

2012 Wittmann-Family Christmas Letter



We got the seed for this Poinciana via internet. It blossoms for Heidi's birthday



Sabine plays violin in her Orchestra group



Each spring we enjoy the color of the Yellow Elder or *Tabebuia aurea* tree



Jutta, Volker, Nils and Heidi Wittmann savoring Heidis Pavlova

Synopsis of our Year Notes **2012**



Mark with all his woman at brunch



Dr. Gisa Tolkdorf, the best GP ever came to visit her new friend Struppi



Sunrise at Gulf Winds Way



Cocktail hour for Volker and Jutta with Bloody Mary and Margarita



Sunset at Casey Key Estates



Struppi Milou-Sassie

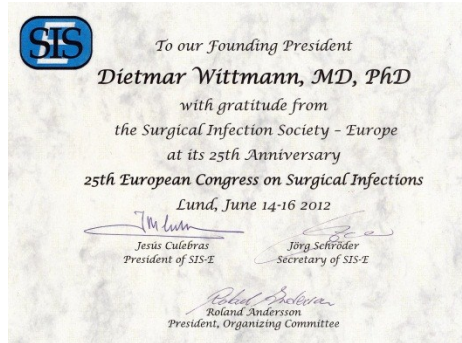


The Beach – the Gulf - the Sun

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Milou and Struppi in a Florida forest



Honors in Lund



Even small hurricanes crash tiles

Shortly after we moved to New World we started writing these Christmas letters to tell our friends back home in Europe about our new life, our new friends, our new adventures and how we handled all the challenges linked to such a gigantic move. Over the years our children were the news provider and now they are on their own and communicating with their friends in their own style. We departed from our original reporting and with time touched more general topics and talked about some of our political beliefs. The feedback by most of you was very positive. Last year, however, it was too much for some on this side of the ocean and we got stiff criticism about mentioning the neighbor of Dietmar's grandparents in Trier. Without mentioning his name, nor praising the misuse of his philosophical heritage, we have to accept that some of his theses appear today like correct predictions because capital seems excessively accumulating in the hands of few. The middle class is fading away in the US, and countries with a slightly different, more responsible capitalism do much better economically. In fact some Germany corporations are contemplating to export their manufacturing to the US because of cheaper labor in this country. One may argue that these events prove Adam Smith's "invisible-hand" concept of self-regulation and everything will be fine by the end of the day, and averting more suffering to the average American.

Often capitalists forget that Adam Smith's invisible hand concept was imbedded in a framework of limiting restrictions on competition for government and industry providing for a "natural system of liberty" and egalitarian justice. His limiting restrictions included banking regulation, health care, education and infrastructure to name some: All very actual issues for our president. Unfortunately the US constitution is no longer up to the task and urgently requires updating particularly of justice and the legal system. The Nobel prize laureate Obama is the right man these days and we (and most of the world) were tremendously relieved when the American people finally made the right choice at the last election.

The pictures above will say more than the written word about our year 2012. We enjoyed "our" Florida with its natural beauty and year round sunshine. Every day included some outdoor activity at the beach or in the woods mostly with our terriers Struppi and Milou. The hurricanes removed about 10 meters of beach and many turtle nests but brought the beach back, albeit at the 1 meter lower level than before. Our big pride was Sabine who excels not only at school but also in art. Similarly we are proud of Fritz who got a degree of excellence from the International baccalaureate school and now studies at the University of Florida the art and business of filmmaking.

My brother Volker and his wife Jutta visited us twice this year, once together with their son Nils. We enjoyed their presence and the exchange of memories. Nils is working on his PhD in economics and we had very exciting discussions about the reasons of the current economic crashes and the growth philosophy. For the time being we decided that quantitative growth should be abandoned in favor of qualitative growth which would provide jobs for all but less profit.

Another visitor that we enjoyed was Gisa Tolksdorf, an old friend from the "Cold War" times. From 1972 to 1975 we supported her desire to translocate with her family from east to West Germany which was a crime by DDR standards. Many attempt to flee failed and both were finally caught at the border and she was sentence for 5 years in jail and their daughter was taken away. We did not realize at the time that the flight organization that we paid from the West was controlled by the DDR to make money. The West German Government paid up to 250.000 to bail out imprisoned DDR physicians. With that help and Gisa's sentence was reduced by one year. She never totally recovered from the psychological trauma of these events. She went on, nevertheless, as a fine general auctioneer in Hamburg and was highly respected by her peers. For Dietmar she became his hero.

Last but not least, we were invited to the 25th anniversary of the Surgical Infection Society Europe in Lund and Dietmar was honored for his initiative to create the Society. He is very proud of it and we have therefore included the document to share with you. On our way back, in Hamburg, His niece Marie-Louise invited him to attend a physiology lecture at University of Hamburg where she is in her second year studying medicine. Looking at the timeline, Dietmar realized that it was exactly 50 years earlier that he went to the same lecture as a student. Yes – the circle reaches completion.

We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year 2013.

Dietmar und Heidi

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