

Living Spring

Summer 2010

- Christa -

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Greetings to you! And have a wonderful day wherever you are!

After last year's picture book summer we seem to be getting another one this year. We had comparatively much rain after the new year began whereas the old year had brought us hardly any snow. Spring and early summer were rather chilly. But now – it is mid July – the meadows are still green, up into the forest, and the pine trees around the huts show new growth of up to 20 cm at the tips of their branches. Never have I seen this before in the ten years since I've been here!

The garden is blooming and flourishing. This spring the deer left it alone, did not touch the tulips and took only some leaves from one of the apple trees where I had removed the protecting fence. Nobody believes it. All neighbors complain about the deer which they see guilty for their non-garden. Yet here for us it is not the deer this time. But something else! Those of you who were here last year know how much trouble the grass hoppers caused us. Once again they are fully advancing. I may have told you already that last year Montana called out a year of plague and was provided by the U.S. government with means for spraying. However this time we also have five hens and a rooster which diligently eat all the bugs, provided they have not just escaped through the electric net fence, creating absolute chaos in the garden beds. Sometimes I shake a bush full of locusts into a pot with water and take them to the chicken. How they devour the grass hoppers with a contented clucking! Yet this can release my frustration only momentarily because there do not seem to be any less grass hoppers. But at least some are really good for the hens. With these proteins they busily lay eggs – for us and others whom we give them to. The little Muscovy ducks, which had been delayed by USPS on their way here, have unfortunately not survived the transport. A complaint has been filed. I am looking for Guinea hens. The German guys who lived here for three weeks (up to 19th July) recommended geckos – hm, I don't know ... because perhaps I may not find them again.

Talking of animals: Alwin, a neighbor whose wife Cheri left the earth suddenly last year, gave me with her horse, a mare called Syrup, about 16 years old, but nobody knows for sure. Days later he also brought a saddle and tack. Unfortunately they had put on too small a halter on her for transport, so Syrup had wounds on her head and nose when I removed it. That is why she would not let me touch her head for a long time. However a few days ago, just when I intended to go away from her and was still standing at the gate, she put her head on mine – what a gesture! I knew: now all is well. Ever since she comes when I call her, and now I consider working with her, i. e. to accustom her again to halter, leash and saddle after she has spent years free on a huge pasture. But to do so I will first have to fence in a small area.

And this brings me to the many projects which keep me busy during daytime (and healthy!), such as building a hen house and a pen, repairing the fence (as every year), running water for the cows, taking care of the garden, watering, harvesting, sowing etc. Meanwhile our friend Rod added a deck to the "green" cabin, with a solid staircase with railing so that nobody can fall off any more. Old construction wood leftovers have been used up, and what could no longer be used from diverse

hoardings was collected and taken to the dump. Or rather, I am still doing so and am happy about each load coming together. Since yesterday I even have a scythe! I don't know yet if I'll be able to handle it. I'll have to learn it, though, because in some areas the grass is too high and too difficult for a lawn mower. It would require a brush mower.

A few weeks ago Michelle C. from Dayton came for a week. Meanwhile I believe she only came to make sure it is what she thought it is because now she is in the process of clearing out of her house and moving here to live with us. Another American woman, inspired by her, called and said she would also like to live in a community and would like to join as soon as a community was existing here. I just laughed, saying that for our community I had little interest in someone who was waiting until a community had been created and then would come to feel good here. I am interested in "creators" and "builders", preparers of the path and persons walking ahead, committed givers and implementers of ideas. But there will still be "sofas" and quiet cabins for guests grown tired of participating in the ways of the world but still wanting to continue in their ways for a while after having been here. 😊😊

Most of you will remember that I was in Germany in March/April. This time we were together in the monastery of the Benedictines in Damme and on the "Wendlerhof" in Stephanskirchen. As always the days were very intense, and if you asked different participants you would find each one talking about and sharing different things. I felt very good – as always when I am together with people and "work" with them. And I was shown so much love. It was expressed in various acts, gestures, words. One evening, Helma, full of love, patience, and with a strong grip, massaged my feet and legs, which were heavily swollen from long sitting, not drinking enough (and not going to the toilet because I forgot to!). And Rita brought me a cup of hot coffee in the mornings, before I even showed up. Lovingly Lisa and Rita had organized everything, even borrowed two different laptops to choose from and use during my stay. A lot more could be told ... But much of it is also no longer on my mind ... Today and Living Spring are now rather my focus.

And what about today? Right now I am sitting at the computer in our town house. There is no solar panel (yet) at Living Spring – postponed once again because first I just ordered a refrigerator (finally, after ten years, so that I will no longer have to change the cooling units every four days. What a joy!) And because I have arranged for a solar pump to be installed at the well, and a water pipeline running to the small house, so that I will no longer have to walk two or three times a day to the well – opening the gate/closing the gate, opening another gate/closing the gate, turning on the generator, turning off the generator for water to be tapped near the house and garden. I am looking forward to all these developments and unfoldings, even though the realization of the more comfortable water supply will take some more time due to lack of funds

Gabriele is busy with the guest house. A good income last year induced her to have further necessary renovations/changes carried out at the house. For instance the siding on the third floor (north) – above the stone walls – was decayed and the window leaked. The siding will be renewed, and fascia and soffit will be painted with protective paint. Storm doors will be installed at the two doors (kitchen and back porch) – serving in summer as fly screens and in winter as additional insulation against coldness and wind. The garden behind the house, in which we already worked – sweating - with a group last year, is still being brought into shape. While Gabriele first started sowing and planting vegetables, and has already been able to reap, the stones for terraced beds have arrived; furthermore there are various ideas and considerations about which perennials from the

land could be planted in autumn. But so far none of us have had enough time to really get to it. Hopefully it can be done before winter.

End of July Sara will come, and also Ingrid from Germany, both for a few weeks. I am very much looking forward to them and our time together. Wondrously enough Ingrid – quickly determined – had already had her eye a flight, which then she lost again – fast as such things go nowadays –, and now she will come on the same flight as Sara from Chicago to Billings. They do not know each other and Ingrid did not know about Sara's flight, yet already life is connecting them and us. What will we do? I do not know – life will determine our day, speed, and contents. Will they be able to give up worrying about taking a shower and washing their hair as fast as the group last year? Still today I am laughing with you, dear Margret, Kurt, Karin, Rita, and Lisa – laughing about your increasing pleasure with the cold garden hose bath. I can still see you, Kurt, as you are pushing the wheelbarrow over the land towards the cabins, in contended innocence, with nothing on but your slippers (or was it shoes?), walking unhurriedly and completely at ease with everything

Well, so much for today. There is too much more to share. If you wish to know more, the best will be to come here yourself and find out how it is.

Affectionate regards and best wishes for a good summer, heart-touching experiences and lively being. Be awake and be glad about everything that happens to you. Life intends the best for you and me, even if sometimes we don't like it at first.

Christa

P:S: The Study-Letter III is a bit late this time and is attached for all who receive it.