

## #7 Trick or Treat...

...and getting out of my comfort seat.

*Wow.* Yesterday I hit the 3-month mark. I've been in the USA for 3 months now. Time just flies by like that!

In the last two months, there was a lot going on, which was really great!

At one point I went camping with my host family. We stayed at the **Red Top Mountain State Park**. We hiked, rented a boat (with a slide!) and of course - grilled S'mores. Another exciting thing about that weekend was that I slept in my car for the first time! Yes! Heard right! I am the proud owner of a Pontiac Vibe in grey. And so far, this car is really reliable - I probably couldn't afford a repair anyway. Of course, I also had to get my American driver's license, which was 100 times easier than in Germany. Of course, I also spent a lot of time with paperwork - again. The costs were \$30 which compensated the efforts again. A dream!

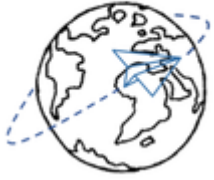
Then there were the **Midterms in college**. In nearly every class I had a somewhat larger examination and a few essays which I had to write in the period of 2-3 weeks. I have never learned so much. Although the English language is much easier for me now than it was at the beginning, it was a challenge to learn facts about American history and ways of management (+ details). After having spent more hours in the library than I should and countless Iced Coffees from Starbucks, I finally got the results and was astonished that things turned out so well for me in the end. Learning helps (unfortunately)...

After the Midterms I had a good time. However, after only one week a new course was added to my schedule: Principles of Microeconomics. When I sat in the first lesson, I saw graphs and complicated English words that made absolutely 0 sense on Google translator. Fortunately, my professor is very good at explaining and because of his academic background in Germany, he helps me out with German translations when I look overwhelmed and don't understand anything. :)

Another weekend I went camping with my friends Meredith and Kayla in **Chester Frost Park in Tennessee**. But this time I really CAMPED. Equipped with a tent, camping gear and thick jackets, we drove to Chattanooga. Meredith and I were writing our own song that she accompanied with the ukulele. It was really cold there but really beautiful. In the evening we sat at the campfire, ate S'mores and talked. During the day we went hiking, walked around and just enjoyed our time there.

Unfortunately, my tennis course ended at the end of October and I don't see my friends so often anymore as they have jobs and are very busy. Nevertheless, I take every opportunity to meet with them, even if it's just for running around the lake on campus. Especially conversations with my friends help me to better understand politics and circumstances in the USA.





One of the most exciting things that has happened in the last 2 months is that I found a **part-time job**! At the beginning of September, I started looking for a job for January. After a few days in New York and Rome I realized that I would also need a part-time job during my college time, too. I definitely underestimated the cost of living in America! Unfortunately, no company has contacted me yet - except WinShape, the company I now work for. I was really happy when I finally got an interview. I have some friends who work for the same organization and just love it there. When I was there for the first time, I knew why. The property of the WinShape Foundation is on the campus of Berry College. The campus of this college is the largest in the world. Currently it comprises 27,000 acres, thus 110 km<sup>2</sup>. You can hike, ride a horse, cycle and much more. It is beautiful there. WinShape Retreat - the ministry I work for, can be imagined as a hideaway. Various seminars are offered - including marriage seminars. I work in the Guest Services team, help guests with check-in and check-out, take care of the entrance area and support our guests with everything that is on their hearts. One of the best things about my work is that the team is really great and integrated me right from the start. As a Christian organization, WinShape also invests in its employees, so that everyone can contribute his or her strengths. There is even the chance to work full-time there from beginning of January!

Oh, friends, there's so much to tell. It's just so exciting to live the American way of life yourself. Now that fall has finally arrived, there are many seasonal things to buy. One of my recent "fall highlights" was the **Chiaha Harvest Fair**. The market was quite big and many local artists were represented. Homemade candles, treats, jewelry and sooooo much more was on sale. I got a necklace stamped with my ZIP code (postcode) - as a reminder of my great time here. Also Apple Cider, the tastiest apple juice after our homemade one from Germany, is very popular here.

Of course, Halloween was celebrated on **October 31<sup>st</sup>**. I borrowed a witch costume from my host mother and we went from door to door together. It was really cool to see all the decorations in front of the houses (and around the houses). It's really a pity that we don't really celebrate this in Germany. Davis and Harrison were really excited and ran from door to door to collect as many sweets as possible. I sat in the entrance area of a friend of Harrison's and pretended to be just decoration. The friend's mother put sweets in my lap and "lured" children to me, who of course clawed the sweets without hesitation. Well, they had not expected me. As soon as they reached for the sweets, I jumped up with a loud "**BAAHHHHHHH!!!!**" and scared them. Their shocked faces were priceless! At the end of the day we drove home with our treats and my guest brothers were so kind and shared their sweets with me.

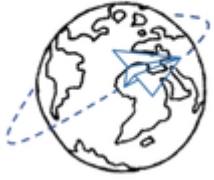
Rome is such a great place and I am really lucky to have such a wonderful home. Anyone who knows me knows that I am not really a total camping freak. However, I have the feeling that I have learned to appreciate nature around me much more. I also like to simply drive through neighborhoods and look at the different houses (of course only from the outside). I personally love fall here in Georgia, the leaves are beautiful neon orange and yellow and the climate is mild.

I'm really looking forward to Thanksgiving in two weeks! But I will report this to you in a few weeks, don't worry. 😊

I wish you a great fall time and please eat a slice of German bread for me. 😊

Lena





A trip on the boat



Harrison and Me



My car was packed for our camping trip to Chester Frost Park!



Kayla, Meredith and Me (it was freezing cold!)



Jackson and Gray took me to Waffle House for the first time



Halloween 2018