

# Jim and Emmy's Travel Journal

## The Country of Austria

1970, 1980, 1985, 1988, and 1989

### 1970

We had arrived in Germany on August 18, stopped a few nights in West Germany, then crossed the border into Austria, from the area near Berchtesgaden, Germany.

We drove on to Salzburg, Austria and drove across our first international border, with no problem at all. The German title to the camper must be stamped at the border the first time we leave the country, and they did. With this license we must leave the country within the first 30 days, but then we can come back, of course.

We drove around town for awhile, saw the famous castle on top of the hill, and went into the Cathedral (Salzburg) where they are prepared to televise an opera, or concert of some kind tomorrow. Since it has been raining so much, we decided to stay at the Hotel Stiegl in Salzburg tonight. We ate steak dinners in the Hotel Stiegl dining room. Emmy and Jim had a regular room, and the Lindas slept in a conference room, with no bathroom, all (rooms) for \$20.

#### A, Salzburg, Aug 22, Sat - Hotel

The girls were up early, as there was a meeting scheduled in their room this morning. We left about 7:45 AM and drove through the Austrian countryside and saw what appeared to be some very nice resort areas. If the weather had been sunny and pleasant, we planned to drive over the mountains, but since it's cloudy and raining, we rode the auto train that cost about \$4.

This train has many flatcars, built so we can drive from flatcar to flatcar. When all had been loaded, the train went through a very, very dark (like black) tunnel and came out on the other side of the Austrian mountain in nice sunny weather. A nice way to save difficult driving, and in the winter it's necessary to take the train, because of snow in the mountains.

Soon after we left the auto-train, we entered Italy. We visited Venice, Florence, Rome, Pompeii and Milano, Italy, to Interlaken and Bern Switzerland, through France to Paris, and across the Channel for a visit in England. We returned to Belgium, then The Netherlands. Finally we crossed West Germany, then crossed East Germany to visit both West and East Berlin. Back to West Germany to visit Emmy's cousins.

We returned to the US from Frankfurt on September 14.

### 1980

We arrived at Frankfurt, Germany on May 9, spent some time in West Germany, traveled through France, tiny Andorra, tiniest piece of Spain, tiniest Monaco, then into Italy to visit Pisa and Florence. By ferry we went to Corsica,

Sardinia, Sicily, back through Italy from the "toe" through Rome and dozens of other fascinating places, to Venice. We crossed into Yugoslavia, for a couple of days, then into Austria.

We entered Austria at 1:15 PM, speedometer said 26,001. We drove to and through Valich where there are Warmbaden (thermal pools). We were on a nice four lane road, and for no apparent reason found ourselves following a detour. We noticed the police talking to people in cars up ahead, and when we got there, discovered the Austrians had a speed trap and everyone was getting a speeding ticket, and paying for it right there. Didn't help our feeling about the country and the people. Disgusting, to say the least.

In Maria Worth there are two churches, one is Catholic with a covered stairway, and the other Evangelical, probably Lutheran. We had to change our clocks one hour again. We camped at about 5:15. Jim was ready to go on, but Emmy has her third sore throat and cold in two months.

**A, Maria Worth, Jul 6, Sun - 45 - 160 - 5,790**

Today was Emmy's day in the camper bed while Jim drove to Vienna. She said she has a fever and feels bad. (Jim checked, then said, "She may say she feels sick, but she feels just fine to me!") We went directly to the campsite and parked so Emmy could rest and sleep. Jim rode the bus and streetcar to downtown Vienna. When he returned he had a McDonald's bag with a Big Mac and French Fries for the invalid! Vienna was very interesting, something like Paris, a little.

There is a family from Poland camped next door. Two boys, Jarek and Przemek, and Danielle and Marian Kosinski, mother and father. The older (16) boy speaks some English. They are on their way to visit Italy. (We found later they were not permitted to cross that border for some reason.) They were going to visit the Polish Army Cemetery near Monte Cassino. It was the Polish Army that finally captured the place after the bombing. Have to look that up. (Later found it to be true, several armies tried, but the Poles succeeded.)

We gave them a jar of peanut butter, they had never heard of it before. Emmy was especially interested in the lady (Dana), and said she wore more makeup than other European women. They have invited us to visit their home in Poland later this year.

(In late September, when we would have visited them, the country of Poland was having strikes and many problems, so we cancelled our visit. In 1981 the Kosinski's defected to Austria from Poland and we were able to help them get to the US and get settled in Los Angeles. Family are all doing fine, and they love living in America. In 1985 we visited their family and friends in Poland. When Jarek became a citizen, he could choose any name he liked, and at least partially to honor Jim, he selected James in addition to Jarek. Przemek took the name Paul, at least partially because of the Polish Pope John Paul II.)

**A, Vienna, Jul 7, Mon - 46 - 200 - 5,990**

Emmy said she is feeling much better this morning, and Jim says, "Better than who?"

We have asked again about getting a transformer to run the refrigerator. We can't find out why it won't work, and no one seems to know. Went to several

places but found nothing that would do the job. While we are looking for something, we are sightseeing. It isn't as if we were wasting time and effort, as we want to see a lot of the city and how and where the people live and work.

(Much later we found we needed a charger that put out more Amps than the refrigerator needed, not just enough to charge a battery. The one we had would charge the battery, but was too small to run the refrigerator. As for the transformer, for some reason [we never found out why], a transformer just doesn't work with this type of refrigerator.)

Went across the Danube River and the Danube Canal to the big TV tower. It's a mile or two from downtown so we can't see much of the main part of Vienna from the tower. Right below the tower is a large complex of buildings for the United Nations. There's also several small houses, like summer houses, situated in flower gardens.

Drove around the downtown area, past the Opera, and other large government buildings. Stopped at the Prador amusement park and saw the large Ferris Wheel. Instead of a seat for two, these cabins will hold at least 15 people each. (When we rode this wheel a few years later, we found half of the original cabins had been removed [many years ago], and each remaining cabin would hold 25 to 30 people.) The spokes of the wheel appear to be large cables, and not solid steel as might be expected.

Emmy had a snack, could not really call it lunch, at a buffet restaurant in Vienna. She took a small plate and after she went through the line, they weighed the plate of food, and charged by weight. Very little food for \$4.

After resting for a while we found a laundromat near the campsite. Incredible price, it cost \$4 per load including soap. Where do they get these kind of prices? In downtown Vienna, we saw a new large laundromat, with several Westinghouse machines, and their price was the same. It's always nice to get the laundry done though.

Jim went to the butcher shop and asked for some ground beef. They cut up a nice piece of beef (filet mignon perhaps!) and charged \$8 a pound, but very excellent. Everything we see here is expensive, even more so than Paris.

#### **A, Vienna, Jul 8, Tue - 47**

Today we rode the bus and streetcar to downtown Vienna. If we buy the tickets at the little store across the street, they cost about 65 cents each, buy the ticket on the bus and it costs much more.

We went to the Hungarian Embassy to get a Visa for a visit, by tour bus, to Budapest tomorrow. They couldn't get the Visa completed before they closed for the day, so they sent us to the Hungarian Government Travel Agent to pay for the Visa, and to make arrangements for a one day bus trip to Budapest and back, all for \$212. The ticket says the bus will pick us up at the campsite at 6:30 AM.

We walked all over downtown Vienna and took a tour of the Opera building. Not nearly as nice as the one in Paris. Seems the Americans bombed Vienna in 1945 and gutted the Opera building. The guide seemed to think it had been unnecessary and on purpose. (Wonder where she was during the war.) In the back of the Opera there is an area with railings that people with standing-room-

only tickets, can lean against. Many more people can get in that space, than if there were seats.

Between Christmas and Easter, there are hundreds of special parties in Vienna, the most exclusive is held in the Opera building. As we (mis)understood it, they either remove the seats and make a dance floor, or the floor is somehow placed above the seats.

Later in the afternoon we went to the Schonbrunn Palace. Emmy liked the layout, but even though they had tried to copy it, there was little comparison with the Palace or the gardens of Versailles, near Paris. It was a hot and humid day, so Emmy did not want to waste much energy, but Jim went up to the big statues far in back of the Schonbrunn Palace and on up the hill and looked back at the view. There was a zoo on the grounds, but we did not bother.

In downtown Vienna, on the walking streets in the shopping area, there is St. Stephen's Cathedral. It has a bright zigzag tiled pattern on the roof. It's difficult to describe the inside as any different from any other Cathedral (Vienna), but each is different and inspiring, in its own way.

#### **A, Vienna, Jul 9, Wed - 48 - 50 - 6,040**

We only thought we were going on a tour bus to Budapest! We were at the street well before 6:30, and waited until 7:20 then called and found there was a mistake and our bus was there promptly at 6:00 AM. The driver said she waited until 6:15, but our ticket says 6:30! We went downtown and picked up our Visas and got our tour money back and decided to drive to Budapest. We don't care for tours anyway.

As we were leaving Vienna we saw a large Dodge Truck garage (the only time we saw the word Dodge in Europe) and we stopped to see about the brakes. Turns out they have the parts in stock and a mechanic with nothing better to do than replace the brake lining. We left the camper and went back to downtown Vienna on the streetcar to kill a couple of hours. The cost was \$353, just for linings! At least three times what it would cost at home. At the border we got 18% (tax) back, so that helped.

We had arranged to join a tour to Hungary, but since they "missed us," we decided we would do it on our own, and we didn't miss their tour at all. We spent only one night in Budapest, Hungary, then returned to Austria.

#### **A, Vienna, Jul 11, Fri - 50 - 242 - 6,472**

Emmy had planned to sleep late, but traffic noise woke her early, so we left at 8:45 and drove to downtown Vienna. We went to the basement bakery of a department store where Jim had been the other day, and bought some more sweet rolls. It's not easy to find good ones.

We left Vienna and were driving west on the Autobahn when we saw a beautiful large building off to the right. We got off the freeway and went to look at the monastery and the Cathedral in Melk. It sits on the top of a hill overlooking the Danube River, with the town all around at the base of the hill. The building is yellow and gold, and is very decorative. Emmy paid \$2 for a picture the man said was being used to raise money to redo the Cathedral (Melk).

Taking the tour would require more time than we planned to spend, but Jim wanted to take a picture just about two feet inside the exit, and the guard, a huge mean-looking and crabby woman, insisted, "No way!" Emmy thought she could understand where Hitler got some of the guards for the concentration camps.

(We later received a book written by an Austrian, and it says Austria is where he got many of the guards. While the German may fit the cartoon image Americans have, the Austrians are like a caricature, or an exaggeration of the German.)

A few days later Emmy noticed in her notebook we were to be sure and see Melk, as Josef Munggenast, one of Emmy's ancestors, was the architect of the Melk Benedictine Monastery, sometime in the 1700's. One of the post cards we bought had his name on the back, but we didn't notice it in time. Next time we visit, we tour!

We drove on to Hallstatt, a picturesque little town on a lake. They say people have lived here for 3000 years, and it's easy to see why. There was a campsite in town so we settled in for the night, then Emmy went to bed, and Jim walked to town. When he returned, found the circuit breaker had blown and the heater was off. When Jim asked the campsite manager to reset the circuit breaker, the man was very unhappy we were so bold as to think we could use an electric heater. Several people were connected into the same socket, and while we had the only heater, he just didn't have much electricity. After a few "words" he finally gave our money back and we left the campsite. We parked elsewhere, and both of us walked into town to look around.

You have most likely seen pictures of Hallstatt, as it's often used when a picture of a beautiful lake-side town is needed for a calendar, or something like that. The salt mine on top of the hill is open for tourists, who ride to the top in a funicular railway. This time we didn't take the time, but next time, maybe.

In downtown Hallstatt there is a road leading through a one lane tunnel. The traffic light lets traffic go one way at a time, and the light changes every six or eight minutes (don't know exactly). There is a large digital clock next to the light so it's possible park in the street and shop until the clock is almost run down, then jump in the car and go. The tunnel was not big enough for the camper, so we went over the hill, and found a delightful campsite right along the lake.

We saw several people in this area wearing Alpine hats and knickers, and saw a man in "lader hosen," the short leather pants we see in Germany sometimes. The houses look a little different here also. Mostly white stucco with brown tile roofs and wood balconies with flower pots. The scenery is sure more beautiful than the people.

#### **A, Hallstatt, Jul 12, Sat - 51**

We drove to Salzburg and had a nice morning, doing what we always do in these towns and cities.

We park and walk and drive then park and walk some more. We like to look around in the stores and see how the people live and work, and what is available to buy. We keep hoping we will see a product or service that would be nice to have in the US, and is not yet available. Hasn't happened so far. So many things

we see in Europe are made in the US. It would be nice to make these trips deductible, if not profitable.

We took the funicular railway up to the Castle on top of the hill. The Castle was begun in 1077 and completed in 1681. Went to American Express for mail and money. We find prices in Austria are high. Some things we found in other countries seem double that price here. Salzburg has been here, and has been very entertaining for centuries, but one of its most popular tourist activities originated rather recently. Every tourist office in town offers "Sound of Music" tours to the locations, near Salzburg, where the movie was filmed. Can't remember that kind of thing in any other place we have visited, anywhere.

We left Austria, and crossed the border into West Germany. After a night in West Germany, we continued on to the western part of Austria.

It rained almost all day so we camped early at the Zellea Zee.

**A, Zellea Zee, Jul 14, Mon - 53 - 22 - 6,827**

Did not rain this morning but the sun didn't shine until late in the afternoon.

We met a man from the US, who is camping in a VW Van, and has been using a transformer for his refrigerator. He is going home soon and will need it no longer. We said we would use it for the night and if it worked we would buy it from him. Well, the same as in Rome, it started out OK then did nothing but run up our electric bill for the night. We were later told his refrigerator worked on a different principal than ours. (He told us his vehicle was broken into while attending the opera in the Verona Amphitheater in Italy.)

We drove across the Gross Glockner Alpine Highway. It's supposed to have the most beautiful mountain scenery of any highway in the world, and maybe that's true, but after a little while all we could see were clouds. They charged an expensive toll to travel across the mountain, then when we got to the other side, they asked to see our ticket! No one told us we would need it, but we were able to find it. They said if we did not have the ticket we would have had to pay again. There was no way to get here without passing the first ticket booth, but that meant nothing to them. We are getting disgusted with the people in Austria.

We left Austria for a few minutes, drove across Italy for a few miles, then returned to Austria.

We arrived in Austria and later found we were on a toll Autobahn for 30 minutes and they charged \$10! We had seen no signs to tell us about that. More and more—these Austrians! We stopped at a place with a big sign saying "I" for information, but no one there seemed to know a thing about it.

Innsbruck is a lovely city with a backdrop of snowcapped mountains, and the winter Olympics have been held here a time or two. When we were in Rome we had telegraphed Linda to send 25 rolls of film, and we picked it up at the American Express office. The Austrians charged us \$1.25 for customs duty. We then went to the Post Office to make a phone call to Linda. After waiting for a half hour the man said it would take hours to make the telephone call, as they had to go through Vienna to get a line to US. Of course, he didn't tell us that when we first arrived.

Emmy likes the little faces of old men carved out of pieces of wood, but didn't know what she would have done with one if she bought it.

We had a hamburger and hotdog in a restaurant near the Holiday Inn. In an antique store, we found a new little brass pitcher that we have seen many times in Italy. Here they wanted three or four times the Italian price, and insisted it was antique. Sales lady complained when he picked it up, and when Jim complained about her and her prices, she complained about Americans and Jim complained about Austrians. So guess we were even.

We camped at a farm campsite just west of Innsbruck, they charged \$10. Large bowls of something was being served family style in the restaurant at the Innsbruck campsite. There were many people at tables both inside and out and when they ate whatever it was, they made a very loud clatter with the knives and forks and plates. It was a real clamor. Have never heard anything like this elsewhere.

There's a lot of snow in the mountains this late in the year. We guess Austria has more good scenery, or at least not much "no scenery" but we don't think the people deserve it. We think our feelings about the Austrians are justified, based on this trip, but don't like to feel this way.

(1992—We have now visited Austria during our trips in six different years. While they are still rather stiff and formal, and their country is still extra neat and beautiful, other than 1980, our trips to Austria have been without incident. We've had no other problems with the Austrian people, as we seemed to have had during our 1980 trip. We have not experienced this in any other country, and we are sure some if it was coincidence (not our fault, of course!) more than anything. But wherever we turned in Austria in 1980, there was a problem, minor though it may have been. After a while, of course, we were looking for problems, and that's the easiest way to find one!)

**A, Innsbruck, Jul 15, Tue - 54 - 183 - 7,010**

We drove to the town of Oetz overlooking a beautiful valley with hay fields, and on to the town of Umhausen. We could see some waterfalls in the distance. Zurs appears to be a winter resort, closed for the summer, and is about the only place we've seen without flowers pots and flowers.

We see snowcapped mountains, and waterfalls. Austrians have large heavy duty snow fences, constructed using steel rails. We find these for miles along the road, and we also went through many snowsheds. They are well prepared for winter, and make sure people can get here so the ski resorts can stay in business during the winter.

After miles of beautiful mountain scenery, we came to a parking place on the side of the road. There were several cars parked there, and a small lunch and souvenir stand. Would you believe it, right next to this lunch counter, and almost between cars in the parking lot, a man and his wife had set up their picnic table, complete with tablecloth, chairs and all the trimmings. All they needed to do was go either way on the highway for a half mile and find a beautiful uncluttered, non exhaust-pipe place to eat, and they would not have been right in front of the man's lunch counter.

We stopped in Feldkirch, a nice old town with an arcaded shopping district. It was closed tight at 2:00 PM, so we went on to see Bregenz, but there was a large traffic jam, and we couldn't get there, so went back to Feldkirch for a little longer.

We crossed the border from Austria into Liechtenstein, and spent one night. We visited more of Switzerland and crossed the Swiss/Italian border a couple of times on our way from St. Moritz to the Matterhorn. From there we spent more time in Germany and France. From Belgium we crossed the Channel to England, drove to Wales, by ferry to and from Ireland, then Scotland, more of England, ferried across the Channel to The Netherlands. After a visit to Berlin, we returned to Mettlach, and after a short time in France, we returned to the US on October 26.

# 1985

**We arrived in West Germany on May 30. After a few days with Emmy's cousins we visited The Netherlands, Belgium, and France. Back to the cousins, then across France and Switzerland to the (Country of) San Marino, and Italy. We crossed the Adriatic Sea to spend a week in Yugoslavia, then crossed the border into Austria.**

There's a law in Austria (and some other countries) that big trucks cannot be on the roads on the weekend. We don't know the exact hours but we see many of them parked, waiting to cross the border. We saw a trucker from Yugoslavia who crossed the border, and now that he's on this side, he's trying awfully hard to find a parking place before the police find him.

As we go further, the countryside looks much, much neater than a few miles ago. We drove through some towns, and since this is Sunday, it's OK to drive and look, but there's nothing to stop for. Mariazell was crowded with tourists. It's a destination for religious pilgrimages.

There are few campsites in this area, so when we saw the sign for one, we turned and looked and looked and finally found a beautiful place in the woods near a lake. There is electricity and plenty of hot water.

A man in the next spot has just returned from a trip across the US riding in a bus with beds. We see that a lot in Europe, but remember seeing only one in the US. He enjoyed himself in the US, but said everything there is very expensive. We just arrived in Austria, so haven't checked yet this year, but we thought Austria had very high prices the other times we were here.

**A, Mariazell, Aug 12, Mon - 55 - 207 - 6,690**

We've seen some ski lifts in the area, and it's very mountainous and hilly.

What a change from Yugoslavia, the roads in Austria are wide, smooth, and in good shape. We have seen a billboard advertising McDonald's, so we assume we are again in a civilized country. In Italy and in Yugoslavia we saw no McDonald's. No French Fries in Italy that we can remember, and the times we bought them in Yugoslavia, they weren't worth the effort.

We arrived in Melk, determined to see the Benedictine Monastery this time. This is a beautiful building that can be seen from a great distance since it's high on a hill above the Danube River. There have been people here since Roman times. The town name first appears in 831, and Monks have been here for 900 years. This building was built in the early 1700's.

Last time we were in the neighborhood, we took a quick look, and later found Josef Munggenast was not only the architect of the Melk Monastery, he is Emmy's distant cousin, many years removed. (It's not just the similarity in names, the cousins know of this man through the family tree. Emmy's family was lazy and only used one "g".)

We took the tour, Emmy introduced herself to the guide, and the Munggenast name was mentioned many times during the tour. This is an interesting monastery, but the most beautiful part is Melk's Baroque Cathedral or chapel. We won't even try to describe the beauty and splendor of all the columns, statues, and gold decorations in the Cathedral (Melk), it's exceptional. How something so extreme can look so beautiful!

The organ in the Cathedral at Melk is rather new. It replaced the old organ which was ruined when someone tried to fix it. They have an old clock that suffered from the same TLC (terrible loving care). Melk's library is also exceptional. They painted the ceiling so it looks like it was a continuation of the walls and it looks much higher than it really is. Trompe-l'œil, to fool the eye, an optical illusion.

We now drove to Vienna and took the freeway toward the south part of the city. Jim said this looks about right, let's take this left turn, and maybe the next right turn, and there we were at the campsite in Vienna, just as if he knew where we were. Sometimes it's easier without a map. Signed into the campsite early. We expect to be in Vienna for a couple of days, because we must get Visas for our visits to Poland and Czechoslovakia, and so we can drive across East Germany.

At about 2:30 PM we took the bus and streetcar to downtown Vienna and walked along the Ringstrasse, looking for the US Embassy in Vienna. We found it, and went in and asked if there were any problems about visiting Poland and Czechoslovakia at this time. The man in Vienna's US Embassy opened a book, looked for a certain document, then said the US State Department recommends we do not go to Poland and Czechoslovakia. Jim asked to look at the telegram and when he read it, found it said just the opposite. What was he up to?

As we were leaving the US Embassy we talked to the Austrian man in charge of security, and the US Marine Guard at the door. They couldn't imagine why anyone would tell us we shouldn't visit Poland and Czechoslovakia. The Austrian had been in the German army and had fought in Russia as a tank commander. We asked when he first knew they had lost the war. He said he was within sight of the smoke of burning Moscow, out of gas, out of ammunition, and had to walk and ride a horse back to Germany. He had been drafted for only two years, but had to stay for many more, and had been wounded several times.

We walked through more of downtown Vienna and stopped at McDonald's and asked for Egg McMuffin. The nice lady who ran the place said they have never served them in Vienna. For the next few days whenever Jim was close to Vienna's McDonald's, he would go in and ask her for an Egg McMuffin. He told her to tell her boss people had been asking for Egg McMuffin all week. Back at the camper, Emmy decided the campsite showers in Vienna were too dirty to use.

#### **A, Vienna, Aug 13, Tue - 56**

We went downtown to get some money from a Visa Bank, it took forever this time.

A very pretty Italian lady, who is an American citizen, was in the same line at the bank in Vienna. Her husband works for a US company, on satellite communication for the Government of Italy. They live at the lake where we camped the day before we entered Rome. She said that due to the sensitivity of her husband's job, they are not allowed to travel to the Iron Curtain countries, like we are planning to do. Can't imagine anyone caring where we go, or what we do while we are there!

Emmy purchased a dress to wear to Bärbel's wedding in Merzig next month, and Jim took a walk to the top of St. Stephen's Cathedral (Vienna). We then took the subway and streetcar to find the DDR (East German) consulate in Vienna, and found they were closed for the day, so went back to the campsite.

#### A, Vienna, Aug 14, Wed - 57

This morning we drove to the Polish Consulate, and found we had been a half block from here yesterday. They had been open then, but they are closed today, and Thursday is a holiday, so Friday must be the day for a Polish Visa. A very pretty lady was trying to get the same information, and since she is Polish and can speak English, she translated the sign for us.

When we arrived at the Czechoslovakian Consulate, the crowds extended out into the street. We took our place in the very hot, crowded, smelly line, filled out four copies of a form, cut and attached our photos, and waited some more.

People in the line were pushing and shoving, but they were helpful whenever we needed help or had a question. We handed in the documents with our passports, waited in the camper for an hour or so, then picked up the Czechoslovakia Visa. Cost 420 Austrian Schillings and two hours of our time.

We drove back to the campsite. Across the street there was a beauty parlor for Emmy to get her hair shampooed and set. Jim went to the downtown Vienna American Express Office to look for mail again. There was none yesterday, but as he entered the office today, the manager recognized him and said we had mail, even before Jim got in line.

We must buy Polish coupons for \$15 per day per person for each day we will be there. Sort of like buying a cover-charge for a show. American Express sells them, but Jim had to see Orbis, the Polish Travel Bureau located in downtown Vienna, about the Polish ship we expect to return to the US on this fall, so went there to get the coupons.

The lady at the desk said something in Polish, and the manager who spoke a little English said the rule has been changed and we must now buy the coupons at the border. Jim reminded him we had just visited the Polish Consulate in Vienna, and the sign on the gate said we must have the coupons before we can get the Visa. He said, "Never fear, the rule has been changed, the sign has not."

They sent Jim to another office to get the ship information, and he picked up a brochure printed in German. Jim stopped at the Austrian Auto Club to see about gas coupons for Poland, and they said we had to buy the other coupons first. They said Jim misunderstood what he had been told, because the Austrian Auto Club had just sold some of those very coupons, a few minutes ago.

By this time Jim was tired, confused, and disgusted with the whole mess, and went back to the Vienna office of American Express. They also assured him he

had misunderstood the Orbis man, since American Express had also sold some of those coupons within the hour.

The manager overheard the conversation and asked the counter man to call Orbis and find out what was going on. He called Orbis, and after a long conversation American Express was now convinced that Jim was correct, the rule was changed, but by now who cared.

There was a book store with some very interesting books for sale. One was printed in Austria, in the German language, but had the best set of pictures of the US we have seen. Bought a copy to give to the cousins in Mettlach.

When Jim got off the bus near the campsite in Vienna, he looked for Emmy in the beauty parlor. They were going to close in a few minutes, but they decided they could cut his hair first.

Jim shopped in the grocery store next door before he went to the camper. Tomorrow is a holiday, nothing will be open except the camp store, which is expensive and doesn't have many products for sale.

#### **A, Vienna, Aug 15, Thu - 58**

This is a holiday, so we took the opportunity to drive around Vienna.

We stopped at the Prador, the large amusement park in town. Not much of interest except the world's largest Ferris wheel. We took a ride that consists of one round for \$1, with many stops to load and unload people. A huge wheel. Our Ferris wheel car was about 8' X 17' (we measured) and there could have been two or three times the 17 people who were in the car, and it still would not have been overcrowded. Interesting, but not much of a ride. Emmy thought it boring, but we could see for quite a distance.

We bought a round flat crispy bread which they deep fried, then put on either a garlic sauce, or salt, very interesting. It's Hungarian, and is called Langos. We drove around Vienna some more, then back to the campsite.

By now Emmy said she was dirtier than the showers, so took a cold one at 2:30. Jim took a hot one, with plenty of hot water at 4:00. Just lucky. A little later a Catholic priest came through the camp with a loud speaker saying he was going to hold a service. Of all things, when it started, they sang Amazing Grace and other songs that almost sounded familiar.

#### **A, Vienna, Aug 16, Fri - 59**

We drove to the section of Vienna where the Polish Consulate is located, and stopped at the local Post Office to make some phone calls.

The calls included one to Dr. Cyrson in Poznan, Poland to tell him we would visit him in a week or so. (He had been one of Linda's professors, at Cal State Northridge.) He told Jim the Cyrson family was leaving for the US so he can teach at Lamar Tech in Texas, and they would not be in Poznan when we arrived. He said we should keep his phone number handy since a friend would be staying in his apartment, and could be of help if we had a problem. His friend is the Dean of the School of Law at the University in Poznan. Sounds like a good friend for us to know in case of a problem.

We called Linda and Toni, and mailed a couple of things. Jim asked the postal clerk about a laundromat. The clerk said there was one "at the corner,"

but we went around the corner a couple of directions, and didn't see it. Last time we were in Vienna there was one near the campsite, but now it's closed and no one seems to know where there's another in the whole city of Vienna.

In the past days we had stopped at several laundries, and they all said there are no laundromats in Vienna that they know of. A man at a gas station sent us to an automatic car wash. All to no avail.

Emmy stopped in a shoe store and bought some pink flat-soled shoes, and Jim went to the bank for more money. Perhaps there was some connection! We asked the shoe store people about a laundromat and they pointed to one across the street! Then we could see the street takes a funny little turn, known locally as "the corner," and was where the postal clerk meant for us to go.

The Czechoslovakian, the East German, and the Polish consulates are all in the same section of Vienna, all near the Schonbrunn Palace. We now went to the Polish Consulate and stood in line before we were able to get the forms filled out properly and pay our money.

We never did understand all that went on, but the man upstairs said do this, and the people downstairs said do that, so we went upstairs, and that man went downstairs then came back upstairs, then we went downstairs and somehow didn't have to go to the Post Office in Vienna for money orders like everyone else did, including some Americans who had a taxi waiting for them, had to do.

The same pretty lady (and she was exceptionally pretty!) who we met at Vienna's Polish consulate is in line today. She again translated for us when needed, but we didn't have to do all that for some reason. She didn't understand what happened either, since she had to go to the Post Office for a money order, but we didn't!

The Visas cost 280 S, then we found we had to pay another 140 S to get them today instead of next week. But whatever, we now have the Czechoslovakian and Polish Visas. We had been told by the East German (DDR) people to get these first, and now we have them, and the DDR is closed for the day. Aw well, we tried to get it all done, but we can get the DDR Visa at their border.

Now we went back to the Vienna laundromat and for the grand price of \$4 per load wash, and \$1 per load to dry, we got the clothes taken care of. We shopped in two very nice supermarkets in the next block, buying a lot of food items, such as orange juice, cokes, peanut butter, canned meat, canned pineapple, and everything we could find in Vienna, so we can eat without problems behind the iron curtain. A man in the Czechoslovakian Consulate recommended that. He said at best we would have to stand in long lines to get food, then would not find much we wanted.

We went back to the campsite for lunch, then visited the Shopping Center Sud (South), a very large indoor shopping mall. For blocks around the center there are large furniture stores, and other businesses. Shopping Center Sud in Vienna is very badly designed, compared to similar places in the US. There are several large stores with plenty of nice things for sale, but it's cluttered and difficult to find our way around. The style is "early warehouse."

**A, Vienna, Aug 17, Sat - 60 - 198 - 6,888**

Campsite cost \$39 for the week. This morning we went to visit the beautiful Baroque Church of St. Charles (Karlskirche), built in the early 1700's. The church is oval inside, has a huge oval dome, little side chapels, and large pillars at the front door. The guide book says of Karlskirche, "Typical Baroque, with its blend of illusionism, light and color." It's located near downtown Vienna, next to a large park.

Just when we think we have already seen "the best, the most unusual or whatever," we find another place like this food and flea market. There is a wide street near downtown Vienna, divided by a median strip maybe a half block wide. One side called Linke (left) Weinzelle, and the other called Rechte (right) Weinzelle. (Vienna is spelled Wein, and zelle means booth in German, Wein is German for wine, and is pronounced something like Veen!) In the first part of the area there are a couple of blocks of buildings where they sell many things, but mainly food. Further west, there are a few blocks of a flea market and food for sale.

Emmy bought a small pink bowl for \$3, but did not buy a center piece with a navy and peach design on a plate rimmed with brass. Jim bought a \$2 picture book of Prague. He plans to place the book on the camper table while we are crossing the Czechoslovakian border, hoping to make an impression on the border people. (We later found the book is a very nice picture book with descriptions of each picture in four languages, in the back of the book.)

On the way back to the camper we bought more food, including a loaf of flat Turkish bread, and a sesame bread ring shaped like a pretzel, but not made of pretzel dough. In Milano we bought some of the same flat bread, but they didn't call it Turkish. We bought lots of good fruit and food, including dates and nuts.

We now drove west from Vienna, and saw another beautiful Benedictine Abbey high on top of a hill. We drove up to the Gottweig Wachau and walked around. There was a wedding taking place in Gottweig. Before they were finished, another wedding party came up the hill, and waited their turn. This church was much nicer on the inside than on the outside, but in no way did it compare with the Baroque Cathedral at Melk, just a few miles from here.

We drove through and around the little town of Traismaur. There was a beautiful city gate, a wall, and a gorgeous walnut tree almost covering the gate, a picturesque sight.

Durnstein, on the Danube River, was highly recommended in a tour book, but we were not that much impressed. Again it's "compared to what." Durnstein has many hotels and restaurants and a view of the Danube River, a great tourist town for a lot of people. We saw straw wreaths on front doors, and were told they indicate that new wine is available for sale.

We had a hard time finding a campsite in this area. One we did find had no space available and it seemed impossible to find another. In one little town a lady saw us studying the town map on a sign board and called her daughter, who spoke English, to help us. After we found this one, we discovered it was one of the nicer campsites.

The weather is bad, and it was raining hard as we camped. The site is on a small lake with boats for rent, a couple of tennis courts, nice scenery in the

distance, and the facilities and the people were excellent. We never stay anywhere very long, but Kramau would be a nice place to start. We probably drove 25 miles out of the way to find this site, but since we are always sight-seeing, we never add the cost of extra gas to the cost of camping. We don't keep an exact record of the costs anyway, and if that was necessary we shouldn't be here.

For dinner Emmy fixed an excellent dinner of roast-beef. For some reason, the meat in Europe tastes different than at home when fixed as a roast, but has usually been delicious. When fixed as a steak, it just doesn't do well at all.

**A, Kramau, Aug 18, Sun - 61 - 117 - 7,005 - \$3.50**

We crossed the border into Czechoslovakia, visited Poland, then across East Germany to the West. We turned right, boarded a ferry to Denmark, another to Sweden then back to Denmark. We crossed Germany for another visit with the cousins in Mettlach. Later we drove across Luxembourg and Belgium to Rotterdam in The Netherlands, to board the SS Stefan Batory on October 22. Spent a day in London, 10 days on the Atlantic Ocean to Montreal, then drove home to California.

# 1988

We arrived in West Germany on July 30, spent most of a month finding an RV, and spending time with Toni and dozens of cousins. We spent about a month in France, from Paris to Bordeaux, then to Nice and the Country of Monaco. We crossed the French Alps and back to Toni's for a week or so. Next we crossed France and Switzerland and spent 20 days in Italy. After three days in Yugoslavia, with nights in Italy, we entered Austria.

We stopped at the last service area in Italy, and the first one in Austria, and the difference is amazing. The Italian one was in some ways nicer than would be found farther south, but the Austrian rest stop was just excellent in design, and was very different. Got the impression the Austrians went out of their way to make this a very special place, just to make sure we knew we were not in Italy anymore.

We exchanged a \$50 American Express Traveler's Check for Austrian Shillings to make sure we had a little money if we need it, but have no idea how long we will be in this country.

We still have the alternator light problem, so in Villach, the first little town in Austria, we found a Renault dealer, at 10 minutes to 12:00, and that's no time to find anything in Europe. Jim used a couple of words of English and German, and explained it must be a problem with the sensor system that turns on the red light, and not with the alternator. The man agreed, and once under the hood, he pulled on a couple of wires and found one broken!

For all these weeks of problems, the mechanics in several countries (and Jim), had pushed in the wires to make sure they were making contact. That made it work for a little while, until it jiggled loose again, and this man pulls a wire, and finds the problem immediately!

Since it was lunch time, and we didn't want to wait an hour or two, Jim was telling the mechanic he was the best. The mechanics in France, in Switzerland, Germany, and in Italy, couldn't find the problem, but the first man in Austria found the problem right away! Made him feel so good he immediately fixed the broken wire.

His friends kept trying to get him to stop and go to lunch with them, but he didn't go until he finished, about 10 minutes after 12. Jim asked how much we owed, and when the man saw the cashier had also gone to lunch, he indicated we should just leave. He would not let us buy his lunch, or even give him a tip. Believe it or not, we had no more problems with the alternator light, what a relief.

We drove on toward Salzburg and followed the snowplow over the Austrian Alps. There were two long tunnels (5.4 km and 6.4 km), and a toll booth. Jim handed the man a 100 Schilling note and waited for change. He said no change, Jim said, "I didn't want to buy your tunnel, I just wanted to rent it for a few minutes," the toll-taker laughed.

As we neared Salzburg we could find no open campsite, and no one knew of a campsite that will be open this time of the year. We are sure one in Berchtesgaden, Germany will be available, so we crossed the German border without spending much time in Austria. Jim asked the German customs man if there's an open campground nearby, and he very officially-like indicated there was.

#### **D, Berchtesgaden, Nov 16, Wed - 69 - 17 dm - 243 - 7,693**

We decided sometime ago to try and change our Frankfurt to Los Angeles airplane tickets, to Saarbrücken to Frankfurt to Los Angeles, and return by the same route in March.

The American Express lady didn't tell us it was possible, but Jim read the literature and found we could do it for the same price, and it requires a lot less driving. We had called from Zurich, but there was no answer, then we called again and put in our request, but last night when we called Toni, she said American Express had called for us with a question of some kind. Jim called Heidelberg from the campground, but got nothing but a recording he didn't understand.

We have decided to visit Salzburg again, even though the weather continues bad. It's only a few miles from here, and the border crossing is no problem.

It's amazing that people remember something so differently. We passed a very unusual McDonald's on the way to downtown Salzburg, but just a few minutes later, as she was going to make a note in her diary, Emmy remembered the McDonald's as yellow and red, and Jim remembered it as blue and white. In 1989 we saw it again and it's really red and grey! So much for that eye-witness account! We do agree it was a very modern place, and most unusual.

We followed the signs to a parking lot a few blocks from city-center, then rode the shuttle bus back to the main city square. We got off the bus in front of American Express, and decided to have them find what the problem is at their office in Heidelberg. First they tried to send a telegram. After a long wait and no

response, they decided to telephone, then heard a recording say all Heidelberg is closed for a religious holiday. So we'll call tomorrow.

We walked the rainy streets, looking in this place and that, and Emmy had a sausage sandwich called Bosca, said to be a specialty for the Salzburg area. Two thin sausages in a bun, she liked it just fine. We continued to walk here and there (had a snack at McDonald's), then walked back to the parking lot, and returned to Berchtesgaden area. Drove around trying to find some scenery we could enjoy, but not in this weather.

From here we returned to Berchtesgaden, Germany, then back to Mettlach. We stayed in Mettlach for Hugo and Maria's, and Köbus and Fina's 49th anniversary on December 4, and returned to the US on December 6.

## 1989

We arrived in West Germany on March 10, retrieved the RV from storage near Mettlach, visited cousins, then visited Paris. Back to Mettlach for a few days, then across Germany and France. We spent a day or two in Switzerland, a month in Italy including a ferry to Sicily. We returned to Italy, toured along the "foot from the toe to the heel," and camped on a ship during our trip to Greece. A month was spent in Greece, including a cruise to several Greek Islands with a stop in Turkey. Another cruise went to Istanbul, and into the Black Sea to Odessa and Yalta, **Soviet Union.**

After more days in Greece we spent 10 days traveling the western part of Yugoslavia, from the Greek border until our entry into Austria.

Exchange rate in Austria is about 14 Schillings to \$1.

As we arrived at Graz, we decided to stop at the first campsite, even though it's still early in the day. Well, four o'clock isn't exactly too late in the day! After she rested awhile and we had eaten dinner, Emmy decided to do the laundry, since we could see the laundromat in the window near the office. Now we found they did the wash. No one else is qualified to run the washer/dryer, but the laundry room had closed at 8:00 PM. Emmy would prefer to do her own washing. Over the years when we did let someone do it for us, they did all kinds of funny things, such as leaving the clothes in the dryer until the wrinkles were almost permanent.

### A, Graz, June 16, Fri - 72 - - 120 - 7,903

Rained a lot during the night, but we can see blue sky this morning. Already the weather is much cooler than we have experienced for many weeks. Warmer clothes are now in use!

We sure can see the difference in campsites, immediately! While this one would not be considered one of the best in Northern Europe, it certainly is about the best we have seen in the last couple of months. The campsite is included in a sizable sport complex, which includes an enormous swimming pool next door.

From the camping spot we can see a church with the very Austrian, very carefully designed and maintained church steeple. Most people are proud of

their churches, and Cathedrals everywhere have large and carefully designed steeples. But no other country has church steeples like Austria. In Austria there are single onion shaped church steeples, double onions, very pointed, octagon, bishops miter, some with multiple round parts, most have blue, or red, or green shingles, just carefully taken care of, one after the other. In comparison, Germany and Switzerland don't care nearly as much for their church steeples.

We have visited Austria many times, and it always seems they are extremists where things like this are concerned. Austria is maintained almost too precisely, if that's possible. Not only the man-made objects, such as houses and churches, but the scenery in Austria seems almost too breathtaking to be true. Can't quite understand why it looks so special, but it does. Sometimes it appears someone mows and trims the mountain-side meadows, but maybe its the cows and the goats that are the gardeners!

As we headed north toward Salzburg, we went through two tunnels with a 120 Schilling toll, a little more than the price for two different tunnels last year. In this country they do not hesitate to charge plenty for such things. It rained really hard for awhile, but had stopped by the time we stopped to eat, and the sun tried to shine a little. Another case of mixed emotions. Each time we have visited Austria it has rained and rained. Of course if it wasn't for all the rain, the country wouldn't look nearly so nice as it will, if we ever get here when it isn't raining.

Now we see some fresh snow on the mountains nearby, and there are trees next to the road. The thermometer on the windshield says 46°. Greece sure wasn't like this. There are signs saying we must drive with headlights on in the daytime, on this particular road. (We find that requirement in some places in California, and in the country of Sweden, headlights must be on at all times for all vehicles!)

We drove on a "little" road as a shortcut to our destination, and at one place the road had a 24 degree slope, downhill in our direction. We arrived in Hallstatt by mid afternoon. This must be one of the more beautiful places in the world, but each time we have been here, we only see it under clouds, and in the rain.

This is the same campsite we stayed in the last time we were here. In the meantime they have spent a lot of money fixing it up, and now they have plenty of electricity. The last time we were here, people just camped here and there on the grass. It was a very cool afternoon, and Emmy had the electric heater on while she took a nap. Jim returned from a walk downtown and found the circuit breaker had tripped. When Jim found the owner, he was unhappy we had expected to be comfortable, so refused to let us use more electricity. We got our money back and left. This time, they had more places to park, and there's plenty of electricity.

Again today Jim walked downtown, and here and there. A little later, after Emmy had rested awhile, we both walked downtown again. Hallstatt is on the shore of a beautiful little lake, and pictures of this town are used on calendars, and any place where a picture of a perfect little lake-side town is needed. A couple of years ago we bought a jig-saw puzzle picture of Hallstatt, and it really is special. Sure hope to see this town in sunshine some year.

There is an old, old salt mine at the top of a funicular railway, but we just can't see going up there, when we won't be able to see down here in this weather. There's an entrance to a tunnel, right in downtown, that goes somewhere. It's a narrow one lane tunnel, and traffic goes in the direction indicated by the green light. Since this light changes only once every six minutes, there is a large digital clock at the entrance to the tunnel so people can shop or sightsee in Hallstatt while waiting their turn in the tunnel. Since the camper is too large, we still don't know where it goes.

**A, Hallstatt, June 17, Sat - 73 - 121 AS - 116 - 8,018**

We walked into Hallstatt this morning to buy some Raclette cheese (99 S per kilo, \$3.20 pound), and some bread. We had remembered a sign for this cheese in the store window last night, but when we got back to the campsite, found another store from the same chain, right next door. Aw well, we needed the exercise, and the visit to the town was exceptional. We also stopped at a bakery and bought some bread that is a lot better than the bread at the big store.

As we walked along the shore line leaving the town, it's noteworthy to see they had built garages out over the water, to keep boats protected from the weather.

We now drove on to Salzburg, but since we just visited here a few months ago, and the weather is so bad we can't see anyhow, we just drove around a little. Also, we found no available parking near downtown, and didn't feel like parking further out, and riding the bus into town in the rain.

As we left Salzburg, we passed the very funny looking McDonald's we saw last year. It's in a squarish looking building and is painted with red and grey horizontal stripes. Not your normal, just down the street-looking McDonald's. There's a lot of construction nearby, so it's too difficult to bother getting into the parking lot to see the inside. Next time.

**We crossed the border from Austria to Germany, and after one night in Berchtesgaden, Germany, we continued on to western Austria.**

We are passing Austrian Alpine houses, mainly white or cream with brown roofs. In this part of the country, some houses have a decorative bell tower, and many have a cross at the top of the roof. The town of Hall in Triol is colorful. There are three special towers, one is octagon shaped, with windows clear to the top. Looks like a small castle. Could be apartments and a restaurant in the building, but we're not sure.

As we walked into Hall in Triol, we saw a huge man who sure looked funny. Don't know if he was just dressed to be funny, or if he thought he was dressed in an Alpine costume. He had a tiny (for him) hat with a feather, and short pants, and a huge belly that stuck far in front of him. Wonder if he ever got close enough to a door to reach the door knob. He hasn't seen his shoes (among other things) for many years!

We walked around the city of Innsbruck this afternoon, but only stores selling tourist gadgets are open in Germany or Austria on Sunday. We met a group of high school kids from somewhere in America. They were members of a band,

and were to have a concert later in the day. Jim bought a nice cane, in Innsbruck, to add to his collection, and just looked and walked, then left town, headed toward some of Emmy's relatives, or at least relatives of common ancestors.

We're in a campsite by 2:30, and while Emmy rested, Jim walked around this little town. It might not be hard to find her relatives, since right across the street from the campsite is a "Zimmer Frei" with the name Mungenast, and the grocery store next door also says "Mungenast" on the awning. Later in the afternoon Emmy knocked on the door of the house, but no one answered. We will see who's there in the morning, if it isn't another holiday of some kind.

**A, Zams, June 19, Mon - 75 - - 148 - 8,233**

This campsite is just an open field in back of a home. There are facilities and electricity, and about a half dozen customers for the night.

Emmy stopped at the Mungenast Store and asked for Frau Mungenast, but Herr Mungenast immediately told her there was no such person. He was not overly friendly, but did tell her he was not part of the Schnann Mungenasts (the town we are looking for, a few miles west of here), and said there were many people with the name in this area. Emmy didn't spend much time with him, as he was busy, and wasn't interested in talking anyway.

We bought some groceries, and a little dress for Linda's expected one. We stopped at the store across the street to buy meat, didn't like the looks of the meat in the butcher shop at the Mungenast store. As we drove out of town, we we passed another "Zimmer Frei, Haus Mungenast" so there must be a bunch of them around here. The weather today is so beautiful, we thought of returning to Salzburg and Berchtesgaden, but who knows what their weather will be today.

The scenery is fabulous, high mountain peaks with snow, pine trees, hay making, covered bridge, farm scenes, snow sheds over the highway, etc. As we always say, Austria has more of the most scenery, than anyone else, and they just don't seem to mess it up with the things they build. The main highway we are on, tunnels here and there, so the countryside isn't messed up at all. The little roads between towns twist and turn with the hills, but the Autobahn is mainly out of sight.

We went to Schnann, a very picturesque little town with a special church steeple, and asked an old man working in his garden if Mungenasts lived around here. Seems there are none in this town, but back a few kilometers there are many, so back we went.

We stopped at the side of the road to take in the scenery, and noticed a helicopter sitting next to a pile of plastic-wrapped mattresses, perhaps waiting to take them high in the mountains to a ski hotel. A few moments later Jim heard the engine start, and looked around and saw the men leaping onto the piles of mattresses to keep them from flying away with the wind from the helicopter blades. Men, plastic, mattresses, and dirt, flying in all directions!

Stopped at a little hotel in Flirsch, and they were more than helpful. They found a map and gave Emmy several names. Jim stopped at the little town store, and as he paid for whatever, the cashier told him about a little town nearby just filled with Mungenast's.

We went back to a place where we had stopped to take a picture a little earlier, and now found it was at the street to the people with the famous name. We drove up the narrow street and asked a postman for directions, and found we had just passed the house we wanted. There was no room to turn around here, so Jim had just started to back down the hill, when a huge tractor, pulling the town garbage trailer came up behind us. They insisted the little dirt road with two little tire tracks led to a place where we could turn around, so with misgivings we went on.

Soon found the garbage dump, where the tractor stopped, but we went on to find a wide place to turn around. Aw well, this big tractor could get us out of a mess, and there must be a bunch of Mungenasts around, if all else fails, but we made it OK.

Finally found very friendly Johann Mungenast. Emmy met his wife who invited her in for a drink, but instead Emmy and Johann came to the camper and talked for a few minutes. Linda and Dan visited here a few years ago and talked to some younger family members. This man has nine children, and 30 grandchildren, and he had spent five years, mainly in Russia, in the German Army, during the war.

We went on through St. Anton, then headed north, through ski country. We stopped for breakfast with beautiful scenery all around. Much of the road we can see goes high into the mountains, and is covered with snow sheds. As we came to St. Christopher, we found many hotels and a dozen cable cars and ski lifts of various kinds. We are now above the snow line, and the grass is a gorgeous green, looks like velvet.

The Austrian hills are alive with water falls, snow filled crevices, snow sheds, flower covered hillsides, covered wooden bridges, church steeples of every color, shape and size, and snow fences high up the mountains. Hotels for skiers, cable cars, ski lifts and hillsides covered with velvety moss-like grass, and all in bright sunshine. Lech was filled with more hotels, closed until ski season. Tiny white and yellow flowers cover the slopes now. Redi-mix concrete trucks everywhere.

We stopped near another church steeple, and waited for the sun to come from behind the clouds. Over each grave in the cemetery there were crosses made of iron with elaborate curlicues, and with a photograph of the person, mounted on the cross. There are older people in the nearby fields, piling hay onto the drying racks.

We returned to West Germany, drove across France to Mettlach, Germany, then returned to the US on July 2.

## 1995

We arrived in West Germany on May 17, rented a Fiat RV in Saarbrucken, visited cousins, then visited the Alsace. Back to Mettlach for a few days, then more Germany and into Czechoslovakia and on to Austria.

We stopped in a little town, and to our surprise, found the ATM liked our Master Card just fine. However Jim almost made a fatal mistake. It took the machine longer than normal to dispense the money, so after retrieving the card he waited a little while, then left, thinking it didn't work. A very honest Austrian, using the machine next, hollered for Jim, and gave him the cash.

Who said everything/one was going to be bad, this year! By the way, Diesel Fuel cost about \$3.50 per gallon in this country, and the exchange rate was 9.60 Austrian Shilling to the dollar.

We just drove and enjoyed, including many miles along a lake, with mountains on the far side. Headed for Hallstatt, where we have visited twice before, just so special we must visit again, hoping this time the sun will shine. To quote a well know source, "Each time we have visited Austria it has rained and rained. Of course if it wasn't for all the rain, the country wouldn't look nearly so nice as it will if we ever get here when it isn't raining."

Hallstatt claims to have been populated since 1500 BC, and it looks lovely enough for that. This is the town that is often pictured on calenders, jig-saw puzzles, and other such things. The lake is surrounded by mountains, and on one there is a funicular railway that goes up to the entrance to a salt mine, at the top of the mountain. If we ever see the sun in Hallstatt, we'll take that ride.

The town is bunched on a narrow space between the steep mountains, and the lake. At the side of the lake, the church has a tall pointy steeple, and boat garages are built out over the water. As we walked the mile from the campsite to downtown, there must have been 6 or 8 waterfalls and streams coming down the mountain.

Next to a church a couple flights of stairs up the side of the mountain, the cemetery has a hundred or more graves, each a separate, detailed, trimmed, beautiful flower garden. The "gravestones" are crosses with a little roof, and many with the photograph of the person buried there.

The short way out of town is open only to small automobiles. It is a long narrow road with some tunnels, and a traffic light that changes each 7 minutes. You can do your shopping while you wait for the light, permitting you to leave town.

#### **A, Hallstatt Jun 24, Sat, 21, 107, 2,115, 183 AS**

To give you an idea of the temperature, this morning many of the chimneys had smoke raising above the house. We agreed with that, and wished we had a fireplace in our RV.

On the way to Salzburg while we were stopped next to a lake for lunch, a man stopped to ask directions. Jim always supplies directions, even if he doesn't know where they are going, but nobody has ever complained to him the next day. Jim discovered the man was from Argentina, and had been a Vice President of IBM, in that country.

They talked a few minutes, amazing each other with memories of the olden days, when computers were really computers, and not these little wimpy things

that are a million times more powerful, a million times smaller, and a million times less expensive.

This time we didn't try to find the parking lot with the tram that shuttles visitors downtown, and parking was nonexistent until we were several blocks across the river from Salzburg's city center. But we parked, walked, and walked in the rain, and videoed, and videoed, etc.

We have been in Austria all or parts of about 30 days, and spent 21 nights in six years, mostly in June, July or August, when you would expect good weather, and a couple of days in November, when cold weather was expected.

We can't imagine how they were able to find enough sunny weather around here to make the movie, "Sound of Music," but there are signs at several Travel Agents advertising tours to see where "The Sound of Music" was filmed, 25 or 30 years ago. In 1970, at the top of the Schlithorn Mountain, in Switzerland where they filmed the James Bond movie "On Her Majesty's Service," there were signs telling about it, but nothing like this.

We drove into Germany to Berchtesgarden, and drove to where the busses leave for Hitler's Eagle Nest, on top of the mountain. We drove this 24% upgrade with difficulty in the VW Camper in 1970, easily with the 1978 Dodge in 1983, and with great difficulty with this diesel engine. The bus ride would cost 19 DMarks each, plus 4 to park, or \$30 total, a price we would have paid if the weather was better. Since we could see nothing in the fog and rain at this level, it didn't seem worth while to ride to this mountain top again.

The view from the building called the Eagles Nest, on the mountain top is really exceptional, at least it was when we had a break in the weather several years ago. In old newsreels, you see pictures of Hitler and Eva here, many pictures show a huge plate glass window overlooking the view below. Other pictures show the tunnel leading to a large copper and brass paneled elevator, still in use to take tourists the rest of the way to the mountain top.

The area, down below, where Hitler and his henchmen had their homes, was bombed a couple of times, then destroyed and replaced by a golf course for US Army personnel. The hotel where German officials stayed in the 1930s, was renamed the General Walker Hotel, and has been a Rest and Recreation location for vacationing GIs and their families, for the past 50 years.

The nearby campsite we have used in past years was almost filled and the prices had climbed too high, so we went back to Austria for the night.

#### **A, Salzburg Jun 25, Sun, 22, 101, 2,216, 182 AS**

There was a cold rain all day yesterday, and all night last night. Since we could see fresh snow in the Austrian mountains in mid-June, we decided to head south 'till the sun shines! The scenery is much nicer on the little roads, but in this weather, we wanted to use the Autobahn tunnels, not drive over the mountains.

At one place along the Autobahn, a sign said something about the song "Stille Nacht," or Silent Night. We thought the song was written near here, so we spent a couple of hours trying to find what they were "signing" about. In Wagrain someone said, go to St Johann. In St Johann, they said go to Wagrain.

We finally found a cemetery with a sign at the gate telling about a man named "Joseph Mohr" who wrote the song in December 1818, but we found nothing else. We did get interesting pictures of the Austrian countryside, of course.

A young man, visiting the cemetery, lived in East Berlin, but happened to be in the US when the Wall came down.

A lady we talked to had managed to escape from the east, just before the Russians came. She said that when the church bells rang in her town, that meant the Russian soldiers were coming for the women. Her friend hid in a chimney one time, but then killed herself, rather than again be subject to their brutality. If we had transcribed all such stories we have heard, from all parts of Europe, what a book it could make.

It has stopped raining, but there is still fresh snow in the mountains. The toll for the two long tunnels was 190 Austrian Shillings (nearly \$20!), almost twice what it cost in 1988, but this is not the time to drive over the mountains. (The last time, the toll taker laughed when Jim said, "We don't want to buy your tunnel, we just want to use it for a few minutes.")

We went on to Italy, San Marino, two weeks in France, then after a month in Germany, we returned to the US on August 31.