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Epic Journey 2008 -- Family & Friends Newsletter
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Week XXXIV Abroad
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Hello faithful readers! It has been a couple of months since you last heard from me, but as I promised I would only write when I had something worthwhile for you to read. The longest part of my journey has come to a conclusion, as I will be departing Wellington tomorrow to continue traveling. I have spent the last eight months immersing myself in New Zealand lifestyle and culture. I have worked and lived amongst them, and I am forever grateful for the experience. In this edition I will update you on my recent adventures in Wellington as well as give you a preview of my upcoming travels.

Wakefield Hospital

When I last wrote I was settling into my job at Wakefield Hospital.

This job has proved to be a wonderful experience on several levels. In terms of work, it has given me the opportunity to work in several different areas of accounting and finance. However, the true highlight of my job was being surrounded by great people and being challenged with unique projects. When I first arrived I was extremely anxious about how I would be perceived by my coworkers. Many people have preconceived ideas about Americans, both good and bad. I was afraid I would be judged based on my nationality before they got to know me. However, just the opposite occurred. As a foreigner and recent graduate my colleagues made me feel welcome and appreciated. It has been an absolute privilege to work at



Steve & Curtis hanging out at our flat in Wellington, New Zealand. We each our wearing our respective work clothes.

Wakefield and I will always be fond of the people and the institution.

This experience has given the courage to pursue another job abroad. As of now I am not sure where or when, but I doubt this will be the end of my international work experience. To my friends at home and other recent graduates, I urge you to consider a working abroad. Whether for six months or a few years, it will give you invaluable experience that cannot

be gained in the United States. It has taught me the importance of working with people of other cultures, ages, and backgrounds. Before this trip it was hard to appreciate the difficulty of entering a new environment. At home I always had my reputation or friends that would precede me. That comfort was gone when I came to New Zealand. I was 6724 miles from home, therefore my success or failure was completely my own responsibility.



My beloved coworkers from Wakefield Hospital. They are my family in New Zealand. (L-R): Steve Yoss, Danielle Uden, John Baxter, Brett Plim, Anna Brosnan, Angela Wills, Richard Catto



Top: A view of Parliament and other government buildings. The main building is known to locals as the "beehive" Middle: Friends from Capital City Lodge; L-R: Dave Littlejohns, Curtis Buchanan, Elizabeth Satherley, Steve Yoss Bottom: Steve after a particularly muddy rugby practice.

I can say with certainty that I have learned and grown from being here

For the first time in my life I haven't been surrounded with people like me. From youth to college I have always had friends who shared similar interests, age, backgrounds and education. In college all of my friends were at LMU, likewise for high school and prior. Other than Curtis, this was the first time I was surrounded by people who were different than me. At the hospital I worked with people from several different countries, ages, and backgrounds. At my flat (Capital City Lodge), well... lets just say Curtis and I stood out like a sore thumb. The experience was both refreshing and reaffirming. It was refreshing to have change in my life and at the same time it is reaffirming of my life back at home. This distance has made me appreciate more than ever my family and friends on both sides of the Pacific.

Corporate Sponsorship

A few months ago I developed a plan to test the generosity of corporate America. I decided that I would write to my favorite companies and products to notify them of my upcoming travels. In order to enquire if they would be interested in helping me along the way. With the help of my good friend Matt Young, I was able to make contact with representatives from companies such as Pyro Spectaculars, Del Taco, Apple, and In-N-Out Burger, just to name a few. I described my upcoming travels and asked for their help. I mostly received letters of encouragement, but a few companies sent gift certificates or clothing. Their generosity is very much appreciated.

The All Blacks

While in Wellington I had the pleasure of attending two All Blacks matches. The first game was against the Irish National Rugby Team, the later against the South African Springboks. The Irish game was the first match of the season for



View of Westpac Stadium during the NZ All Blacks v. South Africa Springboks. The All Blacks defeated the Springboks 19-8. Great game.



Steve & Maurice Bertolini at the Temperance Bar in Courteney Place, Wellington. Drinking the pride of the Netherlands.

the All Blacks and the first time a majority of the team had played together. It was generally agreed that their performance was not exceptional, but a solid start to the season. The next game was against the South African Springboks. The Springboks are the current world champions as they won the Rugby World Cup last year. The game was spectacular, with the All Blacks beating the Springboks 19-8.

After the match, my Dutch friend Maurice and I decided to cel-

ebrate the victory by having a few drinks in town. As we were making our way around town, we caught up with the All Blacks at a local bar. The guys were awesome and warmly greeted us. Below is a photo of me and Dan Carter. Dan is considered one of the best players currently playing the game. The best way of describing him to people who don't follow the sport would be to compare him to Alex Rodriguez of the Yankees or Kobe Bryant of the Lakers. For as famous as the players

were, they were humble and treated us well.

Wellington Rugby Football Club

One of my biggest accomplishments while living here was holding my own in the rugby pitch. I started playing rugby at LMU my last semester before leaving, but it wasn't until I came to NZ that I actually learned the game. It has been an arduous and dedicated process, but I feel that I have benefited greatly from playing the

sport. We had practice twice a week and had games every Saturday. I also had my own training an additional three to four nights a week. It allowed me to stay active and meet new friends. Our season came to a conclusion last weekend, and I can proudly say I played the entire season.

Overall, our season was successful. We began in the Senior 2nd grade, and halfway through the season the union promoted our team to Senior 1st grade due to our spectacular



Steve and Dara Moloney. A good friend from Ireland and a teammate from the rugby club. A great guy to have your back on the pitch.



performance. We finished the season in the upper half of the standings, a solid improvement from the prior year. I will forever be grateful to the boys on the team for their patience, making me feel welcome, and teaching me the sport. As an outsider they invited me into their team and made me one of them.

Upcoming Travels

After considerable thought and effort I have successfully planned out the next section of my epic journey. I will be touring countries in Oceania, Asia, Europe, and Africa. I will be seeing world highlights such as the outback of Australia, the pyramids in Egypt, Oktoberfest in Munich, an elephant safari in Thailand, the Trans-Mongolian Railroad in Russia/China, a cruise on a US Navy battleship and many other fascinat-

ing places. I intend on surprising you as I write so I have withheld my exact itinerary for that purpose. It is my goal to write every 2-3 weeks with an update of my travels. I hope you will keep reading as there are many more adventures coming.

I am not naive to how lucky I am to have this opportunity. I realize that very few people get an opportunity to do this after college. I am forever grateful to the people that have made opportunities available to me. I would not have been able to do this without the love, support, and kindness of those I leave behind. Thank you to my friends and family on both sides of the ocean.

As always, please check my web site, <http://steveyoss.com> for additional photos and videos of my travels.

CHEERS!
--Steve



Top: Steve & Curtis at the waterfront of Queen's Wharf in Wellington. Middle: (L-R): Pele, Steve, Oscar, and Maurice at a rugby party. The boys would often get together on a Saturday night after a match. Bottom: Steve with Dan Carter, the star back of the All Blacks. This photo was taken a few hours after the All Blacks defeated the Springboks.