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Epic Journey 2008 -- Family & Friends Newsletter
Volume II

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Week VII Abroad

Christchurch (South Island), New Zealand

It is hard to believe that I have been gone for almost two months. I find myself in my own bubble that is devoid of time and news. As someone that prided himself on being up to date on national happenings, I couldn't even tell you won the primaries or next season's starting lineup for the Angels. In my last writing I told you of my intentions of settling in Queenstown. Well, the situation has changed...

I came across a wonderful bus company called Stray Travel. Stray's speciality is transportation for backpacking tourists. Their buses travel everywhere and take us to the best spots in the country. For US\$1000 dollars I was able to purchase a pass that allowed me to travel anywhere, as much as I wanted, and is valid for a year. Using this pass I was able to explore the entire South Island, from Nelson (most northern) to Stewart Island (most southern). The company also guarantees accommodation in every city, so I never have to worry about getting a roof over my head.

I have become fully immersed in the hostel community. At

this point a Motel 6 would be the Ritz Carlton to me. For as cost-effective as hostels are they are rich in personality. I have stayed in a variety of types from a quiet farm setting to bustling city. Each has a unique charm and amusing people. The only time that they are frustrating is in the evening, when 200 people decent upon the kitchen to simultaneously cook dinner. As much as I have enjoyed it, I am looking forward to finally unpacking and using hangers again.

Before leaving Queenstown Pete, Ian and I went river boarding. I briefly described it in my last writing. To summarize, it is white water rafting with a foam board instead of a boat. Kiwi's are world famous for thinking of new ways to scare tourists, but this takes it to a new thrill level. The water is a chilling 50 degrees cold, the rapids are moving several feet per second and your only comfort is your ability to swim. After surviving the grade 3-5 rapids, I had the opportunity to cliff jump from a height of 30 feet, and play on a jet ski.



Trying my luck as a sheep wrangler. Working with sheep is much harder than it looks. I'm think I will keep my office job.

Our first stop on the Stray tour was Milford Sound. Milford is a giant fjord that was carved by a glacier thousands of years ago. If you have ever been to the inland passage in Alaska, it looks similar



The gang shares a pint at Speight's Brewery in Dunedin. We have never met a pint we didn't like!

Learn to talk like a Kiwi!

Sweet as!

lswēt! laz! adverb

English Translation:

Awesome, cool, bad-ass

You can make anything, -as (e.g. expensive-as, hot-as, cheap-as, etc).

Sentence: I got a fresh tasty Animal Style In-N-Out burger... sweet as!

(Yes.... I miss In-N-Out)



Pete and I at Milford Sound. Behind us the entrance to the fjord.



Feeding a lamb its dinner while on the farm in the South Island. bury factory. I got to see how large quantities of chocolate are made. I could not believe the variety of foods that they can cover in chocolate, every nut and fruit imaginable. At the end of the tour I saw chocolate water fall that continuously dumped 20,000 pounds of liquid chocolate through a silo. Unfortunately, I didn't have my swimsuit. If I was a 8 year old boy again, I am sure I would have enjoyed Cadbury's more. Now at my age, I just wanted to go back to the brewery!

The South Island has amazing diversity of climates. The west coast of the island features a lush rain forest. We spent three days at Old Macdonald's Farm in Able Tasman National Forest. The farm is on the border of the forest and the ocean. An interesting fact about the waters in this region is that they can vary as much as 30 feet between tides. This would cause hundreds of feet of coast to appear and disappear depending on the time of the day. While there

but more spectacular. The glacier forms it by melting and disintegrating the surrounding rock. The melting carves deep valleys with spectacular cliffs and waterfalls. While there I took a short boat voyage and explored it to the edge of the Tasman Sea.

While en route to Steward Island I got to spend some time on a sheep farm. New Zealand is world famous for the production of wool and mutton (lamb meat). During my stay I learned how to shear a sheep, the uses of the animal and the importance of to the farm economy. Check out my web site for a link to a video of my trip to the farm.

In Dunedin I visited two very important centers of production.... Speight's Brewery and Cadbury Chocolate Factory. Speight's (aka the "Pride of the South") is a lager beer similar to a Samuel Adams. I was able to tour the factory and see how they make this precious resource. At the conclusion the gang and I were charged with the important task of taste testing. The tasting lasted about a half an hour, but it was all you could "sample" in that time. I would like to note, that we did this for the "good of the people", through our burden we were able to determine that the beer is of high quality... Thankfully, the hostel was nearby.

The following morning I toured the Cad-



This copper kettle is used to make the beer mash. It can hold several thousand gallons of beer... just enough for an ADG party!



I had the opportunity to spend a day sailing. I left in the early morning and set sail on the catamaran, *Alley Kat*. We set off to explore the Abel Tasman park by boat. The tour took me to some notable highlights including split apple rock and a massive seal colony. It was an amazing feeling when the Captain raised the sails and cut the engine. There was good wind that day and the boat felt as if it were flying.

After leaving the Able Tasman, we traveled to Franz Josef. However, in order to reach Franz Josef I had to pass through the city of Barrytown. Although I have never stayed for more than an hour in Barrytown, its the only city that comes to mind when finding another town to



compare Barrytown to. While there I attended a costume party at our hostel, debauchery ensued.

Franz Josef is famous because it is a giant glacier... in the middle of a rainforest. Think about that one for a minute... The glacier is as old as the island itself and has been advancing (growing) and retreating (shrinking) for years. Since the 1970's it



Top: In the middle of a large crevasse. I was surrounded by millions of tons of ice. Middle: View of the rainforest from atop of the glacier. There is a large stream flowing from the base which is the melted glacial water. Bottom: Another view of the glacier with a waterfall.



Split apple rock in Abel Tasman. In this part of the country the tide can change as much as 30 feet in a day! This rock could be submerged depending on the time of the day!

the country and the third largest city. It has been compared to a miniature San Francisco.

I have been spending time at nights preparing my resume and related documents for job interviews. Ideally, I would like to work for either an accounting firm or as an IT administrator for a large company. Factors such as location, pay, and most importantly atmosphere will help guide my decision. As this will be a major way of meeting new friends, I want to work with people my own age. Wellington is rich with opportunities and has a low unemployment rate, so odds are I will find something good.

Outside of the office I intend on playing rug-



The guys and I at a costume party in Barrytown, South Island. Curtis is a scuba diver, Pete is a discount skydiver and I am a construction worker. We represented America well.

has advanced as much as a half mile. I spent a day climbing to the top of the ice. If you ever truly want to feel small, climb a glacier. There were times when I was in a crevasse a hundred feet deep. While there, I could not help but ponder about global warming. If global warming is such a major problem how does a glacier not only exist but grow in the middle of a rainforest? I have taken the liberty to write to Al Gore to seek his advice. I'll let you know.

I am departing shortly for the north island where I will resume touring for another two weeks. I will be working my way to Wellington, where I intend on staying for awhile. (I'm serious this time).

Wellington is the political capital of



River boarding in Queenstown. Its comparable to white water rafting but on a foam board. Grade 3-5 rapids... head first. What a rush!

by for an adult amateur league. I am also considering taking some classes to learn a foreign language.

Lastly, additional photos can be found on my web site <http://www.steveyoss.com>. I have put up a variety of pictures from the South Island and Fiji. Cruise on over and enjoy.

More antics, exploits, photos and tales coming your way in a few weeks with the North Island edition of the newsletter. Thanks for reading.

CHEERS!

--Steve