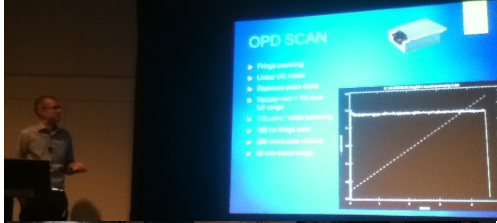


The Sallie & Theo Times Winter Solstice 2014

The CHARA Gang Forges Ahead

"It was not all good news" said A.D. Dr. ten Brummelaar, "we got one of the worst reviews of all time, but we smiled our way through it". The year included a meeting in Michigan which was "cold but full of bonhomie", a gathering in Montreal for the SPIE, and some drinks in Paris. "Wretched isn't it?" said Sallie "but someone has to do it". The Michigan meeting included a visit to the Ford Museum where Gerard fulfilled a life's dream and beheld a wiener mobile, while the SPIE – a meeting designed to attend at great expense in order to complain about how much it costs to go to the SPIE – included excellent food and some life lessons. "For example", said Theo, "I finally learned the difference between Poutine and Putain!". And there was much rejoicing.



Capital!

The Traveling Whiffleberries, were delighted to visit Berlin and Bonn in the Spring and Paris in the fall. "Both superb seasons to travel for clement weather," trilled Sallie in her best Hyacinth Bucket. Her accents unfortunately were better than her French and German and thankfully Theo fared a little better in the lingua department, "Especially as I can listen in Dutch to the Germans and catch the drift." Our pair caught up with a friend from the old SBS Radio days who now ripples the Berlin airwaves. "Krista is also a tour guide so we totally lucked out," enthused Sallie "and that luck ran to catching not only Claudine but Tristan as well, who are mates from earlier days in Pasadena." Sallie's made a thrift store dimdl score so she was, of course, thrilled. "Oooerrr," she said.

From the new Capital of Germany to the old, the train trip from Berlin to Bonn made our heroes happy as usual "It's never long enough," said Sallie. "That's because we're traveling at hundreds of miles an hour," was Theo's satisfied reply.

Bonn's greenery and river views were among the highlights, "And the curryworst!" they chorused. Gerd and wife Judy took them to a winery and a castle that was still intact from 200 years ago and all manner of lovely spots to drink and dine along the Rhine. "And have ice cream!" Gerd was often heard to say. A quick trip to Heidelberg to visit Andreas and Bettina became an Easter eggstravaganza and our two explored the old and new of German Astronomy. There was also another river excursion but you had guessed that already, dear reader. Right?

The Paris apartment Sallie found promised "Excellent views over Paris" and the ad did not disappoint. "In the day you can see the Eiffel Tower, the Montparnasse Tower and Sacre Coeur in Montmatre!" enthused Sallie with Theo jumping in with "And at night the two towers put on a light show!" The pair reconnected with Theo's cousins Evelyn and Faustine "Theo spoke Dutch with Evelyn, she spoke French with Fasutine who spoke English with me!" exclaimed Sallie. And also they met up with Theo's brother and husband, Graham and Michael, "I see more of them here than in Sydney!" marveled Theo. This was true for the Ridgways who live in Arizona but see Theo and Sallie more often in Paris, "Mostly at Happy Hour at the Rendezvous", said Sallie with a wink. They also managed to catch up with Denis in Paris, now the "Fromage Grande" of the French Astronomy program.

There was music of course, a soiree with the aforementioned Steve & Alisa, Vincent & Saskia and their son Leonard, "The lad has a musical ear and can keep the beat, we had a good jam," said Theo. They also joined up with Mouss and Florence for another lovely musical evening, and even caught up with François. A flying visit to Ivo's and Anna's found our pair playing with the great bassman to their delight. And a float upon the Seine and a long awaited visit to the Maritime Museum completed the naval must-dos. "Phew," they said!



Photo d'art by Steve

A Musical Year

The year of 2014 turned out to be a rather musical time for the “we’ll play anything with anyone, anytime, anywhere” duo. The year began with an impromptu Python tune from Theo at the AAS meeting in DC. “I was rather bemused by two things” he said, “to begin with I discovered that, due to large age gaps and so on, hardly anyone in the room had any idea who Eric Idle is.” Word is that he simply chose to pretend he wrote the song himself. He went on to say “I was followed by a guy who tried to do stand up, and instead managed to insult everyone in the room. I have never seen 300 people stare at the stage with their mouths open before”.

Later in the year came the Soiree, once again ably hosted by Seena, and with more acts than you could point a stick at. “It must have been a good night”, Sallie opined, “The police visited us twice, although I suspect they meant to be visiting another party held by our neighbors up the road as later that night they came a third time with helicopters and sirens.”

As part of their ongoing tour of Europe the three hooligans of Cruise Control played Berlin early in the year. “It went quite well” said lead noodlemeister Kaspar, “despite Theo’s determination not to tune his guitar”. Jessica, their impresario, has booked them more gigs because, as she says, “They respond well to fear and bourbon.”

The One Olive Martini Band, although now short one member, managed to have one last performance at the Library with the full line up, which went well except for the guitar players “biggest public mistake ever” and his determination to keep pointing out that “I’m the Olive.” Much fun, wine, and bitching at OOM rehearsals fills the Brandi sized gap. Sound guy Ramzi will also be missed. “He and Alan really had our audio humming” said Theo.

In the meantime the Living Room Band continued its winning streak of performances around LA. There are some rumors that various members of LRB (yes.... LRB, go figure) will also disperse but will continue on, mostly at random, nevertheless.



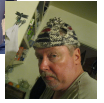
The Life of A Sailor

“Sailing is hard work” quoted Captain Don “Aubury” Hutter, “I mean, sometimes it can be difficult to avoid spilling your G&T, or preventing Theo from falling into the water”.

Despite these hardships the happy crew of the Orion sail in all months of the year and in various weather conditions, although they do like to avoid the rain.

More Salt

Nils embraced the life aquatic as well and yo-ho-ho’d it down to the Tall Ships Fest and the inexplicably camera shy Giant Duck.



News Flash – Some People make a living from Music!



“I know” Sallie said, “it seems unlikely but we do know people that make a full time living from music”. Turns out, long time

friend Jim, having done the whole “keyboard hero, degree and then getting disenchanted with academia” thing has long since become a Japanese Flute Master, regular performer and teacher throughout Germany. “The flute stuff is pretty cool” said old friend (and we mean old) Theo, “as is his pedal board. It seems that despite the organic and acoustic nature of the flute thing it’s hard to lose the need for groovy effects and electrical jiggery pokery”.

Thanksgiving

“Definitely our favorite American Holiday” Theo was heard to say. “Yes”, Sallie agreed, “There’s none of that dreadful gift giving and the naked greed – oooh gluten-free stuffing - just a festival of food, family and friends”. This year the dubious pair was invited once again by Rolf and Jeff to partake of the beast, Gurgle,” opined Madison (pictured here flanked by the lovely hosts.)



Time Flies Like an Arrow – Fruit Flies like an Orange.

Much to their simultaneous delight and alarm the traveling Cruiselaars attended the wedding of Ashley Mason, who has now added Strausser to her name. Despite the threat of rain the proceedings went extremely well and friends from many places were reunited, and also managed to fit into the same photo-booth. The distress came from the “Oh my god is she old enough to get married already?” and “how old does that make us?” thoughts standard at these times. We all particularly enjoyed seeing her parents so happy together, and discovering that we still knew most of the songs played at the reception.



Happy Humbugs to the lot o’ ya xxx