stayed for a little while, but it became obvious we weren't going to be on schedule, so they went home.

We could have left yesterday, but since that flight had one stop, and the one today was nonstop and an hour or so faster, we had waited until now. Pan Am did give us a meal ticket for a \$7.50 hamburger at the airport. (In 1991, Pan Am went out of business completely.)

Ha! At 2:00 PM Pan Am said they would leave at 3:00, at 2:30 they said 5:00, at 4:00 they said 8:30, and at 8:00 they said 9:15. We were herded toward the plane at 9:15, but actually left the ground at 11:00 PM, 8 hours late on an 11 hour flight, and remember, we were on this one because it was two hours faster than the flight yesterday! At least we were seated together, and since the plane was

rather empty, we had four seats and a little space, so we could relax and sleep, maybe.

Soon after we took off, they announced dinner will be served in a few minutes, and the sun will be up in two hours. Emmy did sleep on the airplane for maybe four hours, and Jim slept maybe a little but maybe none.

We flew Pan Am Airways nonstop from Los Angeles to Frankfurt, Germany. We toured West Germany, Luxembourg, France, Belgium, Switzerland, Italy, Yugoslavia, and Austria.

A few months later we flew Lufthansa, the German Airline, from Saarbrücken to Frankfurt, then on to Los Angeles.

An explanation about our tickets and schedule: Near the end of July 1988, we bought round-trip Pan Am Airways tickets, Los Angeles to Frankfurt and return, and the tickets were good for one year. We had first planned to visit Greece in 1988, but since it took longer for us to buy the RV then expected, and we were delayed for other reasons, we decided to wait until 1989 for our visit to Greece. We would only have had about six or seven weeks for the visit in 1988, and while that may seem like a lot, there was no reason to be in the position of rushing, if we didn't need to. It turns out the weather was so bad we were sure glad we didn't go to Greece in 1988.

We need to complete our European trip by the end of July 1989, before our Pan Am tickets become void, and Emmy wants to get to Greece and perhaps Turkey before the weather gets too hot in 1989. We decided to return to Germany (from the US) on March 9, 1989, then head for southern Italy, then by boat to Greece, then who knows! Maybe visit Turkey, maybe find a cruise ship to take us around the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea. Perhaps even visit Russian cities around the Black Sea, perhaps Israel, maybe even Egypt.

It all depends on what we find available that time of the year. We would most likely return to northern Europe via Romania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, maybe Hungary, and who knows. We sure know better than to try and plan such a thing. But stayed tuned! (Turns out cruise ships had cancelled trips to Israel and Egypt, by summer 1989.)

Originally, we had intended to somehow get to Klaus and Helga's in Heusenstamm Sunday evening December 4, then catch our plane home on Monday or Tuesday. However, since the Lufthansa ticket costs the same to fly to Los Angeles from Saarbrücken as it does from Frankfurt to Los Angeles, we arranged for Cousin Josef to drive us to Saarbrücken early on the morning of Tuesday December 6. We flew in a small plane to Frankfurt, to catch our large plane to Los Angeles.

The 747 was half passengers, and half cargo, and the main cargo was three race horses. After lunch, Jim looked through the peep hole to see the horses, and said to the stewardess, "I see there are only two horses now, that must explain lunch."

We drove the rented VW 4,000 km (2,500 miles), and the Renault 13,377 km (8,360 miles, average about 120 miles per day), and camped for 70 nights, in 1988. We spent two nights in hotels as we looked for the RV in the first place, one night at Bärbel's, and the rest of the time with poor Toni. More time than we like to

spend there, of course, but in the first month, she was ill, and we helped take care of her, and took her to see the Doctor several times.

In early October we had spent about a week with Toni, waiting for the man to make the bumper for the Renault, and getting the wheel bearing repaired. Near the end of the trip, we stayed in Europe for a month longer than we ordinarily would have, because we wanted to be there for the double 49th anniversary. Since the weather was so bad, and campgrounds were not always available, we spent more time at Toni's. Hope she didn't mind—she insists she is more than happy to have our company.

Not an efficient trip, since out of the 128 nights in Europe, just a few days less than two months were spent at Toni's. We had a lot of fun, and saw many new and interesting places, and revisited many others. It seems we just enjoy going here and there, and the mesmerizing things to see and places to go, seem endless!

The flight to Los Angeles was as pleasant as sitting in a stuffy metal tube for 11 hours can be! Jim was talking with a customs man while waiting for the luggage to arrive in Los Angeles. After a few minutes, he asked for Jim's customs declaration form, signed it and told us to go, "... out that door," so we missed the luggage inspection and the rest of the mess. The customs man didn't even know how many pieces of luggage we had, let alone what was in it. Jim says it sure pays to look so innocent, or perhaps it's because we look too dim-witted to be dangerous!

Linda and Dan were at the airport to meet us. We spent a couple of nights with a friend in Indian Wells (in the Desert), before we moved into a furnished apartment in Palm Desert. We plan to stay there until we return to Europe on March 8, 1989. All in all, a very fine trip in 1988.

## 1989 Prelude

Emmy couldn't stand the apartment (in Palm Desert) where we lived for these last three months, or the prospects of living there for even a short time after we return from this trip, so she spent much of her time (these last three months), looking for a house, or a building lot, to buy. One day, while on our way to see a vacant lot, we passed a group of new homes, duplexes actually. We stopped to look, and found they were new 3 bedroom, 3 full bath homes, at a very good price, \$85,000. So we bought one and moved in ten days, before we left on this trip.

Our furniture was brought from storage, and the contents of the other storage space was emptied into the garage, escrow closed the day before we left, and off we went. At least we don't have to house-hunt in mid-summer when we return.

When we left home in La Quinta, we had our customary two or three overstuffed carry-on bags, an ice chest, and three maximum sized suitcases and a box of books, of course! Emmy said the box of "Invitation to France," would be used either as peace offerings or weapons, which ever seemed the most useful at the time!

We had left a lot of clothes and other things at Cousin Toni's when we returned home last year, so while we don't need a full set of clothes this time, we always think of a few things we do need.

Packed in the suitcases were a large number of paperback books to read, and all those necessities we can't buy in a store in Europe. Dried beef, Log Cabin Syrup, walnuts, Velveta cheese (the European Velveta is excellent, but different), a large dry pizza, tortillas, corn chips, and salsa, among other things. Worst of all, we carried a small Styrofoam ice-chest filled with frozen fish (pollack), we could have bought in France at \$40 per pound, rather than \$2.50 here. It's sure a good thing they don't make us justify the contents of our packages!

We stopped at McDonald's for a final "fix" of Egg McMuffin and Sausage biscuit. Then we stopped at an office in the town of San Marino near Pasadena (we will visit the country of San Marino, inside Italy, a little later!), to make sure business items are OK, then visited Dan's new office to see the \$8,000,000 worth of TV equipment he has just installed for Disney Channel. (Some others try to take credit for part of that, but we don't believe them!)

Ran several other errands, turned the check-books, etc, over to Linda (had to hog-tie her first, she just hates that job). We transferred our bags, etc, to Linda's station wagon, and drove that and the Cadillac to Bob and Estelle's, where we spent the night.

On Thursday March 9, we left Bob and Estelle's (they will use our car while we are gone) at 9:30 and drove Linda's car to their house. Picked up Dan at his office near noon. Went to the Smoke House Restaurant for a final "fix" of Garlic Bread, etc, then arrived at the airport about 1:00 PM. We convinced them to drop us off and leave, as Dan had a lot of work to do, and Linda was still nauseated and throwing up (something she ate?). She said if this was the way all women felt, the world would not have been populated. We also remembered our eight hour wait for the Pan Am plane last year, and didn't want them to wait around until Lufthansa decided to leave this time.

At the Lufthansa counter, we found the 3:30 flight now listed as 4:15. There is an Air Controllers "slow-down" going on in Europe, so the incoming flight will be late. Tail-winds on the way to Europe will make up for some of the lost time, but we will see. (They made up almost all the time.)

After we passed through passport control into the international flight area, we watched a Finnair plane land and "dock" just two gates away. If all was as scheduled, Hagar and John were on that one, returning from a vacation in Finland. Due to passport and customs regulations we couldn't see them, but found later they had been there.

We flew Lufthansa Airlines from Los Angeles to Frankfurt, then on to Saarbrücken, Germany. We visited West Germany, Luxembourg, France, Switzerland, Italy, Sicily, San Marino, Greece, Four Greek Islands, Turkey, Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Austria.

A few months later we returned from Frankfurt to Los Angeles on Pan Am Airways.

As much as Jim likes to travel, he says there is nothing more stupid than spending half a day like toothpaste in a metal tube, in this case called an airplane (He has been on 1200 to 1500 flights, up to now.) If it was practical, reasonably possible, or financially responsible we would drive across the US and take a boat to and from Europe.

Jim had called Pan Am Airways to find what he should do with his little computer. Since it can be set to turn itself on at any second and make a phone call, it also can turn itself on and set off a bomb. They said the battery should be in the checked luggage, and the computer in the carry-on, but no one looked, they took Jim's word for it. And they call it "Airport Security!"

In addition to dumb and boring, the trip home was as expected. But again, for reasons we don't understand but like very much indeed, while we were still waiting for our many bags at the baggage counter at the Los Angeles Airport, a lady customs agent talked to us for a moment, asked a question or two, then stamped our customs declaration. Again we by-passed the long lines where luggage was being checked. Sure helps to look so honest and upstanding. Or do we look so forlorn and confused the US Customs people don't think we could cause a problem!

Linda and Dan were waiting for us at the gate, and so ends the 1989 Travel Journal!

#### Conclusion:

We were in Europe for about 250 days, camped for 145 nights (68 in 1988, 77 in 1989) during the two trips, and visited 14 countries, Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Monaco, San Marino, Soviet Union [Russia], Switzerland, Turkey, Vatican, Yugoslavia, four Greek Islands, and Sicily. In 1989, eleven nights were spent on cruise ships, and one night on a ferryboat.

Jim did a little creative accounting on the month we spent in Italy this year. We either used the Visa card to buy things, or used it to get Italian Lira to spend. We used the information on the Visa bill, and that came to about \$40 per day. Add \$10 per day for the camper, the cost of plane tickets, and the out of pocket cost was about \$65. Subtract what it would cost to live at home, and it cost us about \$10 to \$15 per day more to see all the fantastic things we saw in Italy during that month, compared to the cost to stay home. Jim doesn't need an excuse to travel, just the opportunity! Of course, the \$2700 (prorates to another \$10 per travel day) for the cruise ships to the islands and to the Soviet Union, is not included.

We drove the Renault about 27,300 KM or 17,080 miles since we bought it nearly 11 months ago, and drove rented cars, and Josef's car at least another 6,500 KM or 4,000+ miles. We do get around!

These cost figures are all approximate. We never keep an accurate record of what we spend. If that were really necessary, we shouldn't be on the trip. We have never spent and lived in a five star mode, and we aren't about to start now!

#### POST SCRIPT

1991—Now the Berlin Wall has been removed, and the two Germany's are one, so the manuscript for "Invitation to Germany" is not of much value, or at

least is incomplete. Can't possibly sell a book about half of a country. This means we must visit Europe again in 1991 and try to see enough of what was East Germany, and add to the existing manuscript.

## 1991 Prelude

We had hoped and expected to leave for Europe in May at the latest, then June, then July for sure, but here it is August 5, and we are finally on our way! Sometimes it seems we just think we are retired. This Trust Deed (Home Loans) business gets difficult sometimes, just like the Savings and Loan problem, but for us each problem is a potential disaster, but we'll live through it. Hopefully Linda won't have too many difficulties with our business while we are gone.

(By the time we got back she had had to solve more problems than we had hoped, but thanks to Linda's efforts and more Transatlantic phone calls than we care to remember, there was nothing that would have been in better shape if we had stayed home.)

You can't believe the four huge heavy suitcases we had! Again! Each weighed between 55 and 70 pounds. Since Jim doesn't do all that much heavy lifting these days, it could be dangerous for him to lift these suitcases into and out of automobiles getting them to Linda's, then to the Los Angeles airport, then into a rental car at the Airport in Frankfurt, Germany, then up the stairs at Toni's in Mettlach. Of course, whatever we do, the same thing in reverse is always needed at the other end of the trip! (If the above seems to be a "hint" to a certain party, so be it!)

We stopped to talk to the Real Estate Agent who is supposed to sell the house we are about to own (through foreclosure) in Sierra Madre. The house is at the foot of the mountains above Pasadena. (During TV coverage of the Rose Bowl and the Rose Parade on New Years Day, those mountains are in the distance). With the Real Estate market like it is, there's not much we can do about that but keep making the payments and hope for the best!

Today is Dan's birthday, so Linda called him at his office at The Disney Channel and asked him to stop at our favorite restaurant, The Smoke House, and bring home a couple of orders of their special Garlic Bread. It was a surprise for him to find Christiana sitting on the step in the restaurant lobby, and the rest of us to the side, waiting for him. Later he ate the birthday cake Linda had baked for him, his favorite Cheese Cake!

We spent the next several days trying to make sure nothing else was in trouble with our business. One night we had dinner at Hattem's in their new home.

This time the Hattem's did not think they needed our car, so we made arrangements to park it in Maggie's (a very good friend) driveway near the Airport. She not only had plenty of room, she felt it would make her house look more lived in during the day. We insisted that she drive the car if ever there was a need on her part. Since she drives a very small Renault, about 1/2 the size of our car, that will be quite a challenge! (As you might expect, there will be more about this later, at the other end of this trip!)

We loaded all the suitcases into Linda's car, drove both cars to Maggie's, then Linda dropped us off at the airport and we checked our luggage and our tickets at Lufthansa about three hours early. With all the problems with Pan American Airways (they are about to go out of business at this time, and did, before we returned at the end of this trip), Lufthansa (a German Airline) is the only airline flying non-stop from Los Angeles to Frankfurt, Germany.

Lufthansa's ticket prices and restrictions are the same as anyone else had, and that's not good. If we would be gone for only three months or less, and if we knew exactly what day and hour we were going to return, round-trip tickets would be about \$900 or so, each. But since we might have to (or want to) return earlier or later, due to business or otherwise, we paid \$1,425 each for that privilege. Doesn't make us very happy, but if we bought the \$900 tickets and then had to change the return date, we would not only lose all the money paid for the return part of those tickets, we would then have to buy new one-way tickets with all restrictions in place, to come home. Those one-way tickets could cost as much as \$2,000 each! That not only can't be justified, it can't even be explained!

The lady at the ticket counter saw our ticket price and immediately tried to get us better seats. She said to just leave the tickets with her and come back in an hour, which we did. She had tried unsuccessfully to get us First-Class seats upstairs in the 747, but did get us into row four in Business Class, with only six wider seats in a row, instead of the ten narrow seats per row, found back in cattle-class (perhaps better known as Economy).

The seats are much wider, there is much more service (or bother), fancier food (you can imagine how that thrilled Jim), and in general there is a more expensive environment in Lufthansa Business Class. Emmy's complaint? The armrests between the seats couldn't be lifted so she could use some of Jim's space for sleeping. (Well, it was something like that!)

We again flew from Los Angeles to Frankfurt, Germany.

We visited all of Germany, no longer called "East and West", Luxembourg, Poland, Czechoslovakia, France, and Belgium.

We flew home on Lufthansa, German Airlines.

#### **D, Heusenstamm, Oct 25, Fri**

We drove to the Frankfurt airport early this morning, returned the Hertz car, then tried to get a better seat on the return flight, just like we had on the way over here. Only this time we had no luck.

As we waited to board the plane, we were about first in line, as usual. Since Jim had his cane, they assumed he was handicapped, so asked that he board the plane early and let Emmy take care of the luggage. (Boy was that tempting!)

They were very careful to inspect all the luggage. As happened one other time, all the luggage was set on the ground near the plane, and we had to go out and put our own luggage into Lufthansa's luggage carts. Then they made sure we immediately boarded the plane, with the understanding that if we had packed a bomb, we also had to ride the plane to Los Angeles.

The return flight to Los Angeles was just like any other 12 hours spent like tooth-paste in a tube, sardines in a can, peas in a pod, whatever. We did survive the smaller seats, but it would be nice to feel we could afford the better ones. They charge a terrible price for just a little more comfort for just a few hours. There is simply nothing worse than sitting in a stupid airplane for all those hours. The best return trip was the one that took 10 days on a ship, then several days of driving across the US. Well, it took a lot longer, but it was more fun.

A few days ago Linda called and said the battery was dead on our car. Maggie had driven the Cadillac (quite a contrast from her little Renault) just a few weeks ago and it was fine then, but now even an AAA truck could not get it started. (On a picture postcard sent to Maggie from Prague, Jim said she was the first parking lot attendant he had ever written to!)

Linda was still not feeling too well, but Dan and Christiana met us at the Airport, then drove us to Sherman Oaks. The next day, we made arrangements for a loaner battery from Firestone (the old battery was still under warranty), and got it started and to the Firestone store in Culver City. A new battery took care of the problem for the moment, but Jim has complained to Firestone about their bad batteries, and they have promised to install a new style battery that will be available in a couple of months.

In the past Bob and Estelle Hattem have used our car while we are travelling for extended periods, but this time they were storing a car for someone else, and didn't need ours. As it turns out, they had a lot of problems with that car, and wished they had ours. But then who knows, maybe the battery problem on our car would have been just as bad.

All in all it was a fine trip. Emmy was very glad that she had the chance to see Josef one more time.

## 1995 Prelude

### USA, La Quinta, May 14, Sun, Home

In late April Jim called a dozen airlines and travel agencies, trying to find the most advantageous tickets for our trip to Europe. That is not only not a lot of fun, what you learn is very stupid.

If you walked up to the airline counter and bought a ticket without any discount or restriction, it would cost from \$1,500 to \$2,500, or more, each. When you buy a discount ticket (\$700 to \$800), it is good for only 3 months. They require you to schedule your return flight, even if you don't know when you are going to return, then charge extra if you want/need to change that date. We found those things to be true on both USA and European airlines. Those ideas didn't suit our needs.

We discovered Air Canada had tickets that were good for 6 months, and if we bought them from the right place (certainly not from Air Canada), the cost was \$622 each, round trip. It's not a lot of fun to pay all that money to something called "American Travel Ventures," rather than to the airline, but it did work OK, of course.

The only advantage to living east of the Mississippi that Jim can think of, is that plane fares to Europe must be a lot cheaper! But if we count the “cost” of living in east-of-the-Mississippi weather, it wouldn't be much of a bargain for us. We live in weather every day, we travel to Europe, every few years!

Yesterday we rented a tiny Mazda from Hertz, and this morning we overloaded it with 4 huge suitcases, 2+ carry-on bags, 3 ice chests with leftover food from our refrigerator and freezer, a half-dozen plants for them to keep alive until we returned, a VCR so they can record Emmy's soapie each Monday, and left for Linda's in Sherman Oaks, CA, for a couple of nights. Some of that stuff we left at Linda's, most of it we took to Europe—you can guess which was which. We returned the rented car to the Burbank Airport that afternoon.

Today is Mother's Day, and Dan's mother and father (Nino and Ada) are here for dinner.

## May 1995

### USA, Sherman Oaks, May 15, Mon, Linda

Today we visited with, and had lunch with the Hattems and the Altiers, and mainly just took it easy.

### USA, Sherman Oaks, May 16, Tue, Linda

At 5:45 in the morning Linda, Dan and Christiana took us to the Los Angeles Airport, for our early departure. This early in the morning there was no traffic problem, and they did not wait with us, so had no traffic problem getting back home in time for school and work.

Our Boeing 767, Air Canada flight, left Los Angeles on time at 8:00 AM on Tuesday the 16th, and arrived in Toronto about 1/2 hour late. We spent about two hours in the Toronto Airport waiting for our half-hour-late Boeing 767, Air Canada flight to Germany, then unsuccessfully tried to sleep until we arrived in Frankfurt, Germany at 8:00 AM instead of the scheduled 7:20 AM, on Wed. May 17.

The plane was not too full, but was full enough so we couldn't lift the arm rests and lay across several seats, to try and sleep. As usual, we didn't sleep all that well on the flight, and of course Jet-lag seems to go with the territory, especially where we are concerned.

### D, Frankfurt, May 17, Wed, AirCanada

Cousin Helga had taken time off work to greet us at the airport, as she has done so many times. We retrieved our four huge suitcases with no particular problem, but the line for the rental car was a mess. Everyone has heard of the German efficiency, that is, everyone but the Budget car rental people at the Frankfurt Airport, (both coming and going). We had a special car rental rate, paid for in the US, and it would have cost two or three time more to rent from someone else, at the regular price charged at the Frankfurt Airport.

In addition to the plane being 40 minutes late, the car rental took so long that Helga finally gave us her house keys, as she had to get back to her office for

meeting. She is an instructor for some special training for medical personnel. We have visited their home several times, so had no problem finding our way the dozen miles to Heusenstamm, emptying some stuff from our suitcases all over their living room, then to bed to try and sleep awhile.

Not that anyone is counting, but just so you don't think we are taking advantage (of course we are, but don't want anyone to know it), Klaus and Helga have stayed in our house in Rancho Mirage and the one here in La Quinta, a week or so each, when we weren't home (as well as a few days when we were home), and one time they used our little Ford truck as their transportation for their vacation in the Western US, while we were visiting in Europe. Counting this trip, we have spent 10 nights at their home, just about a dozen miles from the Frankfurt airport. That sure is handy!

The weather in Frankfurt was rainy, and compared to what we are used to, very cold, colder than the middle of winter in La Quinta. The first night we tried some of the Melatonin pills, that you may of heard about. Dan used them when he flew to Singapore, and said they worked wonders to "cure" jet-lag for him.

Emmy said they helped her sleep 5 hours, but Jim didn't think it helped him at all, and he insists he felt "funny" the next day. The second night Emmy took the pills with more good results, but since he had to drive, Jim didn't take any more. Your guess is as good as ours—did it help or not!