

Crazy April

From: Marcus Stephens (stepmarcus2@gmail.com)

To: sdnowacki@yahoo.com

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Dear Susan,

This past month has been crazy busy. I went on a tour across Germany with Rotex, celebrated Easter with my new host family, and went to an Avril Lavigne concert in Berlin. Saying I'm tired is an understatement.

On the Wednesday before Easter break, I was whisked away to Braunschweig where my Germany tour started. For the next two weeks, I hung out with my exchange friends while we explored places like Saxon Switzerland National Park known for the Elbe Sandstone Mountains, Nymphenburg Palace, and Neuschwanstein Castle. We also went to Dachau Concentration Camp which was deeply powerful and something I think about a lot. When you walk through the gate the words "Arbeit macht frei" are welded on the door. It means working makes you free. It was used as a way to control prisoners to be compliant. Another place we went to was a coal mine, which I thought was going to be boring, but turned out to be quite interesting. While the trip was an all-over success, having to stay in a hostel with up to six guys on bunk beds in one tiny room got old really fast. Especially since no matter what we did, our room always stank.

When I got back, I slept for a solid two days straight. My host mom was genuinely worried about how much I slept but I reassured her it was only due to the trip. The next weekend was Easter meaning meeting up with the whole family for lunch. It was like a mini Thanksgiving and I got wayyy too much candy. There was also an Easter fire in my village. They created a large wooden structure and had kids light it on fire. It was huge! Coming from California was a big culture shock for me. I didn't worry too much though as I know how thoroughly Germans think about these types of things.

Finally, I saw Avril Lavigne at a concert in Berlin. She was amazing, playing some of my favorite songs. Also, the band that performed before her was from California and had a song named after it. I was super happy to see a bit of home so far away.

Today I officially have 98 days until I return home. I feel both excited and sad that I have to return home soon. I miss my friends, but the thought of leaving all the friends I made here is a bit upsetting for me.

Frühlingswetter von Göttingen,

Marcus