



Bushy Tales

Dedicated to all who attended London Central High School in Bushy Park, London England from 1952 to 1962



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Visit the Bushy Park Web Site at <http://www.bushypark.org/>

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1954 - Betsy (Neff) Cote

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1958 - Pat (Terpening) Owen

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1960 - Ren Briggs

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1961 - Betsy (Schley) Slepetz

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1962 - Dona (Hale) Ritchie

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Roster Changes

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Look Who We Found

Kathy (Tibbets) Robinson (58)

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Classmates Who Have Transferred To The Eternal Duty Station

Our love and prayers go out to the family and friends of our classmates who have gone on before us. We will miss them, yet we can find comfort in knowing that one-day we will all join them for the greatest of all reunions.

Don Pierce (55) - Per Burtonwood HS and Obituary - 9 April 1937 - 15 July 2003.

Just found some information from the Carolinas Historic Aviation Commission " Our deepest sympathy goes to the family of Donald M. Pierce who passed away in July (2003). Don was a staunch member of CHAC and a docent at the Museum. He graduated from the Munich American High School, Munich, Germany and attended boarding school in London. He joined the US Air Force and was an Air Traffic Controller stationed in the Panama Canal Zone and Boston Center from 1955-63."

Sick and Distressed

From Rev. Aaron Peters, O.S.B. (57)
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Hello everyone, especially the Class of 57. A little bit of sad news: December 5th June was diagnosed as having leukemia. She was immediately hospitalized and started a chemo regimen and blood/platelet transfusions. She remains hospitalized. So our dear classmate and friend needs our prayers and best wishes. Her husband Ron needs our support, too. Her son, Craig, has access to her email, so you can send her emails and cards.

Email is: rjk@open.org

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1173 Madrona St. E.
Monmouth, OR 97361.

Let us flood heaven with our prayers.

Memories of Bushy

From Nancy Reed Robinson (56)
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The Teachers I Remember at Bushy Park

I was a day student, junior class, in 1954-55. I came from a year in a British Girls' school and needed to get my credits in order before shipping back to the States. I was concerned by the prospect of adjusting to another school. That was an unfounded worry. Where I lived, delightfully, there were a few other Americans. Robin and Janie Cram were my friends. Other friends were Pat Miller, Kenton Pattie, and Don and the rest of the Crews family. It was nice to be in an American environment though I had enjoyed the British School.

My favorite teacher was Mr. Francis. He taught the American history class I was in. He taught it beautifully and I learned so much. As a teacher myself, I marvel that he was so good at setting up charts and diagrams for us to learn more easily and to memorize. He also rode our bus. Robin and I got to know him a little more but mostly he sat alone and graded papers. We preferred to be by ourselves as well. One day he invited us to come to his flat and see his newly acquired Louise XVI bed. Robin and I were thrilled to get such a mature invitation. When I got home I shared the joy of my invitation with my parents. My dad acted like a father and questioned the adventure at length. Finally, he was convinced that it was a history lesson, which it was. Robin and I took the bus and visited Mr. Francis and saw the lovely antique bed. We were impressed.

Later in the year I was told to switch history classes because of National Honor Society induction. It was difficult to leave Mr. Francis and his history class. He was considerate. In fact, he gave me my semester test on the bus. I had difficulty taking an oral history test that I had not studied for on the bus. He patiently kept asking me questions in different ways until he was assured that I knew the material.

Later in the year Mr. Francis, Mr. Roseman, and Mrs. Bidleman (I think) took the French club to Paris for a weekend. (Do you remember Mr. Roseman and the pieces of chalk which suddenly were flying when you made a mistake in class?) The trip was exciting! Unfortunately, Mrs. Bidleman got sick and spent the weekend in bed at the hotel. Mr. Roseman and Mr. Francis took us lots of places including L'Opera. Afterwards we got onion soup. The most memorable part of the meal occurred when we did not leave a tip. The waiter followed us for blocks screaming at us in French for his tip. After we got back to the hotel Mr. Roseman and Mr. Francis went out again. We had wine and loaves of French bread so we partied and practiced our French too!

Mr. Dickinson was my English teacher. He was great! Once he assigned us a paper on spring cleaning. Spring cleaning what was that? We moved every year! I hated the assignment! I decided to make a joke of it. I chose to be a young African female nomad who lived in a hut. Huts in our tribe

were ceremonially burned each time we moved to follow the food supply. Mr. Dickinson had a sense of humor too. He gave me an A. When my dad saw the paper he was appalled. He fussed at me for not taking school seriously. He even said I had a poor teacher if he would give me an A for such a paper. I knew that was not true. I had learned a lot from Mr. Dickinson.

My hardest class was Algebra II with Mr. Terry. Mr. Terry was kind and understanding. I **had** to take Algebra II to get Algebra I credit for math in the British School. With the Brits I had algebra I only twice a week. The rest of the week I had daily had business math, geometry, or trigonometry. I had a lot of algebra to learn from Mr. Terry!

I sat by my friend Jamie Mosgrave. We both were having a hard time. Mr. Terry was helpful. He knew we were suffering. I never did understand much of it. My dad insisted on re-teaching a lot of the stuff to me. (Not sure if that was better or worse.) In the end I was grateful to pass. I think it was Mr. Terry's gift. I am still not very good in math especially, algebra.

In the American History class I was moved into from Mr. Francis's class I was with other students who were also in the National Honor Society. We were not pleased with our new teacher. At the end of the year that teacher gave us the A's we got on the tests and the C's he felt we deserved with comments on our effort. I guess the feeling was mutual.

I always felt that I got into National Honor Society because in Mrs. Harris's Art club when we had elections, Janie was nominated president. She declined and asked me to do it instead. I was surprised and everyone else accepted the change so I was president. Not sure we did much in terms of being a club. We loved the art projects!

The next year in California I was enrolled in a big high school in Long Beach with 400 new students and 965 graduating seniors. New students were considered like freshmen and no former awards were transferred. All clubs and sororities were closed to us new ones. The only clubs open to us were the French and the Cosmopolitan Club. What

a reality check! I sure missed the students and teachers at Bushy Park.

Bushy Park had been like a dream!

From Ed Brown (58)

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Enjoyed Connie Drennon's recall of the old British currency. Dad was stationed at Sculthorpe Air Force base. We lived off base at Hunstanton so I had the experience of dealing with British currency and military scrip. It wasn't anything to have a couple of dollars in scrip and several shillings in English coins while attending 7th and 8th. grade at Sculthorpe. I got a dollar a week allowance, which converted to 7 shillings tuppence while off base and seem to go a lot farther. Some weekends, when my Dad had to go in to work I would ride in with him and bag groceries at the commissary. Some Saturdays I would make 8 to 10 Dollars. I would exchange it for British sterling (3 or 4 Pounds) and that was a lot money back then in my neighborhood. I bought a thrupenny (3 pennies) bag of chips at least 4 times a week soaked in vinegar with salt and wrapped in newspaper.(What a deal!).Of course when I attended 9th Grade at Bushey all that changed and I was just another American kid living on my allowance and food money from one week to another. I missed all those different Brit coins on my last trip to England but sure didn't miss being weighed down with all the Pennies, Haypennies, Thruppenny bits, Sixpences, shillings etc.

This and That

From Judy (Risler) Covington (60)

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Hi to everyone!

Hey guys, I need your assistance. I have been asked by several to write something solid and profound about growing up in the military way back when. It's still in the talking stages, of course, but I already have several chapters based on my own journals over the years (I've kept a diary, of sorts, since I was eleven years old!). Nothing of any major consequence, but some unique things that happened simply because I was a dependent. I'm not looking for a sob-story, tell-all, oh-what-a-

horrible-existence-I-had-as-a-military-dependent type of thing. I'm looking more for a smattering of unique memories that had to do with being a dependent. Example: I was in the 8th grade at Reagan Jr High School in Wichita Falls, Texas, a huge 3-story edifice, brimming with civilian kids, with some of us brats thrown in for seasoning. Unique though I always believed us to be, we weren't exactly on everyone's most popular list. One day, our civics teacher was expounding on the merits of getting a good education, and what constituted a good education. My friend and fellow dependent, Jim White, raised his hand and made the comment that he believed that his constant moving and traveling had furthered his education like nothing else could. The teacher looked at Jim with just a hint of a smirk on his face, and said, "Oh, is your father a serviceman?" All Jim replied was, "Yes, he is." The class twittered a little, and the teacher steered the discussion onto something else. What Jim did not tell him was that his dad was the Base Commander at Shepard AFB.

So, anything you can dredge up out of your dependent past, that you don't mind sharing, would be appreciated. You can either get in touch with me on the email, or call me, at 318-388-1576.

Let's do this! I'm so sick of seeing movies and reading books that say nothing positive, if anything at all, about growing up in the military. Surely I wasn't the only one who had such a good time all those years. Let me hear from you. Please.

From J R Percy (60)
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I truly hate it when I get an e-mail that has a million e-mail addresses on it, and has been forwarded 50 times. In fact, a lot of those I will just delete without even reading. Most of them I do already, but it's nice to know that there are a few more things I can do, and that those that I'm doing are the way to go.

This ABSOLUTELY applies to ALL of us who send e-mails. Please read the short letter below, even if you're sure you already follow proper procedures.

A System Administrator for a large corporate system, has this to say:

Do you really know how to forward e-mails? 50% of us do; 50% of us DO NOT.

Do you wonder why you get viruses or junk mail? Do you hate it? Every time you forward an e-mail there is information left over from the people who got the message before you, namely their e-mail addresses & names. As the messages get forwarded along, the list of addresses builds, and builds, and builds, and all it takes is for some poor sap to get a virus, and his or her computer can send that virus to every E-mail address that has come across his computer. Or, someone can take all of those addresses and sell them or send junk mail to them in the hopes that you will go to the site and he will make five cents for each hit. That's right, all of that inconvenience over a nickel! How do you stop it? Well, there are several easy steps:

(1) When you forward an e-mail, DELETE all of the other addresses that appear in the body of the message (at the top). That's right, DELETE them. Highlight them and delete them, backspace them, cut them, whatever it is you know how to do. It only takes a second. You MUST click the "Forward" button first and then you will have full editing capabilities against the body and headers of the message. If you don't click on "Forward" first, you won't be able to edit the message at all.

(2) Whenever you send an e-mail to more than one person, do NOT use the To: or Cc: fields for adding e-mail addresses. Always use the BCC: (blind carbon copy) field for listing the e-mail addresses. This is the way the people you send to will only see their own e-mail address. If you don't see your BCC: option click on where it says To: and your address list will appear. Highlight the address and choose BCC: and that's it, it's that easy. When you send to BCC: your message will automatically say "Undisclosed Recipients in the "TO:" field of the people who receive it.

(3) Remove any "FW :" in the subject line. You can re-name the subject if you wish or even fix spelling.

(4) ALWAYS hit your Forward button from the actual e-mail you are reading. Ever get those e-

mails that you have to open 10 pages to read the one page with the information on it? By Forwarding from the actual page you wish someone to view, you stop them from having to open many e-mails just to see what you sent.

(5) Have you ever gotten an email that is a petition? It states a position and asks you to add your name and address and to forward it to 10 or 15 people or your entire address book. The email can be forwarded on and on and can collect thousands of names and email addresses. A FACT: The completed petition is actually worth a couple of bucks to a professional spammer because of the wealth of valid names and email addresses contained therein. If you want to support the petition, send it as your own personal letter to the intended recipient. Your position will carry more weight as a personal letter than a laundry list of names and email address on a petition.

Actually, if you think about it, who's supposed to send the petition in to whatever cause it supports?

And don't believe the ones that say that the email is being traced, it just ain't so!) One of the main ones I hate is the ones that say that something like, Send this email to 10 people and you'll see something great run across your screen. Or sometimes they'll just tease you by saying something really cute will happen. IT AIN'T GONNA HAPPEN!!!!

I don't let the bad luck ones scare me either, they get trashed. Before you forward an Amber Alert, or a Virus Alert, or some of the other ones floating around nowadays, check them out before you forward them. Most of them are junk mail that's been circling the net for YEARS! Just about everything you receive in an email that is in question can be checked out at Snopes. Just go to www.snopes.com Its really easy to find out if its real or not. If it's not, please don't pass it on. So please, in the future, let's stop the junk mail and the viruses.

Letters to the Editor

From Billie (Culp) Bules (54)
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I enjoyed reading the December issue of Bushy Tales and found 3 articles especially interesting.

The ones from Bob Lyle, class of 54, Judy (Risler) Covington, class of 60 and Tony Taylor, class of 58. These folks are not only talented writers, but have good memories. The address that Judy gave in the recent Las Vegas reunion brought back a memory of mine that had slipped into the back of my mind. I was a town student and found myself in a quandry when I was sent to detention after school, for talking in class when I shouldn't have been (I'm sure it wasn't the first time, but this teacher decided to make an example of me and issued the punishment). I called my Mom and she told me that she had no way to get me home, since I missed the school bus and I would have to find my own way home. After riding a bus, train and bus I finally got home 2-1/2 hours later. I did learn a lesson though and never had to stay for detention again.

From Tony Taylor (58)
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The Bike Tour of a Lifetime: Europe – Summer 1957 (Age 17)

CHAPTER 3

We knew this was going to be another hot day, and we had a long trek ahead of us, so by 5:30 AM on the 29th of June, Ric and I were on the road again. Our original plan was to take an easy ride to Saarbrucken, just 40 miles down the road from Kaiserslautern.

Saarbrucken is the capital of Saarland, the smallest of the German states. The state borders France in the south and west, Luxembourg in the northwest, and the state of Rheinland-Pfaiz in the north and the east. After World War II the Saarland came under French administration and was initially headed by a military governor. In 1954 a plebiscite was held in the protectorate to establish the area as an independent nation, but the plebiscite rejected it in favor of being allowed to join the Federal Republic of Germany, which it did just six months before, on 1 January 1957.

The early morning ride was easy and was only interrupted by the fact that Ric had a flat tire a couple of hours into the ride. This was only our second flat so far; Ric had a flat just out side of Bonn a few days before. After a quick roadside repair, we were off again feeling good despite the

rising temperature that was expected to be in the high 90s again. By 9:30 AM we were surprised to find that we were already approaching the city of Saarbrücken...much too early to stop for the day. After looking at our map we decided to continue for another 60 miles to Luxembourg; it would be a long ride, but why not? In hindsight we probably should have asked one of the locals first before we said "why not?". Little did we know that on the far side of town we were to come face-to-face with a very steep hill, one which could be classified as a mountain most anywhere else... at least to a bicyclist. The Saarland is beautiful with lush green trees in most every direction; over one third of the state is forest. But little did we know that our 3-speed bikes were not up to the job (or was it us?) as we started the climb up the two-lane road. For the next 3½ hours we tried pumping, then pushing our bikes as we slowly made our way, sweating till our shirts were soaking wet. Pushing a bike up a long, long hill (mountain?) is no fun, but when you get to the top there is nowhere to go but down, down, down. This may have been the scariest part of the ride considering that we did not have helmets. We were going so fast that at times I almost felt out of control of my bike, especially as we came around sharp curves. Our shirts quickly dried out in the wind, and before we knew it we had leveled out and were coasting along the Saar River and then crossing the boarder into the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.

Luxembourg is the world's only sovereign Grand Duchy, in other words, it is ruled by a Grand Duke. Luxemburg lies on the cultural divide between Romance Europe and Germanic Europe. The people speak French, German and Luxembourgish (really, that is a language... good for Scrabble). It is also a very small country with a population of under half a million people in an area of about 1000 square miles. Again, 1957 was a pivotal year for Luxembourg too as it became a founding member of the European Economic Community (later the European Union). Its largest city and capital is the City of Luxembourg, and that is where we were headed.

It was very late in the day by the time we rode into town. Fortunately it did not take us long before we found the Tourist Information Bureau, and were able to ask for directions to the local Youth Hostel.

We also made a momentous decision that had been brewing in the back of our minds. Our plan had been to ride into France and then south to Switzerland, and then finally onto the French Riviera. But after this past day of pumping and pushing our bikes up the "mountain," we opted for another mode of transportation: hitchhiking! We asked the good people at the tourist bureau where would be a good place to leave our bikes for a couple of weeks. After some thought they suggested that we go next door to the police station and see if they would consider looking after our bikes.

So here we are again, two grubby looking American teenagers in a day when few American teenagers were seen traveling around Europe, asking the duty sergeant at the police station if we could leave our bikes with them. After some animated discussion with the other police officers, and a phone call (probably to the chief), the duty sergeant told us to follow him. He led us down a long series of well-worn stone steps to what appeared to be a 14th century dungeon. He assured us that our bikes would be safe there; few people came down to this level. With that we looked at each other and laughed, and with a sense of relief and feeling very proud of ourselves, we headed out onto the streets to find the hostel.

Forgive me if I don't remember much about the hostel in Luxemburg that night... by the time we had taken a shower we crashed for the night and slept soundly despite some soreness in the legs and in the butt. Come morning we were ready to begin a new phase of our adventure. With a firm grasp on the straps of our saddlebags we were soon on the edge of the city with thumbs out. As was most often the case, before we departed a town we tried to make a stop at a street vendor and get our lunch to take with us. In Germany and Luxemburg this was usually a small loaf of crusty fresh bread and a piece of sausage such as bratwurst or weisswurst with a dab of mustard.

Although I had never hitchhiked before, during the 50s hitchhiking was common both Stateside and in Europe. It was considered safe and it was not uncommon for someone holding out his thumb to expect to hitch a ride in short order. Such was our experience as Ric and I caught our first ride to Metz, France, about 40 miles down the road. We

could hardly understand a word our host driver spoke through his brown tobacco-stained teeth as we crawled into the car, but we did get a nod when we said the word "Metz." He must have been a country-boy where true French was a lost art, so there was little talk during the ride as he smoked one cheap cigarette after another stinking up the car with his clouds of smoke. As with most everywhere in Europe, speed limits did not exist, so our misery did not last too long... in less than an hour we were thanking our driver with nods and gibberish as he let us off at the edge of town. As with so many cities, towns and villages in France, Metz is a city with numerous traces of the Roman era that made it at one time one of the centers of the Roman Empire in Gaul. In fact, the oldest church in France, Saint-Pierre-aux-Nonnains, dating back to the 4th century, is located in Metz.

Our luck stayed with us that first day of thumbing as we caught our next ride soon thereafter; this time we were heading for Nancy. Our host on this leg of the trip was a Frenchman heading home to Nancy with his wife and young son. No one in the family spoke English, but they appeared to be excited to have picked up two Americans. From what I could tell, it seemed as though they were trying to convey their gratitude toward America and the soldiers who came to help liberate France toward the end of the War. Although I long ago forgot their names, I still have a photograph of the family with Ric standing on the front door steps of their home in Nancy. They wanted us to see where they lived and insisted that we stay for supper. This was the first time we had been invited into a European home since leaving London eleven days before. After supper they then drove us over to the youth hostel and bid us adieu.



The next day Ric and I decided that we would try to make it to Remiremont in the east of France. We had no trouble again hitching a ride, this time in a truck that took us the whole way. Although our youth hostel guidebook indicated that there was a youth hostel in Remiremont, we found after we had arrived that the hostel had been closed and there were no others in the area; however, it was just shortly after noon and early enough to keep moving until we found a place to stay.

As we started to wonder through town, Remiremont immediately fascinated us by its old world charm and its history. The town is located in the Moselle Valley, and originally had been built around a monastery founded in 620; one of the earliest monasteries built specifically for women. Initially there had been 80 noble ladies housed there. These *Dames Nobles* became so famous in their time that a poem honoring them was written by an unknown poet in the 12th century. The poem is a story about nuns who are just a little bit naughty and who convene a conference with each other to talk about what sort of men they like.... (To me it sounds more like a medieval episode of the TV show, *Sex in the City*.)

Hitching a ride out of Remiremont was not as easy as we had hoped. We were now in a town that was off of the beaten track, and there were very few cars or trucks leaving town, especially during the afternoon nap time when everything seemed to shut down, including the traffic. As is custom with most hitchhikers, we continued walking from one street corner to the next hoping that our progress would be rewarded by someone willing to give us a lift. As we approached one intersection nearly at the far edge of town, we met up with another hitchhiker also looking for a ride. His name was Mark Black, an English lad who was traveling around Europe for the summer on his own. After some chatting and commiserating, the three of us agreed to teamed up in hopes that someone with room for three would give us a ride. Finally, by mid afternoon a French businessman came along and offered to take us all as far as Mulhouse, about 20 miles north of Basel, Switzerland.



Mulhouse is a relatively small city with its roots in the Holy Roman Empire in the 12th century. In the early 16th century it was a member of the Swiss Confederation until France annexed it in 1798 during the French Directory period. In 1870 it then belonged to the German Empire as part of Alsace-Lorraine, but by the end of World War I it was again a part of France. Of course the Germans then occupied and annexed it again during the years of World War II. All of this gave Mulhouse the appearance of a medieval town that seemed to be a goulash of French and German. Fortunately for us we caught another ride quickly enough for us to arrive in Basel in time to explore a little of that lovely town before the last light faded from the long summer day.

Basel is just inside the Swiss borders with France and Germany. Although Basel is less known by tourist than Zurich, Geneva, and Bern, it is Switzerland's second largest city. In fact it was once a Roman town, home to 20,000 people before a Germanic tribe destroyed it 1800 years ago. I still have a photo of Ric and Mark Black (who looks as though he could have been Ric's brother) drinking water from an ancient public water fountain. The youth hostel there was again up to the high standards of so many of the European hostels, and cheap!



The following morning we were off to Bern, another 65 miles away. I draw a blank when it comes to how long we had to wait to be picked up in Basel, but I know that when we arrived in Bern early in the afternoon, we knew that we had arrived in a city that was one of the most charming we had seen thus far. If you have never been to Bern, it too will become one of those favorite small cities you will never forget. It is tucked onto a peninsula in a sharp crook of the River Aare. It is truly quaint with so much of the city looking the same as it probably looked five hundred years ago. Considering that it is the seat of government for Switzerland, it is a relatively tiny city. But here you will find an embassy from all of the world's great, and not so great nations. Subsequent to the time we were there in 1957, Bern became a designated World Heritage Site by UNESCO. Again I remember how clean and neat everything was, including the hostel where we spent that night.

The next day was the 4th of July, and we were headed to Geneva. Our first ride only took us so far in that direction. I remember that we had been left out in what seemed to be nowhere surrounded by sheer mountain cliffs and where cars seemed to be speeding by at what must have been in excess of 100 miles per hour. And then we saw it... a red streak heading toward us... we instinctively stepped further to the side... zoom, zoom, as the commercial says! Wow, it was a bright red Mercedes 220S convertible (top down, of course) looking as if it were responding to a five-alarm fire! As the car passed us, clouds of dust billowed up around us... and then we heard the crunch of tires on gravel. The car had come to a stop a couple of

hundred feet down the road. As dust began to settle, we could see that the driver was waving for us hurry up and run toward him. As it turned out, he was a young Swiss businessman heading home from Germany having just picked up his brand new car. We were going to be his first passengers. The fact that I am here telling you this story now is testament to the fact that we survived the next 50 miles, or should I say, the next 20 minutes, as we got to zoom, zoom around the curves passing every car in sight! Yes, I was a kid of 17 who loved red sports cars, but I was not quite ready for speeds such as that; it was a true white-knuckle ride. After he dropped us off in downtown Geneva I wanted to take a picture of the car, but by the time I pulled my camera out of the saddlebag, he was gone... he was out'

Before heading over to the youth hostel just at the edge of town, we went by the U.S. Consulate in Geneva to see if we had any mail from home, but it was closed... of course it was closed... it was the 4th of July! I had also checked for mail at the U.S. Embassy in Bern while we were there, but again no mail. I think that our parents did not expect us to be this far south already since our initial intention was still to be riding our bikes.

We could see Lake Geneva from the hostel, but other than being spanking clean, the hostel was nothing to write home about. But I did send a postcard home showing the famous jet of water (Jet d'Eau) spouting high above the lake at night. Other than some beautiful 5-star hotels, and the international flavor of the city, there was not a whole lot to do or see. It is often referred to as the smallest metropolis in the world. Geneva is the home of the International Red Cross, as well as the site of the European Headquarters of the United Nations. As we walked through some of the hotel lobbies we saw glitz and glamour, but there was nothing there that tempted us to stay more than one night. This was also the last day that Mark Black would be traveling with us; he was headed off in another direction... we were heading for the Riviera.

Ric and I hitched a ride out of town early the next morning heading back into France. Our first ride took us to Annecy, a picturesque town on an Alpine lake. As I recall, Annecy has a beautiful "old town",

or ville de vielle, with canals and stone buildings that must be hundreds of years old. Again, it was one of those romantic, medieval old towns with cobblestone streets and gas lanterns. But getting out of town was another issue; there were very few cars going our way. Finally, after about three hours of holding out our thumbs, a truck driver came along and offered us a ride in the open bed of his truck. At first the ride was fine as we were still on a fairly level road, but soon we could tell that the truck was climbing, climbing higher up along the edge of the French Alps. Being that we were exposed, the air was cooler, and then it got down right cold as we bumped along for the next several hours. Finally we came into a valley and the town of Chambéry. Chambéry was once the capital of Savoy, and is a principal gateway to Italy. There is a 14th century Chateau des Ducs de Savoie situated here. This was the home to the Savoie dukes before they moved back to Turin.

Not only was I aching from the long ride in the back of the truck, but also I was very hungry, thirsty, and not feeling so well. Both Ric and I were dead tired, yet we already knew that there would be no youth hostel in this old town. It was late in the afternoon when we finally stepped inside a café (it looked more like a working man's bar, but there was nothing else in sight) for something to eat. The café, or bar, was not very appealing, nor did the bartender speak any English. My high school French could not match his backcountry French. The only food he had available was some day-old sandwiches and wine or beer. We passed on the wine and beer, but asked for a Coke or an Orange Squash or water. No Cokes, no Orange Squash, and the water tasted awful. I was definitely not feeling well... "où est la WC?" I asked. He pointed to a door in the back. Ugh, the WC was no more than a closet with a hole in the floor. Don't ask me to guess if it had ever been cleaned. Whew, the illness came and passed, but now I felt weak... and so tired. But here we were in a town with no hostel; it was dark by now, and we did not know where to go. We asked which way toward Grenoble, and started walking. We walked and walked, leaving the town behind us. As we left the town we became one with a dark, lonely road that now started up the mountain with all of its twists and switchback turns. About once an hour a truck or car passed us coming down the mountain, but nothing was coming up. The air was cool, but

not cold, and the stars were now so brilliant that we could see our way by their light. Every star in the sky seemed to twinkle... and there... and there... there goes another shooting star....

It must have been past midnight when we first heard, and then saw the lights of a car slowly making its way up the narrow mountain road. At last, maybe a ride, but then again, who would stop in the middle of the night and pick up two strangers? As the car approached, we stepped out into the middle of the road to wave it down. The car was going so slow that if need be we could have moved out of its way as it passed. The high beams came on and the car stopped about 50 feet from us... the engine still idling, or should I say laboring? For several minutes Ric and I stood there not wishing to spook the driver by being too forward in our approach. "Qui sont vous," and then "Venez ici." ("Who are you; come here.") As we approached the car not thinking so much of our own safety, but just a chance to hitch a ride to somewhere... anywhere... the bright lights remained fixed on us. We slowly walked over to the driver's side and said "Américains... où allez-vous?" We could see that the car had other passengers in it; the driver turned to the person in the passenger seat and started speaking quickly and very animated. Then he turned back to us and said "entrez," and indicated for us to get in the back seat. This was easier said than done since his son, about 8 or 9 years old, was sitting in the back, and his wife was in the front seat. Did I mention that this car was a post war vintage Renault, a 2-litre, 4-cylinder rear engine car made in France? I think they came in battleship gray, and were no bigger than a VW Beetle. Anyway, the boy crawled up front and sat on his mother's lap, while Ric and I squeezed into the back amongst bags and bags of food and other household supplies from a long day's shopping trip in town. My long legs were under my chin; our saddlebags were thrown on top of the groceries. Both Madame and Monsieur started talking a mile a minute at us while their son looked at us with wide-awake eyes. We had no idea what they were saying, but obviously we had found another "friendly" ride. The next problem was getting the car moving again. I am not sure if I heard the tooth of a gear go "clunk" somewhere beneath us or not, but that little car shook and heaved and tried its almighty best to get moving up

the hill. With much coaxing, and possibly some French swearing... "Père, arrêtez cela!" ("Papa, stop that!") shouted Madame, as the car inched forward. With each little inch, or it could have been each little centimeter, the car moved a little faster and with more confidence. We then drove slowly and in silence, afraid that if anyone spoke the car might be spooked and would come to a halt for good.

We did not pass or see another car or truck for the next 40 minutes or so as we kept climbing up the mountainside. Then up ahead we could see the faint glow of some gas street lanterns and the outline of some whitewashed homes where the road crested and then leveled onto the street of a very small village. In the still of the night the car stopped. Ric and I unfolded our legs and practically crawled out of the car on our knees. "Merci beaucoup, merci beaucoup, merci beaucoup... bonne nuit... merci beaucoup..." We watched them slowly drive down a narrow lane for about a half a block and then come to a stop as they had arrived home. We were left standing in the center of the village... the main road turned to the left, continued for about another block, and then turned to the right and immediately was out in the countryside again. There was just one shop in sight, and we could see lights coming through the shop window... we did not have to guess what type of shop... we could smell it! The baker had the croissants and daily pain (bread) in the oven. Oh, but how good it smelled. But when we went and tapped on the window he shooped us away; everything was still in the oven.

Ric and I were both wide-awake now, but yet dead tired at the same time. We walked along the road to the edge of town and looked around to see where we might be able to stretch out for some shut-eye. There was a field along one side of the road, but from the road and the fence, the field went straight up a hill. We could tell that it was a cow pasture because the grass was clipped short and irregular. But what choice did we have? Over the fence we climbed, and then crawled up the hill about another 50 feet. We put on our yellow ponchos to curl up in so as to keep off the dew. We lay down with our head at the high end and with our feet pointing downhill. It did not matter that the field was rough and rocky; we were asleep almost immediately. Then we were awake... despite our feet pointing

downhill, our bodies were slipping inch by inch down the hill. With a chuckle to ourselves, we crawled back up the hill and closed our eyes again. This routine must have gone on for most of the rest of the night as we fought to stay put and get some sleep. Soon, much too soon, morning came and I could feel my feet up against the fence just a few feet from the road. I could also sense that we were being stared at. A circle of cows had wandered over and were just looking at us with those big brown cow eyes set in those big flat faces. Trust me, there is nothing like waking up and laughing out loud at yourself... it is good for the soul.

Tired, grubby, and hungry. Ahh, but we knew where to get something to eat... the bakery. We were not the first in the shop, but the baker smiled when he saw us for the second time as we drooled over his fresh baked goods. As I recall, he also offered us some creamy fresh milk.

By mid morning there was some traffic on the road again, so we were able to hitch a ride on another truck. There were more mountain roads to climb that day until we finally came down into a long valley into the small city, the City of Grenoble at the foot of the Alps. Grenoble is surrounded by mountains, and is often along the route of the *Tour de France*. It is also a very popular ski and recreation area. Its history goes back to Roman times during the 3rd century. After the collapse of the Roman Empire, the city then became part of the first Burgundian kingdom. In 1968 Grenoble was the site of the Winter Olympics.

It took us an hour or more to get close enough to the western edge of town before we were able to hitch another ride. Most of the traffic heading west and then south was going to the great port city of Marseille on the Mediterranean coast. We knew that in Marseille we would find a youth hostel and a chance to shower, shave, and get a very good night's sleep.

After Marseille we were heading to the French Riviera and to see another girl....

From Pat (Terpening) Owen (58)

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got this from a Welsh friend, and thought it was hilarious. He didn't mean any slur against the US or

the President - in fact, he's probably a better American (although he's English) than many Americans and really likes President Bush. However, if you think this might offend anyone who gets our newsletter, don't publish it. Again, I thought it was hilarious.

A message from John Cleese to the citizens of the United States of America:

In light of your failure to elect a competent President of the USA and thus to govern yourselves, we hereby give notice of the revocation of your independence, effective immediately.

Her Sovereign Majesty Queen Elizabeth II will resume monarchical duties over all states, commonwealths, and territories (excepting Kansas, which she does not fancy.)

Your new prime minister, Tony Blair, will appoint a governor for America without the need for further elections. Congress and the Senate will be disbanded. A questionnaire may be circulated next year to determine whether any of you noticed.

To aid in the transition to a British Crown Dependency, the following rules are introduced with immediate effect:

(You should look up "revocation" in the Oxford English Dictionary)

1. Then look up aluminium, and check the pronunciation guide. You will be amazed at just how wrongly you have been pronouncing it.
2. The letter 'U' will be reinstated in words such as 'favour' and 'neighbour.' Likewise, you will learn to spell 'doughnut' without skipping half the letters and the suffix -ize will be replaced by the suffix -ise. Generally, you will be expected to raise your vocabulary to acceptable levels (look up 'vocabulary').
3. Using the same twenty-seven words interspersed with filler noises such as "like" and "you know" is an unacceptable and inefficient form of communication.

There is no such thing as US English. We will let

Microsoft know on your behalf. The Microsoft spell-checker will be adjusted to take account of the reinstated letter 'u' and the elimination of '-ize'. You will relearn your original national anthem, God Save The Queen.

4. July 4th will no longer be celebrated as a holiday.

5. You will learn to resolve personal issues without using guns, lawyers, or therapists. The fact that you need so many lawyers and therapists shows that you're not adult enough to be independent.

6. Guns should only be handled by adults. If you're not adult enough to sort things out without suing someone or speaking to a therapist then you're not grown up enough to handle a gun. Therefore, you will no longer be allowed to own or carry anything more dangerous than a vegetable peeler. A permit will be required if you wish to carry a vegetable peeler in public.

7. All American cars are hereby banned. They are crap and this is for your own good. When we show you German cars, you will understand what we mean.

8. All intersections will be replaced with roundabout s, and you will start driving on the left with immediate effect. At the same time, you will go metric with immediate effect and without the benefit of conversion tables. Both roundabouts and metrication will help you understand the British sense of humour.

9. The Former USA will adopt UK prices on petrol (which you have been calling gasoline) -- roughly \$6/US gallon. Get used to it.

10. You will learn to make real chips. Those things you call French fries are not real chips, and those things you insist on calling potato chips are properly called crisps. Real chips are thick cut, fried in animal fat, and dressed not with catsup but with vinegar.

11. The cold tasteless stuff you insist on calling beer is not actually beer at all. Henceforth, only proper British Bi tter will be referred to as Beer, and European brews of known and accepted provenance will be referred to as Lager.

American brands will be referred to as Near-Frozen Gnat's Urine, so that all can be sold without risk of further confusion.

12. Hollywood will be required occasionally to cast English actors as good guys. Hollywood will also be required to cast English actors to play English characters. Watching Andie Macdowell attempt English dialogue in Four Weddings and a Funeral was an experience akin to having one's ears removed with a cheese grater.

13. You will cease playing American football. There is only one kind of proper football; you call it soccer. Those of you brave enough will, in time, be allowed to play rugby (which has some similarities to American football, but does not involve stopping for a rest every twenty seconds or wearing full Kevlar body armour like a bunch of nancies).

14. Further, you will stop playing baseball. It is not reasonable to host an event called the World Series for a game which is not played outside of America. Since only 2.1% of you are aware that there is a world beyond your borders, your error is understandable.

15. You must tell us who killed JFK. It's been driving us mad.

16. An internal revenue agent (i.e. tax collector) from Her Majesty's Government will be with you shortly to ensure the acquisition of all monies due (backdated to 1776).

17. Daily Tea Time begins promptly at 4 pm with proper cups, never mugs, with high quality biscuits (cookies) and cakes; strawberries in season.

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