

*Oh, lovely spring,
with your sunbeam,
bring me flowers and songs
Greetings a thousand times
(Song from the Grütli-Chörli)*

Looking back on a sunny 2018

Rejuvenation

Last Sunday I drove with SS Stadt Luzern (paddle-steamer) from Lucerne to Flüelen and back, on the last trip of the 90-year-old ship. However, it is not the very last ride; In two and a half years, the nautical great-grandmother is rejuvenated and fresh as on the first day to resume her activity on Lake Lucerne. On the contrary, healthier than it was then, for two days after the maiden voyage the machine, the „heart“ of the ship, suffered a total loss and had to be replaced. This has the ship ahead of us humans: While we can replace at most single, worn-out part, which can make the signs of aging something bearable, the ship after a general revision / restoration is young again and can it be so long, as the technical knowledge and skills, the economic opportunities are available and above all the will to maintain the ship. Thus, the proud ship will probably live for many decades in youthful freshness and bring joy to thousands of passengers.

Age

Unlike the ship, we age not only mechanically but also mentally. Inevitably old people has much more experiences than younger human beings. When I read a newspaper, day after day, I can not help shouting: „Why must the same nonsense be made over and over again?“ And I forget easily that the young generation is making this nonsense for the first time. Experience also strains; we old people already know everything (or at least we think it) and therefore do not tread new paths (and therefore make less nonsense).

I was born at the beginning of the Second World War, and although I saw this global catastrophe only marginally, but very impressively, so impressively that I remained convinced that such a thing should never, never happen again. Far from it ... Stalin and Mao and many other power-hungry evildoers continued to rage, and millions more lost their lives completely uselessly. Essentially, it's all about the same thing: greed for power, I use to talk about the „rogue gene“, which is apparently planted in the people, and comes to breakthrough in one more, in the other less.

This brings me back to my experiences: Together with my personal contact with the two preceding generations, I am covering more than a hundred years of human history, and a hundred very intensive years, from humanitarian catastrophes, to enormous technical and scientific changes, and finally positive developments in ethical terms. With the latter point, however, I have my doubts. The civilizational whitewash is too thin ...

And we are still moving ...

Actually, I could sit back at the age of 78 and look the closer and further events with disgust or with serenity. But it is not that far yet.

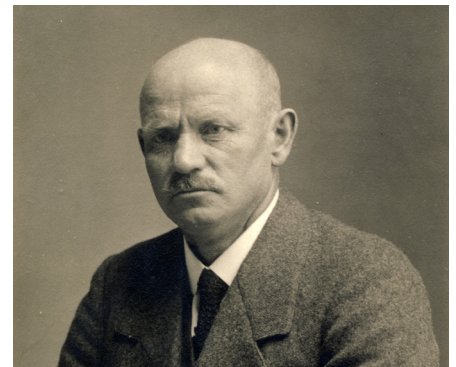
An unlikely summer is behind us, a summer that kept drawing me to the water. Almost every day I swam in the old Rhine near Diepoldsau / Hohenems: natural (or again become natural) landscape, lots of space, water temperature about 25 degrees, accessible by train and bike, or if the laziness won, by car. The Lake of Walenstadt also reached extraordinary temperatures. So I found myself at Mols in the water, to reach with the S4 and a few steps.

Mountain hikes were rather seldom, why, I do not really know; a difference of altitude of 1000 m makes not too much difficulties; so I reached easily Montalin and Alvier. The rest were shorter hikes, such as the long-planned destination the „ghost spa“ Val Sinestra in the gloomy canyon and the further back in the valley lying farm Zuort in a lovely environment in the Lower Engadine. Incidentally, the ropeway walk fashion has also reached this footpath, so it is only conditionally recommendable for people with no fear of heights (but you can avoid these bridges!).

Our December river cruise to Nuremberg (with an involuntary end under one of the old bridge arches in Würzburg) has continued with a journey from Basel to Amsterdam / Rotterdam and back. We were taken with the leisurely gliding on the



Bow of steamboat „Stadt Luzern“



My grandfather at Oftringen, Anton Hodel-Meier-Stauber



My grandparents at Sevelen, Margreth and Georg Giger-Beusch, „Staihouers“ (stonemason)

stream, the view of the changing landscapes, the impressive encounters with the many cargo ships. Impressive again and again the breakthrough through the Rhenish Slate Mountains, the castles, the pretty towns and of course the Loreley rock, a place where Germany is concentrated (even if Germany does not actually exist). We were probably not the last time on a river boat.

Margrit Enderlin / Gitta, biologist, member of the Fresschränzli, was many years in Namibia. We have never visited her, flying is not our thing and a road trip across Africa actually not. But now Gitta is in the Münsterland, so in overcoming distance, if you do not shy away from a few hours of highway. So we started on a beautiful October day, even enjoyed the long highway ride through the colorful forests, spent the night in the oldest wine town in Franconia, Hammelburg, and finally moved to the „Sonnenwinkel“ outside Bad Laer, right in the middle of the agricultural area. Quiet, very friendly people, a small indoor pool, wonderful breakfast buffet and all at an incredibly low price for Swiss people. Of course we visited Gitta and Inge and went with them for dinner in Bad Laer and the nearby restaurant, looked at the presumed place of the Varus battle and museum, visited the huge (tinny) Hermann or Arminius, the unifier of the Germans (he wasn't) and victor over the Roman legions under Quinctilius Varus, enjoyed the pretty spa parks in the small brine bathing resorts Bad Laer and Bad Rothenfelde, rode our bicycles across the country, explored Münster with the Peace Hall (Westphalian Peace 1648) and the Lamberti Tower with the macabre cages, the astronomical clock in the cathedral and so much more.

And above all: people

In March of this year Elisabeth had a meeting in Freiburg i/B and Franca and I were supposed to babysit, I of course as an assistant sub-babysitter. Well, Franca was ill, a replacement far and wide not in sight and so I was suddenly promoted to chief-babysitter. With a queasy feeling I traveled to Freiburg. After a quick course in the changing diapers, Ladina was given in my care. With pushchair or walking we looked at the city center, followed the Bächles (little canals along the roads). Feeding was not difficult; Ladinchen has a good appetite. At some point, changing diapers was done. Thanks to the friendly help of Ladina, this procedure went on relatively smoothly. So I had passed the babysitter exam; I do not know if the main sufferer would have handed me the diploma!

At a service in Sevelen, a choir sang folk songs accompanied by guitar, accordion and bass. Off the cuff, happily ... actually what I miss since the mixed choir Passugg-Araschgen fell into slumber. No, they were a closed society so to speak, I was informed. But then came a call, if I was still interested ... I was interested and so I am now at the singing rounds of the Grütli-Chörli. My boy scout and mixed choir repertoire does not quite match that of the Chörli, I do not hear very well anymore, I do not remember the names of the singers, but until now they kept me in spite of everything. I've even been to gigs, but I'm still cautious. And I like it to be in the cozy round, in which the song wishes are sung one after the other, and above all: It is spoken real, rustic Werdenberg dialect, which of course does not exist, because between what at Sevelen and what at Grabs is spoken (10 km distance!) is an immense difference...

Yesterday I came back from one of my almost regular visits to Lungern. I enjoy the company of Pia and Ruedi and their grown-up children, whom I've seen growing up, and am always amazed that they spend a whole afternoon with the old guy. I have to confess that I ducked out for such tasks at their age. Yesterday it were Pia and Bettina, with whom I fought a hard „Haste Makes Waste“! Thank you very much, my beloved ones! We owe it to you that we came into contact with Obwalden culture. This year it was the „Black Spider“ (Jeremias Gotthelf), played by the Kollegitheater Sarnen, which taught you the scary. The Volkskulturfest Obwald in the atmospheric area „Gsang“ (nomen est omen; the name of the place means „chant“) near Giswil with its top formations from Central Switzerland and the rest of the country, and this time also from Portugal, is medicine for heart and soul.

Some people only have memories left. Of those who had to leave in 2018, I mention Dölf Schwegler, who died in his centenary. He was probably the last one who was involved in founding the scouts of Buchs. After a long career at the Swiss Telecommunication Administration at Chur, he became managing di-



The old Rhine



Hof Zuort, Val Sinestra



Köln-Düsseldorfer-Boat at the Loreley rock



Hermann-Monument in Teutoburger Wald



Spa park Solebad Rothenfelde with graduation house

rector of G + F in Grüşch. He served the public as a district judge. I experienced Dölf as a clever and a wise man, with whom one could still discuss current topics even in old age.

About a hundred years ago, a girl from Budapest, Maria Sallay, spent holidays in the family of my mother at Oftringen. The connection remained, once more intense, once more relaxed. In April, the family of a niece of Maria visited us, because a daughter of them worked in the Bernese Oberland. We were happy to see them!

Jürg wants to rebuild my parent's home virtually. For to help him I'm trying to imagine the rooms and their furnishings. It is inevitable that memories will rise, to the parents and grandparents, to everyone with whom I was connected and to the house itself. I have received so much love in these rooms ... and failed to return so much. In the youth, everything is self-evident, even the love of the parents, and what is now, will always be, even if you know well that everything will change. But that's a long way off in the future. And then the future becomes the present ... And the house ... there I was at home, since then I dwell

You can not change anything anymore. The year 2018, which ended now, was a good year, with some lows, as they occur in meteorology. I thank you all who we are in contact with us and hope for a happy reunion.

*Und kommen wir wieder zusammen
Auf wechselnder Lebensbahn,
So knüpfen ans fröhliche Ende
Den fröhlichen Anfang wir an.*

Walter bzw. Koks



Döt, wo dr Alvier grooss un still...



*Folk music in traditional costumes
Volkskulturfest Obwald*



*Adolf und Irma Schwegler kurz nach dem
70. Hochzeitstag in Davos*



The house of my parents in Buchs



A "Bächle" in Freiburg i/B



Family Bosza from Budapest in Buchs



9. Juli 2018 on Mount Montalin

Annual Report 2018

Dear friends, relatives and acquaintances

Die Gnade ist ein unermessliches grosses Geschenk Gottes.

It's that time again. I'm trying to tell you something about the past year 2018.

At the end of April, Walter and I visited Adolf, who was in the hundredth year of his life, and Irma, who was almost 94 years old, in Davos. During the conversation, they told of their seventieth wedding a week ago. 70 years of marriage! It's not self-evident! Nevertheless there was no party on this day. They did not know how the 70th day of marriage is named. At home Walter looked on the Internet. At seventy years of marriage one speaks (German!) of the grace wedding. This appealed to me. I searched for my annual report on the internet for an explanation for grace. For Irma and Dölf it is grace that they still live both. Over the years, they grew together more and more and complement each other wonderfully. Adolf is weak on the legs and uses the rollator, Irma very forgetful. Irma helps her husband to get up and opens doors so he can move from the room to room. Dölf helps his wife to find names, and so on. With the help of the home care organization they live in their own home. At the end of July we were in Davos again. Dölf was weaker than in April. In September we received a change of address from Adolf and Irma Schwegler. They had moved to a retirement and nursing home in Klosters. On October 8, when we were in Germany Walter read in the news on the computer that Dölf's circle of life has closed on 7 October. How well that Irma does not live alone in her own flat.

At the end of June I was invited to an afternoon party for Dori's hundredth Birthday in the nursing home in Köniz. I was glad to see her three sons, daughters-in-law, six grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren. I have not seen Hans since Ruedi's wedding in 1967. In 1959, Hans was with his girlfriend Beatrice in Davos on vacation. The two are now married for over 50 years. In December, they become great-grandparents and Dori great-great-grandmother. Ruedi was the god-child of my mother. When Ruedi was six years old (1950), Dori took him to the train to Davos in Bern. Alone he went to Zurich. There, his grandmother helped him with the change. In Landquart someone took him on the train to Davos. At the Davos-Platz station stood his god-mother Trudi. (Would be unthinkable today!)

With Olga and Werner Roth we went to Lugano in the retirement and nursing home on Alessandra's ninetieth birthday.

Olga and Werner celebrated on 15 September 60 years of marriage.

My nephew Carlo was 16 years old. Carlo was eight hours old when I held him in my arms. To his mother Claudia connects me a deep friendship. I still took and take active part in the fate of Carlo and his family in Scotland. A pity, we only see each other two or three times a year.

In June, we were allowed to attend Jan and Muriel's wedding and the subsequent aperitif.

On April 11th, our cruise Basel - Rotterdam - Amsterdam - Rüdesheim - Basel started. On the first day we had four hours in Strasbourg. With the tram Walter and I drove into the city. The cathedral opened its doors at 10 o'clock. In front of the doors of the cathedral sat or stood beggars every few meters. This bothered me. On our city tour we saw no more. We visited the cathedral, but I have no memories of it anymore. Bonn is the Beethoven city. The people of Bonn cannot sell their Beethoven. Not a single statue or picture I saw on which Beethoven



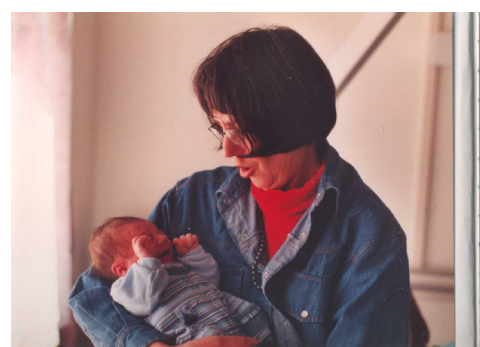
Irma and Dölf Schwegler in Davos



Dori is 100 years old!



Alessandra Bianchi and Olga Roth



Carlo 16 years ago!



Wedding Jan und Muriel

made a friendly face. Beethoven balls? (Mozartballs in Salzburg) : out of question! In Dortrecht we admired the houses. There were streets, where the houses leaned more against the streets towards the top. It seemed to us that this made the rooms larger in size on the upper floors. We visited a windmill. Walter climbed all the way up, I gave up in the middle. On the same day we reached Rotterdam in the afternoon. In Rotterdam, the painted ceiling of the market hall is worth seeing. This probably found all tourists. It was swarming with people, you came against someone again and again. Finally, we avoided the crowd and retired to the Church of St. Lawrence. There was an exhibition about the creation of Rotterdam. The way back to the ship we took over the old port and saw steamers, lightships, and so on. In Amsterdam, we were brought to the Keukenhof with three buses, which were ever accompanied by a guide or leader. Our guide told us a lot very humorously. I did not always understand his German. But how to breed tulips I have kept in mind. Despite the gloomy weather, the colours of the daffodils and tulips shone magnificently. Before we left again by bus, our guide points to a bus escort. This is Rebecca, the best and most beautiful of all women! (his wife!). In the afternoon we had the pleasure to make a canal cruise with Rebecca. She told very exciting. She knew how many bicycles are in Amsterdam, at what prices houses on the canals are traded. I understood her German well. She pointed to sights along the banks of the canals. At the Anna Frank Museum she said: «Look very carefully, maybe you will see my Hermann.» I am always happy when married couples who already have grown-up children talk so enthusiastically about the other. On April 17, a local guide came to the ship and commented on the trip through the Rhenish Slate Mountains for three hours. About every castle and every castle she knew something to tell. The listening was of course voluntary, but very interesting. The Loreley became a climax. There was even a glass of sparkling wine (which I passed on to Walter). In the afternoon we visited the Germania (NiederwaldDenkmal) above Rudesheim and on my birthday we arrived back in Basel. It was a great ride. On the return trip, the sky was always blue and the sun was shining from morning to evening.

Since the end of June all our children and grandchildren live in Switzerland. For Ladina this was a big change. She only knew Neni and Nani from holidays and skyping. Elisabeth was always close to her. Now she should spend one or two hours alone with Neni (grandfather) and Nani (grandmother). There were many tears. Now she got used to us. Since the middle of July, I have been looking after her on Thursday. I enjoy having a baby near me again. Every now and then Walter comes in the afternoon too. In August, Stella went to kindergarten. On Monday, I drive to Zurich with the 9.15 train. In the Staffelhof I cook lunch. In the afternoon I'm just there for Marc and Stella. On Annie's birthday and the wedding day we baked cake. That's alright with the two. In summer, our VW van was ten days in Tuscany with Haltinners. The family spent the autumn holidays in Corsica. With Juerg and Sascha we spent a day on Lake Lucerne. On a Sunday they spontaneously accompanied us to Sennis. Every now and then they come to Buchs for dinner. Often it becomes late evening. I usually disappear around 21.30. I am not used going to bed late.

At the beginning of the year Walter explained that he did not want 2018 to be as dwindling as 2017. Everyday life has to be interrupted more often. So we decided to do something once a week. We wanted to invite or to visit someone, or just make a trip somewhere. Well... some things succeeded, others stayed with the intentions. On the 1st of August Walter and I were on the Rigi in the afternoon and we spent the evening on Lake Lucerne. After an overnight stay in Lucerne, we drove to Engelberg on 2 August, a village in the mountains with a big Benedictine abbey. I have never been there before. We walked to the «End of the World», a valley that ends at a steep rock wall. In August we were two days and two nights in Sennis, in the old mountain hotel. Elisabeth gave us a upgrade to our train tickets



Keukenhof



Kaub: Burg Pfalzgrafenstein and Burg Gutenfels



Ladina in Baden

on Christmas 2016. We redeemed it in September. We drove with the Glacierexpress 1st class from Chur to Zermatt. For the first time, I did not just see the Matterhorn in pictures but in reality. We stayed in Zermatt. The next day we hiked to Zmutt, a little mountain village above Zermatt. Again and again we saw the Matterhorn. After another night in the hotel we drove via Lötschberg - Kandersteg - Bern to Buchs. It was a wonderful day with wonderful weather.

Our old friend Gitta lived in Namibia for over 20 years. Walter and I do not like to have air under our feet. A visit to Namibia was never an option for us. Since two years Gitta lives in Germany near Münster (Westphalia). Münster can be reached by train or by car. In October we drove by car in two days to Bad Laer. In Hammelburg, a small town near Fulda, we spent a night. We enjoyed the drive through the brown-red-golden forests. Gitta lives with Inge 8 km from Bad Laer. From her living room you only see the wide landscape. We saw Gitta and Inge every second day. Our pension was surrounded by farms. On the first and last days we explored the area by bike. By car we visited the city of Münster, the Museum of the Varus Battle, the monument of Hermann and the Externsteine. Our excursion destinations were on average 60 km from our hotel. We sat in our car for one and a half hours to our destinations and just as long back. It was worth it. The weather was sunny every day. On the way back to Switzerland we spent the night in Marktbreit, which is a bit closer to Switzerland than Hammelburg, an old commercial town at the river Main.

Amrum stayed again without our visit or we without trip to Amrum. In August, I picked up the phone. At Konrads I have reserved a room for 10 days over Easter 2019. Nothing is certain... but we know it and Konrads know it too. At our age, nothing is certain. We just hope... . My godson Peter in Brienzwiler marries at the end of May. Also there...

With the outlook for 2019 I close my report. I wish you a quiet Advent season, a peaceful Christmas and God's blessing in the New Year.

*Ach bleib mit deinem Segen bei uns, du reicher Herr;
Dein Gnad und alls Vermögen in uns reichlich vermehr*

Evangelisch-reformiertes Gesangbuch Nr. 342, Strophe 4



*One of the highlights 2018
Eye to eye with the Matterhorn*



Marc und Stella in Staffelhof Zurich)



*Jürg and Sascha with us on steamboat
Stadt Luzern*



Farm house in Münsterland



Externsteine in the Teutoburger Wald



Margrit's house in Füchtorf

*Village Zmutt above
Zermatt*

