

MEET YOUR NEIGHBORS

Kendall and Ingrid Rogers Enjoy A Variety of International Interests

Their Links With Germany Made the World Cup Championship Special

TGN: Ingrid, describe your link with Germany and your college years.

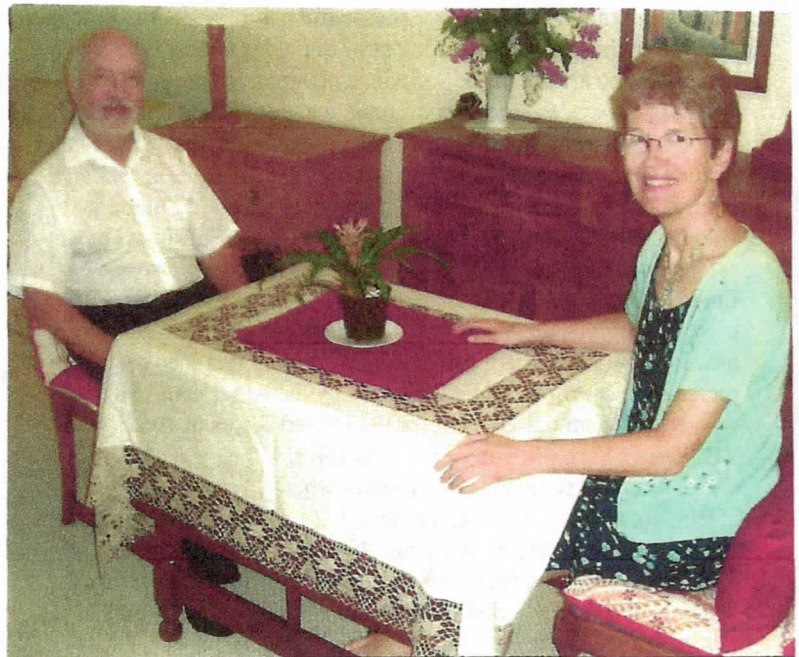
Ingrid: I was born and raised near Hanover, Germany. I was an exchange student and attended a high school in southern Ohio in 1967-68. Back in Germany, I attended Philipps-University of Marburg, north of Frankfurt. I went on to earn a doctorate in foreign language pedagogy. In Indiana I was a professor of foreign languages (German and Spanish) for twenty years. I also taught literature and English as a second language.

TGN: And you, Ken?

Ken: I grew up in the Midwest - Iowa, Nebraska and Indiana. I went to college at Manchester College (now University) in North Manchester, Indiana (west of Fort Wayne), but spent my Junior year at Marburg University, where I met Ingrid in May 1971. We married a year later in two ceremonies - one in Ohio and one in Germany. After college graduation, I studied at Oxford University in England, receiving a second BA degree there. Ingrid also studied at Oxford. Then I had a scholarship to Harvard University, where I earned MA and PhD degrees. My training has been in history, specializing in the history of Christian thought (theology and philosophy). I taught at Manchester College for thirty years. Since 2008 I have continued to teach history at a small Protestant seminary in Indiana. My students are preparing to become pastors and hospital chaplains. I travel there from Menlo Park during the school year. I also teach courses online. Over the years I have led a dozen travel seminars to Germany, visiting sites related to Martin Luther and the Reformation as well as other places important in church history. I have such a trip planned for next year.

TGN: Tell us about your family.

Ingrid: We had two children within four years after our marriage. Our daughter, Angela, is married, has two daughters, and is a doctor at Stanford Hospital and teaching at the Stanford Medical School as an assistant professor of medicine in pulmonary intensive care. Her graduate degree was at Harvard. Our son lives in Allentown, Pennsylvania. He is married and works for Amazon.com. His education was at the University of Wisconsin and Manchester College.



TGN: What international adventures have you experienced?

Ingrid: Shortly after our wedding we both worked at the 1972 Munich Olympic Games. Then we spent two years in England. During the 1990's we hosted exchange students at our home in Indiana - a boy from East Berlin and a girl from France. Our daughter was also an exchange student. From 1999-2001 we led an exchange program in Germany. We also spent six months in China. I have written seven books, including one called "Glimpses of China". In Boston, Massachusetts, I taught immigrants from the Dominican Republic, preparing them for citizenship in the U.S. Now I teach at the Lydian Academy in downtown Menlo Park, where all classes are one-on-one. My students are high school age, and I teach them to read, write and speak Spanish. A few take English literature with me.

TGN: When did you move in to Menlo Commons?

Ken: We came here in July 2013, to be closer to our daughter and her family. We love it here. Menlo Commons has met all our expectations. We enjoy getting to know the people. Our favorite part is the swimming pool.

TGN: I understand that you have organized a variety of activities here.

Ingrid: Yes, and I believe they are going well. Programs include Gwen Leonard's "Appreciation of Classical Music," Pat Galvez' basic technology class (starting computer, iphones, and e-books for instance), autobiography sharing, game night, and the ballroom dance that Ken and I host. These activities are now under the umbrella of Menlo Commons.

TGN: Ken, what are your hobbies?

Ken: We love camping and hiking, particular in the San Mateo County parks. We attend a square dance class near Mountain View. We enjoy swimming, especially when our granddaughters come over. Ingrid likes to bike to her work in downtown Menlo Park.

TGN: Thanks so much, Ken and Ingrid.



Gitta Grabowski - An Original Owner Life-Long Tennis Player and Fan!

TGN: Gitta, are you from Germany?

Gitta: Yes, I was born and raised in Dresden, Germany. My mother was from Berlin and my father from Dresden. After their divorce my mother moved my brother and me to Salzburg, Austria because of the heavy bombardment of big cities during the war. I remember the arrival of the American occupation forces in Salzburg - it was the most unforgettable experience and made a huge impact on our lives immediately. I was 14 at that time. I had learned English from a British nanny when I was little, and later learned some American English from a lady living in Salzburg, who had worked for an American couple living in Berlin. The soldiers were friendly and when they found out I could speak English they immediately wanted me to be their interpreter. I tried, but my vocabulary wasn't sufficient at that time. We later moved to Munich where I finished high school and then a secretarial school, and then was hired by the American Army. I worked for them until we left for the United States in 1951.

TGN: So where did you come to in the U.S.?

Gitta: We first settled in Los Angeles where I worked for several hotels, got married in 1956, and then IBM moved my husband and me to San Jose in 1959. After our divorce, I moved back to Los Angeles and worked for a lawyer in Beverly Hills for 20 years. When he retired I decided to retire too, and I came back to Northern California.

TGN: Why did you move to Menlo Commons?

Gitta: In the mid-1970s, Menlo Commons was started, and my stepfather Erik Knauer and I decided to buy into our unit in Building C, first for his retirement and then subsequently mine. The whole building was just 2x4s and hanging wires at that time but we could envision how it was going to look. Eric lived here until he died in 1995. I had the place rented for a few years and then moved into it myself in 2001.

TGN: What have you been doing now?

Gitta: I have been doing a lot of reading and writing. I am most interested in history, politics and especially like to read up on the details of World War II. When it was going on I was too young to understand. Once in a while I also like to write to our representatives in Washington and let them know what I think. I am also trying to write a narrative of my family for my nephew Christian who doesn't know anything about those who came before him.

TGN: What about your family?



Gitta: I have no children. So my brother Karl was my closest relative. He lived in Wiesbaden, Germany, and we saw each other almost every year until he was killed in an accident in Germany two years ago - he was hit by a car while walking. He had visited me here just before then. Now my closest relative is my nephew Christian Loewe - he is still trying to finish college to get a degree in political science.

TGN: And your friends?

Gitta: Yes, I have some long-time friends here from our IBM days, and we get together as often as we can. Once a year, I travel to Kona, Hawaii, for 2 weeks where some of my friends live for half of the year. I love the island, the climate, and friendly atmosphere.

TGN: I see you have had a cat.

Gitta: Yes, he died very recently. His name was Charlie and I am having a hard time recovering from losing him. I had him for seven years, and he was already seven years old when I first adopted him. So he was 14 when he died. You can see from this picture of him he was a black cat. Once I recover from losing him, I will probably get another cat.

TGN: What do you like about Menlo Commons?

Gitta: I love the trees, the atmosphere, the fact that it is very close to shopping areas, parks, and Woodside with all the good restaurants. I still drive and often drive to the coast which is spectacular.

TGN: And you watch tennis on TV, I see.

Gitta: Yes, I am a life-long tennis player and fan. Now I watch tennis games on TV.

TGN: I see you have some classical pictures on your wall, and some beautiful flowers in your garden.

Gitta: Yes, I ended up with all of the pictures from my family, some from my grandmother from Europe. I enjoy planting flowers on my patio. We are also lucky on this side of the building that there are so many trees that screen us from Sand Hill Road and the close developments right in front of us.

TGN: Thank you, Gitta, for letting me interview you.

