

## The journey East...

At 0615 brother Ric, on the way to work, drove me, both full packs and guitar to the train. Arrived London at 0700, dropped big pack & guitar for the day, £5 at Victoria Station Left Luggage. Went to post mail, walked around Regents Park, past the Queen's house, had a final English Steak & Ale pie and read - "Highlanders" (a book about their history). Picked up salad, fruit and juice for bus trip. Grabbed gear then sat reading at the station as bus to Amsterdam delayed 90 minutes. Trip delayed again for one hour at Chunnell security. We were directed into a closed train car. There's nothing to see, so most just wait out the trip through, on the bus. Had a great long talk off and on during the trip, about alternate energy with a young engineering student from Hamburg. In Rotterdam we picked up an Afro-Dutch mom who let me photograph her two gorgeous, sleeping, adopted sons, orphaned brothers from Africa.

Arrived Amsterdam at 0300H. Even though I was just winging it for my accommodations this trip, I was so tired I almost began to feel sorry for myself that every hostel, B&B and hotel I walked by was "FULL". I realized very soon that it was a beautiful, warmish, rainless morning. "Enjoy the coming dawn", I thought! I strapped my 8 kilo day-pack on my front, hiked up my 25 kg backpack, threw my guitar and strap over one shoulder and began to walk the canal area, beautiful in the quiet lamp light. Trudging along I could not help getting a little misty eyed at the thought of eighteen year old kids in Canadian uniform who had walked through this and other areas of Europe even more heavily burdened and bone weary than I, heading towards their end. The Dutch really have never ever forgotten this. In the following days I would chat with a few of all ages about it when they found out I'd come from Canada. They really do learn as kids and

remember the Canadian sacrifice, perhaps more-so than our own children.

I stumbled across signs leading to "Anne Frank's" house about 0330H, followed them, sat on the canal side and told her quietly I was sorry this kind of thing could ever happen, especially to kinders and thanx for writing the book and that our school kids read it and study the horrors surrounding life under Hitler's NAZI occupation.

At 0400H an early thirty's aged couple passed by in romantic embrace- read out loud, "Canada" on my pack, mentioned it was twelve degrees inferring I might be cold in shorts. Beefy me in motion wasn't. They offered me a couch in their flat to bed on. I might have, just for the experience but by now I was pretty wired and knew I'd not sleep anyway. I thanked them very much but said I was wide-awake and would just enjoy the approaching dawn and sleep a little longer "tonight". They smiled and said in delightfully accented English, "So... hvee ontorstahnd. It's beautiful morning. Have a nice time in Ahmsterdam".

I wandered the canals towards my future accommodations and sat in a little cobblestone plaza over the centre of two crossing canals, laying against my pack on a park bench, reading by lamp light. There's a life-size bronze here of Theo Thijssen, [tao tysin], a school teacher and writer of "Kees de Jongen", Kees the Boy, about growing up in The Depression and WW2. All Dutch kids read it in grade school, and as Barbara at the hostel would later tell me, "We seldom overeat, we clean our plates and now always be thankful for today never to be eating tulip-bulb soup". I think this might be something that far too many Canadian kids have forgotten these days- "if they've a secure dry\* bed to wake up in, a little food in the fridge to break their fast - anything else, EVERYTHING else, is

really a bonus, or should I say gravy; (\*even if like me, that bed is wet until age 12).

Around 0600H I moved into a nearby café, not the Pot kind, and had “chocolate coffee”, a bagel and wrote. The young proprietor showed me a photo of Canadian troops bivouacked here at war's end awaiting ships home. Tried to get a photo of it but it was at the back of a heavily glassed locked cabinet and didn't turn out at all.

Checked into a hostel at 0900H. Very nice, very clean, very organized, € 20 / week nite, € 30 / Fri- Sun, includes breakfast. Cheap older hotels are € 50, while the regular / posh hotels are € 65 to 400. Room and entry pass card, € 5 deposit, are electronic; six to a room, three bunks, a large secure cupboard each for packs; security cameras everywhere. Thanx to sister Heath I have her nifty little combo locks, one for pack and one for locker, (combo not 355 anymore Heath, now 416). There was also a secure storage across from check-in for my guitar. The Inn's near everything here. After settling in, I immediately walked the half kilometre to have a look at the possible campers these guys have that are economical of fuel and reliable. [www.bwcamper.com](http://www.bwcamper.com), was recommended by a teaching colleague. I ordered a book from [www.roadtripeurope.com](http://www.roadtripeurope.com) in the States by a couple who have van travelled Europe a lot, who also recommended them.

Serendipity break: Nephew Chris had shared with me a story about how in the middle of outback nowhere Australia, a Birkhamstead girl two years his junior, whom he did not know until then, travelled with him for a while. I had then shared with him a few small world stories. TeeStuThms would remember some from our widespread camping trips; another re the crazy Scots lass Lynne from my flight

whom I met up with again @ the Edinburg Harry Potter release; the Settle Bar-owner & piping-instructor in Sterling Scotland who knew my colleague Jack; finally, the Romanian orphan ex-student Adrianna in London story. This next one now, perhaps, tops them all.

In 1976 Mary Campbell and I arrived in Amsterdam in cold, rainy January and had spent several days trying to find a decent VW camper van at the classic and traditional for it's unregulated day, parking lot across from the American Express. After several days we were getting discouraged. A young Alberta couple were all happy they had found a shiny “newish” looking camper and were on their way. We would meet them later and learn their shortblock had blown up and needed replacing in Spain. Mary and I finally found a bit of a banged up, cream coloured, rust spotted VW with rustic but complete basic facilities inside. I checked out the engine and it seemed excellent with compression in two cylinders several pounds above 125 lbs, near new good, the other two were only a pound or so under, good also. We made a snap decision to buy it from this young bearded hippy guy in a faded red Mexican poncho just like mine. I make a note of this because when I went this time thirty years later, to the office of B&W, to look at the web-pics and details on available Vans kept at the company's lot about 20 minutes away in the industrial area, the clean shaven guy I met seemed somehow familiar.

Okay serendipity, here we go. This familiar looking owner now has a new partner my age, as well as another young guy working in the office. They have three mechanics in their own small modern garage at the lot. This now clean-shaven guy is the same guy who sold Mary and I, the other Van for U\$900 in 1976. He recalled he bought and sold that van a year and a half after he had sold it to us.

Mary and I had sold it directly to a couple from Toronto when we got back. He said he remembered the van but, "Someone had painted a large Canadian flag on the front". That someone was me. He said it was bought and sold for a few years by Canadians, but then someone painted it over with a Danish flag. I told him I had sanded out and bondo-patched, undercoated and spray painted all rust spots then painted that huge Maple Leaf flag on the front, while sitting around in campsites. We had eventually sold it for U\$950. He's made a good life doing this ever since. Only now it's very government regulated- road worthiness, "air-care", insurance, registration, etc. and there are only a few dealers left. When we were out driving the van I chose, he said he's just sold the business to the new partner as his former life partner died suddenly of pancreatic cancer last year. He said after he died he just had to move on. He's going to live in Israel actually. He's sixty now.

Back at the office he showed me some pictures from the early years and I noticed the red Mexican poncho and said, "That WAS you who sold us that Van! I had the same faded pink poncho. That van ran beautifully". I took out my laptop and showed him images I had scanned from slides of it.

I'm really happy to be going to places I've never been before on this trip, as I have no desire to feel like I'm reliving my already incredible past. I returned to the hostel, picked up a walking tour guide and set off for the day to ponder my choices. 'Sightsaw' all day, then took my tired feet to bed at 2300H.

Had hostel breakfast at 0600H, then went to a café for mocha, to read. The Van I decided on today is a five speed manual, Citroen diesel, with slightly better facilities than 1976. It has a built in propane stove,

sink and twin 35 litre plastic water containers as well as a three way fridge-220V, gas and 12V. It also has standing room, so no more sitting to cook like the VW. As well, it has an outside canopy.

Now, I get to see Amsterdam at my leisure as the camper gets a tune-up, fresh glow-plugs, oil change, paper work, green card for export, insurance, etc. all done by them. Paper work takes a few days, up to a week.

I'm staying at The Tourist Inn hostel @ 52 Spuistratt-sales@tourist-inn.nl. I recommend it if you don't want to waste money on a much dearer hotel or chance some of the dirtier dives at € 5 less.

#### Amsterdam Bicycles

Two wheels one speed,  
Baby in front, toddler behind.  
Riding deftly, umbrella in hand.  
Friends of all ages doubling fine!  
Business suit, fancy dress date,  
Passenger held parasol cover for two.  
LR 2005

Up at 0700. Wandered to Red-light District for a look around then found an English second hand bookstore and used copies of The Hobbit and LOTR-Fellowship. Also found an art supply store and bought some Dutch charcoals to send as a nice surprise to Jeremy. At noon I stopped into a bar full of Kiwis and South Africans- which was showing the Aussie/Kiwi Three Nations rugby union game live. Excellent lunch- chicken breast, huge salad and a handful of tiny, pan fried potatoes, € 6. The Kiwis were very friendly to this Canadian about rugby. They told me they thought our youth team had had a first "fluke" win vs NZ, as well as against Aus. Retired early to read as heavy rain began to fall. It was nice not having this when I arrived Amsterdam at 0300H.

Up early to all day rain, spent on reading, writing, editing Magickall England iMovie, and the InterNet here for € 1 per half hour, not as cheap as cafés. Bought curry dinner-to-go next door and retired to read Hobbit.

Paperwork to be ready, tomorrow Wednesday, so just wandered Amsterdam, read beside three or four assorted canals then went back to hostel to clean up and drop laptop and pack in my locker.

Took Barbara, the day shift 0700 'til 1500H, desk-clerk from the hostel to dinner and picked her twenty year old Dutch college brain about Dutch kids. She suggested "Foreign teens and older are like kids in a candy shop with soft drugs here, which Dutch kids use once in a while". I kinda like to think, hope my own kids are more like the Dutch in that maturity. Stu and Thms are perhaps in the category of wilder Dutch youth, but still responsible and hard working. "Most college age kids have jobs in the tourist service industry, working their asses off and making good school money during the 5 or 6 month height of the tourist season. They study hard, toke once in a while and drink some only on weekends. Two or three weeks before exams or major paper due dates they don't party at all." She also said, "Most kids pace themselves during months away from academics and seldom binge." She's been to England and thinks the kids there binge the most, especially weekends. I might agree on that one.

"Many Dutch kids age fifteen and up have a government subsidized tourism services job. Unless they are 'bad' kids. Then they do physical work in camps repairing dikes, planting cover plants, etc. and they have to go into the army earlier." "Yes!" she said, "many Dutch kids smoke pot." "BUT!" she qualified, "they use it, almost the way

previous generations used Champagne-for special occasions." Retired at 2200H to read Hobbit.

Checked out of hostel at 0900H. Said "see ya later to Barbara\_Angel!" That's, "underscore" mom, for those of you less email-savvy. Agreed to meet-up later this aft when I came back on public transit. Picked up Van at B&W this morning. Papers not ready until tomorrow, so on the company insurance I drove to nearby Amsterdam Bos (woods or forest) to set up camper. All needed supplies, cooking and eating, most small tools, canopy parts, camp chairs are in good order. Set up the canopy and checked everything out.

Took the excellent transit back into town later in the aft. Met Barbara at the hostel. She lead me down the street to the Bull Dog Café. She hadn't been to a "café" in quite some time as she had to start work right after college final exams and then had to study as well for three weeks for some big government English certificate. She had just taken the exam two days earlier. It rates Dutch kids out of 10 on English proficiency, especially related to your career path. I believe her when she says she scored a rare 10. 'Idiomatics', jokes, etc. being what the final 10 mark covers. She is pretty bilingual that way. She really even knows how to translate "cultural differences" into words. They don't say, "Get to second base, etc." on a date, but she knows "score a home run" is the same as "plug the hole in the dike".

She had the next three days off work so we had an interesting time. I picked her brain for four hours PT, so about two hours Terra Firma Time, then we went next door for a glass of wine and chatted until 1930H. We then walked me to the bus stop on the way to her parent's home. Dad's a prof, mom's a well sold artist of Amsterdam buildings, canals and scenery.

Arrived at the campsite around 2030H to a shocking shades of ruby-red sunset. Read Hobbit, to bed.

Today I drove to a nearby shopping centre and bought bedding, pillow and grocery supplies, as well as a few small pieces of hardware to make small mods to camper. Hung around the campsite loading up, reading, writing etc. Camped here again tonight.

Left Amsterdam 0800 and drove to Arnhiem grave-site. The first Canadian grave I came across had the curious name of Lieutenant Wellbelove. There's a plaque showing how groups of school children are organized when they come once a year, year round to tend the graves. They are immaculate. Drove on to a museum re "Bridge Too Far", now housed in an old elementary school. When I approached the gate a German shepherd dog started barking at me. Ironic! It was interesting to see the many different cloth ID patches the many people were forced to wear. Pink triangle was for Gay men. Now how did those Nazis know they're partial to pink... someone in that NAZI party been dabbling in the closet have they? Bought a square of four stamps with Hitler's image for my bro Ric. Camped in Arnhiem Bos, near Oostbech. Chatted with a very nice older Belgian couple next to me, the first of several I would meet on this journey.

Left at 0700H, passing the rebuilt "Bridge Too Far". Drove the 120 km per hour hwy towards Berlin. I stayed in the 80 km lane with the truckers. The 300 km trip took over six hours with almost two hours of delay due to several bad accidents. Found out later in Berlin it was a long weekend with the accompanying auto mayhem. We were stopped four times for deadly wrecks. Every few kilometres,

there is overhead signage showing speed changes with two separate signs showing "accident in progress slow to 80". Bizarre! Why don't they just slow down?

Free-camped in Potsdam forest, west of Berlin, walked to a Brauhause, had a litre and read Hobbit. Watched first C-wack lake "Kids" DVD in the van then to bed.

Slept in until 0800H, read Hobbit, had brkfst then drove into Berlin about 1100. No traffic, few people around. Long weekend. Yes! I'm only here for the day so I decided to take the € 12 - two hour double-decker bus tour. The Canadian embassy is the only one which was purposely built straddling the olde wall line. Our guide was excellent and quite funny. This will be my last night in Germany. Been here before twice and as I would find out at lunch I don't really feel that welcomed. Had a typical German fayre of Veal Schnitzel with potatoes and cranberry sauce with a half litre of in house brewed wheat ale. I can't understand how someone as nice as Jon Asbacher can be so different from the average arrogant German I've run into. Went to English speaking Cinema at Potsdamer Platz for the 1730H showing of "Crash", that Chris had seen previewed in London. Excellent. Cath should take a look at Sandra Bullock's character here. Took a souvenir parking ticket off the van and left Berlin at 1945H. Drove South East for about an hour then free-camped under some trees at the edge of a quarry sorting yard. Stayed up reading Hobbit and listening to music. Absolute downpour for a while followed by huge sheet lightning storm which never moved from all around us. Crashed dead tired at midnight.

Up at 0600H. Drove due East all day. Picked up a € 30 ticket before leaving Germany for not pulling off the road far

enough taking video. Although I was courteous throughout, the stocky little cop started yelling at me immediately as he “ripped” my passport and papers out of my hand. I continued to film the windmill generators as he muttered and wrote the whole time. Other than “schwein-hundt”, I didn’t understand him anyway. I don’t think police officers should call civilians “pig-dogs”. He then pushed my papers and a ticket in my chest, yelling some more. Then they burned rubber and sped off on down the highway. Within the next hour I counted some dozen highway grave shrines that I even cared to notice. No doubt, many are caused by some idiot like me pulling over to film and surely not anybody doing the average 140 plus kilometres per hour. Crossed the border through Frankfurt Olde into Czeka Republik and drove to outskirts of Praha to Camping Sokol arriving at 2300H. Twenty-one Zloty per night. All facilities as I need to do a wash after two weeks in dirties. Oh ya! No € uros here yet. Czeka Rep will begin using both next year in transition. Bed right away.

I really needed and had a good sleep in until 0900H. Woke to sunny skies.

### **Camping with Mac Visualizer**

Believe it or not, hard for some to imagine, during this next segment, relaxing on and off in the van, going back and forth to the laundry; I was very clear and straight of mind, alternating between reading the Hobbit and writing while listening to Green Day, LOTR, etcetera.

When I paused on the keyboard for a while and the iTunes Visualizer kicked in, and followed the music for LOTR, I’d watch it until this very journal’s notation pulled me back to write or read Hobbit. At one point, Dwarfs, Gandalf, and Bilbo have just escaped the Goblins in Misty Mountains where Bilbo found the ring. Bilbo says, “I won’t quite share about that

at this time”. Ooooh! What happens next? Bye bye Hobbit... and journal. Save NOW. Cmnd S/Q kiddies. Time to relax with some music.

A half hour later, I go back into the journal with this comment on- The Apple Visualizer... NEVER Wrong?!?

Thms aren’t they trying to brainwash us into loving the MacIntosh more? You can answer this for me if you’ve ever seen something appear in iTunes for PC. Was it the Apple or Windows logo or nothing that appears on the PC?

Then watch the Mathematics going into the Mac Visualizer. Isn’t it somehow “calculating” when the piece of music is at a moving emotionally positive moment, then presenting a faint, ghosted Apple Logo at screen centre which disappears as the music ebbs.

Of course for us less musically inclined, perhaps we might better see and hear the math of- algorithm generated “chaos”, harmony, sequencing, patterns, geometry, Math of the Universe- like that Mobius strip thing, while in an altered state. I used to love getting kids in my classes to take a strip of paper and make a mobius strip whenever the right moment popped up in any subject, from Space Science to Math to Reading to Socials Egypt. Eventually they all knew what a mobius strip was, but, like I, could never really fathom how it could possibly “be”, as in how can you be on both “sides” at once... endless space running round and round on itself.

The relationship between art & music theory in the Visualizer as the average human envisages them... colours, intensities, tones, rhythm, beat, counterpoints, brightness, darkness, ebbs and flows, range, change of key, modulation, repetition, etcetera, etcetera- hey I’m no more an art music guy than I

am a wine guy- cut me some slack here folks. AND a growing, iTunes updated database of a poly-algoric-multi-faceted algorithm I cannot even fathom. I read that the iTunes algorithm has apparently been generated by Apple programers just for the Visualizer, from the responses of selected people of all kinds from their answers to questions of feeling towards musical passages from a broad range of genre from Alternate, Rap, and Punk to Opera. Ouch! Now there's a number crunching algorithm I can't fathom right there.

BACK to the Visualizer - Thms, in "The Ride of the Rohirrim", watch the Visualizer and you'll get an idea of what I'm trying to bullshit about.

Clean laundry tucked away; camper sorted out; beef, bread and beer in belly; journal up to date; off to bed with visions of Visualizer in my head.

Rained all nite. Love the three sounds on the van roof. Ping off the metal roof; Bing off the back sunroof vent and Blop off the bigger double-pane front sunroof. Sounds like some wild drumming thing going on, especially when raining in gusts. Catherine Jean, I'm not sure you could sleep to these sounds, but then they're more like C-wack Lake roof music, so perhaps. Slept very peacefully in until 0700H waking to pissing rain. Put on the cocoa, sprinkled in some Nescafé, dripped in some milk, then curled up and read until 0830H. Left at 0900 for Praha "Centrum" in the nine seater van with five other people for the thirty minutes in traffic to the Centreville or as they say in the EU-Centrum. Round trip- 60kc = € 2 = Can\$3.20.

Beautiful city! Took a five hour walking tour with ten others for € 10 each. We stopped for a 40 minute lunch break near several restaurants. I had some kind of stew with

sliced dumplings, bread and beer. Not a lot of area to see really, but very interesting history of buildings, bridges, river and people. The oldest surviving European synagogue is here along with a very old jewish quarter. Shot some nice DVD material, especially on the KING Charles bridge. My old scout patrol leader and child-rearing buddy, Bruce Fairburn would have loved the Dixieland band, much like his old group, "Sunshine". The camp bus-group met at 1730H in the Centrum, for trip back. We all realized it'd not rained all day but was starting now.

The "camping" area I'm in, would be like "camping" in Vancouver's Maple Grove Park area, then driving into Georgia & Burrard. There are neighbourhoods and houses around us and a stream, lake and park along one side but they're outside the compound because the entire campsite is behind a gorgeous 16th Century brick wall about 80 cm thick and three metres high with a rounded broken glass-tip infested top. There are lots of mature trees sprinkled throughout with campervan and tent spaces. It's about half the size of Connaught park, i.e. two city blocks in a rectangular shape. There is a store, canteena/bar, showers, washer and dryer. The place is nearly full with people from all over Europe. It used to be the private orchard garden next to a palazzo of some Royalty or other pre-revolution mucky-muck. The "little" Palace is now a private Catholic "Gymnasia" or High School, not currently in session.

The 25 year old kid, Joseph, who runs the checkin/out desk seven days a week for three months a year, from 0900 until 2100H at this popular sixty spot camper-ground, speaks many languages. Fluent Italian from father, French from mother, and all three- Joe, mom and dad speak perfect Spanish where they summered two months every year. Parents were in the diplomatic corps. He also speaks, Czeka, Polish, Russian, and Hungarian

fairly well, as well as Danish. Most of these I heard him handle fluently while using the internet in the reception area. English he said, "I'm pretty good". He was very good. He says he took German in school and always spoke it fairly well, better than English, but in the last six years doing this summer job here every year, he's lost his taste for German and said "unt nien ist zoo gut... oont und now, I slowing speakee, not so goot!" or some such thing.

I stood talking with him after I came to tell him I had moved some woman's clothes from the washer to the dryer and then started mine washing, but she came in and went berzerk, yelling at me and shaking a fist at 5 cm taller and twenty kilos heavier, in my face. I said to Joe, "Anywhere I've ever been around laundromats people are so used to doing this!" He asked, "Vuz she Germant?"

I said "It zounted like Gaerrman to me!"

He said, "Never! Ever! touch a German's anything... clothes, camping stuff, nothing. They don't like that!"

I said, "I didn't know".

I told him, "When the German lady's lady friend came into the laundry, they started speaking about me and the incident". Mine German ist gut nuf to unterstan, mut dae ver gusaying. (I always want to throw a word like Gemienshaft, or maybe Gezelschaft [sp?] in there somewhere).

While I was talking to Joe, the irate German ladies came to complain and one to shake her fist at me again, Joseph showed how poorly he can speak a broken German. The ladies were about 55 or 60. The childish look on hand-shaker's face was like Olga the school yard bully. Perhaps most Germans are very nice, just not the ones travelling in a pack. Totally bizarre but entertaining.

As the Germans left a Portuguese couple came to sign in. Joseph, doesn't speak

Portuguese he told me after they left, but he "Spanish/ Italian/ Hungarian-ized" his way through. He said he can understand Romanian okay, and the Portuguese can understand his latino. They communicated just fine about some- going to town info, canteena hours and food, and the complicated washer dryer rules, like "no group sign-ups". The ten German couples had just passed the key on to each other without being in the sign-up book. Maybe these were just the hells angels of German campers. I hope so, because Germany is apparently undergoing a 're-Christianizing' movement as shown in this current election. Like "How Christian are you? I'm more so than you are! No I am!" Maybe they're trying to get back in GW Bush's good Christian graces or perhaps it's once again more about keeping Germany for the Germans no Asians or Turks.

Oh well. Humans are slow learners and history always repeats itself- WW1, Viet Nam, Iraq, you know what I mean.

Slept in 'til 0900H, after a late evening up 'til 0200H, then spent the entire day, reading, writing, walking an hour each way to market for full pack of groceries at the SuperMarket and later watching another "kids" DVD #2. It's too bad some of the early stuff had faded on tape so much. At times you can't see any detail in the faces and things are really washed out on my iBook. At least, however, you can still see the basic mannerisms and hear the voices perfectly, which gives a pretty good idea of the kids growing up anyway. Tee was little Ms. Assertive at home. I don't know how her mom could stand her. I kept thinking she was a tiny "hobbit sized" grownup. I always seem to treat her very 'proper' and adult like. Stu was Mr. Happy man, unless having soap in the eyes. Thms not on the scene 'til DVD #5 or later.



Up and gone by 0900H. Drove smaller back-roads alongside an old rail-track that heads from Praha, CZ, towards Oswiecim PL- Poland. Things in the world and my age have changed a lot since 1976. Since then, for me, we have had some horrific anniversary documentaries and images about WW2, the camps, the Holocaust and murder of ten or twelve million, jews, gypsies, homosexuals, political & religious leaders and other opposition to the Nazi Party. As well, I think I myself have learned a lot more this past ten years in the Middle School where we'd done some very interesting Remembrance Day's with assorted media we'd organized to accompany the wonderfully moving choir/drama performances.

Uncle Aaron was of course always very special to the family. We loved him and crazy Auntie Rita as much as any of our many members. We loved his simple little old Vancouver 'broly shop. Like the Ford Model-T, you could get a reasonably priced, built for Vancouver weather, sturdy umbrella in any colour you wanted as long as it was black. I used to make any excuse when passing by on the way to the Army & Navy or to see brother Ric at WW-FoodFloor especially. Aaron usually started out a little grumpy until he knew you weren't going to waste too much time. Then he warmed a touch, especially if you had something relevant to talk about, particularly classical music or some piece we had played in Sr. Band.

I approached Oswiecim in the late afternoon, early eve, wondering if it might be closed earlier tomorrow, Friday "Shabbat" and not open until afternoon on Saturday. At least that's what's possible, but then there were plenty of jews and non-jews who might want their story told every day of the year, Catholic Sunday included, so who knows.

The 2030H crimson-red sunset was terrific on a clear nite. No photos, I just read and

gazed at it occasionally and then let it sink slowly away. Reminded me, from up here on this dike along the river opposite the camps, of a Vancouver sunset. Two wacky Polska women jogged by just before I packed it in. A mother and daughter I think. They smiled as they twirled and said, "Hello Canada!"

I said "Hi Poland!", to which they retorted, "Polska" and trotted off giggling. Read Hobbit until 2300H, then woke at 0230 to pee and write this entry to find it pissing rain on roof also.

Woke at 0700H and what a day that was! It turned out quite wonderful in the end, but touch and go by 2150 as I begin to write this entry far along the road.

Let me back track here just a bit. Yesterday, I had arrived Oswiecim late so I free-camped. The guidebook says no camping around here anyway. I ended up someway along a nice tree lined dike on the other side of the river from the camps. I had pulled off on a dirt road, driven along, then up onto a dike and along away from the river. I could see houses across the field to the south east around a bend in the dike. I took a folding chair out to sit and read Hobbit and watch the sunset with a glass of red wine. I had run out of "gaz" for the burner and fridge, and am finding it harder to get as I move east. I decided to run the fridge on 12 V for some stupid reason. It's meant to save gaz when driving between camping spots. 220V for campsite outlets. After this incident, I better have gaz for "free"-camping from now on or the fridge is going to get warm.

I was sitting comfortably beside the van sipping a "robust though fruity, yet dry" red Polish wine, Can\$3, all the while quietly and stupidly draining the entire battery system.

Several locals had wandered along enjoying the evening and said, some version of "Hi!" A mom Cath's age and her daughter Tee's age jogged by chasing each other playfully. As they trotted by they sang, "Helloooo Canada!"- spun around jogging in synch and with warm voices finished with "bye Canada" which sounded like "Buy-Canada". Yes! there is a little Canadian flag sticker above the NL tag on the back licence plate as well as under the side mirrors. It saves confusion of people thinking I'm from Holland.

I sang back to the two joggers, "Hi Poland!"  
"Polska" they chirped back!"

It was a pretty cute ACT from a mom and daughter having fun together. See DVD photos. They aren't "soft looking", but they are both actually "blond" Poles- thinner, taller, strong arms. Dagmara actually highlights her white blond hair with darker streaks. How would I know? Follow story and see photos in DVD-Europe 2005. An ugly red dye job seems all the rage in PL at the moment.

TeeStuThms- as I write this tonight, I listen to the LOTR sound track and it just went from the "Prophecy" to "Concerning Hobbits", and! isn't it amazing! how well each piece fits that part of LOTR. Seeing the movie helps, but only someone whose ever read LOTR could enjoy that beauty in the music. Tolkien's writing is quite beautiful, e.g. I'm twelve pages into the chapter Kingdom of the Golden Hall, in Two Towers. Théoden has just spoken with his daughter Éowen. Tolkien's narrator says,

"Grave and thoughtful was her glance, as she looked on the king with cool pity in her eyes. Very fair was her face, and her long hair was like a river of gold. Slender and tall she was in her white robe girt with silver; but strong she seemed and stern as

well, a daughter of kings. Thus Aragorn for the first time in the full light of day beheld Éowen, lady of Rohan, and thought her fair, fair and cold, like a morning of pale spring that has not yet come to womanhood. And she is now suddenly aware of him: tall heir of kings, wise of many winters, greycloaked, hiding the power that yet she felt. For a moment still as a stone she stood, then turning swiftly, she was gone."

AND this isn't even anything significant in the way of his writing as far as semantic ordering goes.

One of my Tolkien favourites is the description of Rohan as a country entering a dark period- "as if moving towards a Springless Autumn".

I guess Tolkien was just doing his Anglo Saxon version of the Scandinavian Saga poems. I'd hope father Bill could someday see the metre, cadence, and poetry of JRR's phrasing and the Operatic quality of LOTR. Tolkien's writing is like a toned down, simplified, more readily understandable to all, Shakespearean poetry. It's like an Opera that goes on for twelve hours in the movie or six months of reading in your spare-time non-stop - for me that is. Some people read it three times a year. Unless the reader on tape is excellent, one cannot really capture the sound of his writing. I listened to the Official set of 13, borrowed from a student Alex Middleton and it was... well... okay.

Back to the Polska women, my van and the dead battery.

I wake up at 0800H the morning after the "Hi Canada!" incident. No rain. Nice morning. Quiet, other than a soft highway noise coming across two rows of trees, a hundred metre wide river and flocks of pigeon like birds cooing.

I realize I fell asleep with the interior lights on for the first time. Although, I may have been dreaming, so I open the fridge and it's already getting not cold. I get packed up, turn the ignition to diesel "glow plug mode" and Nada! Ziltch. I'm voltless. Shite. Panic! Naaaaaa.... within a moment of no noticeable heart rate increase, I take stock like any capable D&D veteran.

Water? Plenty, it's full  
Dry bed tonight? Yes, Built-in  
Food? Plenty, just stocked  
Food to go bad? none, thanks to UHT milk  
Fuel? Lot's of diesel; Useless at the moment  
Electricity? None, nada; somewhat important at the moment  
Jumper cables? Crap! I told you to buy those in Berlin! Hey team-mates! I was studying city life there, not shopping for parts and stuff

I load my laptop, camera, BU Drive and iPod into my pack with rain gear and head around towards the houses I saw beyond the trees along the dike. At first home, man has headphones on at some kind of loud machine doing some repetitive task like beating flax. The second house- no car, deserted looking. The third looked promising because like many Polish homes, they have some business attached from the commie-days. This one said, "Auto-Meckanik". I figured I was way too lucky, this far from town centre. And I was right. I knocked on the door, a voice came shortly from a balcony behind and above me. I backed up and looked up at the mom of the two joggers. Their dog "Brutus" was barking deeply.

In Russian I say, "I speak little Russian!"  
Making fun of my accent AND Russian, she says, "thyats yokay I speak English... Canada".  
I say, "Oh! Poland Mom, jogging! Hi!".

I explained my battery was dead. She says, "I'm sorry. My husband meckanik is away in Rotterdam working".

Mom, Bogania Kojodziej,  
ul Kamienice 19,  
32-600 Oswiecim,  
cell 00.486.03.090.613,  
comes down and answers the door.

I asked if she had jumper cables. She said, "Of course I can jump you, my husband's mechanical". Now if this is starting to sound like some racy erotic movie, it's not! It's beautiful & international & wonderful.

She tells her daughter she's going to help me, comes down and we get in her little blue Ford Escort, "American", she boasts. Apparently actually a great car for Poland if there's a meckanik in the family. "Never buy Hyundai from Korea, they die young in Poland!", she mentions, being a meckanik's wife.

We drive the kilometre back up around where she passed me jogging. She knows exactly where as she jogs by that way most days.

I set the cables in place, triple check and rethink polarity... as if it might somehow be different here in the East from we in the West. Naaa! Red red, black black, plus minus! It's good... she starts her car. I get in and set the diesel starter to glow; they glow, BUT No go! Starter just RRrrs. Ahhhh! No panic. Check list now includes interesting woman Cathy's age who would be great to compare outlook on life with and find out about Poland. AND! she has a cellphone and is married to a mekanik!

She says not to worry. She calls cell number of her husband's old partner at his home business, five minutes away. After a short discussion, we drive back to her house and she says his son is coming but

she and her daughter, who is now coming out with two dogs, must walk them now.

I say, "Thanks ever so much", thinking that was it.

She says, "Here is my business card! Call me if he needs any translating and come back when you are fixed".

I said, "I'm already fixed". She looked puzzled. It was then I knew how good her daughter's English was. She translated into Polish, just at the same time I was motioning scissors cutting at my groin. "Oh Fjixed. No more byaby!" she draws again. They leave giggling, themselves being towed quickly by a small frisky lab and a larger terrier.

Dagmara leans her head back as they trot off and says clearly, "My aunt's family lives in Ajax".

I almost say, "Ajax is in the U.S." but I check myself against this Pole, who seemed quite bright. Random memory check. Ajax Canada, COMPUTING-Getting it- Ajax Ontario possible? Yes there's an Ajax Ontario. Whewww!

Meckanik friend's son comes with "tow car" - Polish do-it-yourselfer's way... he tows me in my van with a rope, five minutes away to a concrete and brick garage with a home on top. No hoists, two in-floor bays.

Father hooks up heavy duty battery. Glow plugs get totally ready all circuits go. Crank engine... irr irr.

"Starting motor" he says.

My, "How long to fix?" in Russian gets me the answer- "three hours".

No way? I'm translating again now... Did he say 3 hours or 3 days?

I ask him if he said three hours, like right now.

He says, "Yes, friend Bagonia".

I wasn't sure if he meant I was a friend of hers or she was his friend, which I assumed he meant. I asked how much?

He wrote 240 Zlotys? I walked to the bank about forty minutes towards Oswiecim Centrum and took out ZI 1000 just in case I got it wrong, because it works out to about \$75 for a rebuilt starter installed. It was correct and he topped up my oil and washer fluid for free. I gave him the money plus \$5 more as it started better than ever. Very perky. I drove back to their house and parked.

I asked her if that seemed a fair price or if he had charged me too little. "The price was correct", she says, "he did me/us a favour by putting it ahead of two cars not being picked up for a day or two. Well, he could have perhaps charged an extra \$10", she admits. I was just very pleased, as it would have been two or three hundred or more in Canada. She used to do the books for their home business. Then she had a full-time accounting position for an LNG sales company that went broke with corruption. She now works pretty steadily from home for small companies that don't need a full time accountant.

I had picked up three slabs of very chocolatey fudgey cake at Tesco's PL, when I went for cash there. There are enough females in our family to know women like chocolate, especially if it is dark and has ginger in it eh mom!? But it seems most women enjoy it better when the guys join in the guilt trip.

We sat and chatted. Her husband has a good job with a large company in Holland. Twelve hours away, direct driving. He works two months, six days per week there, one week home during factory turnaround time. Really, one day travelling home, five days home and a day back.

Bogonia said the family almost moved to Canada, ten years "before".

"Ago", says Dagmara. I was okay with "before", completely understandable.

Dagmara is studying to be in the tourist trade and has excellent English, Polish and Russian. Kids no longer learn Russian she said. She was actually in the last class to go through with it. Reminds me of the last class of Dr. "Four-eyes" Latin when we were in grade nine at Kits.

I say, "- to Ontario, where your sister lives?" Mom asks how I knew that. Dagmara reminds her that she had said "Ajax", going on the dog walk. Meanwhile Dagmara's giggling at something on MSN Messenger.

She says MSN is called GAG in Poland. While her mother and I talk politicks about Poland, their struggling small business now gone under, Dagmara is listening as she will correct her mother's English at times, from what is quite intelligible to more grammatically correct. Yet both have nice Polish accents. Neither can stand the Russian one she mimicked for me on the balcony earlier. They do not like Germans much either it turns out. Apparently, many German tourists, still act like Poland is a backwards part of Germany and treat the people as backward also. I ask them why I see so many women with very red dye jobs. Mom says, "it's fashion". "...able!" says Dagmara. She then says, "Many women in Russia and Poland dye their hair platinum like my mother's"

"Oh! you dye your hair?" I ask.

Dagmara says, "No we don't dye ours platinum, it's natural. I streak my hair, so it doesn't look platinum dyed!"

"Dyed Platinum", I correct and wink at mom.

Her mom smiles, Dagmara sticks her tongue out and says politely to me, "Thank you".

Then I say, "Naaa! Your sentence was correct, perhaps better, either is awkward in English".

I think to myself, "Seems out of whack when women are dying hair not to look dyed".

Exchanged snail and e-mail addresses so I can write and say thanks.

Said good-bye after what seemed a long day. It was only 1330H. Drove to The Camps and it was so my lucky day. I went to the queue behind some Italians who were just paying to go on tour. Clerk said, "Next English tour at three o'clock". I bought a ticket with only an hour to wait and went to look around the displays inside here. I heard some Brits coming in behind me asking for two to the next English tour. They're told no more English left for the day. Whew! I squeaked in under the wire. I hoped also to get moving on to Saint Carol Woityal's home town and Bishopric- Wadowice to see where our latest saint grew up.

I take the camp tours, nearby Berkinau first but bail out of Oswiecim early as it's just too much. Too many details I already had a godforsaken image of. I found it impossible to get a clear photo, flash or no, through the heavy plate security glass, of the tens of thousands of confiscated glasses and the Zyklon-B canisters. The guide told us the glass has to be so thick because of the reaction of so many to these acutely painful symbols of horror. After we had viewed old photos of children, notably twins, two seventeen year old German girls became very upset as we left the building, sat down on the curb sobbing repeatedly something like, "Nicht mein volk [mina-folken]", not my people- I think. I sat next to them and wanted to say something like, "we are all capable of this and it still goes on in Africa", but I know it'll do no good so I just get up, walk to the end of the street, thinking along the way that it must be tough on German kids to see this. Especially the gallery of twins, age ten months to five years, cute as buttons,

mutilated and murdered to study- all shown in experimental write-ups. That was certainly the turning point for those two young ladies. I tried to video tape one last segment alone, but was so upset for the two girls, all I could say was, "I'm so proud of our dad having those WW2 Veteran's license plates on his car. "

I hit the road to Krakow, with a side trip through and past Saint JP2's home town. His folks had a nice joint you can tour now for Can\$20 (that's a lot for Poles). And his old Cathedral is getting a huge facelift. Million Zloty copper roof, sand blasted, cleaned and repaired. Also a huge new statue of Papa JP. I suppose it has to look presentable as a First Class shrine to a Catholic Saint. And he's the fastest to ever be canonized so I guess he goes into the Guinness Book of World Records as well. I wonder what the category is for that one? I think, "how ironic", as I remember back to what mafioso like, Father Guido Sarduchi used to say on SNL in the '70s... "Remember when Saints used to have to perform three REAL miracles, no ifs ands or maybe-buts. No two solid miracles and a parlour trick like that changing water into wine crap!"

Now the five years get waved and the miracles are all pretty flaky, like "taking down Russia". What a miracle! It seems now it was eventually going to happen anyway, he gets credit for speeding it up. Some miracle! And to think Mother Teresa's cononization went through such a lengthy process. Is she a Saint yet?

Ran into a huge traffic jam on the small highway to Krakow. After a half hour sitting still, a German walking back to his car said four kids in a small Skoda car had driven under the axle of a lorry, passing others. When I finally drove by the scene, there was less than a metre high pile of scrunched metal covered in foam and a big tow truck was getting ready to lift the lorry. The bodies were obviously still

blended inside. If this were Canada, no traffic would have passed an accident like that until all was cleaned up. Whistler highway comes to mind. There are so many little mini-shrines along the Polish highways and as it will turn out, the rest of my Eastern trip. It's almost like car crash death is part of their religion and culture.

I'm Krakow camping in the burbs not too far from the Centrum. \$10 per nite all included. Every other camping closer to town is three times the cost. Auto benzene (gasoline) here per litre is Can\$1.40, and diesel is \$1.05, compared to \$4 and \$3 in Western Europe.

Going to sleep with the Hobbit, I recall I once dated a blonde woman named Dagmar. Dagmar Liepa! But she was a buxom blond Danish kid. Great day overall, ending with a cozy dry bed, belly full, food in larder, van fixed already and plugged in to fully recharge everything.

Up and gone by 0800H to Krakow by public transit, 2.5 Zl, to Kashmirih Galleria looking for leather work boots. Took in the old city streets and buildings. Lots of great old shops away from the Galleria. Stood and watched several repair guys for a while- small electrical appliances, shoe soling as you wait, etcetera. How I love the smell of rubber cement and leather anytime I pass a shoe shop. Must be something in the childhood past!

Returned to camping and treated myself to a restaurant patio salad dinner for 4 Zl and a 500 ml beer - cheap at 1.5 Zl each. Guys nearby, from a wedding party started chatting when they heard me speaking English to the waitress. At first they thought I was American and were just interested in speaking English. When they asked, "what State?", I said I was from Canada. They then became very friendly and came over to my table and asked questions about Canada. Seems a lot of

Poles dream of going to the West especially Canada. Many friends have gone to Scotland a few to Canada. We had several shots of Wodka over the next while. Every wedding table has several bottles. The bride came to pull one of the guys away to dance, then I realized we had been hogging the groom. The waitress Natalia was almost stiffed by me as I drifted back to the camper. I returned later and tracked her down.

Back in Krakow by 0830H, I hired an English speaking student, Marie, near the bus stop, to give me a \$3 per hour, three hour walking tour of notable buildings and spots. We finished at the old central market square which was going wild with an ethnic fayre. Had a typical Polish meal in the "dungeon" of the old city hall, including, perogies, borsch, thick slabs of assorted heavy breads and beer. I gave the mug of warm pork fat with pig-rind chunks congealed in it a miss and instead had the real butter with herbs on my bread.

Took the minibus back to the burbs stopping for the Salt-mine tour. We walked 490 steps down a narrow spiralling wooden staircase. Miners walked down one way, returning by lift.

Photographs could not do the huge caverns justice and it was just a bit too dull to video as the DVD shows. There were three notable, spent caverns. One has now been finished as a huge cathedral used every Sunday for services. It was certainly as big as the average Canadian "church", like St. Andrew's or Canadian Memorial. There is a life-size salt block likeness of JP2 on the occasion of his visit and the full mass he did here shortly after he became pope. The next is a high vaulted cave with intricate Polish scenery carvings scattered everywhere in niches. A lightshow accompanied by music of Polish composers, was too difficult to

catch well on video as the lights came up randomly during the show and were pretty dull to the camera's eye as seen on the DVD. The last was a huge convocation hall, complete with cloak-room, reception area, bar with heavy wood dining tables, stage and dance floor. Since shortly after WW Two, all high schools in Krakow and surrounding area hold their grads here. It was the only space big enough after the destruction of public buildings, but continues today as a wonderful tradition, which also pays tribute to the mine.

It made me reflect on how we in Vancouver love to do away with traditions. Simple example: the NHL Canucks have had numerous jerseys in 35 years. I liked the distinct original blue and green hockey stick "C". The Canadians, Leafs and Bruins have kept their basic design for nearly a century. What really makes me wonder about tradition chucking is how and why Kitsilano ever became the Blue Demons? What the hell was that all about? And even more curious and less understandable was why the grad night format was ever totally thrown out. What was wrong with: arriving with grad-partner and mixing with classmates in the good olde cafeteria; supporting a local Kits caterer providing a simple sit down dinner in the decorated 401 gym which held so many memories for all, from PhysEd classes to staging area for all those band concerts, etcetera; marching into the "Lawson / MacKenzie" double gym, bleachers filled with parents; "Pomp and Circumstance" played by next year's Sr. band consisting of this year's grade elevens and newby Srs. to be, currently in grade ten; clearing the gym of chairs as parents and grads mixed in the cafeteria; returning for the formal dance with grad partner and those on your twelve slot dance card, while parents proudly watched a song or two.

Why is it we don't value tradition? It's as if it's become traditional to slag, refashion or

systematically shuck away traditions. Our bums have even become too soft to be able to last a three hour awards ceremony sitting on carefully crafted shapely contoured wooden seats in the auditorium. What a great fund-raiser- seat pad rentals for soft butts, five bucks a pop.

I walked the hour back from the old Saltmine to the campsite through several tiny villages and hung out, eating with some Aussies and Brits. You'll notice them watching the break-dancing boys on the DVD. The Brits had talked to the break-dancers. They said these boys put on a half hour show once an hour off and on all day, rain-showers permitting and pull in 10 to 20 €uro per show, € 150 per day. They make more than most people flogging stuff and services. Two are in Uni, one is a musician by night, the other is in grade ten. The Aussies of course had fired up the barbie (sp?) and we pooled our assorted beer for a taste sampling. Uncle Steve will remember the card game, 369. Sort of like "bridge for 3" which we three guys played for a couple of hours, while the girls chatted. We all five flakes hit the hay at 2200H.

Left camping at 0500H, driving East North East. From here, all the way to Kyjiv / Kiev it's like travelling the prairies of Canada. Thms will recall how fast we did that part to Winnipeg. He drove part way. The PL/UA border had several huge line-ups. A Ukrainian fellow in a suit in the car next to me, saw the Canada sticker, checked my plate, then told me to go up the other lane to a special non-UA queue. Must have missed that one in the guidebook. A quick inspection of my "Canada very nice camper, Canada guitara, very nice Canada", camper and ten minutes later I was on my way East again. Not sure if she meant nice camper, nice Canada, or nice guitar but she was very nice. I free-camped in a grove of trees in the middle of nowhere between

Rivno closer to Korosten, around 2230H. Thms will recall our Canada trip driving all day and sometimes all night. Yes Thms, I have to start pulling off earlier when I can see more easily a safe place to camp.

Left for Chernobyl at 0500H, passing by and stopping at the museum which is not near the nuclear plant but in an historic town fire-hall. It's just weird passing through an area that was "killed" by nuclear fallout. At times I feel like holding my breath as, heaven forbid, "I wouldn't want to die of cancer". Pulled off several hours away from Kiev in a huge cornfield by a pond at 2030H. So quiet and deserted here. Ate some half size cobs, right off the stock, raw with dinner. Delicious. I know I know! It's stealing but I thought me being here doing my thing for them might be worth a few free corn cobs. Read for two hours with some wine, roadside market pear and fresh cherries.

Up and gone by 0430H, arriving in Kiev at noon, pulling into a parking lot to ask help with directions to the nearby Uni. A fellow in a black leather jacket was checking under his car hood. His old battery had died while he dropped off his wife and chatted for a while. Serendipity again, as he turned out to be my University contact Jens. Felt a little mafia or spy like. We jumped his car with my battery and he lead me to the school. I kinda hit the ground running as the techs and I worked excitedly until midnight on adrenaline, mapping out their server. One of the problems here is that they still don't trust Microsoft "in the west" with remote viewing for assistance and troubleshooting. We backed up the Mac and PC files separately to isolated drive banks overnight and I slept in the van in the parking lot.



Spent most of today, reconfiguring their file-saving structure and testing it. It's pretty much the same now as the way we've set it up in the west, separate OS files - separately controlled PC drives. They will notice for sure, how much more quickly the files save and load now especially on a busy network, as well as solving missing/hidden file problems. At lunch we went out into the campus park for a picnic. They love being outdoors here. Even with global warming. Sorry Mr. Bush, they really seem to notice it here. Winters are nowhere near as cold as twenty years ago as these kids remember. They still have a short warm season and take advantage of it.

In the later afternoon I went with Boris (Bear) to the Polytech. The Uni and these guys are in touch all the time. Some techs from two other colleges joined us and we had a look at the network structure together. About 1930H we picked up my van and went to party at a nearby apartment where two of the techs live. They had asked what I wanted for dinner and I had said, "Ukrainian please?" They had picked up "food-to-go" and lots of beer and vodka. Then we played college drinking games in English, so most of the time it was "how do you say?" At least it slowed their drinking up, but these guys and gals all love to drink. One 26 year old tech and Math Algorithm T.A.- Kathryn-"the Great" they call her, drank with no seeming effect except she was hilarious and affectionate to all. She kept dragging anyone nearby up to dance. Reminded me of our own "Cathy-rine" after a few drinks. Apparently, I'm a very good dancer, but it could just be the, "Green card to Canada talking", I told her. Guess it's the same in college Canada, but at least these guys seem to be getting a lot of stuff done. Although my van was downstairs they insisted I sleep on the pullout in another room down the hall where two of the techs also live. "Myor com-pfor-teeble" and "syee-yafer" I gather.

Having tried to drink less than the others, I was up at 0630H and wandered the streets near the apartment. Lots of activity at this time in the summer. Some students were banging on the window of a tram car and waving. I realized quickly it was probably for the Canada rugby jersey and not me. When I came back to the apartment the techs were watching TV, eating breakfast. TeeStuThms- did U know that the guys in Green Day, love the Classical piece, Nimrod, by Adrian Boult. You have this piece on your greatest classical albums. I heard this same Green Day interview when I was out with the kid Barbara in Amsterdam. No wonder Green Day have an album titled Nimrod.

At 1000H we ran a workshop at the Polytech for a couple dozen techs from assorted colleges in the city. Emin, a UA born, asian looking tech, perhaps offspring of Genghis Khan has been given time to go to other schools and step them through the actual process once they all get the idea. They all seem to have just let their file servers evolve out of control the same way, so that being understood, it's a matter of back-up time followed by reorganizing, but I bore myself and readers here. At 1400H, we broke up and I had a really good tour of the University with my original contact Jens. There will be a rally in support of Falun Gong on Saturday

Went to dinner with Jens and his wife Zava, at their home. Request for food? Ukrainian of course. I thought it was remarkable that she had been able to spend the whole afternoon cooking what with organizing the concert tonight, but he said, "she very organize and I meeyade soup last night". They were both excellent cooks to my taste buds' knowledge. The soup turned out to be borsch from scratch. I tried it with and without sour-cream. Without was better I think. They eat a lot

of sausage here so it was nice to have a rack of "lamb" rib. After dinner they took turns playing piano and singing Ukrainian duets. They even knew the Russian version of the Russian song we sang in primary school, "Mishka" what have you been doing? Naughty little Mishka! We even sang it together in English, once they reminded me of the other two versus. Got some great video but alas!

Later, we drove back to the symphony hall where he and I had first met by coincidence. Or is that fate Thms?. The fund-raiser she organizes annually was sold out but she, "managed to scrounge up an extra ticket". He lent me some clothes as I had naught but jeans and a jean shirt at best. The concert is always fashionably late in summer and started precisely at 2100H. "No-one is Ever late to Ukraine music concert", they told me. The performers mixed with the crowd beforehand and ranged in age from 8 to 80. I myself could tell little difference in their playing, it all sounding virtuoso, but then I'm not a musician. The concert opened and closed with traditional costumes and dance with of course eight Cossacks bringing everyone to their feet on both occasions. Jens explained later that it's really one way Ukrainians can show their nationalism and "steal them back from Russia, who stole them from us in the first place". I got some great video, but unless it gets found and sent back from Romania where my camera and a 1 mb card were stolen... alas.

Mom, dad and siblings I should say at this point thanks ever so much for gifting it to me. But it is gone. I was devastated for a bit, but as Cath will know, no one can ever take those images away she and I "lost" in Israel. I still have clear flashbacks of her standing on a burned out rusty tank in the Golan and rows of volunteers warming up en masse at sunrise below Massada. We never took photos of our silly little gang marching around with sticks like in the

movie "Stripes" with Bill Murray, but I can see and hear it clearly if I close my eyes. I will always now, be able to shut them and see an audience jump to their feet at the site of black, red and gold garbed Cossacks finishing with a flourishing bow in Kiev.

Nevertheless, I apologize for having lost it in Romania. Story to follow later in journal. At least I have those great images and video from Scotland, aunt Greta, the Spey, Glenfiddich, Oxford pub and especially Stonehenge night out. As well, I have the DVD portions I did save herein especially The Camps, as well as East Europe to this point & a few photos later.

Apologies for the discombobulated jumble in the DVD from the Ukraine on. At this point I had been trying to shoot more and more in video on the big card and saving images on the small card... and I had been so busy I hadn't saved to computer. A tough lesson learned. Apologies for the quality of the DVD "storyline" from here on when you see it as it will be based mostly on photos and only a bit of video.

Stayed the night at Jen's and Zava's in my own room and large bed. We had not returned until midnight so went to bed after a half hour chat.

Spent the day starting at 1000H, at the Polytech on a projected computer, showing those techs from the area and their supervisors who had opened their network to password protected remote control, how and why it's helpful and the kinds of things MS tech-support can check and suggest or fix for them. Then, how to make sure they can be securely locked up again. Fielded tech questions for an hour then we went to "observe" a Falon Gong protest. Beautiful day for it. Along the way we stopped for a street vendor beer and to watch some guys playing Asia's Go? or No? I don't know... the one with the little

white and black buttons. Derek will know! Chess is also huge everywhere here. Some young cop at the protest kept eyeballing me. He really didn't like me taking his picture. I was wearing a red Che T-shirt, with the Canada rugby shirt over my shoulders just in case.

After that, it was party time at Vladi (lot's of Vladimirs here) and Terassa's apartment. When they hesitantly mentioned to this "older guy", that they were going to shoot off rockets the next morning at the range. I was right into it, thinking back fifteen years ago to when I had taken TeeStuThms over to their school to shoot off little foot tall, parachuting solid fuel rockets. Later, we watched some UA site-gag TV something like "Just for Laughs". No language barrier here, we were all in hysterics. They had the one where the delivery guy walks in to an office, places the "gift-box" on the desk to get the waybill signed, tips it over and the "fragile" glass something inside shatters loudly. I could just hear Thms' infectious laugh. These tech-kids would have loved hearing it. Everyone was really tired so we bagged it in early. I slept on a pullout tonight.

We stopped for breakfast on the way then continued our drive out to the rocket centre towards Fastyv and I mean Rocket! These were nothing like the ones I made with the kids. See stills on DVD, alas no moving smoke trails. These went off like, "Here now... GONE!" They actually carry scientific instruments and locator devices. Never animals anymore. It's both a loving hobby and science. We also went to see some space memorabilia nearby. Tonight we had Chinese. A lot different than ours. Other than the huge, whole, cut up bbq duck, everything has noodles or Dim Sum style dumplings of some kind. I put on a show of Canada photos pumped into their forty something inch TV for a group of six. They are fascinated that I've been so

many places in Canada, especially "wild places". One of the guys dreams of bathing in "the Yukon where was the gold-rush" and "Is it cold, Yes?" Strange to hear him as he began reciting Robert Service's poem, "Sam McGee". I joined him and we got into a rhythm that everyone began tapping to. Later I showed him the Yukon DVD segment with the original version of "Aurora Borealis / Where Montreal is" and told him my boys and I thought it was pretty funny. Of course that opened the bag and they had to see the whole video. Thank god we didn't drink much and packed it in at 2200H. I was bagged from the fresh country air and "chinese".

We met at 0800 for four hours in the morning with a group of very savvy young techies and student assistants from local "enriched" high-schools. After showing them what we had been doing, they asked questions in perfect English. It's interesting to note that when Gates is asked if there's anything he regrets not having done, his usual response is that he was always focused on Software Engineering and never learned another language. Well of course programming is a language or many languages, but I understand what he means. These kids are the tech brain trust and they all speak English so clearly and effortlessly as well.

At 1300H I drove SW towards Khemel-nitz-kiy at least that's how it sounds to me. Some big wigs have set up a meeting with area techs there for me at 1330H tomorrow. I free-camped at 2230H with real bread pretzel, fruits and cheese and a few swigs of wine.

Started off at 0500H after falling asleep last night instantly at 2300. Highballed it for Khemel, appealing to Vinny the van to run smoothly straight through. I'll mention here, I called the van "Vin Diesel", but

somehow he seemed more like a "Vinny" after a while.

I pulled into the University early, at noon using the "MapQuest" directions Jens' guys had given me. The techs were waiting and eating a lunch set out for us as they had everything set to go. There was an alternate sharing session planned if I failed to show. We started a little early at 1230H and finished by 1530. The session went very smoothly and Emin is coming to take over, once they've done the prep ahead of time as we had gone over. It's pretty routine for me now. Perhaps I should've charged more, what with diesel prices, however, the perks, hospitality, inside tours I've been afforded, getting to know and eat with these people in this part of the world would have, alone been worth doing this in the end, for nothing but "benzene" money.

Taken to dinner by three techs- Paulina, Yiorgi, Sven and their mates. Tee would have loved being there with Paulina's boyfriend a "geography research instructor". They insisted I park my van in the side yard at the home they all share. It's actually a large house with a yard and large back vegetable garden Cath would admire. Got some great photos. Hope they show up from Romania. I had my own small room and "very modern toilet closet" not a bathroom just toilet and sink. We walked to a local pizza place for Ukrainian pizza and beer. I had sort of skipped lunch at the session and was famished. Thms! Roast garlic, sun dried tomatoes and ground beef with sage on one of the pizzas. Yummy! Try making it some time!

As I was comfortable that Emin would be on the ball shortly after I would leave, we only talked Canada. NHL hockey- they knew more than I, outdoors Canada, and "all about my family" which they seemed very interested in. I gave them a quick laptop show, in the restaurant. Seems

they are really into family here and seemed impressed with all the bull-shite I made up about ours. Naaa! Really, the photos show "Byig cloz famyilee. Nyice! Gyood!" At one point Carol (sp?) the geo guy was grilling me with geography questions, "I hear in Canada..." and stuff about 'litepipe' diamonds, some of which I actually knew.

They were blown away, that I and my three kids had been from Van-Isle surf, to Prairie edge, my boys and I in the Yukon River, and Thms and I all the way to Niagara falls, the Maritimes and Wowww, NFLD Cape Spear in "Titanic iceberg water". When they asked, I had told them many or most Canadians actually see little of Canada outside their own province. I thought they might think it impossible I had because they know it's a huge country like Russia, so when I told them I had photos of all our camping trips, they were really breathless and unanimously voted to grab the rest of the pizza and some beer to go and get home, especially right after one of the wives asked if my laptop had VGA-out. Two of them, Mac fans, grinned and said gleefully, "Of course it does". They had a beautiful, 2000 lumen LCD projector they had gone in on together, for movies. They'd painted one wall in their large dining room, bright white like a screen. I skimmed through selected photos of the kids and I from all over Canada. They were all leaning forward mesmerized saying, slower" for like three hours. We packed it in at midnight. They all vowed to travel in Canada some day. Of course MacLeod cabin and our "lucky to have that" children amazed them.

Left for Ivano-Frankivsk at 0700H. They all came out to see me off... and say thank you for the wonderful slide show. Never mentioned the workshop until just as I was driving away. They did e-mail later to say it was very good workshop and everything good now and "Emin did good

job will follow me". Free-camped two hours from Ivano. Read the last of the Hobbit. So sad to finish but excited to start LOTR Book One - Fellowship for the second time in my life. Read first part with a half a bottle of wine and left over pizza. Wrote. Zonked out at 2300H.

Arrived at campus at 0830H for a 1000 start. I asked directions from a couple of people as it's a confusing SFU-grey concrete campus. One woman Tasha, asked where I was from and replied surprised, "Cyaannada? Wowww! I hyave fyamily in 'Red Deer' Cyanada. I've never been. It's very far away". I tell her I've only been through Red Deer twice because everything in Canada is "far away".

She offered to take me to the building I wanted. Of course she was very interested to hear my daughter's name was Tasha with an "i" and said it was more beautiful than her name. I said I had only taught two Tashas, one was a Uremovich, in my twenty years of teaching. She said it was very common here obviously.

Met with a tech named Demetri Tmaso. Sounds like Cath's nickname for son Thomas. The technical morning went very smoothly as he had done all of the prep work ahead of time and all we had to do was rebuild the servers. We ate a buffet salad dinner at 1300H, outdoors on a rooftop patio. Great pics of far off mountains, alas. Went that night with a group to a great student team handball game. I've never seen one. Very aggressive and fast. We might call it European handball. Beer, "real" pretzels and shishkabab sold right there.

After the game, several of the techs, their mates and friends took me to an old fashioned, though outdoor patio, University coffee bar. They sold wine also. Several singer guitarists and guitar

accompanied singers. Didn't understand a word but it was very beautiful. Before each song a tech would whisper briefly what it was about, while the singer was telling why the song was chosen. Said goodnight at 2200H and left to sleep in the van on the campus. A 27 year old techy, living in campus housing showed me the way, came in to look around the van, saw Che's flag and said, "Nice! Great man!". I said my boys call him "Shaggy Beara", and then we sat and talked about his MC Diaries and the movie for a bit.

She saw the guitar case and asked me to play. After each song I said, "Okay that's enough!" and she would say, "Youkyan plya yanother?" After a while she said, "You are myuch byetter zen some at dzee coffyee bar". To which I say, "That's why I'm travelling around in this van making a living as a singer". "Yagyain?" she said very colloquially. Then looks at me and says in perfect vernacular, "Oh! Just kyidding mye!" After the next song, "Love is Everywhere". She compliments me again and I say, "Ohhh! You're just trying to butter me up to get to Canada". She was puzzled because she didn't know what, "Butter up meant" until I explained it. Then she said, "No! that would be Russian women". She may actually be right about that. I have a strong feeling that English is a softer sounding language to some foreign language speakers and that helps me sound passably entertaining to those ears. At 0100H she decided her dorm was locked now.

At 0900, I woke up as she said, "Are all Canadian guys gentlemen?" I said, "Only the gay ones". She said, "You are not gay?" I said, "I know". She said, "Thank-you. That is a first time I ever didn't sleep with a guy!". It sounded cute. I knew what she meant. I found out that Mila is a short name for Ludmilia. We checked in with techs to see how they were doing, answered a few questions, made sure

everyone had my e-mail and then as my teaching colleague Rich Rasmussen always says, told them "AMF". Translating for all the questioning faces, "Adios Mother Fuh...", to a returning chorus of "AMF" and a few bolder- "Adyios Myuther Fyuc&er". Jumped in the van and headed out to LOTR "Riders of Rohan" towards Hungary/Romania border.

I had climbed forever into some mountains in Southern UA and was coming down a 'steepish', winding, fairly well paved and wide road for this part of the world. Similar to but twisting more than the Cypress bowl road, which itself has relatively few switch backs due to the long curvature of the abdomen of the North Shore Mountains - "Sleeping Princess".

By the way Vancouverites- what is that tale? All I ever remember is that she was a sleeping princess. Sometimes I forget to mention that "first nations" point to visitors like the Ogawa couple. It doesn't seem to matter. All I usually say is, "Native legend has it that a Princess lay down there to die tragically. Can you see her forehead, chin, breasts, abdomen and legs". And Stu? What is the Coqualitza Chilliwack first nation tale about those two peaks as you drive East up the valley towards Sardis on the South side? "Two braves..." and I never recall the rest.

Back to the highway mtns in the S. UA:

It's about an hour to sunset and I'm looking to crash in the mountains before too dark. Well maybe crash isn't quite the word I'm looking for here. Perhaps pull off and sleep. I notice most EU long-haul truckers bailing before now, approximately 1900-1930H.

I'm coming down this long winding hill and I need a clutch and brake leg stretch. I pull off, step from the van and immediately see a sad looking old Ukrainian "babushka" selling apricots et al.

I have some small €uro change scattered around the van here and there and a few coins, but no UA currency left. Plenty of freshwater, food and diesel though. I stop to stretch and have a look around. Babushka smiles with that half tooth grin of my Great Gran Goring that too infrequently, warmed our hearts. She motioned for me to buy. I gestured truthfully I was just stretching my legs and besides I had no UA money. She spoke a little French and German. I showed her all I had was a small bunch of 'Euro change, and a 5 and some 10 €uro notes. I had seen these fresh apricots in the cities here for about € 2 a kilo, which I'd thought even then was ridiculously cheap compared to € U countries to the West.

With her overworked, withered, gnarly hand she handed me the paper handle and bag, bursting with a generous two kilos of apricots, placed two small, spotted apples and a tiny bag of almonds on top, counted out € 1.50 grinned toothlessly and said "zaer gut". To paraphrase a movie quote, "She had me at apricots...". I looked at the € 0.83, carefully poured it into her hand as my attention was drawn to two young boys picking fruit in the distance beyond her. Truth be told, they had caught my attention as they ran around in the trees, one trying to wipe on the other, something gross I should imagine. The other suddenly stopped, said something smiling, pulled up his gathering apron, and returned to the trees. Fingerflicker, flicked his finger to the ground, followed him back to their task in the pesticide free fruit-filled trees. They were both swarthy, well toned boys about twelve or thirteen, barefoot, topless with black cotton pants and I want to know what he said to his brother. I'm going to guess it was something like "gran's going to kick your ass bro!"

Babushka, counted the change, smiled at me like she'd won the lottery, patted my hand, all the while saying something like the Greek "Abrigatto" (sp?). I returned to

the van, looked in my wallet, saw the € 5 note, some 10s, my ATM bank and credit cards. I took out the fiver, put away my wallet, went back folding it up discreetly as I went and handed her the tiny 1/7 sized paper wad.

When I looked out the window she was giving that huge GreatGran Goring, toothless Grin with tears coming down, not making a sound. Truly tasty apricots though.

See! Ya'll! We've lost that seasonal appreciation of food. Late spring strawberries were the first fresh fruit, followed by black and blue berries, then uncle Peter's perfect plums. New local potatoes soon sprang briefly to market. Lettuce, celery, cauliflower, broccoli and beans came to us only in mid summer through fall. Mac Apples were the best coming last from storage deep in mid winter. Plump pineapple put in an ever so brief appearance and was gone. Japanese oranges came Christmas month alone. We no longer appreciate our food and we grow obese and sick on it.

When fine fresh food came seasonally daily from local fields, we savoured the flavour of day or two old tomatoes from Richmond or Valley. Short summer season brought celery, salads and scrumptious corn. We savoured each separately as they came in and went out, even the last, the humble Brussel sprout.

Canfree carrot, parsnip and sprout joined turkey and potato for a fine Christmas feast. We ate and appreciated every mere morsel.

We then settled in to tubers, canned corn, peas and beans, appreciative yet knowing spring would soon bring the first fresh foods from Fraser Valley once again.

Our food now comes hardier from far far away, four or five day old, pesticide coated

but spot free from southern California. We've lost touch with our foodstuff for now, but our kids would do well to prepare for the day of \$8 per litre diesel costing the current fresh, flavourfree veggies from off the shelf.

However, unless Vancouverites work diligently now to preserve what's left of Fraser farm lands from housing, local fresh food sources are screwed, and it will mean an unfortunate future of freshfrozen foods shipped year-round on electric trains from southern climes

Back to the S.UA mountain road and being lost.

I had taken my bag of Babushka's apricots, apples and almonds and was skipping around Moldova- MD, on a Canadian security bulletin and advice from UA techs at this time. By the way! How many vote it should be UK for Ukraine, not UA. Can you believe EU officials nixed that because it might be confused with United Kingdom. Sorry! They already chose GB.

Back to border skirting. I could not fynde any camping in my book. It's not really a UA thing. Cheap "Hotel 6s" everywhere. I decided to head towards H, turning away from many MD leading roads. Tee-heart! "I came to a fork in the road", not marked on my map, looked at Stu's owl feather leaning right and decided it's lead was as good as any. Imagine being in some confusing part of back-road Sumas Prairie, heading in darkness towards Vancouver. Stuart may have driven the bike back that way and would know. I ended up free-camping between Mizhirèja and Svilva. Now you'll have to mix up your v&w, s&z, k&c to search out any of these but they're right near the UA, RO, H border conjunction, near north of Satu Mare, Hungary. That! you may find on a map. During the night another Belgian couple saw my lights and pulled off also

“lost”. The next morning we would awake to find ourselves in a beautiful mountain pass field.

EU agreed words- “Camping, Restauracja, Educar, Bahnk, Centrum” One item the entire EU had not had to argue an iota about was a common term for the game with eleven men kicking a round spheroid. It was €Universal, “We will call it FOOTball”, they proclaimed. Officially, the other game as in NFL “Superbowl” football, is broadcast as “American Football”! EVEN if it’s the twelve player “Grey Cup” version.

Woke to a dawn of thin foggy mist. Bright skies seemed metres above all as I stepped from the van into chilly fresh air. The next moment was like being in the centre of a science experiment test tube. Before I could fire up the camera the air warmed instantly and the vapour just disappeared in the breath from the valleys below. DVD photo showed not a trace of the haze I tried to catch in frame.

Explained to the Belgians going the other way how I came through this far and they assured me my border was just ahead of me. Drove fifteen minutes further along the road and as fate, Thms, would have it, I came to the last UA border checkpoint. When the officer asked me why I took that road, I said I was kind’a lost and the owl’s feather had lead me here. He was confused but said I would have been on a road right into Moldova on the other. Good olde Owl. He tried to explain how to continue, then he said in Russ-glish, “I finish in thirty minutes. You can wait? I will show”.

Can I wait? I made “mocha” and read right there. At 0830H, Vladi or as he preferred Vlodya, threw his duffle in, climbed aboard and we were off and rolling south west through the mountains.

Along the way we tried to talk about EU economics and then had a very funny verbal exchange. He spoke some broken English, and very good Russian and I have no Ukrainian. He was saying the road would get better ahead as it had “just had Massdona”.

I was like, “Oh? You mean worked on by Greek people? Macedonians?”.

He was puzzled and said, “No! No! You know! Mass-i-dama road fix?”

I was rolling it around on my tongue, “Massdama, Macedama, Mackadama?”

“Yes!” he explains, Tarro-mackadama”

“Oh Asphalt!”, I chimed, “Paved with [ashphalt]”

“You say asphaltum in Canada?” he questions.

I chuckle, “More than tar-Macadam”. Hell! I should have said, we never say tar-MacAdam, unless we’re talking about the Scottish inventor.

We were both chuckling at that one when shortly after we hit the good paved road. Then I tried to explain we don’t actually say tar or asphalt or ashphalt or macadam at all... we just say a paved road or repaving the road... now if that’s a weird example of how English changes words, way too complicated for our limited Russian or English.

He is 28 years old, paid U\$24,000 annually compared to U\$10,000 of an average peasant farmer. He says that although their life is physically more demanding, many people could never leave and many have returned from full time, “Russian organized” city factory office life going only part time seasonally to supplement their income.

Along the way we saw many peasants waiting in the middle of nowhere, for a ‘citizen-bus’, a private vehicle, car or bus charging as transport.



Once again on my UA journeys, we saw ten to twenty people in a row, deftly sweeping scyths in perfect rhythm. "Those hillsides kill traktor", Vlody said. In his days off he cuts trees, scythes, "throws" hay and tends to his large garden. He seems happy and healthy. He also mentioned, "City people smoke too much. We smoke one cigarette or two a day". I did not say, "Perhaps one too many."

We spoke about scything, raking and hay-hucking! "Hay hucking", being a compound-word we negotiated in translation, during our 50 km/h mountain trip for 55 km to his home town with a stoppage for diesel. Vlodya treated me to a café espresso. He had heard American's say they were going to "huck the ball around", and thought it was a real word. I said perhaps it came from chuck, which is also a made up word. He said he found it stupid that American's couldn't find more productive ways to work out than wasting time inside a gym. And this guy's built like our Uncle Alf up there in Billy's Pond.

Somehow I could never ever imagine uncle Alf at the gym especially wearing those tight little shorts, but I can sure hear guys asking him "So, do you work out?" I'm sure lots of people from America would look at this Vlodya and ask the same. He's never been to a gym either.

I understood him to say everybody helps on community projects when no work to do in the fields. Government subsidizes the peasant income, not enough yet but some.

StuThms? How heroic is the music from, "Helms Deep"? I'm listening to it at the moment as I write this entry and comparing it to what I've recently read in LOTR.

Two hours later, we arrived in Vlodya's home town near Vilok. Fynde that in a

gyood yAtlas. He cell-phoned his wife, drew me a map, let me screw up with the camera again shooting video sideways like I did in England and sent me down the street to turn right at the next light towards Hungary and Budapest. "Five minutes to town centrum, take right at lights YES?! Signal estayshioni? Lights?"

"Traffic light or Traffic signal", I suggested. He reminded me his English is better than my Russian. No duh, I thought! Compared to those gifted people I've met in NL, D, PL, & UA who have a built in babble-fish, my polyglot tongue sounds like babble-glot. We all usually opt for as much English as possible as my tongue is more a Manglish/ Russkaglish.

Like the words Gjingkwa, Gudgwa, Dobra, Djwisay, Swudja- I simply get mixed up so replace with an EU universal MerciThankyou.

Pulled into Budapest camping a few hours after dropping Vladi, hooked up and went to town Centrum on the tram with another Belgian couple to show me the way. Spent the whole afternoon and evening walking the river front, up to the "castle" where I had a Hungarian meal, back over the famous bridge over the famous river and relied heavily on what I had recorded on video yet to be stolen, to remember. There is a beautiful, huge church in town and some great building on the water front. Did save a few minutes on another mem-card about wine and beer and the van in the campsite for the DVD though. Arrived back around 2100H and RELAXED my, walk for eight hour, tired feet. Taste test shared red wine and chatted with interesting thirty year old English couple. They've been travelling for three years. Not sure what they do/did, we just talked about travelling. They said to give Bucharest a quick look also. Poor old Romanian capital. Read 'til 2330H.

Left camping at 0800. Continued driving East over Romanian border and through mountains all day. Stopped frequently to take photos of people and very quaint places I've seen nothing like on this trip. Late afternoon I pulled off into a roadside mountain pub-grill where there were lots of truckers. Ate on a patio under a grape covered arbor. Cath! Mmmmm! Fries cooked in olive oil and really garlicky bbq goat and our favourite- chicken. No greens to eat here but spicy olives! A raven haired gypsy woman playing guitar for "tips", was about to start playing, unfortunately for me, her last song. Afterwards I asked her in French, she had no English what it was called, "Concerto de Aranjuez", in the classical style our father used to play so well. She seemed in a trance and threw in a little, almost Flamenco flourish here and there. Wow! Although I heard but one song I'm sure I "tipped" her as well as any. She was mesmerizing.

Free-camped that night, further along, on one of the three peaks at the top here with but a herdsman and his perhaps, hundred goats to see, scattered way off on the side of one other peak. Great sunset shots. This is the southern "border" of Transylvania state in Romania, the real Count Dracul country. Sat outside watching blood red sunset streaked with black clouds. Very eery here in Dracula country. Pumpkins everywhere already. The lower valleys are filling with mist and cloud. Sat in locked van reading LOTR. Went out for a pee away from the van and was freaked by a bat squeaking past me. No! Seriously Thms! A bat! I'm sure of it. I asked later and the cops told me lots of bats but they suck only fruit. Locked everything up tight and crawled way under the covers, but I never checked under the bed! After all, I'm not a kid!

Woke up early to catch a gorgeous red 'sunrising' fireball, between two distant

peaks. These mountains may be as tall as North Shore's but I don't think quite. Great video, alas. Headed East and got some photos of Count Vlad Dracul's "castle" as well as some gypsies. Thank the gawdness, I add here later on revision that they were photos on my other smaller memory card and are included in DVD, because they're gorgeous. Took no video at this time for some reason. Later in the morning I was watching some kids head down the road and thinking how much I might miss school this year. Shortly after, I saw two petite young guys hitchhiking south. I had already been road-construction detoured twice and almost got lost, so I decided to give them a lift. Julian spoke English okay, Allaine spoke none. They were heading home to a small mining town, Petriila, next to Petroville where I was planning reaching by late afternoon. Along the way I asked if there was internet anywhere nearby. Julian said there was a cafe right in his town. We stopped to eat and I gave them juice, bread, cheese, and apricots for lunch. We continued on and they directed me into their town to the cafe. Jullian talked to the owner, asked how long I would need and got me settled for a half hour. Sucker!

I'm lucky I was in that particular Internet Cafe at this time. A young kid next to me was using IE Romanian version, the dad was just watching. The son was having problems getting several pop-ups and cookie feeders repeatedly. I leaned over a couple of times during my half hour to point out a tip. His dad smiled and said something in Romanian about not knowing anything computers. I said, "I don't speak Romanian". He said in accented English, "How did you see what is his problem?"

I told him, "I recognize the same sequence of buttons and boxes in the windows of the Explorer application from the English version. They all look the same!"

When I was finished paying I said good-bye to the officer and his son. The father said, "My son Christwofer". The son said "Thank-you!", in English.

When I got back to the camper, the front vent window was open. I knew I had checked all the doors to be locked and had seen the windows were up and closed. I tried the sliding door and it was unlocked. Shite! Went into the back and noticed my camera was missing. I had forgotten to put it back in my pack when I took their photos at lunch. I also realized they had left their swimming towels laying on the counter and that I had placed the camera on them. All were gone. Either they had remembered their towels on the way home, found the vent window open and taken the camera on a whim or they had planned this and opened the vent on the way, leaving their towel as an excuse to go into the van here in town. I'm going to go with the first. Having found the camera missing, I went back into the cafe and asked the father who was just paying for his son, "Could you please ask the Internet guy if he knew the two kids who brought me in, Jullian and Allaine?"

He turned and spoke Romanian, then said "Yes, he does! They come here all the time."

"How do I contact the police?" I asked him. He said, "I am the police!"

Now seriously! How often will anyone get to be in a situation and actually hear that verbal exchange in their life? "I am the police".

"I'm Capt. Ovidia Ashirha!"(sp?), he said.

I explained what had happened to my camera. He had me drive down behind him, to the police station, called in a forensic detective who dusted the van, and picked up several good prints, especially off the glasses they had drunk from and placed in the sink. He also took photos. To eliminate mine from the mix,

they fingerprinted me. Haven't had that done since long before my official Canadian Government Criminal Pardon. Thanks to John Fraser for the advice.

The police will go to the only high-school here when school starts back in a week and a half to interview any kids named Jullian and Allaine. If they are not there then they'll look at the names of those who are away. They are apparently very strict with truancy here.

Thms? What do you think? Was it fate, or was it just luck and bad luck?

I must come back for an interview with an official translator later tonight when she comes in. I'm now being put up by the police in a hotel ten minutes down the road in Petraville, a larger town of 55,000.

At the moment, I'm watching some Discovery Channel program all about design. I think this design group might be based in Ireland. The program has been about designing a leather chair, a moulded plastic bar chair, and a Formula One race car steering system for EA type computer racing games. Wowww! I didn't know how high tech race-car shifting had become. Only an accelerator and break, shifting now all done in steering wheel buttons just like a game controller.

There's the door, I'll be back a bit later.

It's now, "a bit later":

An officer, came to my room and drove me to the police station.

I've now been able to hear Romanian very closely through a police officer giving questions to a translator to ask me in English. Her English was very very good, although her accent was like ZsaZsa Gabor (although I believe Gabor was Hungarian).

The police officer had to ask many similar questions about the entire incident. I could hear the slight difference in questions translated into English. The more I listened to them the more I heard a more Latinized ancient form of Italian; i.e. it is more Latin than Italian.

Listening to the police interpreter translate what I was hearing in “Latinish” really tuned my ear. They had to go back to similar questions a few times trying to get to the exact point of the questioning as he revised notes. I heard similar words in different phrases that I eventually could almost answer directly, and not just “Father’s name? Mother’s name?” type of questions but “What side of the street was the van parked when next to the Internet Cafe? What direction was it heading?”

As I write this now, I’m watching a televised version of, “Shakespeare in Love”. It’s one of the few DVDs I owned and watched many times over the last few years. Watching the Romanian subtitles running along under this BBC broadcast, I can see so much Latin mixed with modern Italian. No wonder Portuguese sounds somewhat like Spanish gone “wild eastern”.

Earlier tonight when I returned to the hotel from the police, there was a wedding reception happening. I was talking with the receptionist who speaks nothing but Romanian. I was trying to gesture and speak English more slowly and clearly, getting nowhere of course. She spoke nothing but Romanian, not even French, very popular here. I was trying to find out when breakfast was and if there was a “typical” Romanesque restaurant nearby.

A distinguished patriarch, sans suit jacket with loose tie came out of the reception. He was a tall, broad shouldered man with a large smile. As he headed towards the urinal, I caught his eye and said clearly, “Do you speak a little English”. “Nien

Nien!” he says. “Tu parle le Français?” I ask with my perfect Ms. Hey Sr. Kitsilano French. And only a bare, University qualifying C+ in those days for me, but boy she was tough on the Jean Val Jean book, dragging down my mark. Thank gawd, my conversational all year with partner Judy the Irish was always a B or plus.

Anyway, the father says, “Oui! Oui!”. From that point my C+ French got me on famously with the proud Romanian father. He excused himself, “Un moment, s’il vous plait” and slipped off to the urinal. When he returned, we attempted to decide when breakfast was, with help from the sign on the door in Romanian. The tipsy papa then tried, thank goodness, to elicit really simple facts about climate in different parts of Canada.

I then understood, he owns a roofing material design company. I may have told him the weather in the Yukon was great for skiing in July or something weird, but I think my French was generally pretty good. At least I understood most of his questions. His daughter came looking for him and was pretty happy wrapping herself in papa’s arm. Taller, thinner and a much sexier wedding dress than I have ever seen in the West. Like, it was totally open at the back to her bum crack and split wide down the front from collarbones to below her belly button in a long curved V exposing “beaucoup des titons”. She looked like a beautifully shaped rose vase, with her full hips in the shape of the lower globe. I’m not sure what that all means... but we’ll go with it for now. She was very shapely.

She gave her dad a big hug then asked to be introduced. The father said in French, “He comes from Vancouver Canada”. She smiled and said in English, “My husband is from Montreal and I move there to live. I’m teacher. My father doesn’t know one word of your language, only French. He

loves Montreal and may try to move his business there". I found the use of "your language" somewhat strange as if she doesn't approve of English or has watched too many original Star-Trek episodes.

I think I just met the creme de la creme of Romanian society because this is one poor country. Stupid of me not to bring the camera with me and shoot her! Oh yah! I don't have a camera at the moment! They invite me to the wedding. I say I have nothing to wear.

She says, "It doesn't matter, I'm hardly wearing anything and everyone is drunk and falling apart".

I said, "I noticed".

She winked and said, "Noticed everyone is drunk or that I'm not wearing anything?"

I said I'd never seen a wedding dress like that in Canada. She said, she was wed with a lace shawl covering the top. I said it was a strange day for a wedding. She said, they decided last minute to have the wedding before she has to go to Canada and could not get a church this time of year on the weekend, besides, "it's holiday time".

She grabbed my hand and dragged me into the reception where I really didn't feel like going. She handed me a glass of some liquorice flavoured vodka, and we toasted, "To Canada!" Then I think she said loudly in Romanian, "He's from Canada". Everyone grabbed a glass and toasted, "Canada!" Any excuse to tip the glasses I guess. Then she started dancing with me so I just took over and did a polka two step. Not as good as Cath, and a much sweatier backside, but we did pretty well. Thank the gawdess the song was already half over as all I wanted to do was slink away, mourn my camera and write about it in this journal. Thank goodness too, that her father brought over her drunk French Canadian groom and had us all toast, Canada. Then the bride grabbed her groom and tried to dance but

they both fell down laughing. I said thank-you to the father and quietly backed away.

Back in my room I'm watching this movie. The language is certainly stiffer than Italian, like Latin and harder to roll off the tongue. Seeing it on the screen is like seeing the occasional French "de, des, le, les" mixed with long stretches of "lexion tuum esto ilo sa dachi o perdo librum lingua fremantica voi uita ele alusem bon notam scapat de valum, lbrir precum mi-ai dum". I'm not sure that means anything but the point is I have a hard enough time interpreting that sort of choppy soliloquy let alone pronouncing such a string of short morphemes.

The language of course makes no sense to me at all. With the English subtitles, I can only appreciate the Latin in Romanesque that I heard in the police officer's investigation. Blew out the candle at 2300H in memory of my great little faithful camera and bagged it in.

2300H, Constanta, Romania, BlackSea port!

WHAT a Day! Left Petraville, earlier this morning at 0600H and drove all day to and through Bucharest stopping there for a quick one hour open bus tour and again at 1900 in a Stanley type park for dinner as I left the city towards the coast. Many of the techs had also said to give this capital a miss and spend more time on the Black Sea. Pulled off in Constanta here, onto a side street in some tiny, streetlamp free area. I remembered those days of lampless streets in Kits. I was "in love" with Carmel Walsh. Turns out she really liked me but she "had to marry Catholic". Of course we were only twelve years old, so like I even understood what that meant. Una her sister kinda dropped out of the family values, went hippie and opened a clog store in the Gastown area. We kids all used to play "kick the can" on our street in the dark.

A group of ten or twelve kids were playing “petrio la tinnoir” and it looked like so much fun. I had stopped to read the map by my inside light and I could barely make out what was happening out there by a few porch lights. I recalled days of yore in Vancouver, when it was really foggy and people turned on their porch lights, causing the loco coal generated power-station to kick out more smog. Ironic!

Back to Kick the Can in the lampless streets of Constanta.

I arrived at 2300H my time and tried to think wazzup at the moment in Vancouver BUT I’m tired and it’s too complicated to THINK.

Time for a little journal break readers.

Let’s play an  
Applesoft or PC/Q-BASIC  
coding game called-  
“Find the error in the Program”:

```
10 Print: Arrival Constanta = 2300H
20 AC=23
30 Print: Romania = GMT +2
40 R=(+2)
50 Print: Vancouver = PST
60 Print: PST = GMT-8
70 V=(-8)
80 Print: and thee thy thou answer is!
90 Goto 90
100 Print: A
110 AC+R+V=A
120 goto 100
```

Error fix - answer is:  
change goto subroutine in line 90 to read  
90 goto 110  
OR better yet edit & eliminate 2 lines as in

```
90 AC+R+V=A
100 Print: A
```

Wasn’t that fun, Mousing-keteers?!

Anyway, I’m not exactly sure of the time changes these days. England seems so far away, Canada even farther. I’ve switched back and forth one and two hours several times out here and I can never remember if it was 8 or 9 GMT to PST, then there’s that DST that England does or not follow, I can never remember. I’d go with the 9 hours difference if you think that BC to NFLD is like 5.5 time zones, England has to be 3 more Zones across the Atlantic... though maybe it’s only 2. So now I’m leaning towards 8 hours difference Vancouver to Tring and ten hours to Black Sea.

Anyyywayyy! See how complicated it can be.

All this means is that the sun, as you know, gets up for me in this part of this journal’s world, like ten hours before you all, or eleven to fourteen depending on who back home in Canada we’re talking about getting up. Like, Grampa Bill Dad gets up before Gwama Shirl Mom kind of thing. I’ve been getting up anywhere from, seriously 0430 to 1000H. Well I’ve only been up a few times at 0430, and once or twice at 1000H. But I’m usually up between 0600 and 0730 these summer holidays... or what is currently extended summer holidays!

Today I was leaving a sad little piece of history behind, my camera! and kept trying to tell myself, that stage is over, now it’s time for the strictly written journal period. I have really enjoyed this past two years with DVD story telling. From TeeStu on camera around 1985 to Thms and the last of 4 Cross Country Canada DVDs. Of course the EnglandScotland and Magickall England DVDs were fun to work on developing this new story telling medium. For now I will have to figure out how to put together the Europe 2005, with so many pics and video clips missing.

Did I happen to mention my camera was stolen! In the end it was my fault and therefore like a few other treasured things that have gone missing in my past, I've always felt I don't deserve a second chance to NOT take care of something. I once completely tore apart, sanded, repainted and rebuilt to the missing ball-bearings a bike I bought (actually, I think I was sick that weekend and dad bid on it with my money), at the police bike auction. A few weeks later someone cut the lock while I was late at a Kitsilano Mariachi Band practice, stole it and stripped it. I didn't bother buying another one for a long time.

### **Accident Day**

Let's back way up, to much earlier today and something I've been putting off writing until this point right now. Today turned into Accident Day as I was approaching Bucharest, not to be confused with Assention Day or Budapest, although one poor fellow would "rise up" today.

Driving along carefully as usual, I was suddenly flagged down by a highway patrol officer around noon. I thought I had broken some law. As I pulled over one cop ran around to my side. "Politia kar kaput!" holding up one hand and fingers gesturing emphatically, "Ak-see-dant fyve keeloh-metra!" No doubt he took a shot at franglish based on my western Europe plate. I could now see this did not involve a violation. I would later learn a cop-copter had reported in the akseedant.

My cop's partner was pulling bags and a large fire-extinguisher from the trunk of the kop-kar. I jumped into the back, unlocked the sliding door and slid it open. Of course most who know my background will know the automatic mode one goes into, but I had no idea what was about to unfold.

This was just extremely, weirdly, gruesome. I'll be writing about it haltingly here with glassy eyes. For those of you! Mom, Heath or Tee who wish to skip this... look several pages below for: **REM: End of Accident**

Worst accident I ever saw was the one with the upper torsos of the two kids in the Datsun 260Z that cut them in half after they sped and flipped going over the Burrard Street bridge just after 0100H. The young cop first at that one, threw-up as we looked in the back. Saddest was the twelve year old kid I pulled from the wreckage on my teaching practicum in Revelstoke, whom I knew from playing staff baseball with her widowed father. She died in my arms asking for him, as blood gushed from her, chunk of gun-rack ruptured, heart. Nothing I could do with all that Lifeguard/ Industrial First Aid training. He & I alone, a week later, spread her ashes on Mt. Begby where her mom's were.

Back in Romania here, the second officer literally threw the equipment and himself in the back as the other and I jumped in the front. My cop didn't really need to prompt with, "go go vite vite allez". I sped 140 km/h all the way there not worrying about getting a ticket. As we came to a right-hand curve in the highway, we could see smoke coming from some bushes off the side beyond a breached barrier.

When we arrived, a trucker was trying to pull someone from the burning car. To my knowledge no other civilians would pull over during this incident!?!

The other cop had a fire-extinguisher and was running towards the flames. My cop queried, "First Aid?" I said, "Yes! Yes!", but was already moving toward some guy sitting on the ground as my cop threw me a kit and rushed to work with the trucker on the trapped driver.

I knelt beside the guy sitting on the ground, gushing bloody face on hands. As calm as I could, I said, "Politia here" and some other stuff I don't remember, frustrated not being able to speak his language. He was oblivious to my words.

I lifted his head slightly away from hands and it was a mess. His right eyeball was hanging out still whole and attached, the other side of his face was crushed and just mashed to pulp, the eye ball laying deflated and oozing into the blood mixed with tiny glass cubes on his cheek. His temporal/ tempral artery (me no doctor) was now spurting all over my chest and neck. I tried to put his own hand back on it but he had given up. I now fumbled one handed trying to open the first aid satchel, gave up, let go, leaned over digging in the bag, and was squirted all over the face and neck. Fine paramedic I'd make. Grabbing any bandages and pads I recognized I started with the artery.

I put a wad and pressure pad on it and wrapped some gauze flex ring around his head to hold it tight. He let me move his hands easily as he was totally in shock now and not feeling any pain. All I could see to do with the eye was slip a large sterile plastic cup, the kind that can be used for ruptured hernia OR eyeballs now, carefully over it, and back up under the bandage now encircling his head and eye-socket. I covered his face with a large sterile pad to staunch the red waterfall. Then I found a nifty gauze helmet thingy, pulled it down and tightened it over the mess trying to keep everything in place.

"Thank GOD!", I thought, as I heard what I hoped was an ambulance siren in the distance, "I can't deal with this 'no seat belt stupid speeding shite', right now. I hope it's not just a cop car".

Then the car exploded. I started at the time but sat tight thinking to drag blindguy away with me. It was scary as shite but

there were no flames. It was just something mechanical going boom. It hardly phased the cops.

They couldn't get the driver out without jaws of life. They tried to staunch the blood until they realized there was so much they needed to get him out now. A fire-truck pulled up. I'd not even heard the last of their siren in this case as I just sat there, watching the other cops, with my hands on blindguy's head putting pressure on the artery as blood dripped down my forearms and off my elbow.

Suddenly, my cop jumped back and spun around walking away gasping something Romanian, like, "fuck, Fuck, FUCK". They had opened his jacket and shirt trying to get at the blood source and he was like totally cut in half at the belly. I knew how my cop felt. The driver was still alive and slightly lucid until he died right at that moment.

Paramedics arrived and one took over for me. I gestured, "one eye gone the other hanging out in cup; artery spurting blood". I showed him the cup package. He took a cursory peek and patted me on the back and said with an Aussi accent "Very good mate". I'm not sure he actually spoke much English. Then I relaxed, calm now, hand on artery, in that kind of state of traumatic euphoria, as he set up and inserted a saline IV shock pack needle and got me to sit behind, hold the bag and propping up blindguy as he was now fainting to the side. Sitting being the optimum position at this time.

I know what it's like for my cop or anyone to have someone die right there. It's very sad for me to think about it, but hying back to the VP's daughter in Revelstoke it also makes you angry in a controlled sort of way, that life can just ebb away so easily, when you are right there showing so much care to keep the candle flame flickering. I could never be a doctor.



The paramedics, sat blindguy on a gurney and loaded him into the ambulance. They left dead guy to the fire department and next crew of paramedics arriving.

One of the new paramedics had a fresh towel over his shoulder and tried to clean me with a wash-bottle of solution and some pads. It just made a "bloody mess". Once again, how often will one get to literally use a phrase like that in real life? Two fire-fighters were hosing down the bushes so I showed the paramedic where to grab my other shorts and a clean t-shirt, walked over to the firefighters and had one drench me down, turning round and round in the spray, washing down and scrubbing my arms with some antiseptic pads. I stripped naked feeling nothing as none of them paid any attention to me in this situation, wrung out my bloody wet gear and placed it in a large ziplock bag a paramedic held open.

Someone was taking pictures of the car and driver while the rest were trying to figure out how to remove two-halves of deadguy from the car and were preparing the "jaws of death", in this case.

I towelled off, got dressed, then a paramedic very carefully checked my hands for glass cuts. There were none. All he had to say was, "AIDS!" and made me rinse them again with something and then washed them off once more.

I retrieved a "business" card from the van with my e-mail, added my Passport number, and assured my cop's queries that I was okay. I asked him to please e-mail re blindguy. My cop walked me to the car asking "for sure you are okay?"

After trying to reassure him. I said, "Are YOU all right?" and gestured severed body. He motioned bent elbow arm action and said, "many drinks tonight".

Post MORTUM: A week or so later I would receive an e-mail thanking me for my assistance. After several exchanges I can summaries as follows:

Pre-airbag vintage sports-car blew a tire and flipped doing in excess of 200 km/h, slid upside-down backward, sheering off the roof taking out steel barrier, flipped upright smashing through bushes into concrete retaining wall killing driver. Blindguy only in one eye, they managed to save the other.

### **REM: End of Accident**

Oh my goodness StuThms! Just as I type these words here free-camping in the street, I hear LOTR music from "The Breaking of the Fellowship", the haunting piece by Fran WALSH and Howard Shore. Her input to the melody and words is staggering . Didn't she read this trilogy, like three times per annum, amongst many other works in her life? She must read as fast as a few students I taught, like Stephanie Lancaster- Harry Potter, one weekend with just enough sleep and a three hour Girl Guide meeting.

Now the music has made me want to lay and have a good sobbing cry into my pillow, about today, so I'm just going to do that! I'll be back.

Okay, "fuc&, Fuc&, FUC&!" I'm back. Sorry mom! Bit of a rough day.

I've read LOTR once in my life and dabbled with certain bits over the years. I've read the Hobbit twice. I'm once again too soon finishing Book One- Fellowship again. And of course I see all too clearly the popular criticism of, "Oh Sure! What a timely coincidence, Mr. Tolkien!" and repeatedly, "Just in the nick of time!", frequently, but then I just zip back into "non-judgemental heroic mode" and continue the quest.

After what happened to me today on Accident Day, I wonder how Tolkien, after the carnage and what he saw in the trenches, losing all but one of his favourite high-school, poetry, Latin, Greek, O.E., Saxon, study group foursome and many close friends could handle life at all. And how Tolkien was such an amazingly, before his time environmentalist, and "ALL for the shire", positive person. I wonder if he really believed in all that Catholic stuff or did he do this in an attempt to stay connected to his devote mother. Perhaps only those who've read LOTR and his Biography ponder that point. As I down this last glass of wine on the bottle, I assure you I, I like "my cop" shall sleep deeply tonight.

Good morning. As I sit here by the van under the canopy on the beaches North of Constanta listening to Dire Straits' "Brothers in Arms" looking into this "hippie" van for a moment, it's like I can no longer make sense of this our precious world anymore. Che Guevera's black silhouette on the red flag making a wall between my little hobbit hole and the front seats-makes it feel a little more homey ya know kids. There's a Silva compass hanging in the windscreen, reminding me how much I miss chief Canada navigator Thms. Hanging with it is the owl feather from StupermanStuey. That "night-driving-vision" has come in handy.

I can't believe I'm actually camped on the Black Sea. Bucharest had many trees, parks, wide open boulevards and interesting architecture. BUT it's just a dustier, older, busier, city of 2.2 million people similar to any other big city. It's certainly not Vancouver, without those mountains to nestle near or those beaches to embrace. It has several branches of a beautiful river going through it. It took me 2.5 hours to get from the eastern side to the western side in afternoon rush hour, something I've tried to avoid!" I did stop to

take a one hour bus tour of the traffic minimal Centrum. So it was like an hour and a half of slow in and out traffic. Then again, Vinny's temperature gauge hasn't ever complained. He's a diesel and tends not to overheat so far.

Back to this beach North of Constanta at N. Vodari. Tee-heart, it's on a long Isthmus, or whatever you call that strip of land that closes a lagoon or lake off from the ocean or sea. The sand is white with tonnes of broken white shells. My mom would love it here. The rivers cause the water to be fresher here. It's not a lake, it's a Sea. One of the locals, Alex, told me it's so salty farther out, no fish live, only here near shore. Check your maps to see how big it is. Way off on the horizon can be made out huge freighters heading North and South to and from ports of the greater world through the Dardanelles which split in two, the city of Istanbul/ Constantinople. (Thms and Tee are singing now as they read! I can hear them, "Istanbul Constantinople... da da dah..."). I awoke to seagull cries early this morning while free-camping on a quiet residential street something like West 14th Kitsilano. I knew I must be back near the "ocean". Constanta is more beautiful than Bucharest, cleaner with more trees and better organized. Greater city is 600,000. Most major intersections have cross walk and traffic lights the same shape and size as ours, except the red and green count down digitally just above the light itself and the green walking man is moving while the red stop guy is not. All very bright LEDs of course.

Back to the beach and society not making sense. Being surrounded in Canada daily by that incessant consumerism was driving me crazy and I do try to avoid being near it here as much as possible. I loved living in Vancouver the last year of teaching in Coquitlam and taking the bus, SkyTrain, bus. It worked out well and I loved reading at bus stops and on the

transit, and not having to drive, but I was cloaked the whole time in consumerism. Bright, shiny ads everywhere. Even shopping bags on arms returning from assorted malls along the way.

I loved the ride through nature every day the prior two years, as I went up the Coquitlam river to school while living in North PoCo, but in the end I wanted to really spend time with intimate parts of the city that nurtured me by the sea between the river and mountains and I did, but a car commute would have been deadly on my psyche.

Where I am here in Romania is more a San Diego beach scene. The water is cooler but almost not refreshing this time of year in the sun and heat. Attempts at tropical island bars dot the beach. Way off in the distance to the south is the port-side separating Constanta Centrum from these beaches. We can make out the tops of tall cargo cranes. Lying around tanning is not really my thing and I'll get going again through Bulgaria towards Turkey soon.

The extent of consumerism in my youth was limited to silly Radio & TV Jingles that were actually kind of stupidfunny. Coke's swiping of and perversion of "I'd Like to Teach the World to Sing" seemed like a highlight of caring in our hippie-trippy world. I never drank cola much anyway. And the diet makes me gag, like I accidentally wiped film developer in my mouth.

We were going to make things better. We were going to stop the insanity of our parents nine to five treadmill generation. We were not happy with the VietNam war and we marched and we said so. Nuclear missiles not for us! Not here! Not Bangor Washington. Nowhere! We marched again! And we were just starting to care about the environment in the 1960's. Well not so much at Yasger's Farm '69, which

was turned from pristine pastureland into a mud-bath. But our heart was there.

But then we sold out to money, greed, things, crap and stuff. Unfortunately we were the Baby Boom and its Echo. And we went crazy with consumption in childhood and just had to "do better" when we grew older. Daddy had a Station Wagon, we just have to have a Beamer / Rover SUV for mommy and the family and a "light" truck for daddy to drive to the office. And never one cargo box will ever see a load.

We're now busy building wider, faster roads to Whistler, instead of using the existing rail corridor and going electric. Now more and more people can drive their global warming machines to a mountain which is getting 'iffier' and 'iffier' for future snow fall. Worst case scenario, which is becoming more and more possible- 2010 Olympics moved to Calgrary, Colorado or Osaka because Whistler hovers just above freezing all winter.

Long term thinking and planning should involve thinking as far ahead as, "What could/ should I do drastically differently in my consumer life that is right for my grandchildren and their children's world". We are killing the planet quicker than ever. If we all worked less and consumed less we would need less money and crap anyway. People working less means less consumer goods output anyway. Perhaps we could go back to a time of communities making and purchasing local quality goods and the shoe repairman. Remember him? When we took care of our few pairs of long lasting footwear!

And the pervasiveness and variety of crap we are sold on buying is ridiculous. Take automobile speakers for example. The most annoying thing about the super-low base speaker found in a lot of audio systems now, especially in automobiles is that while those listening nearby hear the

full range of music, those in the distance hear only an annoying deep, rumbling base thump. Medical science says we are seeing a growing epidemic of people with premature deafness. If they irritate ears well away from the vehicle, imagine how much damage these speakers do to the listener within the vehicle. It's kind of the audio version of having it all right now. Listen big until age thirty or so then you don't have to hear anything anymore. Worse than that, the rest of us have to put up with ever louder music to compensate for their hearing loss. END of RANT

A sparrow just walked into the camper looking around for crumbs, bringing me back to the beauty of my current surroundings. Seagulls cry. Wind whistles and waves lap the shore. Enough cynical, downer typing for now.

I'm back and it's midnight but I wanted to get this entry made. I knew the beach patio restaurant was closed for the season but I saw some lights and walked over to read. There were about twenty people having some sort of party so I sat as far from them as I could to give them privacy and read undisturbed. A kid came up and said all they could sell me was beer no food. I said beer would be fine. I sat reading LOTR and swigging beer for about half an hour.

A distinguished looking older gentleman came over and said, "My friend noticed your van. You are from Canada?" I said, "Yes, but not Montreal or Toronto. The west coast, Vancouver". It seems that's always the second question, "Montreal or Toronto?", so I usually get it out of the way at once. "Please come to my birthday party. I am sixty today", he said cheerfully.

He presented me as, "An honoured guest from Canada". Then he sat me next to several people near him who spoke English fluently. One is an English

teacher and her husband is on the phone all day to the U.S. for business. Their son Alex is thirty and speaks first.

Alex: "Party is for Nelu!"

L: Who?

A: Nelu!

L: What is his name in English?" I say.

A: John = Ion, but Nelu, is his nickname.

It was a very interesting couple of hours. Nelu eventually sat with me and told me he had been to Vancouver several times in his career. Alex and his mother had told me Nelu was the Admiral of the Romanian navy, but worked hard to have it re-organized more as a coast guard and everyone was very proud of him. Many of the men there were long serving officers of his. He had been to Vancouver with the Navy and back again when studying the coast guard setup.

He asked me if we had removed our lighthouse keepers. I said I wasn't up on that but I did think they may have ended up leaving strategic ones here and there but replacing many with automated systems. He remembered the Lions Gate bridge and when there was a control tower on the top, so that's like in the 70s maybe. Last time he was in Vancouver a few years ago they were half way through replacing the bridge deck. "All completed nicely", I said. "Nice little engineering feat that", he said. He also remarked on how it's the most beautiful inland waterway to sail into, "seeing the mountains looming ahead coming to port". He's been to Rio and Sydney in his ship travels, so I guess that's saying something. I figure he must really be an old salt if he calls commanding a heavy warship "sailing". He is now retired but is working with a planning group in the replacement of all light-guiding safety-bouys with modern, longer lasting, LED, solar powered ones throughout their area, the Dardanelles and parts of the Mediterranean.

It felt good for a change that they were all sincerely impressed by the fact I had been a teacher although I told them I was on sabbatical. Having admirable status as a teacher is something I sometimes missed in Canadian society.

I had slipped away from the party at one point on the pretence of going to the "head". I went back to the van and wrapped a nice little travelling Backgammon set someone had gifted me when I left Canada. Whoever that was, thank you ever so much, but it served a greater purpose as I had never actually used it until now. I handed it to him and said, "It's a tradition when one gets invited to a birthday, to bring the birthday boy a present."

Perhaps he had had a little too much to drink but when he opened it he got all misty eyed and his friends were all, "Awwwww!" and maudlin themselves. He stood up and made a toast, in Romanian, with his own brief translation then came over and kissed me on both cheeks.

His best friend owns this complex I'm staying at and had put on a nice dinner for all. So after all, I did get to eat there and the drink was free as well. That was all a pretty kewl memory worth recording before bed at midnight.

Swam and lazed around from 0700H until noon, then drove four hours, straight down, along a beautiful coast through Bulgaria to near Turkey border, stopping to take a swim on deserted beaches several times along the way. Yes Thms! Au natural, just like in the Straits of Belle Isle! A couple of German college guys came over while I was playing the guitar at my final stop there. They are on their way to Black Sea- Turkey. One went and made tea for us all, with some biscuits. They "have no music", so I'm okay with them hanging 'til sunset listening. On revising

this journal, I shall add, I did not learn their names until I met them again later in my trip by great fortune and they were to "help save my sorry a\$\$".

The beaches here in Bulgaria are whiter than anywhere I've ever been, but everything is way too expensive. Especially the diesel. Ended up moving on after sunset, driving some mountain road up to a border check-point some forty kilometres from the actual Turkish border. Not much traffic on this road and the guards were playing cards when one jumped up to flashlight me to a halt in the dark. They were very nice when they realized I was from Canada and let me sleep in a clearing across from their little "cottage under the trees". They said the area wasn't the safest place to camp out, but I would be very safe all night camping there beside the cop shop; they'd be up all night. Read LOTR, wrote and sipped wine until 2300H.

Up at sunrise and made the "empty" Turkish border by 0730H only to find I was just short of cash for the entrance visa, which the guy inside the customs shed originally worked out to € 45. "Catch 22!"-closest bank machine is thirty kilometres into Turkey but I need a visa to go there. Shite! After some wrangling and coaxing from officers there to "be a nice guy to the Canadian", a merchant, gave me € 45, cash on my RBC-Visa, for a € 2 surcharge. When I went back to the visa guy he told me he had miscalculated. It was now € 50! Fudge! I went back to the van and scrounged around finding almost € 2. The other border guys scrounged around in their lockers and desks coming up with the rest. One of them told me quietly yet distinctly, "Visa-guy is asshole! No one likes him!" At 0830H, I finally got into Turkey. Auspicious start to what would turn out to be my favourite country on the trip.

## Istanbul

After taking a bus / walking tour, I went to an Internet Cafe for awhile. Driving away later, behind two small taxis down a small side street, through hordes seriously like the market scene in Raiders of the Lost Arc, we passed three little guys Liam's age, height and build who were fighting over a soccer ball. As I drove slowly by, one came flying backwards and crashed into the van breaking his forearm. When I jumped out to help him, he was leaning over holding his elbow to his side moaning. At first I had memories of aunty Heath breaking her collarbone when just a little younger. There's an ambiguous sentence ending! The mom came out of a tiny, roughly built dwelling and I was like, soooo sorry! We drove him to a nearby hospital through the crowded streets, he moaning not crying all the while.

The hospital was quite good and the doctor said it was all covered. However, he said to the mom, a kid this age should have a "plastique" cast. I paid the € 30 not covered. The kid chose black. Guess he won't be getting any autographs from friends unless they use, whiteout. Aha! While he was being taken care of, I found a "real" soccer ball- € 25 in a nearby sports shop I had noticed while waiting at the light, turning into the hospital. I also bought a € 3 whiteout "autograph" pen on the way back.

The wide eyed little guy couldn't believe his luck. I told the doctor to explain that footballs are not for playing rugby. The kid just smiled. His last name sounded like Sedwi. As it turned out when I saw his paperwork, it was spelled Sedawie just like our Kits classmate Carle. I autographed the cast with an "L heart/star R" and the doctor explained to him he could get his friends to do likewise. I drove them home and the mom was very grateful, actually. His two friends were still there, kicking the ball around waiting. Plastique cast- € 30; Football- € 25;

Autograph pen- € 3; Look on all the faces when Amrit showed off the loot and they signed his cast- PRIC€ L€ SS!

Drove the coast and free-camped on a quiet side street near the harbour breakwater, in a beautiful fishing village, Bandirma, right on the coast. Hopping nightlife, so I treated myself to a chicken kebab dinner in a sports bar watching a "huge" televised, local soccer match. These Turks are crazy mad for "football". The young bar guy was very friendly and spoke English well and German, very well to others there. Before retiring to the van I walked the breakwater out to the end. A stream of ship lights passed in the distant dark night, going to and from Istanbul and the Black Sea. Lights out for me at 2300H.

Drove along coast to Troy or Troia in Turk signage, arriving at noon. Very nice. I gave in to punishing myself about the camera and went ahead and bought a one use Kodak 36 shot camera. Partly to take pics at Efes (Ephesia) for mom, was my excuse. I will let the photos speak for this part. It was just really cool being at a place that has a connection to some huge part of all our past's, mythological or not. Great little educational display and artifacts in the museum. This was the most advanced city of its kind in its day and controlled the whole area from as long ago as 3000 BCE. Then and now it is a Garden of food Eden. For centuries it's existence was poopooed as legend until it was found and dug up in the early 20th C.

The roads in this part of the world are being upgraded everywhere to meet EU standards. Turkey seems a fairly wealthy country. Amazing agriculture everywhere. However, it's also a bit dear on the budget for diesel here. Approximately Can\$2.50 / litre. Just outside of Aliaga on the coast north of Izmiri, a convoy of trucks going past towards me threw up rocks. One hit

the front of the car “gunshot” hard, but the windshield was fine.

About five minutes later another motorist passing me from behind motioned something was wrong, so I pulled over and looked around. Coolant was pouring from a hole in the rad. I coasted down into Aliaga and pulled onto a side street next to some fellows having tea outside a shop. They brought water but it was really bad. Poured right through. One spoke English and I asked if there was a rad repair shop in town. No. Must go 80 km to Izmiri.

It was 1900H after I had plugged the hole with a whittled stick and squeezed some ShoeGoo in and around it. I'd let it harden over night, fill the rad in the morning, and if not too bad, take a run for Izmiri, replenishing three, two litre plastic pop-bottles full of water as needed at water fountains for religious cleansing use, found along all Turkish roads.

Now at this point I want to say, there is a minor screw-up on the DVD which I've already burned five copies of and labelled. I am not waiting another forty-two hour “Asset Encoding” time (ask dad) in iMovie to edit and do again.

By the way dad! I found out with complicated DVD's, one need only be patient when Encoding. If it's a major mishmash of short video clips, music, voice-over, and many Burns effected images, it will eventually sort them out and Multiplex and Burn. Yaaay.

I can only explain the DVD discrepancy away as a result of FBS, Fried Brain Syndrome. My journal was a bit behind in this next section and consisted more as a string of outline notes. I was intending to transcribe and flesh out, the day I ended up trying to pass permanently beyond the veil. Thank the gawdess, the rad thing actually did happen before the WNF. If it

were after I'd no doubt have bailed then and there before even going on to Efes.

I did not go “Ayatollah fishing” and get WNF before the rad repair in Izmiri. I went fishing the first time after the rad repair was nicely completed. Either sequence would have been possible as the beach is close by on the coast, West of Izmiri. In fact the guys working at the camp, live in Izmiri. The DVD shows me camping, then going to Izmiri for rad repair then on to Efes. Minor discrepancy really. The last thing I really did before making the freak-out dash to Amsterdam was actually go and see Efes/Epheses... prison of St. Paul.

### **Rad Accident Day**

(not like **Accident Day**, Mom, Heath, Tee)

What an incredibly glorious end to a challenging day. Woke up on this little side street to the first crowing of the day. The hillside is quite low to the east, so a pale red sky began around 0500H. At first I sort of dreaded what might unfold today. Worst case scenario, jerry-rigged hole plug fails and water gushes from rad as soon as I first fill it and I have to pay big bucks to be towed all the way there. I rolled over, pulled my covers over my head, yawned and blanked my mind. Five minutes later the mullah's minaret cries began, “Allah Oooo Aackbar!!” I figured if god was great, I might as well jump out of bed and get going. It was still a beautifully cool morning. I packed up, filled up the rad and Oh! Not too bad! A fairly steady drip but no spurting anymore, for now. Off I went at 0520H up the highway towards Izmiri at a steady 75 km/h. Thank Allah, I had only one small hill to climb along the way. The rest is seaside along a large bay. I was told it was about 80 km to the city. Four times, every 15 or 20 km or so I pulled over at a cleansing bath to top-up the rad and refill the bottles and thank Allah for the nice founts. Each stop took about half a two litre bottle. I figured I

would arrive in this city of 2.2 million before rush hour and try to find a Citroen service centre. As I approached the outskirts, I realized immediately I was working in a culture vacuum. People leave for work here before 0600H and start at 0700-0730. As well, it was the first day of school I found out and students waited at bus stops everywhere. Grey pants/ shorts/ plaid skirts and white shirts being the common uniform. Rush hour was well on.

Many parents in business dress are chatting with their kids waiting for the send off. At this, I thought of the many years I was never home as my kids got ready and left for school. I had been up and gone by 0600H for school myself and I don't recall ever being sick once to even be there to see them off, even on our first day.

I pass a Renault dealership and service centre and think stupidly, perhaps 'wishingly', I will soon see the same for Citroen. I don't even know the word for radiator. Suddenly I am in grid lock, akin to some long divided stretch on Canada Hwy One. Shite! I should have turned into the Renault place and asked direction.

StuThms, as I write this tonight, I listen at the moment to LOTR soundtrack, "Breaking of the Fellowship" again. Don't worry no crying this time. That young boy soprano is incredibly moving ay what? Hauntingly sad. And then Enya's "May It Be". Beautiful lyrics!

Crawling through town is not good when you have even a slow leak. Lucky for me the lights here can take up to two minutes so I get adept at- parking brake, water bottle, rad top on off, fill ups. Anyone I see watching me from sidewalk, bus or car seems concerned. None smile in a country of smiling, happy people.

Finally! I arrive back at the Renault dealer service centre. No English speakers out

of six mechanics, but I elicit they only do Renault warranty service. It's pretty posh. They do not seem too concerned to help until Canada pulls through again. One motions to the NL tag and the Canada flag. I fumble through with gestures and gibberish at having bought the van in NL but I come from Canada. The service manager then immediately grabs some parts for repair and motions, "follow me". Unlike my sis, aunty Jo, I don't know sign-language, but somehow pass on, "Woah! It's been twenty minutes. I need to top up with water". That done, off we go, twisting and turning through back roads and small streets full of auto repair places. Five minutes later we pull into an "Oto Elektrik ve Radyator" shop on a street lined with speciality mekaniks. There are thirty identical cinderblock cubby-holes along the street. This one we stop at is #30; it's 0725H.

Two fellows are sitting in blue overalls having tchai; "café" is not big here. The Brits left them this tea habit. One mekanik goes back to his shop next door, the other, Murat Altun age 50, takes a quick look and says "no problem!" That is to be pretty much the extent of his English. I thank Renault guy & say good bye.

I realize I've skipped breakfast and I'm famished, at least my stomach's been suggesting this for while. I sign to Murat, fingers to mouth finishing with a one finger circle over shoulder, meaning "anywhere around here?". Murat takes me, two hands by the shoulders and turns me around. Right across the narrow street at #1, is an identical size cubby-hole, only it's a sandwich/tea shop.

Cheese, tomato, pickles in a small squish-grilled baguette and a large tchai, 2.50 Turkish coin. Yum!

I try to read but this is not really a LOTRs time. I'm thinking, "Maybe I'll have to put this on my VISA!" How much do I figure? In Canada perhaps \$200 for sure? Maybe



\$300! I sit and watch the relaxed businesses around me as a few more cars start to arrive. Murat has the rad out before I can get started on the sandwich. I leave the book and my glasses, grab sandwich and pack, and walk over to see the next step. He has already pulled out my little stick, code named, "Peter Dike Finger". Next, he's blowing out the goop with a pressure washer. Then he stops one hose hole and applies air to the other while bathing the rad in an old bathtub full of water. He may as well have put the air hose straight into the water, it looked that bad.

Apparently it wasn't bad at all and could not have been a luckier stone shot. It tore through only one of the main cross circulation ribs. Ever thought about the fact that the rad is kinda like the lungs if the water pump is the heart. Vinny the Diesel was haemorrhaging for ages from a chest shot and lived.

Murat shakes off the rad vigorously. He uses air to sort of dry things up. With needle nose pliers, he quickly plucks out the bent and broken, thin aluminium cooling fins in the area. He then dries it all with an acetylene, I think, torch. After applying some kind of flux paste, he solders the area liberally. The final step is to recheck it in the bath. All holes plugged, he lowers it in the water tank and really blasts it with air pressure for about half a minute, checking it very carefully for even a single tiny bubble.

The 'hole' operation took thirty minutes until back in the van. However, for the next twenty he runs the engine hard until he has checked and doubled checked temps and pressure. He's obviously a master at his craft. When he was finished he phones for tchai, tells me to sit and goes to wash up, just as a man in a suit comes in. Suit-man says in perfect English with a German accent, "I'm an

account down the road. Do you need me to translate anything?"

"Not really, perhaps the cost", I say.

He says, "Not to worry, these guys are all good and fair!". Then he leaves.

Tea arrives with a young man on a tray. We take him off the tray and pass him around.

Don't you just love misplaced modifiers?

Let's try again.

A young man arrives with tea on a tray.

Not quite right yet?

A young man arrives with a tray of tea.

There we go.

He slides up the silver lid and Murat and I take a glass of Tchai and a cube of sugar or in Murat's case three cubes.

I see Murat's kids in a picture on his desk and we "chat". I get my pic of the kids from the van-dash and we "chat". I'm going to Efes I tell him. He shows me a calendar with Efes pictures and "chats" about it. It's "bella" he says. It's the smiles, enthusiasm in the gestures and tone of voice in the "chatting" that gets the message across, not the "words".

Now the NOT bad news! Repair charge-Can\$30 and he paid for the Tchai. We shake hands. He gives me his business card and surprises me with his second English phrase of the day, "Keep in touch". He directs me towards the coast due West on a small road, as he points back the other way East saying, "Rush Hour"! I'm pretty sure he's quoting that English directly from a movie title.

I say "Taisha Kü" to Murat and drive off successfully to this campsite. Taisha Kü is not spelled that way, but does sound that way and means "Thank you", and thank you Taisha for making it so easy for me to remember!

Murat ALTUN

Tunaz Oto

8780/27 Sokak #30

Ata Sanayi Siesi

Çigli- IZMIR

Turkey

Cell 0,537,595,17,83

I arrive less than an hour later at the Aegean Sea and a slice of much needed heaven.

Camping Orman Bakanligi

Gumulder Mesire Yeri

Sahia Girisi, Turkey

I've been through a plateful lately so I'm not sure if this is my Rivendale or Lothlorien rest stop, but it is a stop and rest for sure. It's so post summer deserted and beautiful, clean and well... Aegean-sea-ish. Off shore are Khios and barely to the North, the last island of the Sporadies after Alonysos, where Cath and I stayed with Mrs. Nelos and Grandma and Grandpa in Autumn '81.

Walking back to the camper through the trees I didn't notice I was too close to three pups lazing in the shade against an olive tree. Mom came dashing over to bite my ass, literally. She got more bathing suite than skin, so I think it was a warning but she sure looked bare tooth ferocious when I turned to face her and back away. Her mate is pure sled dog with those scary grey eyes, yet he's as gentle as a wolf.

Taner the manager, said the bitch was a pure bred lab and she looked it except she has a golden whitish fur. The pups are blond with dark grey paws and chest. Anyone want me to send one home after that description? Later at the singsong Taner introduced me to the bitch. She was quite nice as I petted her some time. She's still nursing. Now, if being an albino lab isn't humiliating enough, she was named after a TV collie, Lassie. Talk about mixed genres.

I sat and sang for my supper tonight so to speak, beer included. Taner, the manager of this government beach camp is age fifty. His English is pretty good. Only one other, of the eleven young men at the

windup staff party has English, Kamal. Tanner heard me sitting playing the guitar earlier and insisted I come to play. Crap! That's not really my thing. But I know these people love their music. I've seen it everywhere since arriving. And they do not listen to American top anything. They have their own Britney and Spice Girls here. BUT the airwaves and bars are full of solo acts singing a kind of Bazookie, or whatever that "Greek" music is. They seemed quite enthused while I sang a few songs. Then thank Allah, they all broke out singing camp songs, one sort of to the tune of "Oh, Susannah".

Just before sunset Professor Awesome, not his real name, invites me to go fishing. He has no English. None. We climb on a large peddle boat and head out West, towards Greece. He is like a barefoot little kid, smiling and speaking what is only gibberish to my ear and motioning hugs to the setting sun, and I'm right in there thinking of my Wreck Beach view. We are two souls who can sense kindred spirit coming on. We don't even know we're the same age yet. That will come later in the journal. I sort of picked up the vibes earlier in camp that he's some kind of different sort of "holy man", but it doesn't quite jive with this beer drinking, chain smoking, jolly, bare foot, baggy short, man in belly showing T-shirt. All the young guys seem to love him. The closest I can get with his image is leaning towards "Friar Tuck holy". Time will prove me wrong.

He is more radiant than I in the glory of his Allah's and my Gawdess's sunset. One I will never catch on film here. To see it, go to Wreck any sunny eve in mid August at 2000H.

Fisherman Thms, Mr. Awesome jigged 45 ten centimetre smelts on his six hook line in about an hour. When we returned to shore, he had me triumphantly present tomorrow's breakfast to "the boys" who all

passed the bucket around and then stood and clapped. The "Ayatollah" passed me another beer.

Three 500 cc beers later and I'm typing like shite but wanted to get this all down. So there you go. I will take two or three pics of my Rivendale on the disposable tomorrow.

Winter closing means all of the rental boats, etc. have been stored.; no hot water; luke-cool showers and no electricity. Except Taner had the maintenance kid hook me up. I paid for three days including electricity, at Can\$12 per day. He said I could stay the rest of week with electricity no charge ,without electricity 'til May, free. Oh yay! Did I mention his sister lives in, you guessed it, Canada's Montreal?

Only four guys will stay after tonight for two weeks and two of those will stay cleaning up and repairing stuff through the winter. It's a big place.

Stu, I am parked under the shade of dozens of ten metre tall Eucalyptus trees which along with olives, abound here. Like Willows, they were planted because there was originally "too much water in the ground". He said the bay and beach here are identical to the one North of here where legend has it the Greeks returned to sneak back door into Troya. The Troya beach is shale and not good for swimming, only for invading with a fleet.

Now doesn't that day sound like one of those implausible adventures out of LOTR those of you who have read it? I enjoyed the happy ending this time as well, but I'm growing weary of these sets of challenges that crop up almost weekly. Think I'll fall asleep 'narcissistically' watching me in DVD Scotland/ England. I am so very very glad I had the movie and still camera for that part of the journey. Sorry again for losing it ma, pa and sibs.

Hitting the hay early tonight. Like it's only 2130H and I'm totally thrashed.

Woke up at 0800H after a great sleep. It's cooling down a bit these nights and perhaps the free party beer last night helped a bit.

Today I learned from security chief Kamal that professor Mr. Awesome is really a Mullah or "chaplain" from and for the huge airforce base and community inland north of here. He was not "born to the cloth", whatever that meant in his case, I never found out. We went fishing on the peddle boat again in the morning from 0900 to 1100H, in nothing but T-shirts and swim trunks. I'm sure we look like two overgrown scruffy kids out there. Osama's daughter is a fighter pilot and his son is a CGA and businessman. How does that mess with your stereotype of Islam.

Thinking back, until today, I did not know the chant/prayer "Allah Ooo-Achbar" thing was said exactly the same EVERY time. It's kinda like the Catholic's, "Hail Mary Full of Grace, here's some pie in your face", or whatever that is they say, 'cuz eating dinner at the Sasges family's they said two different short really quick ones and I never sorted out the bits. I thought the Islamic one was more like "God is great!", followed by a sort of tower top news announcement for the day like "God is Great! Come on everybody! Wake-up! Wake up! It's a sunny dayayay! God is great!" Then at other times, "Hey you guys, even though it's raining, get your a\$\$es outta the sack! God is great!" Of course, Mullahs no longer climb all those steps, to the top of the Minaret, five times a day. Mullahs now talk in a microphone and it comes out of three loud speakers up there or in many cases they just play a recorded version. Were either of those split-infinitives or misplaced modifiers?

Yes? No? Almost? Only crappie writing!  
Just checking to see if you're listening.

When we were way out in the boat, Osama/Awesome yelled the whole thing and got into a rhythm just ahead of the recorded one in town. After it was over, he chuckled and I think he said something like, "It screws with the minds of people within the listening area when I do that! They think they're hearing an echo off nothing out here, sort of in reverse!" He thinks it's really funny! So do I, if he's gesturing and laughing about what I'm thinking he is, because I could hear it and see the same people he could see on the beach, looking around confused. This jolly guy's wacky. I did take a picture of him on the Troya camera. He's the big toothless guy of the group I shot during the TV soccer match, although I won't know if I caught his "missing teeth" grin until I get back the photo.

He was very affectionate but he never quite got my name the whole time, "Laa"- hold these hooks!; "Lan"- coil this anchor rope!; "Lanetz"- peddle slower! I have no Turk, he has no English except, we both have "Thank you!" and he has other useful words he tried to impress me with like, "John Wayne, Arnold Swartzneiger, Beell Clinton".

We used sign-gibberish the whole time like, "Beautiful sunrise!" "Beautiful sunset!". Some of the few Turkish words I learned besides "taisha kü" was "ballock" for "fish" as well as "hashish" for "hashish".

That morning when we finished pulling up the peddle-boat, Prof Awesome handed me what I thought was a spike-free chestnut about the size and shape of a kiwi. He was playing a game of "what is it?" I had no clue. Then he handed me a walnut. I'd never seen a walnut "fruit" before. They grew here on the beach. We parted and I was juggling them on the way back to the van. As I walked back

through the trees I saw a tiny kitten, being torn apart by Lassie and Rockie the guard dogs. Cath will remember a similar incident in Israel that was gruesomely over before we could do a thing. I took off at a run shouting, "Lassie!"- fired the fruit and hit Rockie hard in the ear. Totally lucky shot for me, not for Rockie. He let go and whimpered away. I fired the walnut at Lassie walking quickly away with the snack in her teeth. She lucked out with "Ball one!". Then I dove and whacked her on the hind quarters and rescued the kitten she had immediately dropped to turn and snarl. Awesome saw it all and was clapping. He said the kitten sleeps in the bottom of the bread warming cupboard. We then called her Ocha or Eight because she had just spent one life.

Funny enough, I got along great with both dogs after that, especially the mom who let me pet her and play with her dogs. Master dog thing?

The four guys left working here today are: Security chief Kamal, age 35. Plays football. Has a one year old daughter. Speaks English quite well. Quotes: "Turkish tobacco has no additives and it is very cheap. People die younger here than in Europe, usually by heart-attack. Cheap tobacco saves government billions in old age security." He chain smokes.

Bemis- Tall thin kid, age 20 yrs. very quiet, smiles a lot, plays football, owns a small sports business in Izmiri. No English. Chain smokes.

Oomeet- 27 year old, "porno man" is related by blood to crazy Arab English Turk comedian Jamie Mass. Only English- "porno". His pride and joy is an autographed t-shirt of some local pro soccer team. Chain smokes.

Professor Mullah Osama, age 53. Prefers to be called Mr. Awesome these days. He's a Northern Air-base "chaplain". He

comes for two weeks to get away, do some fishing, help clean up for free room and board, drink with the boys and watch the football at night.

Prof Awesome was all excited to get going fishing tonight. He came over and was "La/ Lan/ Lanetz! Fishing!". It's fun to see as he is just like a kid and we're a few days apart in age. April 22, 1952 for him, me April 16, so I'm older I told him. We went out just as the sun was setting spectacularly over Greece, with a light dangling from the peddle boat. He snagged two to six every time he jigged. He uses some kind of tube shaped clam and cuts them into small chunks. He really feels and yanks at the right time. We can both see the relaxed enjoyment in each other just being out there on the glassy calm sea with the stars and lights far away on nearby Khios I believe the Turks call it. We stayed out until 1945H then came back to watch the "big" football match. During the game, Prof Awesome broke out what turned out to be a € 30 bottle of white wine with some religious guy's picture on it. Good wine here is like € 4. We celebrated the kitten's re-birthday. The other guys don't drink wine so we were happy. Feeling tired I wrote this and went to bed early at 2200H.

### • Three hazy days later •

I found out that West Nile Fever is worse than West Nile Virus as I write this several days after crashing and burning with it. At least Thms and I didn't get it in Toronto in 2003.

Several days ago, I went fishing with Professor Doctor Awesome I'm calling him now. It was a beautiful morning as the sun came up. Two hours later, as I walked up the beach, an Aussi couple who came to the beach the day after me, asked me to bring the guitar and teach them one of the songs, "Hallelujah". I said I'd be right back with the guitar and went to the van. I felt a

little light headed and thought too much sun perhaps. I slid the door open and sat down in the entry. Suddenly a great euphoria came over me as though I was stoned and yet feeling absolutely no senses whatsoever. I lay back and drifted off knowing somehow it was all over and I was finally going beyond the veil. After about a half hour the Aussi apparently came looking for me and found me burning up. Dr. Awesome whipped me to the hospital in his little truck. At one time in the hospital the chart showed me fighting a temperature of 42+ C, which means nothing to me really, I'm still better with 105 Fahrenheit, once we go above 39 or 40 Celsius kid's fever range.

105 sounds really bad to me. It was only for about 5 or 6 hours but I don't think it's too cool for the brain. Third day and I'm released.

Hung out back at beach writing and resting all day. Dr. Awesome was very attentive. All I wanted to ingest was fruit juice, fruit and bread. Went to bed at 2100H and had a great sleep. Dr. Awesome came by at 0700H. I said, "Not going fishing, too tired today". He said "No ballock okay". His English is improving. I think he was just checking on me. I got up and sat reading and writing at the picnic table as he read some religious looking book across from me. I don't think he was paying attention because every time I looked up he would be looking at me and then grin. I would say, "I feel much better and smile". "Good, Good!", he can say now. In the afternoon, we went paddling around on our backs near the shore, all the while he keeping a close eye on me. Then we sat on the shore and played bomb the floating wood with rocks like a couple of kids. The Aussies let me lay in their hammock in the shade and I fell asleep from 1400 'til 1800H. I never nap but I guess there's always time for something new. Had a fresh bread, many fruit and juice dinner.

Played guitar and sang with the Aussies but after a half hour was exhausted and I had no singing breath left. Wrote this journal entry and crashed at 2000H.

Up at 0700H. Read for a bit, but hanging around at the beach no longer seemed so relaxing so I decided to bail today at noon and drive down the coast to Efes. Said good-bye to the guys. Dr. Awesome crushed me with a hug reeking of tobacco. I'll never forget that crazy kindred spirit. It's as if we were spawned from the same chunk of clay and were brought back together at this extraordinary time in my life. Come on Thms... gotta be fate.

Efes is simply an amazing place. Like a giant Pompeii. Same haunting, they just left yesterday, feeling. The library and 60,000 seat stadium alone are worth the price of admission. The cobbled streets, communal toilet, and market place are also very complete. Funniest part: "Prostitute's Way" which I'm thinking would be called "Ho Road" in this day and rap age.

It was like 35 plus degrees this afternoon and I suddenly realized my internal thermostat may have recently been knocked back towards normal. We were never sure to start with what the actual experimental treatment cause of its "off-jarring" was in the first place. I actually shivered last night and I never shiver anymore. I also never really sweat today when many around me were doing so profusely. Not sure it's a good or bad thing, but we'll keep an eye on it. Bought another 36 shot camera for this site, as I had used up the other camera.

Went to internet café after, to check on ferries to Cypress and or Israel. Border to Turkey from Syria is a mess, Syria / Lebanon worse, even for Canadians. Security website suggests avoiding it and take an alternate route. Received e-mail

from Derek with link to hysterically funny SNL episode, "Cork Soaking". Would love to have watched that with Thms. Next e-mail Cath expressed concerns re Thms missing his dad. Something just snapped in me. I freaked thinking what would have happened if I had been free-camping in the mountains when hit with WNF. Some goat-herd would have found my bloated, maggot filled body. How lucky I was it happened here. Fate once again Thms?

Checked out reselling Van and bailing this trip this time around. No way to sell van in Turkey, it's "against the import law". Next stage was pack-up and hit the road for a run to Amsterdam. Bottled up with water and juice at 1800H and then seriously frappéd la rue as uncle Steve says. Drove North-East non-stop passing through Istanbul long before rush hour. Few cars on highways, just transport trucks.

First time ever this trip, I ended up running on fumes. I'm speaking about the van not myself personally, although this will be a challenge as I'm still on meds, but was kinda wired at the moment. I've been low on diesel before but this time the warning light was on for a good half hour with no station anywhere in site. I finally pulled off at the second last toll booth exit, asked, "benzene?" Toll guy said, "Three kilometres ahead on side road, but closed now". At 0230H, I free-camped in a farm field where, in the almost full moonlight I can't make out a station anywhere down the road. Make notes on today's latest adventures and crash at 0300H.

Wake up at 0800H to heavy fog everywhere. I take a chance at a silhouette down the road and as I roll down the hill I see a brand spanking new Turkgas. A cute little old man comes hustling out as the sun begins to drive off the fog and says good morning in French, German, Turk, English and Spanish. He speaks only Turkish. Checks the oil. Fills the tank and cleans the windscreen. His

cheap plastic squeegee breaks. I jump in the van, grab the duct tape and a short piece of dowel that fits perfectly and fix it stronger than new for him. After I pay he says, "Tchai". Ahhhh! Tea on a brisk, empty stomach morning. We sit and sip at his little desk, he opens a box of biscuits, smiles and nods. How British is that. We just smiled and nodded and grunted that the tea was good, the biscuits and morning are good. "Thank you", I say and hit the border.

Border line-up to Bulgaria short- through in fifteen minutes. Drove all day straight through, easily skirting Sofia. Saw it in '76. There are redheaded women with pillows all along the highway near every clump of trees or side road. "Pillow girls", I never mentioned before, are everywhere in Eastern Europe, especially Hungary. It's usually truckers and the odd suited up business man who stop to receive oral sex in the bushes. The pillow is for kneeling on. A lot of them are apparently Russian. Kinda get a morose feeling passing that kind of stuff. I like a little candle-light and wine, maybe a little massage, but not this way.

Late afternoon sun getting low over steep mountains ahead as I approached Serbia/Yugo border. Getting chilly so I slip on the first thing I can reach which is my bright red Canada rugby jersey covered in maple leaves. Easy check of van at Serbian border, but the guards are all like, touching two fingers to the Canadian flags on the van and touching my jersey with a kiss to two fingers saying, "Thank-you! Canada good! Brave soldats!". I've apparently arrived coincidentally at some kind of war memorial time. I mention, "I was never here! Never in the Canadian army!" Serbia still a pretty desolate area. Really very sad.

Make it through to "Yugoslavia" and close to Belgrade without any symptoms of WNF, the pills for the virus are pretty

peppy until now. Travelling around Belgrade and in Northern Yugo, what the hell? Road tolls everywhere - € 47 for four hours on highway of which one hour was crawling in traffic due to construction then - € 17, € 12, € 12, € 7. I had taken out € 200 before starting this run but had to fork out € 100 for diesel just into Serbia where there was "No VISA here".

Yugoslavia in the rain and dark now, heading towards Hungarian border. What a fricking nightmare, and my adrenaline is fading fast trying to read the fricking roadmap and follow all the detours due to road construction. I'm so thinking, "Where's my Thms when I need him?" Stay kewl is my mantra now, but energy is ebbing fast and I am so thirsty. After three detours, I don't even know now if this is anywhere near the border crossing .

As I approach what I think is the border I see a camper in the pissing dark rain ahead that looks something like the rear bike rack and bike of the two German guys from Bulgarian sunset song session. I would soon learn their names are Martin and Phillip. Pulling into the short line-up at the border, I realize it is them. I jump out in the increasing deluge and say hi and ask if they are shooting straight for Munchen area. They are! They agree to convoy as they've had a few engine problems. They have the shortest up-to-date MapQuest direction as well. Then the "Midnight Express" fun starts.

Of course I have no drugs on board. Nadda. But it's 0100H, and that's like one a.m. in olden time. I look like hell! Unshaven, greasy hair, bloodshot and bleary eyed. Hungarian customs ask us all the same questions finishing with, "any drugs- marijuana, hashish, heroin?"

The boys get through and say they'll wait and make tea in the parking lot.

I answer customs "no", but he looks at my passport Turkey stamp, then at me and immediately sends me to the vehicle inspection station with a pit under the van and now in my stomach as well. The "drug inspector" does a cursory check with some wand and puts the paper in a machine, then he looks me in the eyes and says "Mary Wanna!" as in "Ah Ha!! we know you have some!" He loads a fresh sampling strip on the wand and rubs it over my hands, fingers and shirt. Puts it in the machine and the machine says, "Beep Beep! THC or MARIJUANA", or whatever it does. He smiles an insidious grin at me and radios for the dog. He speaks no English but smiles, signs touching his nose and says, "English dog". I say in a very pleasant tone sarcastically, because I've never heard of the breed, "Oh yah. An English 'Sniffing' Dog?" He smiles and chirps gleefully, "Yes, yes, MaryWanna", because he just knows he has me.

I am so fried from the past few days I start getting silly with this guy who may actually have my nuts in a vise. I say 'eversosweetly', and almost as quickly as a Quebecois speaks French so we in BC with our high-school Parisian can't make any sense of it, slurring together in one long word, "Ifyou're quoting from Monty Python, Ibelieve that's English 'Pig'Dog!". All he hears is English and dog", and repeats, touching his nose, "English dog".

At this point I have faith there's no such thing as "planting drugs" in this part of the globe, so that's calming. Then I think, "Whatever happens, I have a pretty good track record on this planet, things in the long run will be fine. If it's only Marijuana, as least it's not Heroin or Cocaine". But I know I have none on board.

I'm trying to think. It's been like five days since I was even near someone with hashish in Turkey and I've been sponge bathed and had a shower in the hospital and a few at the beach. How could there

be pot on my hands? As the dog is busy finding nothing, which was actually quite interesting to watch and be a part of, it's keeping me very calm. I'm trying to figure where I came into contact with pot residue or else I am being framed. Then I suddenly say rather calmly, "Ohhhh! Two Australians and a Turk mixed some hash and pot on the counter in my van because it was really windy one night. The pipe fell over and spilled some spent ash and I wiped the counter waiting briefly at the Serbian border just the day before I arrived here." He doesn't understand a word but smiles gleefully, probably because he thinks I just offered my first born, it's mother and all the money in my bank account if he'll just overlook this one small error in judgement on my part.

He smiles and just says, "Mary Wanna" like I am so busted. The dog and tail remain calm checking under the van and everywhere inside. After he has done a very thorough job finding nothing, I show the sponge to the guy and say, "I wiped up the pot with this, wanna check it?" As he wipes it and goes to the machine, Martin comes in. They've been drinking tea patiently, still waiting in the parking lot thank goodness. I tell him they're trying to bust me for pot. I explain the sponge thing and where I think the positive indicator came from. Martin explains it in German to the Hungarian.

The Hungarian walks over, grabs Martin's hands, wipes them and checks. Nothing! I am so relieved because I'd hate to have been the cause of them being searched. He and Phillip know all about this border so they came clean and prepared. Dog-handler comes back from letting the dog "cleanse his palette" sniffing long wet pissed on grass around a tree base. Customs guy is determined that I'm dirty and will be busted. The dog is all over the van and still finds nothing. The only time his tail has wagged at all ever so gently, is sniffing the tree pee. The customs guy



walks past me really closely, leans over, grins and says, "Maaarry Wanna!", nodding his beady eyed head! "You go! Bye!" and dismisses me with a backhand wave as if saying, "You won this time but I'll be watching for you".

"That's it? I can go?" I say, feigning shock. I should be an actor.

He doesn't even look back but flicks his hand over his shoulder and says, "Bye Bye Mary Wanna!"

I can't get out of there quickly enough, but I do take a few minutes to calmly stow my guitar and a few things they pulled out of place, then drive ever so slowly out of the garage and past the border gate into the parking lot next to Martin and Phillip who say, "Wowww. That was pretty kewl! Everything okay!" I say, "Yah. I'll need to write that up in my journal as soon as possible. As if I'm going to transport drugs across an international border that way. Oh well, lets roll".

We take off in the rain at legal speed, in case we're being followed and drive for an hour, then stop for diesel and café. I have two double espressos dumped in a large hot-chocolate. I mention to the boys that I've seen no lights following us, only passing. They concur so we presume we are "free". There's a very good washroom here, so I take six minutes to shampoo hair, shave quickly, (I can do this, dry if need be; bro Ric and Uncle Steve, no can do!), brush teeth and change into fresh clothes for appearances in a few hours at the next border. The boys, brushing their teeth and cleaning up also, keep saying, "Take your time! No hurry!" Not being a big coffee drinker, my heart has kicked in from the espresso caffeine and I just want to get going. Then we drive non-stop to the next border. Hungary scans my passport, looks at her computer, looks at me nicely and says, "No marijuana?" I'm looking pretty squeaky clean, so I say, smiling sweetly, "If you say so".

Austria border a breeze and at 0600H we are safe in the far West. Thirty-seven (37) hours 4060 km, since I left Turkey, we arrive at twelve noon, Sunday in Lintz, me running on three hours sleep, the meds and near lethal dose of espresso. I definitely buy these two German lads lunch. Total bill, € 38, well worth it as it would have taken me two extra days and a nervous breakdown to get this far. We take a photo of them and their camper, exchange e-mail and say good-bye. They've decided they have time to spend two days in Praha, before going back for Martin's father's birthday.

If anyone in Vancouver ever has a German visitor named Martin, industrial design, or Philippe, economics from Munchen- free room and board for a week please. Uncle Steve, his insights into EU economics would be well worth the hospitality.

After lunch I drive from 1400 'til 2100H into Germany and pull over at a luxurious trucker's restaurant and rest stop like only the Germans do. I call StuThms, chat by phone card for ten minutes then fall asleep instantly in the camper van until 1000H next day.

Drive and arrive Amsterdam at 1400H, check into Traveller's Inn Hostel and crash until 2000H. I walk in the rain, back to the rugby restaurant and eat a good meal. Come back to the hostel and sleep until 0800 next morning.

Turn van over to B&W for resale then book bus to London for 0500H tomorrow in front of Victoria Hotel. Spend the rest of the day sorting and fleshing out these notes in journal then go to dinner with Barbara. Not surprisingly, she's been accepted into some special government tourism program based on her English skills. Of course, like many Dutch, she speaks

German fluently, but then I always get the idea they are almost the same, which isn't true. She says they split apart as long ago as the 12th Century, and developed very differently like Latin into Italian and Romanian.

Mon. Sept 26- Bus ahead of schedule so we pull out precisely at 0500H. Arrive Nithsdale late afternoon. Stella just smiles when I walk in and says "Welcome back". Gotta just love that gal. We're the same age you know!

Tues.- Attended to journal and read LOTR in the sunny hammock, most of the day.

Wed.- Laid in hammock reading and napping in the sun. The drive really took it out of me... or maybe it's that I'd not recovered from WNF before doing it.

Thurs.- started pruning fruit trees at garden back- four hours, two 2 hour sessions. Whew!

Fri.- finished pruning fruit trees, four hours, two 2 sessions.

Sat.- hauled prunings to dump w/ Ric

Sun.- day off, I'm bagged. Can't even work two half days in a row. It sure feels like my thermostat of the last five years has gone back to original setting. Will continue monitoring.

Mon.- pruned tallest tree closest to house, East side- 3 hours straight. Whew!

Tues.- Went to London on a day pass bought right at Tring Station. Good deal, return train plus London transit, £14. Bought Kodak DX6490 camera at Dixon's. One model older than the one I lost in Romania. I now know it's all I really need however. Had been on line to Duty Free and then phoned to see if the camera I wanted was there for sale. Not. Found on the web, a suitable similar camera at London, Bank Station Dixon's. Three in stock. When I got there I was concerned about the 13 FPS Video compared to my

old camera at 20 FPS. The sales guys didn't know what difference it'd make in iMovie. I was hemming and hawing and then he said, "We do have a camera one year older than yours. It's 20 FPS, 10x Optical but only 3x Digital as compared to your other's 4x Digital and it only has a few auto settings compared to the range on the other one".

"Digital smidgital!" I thought. I could care less, because I very seldom used it as the quality sucks; perhaps from the King's Barrow to the Henge and a few times since. It's not great in iMovie, only when really necessary and then you need a tripod or to find a prop to steady the camera. And I never used those selectable Auto settings anyway.

Then he says- "It's only 4.0 MegaPixel, compared to your other at 5.0". Again! I'm using in iMovie DVD's so I care not that I can only enlarge the 4.0 up to a 20 x 30 inch photo-print, which I'll seldom/never do. I may get a lucky shot sometime to make an 8 x 10 or at the most a 16 x 20, framed print from.

AND it was clearing at £139 plus £49 for a 512mb memory card. That works out today at double in Can\$, so about Can\$380 and I get the VATax back at the airport as they took my Passport and filled out a form to submit for cash when I fly out.

I take the tube from Bank station to Camden Market and the Stables, where Jez has directed me for discount jeans and second hand stuff. The stables is a large ring of brick arch stables for the London Rail and Transit horses when the barges and trams were pulled by equine. It was a really hippy-dippy-trippy place.

I had found a pair high cut brown leather German Army boots at an army/ navy/ airforce surplus. It's mostly stuff from British and European services. A little bit

from the U.S.A. There were three pairs left in that style. These boots no doubt have been tried on and walked around in over and over again at the quartermaster's stores, hopefully with freshly issued woollen socks. When the style issued changes, they are 'surplused'. These boots are in effect already broken in, but immaculate. They fit perfectly. I am well pleased with them as I did not bring any hiking or other boots with me from Canada. My old Gorilla boots had worn out on the motorcycle the last few years and besides, I wore those in Europe in 1976 and then again in '81-82 on the MC with Cath as well as to work on the Kibbutz. I wore them also, building the addition to the house in Ladner. They owed me nothing but I could never find anything suitable to replace them in Vancouver what with my stubby size 7.5E width foot.

Serendipity # ??- forget it. I've lost count this trip. I was checking out weird and wonderful shops in the stables when I went into some total Goth shop- bright and cheery but all black, red and chrome. I was looking at some jewellery in a case when I heard, "Mr. Reeceead?" Unlike the last time when I heard Vanessa in London, I so knew this was meant for me and I was trying to place the voice. I looked up at a late twenty's aged woman and tried to subtract the darkly made-up eyes and lips from the milky white clear bare skin. Eliminating the facial piercings brought me to exclaim, "Oh my gawd! Lindsay? Look at you! You're gorgeous!", though I could not muster the surname just at the moment. I was immediately reciting, "Lindsay, Emily Seseljia, Julie Boyvin", naming her bosom buddies from grade two to six at Hazel Elementary. She came rushing from behind the cash counter and gave me the longest hug. She's about Cath and Heath's build but 5' 8".

The three I listed off, were in my grade four then five class. After a long year in grade six with "psycho Ms. Soh" (her words during lunch), I had that same class again in grade seven. I'll never forget any of the kids in the class and named almost every one when we and her girlfriend closed shop and went next door for lunch. Halfway through lunch, it suddenly came to me and I ventured, "Hey Crosby, you had an older brother I never taught. What's he doing?" "Teaching High School French in Winnipeg." she says. Took a while, but I got that last name in the end.

Lindsay left us half way through grade seven to go to French Immersion. She had pretty good French from home so she did okay. She said she took three years at Queens, went on to counsel abused women in India, married an American therapist, who turned out to be mentally cruel and degrading, (ironic shades of our fav, Vicky Henson and Ken); left him, went to some London business school, opened this shop with her girlfriend and is doing very well. They bought a flat in Kensington and will shortly pay off the mortgage. She is 28 now. We had an almost two hour lunch, my treat. Her partner in business and life it turns out, returned to the shop after a half hour, while Lindsay and I got caught up.

Later, I told her I was looking for some Levi 516 Wide Cut, 36 x 30 jeans just like the ones I was wearing but could only find lots of popular 501s. She took me to another shop deep in back of the stables where I found some for £5. Then she asked me if there was anything else I was looking for. I said, "Do you always go to the same place for piercings?" She said, "Yes! A guy named Clem." She "celled" him and he said he would be free in about fifteen minutes.

Crap, another new verb for English, "to cell". Now that's going to be confusing for ESL, as in "Hey! do you want me to cell

him for you?" They're going to think we have a slave marketing system here.

Lindsay and I walk back along the market street to where his shop is. It's very sterile and set-up like Sacred Heart on 10th at Alma. Funny name for a guy with a heavy German accent though.

Walked Lindsay back to the shop and promised to "try" to stay in touch. What a great second, student reunion that was since leaving Vancouver. Amazing coincidence- London too? When I told her of the other in Smithfield in July, she said, "Well Read! You've taught a lot of kids and we've scattered far and wide, it could happen again!" Which sounded funny, so I said, "I wonder who, where and when the next will be?"

She and I had earlier sat and figured out on a napkin how many I'd taught. Over 2000 kids in my short career and since Middle, more than 1700 of them for three year's in a row for grade 6, 7, and 8 in computers, PE, drama, guitar, first aid and even art 8 one term. Many I coached as well in V-Ball, B-Ball, Field Hockey and Rugby as well as all those I connected with helping direct musicals or sponsoring in the Yearbook and or Newspaper teams. Wow! I never really stopped to count them all.

When she and I had been walking through the stalls, I said a few times that "I should buy one of those red Che T-shirts to replace my other very faded one". When we got back to her store and they said good bye her partner handed me a Che T-shirt. Lindsay had "celled" her when we were at the piercing place and had her send some kid to buy one as a gift. Lunch £ 3 0. London Daypass- £14. T-shirt £4.50. Seeing Lindsay Crosby again. PRICELE £ £ !

I arrived home after a precious Autumn day-trip to London, the scent of burning

leaves in the air. Should sleep well tonight. I e-mailed Julie Boivin when I got back and gave her Lindsay's e-mail.

Wed. Oct. 5- More gardening work at Ric's- pruned backyard berry covered bush. Took a pewter cigar tube I had bought in London for Gus Fumano, up to the shoe/ engraver/ embroidery shop but he was closed at noon.

Thurs. Oct. 6- Trimmed back the laurel bush. Toughest job yet. Finished the BC/Alta camping DVD. Dropped the cigar tube off in the morning and told him I was leaving on Saturday. He said no problem as he was leaving for holidays that night closing at 1700H. I went back at 1600 and he had it nicely done. We all sans Chris, had a family dinner with Amy in attendance. I bought a "Special" Scotch haggis and some Black-Angus steak from the meat shop in town, marinated it in garlic, soya and beer and Ric bbq'd. The haggis was quite good, at least it disappeared in one sitting and Amy tried it for the first time and didn't throw up at all.

Lindsay called in the aft to bail on tomorrow. We were thinking of meeting for half day in London, but her partner is sick so she has to be at the shop. They had mentioned when I chatted with them the first time, that they have a problem with a few twenty's going missing here and there from the cash, so always try to have one of them there. HOWEVER, she seemed excited to think of planning her first holiday in three years and is checking into Israel. Perhaps I better brush up on my roadmaps and historic sites over the next several months in case I'm still around to show her.

Fri. Oct. 7  
Mailed cigar tube, "Goose w/U Always" to Gus. Mailed back storage lockup key I had neglected to return at Salisbury Cathedral Clock Tower. Picked up new e-ticket as flight was postponed to Sunday

morning. Trimmed three to four metres off the cedars near the patio. Huge amount to dispose of, OUCH! Had family dinner of "fish and chips" from the shop in town. Ric's treat. Wine, my treat.

Sat. Oct. 8

Thank the gawdness Grampa Rodwell came by last night and said the cricket fundraiser bonfire pile was just started. Ric and I took car load after car load of trimmings across the road instead of all the way to the dump. Whew!

Ric and Stella drove me to Heathrow at 2315 after they had had a good time at the hospital trivia fundraiser. Took just over half hour one way, no traffic.

Hooked up to net on wireless for a few hours at £6.50 for 3 hours. Attended to a few websites and sent some e-mail. THEN I just took some time to lay and reflect on this sad old life of mine that's been of late not really so bad. During this past few years, it's been very difficult dealing with losing Cath and home and feeling like a gypsy. For the longest time I kept as busy as I could but absolutely dread coming back to my abode with no one waiting. I cherished having Thms come over for weekends and was always so disappointed when he was not be able to make it. I really had so much to be thankful for, but as Shakespeare's Romeo sighed, "Lonely hours seem long".

Thank gawd for my bro Ric and sis-in-law Stella and the Nithsdale England clan. They can never really know how much being there helped.

Writing this journal, I came more and more to realize I have little to be too bitter about. Melancholic at times perhaps, as I wish back to having been a better husband and friend to Cath. Just seems I had some all consuming fire burning within to try to change a society I see falling apart, and instead I wrecked part of my own life.

I once quoted in a letter to our dear Tee-heart, lyrics from the musical, Hair- "Easy to Be Hard", which well summarizes my own life pretty much pissing off people around me. Hud's pregnant girlfriend Jeanie sings to him:

How can people have no feelings  
How can they ignore their friends  
Easy to be proud  
Easy to say no.

And especially people  
Who care about strangers  
Who care about evil  
And social injustice

Do you only  
Care about the bleeding crowd?  
How about a needing friend?

I need a friend. (she sings)  
Apologies to Cath for that especially.

Writing this trip journal also made me reflect back on the truly amazing life and pile of experiences I've had good or challenging. At the end of his practice, Dr. Bisson showed me the annotated records he kept on recipe cards, of the Read kids; inoculations, earaches, medication, stitches, etc. All my siblings had perhaps a half dozen cards each at the most. Heath had a few more. Then he showed me a stack of mine. He suggested I slow down, life might be too short. Well, it hasn't been that short so far. The incredible experiences I've had on this brief journey through Europe 2005 alone, as the DVD and Journal will hint at, sometimes makes it feel exhaustingly endless. It might be, that perhaps some of us were just not meant to live to comfortable ripe old ages, doddering into retirement to endlessly rock in front of the TV or stroll sunny beaches. As surprising as it may be to a few, when I am finished sharing any expertise I have overseas, away from My Oh'Canada, I'll just come home and live quietly volunteering for every group I deem is trying to redeem and save the Oh'Canada I believe in,

especially the abolition of "Freetrade" with the better termed "Unfair, all for America Trade". All of you should read, heed and act upon Peter C. Newman's book on this subject. I would work to find a cure for the "Affluenza Virus" so rampant in Canadians. (affluenza.com)

My song for now is Enya's, "May It Be":

May it be an evening star  
Shines down upon you.  
May it be when darkness falls  
Your heart will be true.  
You walk a lonely road  
Oh! How far you are from home  
Mornie utúlië  
(darkness has come)  
Believe and you will find your way  
Mornie alantië.  
(darkness has fallen)  
A promise lives within you now  
May it be the shadows call  
Will fly away.  
May it be you journey on  
To light the day.

When the night is overcome  
You may rise to find the sun  
Mornie utúlië  
(darkness has come)  
Believe and you will find your way  
Mornie alantië.  
(darkness has fallen)  
A promise lives within you now.  
A promise lives within you now.

**END**  
of  
**Europe Journal 2005**  
L R

**Israel & Beyond**  
2005 - 2006

I'm not sure there will be anything more than a highlight's reel DVD from here on, and a few notes, hopefully.

Sun. Oct. 9, 2005 con't

Sat at London-Heathrow and read LOTR, then lined up to check in luggage at 0430H. I had been told my passport and e-ticket were enough. Got to queue front and was told go back to ticket office. Line-up there. When they announced the flight was about to close I butt in as nicely as I could and told the clerk what had happened. She phoned someone while she processed the ticket then said it's okay go to front of baggage check-in queue. They checked me in and I made the flight fine.

Flight to Milan went smoothly. Change over went very smoothly. Sat for an hour using up same company's wireless time. That was pretty kewl too. Flight to Tel Aviv was as turbulent as they had warned us. Sunny all the way so I don't know what that was all about. Lots of people were white knuckled. Sat with a very nice young Israeli couple, Ofir 28 Archaeology and Margalit 27, Geography B.Ed. like Tee. They are returning to their Kibbutz near Beit Sha'an via Milan from Delhi and India holiday. Picked their brains and they were obviously more left wing and very proud of changes towards peace, especially in suppressing religious right. Exchanged e-mail addresses: tsimering@hotmail.com.

1100H - Arrive Israel...