

The sys admin's daily grind: LUG Camp Tschierv

LUG High

He nearly missed this year's LUG Camp, but what was columnist Charly supposed to do instead – celebrate Father's Day? *By Charly Kühnast*

Ascension Day is the day on which men in Germany meet up with their friends, hike cross-country, drink beer, and sing quaint German folk songs (out of tune). This isn't my idea of a good time. I prefer to meet up with my friends, hike cross-country, drink beer, and sing heavy metal oldies (out of tune). Luckily, these activities feature in the central LUG Camp program, which just happens to start on Ascension Day.

This time LUG Camp was in Tschierv, Switzerland, in Val Müstair to be more precise. My image of a Val (= valley) up to now has been something at about sea level that fills up with water when it rains. At least that's what it's like here in the Lower Rhine area, where you can easily identify the 100-meter remains of an ice-age moraine at a distance of 50 kilometers (about 30 miles).

Our base camp, as I soon discovered, was at a height of 1,600 meters (~ 5250 ft) and was surrounded by snow-covered, pretty vertical geology. It was fairly obvious that Switzerland is nothing like the Lower Rhine. To my dismay, I learned from the mailing list that two of the three pass roads into Val Müstair were above the snow line. The third was awash with rain and had a visibility of 10 meters (~ 10 yd) in the fog. LUG campers should have winter tires and snow chains.

I check my equipment in my mind: A two-person tent and a sleeping bag designed for the kind of temperatures you get on the French Med coast in August. A car with a soft-top, rear-wheel drive, and summer tires. Sandals that most



Figure 1: Alpine LUG, where valleys are 1,600 meters above sea level: Linux fans in Val Müstair.

Swiss probably wouldn't count as "solid shoes" for my Alpine climbing gear.

Postulate of Reason

It didn't take me long to come to my senses – I decided to stay at home and told my better half.

She asks: "Oh, so you prefer to go on a Father's Day tour with the boys?"

Me: [Silence] "Erm – now where did I put that tent?"

The next day I cross the Reschenpass in blazing sunshine. Just a day before, the people at the road rescue service office had LOLs when I asked about snow chains. Who cares? Switzerland is sunny-side up today. And the camp organization team tells me there is plenty of space in the building. I don't need my beach tent.

The camp has fantastic talks, including one about Git that takes nearly five hours in two stints. I meet friends, hike cross-country, drink beer, and sing heavy metal oldies (out of tune). Almost a pity that the 13th LUG Camp next year will probably be at sea level again. But only almost. ■■■



AUTHOR

Charly Kühnast is a Unix operating system administrator at the Data Center in Moers, Germany. His tasks include firewall and DMZ security and availability. He divides his leisure time into hot, wet, and eastern sectors, where he enjoys cooking, freshwater aquariums, and learning Japanese, respectively.