

It's a Small World!

This is another "small world" story that brought joy to new friends, fellow residents of Tryon Estates in Columbus, North Carolina.



Hertha "Tah" Flack (nee Eisenmenger), was already 100 years old, and a lovely, sharp woman with a delightful sense of humor when we (Johanna and John Lawler) met her. Shortly after we had moved to Tryon Estates, we happened to pass two people in the hallway who were speaking a few words of German together. We stopped and introduced ourselves to them in that language (Johanna was born and raised in Berlin and John learned German in college).

We asked where Tah was from and she told us it was a very small town in Austria that nobody had ever heard of. When we told her that we knew Austria fairly well, she said the town's name was Oetz. To her surprise, we not only knew of Oetz, but we had been visiting Austrian friends who live in Oetz every year since 1994!

Tah was flabbergasted and could hardly believe that anybody was familiar with her family's territory! It turned out that her uncle owned a large mountain estate which included a beautiful mountain lake called

Piburgersee. We not only told her that we knew it, but that we hiked around that lake every summer and had photos to show her. When she saw them and we told her that we were going to visit it again in 2017, she told us to stop by the family home and introduce ourselves to her relatives who still live there.

In August, 2017, we drove down to Oetz from Oberammergau, Germany where we were vacationing and we walked around Piburgersee to the entry drive to her family's property. There was a woman working in the flower beds next to the drive and we asked if she lived there. She answered that she was the owner and, when we introduced ourselves as friends of Hertha's, we were instantly embraced as welcome visitors! Her name is Nemesia "Neme" (originally from The Philippines, she was in hotel management and speaks perfect German and English) and she's the widow of Tah's cousin. She still lives in the large home and rents parts of it as a bed & breakfast. (Here is that home's link: <https://piburg-seebichlhof.com/>)

This is Neme and Johanna standing next to the family home



A photo of Johanna and John in front of that family home



The following photos were each met with spontaneous stories of Tah's earliest memories of visiting her uncle's family for long summer stays:

When Tah saw this photo of the home's living area, she immediately told of how she and her sister used to sit at that table to play games!



Tah remembers that this lovely living room's "Kachelofen" (tiled oven) kept the thick-walled stone home warm and cozy. It's wood-fired and the door to feed logs into its firebox is located at the rear of the oven which extends into the adjoining hallway to keep any smoke or dust out of the living room.



When Tah saw this photo, she immediately told the story of sitting - holding a pose for hours - in front of that window when she was having her portrait painted at age 12!



Tah's immediate reaction to this photo of the home's kitchen was, "I never, ever saw a table cloth on that kitchen table!"



Here is the front view of the home. It was built a long time ago of solid stone and its construction is massive!



Here is the view from the front yard of the home. It shows the Piburgersee, as well as the magnificent Austrian Alps around the Oetz Valley.



The property is at the edge of Oetz, just 30 miles west of Innsbruck, in the Austrian State of Tyrol. The 40 mile long Oetztal (valley) runs due south between the east-west running Inntal and the Italian border.

For interest; Oetz is around 2500 feet above sea level, the Piburgersee lies at 3000 feet, and those mountain peaks in the photo are about 7000 feet. The highest mountains around the upper Oetztal and the Austrian/Italian border are over 12,000 feet!

When Tah saw this photo, she immediately said, "They still haven't painted that boathouse! I remember getting splinters from that deck when I was a little girl!"



You can see more of the home, its large property, and the Piburgersee with this boathouse in this video link:

<https://piburg-seebichlhof.com/info/>