

## B53 WHERE'S THE BRATWURST?

PROJECT: EUROPE 2011

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DATE: 22 AUGUST 2011

Church bells ring long and loud on Sunday mornings in Broggingen. Anita Schnaiter promised to take us to services but, when we left the house, she turned not toward the church but led us back to the festival. Turns out, God likes a good time as well so during this time church services go to where the action is.



The pastor stood at a makeshift altar right next to the beer trailer and delivered his homilies. We stood to sing familiar hymns and found that singing in German isn't difficult as long as you know the melody.



Although deprived of her church organ, the organist made do with an electronic keyboard and loudspeakers. The service was held in a beer garden and well attended. It was difficult to determine how many of the faithful who showed up were nursing hangovers or how many were left over from last night's celebration. You certainly couldn't tell by looking them in the eye. While I didn't understand the sermon, I would almost bet it wasn't about gluttony or overindulgence.

At the end of the service the beer trailer raised its curtains and the festival was on its way for a second day.



Not wanting to drink on an empty stomach, the family, now including daughter Julia, headed for a food area manned by yet another volunteer organization. This is as good as any time to bring up one of our greater disappointments. Since setting foot in Germany, we have been unable to find dark bratwurst. Fifty plus years ago it was our stable diet after crossing the Rhine because bratwurst und kraut were on almost every menu across the country. Now, if found at all, it is a boiled white sausage with little taste. “Oh, that brown bratwurst is peasant food,” we’ve been told more than once. “Too fatty. We’re glad to be rid of it.” Wolfgang vowed we’d taste the real thing before leaving.



Our time in Broggingen was growing short but it had been a respite from daily travel. I went out with camera in hand to capture some of the local flavor and just to stroll around. Louise was able to do several loads of overdue wash and even iron an item or two.



We made time to enjoy our “apartment” because we were so far removed from daily family traffic. Even experienced the “Beam me up, Scotty” circular shower in our private bath. Can’t remember exactly how we spent our days but, at the end of each, we fell into bed exhausted.



Early Monday morning we took the MG to a trusted mechanic in the town of Emdingen and then did a little sightseeing. This is where Anita works for the government in a Health/Human Services position while Wolfgang checks in daily as a detective

for the regional police department.



On the way home she drove by an amusement park that was created by a manufacturer of thrill rides as a way to show off their products. It bills itself as the “largest seasonal theme park in the world” and is serviced by four hotels. One is themed after a Portuguese monastery (fun, huh?), another is Andalusian, a third in the style of a medieval castle.



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The fourth, Hotel Colosseo (our favorite) has a re-creation of the Roman coliseum as the centerpiece of its outdoor plaza and stage area. They were rehearsing for an evening musical performance while we were there. The hotel's room décor carries out the theme of the hotel as well. Anita worked here as a room maid after graduating high school and their daughter, Julia, is doing the same while saving money for college.



On our last night in Broggingen, they invited their parents over to enjoy a typical California barbeque in the back yard. Poor Anita spent the day visiting butcher shops trying to carry out Wolfgang's promise of bratwurst but none could be found. I couldn't believe my ears.

We settled for an excellent spread of barbecued sausages and turkey steaks, homemade potato salad, salad greens and corn on the cob. The latter is unusual because Europeans typically consider corn on the cob as food for the pigs. "Then we eat the pigs," is the usual explanation. We had beer (of course), dessert and chased it down with a sampling of high quality schnapps. The evening ended with a thorough test drive of the iPad2 that left Wolfgang drooling over the prospect of acquiring one. It was a test of faith that I left it unguarded for the night.



My initial question, "What's this festival all about?" was answered when I learned Anita and Wolfgang met



at a local wine festival. I observed that teenage girls showed up at the festival in a group, followed almost at once by a pack of teenage boys. As the evening progressed they slowly began to break into pairs, all under the watchful eyes of their parents who pretend they're there

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just to drink beer. So human nature, hormones and alcohol on a summer's night...what better reasons are there for a Festival?

Ray & Louise, Julia, Anita and Wolfgang Schnaiter

Tomorrow we sadly say *Aufwiedersehen* to our German family, strangers no more and friends forever.