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Dear Friends
liebe Freunde
chers amis

Maybe you remember our
very short 'small talk'?
Jog

Our country road is pretty dark; but we are still running. Actually one should say 'jogging' to avoid any idea of somebody being behind us. Well, to be honest there isn't any person following us, but an interesting kind of ambition tonight - located somewhere in our legs. This night we have decided to run the distance of five miles from our cottage on the countryside northwest of Madison, Wisconsin to the next village called New Glarus. It is early September and just a couple of weeks ago we had stopped a habit: smoking! - and as a sort of daily reward we started another one in order to be in mental and physical top shape, the ancient Greeks would have named it **ΚΑΛΟΚΑΓΑΘΙΑ**.

Back to our surrounding: coming from our daily stay in the book-stacks of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin in Madison, where we did our research about 'Immigrants from Schleswig-Holstein to the US', we had to start the wood-stove in order to prepare our dinner. There was neither running water nor electricity in that wooden cottage which was originally owned by Finnish pioneers round about one hundred years ago. During our first stay in the US in 1978 we got to know Dr. Eichhoff, a German professor at the university who had invited us to live this time on his farm close to 'mother nature'. We really enjoyed that very beautiful spot and we also got a deep impression about what pioneer-life was like 100 years ago. So we added the actual feeling to our theoretical research.

Fried potatoes, green peppers and carrots were harvested by us and put together to some delicious dinners à la Dee's cuisine. After a rest we usually put on our poor jogging outfit and on we went. More or less every night we enlarged the distance to the turning-point before heading back home; for already quite a while we had planned to reach this final goal: New Glarus.

If you like, you may run with us as an invisible friend and share the 'hardships' and our conversation.

"Dee, how many minutes do you estimate will it take us getting a

glass of beer in this funny Swiss village?"

"Maybe 30 or 35."

"Did you expect us getting into the philosophy of jogging, when we were writing our last Christmas letter?"

"No, not at all - even knowing at that time that there will be more things in store for us when going to America again, this was the least I had thought about."

Some minutes of quietness, outside tranquility. Yogi starts talking, maybe encouraged by the enchanting setting of the moon and the fact that after four and a half months they would separate the next day:

"This year started as the old year ended; being in love with Kirsten and her young daughter Christina caused problems: handling a partnership with fifteen years of age between us, different expectations of life, my growing jealousy, all that finally came to an end.

She ended the partnership to reduce it to a platonic friends' relation which wasn't agreeable with my emotions at all. So I had to leave them forever, or at least for a very long time."

"You know how sorry and bad I felt about that. And how guilty I felt that I enjoyed this spring with Barbro, knowing that I would not see her for more than four months. Especially the days of Carnival (Mardi gras) in Cologne were mostly enjoyable and extremely funny. Well, you did not make it to hide your depressed mood when you met me in Cologne to produce our radio-feature about journey-man carpenters."

"Mainly two things have finally helped: on the one hand knowing that I will leave for America and the understanding of a remark of an old high-school teacher who had said years ago that in such emotional situations only 'time and hard work' helps."

"And work was enough to be done: at that time the first ideas of starting our own publishing-house with Harry (Greve) came into being. Do you remember this little booklet with own stories that we had printed as the invitation to a well-come party for our journey-man carpenter Kai-Uwe (Petersen). He had finished his "3 years and 1 day" working-and traveling trip around the world. That was how 'Chamäleon' started."

"Because of the traditional rule of the carpenter's guild that you have to leave your hometown for at least 3 years and 1 day, we had no problems to find a title for the first book, but it took us quite a while to find a decent name for our newly founded publishing-house."

"My brother Wolfram (Eicke) had collected quite a few of his own poems and fairy-tales in the last year, and he had plans to publish them as a book. The title that he chose ("Wenn das Chamäleon rot wird, wer glaubt ihm, daß es sich schämt?") inspired me to 'baptise' our publishing-house "Chamäleon-Verlag".

"Dee, how many minutes more, until we reach that old oak where we turned yesterday?"

"Less than 10 minutes, I think, but I'm not quite sure about our speed tonight."

If you still want to run along, don't underestimate the hill in front of us. Now you can hear the barking of an Irish Setter, the watchdog of one of the few farms in this area and from that viewpoint - even in this darkness - you get an impression about the distance we have left to run. The lights of the village New Glarus are still very little...

"Eh, Yogi?"

"Yes..."

"Don't you think that from middle of March till April 15. we learnt more about free enterprise in terms of how to cope with a lawyer who had to register our Chamäleon at the Hamburg court, what to do after the printer had not finished his job in time, how to convince a banker to lend us some money etc., than our whole life together?"

"That's very true, but what I enjoyed even more was the human aspect of working on our own enterprise. I'm sure we would have never got to know our graphic artist York (Penno) who became a friend. Since then we see Harry (Greve) and Wolfram (Eicke) more often and actually I had never expected to work with my parents Hilde and Ingo (Reppmann) on "business level" (they do a big part of bookkeeping and distribution)."

"Well, then the middle of April meant a total change of the environment and our job. Everything worked out that perfect, as if an invisible stage-manager had organized our whole American trip. Not only the hitchhiking to London worked without any delay, but also the first ten days of relaxing in Manhasset, Long Island were just what we looked for and needed so badly."

"I don't think there was any place, where we did not get to know the impressive and overwhelming American hospitality and helpfulness. Be it in archives where we had to file materials, be it in private life. In Manhattan and Washington D.C. we even experienced the black life-

style."

"But the highlight was the stay in Holstein, Iowa, where we had been invited for its Centennial. I only think of all the honors of being two celebrities: receiving the State Flag at the opening-ceremony, being invited to the local news-and talkshows, sitting in an open Cadillac Eldorado during the parade etc. - I hope that we can give back some of the great experiences we have had, when a group of Holsteinites comes to Schleswig-Holstein, the country of many of their forefathers. Don't you think they'll make it?"

"Sure I do; I think they seemed very excited and pretty adventurous. But besides all this celebrating, I'm also proud about us coming into a daily routine of working and eliminating all distractions during the day. The research in the Newberry Library, Chicago, all local and central archives in Kiel and New Holstein, Madison and Green Bay (Wisconsin), Holstein and Schleswig, Des Moines, Iowa City, Ames and Davenport (Iowa) was more satisfying than I had ever dared to expect."

Well, dear fellow-runner, if you look to the right, you can see the "Wilhelm Tell Shooting Club". It is really amazing in how far this Swiss community has preserved its heritage.

"Eh, Yogi, I can nearly "smell" the beer. It may be about one more mile. - Tomorrow after mailing the last parcels with photocopies to Germany I'll take over Black Beauty (our '67 Chevy Impala) to drive to Chicago to pick up Barbro (Lieb). Yogi, I'm really looking forward to see her again and to show her the places ^{where we} had done our research, before we drive west to California, but sometimes I'm not sure if everything will be that easy with us after such a long time."

"I plan to hitchhike from Chicago to Boulder, Colorado and after maybe ten days, I'm gonna cross the Rocky Mountains to Los Angeles. Even with all these disadvantages of travelling by "thumb", waiting for perhaps a day or two for a ride, sleeping under bridges, I'm looking forwards to the challenge of being alone by myself. And the possible reward will be the Californian way of life with two gigantic marriages and maybe in October we will meet "where it never rains"."

We finally made it: New Glarus looks really Swiss, with its many framework-houses. A cold, bubbling beer is the reward for our efforts.

"Cheers, Yogi - let's hope that our plans for the next future will come true."

The waitress in a traditional "Dirndl" comes with another

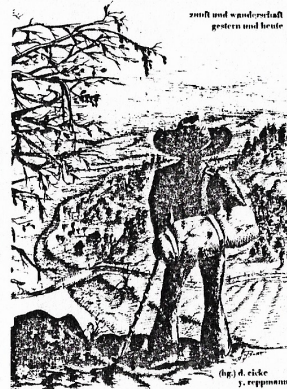
cold, refreshing beer.

"Well, what I heard from Harry, he and Wolfram are busy engaged in Chamäleon-affairs. By the way, do you think it would offend anyone, when we put a tiny advertisement into our next Christmas letter?"

"I don't think so. Maybe many people will be in need of a Christmas present in the last minute and you know that our distribution-system works within 2 days."

3 Jahre und 1 Tag

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Another cold beer, and back it goes, dear friend. Five more miles!!

What we did not know to that time: When we came back, Wolfram was just married, Dee's father also remarried, Waltraut (Danielson) came to Hamburg to pick Yogi up, Dee and Barbro had a safe flight back and last not least Wolfram and Chamäleon work on a new fairy-tale novel.

Thank you very much for your help and friendship we received in so many ways; we wish you a merry Christmas and a beautiful and happy new year

Yours,