

DIARY OF THE TELTSCHIK FAMILIENTAG JULY 26 – AUGUST 3, 2006

In late July of 2006 we came together to celebrate our great family's traditions and to renew our bonds of blood and friendship. What now follows are my thoughts and memories of these pleasant days we spent together.

On Tuesday, July 25, we began our journey with a short flight from Austin to the Dallas-Fort Worth airport. At the Dallas Airport we joined with many of our relatives in preparation of our flight to Frankfurt. Here our immediate family of Linda, Steve, Blaine, Christian and Angela was joined by my sister Judy, husband Hal, daughter Kim and her husband Joe. We enjoyed greeting the numerous other Teltschik family members assembling at the gate, all of whom, as were we, eager and excited in anticipation of the coming events.

Our flight was uneventful and much more sedate than the flight of twenty years ago. This I attribute to the maturity of the group and to the cost of \$5.00 for a beer.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 26

On arrival at Frankfurt we were greeted by our German relatives in a welcoming group. There was a band, a banner, and Friedrich and Christine Teltschik, dressed in traditional costumes, presented each of us with a small bottle of "Waldkimbeergeift" or "Kirfchwatter" (schnapps?). We were made to feel most welcome. We boarded the buses and were driven to a woodland near Wilhelmsfeld. Our buses stopped at the carpark and we made the trek to the Teltschik Tower. The path to the tower wound through the forest. The exercise was welcome after the inactivity of the long hours of flight.

At the top of the mount we came upon the Teltschik Turm. For most of us it was our first view of this impressive edifice. The observation tower offers splendid views of the Odenwald hills, the Rhine Plain, and the Palatinate hills. The tower was erected in 2001, a tribute to the inspiration and dedication of Walter Teltschik. Walter Teltschik donated the tower, which was designed by architect Robert Teltschik, to the village of Wilhelmsfeld. The tower stands as a symbol of the old home of the Teltschik Family and of the continuing of the traditions of the family into the future.

We were warmly greeted by family members who came to meet us. It was so wonderful to once again see Walter and Karin. Our arrival was announced by a group of musicians with brass hunting horns. Walter gave a welcome and opening address. We were also addressed by the mayor of Wilhelmsfeld. Refreshments had been provided for us, fruit kolaches (the plum kolache was very tasty), soft drinks, and beer. We were refreshed by our stay here, sitting in the warm sun with the occasional cool breeze scented by the trees of the forest which surrounded us.

At the conclusion of our rest we returned to the buses and were driven to Schriesheim. In Schriesheim we had a planned lunch stop at the Strahlenburg. The crumbling walls of this ancient fortified castle now houses a restaurant. Once we walked through the old gate and up to the level of the restaurant we were met with lovely views of the city below us. We sat at tables on the tree-shaded terrace overlooking the red-roofed city, enjoying the fine air. Grape vines with maturing clusters of grapes festooned the borders of the terrace. Below us on the steep hillside stretched a vineyard. Our buffet lunch was hearty and welcome, a harbinger of the many delicious meals to come. We chose a variety of salads with the freshest ingredients, stuffed chicken, veal, and schnitzel. Our food was complemented by tall glasses of refreshing beer.

After this pleasant interlude we continued by bus to Freiburg. Arriving at the Kolping Hotel we were assisted at checking in by our tour director T. Haiz. It did not take long for us to realize that our hotel, as most hotels in the city, had no air conditioning. Due to the unusual heat being experienced in the region, our rooms were quite warm, having as our room did, only one small window on the "warm side" of the hotel. This situation soon produced a mass exodus of the Americans in search of fans. No doubt the local shops benefited from our visit to Freiburg.

Later this evening we joined other family members for a buffet dinner in the hotel. Again we partook of the many fresh salads and side dishes which accompanied the main course of pork loin grilled and topped with thin slices of ham and cheese. Of special note was the cream of fennel soup, which caused several return trips to the serving table. The leisurely dinner proved relaxing after the excitement of the last two days. After dinner we retired for a full night of rest. When first seen we doubted the comfort of our bed, which appeared spare and low to the floor. Our doubts proved unfounded; we found the beds on our tour very comfortable and restful.

THURSDAY, JULY 27

We awoke refreshed and began the day with breakfast in the hotel. A buffet of cold meats, cheeses, yogurts, hearty cereals, eggs, sausages, bacon, and fresh flaky croissants and breads was spread before us. The coffee was strong, aromatic and delicious. After breakfast we prepared for a walking tour of Freiburg, "Alleys, Streams, and the Cathedral". We were provided a very pleasant and informative guide. We followed her as we began our walk toward the cathedral, the center of the city. The famous "bachle" or streams of Freiburg were explained to us, their purpose to cool the city, provide water in event of fire, and to help clean the city. There is a legend that purports that a visitor to the city who puts a foot into one of the streams will marry a local person. Indeed it was evident that the streams are widely used by the city inhabitants; we saw children and dogs playing in the streams, as well as adults sitting beside them, cooling their feet in the water. The pavements of the city are also very noteworthy, made up of countless stones from the gravel pits of the Rhine Valley. Though the streets are all laid stone, they are none the less very smooth and present no problem when walking. Many storefront pavements depict the nature of the shop, such as bakeshop or tailor, by depicting in

inlaid stones, a baked good or scissor. The highlight of the tour was the cathedral. Begun about the year 1200, just 80 years after the founding of the city, the cathedral was completed 300 years later. The building started in the "Late Romanesque" style, and was later changed to the "gothic" style. The red sandstone of the cathedral has weathered beautifully over the centuries. Gargoyles enhance and decorate the roofline, their purpose to carry away rain water. One figure of a man significantly extending his posterior over the square below has a clouded history, perhaps a disgruntled stone mason who was not paid for his services? Our guide informed us of the history of the cathedral: among the many interesting anecdotes that the beautiful stained glass windows from the fourteenth century were removed during the wars to protect them. The windows, paid for by the local medieval guilds, depict the life and passion of Jesus Christ, as well as the lives of the saints. To this day the medieval painted altarpiece remains luminous in the dim light of the cathedral.

After our city tour we had free time until the evening. Many shopkeepers had set up stalls about the cathedral square. We had our lunch at a table set up before a restaurant facing the cathedral. From the menu we chose a local specialty, Black Forest bacon, a selection of cheeses, a coarse-grained crusty "farmers bread", and cheese noodles with fried onions. All of this we washed down with a local beer. We spent several hours here, relaxing and seeing and greeting other members of our family as they came and went. A portion of this day had been spent attempting to find a bank at which to exchange dollars for euros. It had not been as easy as anticipated, but had provided us with a walk of the inner city, and had sharpened our appetites for our very pleasant lunch.

In the late afternoon we met at the hotel and prepared to depart for the village of Titisee in the Black Forest. Our way took us through the Glottertal Valley via steep roadways and vistas of the forest. Our destination was a quaint estate of 1641, part of which is an old barn which was the site of the festivities this evening. Upon arrival we were met by our waiters who offered glasses of "bowle", a drink of white wine, fruit, and champagne. After a congenial social hour, being made welcome in this scenic setting, we were invited inside, up several flights of stairs, to the large dining room. The age of the barn was evident wherever we looked. We were seated at tables on sturdy comfortable benches. Folk music was provided by "Trio Ab & Zu". We were invited to partake of an extensive buffet which included roast pork, stewed veal, gravy, spaetzle, a cheesy potato gratin, mashed potatoes rolled and fried, the ever-delicious fresh salads (oh, the cucumbers!) and for dessert, apple strudel and ice cream with a red berry sauce. The dancing began very early and with much enthusiasm. What I can only presume was the "chicken dance" was performed by an energetic group, which included the hoisting overhead of an ancient stuffed chicken. A fun moment was provided to us by the "strongest accordion player in Germany", a fact he demonstrated to us by having a young lady of our group perched on his accordion while he played for us. The early warmth of the evening was banished by a thunderstorm which moved through the area, providing a show of lightening, and cooling and freshening the air. As the rain lessened, and the storm moved away, we made our way to the buses and to the hotel.

FRIDAY, JULY 28

After breakfast we assembled and were driven by bus to the city of Strasbourg in France. As we drove a light rain began to fall. We had been offered the option of a boat tour versus a walking tour of the city, and most of us had accepted it. This proved to be a positive choice. The speaking tour was provided in a glass-topped boat which, despite the rain, allowed us fair views of the city. After departing the boat we proceeded to the cathedral. From the cathedral we walked a short distance to a typical restaurant of the area. On our lunch menu this day was Flammkuchen, a local dish with a soft thin crust covered with melted cheese, onions, and bacon, scented with nutmeg and coriander. Before the Flammkuchen arrived a trip to the lavatories was in order. Here were noted a number of rather risqué photos on the walls. Even on the walls surrounding our tables there were drawings of the same nature. Oh well, we told ourselves, we are now in France.

Though a goodly time had passed since breakfast, and though the Flammkuchen was tasty enough, my only thought was a mission to view the cathedral. I quickly ate and slipped away to the cathedral. I stood, awed by the massive interior, softly lit by the jewel tones of the stained glass windows, imbued with the boding stillness of all such holy places. The glorious painted apse provides a backdrop for the high altar, the attending saints and apostles standing vigilant over the centuries.

In 346 was the first reference to a Strasbourg Bishopric which designated a cathedral at this place, with the eighth century cited as the beginning of the building of the cathedral. The major building began about 1200. The sun had come out and the interior of the cathedral glowed, instilling a desire to linger. Others of our group had also come to the cathedral. It was soon time to hurry out to the buses so that we could stay within our time table for the day.

Our route now took us down the "Wine Road" of Alsace with its many picturesque villages, vineyards, and fields. The fields were reminiscent of a Van Gogh painting, the alternating gold of mown hay, the nodding sunflowers, the brilliant green of tasseling corn. The sky had cleared and the sun shone warmly. On our way we sighted a number of ancient ruined fortresses upon the hillsides. As we wound our way through quiet villages our passage was watched by the storks from their nests upon the chimneys. Our road became steeper as we came to the village of Hunawihr.

How shall I describe the village of Hunawihr? As something remembered from a dream? Here is a village seemingly captured in a long-past time, with its softly and colorfully painted houses, flowerboxes abloom, the narrow cobbled twisted streets winding upward. The village appeared to cascade down the hillside. Our ascent led us to a small winery where we were cordially greeted and given an escorted tour. We were then invited to taste three of the local wines, all white, and treated to a freshly baked brioche. Judy and Kim purchased wine to take with them. While we waited for our group to assemble to depart the winery's very friendly resident canine, excited by our presence, wanted to play with the children, offering them a stick to throw so that he could retrieve it. Over the red

roofs of the village, clinging to the hillside across the valley, like three ancient watchmen, were three crumbling towered ruins. Our parting view of Hunawihl was the beautiful small church perched on a knoll at the foot of the village (this church is also the trademark of the winery). As the afternoon moved toward evening we made our way back to Freiburg.

This evening we prepared for the "Welcome Night". Many German families had arrived, and the dining hall was loud with happy greetings and conversation. An Italian buffet of extensive proportions was set out: marinated vegetables, spicy peppers stuffed with a soft creamy cheese, Parma ham and melon, pasta salad with mussels and herbs, and salmon marinated in herbs with red pesto were only some of the appetizers offered. There was a flavorful minestrone and great loaves of crusty olive chiabatta bread. The main courses included tortelloni, pasta with seafood in tomato herb sauce, sole, shrimps and red snapper in lemon sauce, vegetables and basmati rice, followed by a trio of deserts, tiramisu, panna cotta, and casata. After dinner a surprise waited for us, the performance by three gentlemen of Switzerland, dressed in traditional costumes, who performed on their alpenhorns. A short film of family history and events was also presented.

At this gathering I was so pleased to see and speak with Adrienne Teltschik, and so happy that she looked so well. Here also I was pleased to again meet Leo and Inga Gold, both also looking very well. The gifts from the American Teltschiks had been placed upon the stage and our German friends were invited to pick a gift as a token of the American Teltschiks' gratitude for their hospitality and friendship. We concluded our evening of fellowship by visiting and renewing friendships with those we had not seen for some time.

SATURDAY, JULY 29

Saturday morning we prepared for our divine service in Freiburg Cathedral. As we filed quietly into the cathedral to find our places, the momentous solemnity of this moment came over me; to realize that I had the privilege to belong to this family, and that we could share this moment, that I had the privilege to be connected to those that had had the courage and strength to forbear all hardship to preserve our family history through the centuries, was very humbling. With members of my immediate and extended family around me I knelt in this 800 year old house of God and gave thanks.

Wolfgang had assembled a brass band which played selections which only added to the beauty of the moment. The sermon was thoughtful and comforting.

After the service we had free time to further explore the old city. It was Saturday and today the market seemed more widespread about the cathedral. We walked among the shopkeepers and the stalls with their cheeses and smoked meats, the fresh vegetables and flowers, the sellers of seafood and olives and various condiments, and the fragrant stalls of the herb sellers. On the breeze I caught the faint scent of lavender. From a vendor

whose wares were blue salt-glazed pottery I bought a small pitcher which is before me now, and which will forever bring back to me that day in the "Munster Market". For lunch we chose the popular "red sausage" of the area, a spicy grilled wurst on a crusty roll. We had bought cokes to drink with the sausage, and made the mistake of sitting at a local restaurant's outdoor table before we had completed the coke. A very angry waiter chased us from the area, even though we were trying to order a beer (a lesson learned). We met Judy and her family and they had purchased salami, bread, cheese, olives, and mushrooms, and they had a picnic in the nearby park.

We decided since we had been on free time, that instead of walking back to the hotel, boarding and taking the bus to the Konzerthaus for the afternoon's program, that we would walk to the Konzerthaus from the cathedral area. Since we had Joe, aka "the navigator", to lead our group we felt no fear of getting lost or being late for the program. However, on the way to the Konzerthaus we encountered a demonstration of sorts, a crowd of people (mostly young), with numerous police in evidence. The demonstrators were wearing pink tu-tus and beating drums and leaping about, and though we never found the cause for the demonstration, the effect was interesting.

At the Konzerthaus the Familientag program was underway with participants Wolfgang Teltschik, Dr. Conrad Schroeder, city councilman, Dr. Karin Teltschik, Dr. Norbert Teltschik, and Jeanine Teltschik. Their addresses were both enlightening and uplifting. Recitalists Travis Davis, Alexander Wolcott, and Teresa Teltschik-Robinson performed. Prof. Dr. Horst Teltschik gave the closing address. Afterward we gathered for the family Photograph.

On this evening the family met in the Konzerthaus for a festive evening. All were elegantly dressed and in good spirits. We were served champagne to toast the evening. As we mingled in this congenial group we were able to greet and speak to many family members. When the doors to the dining hall opened we found our table for dinner. We had served to us baguette with butter, beef consommé with slivered pancake (we were told a local specialty), salad, roast pork with spatzle, and chocolate mousse. We were entertained by a band and by a talented magician, who enlisted several of the audience during his act. After dinner the atmosphere was relaxed and one of good will as family members were able to visit and further bond with others. The German relatives at our table were very friendly and added to our evening's pleasure.

When we returned to the hotel, before retiring, we packed our bags in anticipation of leaving Freiburg in the morning to begin our tour into Switzerland.

SUNDAY, JULY 30

Early in the morning, and after breakfast, we prepared for our journey into Switzerland. We assembled with our baggage in front of the hotel; the morning air was cool. It was here that I said goodbye to my friend Adrienne who had come to bid us farewell. May

God keep her in his care until we meet again. We loaded the buses and turned toward the South.

As we drove south through the Black Forest our intended route over the mountain pass was changed when it was announced that two of our buses were “too heavy” to traverse the pass. The buses therefore turned around and took a less mountainous route. On our bus we had the services of a guide, Elizabeth, who kept us informed of the areas of our passage. She informed us that when the route was changed we had failed to see an “absolutely beautiful pass”.

Soon after we crossed the Swiss border we came to the Schaffhausen area and the Rheinfall. We left the buses and walked down a steep path to view the falls. Roughly 16,000 years old, the Rheinfall is the largest waterfall in Europe, having a width of 450 feet and a drop of 70 feet. There is a pleasant tree-lined paved walk to view the falls, and for those more adventuresome (such as Angela and Christian), a boat ride to “the rock”, a central cliff in the falls, that can be climbed to better view the torrent of waters. I found a shady bench from which to view the spectacle. Impressive as we found it, our tour director, Herr Haiz, informed us that due to the hot dry summer, one-third less water than usual was cascading over the falls. At the conclusion of this pleasant interval we boarded the buses and Herr Haiz passed us our lunch, two large, soft, chewy pretzels and an apple.

On our way we continued to view the countryside as we proceeded past Zurich and Luzern. Many lakes met our view, dotted with sailboats. The countryside is clean and pristine and offers many beautiful views. In the late afternoon we came to Interlaken, our destination for the day. Interlaken, as the name implies, is an idyllic village nestled between the lakes Brienz and Thun, with views of the surrounding mountains. We checked into the Chalet-Hotel Oberland and found our rooms to be fresh and comfortable. The air was much cooler than in Freiburg, and we found it very welcome. After a quick freshening we met our family and walked the streets near our hotel, stopping at an outdoor café. While we contemplated the evening ahead, a rooftop, barely visible on a mountain above us, was pointed out to me as our destination for the evening. Being ever gullible (and afraid of heights) I believed this information, even though my heart sank at the sight of the building far above us, seemingly perched on the very edge of the precipice. My fears, however, were laid to rest when we were taken by bus to the point where we boarded the funicular to our restaurant. Our restaurant, after all, was not so very high on the mountain, and I realized I had been the object of a joke. The ride was thrilling enough, a 100-year old cable car, the Heimwehfluh, which moved very slowly upward at a very steep angle. When we reached the restaurant we met in a large room, comfortable and well-appointed, with wonderful views of the valley below. The terrace of the restaurant and the adjacent tower offered fine views of the valley. However, the evening was cloudy, and the peak of the Jungfrau was not visible.

We found seats at a table with a group of our German relatives. Before long we were engaged in conversation, our friends speaking fair English. We were served a savory cheese fondue, redolent of wine and very rich, into which we dipped chunks of crusty

bread. The gathering seemed intimate and warm, enclosed as we were, with the panoramic views around us. At the conclusion of the evening we said goodbye to our new friends and again rode the funicular down the mountain in order to return to Interlaken. We strolled the streets finding time to sit at a sidewalk café and observe the multi-cultural population of this city. When we turned to bed, the cool night air filled the room, causing us, at last, to pull the duvet to our chins.

MONDAY, JULY 31

This morning, after a hearty breakfast, we boarded the buses for the two-hour drive to Andermatt. At Andermatt we would board the Glacier Express for a scenic trip through the Rhine Valley. When we reached Andermatt we had time for a sandwich and coke and then a quick walk about the village. Andermatt is a village with roots in the distant past, situated on one of the old North-South trade routes of Europe. In Andermatt we found pretty views of chalets with blooming flowerboxes, a clear stream tumbling through the town, and a charming church. We had walked further than we thought and had to hurry to meet the appointed time at the railway station. The last three cars of the train had been reserved for our group and we climbed aboard and found very comfortable and spacious seating. We began our steep ascent into the mountains and in only a short time the valley was far below us. As we progressed on our journey we were offered many beautiful views of small villages, always clustered around a church, meadows dotted with the many small wooden barns for storing hay for cattle in winter, and far away, a distant glacier on a mountain peak. Numerous waterfalls cascaded down the mountainsides. Occasionally we would catch sight of an ancient ruin standing desolate, guarding its secrets, upon a hillside. As our journey neared its end we traveled through the Rhine Gorge, known as the "Grand Canyon of Switzerland". Towered over by striking white cliffs, the train traveled parallel to the river which was busy at times with canoeists and swimmers. We knew now the source of the milky color of the water we had seen in the streams and rivers we had passed by.

On arrival at Chur, a city founded in the Bronze Age, and once under Roman rule, we found our buses waiting for us. We continued on by way of Liechtenstein. In the Principality of Liechtenstein we broke our journey at a village directly beneath the royal castle of the ruling family. Our guide informed us that the royal family was in residence since she had sighted the flag flying upon the castle walls.

Once we resumed our journey and approached the Austrian border we were cautioned by our guide that we may need to produce our passports for inspection before crossing over into Austria. However, no such need occurred, as we passed smoothly into Austria.

We reached our hotel in Feldkirch in the late afternoon and had a speedy check in. Our room was in a new part of the hotel, was newly furnished, had a very spacious sleeping area, and a very large and well-appointed bath. Steve called me to the window to admire the view, the first part of which was lovely: distant mountains, the red roofs of the houses below us, a lovely spired church. However, upon approaching the floor-length

Window, the ground level below us presented a barnyard scene: a barn (not in the best repair), tractors, hay stacks covered by plastic sheeting, and a large manure pit. The smell carried on the breeze verified our view. (Oh well, Steve and I both grew up on farms.) A light rain began to fall, cooling and freshening the air.

We met in the dining room of the hotel for dinner and were invited to begin our meal at the salad bar. The delicious fresh vegetables, as fresh as though plucked from the garden the minute before the plate, are such a delight. Once we had completed the salad course the meal continued with consommé, grilled turkey escalope, potatoes, peas, and ice cream for dessert. Entertainment was provided by a band, and the night was not complete before a yodeling contest winner was announced. Many members of our family joined hands and danced gaily through the room and into the courtyard. We retired to a good night's sleep, the fresh rain-washed air filling the room. The last thing I remember before my eyes closed this night was the sight of the lovely lighted church spire in my view from my pillow.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 1

Our scenic route this day took us toward the village of Fussen and Neuschwanstein Castle. The hillsides were dotted with barns, brown-swiss cattle wearing bells about their necks, and well-tended fields of corn and hay. Our guide, Elizabeth, offered many thoughtful and informative insights into the history of the area.

When we reached the area below the castle we were able to take a tram to a point just below the castle. From this point it was walking only. The path led steeply down, then up. This day, as it was twenty years ago, a light rain was falling, making cause for umbrellas. After approaching the entrance gate to the castle, we had a short wait until our entry time of 1:45 P.M. Great improvement has been made in the admittance procedure since we had last been here. We had been provided our tickets, and when our designated numbers were posted we passed quickly through the gates. We had been cautioned by our guide that there were "over 100 steps to climb" in the castle. If I counted correctly there were 162. The climb was very worth the effort; the tour through the castle was enlightening and entertaining and the castle interior very beautiful, echoing the sad tale of poor King Ludwig II, judged mad and doomed to end his life in mysterious circumstances. His legacy to his people and the world are the beautiful and wildly romantic castles he had built. To this day he remains the favorite of the Bavarian people.

No expense was spared in the building of his fantasies; the breath-taking mosaic floor in the throne room (which was never used) took four and one-half years to complete. The rooms are furnished with substantial oaken furniture, beautifully carved, and sumptuous window hangings. The life-size wall murals, heavily influenced by Ludwig's friendship with composer Richard Wagner, depict the legends of Tristan and Isolde, and the Thannhauser and Siegfried sagas.

Across the valley from Neuschwanstein is the royal castle of Hohenschwangau, a site of the knights of Schwangau since the twelfth century. It fell to ruin in the sixteenth century and was restored in the early eighteenth century by the father of Ludwig II. Ludwig spent a happy childhood here.

The walk down the stairs brought us to the kitchen area and eventually out of the castle. Our return to Feldkirch was along a very scenic route through the valley of the river Lech, making the journey back to the hotel pass very quickly.

Tonight our dinner was in the alternate hotel. (On arrival in Feldkirch the day before, when we came to check into the hotel, we found that we had been split into two groups, with one group staying at a hotel across the town. The hotel had done this with no prior notice because of overbooking. After the dressing-down the hotel manager received from Wolfgang that day, she may think twice about doing such a thing again.) Angela and Christian, who were staying at the alternate, had saved for us a corner table. We once again were served a delicious fresh salad plate, a flavorful potato soup, tenderloin of pork and spatzle with a rich mushroom gravy, and for dessert, cheesecake. Our entertainment was the best to date, a troupe of dancers in traditional German costume, performing a variety of folk dances. The energy and skill of the dancers amazed us. The dancers locked arms and the female dancers were swung off their feet and whirled about, defying gravity. An accordion player provided music. There was much leaping on and off wooden benches, and much slapping of knee and foot. The troupe had begun to pick members of the audience to participate in the frolics. Some of the younger members of our family, being too shy to participate, absconded from the room until the danger was past. I had left my camera at the hotel and was upset with myself that I had done so. I had no camera to borrow, so have no photos of the evening. Since we were staying at the other hotel we left when the first bus left, not knowing that the evening's entertainment was not over. I found out from Wolfgang the next day that we had left too early, and had missed some very fine dancing.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 2

The last day of our tour dawned clear and cool. We began our travel to Munich. On this day we had the pleasure of Wolfgang's company on our bus. He provided us with lively conversation on our way to Andechs Monastery. When we reached Andechs another steep climb waited for us. The Monastery is situated on the "Holy Mount", so deemed because of the holy relics which had been housed there in the pilgrimage church. Once lost, the holy relics were returned to Andechs by Duke Ernest of Bavaria before 1438, at which time he named the Holy Mountain in their honor. The eye is besieged by the magnificence of the beautiful rococo interior of the church. Of interest is the stored collection of large, old votive candles. The oldest of these candles is dated from 1594, and the collection is deemed to be the largest and oldest in the German speaking area of Europe.

Following our visit to the Monastery we had lunch at a nearby open-air food counter, enjoying wurst, crusty rye bread, a sweet and spicy coarse brown mustard, and cold beer. Our cousin Bob delved into a roast pig knuckle which he pronounced most satisfying.

We arrived in Munich in the afternoon, and after checking into the hotel, made plans for a quick visit to downtown Munich and the Marienplatz. Since we had very limited time (the going-away party started at 6:30 P.M.) we chose to go by taxi to the Marienplatz. Once on our way, our taxi delivered us quickly to our destination. The Marienplatz was crowded this afternoon. We had fair viewing of the Glockenspiel, though we were not on time for its performance. After a brief time in the Marienplatz we made our way to the Hofbrauhaus which was on our way to the site of the evening's party. We found a table, and ordered the biggest glasses of beer I have ever seen. Our group was joined by our Cousin Bob and his family. He regaled us with a story of our visit in 1986 when he and a few others visited the Hofbrauhaus one afternoon. This called for a second round of beer. Soon it was time to walk to the Unions Brau for our going-away party. With "The Navigator" in the lead we located the Unions Brau. The walk was very nice (and all downhill), passing on our way the Parliament House and a statue of Athena gazing sightlessly across the river. On arrival at the Unions Brau we were warmly greeted and found our table. An appetizer course had been set out, soft pretzels, a creamy spread, and thinly sliced mild white radishes which was complemented by the glasses of good beer which we were served. Our setting was quaintly and attractively decorated, the walls and ceiling hung with garlands of dried hops.

Wolfgang had told us only that morning that the Hofbrauhaus was the largest and most famous, but not the best. We could only agree. The Hofbrauhaus seemed raucous and overpowering compared to the warm intimacy of our gathering, and the food proved to be a delight. A bountiful buffet waited for us, crisply roasted pork, roast potatoes, a fresh array of salads and vegetables, potato dumplings, sauerkraut and veal sausages, platters of cold sliced meats, breads, and for dessert, fried apples, apricot kuchen, and ice cream.

Our entertainment was provided by a trio of musicians, dressed in traditional costumes, playing traditional selections including the "spoon dance". A troupe of dancers in quaint and charming dress performed time-honored folk dances of the "cow-country", including a minuet. The happy mood of the assembly was all pervading. Christian was abducted by a merry dancer and enticed into dancing with her. The Unions Brau overflowed with much companionship, good cheer, and fellowship. Minifred joined the band and played a rousing rendition of "In Heaven There Is No Beer" which was loudly applauded. Here we were once again honored with the presence of Walter, Richard, Horst, and Wolfgang, and many of our relatives who had come to celebrate with us this last night together.

Before long it was time to say goodbye. We passed through the tables, giving farewells and embraces to old and new friends, with promises to meet again. An emotional moment was spent with Rudy and Inga as we said goodbye.

At the hotel we only had time for a quick readying for our departure at 1:00 A.M. for Frankfurt. At 1:00 A.M. we gathered in front of the hotel. Ever vigilant, Wolfgang and

Jeanine were there with us to see that all went well. All did not go well. Herr Haiz arrived on the scene, announced that the bus would not start, enlisted the aid of the young men in our group, and set off to give the bus a push. They shortly returned, the bus not long after drove up, we said our last farewells to Jeanine and Wolfgang, and we prepared to board for our four and one-half hours trip to Frankfurt, and our return to Texas.

In retrospect, this was a wondrous experience, most excellently planned and carried out, a unique experience which most will never know. To say "thank you" seems paltry and words are difficult to find to express our true emotions and gratitude. So, I believe that I speak for all of us who traveled to Germany in the late summer of 2006: thank you to the Planning Committee, especially Wolfgang and Gaby, who were always there for us, and to all our German relatives who enabled us to have an unforgettable experience.

Finally, to Walter and Karin, to you we owe all honor and gratitude. Without your dedication and commitment, the reunions of the last twenty years would never have come to pass.

Until we meet again,

Linda Teltchik Rachel
August 2006