

Danke Schön

Coming Soon:

tomandlauracraig.com

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Laura, Ashlyn and Adam in front of Thunder Mountain at Disneyland.

A Great Send-off!

On March 20th, I began my much anticipated trip back to California to get Laura and the kids. I was to arrive late Thursday night, and on Monday evening we would all be boarding a plane in Los Angeles to start this adventure together. However, the days home were scheduled to be a busy four days!

The time home in the States included a trip from LAX to San Diego Thursday night, a celebration at Laura's cousin Cabernet's wedding Friday, Adam's "unbirthday" party on Saturday, Easter on Sunday, and ended with a fantastic day at Disneyland on Monday. A whole lot of packing was sandwiched in between, but we made it with eight suitcases and four carry-ons to LAX for our flight back to Germany on Monday evening.

The kids were fantastic for a long day of travel! Adam fell asleep on the flight before the plane reached its cruising altitude and slept for about 10 hours. Ashlyn stayed up for about an hour, and then slept for about 7 hours. Worn out children and business class seats: PRICELESS!

Ashlyn's German Words:

Ja = Yes

Pommes Fritas = French Fries

Danke = Thanks

Einz, Zwei, Drei, Vier, Fünf = One through Five

Halo = Hello

Auf Wiedersehen = Goodbye

Hoot = Dog

Nien = No

We're such Americans!

While we have entered this adventure with a mindset of taking advantage of getting to see Germany and so many other places in Europe, there is just something about finding things that feel like home that we just can't avoid. While not the cheapest (and probably not the best), I have found myself buying Charmin, Kleenex, Volvic bottled water, and anything with the word American in the title: peanut butter, popcorn, "Cool American" Doritos, and Adam's favorite.....US Hot Dogs!



Business Class is "Awesome!"

The world through the eyes of an eight year old constantly brings a smile to my face. On the flight back from the US to Germany, we were fortunate enough to fly in business class. This was the first time for Ashlyn and she was very pleased with the experience. Some of my favorite comments from the trip were:

- While snacking in the business lounge, "This is the greatest day of my life!"
- With regards to the preflight water service, "I have never seen water in a glass, this is fancy"
- The fully reclining chair, "Even has a footrest."
- Once seeing the tv that pops out of her armrest, "That is awesome!"
- The personal reading lamp "gets brighter the more you turn it"

Car Shopping in Germany

Like so many things in Germany, the whole car shopping experience has been very different. For starters, when you go to a dealership, this is no swarm of salesman descending upon you like a good meal. In fact, you are lucky if you even get acknowledged. I was also foolish to believe I could get a good price on a German car (Mercedes, BMW, VW, Audi). Quite the contrary! German cars are a status symbol, and are priced in Euro similar to the USD price in the States. With the current exchange rate, they cost about 50% more than they would in the US. Once ordering a car, it takes about 8 weeks to receive the vehicle. Germans are not into the same instant gratification that us Americans look for! Time to learn patience!



Back of the house



View from rear balcony

The House Hunt

Like a brave soul (or some would say foolish) I decided to start the house hunting process before Laura arrived. There are not a lot of four bedrooms single family homes available for rent, and I wanted to look at anything that came available. While looking, there are two distinctively different styles of houses you will find; the older home in a small German village or the newer house with colorful exterior in a new village

Before looking, I was certain I would prefer an older "German looking" house. However, after seeing the interiors, I was definitely drawn to the newer homes with more open floor plan and without the dark wood walls and ceilings.

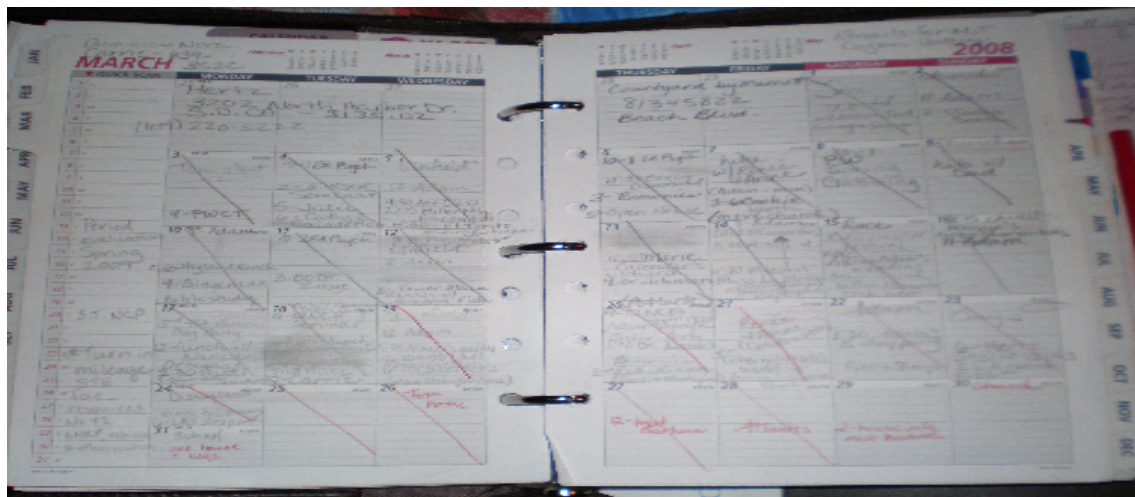
After looking with the relocation agent for a couple weeks, I found a newer home that I really think will serve our needs. It seems to be in a great new neighborhood with many children around, is right off the autobahn (highway), is a five minute walk to the train station, and a twenty minute drive to the Franconian Swiss Alps for hiking. The real test comes soon when Laura gets to see the place and give the thumbs up or down. Please pray for me!

The New Laura

Have you even known anyone that is going absolutely nuts because their life has been turned upside down? Meet my wife! No plans, no internet connection, not in charge of anything but her family (and oh do we get the brunt of that one), no car, no cell phone, no credit cards, no gym, no popcorn, no 7% ground beef, NO CLUE WHAT SHE IS DOING HERE!

Amazingly enough she continues to smile and be an amazing support for all of us!

See Photos On Next Page For An Example of Her Changed Schedule



Laura's Schedule for March in the US!



Laura's Schedule for April in Germany!

Contact Information

Rental House:

Kastanienweg 28

91083 Baiersdorf

Tom's Work:

Adi-Dassler-Strasse 1

91074 Herzogenaurach

Tom's Mobile Phone:

011-49-160-884-2567

Laura's Mobile Phone:

Coming soon

Vonage Phone (US phone number):

951-541-9303

¹³ *I can do everything through him who gives me strength.*

Philippians 4:13