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The "BOTT" issue is here!

STEVE PARKER, PROCRASTINATOR EXTRAORDINAIRE

For those of you who spend many days waiting for each edition of the Parker Press, it has finally arrived. Our PERSON (Publisher, Editor, Reporter, Sports Writer, Operations manager and News correspondent) was on the road for quite some time, and due to some unforeseen delays (we just didn't see them coming) this "Holiday Issue" is very, very late.

If you're curious about the acronym "BOTT", you might figure it out by reading this issue. The translation is buried somewhere deep within. Starting on page six is a copy of a journal that our PERSON wrote whilst on a trip to Down Under (Australia and New Zealand). It's the primary reason this issue is so thick and so late.

Top Secret!

Do Not, under any circumstances, let one Ronald Parker (aka Dad) read this version of the Parker Press! He's getting a slightly modified version.

As I mention briefly in *Events*, Dad's retiring on June 17th, 1994, after years of servitude. He's undoubtedly aware of this fact.

What he's not aware of

Continued on page 3

New Location

The Parker Press staff is alive and well in their new location in Boulder, Colorado.

Most of you are aware that the Parker Press has moved to Boulder, and the entire staff moved with it. It took a few days to get

Continued on page 2

Events!

The purpose of this column is to document important events that I'm aware of. Some of the news I get through regular mail, some I get through electronic mail (the infamous "information superhighway", although the traffic jams there are getting as bad as Los Angeles), the telephone, and other methods. The key

Continued on page 4

A moving experience

STEVE P., ATLAS VAN LINES NEW CO-OWNER

Once I recovered from the basic hassle of moving from one location to another in only one vehicle trip (as opposed to twenty or thirty), I feel honor bound to present some of the details.

Packing all my stuff up was easy. StorageTek covered hiring movers to come into the house, pack everything into boxes, and load the truck. They spoke only broken english, but managed to get everything to the truck without breaking anything.

I packed what I'd need

for a month of hotel living, and headed for Boulder.

After a month, I found a place to live, and the movers delivered the things I had them store for the last month. They brought everything in, including a slightly broken bed, a broken computer desk, two completely destroyed dressers, a couple broken lamps, tape deck, and some other little things.

Well, the moving company paid me off, and I bought a new, larger dresser, lamp, fixed the tape deck, fixed the desk and I'm

now happy and living in my new abode.

With one minor problem: the previous owner's cat had destroyed the original carpet, so the landlord finally replaced the carpet, but didn't really solve the problem. It's starting to smell again.

I'm not too worried about it, though, because I hope to move out of here into a new house later this year, and I am willing to deal with this minor inconvenience (at least for now).

New Location from page 1

everything set up correctly, because the movers had broken most of my furniture (see related story *A Moving Experience*). Now things are getting back to normal. I can procrastinate just as well as I could in Santa Barbara.

I'm playing volleyball three nights a week up here and taking a Spanish class on a different night. I'm definitely keeping busy.

For those of you who missed either didn't get

the October issue of Parker Press, I wanted to make sure you have my new address, both at work, and at home.

To reach me at home:

**Some Address
Boulder, CO 99999
(303)999-9999**

via personal e-mail, read weekly (at best)

StevePark@*.com**

To reach me at work:

**StorageTek
Software Engineering
Some Address
Louisville, CO 99999
(303)999-9999**

via e-mail (read daily)

Steve_Parker@**.com**

Letters to Editor

The following is the second letter ever received by Parker Press. It is reprinted here in the interest of generating more interest...

Editor,

I wish to express my dismay that the distinguished Parker Press has joined the great exodus of business from California. I must now decide if I am to cancel my subscription. I must admit that the removal of that permanent beach bum Steve Parker from the state will only help the economy, but the loss in advertising revenue from the Parker Press will be greatly missed.

I was also mystified to receive my September PP with an October 6th postmark. This kind of tardiness is unacceptable for a professional organization and you should consider yourself reprimanded. (you may do this yourself if you think you might enjoy it; otherwise I'll find some naked amazon women on More Mesa Beach to come and beat the reprimand out of you... Worse yet, I might buy Mark Ward a one way ticket to Boulder and give him your address and a couple of pillows)... ; but I digress.

In closing I would like to say your presence here will surely be missed (by someone... anyone... come on, somebody miss him...)

John M. Cutsinger.

This space
intentionally filled
with meaningless
gibberish, so I
don't have to
fill it and delay
this yet another
month!

Top Secret from page 1

is the other fact that Mom's throwing him a surprise party on June 11th, 1994.

Scott and I will be flying home on Friday night and staying with Linda and Mark, just so we can surprise him in the morning. We are also in the process of trying to arrange for the entire Holden family (Chris, Vicky, Samuel, William, and Mary Kate) to get home for this as well. Somehow it will all work out.

Since it's at the school, and we have plenty of room, you are all cordially invited to the shindig. It will be held at Pinewood School in Pollock Pines (Dad's original stomping grounds) from 2:00pm through 5:00pm. You are not expected to bring anything other than yourselves.

At this point in time, I'm not completely sure of all the details, but to find out more, call the Hogges at (916)644-3611. I'm sure Linda will be involved in the planning.

As I mentioned before, this is supposed to be a
SURPRISE!

EVENTS from page 1 _____

here is that if you don't tell me, I won't know!

If you want to write your own "introduction", feel free, otherwise it will be a "form intro".

So, without further ado, here it is...

New Babies!

Lenny and Tokai Araki had a new baby named Haley on 7/31/93.

Chris and Vicky Holden welcomed Kathleen Marie into the world on 9/23/93. She was 8 pounds, 7 ounces, and was 21 inches long. Should that be high? Naw, babies can't stand up yet.

Josh Williams & Melanie Miller welcomed a slightly smaller child named Alexandra on 10/18/93. Alexandra was 6 pounds, 2 ounces, height unknown.

Mark and Lisa Brown welcomed Nikki's new little sister, named Alex Michelle on 10/25/93 and the considerate hour of 10:25am. Alex came into the world at 8 feet 4 inches, and weighed 21 pounds ?!?!?!? (wait, that's weighed 8 pounds 4 ounces and was 21 inches long)

Phil and Sharon Es-

tabrooks welcomed their first child, Kyle Samuel just before Thanksgiving, on 11/17/93 at 8:37am. Kyle weighed 7 pounds 5 ounces, and was 19 inches long.

Bo and Laurie Mix welcomed Sydney in November.

Kevin and Marlene Nix welcomed their first baby kitten (fooled ya!) named Maison. Maison came into their house around Christmas time at 4 months old, and is a black tabby with white paws.

Ben and Mary Wiener welcomed their first child, Jacob "Jake" Daniel Wiener to Carpinteria (yes, Mary, I finally figured out that you don't live in Montecito). Jake was born on 4/2/94 at another considerate hour of 10:40am. Jake was 6 pounds 6 1/2 ounces, and 19 1/2" long.

New Babies to be (still cooking)

I can't tell you and maintain my clear conscience, so let me just say that I know of two new "babies-to-be" on the way, one due in June, and one in August. You'll just have to wait until the next issue to find out who their parents

are!

Weddings:

Eben Howard and Susan Scobie were married on ??? at the Audoban [sic?] Refuge in Tiburon, on a point looking over San Francisco Bay.

Jeff Leveroni told me he was getting married on 10/2/93, but neglected to tell me who he was getting married to. So hopefully this "omission" will force him to write me a letter with the name of his new wife.

John Cutsinger and Kathy Glover were married on 11/27/93. Unfortunately I wasn't able to attend this wedding, as I was just returning from Down Under (see related story in this issue).

Jerry Sassarini and Tammi Kirby were married in Maui on 4/2/94. The wedding was held at Tammi's Uncle's house in Kihei. The house sits right on the ocean facing the sunset. Needless to say, the entire group was dressed rather casually (very nice idea) and the wedding was spectacular, looking out over the ocean as the sun was setting over the water.

_____ *Continued on page 5*

Continued from page 4

It made the photographers life a little tough with the strong backlight, but hey, that's why they get paid so much.

New Weddings on the way

Rebecca Backus and Todd Richardson will marry on 4/23/94. I don't know much about where or when yet, but I understand that the invitations are on the way.

Carey Kovacs and Sid Payne on 8/7/94. Carey was one of the first friends I had after moving to Boulder. She works at the Residence Inn (the first place I lived). We've managed to stay in touch after I moved

into the townhouse. She and Sid will be married up on Flagstaff Mountain west of Boulder later this summer.

Other Important Events:

Mark and Linda Hogge purchased their first house in the end of 1993. They found a very beat-up home in Pollock Pines, only about 6 houses down from where I spent the first 7 years of my life. After some serious remodeling, tinkering, refinishing, and general clean-up, the Hogge family has moved in and is in the process of "settling in".

After a long career dedicated to educating

the nations youth in many different ways, **Dad** (alias Ranger Ron, Hell's Ranger, etc) **is happy** (believe me that happy is an understatement) **to announce that he is retiring** as of June 17, 1994! I want you all to call him at (916)999-9999 to wish him a good life. C'mon, it'll only cost you about \$1.00, and will be worth it when he gets calls from people he doesn't even know...

Dear Crabby

FRASIER CRANE - PP STAFF PSYCHOLOGIST

Dear Crabby,

Why does Steve persist in writing that stupid newsletter that just sits on the back of the toilet? Shouldn't he at least be a little considerate and make it out of toilet paper so it has some real use?

*Don't Wanna Read Nomore,
Scotts, PA*

Dear Don't,

Steve does this because he has fun (believe it

or not), and needed a way to send notes to many people at once. He just figured that this would be a fun way to communicate with everybody all at once. As far as the toilet paper issue goes, using this recycled paper is no worse than an oak leaf (not a poison oak leaf, you ninny!)

Frasier

Dear Crabby,

What color toga should I wear to a toga party?

I.M. Confused, Winnewood, OK

Dear Confused,

It is politically incorrect to wear anything other than white.

Frasier

Steve's Journal from Down Under

STEVE P. - PRESS STAFF (ALL OF IT)

Following is the complete text of Steve's journal for his trip to Australia and New Zealand.

On the Way

**Thursday, 11:30pm,
Hawaii Time**

Well, after leaving Denver 1/2 hour late and needlessly worrying about missing my "LA Connection" (I had to add a sense of intrigue), I managed to make it on the first leg (actually the third) of the "Flight Down Under". The Denver-Dallas leg was uneventful, Dallas to Los Angeles was a little more eventful, but the event tended to resemble a paint shaker. Because of the tickets I had (Business/First Class), I got to wait in Quantas' "Executive Lounge". I don't know why people pay big \$\$ to join these, since all they are is chairs in a room surrounding a table of free (but cheap) snacks and drinks. It wasn't really that bad, but definitely not worth the \$250/year membership fee.

A quick side note: I'm sitting here in the Honolulu Airport, listening

to a walkie talkie strapped to somebody's belt. The conversation I heard went something like this: "I think we found the missing baggage cart. It has 23 bags on it..." This made me a little nervous, since they "think" they found "the missing cart". If it's not "the missing cart", what did they find? A spare!? Thank God I carried all my luggage on the plane with me! At least I think it's still out there in the overhead bin whilst (an Aussie term) I'm sitting here in the terminal writing these notes.

I met this guy named Bruce Wiley from Canberra, who works for the Civil Aviation Authority of Australia. We (I) talked all the way between LAX and Hawaii. He jumped ship (hopefully not due to me) in Hawaii for a few days vacation. He invited me to stop by if I ever get to Canberra.

**Friday, 10/22/93,
4:00am Cairns Time**

A quick note just to help pronunciation: Cairns is pronounced just like "cans".

I just woke up in the plane after actually sleeping for 5 hours. I still can't believe that I'm on my way. The little computerized map displayed here in the cabin shows we're over some islands (I think they are the Solomons, one of them is Guadalcanal). I can see the very beginning of what should prove to be a beautiful sunrise off the port side of the plane. My first sunrise in the Southern Hemisphere! Ever! WOW! That's a rush. I'll try to take a picture from the window, if possible...

Cairns, Queensland, Australia

**Friday, 10/22/93,
9:00am Cairns Time**

We blew through customs at about 6:15am. There weren't very many people there yet (imagine that!) so it took only 5 minutes. I was so tired, about the only thing I really noticed was the score in Game 4 of the World Series. 14 to 13? Sounds like batting practice to me.

I called a taxi and we headed towards the Fairways Motor Inn. I was a little worried when the taxi driver told me it was outside the southern end of the city, and the airport was in the north. But Cairns is pretty small (by US standards). Only about 40,000 people. I got to the hotel at 6:30am, only to find the doors locked. They didn't open the front desk until 7:00am, which is slightly different than the 24-hour US hotels I'm used to. Down here, some close at night. I waited the half hour, and when they opened, I had to use the pool shower since they didn't have a room ready until the afternoon. It didn't really take much to make me happy this early in the morning after a 32-hour flight. I threw my luggage in their storage closet, and had the hotel van drop me off downtown. I spent all morning walking around, looking at shops, cruises, tours, and more. I had lunch at a small "English-type" pub called the Fox and Firken. It was good food, and good beer.

**Friday, 10/22/93,
5:30pm**

Well, it's the end of

day one for me. I'll grab a quick bite to eat, and drop like a rock. Bill should be here tomorrow morning, about 6:30am. Then we'll have to figure out what to do. I've been looking into all the possibilities, and I think we should have extended the trip for a month or two, and borrowed a few thousand more dollars...

**Saturday, 10/23/93 :
5:00pm**

Day Two : Bill got in this morning, ready for a long day. He waited at the airport for the 8:00am shuttle rather than taking a taxi like I did. By the time he got here, I'd been up for a couple of hours, and was ready to go. We had John (of John, Paul, Lyn and Sue who manage/live in the hotel) drop us off downtown again. This time we ended up at a large open-air market, selling everything from fruits and vegetables to T-shirts to brass tables. It reminded me ALOT of the Itaewon Shopping District outside of Seoul (don't I sound like a world traveller).

From there, we walked back to the Esplanade and tried to arrange a Deep-Sea fishing trip. What a pain.

The Lexus Invitational is being held next week, starting Tuesday, and boats from here to Sydney are very hard to find. I want to know something though: Does the name of the tournament mean they invite people or fish? Anyway, after a discussion with Charles (pronounced Chaawls) we might have found a boat for Wednesday. It's a little expensive, but may be our only choice.

Next we went back to the Fox and Firken for a beer whilst we waited for our bus back to the hotel. The weather got a little "Monsoonal" at this point, and made the trip back to the hotel much more interesting. Once we got back, we booked an all day snorkeling trip to the Frankland Islands (which don't exist, according to our "Insight Guide"), a trip on the Kuranda train with a continuation ride through the "Atherton Tablelands". This one should be a nice trip. The third trip we booked goes north up the coast to the Daintree Rainforest for a small walkabout. The trips are scheduled for Monday, Thursday and Friday. With the fishing

on Wednesday, we'll be pretty busy until we leave on Sunday.

By the way, XXXX bitter is quite tasty, as is Victoria Bitter. The Fosters Special Bitter isn't quite there, and needs more work. We bought quite a diverse sampling of various beers today, and I'll share my opinion (something I'm not known for) as we get to them.

Aside joke/comment that we heard: How did XXXX beer (pronounced "fourex") get its name? The brewer didn't know how to spell BEER.

**Sunday, 10/24/93,
7:50am**

Dinner last night was great. We went to a place called "Roma Roulette" and ate a lot of Italian Food. I decided to live it up a bit, and ordered the mixed seafood platter. It contained things like lobster, shrimp, calamari (squid for the uninitiated), and mussels on a bed of rice. It was all VERY good, except for the mussels, which were OK, but I wouldn't order them again. The "Roulette" part of the name of the restaurant: After your meal, you are offered a chance to spin a

roulette wheel for a free dinner. I threw a coin down on 21-red, and won the dinner. I guess we're going back for another meal there before we leave Cairns. Either that, or we'll give it to the people who run the hotel.

**Sunday, 10/24/93,
8:30pm**

Up this morning at the crack of dawn (yeah, right!). We grabbed a lift to the Botanical Gardens, where we went on a small "walk-about". We climbed up a hill on the northern outskirts of town, through kind of a rain forest/bamboo forest. It was really kind of beautiful, and a little surprising at times. There were lots of wild turkeys running around in the underbrush, digging up huge piles of leaves. The views from here were great. You could see the entire International Runway (whoops, I meant airport) and most of the city. While we were up here, Bill had some small problems with his camera. It just wouldn't seem to work. It turns out that the problem was due to IFP (Insufficient Finger Pressure). Once we got back down from the hill, we walked through a little area called

the Mela Leuca Wetlands. Apparently all of Cairns used to be like this (a thickly vegetated marshland) and was drained to make room for humans. Boy, are we a pain in the butt to Mother Nature or what.

The rest of the Botanical Gardens was really neat, including the "spider clouds". These are huge "cloud-like" spider webs about 10 feet wide, 10 feet high, and probably as thick. I say probably because there was no way I'd get close enough to tell. These massive "webs/nests" are inhabited by Colony Spiders (because they live in a colony?!?). Each of these spiders is from 1/2" to about 2" long. I even took some pictures to prove it.

From there it was back downtown to schedule our Wednesday fishing trip, buy some hats for the island journey on Monday, and then completely pig-out at an all-you-can-eat seafood buffet at a place called the Beach Hut. Naturally I ate too much.

During the course of the dinner conversation, I found out that Bill is an "alumni" of UCSB. Boy it's a small world! I still

can't believe that in the 14 years that I've been in Santa Barbara, I never heard that before! I thought I was the only person I knew (other than SB locals) who'd ever lived in Santa Barbara.

We're back at the hotel now, getting ready to crash. We have to be up at 7:00am tomorrow to catch our boat out to the Frankland Islands. More to follow then.

**Monday, 10/25/93,
7:40am**

10 minutes 'till we leave on our first "real" journey! Oh Boy. [writing fades into very light blue] This pen was actually lifted from a hotel that charges over \$200AD (at \$0.67US to \$1.00AD) per night, and it hardly works. Maybe they put all the leftovers from the rooms out on the counter so they can be lifted by people like me, hoping I'll get the wrong idea and won't ever stay there... The bus is here, so we need to go now.

**Monday, 10/25/93,
5:30pm**

WHAT A GREAT DAY! Bill was up early thinking about the trip, and I rolled out about 6:30am. We had a good breakfast at the hotel, and got picked up by the shuttle about

7:50am. After a 1/2 hour ride through miles and miles and miles of sugar-cane, we finally got to the river and the boat. From there it was a 20 minute boat ride through a slow, muddy estuary before open sea. From there it was 20 minutes straight out to sea, and the Frankland Islands, which are a national preserve and sanctuary. The 35 of us on the boat were the only people on the island (this particular company is the only group to have permits to go there).

There were 5 little islands with sand all 'round, rainforest in the middle, and TONS of coral everywhere. You could walk around the island we landed on in about 10 minutes. We went snorkeling for about 30 minutes before our guided tour around the island. We were told about (and shown) all kinds of various creatures in the tide pools, including a small crustacean in a shell called a "cone shell". Nice little creatures, these cone shells. They are about 1 inch long and can/will shoot a 1" dart out of the tip of the shell that causes respiratory failure (even in humans) in less than 15 minutes. In

other words, DON'T PICK THEM UP!

After the tour of the island, we had an unbelievable lunch. Bill was so proud of his plate of food that he even took a picture of it. We had shish-kebob, all kinds of veggies, fruits, rices, and pastas, and tons of peel-'n'-eat shrimp. Yes, we even threw a few shrimp on the barbie. The food was fantastic, and the setting even better.

Right after lunch, everybody started snorkeling. What a trip! I can't believe that I never even went snorkeling in Santa Barbara. It was unbelievable. Fish in vibrant colors between 1/2 inch and a foot long (Kodak moment style). The sea floor was completely covered in color. Blue, green, yellow, orange, white and more. Huge Giant Clams that were at least three feet across. I know this because I went down and could barely reach from side to side. Our guides told us they get up to 5 and 6 feet wide! The colors were simply unbelievable. I stayed out for about 2 hours, just floating with the tide. The guides for the trip (Josey, Steve, Debbie, and two others) were

great, personable people, and generally a lot of fun to be with.

We left the island for the trip back through the muddy river to the base "dock" where we really thought we were in trouble. Steve (the Guide) lost the keys to the bus. He eventually found them, but it took quite awhile. According to him it was "his worst nightmare come true, frantically searching while 30 tired people were standing around outside the bus". I could easily believe that.

**Monday, 10/25/93,
7:00pm**

We wrapped up the day with a beautiful, hearty dinner at McDonalds. I didn't realize how hungry I really was until we plowed through our meal. I do feel better, but a nice, healthy slab of Prime Rib with a couple T'n'T's at the T-Off in Santa Barbara would have fit the bill much nicer.

**Tuesday, 10/26/93,
8:30am**

Well, we warned everybody we've met and told them to stay off the road, because we're going to rent a car today. I think Bill's going to drive, and he thinks I'm driving, so

between the two of us, we'll probably just sit in the car at the rental agency, and hope it goes by itself. Stay tuned, as this could be interesting. If you don't hear from us again, call the police.

**Tuesday, 10/26/93,
7:20pm**

WE LIVE!!! The car we rented was a little Ford Festiva for \$50AD/day, unlimited kilometers (a fortuitous decision). I started driving, and things got strange real fast. I managed to stay on the left side of the road, but kept looking out the side window for my rear view mirror (the one that's in the middle of the windshield). It was a little surprising to see trees going by where my mirror should have been. Since the car was a stick shift, and the stick was on the left side, I was constantly being reminded to STAY LEFT. I think the biggest shock of the day was driving down the hiway at 100Km/h, and having a large truck coming at us wanting to turn right. I really had to think "what do I do?!" real fast. He obviously didn't turn in front of us, but I felt like I should lock up the brakes anyway. Only sheer mental

willpower kept my foot on the gas!

We took a quick trip due west (inland) to Morris Lake. The road climbed almost 1500 meters (straight up) into the mountain through very dense jungle. It's really astonishing to me that people could get through that thick of vegetation with anything short of a D-10 Cat. The lake itself was very nice, with the "jungle" coming right down to the surface. It was a large lake which supplies all the fresh water for the Cairns area. We saw uncountable species of vegetation, including giant fern "trees" where the "trunks" run from 1 to 5 meters tall, topping in a giant, inverted dish about 2 to 3 meters wide. This type of place must be a botanist's dream and nightmare at the same time.

On the way back down the hill, we came around a corner and almost ran over a lizard that was about a meter long. He took one look at the crazy Yank driving (Bill at the time), stuck out his tongue, and headed into the jungle. For a couple seconds he was running beside the car looking for a break in the foliage. We were doing

about 35Km/h at the time, meaning he could have easily caught either of us in a dead sprint.

We headed back towards the coast and started a trip northwards, past many towns/resorts with Cove or Beach at the end of their names. The beaches and ocean were beautiful. Clean, long, wide, uninhabited beaches for miles, with aquamarine water. We had to stop for pictures along the way.

We worked our way up to Port Douglas, where we ate a light lunch in a little pub (called a "dive" in the states). It was the first time I've ever had beets on a steak sandwich, and may not be the last, since it was pretty tasty.

[Quick dinner break]

[The dinner break turned into 24 hours]

**Wednesday,
10/37/93, 8:20pm**

To continue from yesterday: After lunch, we headed south from Port Douglas, this time to the tablelands. We went through

a town called Mareeba, where we stopped so Bill could buy some stamps for a gift. Mareeba's a typical small Australian town. It was a main street, a few pubs, gas stations, chemists (pharmacy's) and that's about it.

From there, we headed south to Tinaroo Falls and Tinaroo Lake. It's supposed to be 3/4 the volume of Sydney Harbor, but it was way low. Actually it wasn't even worth seeing. On the way we were driving past hundreds and hundreds of huge termite mounds. Big spherical mud piles about 5 feet across. In talking to

John later on, he mentioned that the termite nests go down about 4 or 5 feet underground, with caverns big enough for a man to crawl into.

We continued south to Atherton, and then east on one of the curviest roads I've ever been on all the way back down to the coast. All in all, it was pretty amazing scenery.

Now for today: WHAT A GREAT DAY! We went sport fishing today with 2 other people on a small boat. It was light tackle fishing. I think that means fishing for fish up to 250 pounds. We got up REAL early, and



jumped on a 28 foot boat for the day. We headed due west about 15Km and dropped four lines over the back for trolling around 10am. Nothing happened until around 2pm. Our guide Kim decided to pull everything out of the water, and take a run about 5Km to the north. We got there, dropped the lines, and tuna hit all four lines at once. Talk about chaos. For the next two hours, we pulled in about 15 fish, between 5 and 20 pounds each. As Kim says, "Sport fishing is hours of sheer boredom interrupted by moments of sheer panic". I'd definitely



have to agree with that statement. We caught blue fin tuna, Trevally [sic?], and a Sucker Shark. All in all, we had a great time which even made up for the boring morning.

**Thursday, 10/28/93,
7:15pm**

Last night we went to the "Seafood Buffet" in town, at a restaurant called Charlies. The food was great, but the crowds were too much. For only \$14.50AD we could pig out on bread rolls, peel'n'eat jumbo shrimp, crab, bugs, fish, pastas and tons more. Actually, by the time Bill and I finished, it was Tons - one.

A quick side note: We tested the way water drains down here. We tested it four times. In controlled situations (i.e., a bathtub that we let sit for 5 minutes to still the water). And guess what? It was consistent all four times! If you want to know, you're gonna have to come down here and test it yourself.

Today we took the Kuranda Train up to Kuranda (imagine that). It climbed from sea level up to 390 meters through vertical rainforest. The railway was built in 1891 using hand tools (picks and shovels). There are 15 tunnels and some large number (I believe 30+) bridges. It was spectacular. Kuranda is a small little town up in the tablelands. We went to see the Tjapukai Dance Theater, with the native aboriginal dancers. It was a really good show.

We came back to Cairns, and spent some time cruising around downtown. A couple pubs, tons of shops and more. After pizza for dinner, Home Improvement on TV, and get to sleep for our trip to the rain forest tomorrow.

**Saturday, 10/30/93,
7:30am**

Sitting here on an airplane on the way to Sydney. I feel kind of lucky that we're on this flight. For some reason, I spent the entire week thinking we were leaving Sunday morning, and luckily found out before today (Saturday) that I was wrong. But that story will come out later.

OK, now for Friday. We caught a bus up to the Daintree rainforest. We went through a "rainforest sanctuary" where we saw all kinds of plant and animal life, stopped at a number of other places along the way. We took yet another nature walk through a rainforest on the Mossman river, and then finished by bussing another 50Km north to Daintree.

We spent some time in the huge town of Daintree (population 600) and then went for a river tour to see birds, snakes and crocodiles in their native habitats.

A long bus ride back to Cairns to watch the results of the Lexus Marlin Classic come back in. Unfortunately there were no fish coming; Fortunately they are all tagged and released now, so they only get bigger each year. We did see some on the news that night. They are amazing! Up to 1200 pounds, and 3 meters long.

We walked up to the Roma Roulette for our free dinner (remember the free dinner I won on our first night?). We caught a taxi back to the hotel after dinner, and started joking around with Sue, Lyn and

John. We were asking what to do on Saturday, when Lyn mentioned that they showed us checking out Saturday. I thought she was kidding, but just for kicks I checked the plane tickets. She was right! We would have slept right through the flight on Saturday morning! Then what would we have done?

So we had a bit of a panic-job Friday night, knowing that we had to get up at 4:15am to catch the flight. It was kind of amusing, but relieving at the same time.

Now we're on an airplane just outside of Sydney, about 1/2 way through watching the film "The Firm". It will be cutoff early because we'll land by then. I guess I'll just have to rent it when I get home...

We'll be checking into the Cambridge Hotel (wherever that is) and I'll continue with this saga later.

Sydney, New South Wales, Australia

Sunday, 10/31/93, 9:00am

Where do I start? How about yesterday? Did I mention that the flight was on a 747? With lots and lots of people? Our first indica-

tion that Sydney would be considerably different from Cairns was its size. Landing was spectacular. You could see (on the left) the coastline, and then the entire city, the Opera House, the Royal Botanical Garden, the Harbour Bridge and much, much more. It was slightly overcast, but not enough to cause worry.

We caught our bus to the Cambridge hotel. This is where we noticed the second major difference between Cairns and Sydney. In Cairns, temperatures ranged from 38°C in mid-day down to 24°C at night. Here we were at 10am, and it was barely 22° outside, even with the sun shining. I forgot how easy it was to get used to tropical weather, and for the first time on this trip, I'll have to wear long pants.

We were able to check in early, and took a two hour nap (remember we were up at 4am). Then off exploring. Our hotel is about 1 1/2 miles behind (south) the Opera House, right in the middle of Southern Sydney. We walked up and saw the ANZAC memorial, and then went up in the Sydney Tower for a look around the

city. The tower is like the Space Needle in Seattle, or the Sky Tower in San Antonio. It's 1000 feet tall, and must have been designed by an American. Why? Because an Aussie would have made it 300 meters tall, not 1000 feet tall. You could see for miles, and we got a good feel for the layout of the city. The tower is reported to be the tallest building in the southern hemisphere.

[Breakfast and Pen switch]

We then walked up towards the harbor, and noticed a third difference. There were people everywhere! Thousands of them, all roaming around, trying to spend money. We found the "El Shoppo Cheapo" district where they sell all kinds of garbage for only \$2.00. Then on to a slightly higher quality store where shirts and stuff run \$20.00, and then finally to a half mile of \$200+ shops. All fairly close to each other. It wasn't my idea of a good time.

Eventually we came out at a place called Circular Quay, just behind and to the

left of the Opera House. I didn't think we'd make it that far, but voila! Since it was in a cloud shadow at the time we decided not to take too many pictures yet, but to wait until Monday when we'll be on the tour busses. We went up George Street, and ran into a little trinket market set up in the middle of the road. It kind of reminded me of the Sunday shop on Cabrillo Boulevard in Santa Barbara. Lots of local artists presenting some of their good work.

We walked around some more, stopped at a pub and had a "schooner

of Retsch[sic?]" and started walking home, looking for a place to get dinner. We didn't really want a restaurant, but more like a "pub" or "diner" type meal. The people in the hotel recommended the Court House about eight blocks away. It was an interesting walk into the fringes of the King's Cross area, which we found out later from a tour book "is no longer a center of top hotels and restaurants. Instead there are one sleazy bar and eating spot after another, a parade of pimps, homosexuals and prostitutes." We did notice this change



as we were walking, but I think our next visit will be during daylight hours.

We're both sitting here in the hotel, updating journals, and looking forward to a quiet day. We'll buy a public transportation pass good for Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, so there will be much more to say then.

**Sunday, 10/31/93,
8:30pm**

We had a productive day, just taking it easy and walking around. We got started with our free buffet breakfast. Very high in cholesterol, but hey, we're on vacation. Then we walked north up to a park called "The Domain" where the public preachers are supposed to hang out and preach. It turned out that there was a touch-rugby tournament. We watched for the better part of an hour, and still don't understand the rules.

We then headed further into the park, working our way towards the harbour area. We found a series of tents (big party-type tents, not camping) and we were standing around wondering what was going on when somebody started

counting "5", "4", . . . Bill and I walked around the back of the tents, where a small crowd had gathered behind a large truck. "3" . . . "2" I grabbed my camera: "1" . . . "NOW". A big clang, and probably 500 homing pigeons came zooming out of the truck. I managed to get a picture, but I'm not sure what it's of. In talking with a man there, we found out that the pigeons are affected by cellular phones, so they don't allow them around the launching area. Talk about obscure facts.

From there, we walked further north through the Royal Botanical Gardens. They were beautiful. We walked up Mrs. Macquaries Road to Mrs. Macquaries Point, to see what Mrs. Macquaries chair was. Yes, there was something called Mrs. Macquaries chair. It's a bench that is eroded from and embedded in the limestone bluff looking northeast over Sydney Harbour. I don't know who she was, but if that was the view from her house, she was one lucky lady.

Whilst we were walking back through the garden on the way to the Opera House, we came across an

interesting tree. If any part of it breaks off, it can re-sprout from it, but it CAN NOT grow vertically, only horizontally. So if the tree falls for some reason, the ground around it turns to spaghetti with all the little sprouts growing horizontally. Only the seeds are able to grow vertically. We've seen some really unique examples of weirdness and diversity from old Mother Nature down here.

We continued around the Botanical Gardens to the Opera House. It's a lot bigger than it looks. We walked in and got an actual look at the inside of the Concert Hall. There are three main rooms in the Opera House: the Concert Hall, the Opera Hall, and the recording studio. The Concert hall was very large and gorgeous. A "small symphony" (full size symphony, but small size kids) was getting ready for a performance. Since we were slightly under dressed in our jeans and T-shirts for a formal concert, we left the Concert Hall and continued walking around and through any door that was open. It was a really neat place

Down by the gift

store, we took a look at the original plans. Imagine a small kid with a spirograph and a compass. Let the kid draw about 50 interconnected circles and ovals, all connected. Shade in about four of the two or three hundred intersecting shapes, and you've got the silhouette for the roof. Imagine the same exercise in 3-D, and you've got the actual shapes. Glue them together with cement and little 6" by 6" tiles, and you've got yourself an Opera House, as well as an architectural migraine. From the Opera House, we walked back through the shopping district, and pigged out at a Chinese buffet.

We're sitting here in the hotel now, watching a "World Cup prep" game between Argentina and Australia, happening about 1/2 mile from here. It was really quite exciting, since countries in the Southern Hemisphere are very into their "Football" games. The game ended in a tie at 1 to 1, but the Aussies could have won. They made some really bad shots on goal.

**Monday, 11/1/93,
9:30pm**

Another huge break-

fast started the day, then off to see the sights on a beautiful day. We bought a Sydney Pass for \$50AD each. This pass gives us three days of unlimited use of three different bus systems, all ferries throughout the harbor, and three guided boat tours of the area. Since we'd end up spending at least that much for travel, it was a great deal.

Our first stop on the Sydney Explorer was the outer fringe of Chinatown where there was another outdoor market. We browsed through it for awhile, and worked our way past the monorail. Yes, there's a monorail just like at Disneyland that runs a loop from the shopping district southwest of the Opera House to/thru Darling Harbour further to the west.

From here, we went into the Powerhouse Museum. Can you tell from the name that it's an old Powerhouse? It was really kind of fun. They had literally hundreds of tactile exhibits. It reminded me of the Exploratorium in San Francisco, but much more organized and spread out. They had lots of fun things

to play with in there.

We jumped back on the Sydney Explorer and went across the Harbour Bridge to Northern Sydney. It was a great place to get pictures of the Opera House. A couple interesting facts about the bridge: The two huge stone pylons are NOT used for structural support, they are merely decoration. All 65,000 tons of steel are resting solidly (I hope) on four HUGE pegs which mount the four ends of the bottom arches to solid cement buttresses. Granted, they are big, thick pins, but there are still only four of them. The top arches don't even connect to the pillars. They stop about 10 meters short of the pillars. It's kind of an eerie feeling once you're aware of it.

We caught the Explorer back to the Circular Quay (pronounced "Key") and caught a jet-catamaran ferry. It's a big boat, seating maybe 500 passengers. We took the ferry to Manly Beach (Manly yes, but I like it too!). This is a quaint little suburb to the northeast of Sydney, right on the Tasman Sea. This was our first real contact with open ocean, since Cairns is protected by

the reef, and Sydney is actually about 10-20Km inland. It was still kind of "cheap" with little \$2.00 stores selling junk everywhere, but a little more "rural" than Sydney. We spent some time walking around, and then caught a jet-cat back to downtown.

It's been nice not having any real plans, but I'm already looking forward to New Zealand.

**Tuesday, 11/2/93,
6:30pm**

Another day wandering around downtown. We got on the Explorer again in a light rainstorm (drizzle). We got off again in Chinatown just to walk through it for the first time. It was a block long and kind of boring. From there, we caught the next bus around to the Circular Quay to take a guided ferry tour of Sydney Harbour. We ate lunch (a sausage roll of some kind) watching a juggler who couldn't juggle, and a lady going through the trash to feed seagulls.

The tour was really fun. I never knew the harbour was so large. Some of the houses were amazing. According to our guide, prices of houses within

about 1/2 mile from the South Harbour beaches run from three to twenty million dollars! The north bay gets a little more reasonable, with prices from one to five million dollars!

The tour provided a neat view of Sydney history. For instance, the USS Chicago was tied up in the harbour along with some other ships during World War II. Three Japanese mini-submers came in to sink her. One got caught in a net, and the other two actually fired torpedoes, but they glanced off the bow of the Chicago and sunk a ferry. There were many other examples and historical places throughout the area.

During the tour, the wind picked up considerably, and when we finally came back in, it was starting to get really ugly. We caught the Explorer over to the center of the Kings Cross area. It was an interesting experience, but again I'm not sure it would be a good idea to get stuck there alone after dark, although I'm sure it would definitely be interesting. We didn't spend a lot of time down there before we jumped back on the bus for the hotel. We got off the

bus near home and walked to Mickey Dee's for dinner. At this point, the rain started coming down a little harder, with lightning in the distance. By the time we got back, it was starting to really storm, and the lightning started looking like cameras at the Superbowl. It even got worse than that for awhile, when I started writing my journal, but now it's starting to clear up again (like sunshine...) The weather definitely moves "fast" down here.

One other note: I really need to figure out who Mrs. Macquerie is. Remember the Road, Point and Chair that have her name? Well, she also has a light (no, not a lamp or light bulb!). It sits on the Tasman sea, about 2Km south of the entrance to the harbour. Now I'm no expert on building houses, but it simply doesn't make sense to me to put a light over 5Km from your chair! And it's not even on the road to the chair, so you have to make a special trip to... Never mind.

One last weird note : I never knew that you have to store some types of Opals with an open vial of water, or they disintegrate.

Mother Nature being weird again...

I forgot to mention that we came home last evening and found the sliding glass door to our hotel room wide open, and an empty mini-bar bottle of vodka on the counter. Needless to say, we were very concerned. We went through everything we had in the room, and thankfully nothing was missing. I wrote a nasty little note to the hotel management expressing

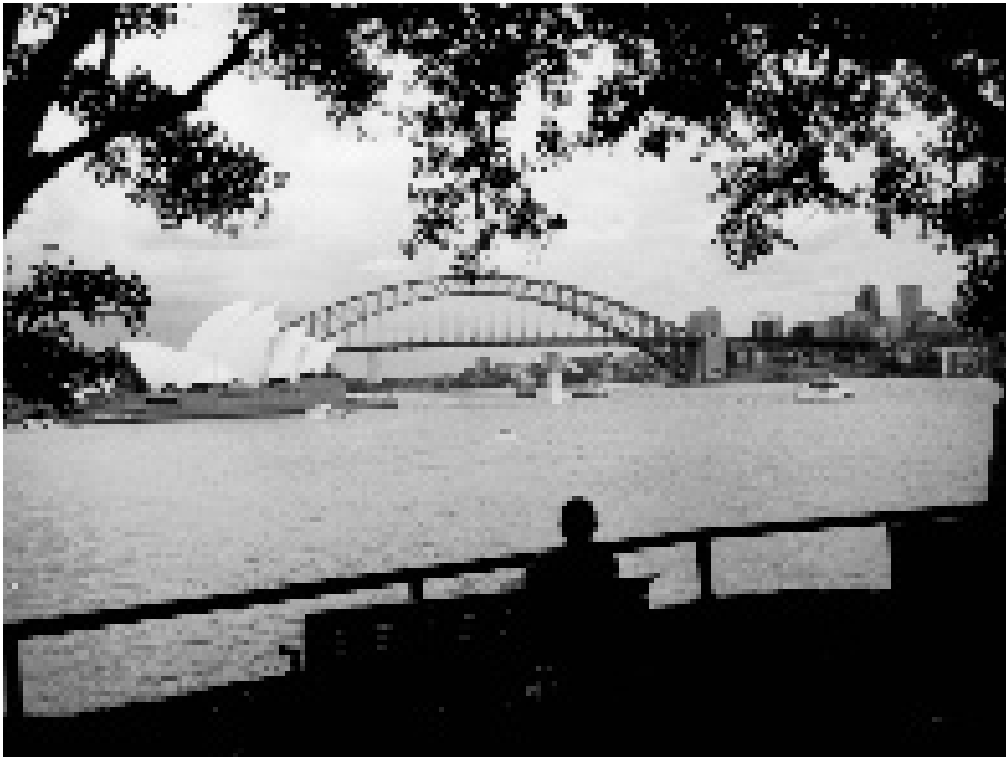
our concern. We'll see what the response is.

The storm has blown away now, and tomorrow should be a good day for the river and evening lights tour.

**Thursday, 11/4/93,
10:30am**

To finish up yesterday (or actually to start from the beginning) we got up a little early to be able to catch a public bus to the Circular Quay for the river cruise. It was a beautiful day with no

clouds. It was even warm outside. We rode around the west end of the harbour this time (inland), working our way up the Parameter [sic?] ("Pair-a-meter") river. They seemed to believe that they could tell where the river ended and Sydney Harbour began, but it all looked the same to me. The one thing that really sticks in my mind about both the harbour tours is the cost/investment in real estate. There were hundreds of



waterfront homes (maybe even thousands), each from \$1 million to \$25 Million. Serious money, if you ask me. I got a little sunburned (imagine that) sitting out on the open water for 2 1/2 hours, but it was well worth it.

Seeing all the development around the harbour, it's hard to believe that nobody but the aborigines were here until the 1800's.

After the cruise, we walked back towards the hotel with the intent to do laundry. As we were walking back, we went through the shopping district again, and finally found a small, pocket-sized tripod for my camera. I've only been looking for this thing for a couple years, but I never imagined that I'd have to travel to the other side of the world to find one.

We got back to the hotel and headed off to a laundromat. I won't bore you with the details other than to say it was EXPENSIVE. It cost us \$4AD per load!

We dropped off the clothes at the hotel, and headed back into town. We walked northeast through King's Cross, up towards

Darling Harbour, and eventually worked our way back to the Circular Quay for the "Harbour Lights" cruise.

As we walked through the Royal Botanical Gardens (again), we heard light music wafting from the Government House (Castle is more appropriate). So we went up to the guard shack to see what was going on. Apparently the Governor was throwing a "small party". The Government House sits on a hill right behind the Opera House, and has one of the nicest views in the whole city.

The Harbour Lights cruise left at 8pm, just after sunset. We covered much of the same ground as the previous two cruises, except we stayed a little closer to the Quay. It was a beautiful night with a crystal clear view of the city lights. It really is magnificent, although I actually got cold for the first time on this trip, and had to go inside the ferry.

After the cruise, we hired a taxi to take us over to Mrs. Macqueries Point to try out my new tripod and get some pictures of the lights. I realized at the time that I've never tried night

shots with this camera, so I'm not really sure how they will turn out.

We headed back home to the hotel where our sliding glass door was left open yet another time (did I mention this yet?). I took great satisfaction telling the manager exactly what I thought of their security for a second time. We still had our stuff in the safe deposit box, so nothing serious could have been taken, but you think they'd have learned.

The rest of the evening went rather quietly, packing for the next leg of our trip, with a truly American movie playing in the background. Clint Eastwood in *Sudden Impact*.

Now for today: We got up at 6:45am to catch our bus to the airport. Things were pretty uneventful until we got on the bus and had to pay the driver \$10.00AD. He wasn't sure what to think of the bill I handed him since it was a brand new bill. I don't mean uncirculated, I mean "brand new design", released officially on November 1, 1993. I thought for a second he'd refuse it, but then he got all excited about having a new type of currency, and wouldn't

even give it out for change to somebody else.

We took our bus (with no shocks) to the airport, checked in, and now we're sitting in a plane about 30 minutes outside Auckland. This is the part of the trip I've been looking forward to.

Auckland, New Zealand

Friday, 11/5/93, 10:30am

We obviously landed OK, and I'm now sitting in the Kingsgate Logan Park Hotel, getting ready to head back into Auckland. The hotel sits halfway between the airport and downtown Auckland, about 35Km apart, with Auckland to the north.

After we checked in yesterday, we caught a public bus down (actually "up") to the city. We walked up Queen Street to find a dinner spot. We ended up at a little pub/tavern that was actually quite good. We caught the bus back to the hotel, where I barely slept all night. We'll be going back to town again this afternoon, so I'll let you know more then.

Saturday, 11/6/93, 8:50pm

Well, now I've got two days worth of journal to write. My memory is slipping away, so I thought I had better catch up.

Friday: After a fitful night's sleep, we headed for town around 11:00am. We stopped at the Upstairs Downtown Food Court (a mall) for a bite. My lunch was a huge plate of Chinese stuff and a coke, for only \$7.00NZ (at \$0.58NZ=\$1.00US). Not bad prices.

We converted some cash to get ready for the rest of the trip, bought a couple souvenirs, and then headed for Kelly Tarlton's Underwater Aquarium via public bus (we're getting pretty good at public transportation). This place is pretty neat. This guy converted two huge concrete bunkers on the ocean into giant aquariums, and put a plexiglass tube through both. It was pretty cool to be walking under all the fish, rays, sharks, and lobsters, but I've seen better aquariums.

We headed back downtown, and eventually tried to catch the hotel shuttle back home. Only it filled up. So the hotel

rented us a mini-van taxi, who came straight from hell. We were very happy (and lucky) to get out of that vehicle with all our limbs intact. The driver about ran some lady into a bridge, and swore at her the whole time she was trying to get back on the road.

As we were coming home, I noticed fireworks stands everywhere. A white-knuckled lady told us (while we were still in the cab) that it was Guy Fawkes day. I don't know who Guy Fawkes is, but apparently it's a big deal, because in England, New Zealand and Australia they burn him in effigy every year, as well as fireworks parties all over. I still think it's just their excuse to have a "4th of July" type celebration.

We got home and started watching ESPN while we updated our journals. We caught a weird kind of soccer/football/rugby game that looked like the only rule was "hurt whoever has the ball". From there it got even weirder. We saw a "hack and kill" hockey style game that was completely Irish, something called Hurling. It was pretty ugly, bloody and violent,

but hey, it originated in Ireland. According to the commentators, broken collarbones, arms, and legs are commonplace.

We called it a night, and I finally got a good nights sleep.

Saturday: We got up this morning, and went down to pick up our rental car. We got a Nissan Sentra that doesn't look anything like the Sentra's in the US. It's a pretty nice car, with plenty of room for us to

make a mess of.

We drove across the harbor bridge, and went up to North Head, which is a point in the harbor that is infested with old tunnels and gun batteries. It was fascinating trying to imagine what life must have been like during World War II down here. We stopped for lunch at a little sidewalk fish'n'chips place, and had a HUGE plate of very tasty, cholesterol-forming, artery blocking food.

We headed back to the hotel and picked up all our maps, so we'd know where we were going. We then jumped back in the car and headed northwest towards the Tasman Sea. We drove through Swanson, Waiatarua, and then headed for a "scenic drive". The scenic drive was cut through dense rainforest at the top of fairly good sized hills, and continued almost all the way to the west coast. We dropped out of the forest into a little (maybe 200 people) town called



Piha. It was quite beautiful, somewhat reminiscent of the Pacific north of San Francisco, except it had black sand beaches.

We took a slightly different route back to the hotel, and now we're getting ready to head up to Cape Reninga, which is the northern tip of the island. We're going to avoid the hotels, and try to stay in farm/homestay locations (Bed'n'Breakfast type places). We found what should be a great place to stay on

green pastureland. It was very "pastoral" (get it?). It was really beautiful, and I even have pictures to prove it.

We worked our way north through towns that all sounded a little strange. They started normal enough: Albany, Dairy Flat, Silverdale; but then things got weird. A sign for Whangaparaoa, towns like Orewa, Waiwera, Kaiwaka, Waipu and Whangarei. We stopped at the last one for lunch at a foodcourt in a

house overlooking the town and the bay. The couple even invited us (though we were total strangers) into their house for a drink of water, and just to talk. We were pretty surprised at this hospitality.

We drove around Paihia for awhile, and then took the ferry about 300 yards across the Bay to Russel, where we bought a hamburger for dinner. It wasn't the best dinner, but it was the only place open on a Sunday evening. We

The hint you've been waiting for . . . BOTT = Back of the Toilet

So why do I say this? You'll never finish reading this thing in one sitting.

Sunday and Monday night. I'll fill in all the details later. I went down to the local McDonalds drive-thru for dinner tonight...

**Monday, 11/8/93,
9pm**

Well, back to Sunday first : We got up and filled our tanks with leaded coffee in preparation for the drive north. We packed everything in our rental car and took off up Highway 1. It actually started with four lanes wide, but once we left Auckland, it turned into a two lane, rural road, complete with patchwork and one-way bridges. The country was rolling green

small shopping mall. While searching for an ice-chest for food and drinks in the car, I found that they don't exist in New Zealand. Nobody even knew what I was talking about. Once I found they are called "Chilly bins", everything got better, though.

Back on the road north through Hikurangi, Whakopara, Waiomio, Kawakawa and finally to Paihia. It's very interesting going past a road sign at 80 to 100Km/h, trying to pick out a familiar town when they all sound (and look) the same. We stopped in Paihia for directions at a nice

started driving east towards our homestay. The roads turned to gravel pretty quick, and stayed that way for the 18Km we had to go. It was a BEAUTIFUL drive down the edge of the bay to an even more unbelievable location. The house we're staying in sits about 50 meters up a steep hill overlooking Waipiro Bay, which is a part of the Bay of Islands. It's a beautiful house. Imagine a three story, octagonal house, with a large, square addition on the back (hill-side). We actually stayed in the octagonal section with our formal living room downstairs, and

the bedrooms upstairs, all overlooking the bay. It's all done in natural wood with exposed beams. It's really something else. We stayed up to talk to Thomas and Beatte (our hosts) until about 11pm, when we hit the hay.

MONDAY: We got up at about 8am, got cleaned up, and went downstairs for a hearty breakfast of poached eggs, fresh baked breads, fruit salad, cereal, coffee, tangerine juice and

Our fishing opportunity fell through due to inclement weather, so we decided to head north towards the top of the island. We headed up Highway 1 again through more places you can't read on road signs at 80Km/h+: Moerewa, Te Ahuahu, Rangiahua, across the Mangamuka Bridge, up through the Maungataniwha Range. We kept heading north: Kaitaia, Awanui, Waipapakauri, and we were finally on the Aupori

photographed lighthouse in New Zealand" or "the World" (I can't remember which) at Cape Reinga. It was a beautiful as it was bleak and desolate. Aquamarine Tasman Sea meets deep Turquoise Pacific for a battle of wills. It was quite a sight.

After leaving Cape Reinga, we started back south, wanting to actually go out and drive on 90-mile Beach (it's actually only 66 miles, but measurements weren't as accurate when they named it). We ended up following a tour bus track down the middle of a small, sandy stream, working our way out to the Tasman Sea and the 90-mile Beach. We were a little reluctant at first to drive



more. This sure beats any of the hotel meals we've had so far, and at only \$35NZ/night including the room. What a great way to travel.

Peninsula. This is the long, skinny, mostly uninhabited (except by cattle and sheep) northern tip of New Zealand. After a very long time, we finally got to "The most

our car down the middle of a stream, but hey, we're tourists, and it is a rental car! The locals told us that it was OK to drive down the stream, as long as we didn't ever stop

near the water. Remember standing at the beach, on the wet sand. You tend to sink. Cars do the same thing, so you just can't stop once you get started. Unfortunately it was high tide when we got to the beach, and it would have been impossible to continue, so we drove back up the stream, and started the four hour journey back to the homestay.

We veered off to the east on Highway 10, towards what Beatta says is the best fish'n'chips place in the northland. It's a little restaurant right on the bay on the north side of Mangonui called simply "Seafood Restaurant". Although I can't say from experience it is the best, it definitely set our sights high for future places.

As we were finishing dinner at the picnic tables on the deck, a squall blew in rather quickly, and we had to jump back in the car and head for home. It rained for the entire trip back home, and once we got there, started clearing again. Weird, fast weather...

Now Bill and I are sitting in our "living room" listening to a nice classical music tape with Audre Lardiot

playing oboe tunes written by Vivaldi, Fischer, LeClair, Albinoni, and Hummel. We're frantically updating our journals before we get too much more behind.

I supposed we should also start trying to arrange our lodging for tomorrow night, so I'll sign off now that I'm caught up, and see what I can work out.

**Wednesday, 11/10/93,
8pm**

Back to Tuesday:: Up again for another fantastic breakfast, this time it was cereal, fruit salad, poached eggs, coffee, homemade bread and more. After saying our good-byes, we took a brief detour to the southeast to see Oakura Bay. This was one of the most picturesque places so far. It reminded me of some of the northern California/Oregon coastline, but in a slightly warmer climate.

We continued south back past Auckland, in the land of pronounceable places, through Hamilton, Cambridge and finally to a "crater lake" called Rotorua. During the long drive, we both got a good laugh out of remembering lines and scenes Monte Python's Holy Grail movie.

Bill has never seen Life of Brian, so I told him that I'd put it in here so he'd remember to rent it. We came into the town of Rotorua itself, parked the car at the local AA (Automobile Association, not Alcoholics Anonymous), and started walking around town. We wandered over to the Queens Park, where there were stinking sulphur pools, immaculate lawn bowling greens, and unbelievable gardens. A quick side note about lawn bowling: I never knew that the lawn bowling balls aren't spherical. They are kind of oblong, and you bowl with the ball "arching" towards the target.

There were steam vents all over the park, and a huge public "bath house" which was very ornate. The whole thing presented a very pretty postcard view, as long as you could forget what it all smelled like.

We worked our way out to Lake Tarawera, and the Pilmer's house (Tony and Heather). This was our next homestay location. The Pilmer's were fantastic people. They had just got back from a three month trip to Nepal and we loved talking about that trip. We had a

downstairs, fully furnished, two-bedroom apartment for \$20NZ/night! Boy, are these Bed'n'Breakfasts ever nice! We sampled Tony's "lightbeer" which was very nice, and headed off to an early bed time. They had a very nice house overlooking Lake Tarawera and the recently ex-volcano Mt. Tarawara. It blew it's top in 1886, and changed all kinds of lakes and nearby mountains in the process. There are even before & after paintings and pictures. The relandscaping was AWESOME! I'm just glad it stayed dormant while we were there.

**Thursday, 11/11/93,
8:40pm**

We're sitting here in Ohakune doing laundry in an estate (just wait, I'll get to it soon) and thought I'd catch up.

Wednesday : We got up around 8am to a very nice breakfast prepared for us. We ate and talked even more. Then we headed back towards Rotorua to the Maori Arts and Crafts Institute for a show and some Maori background, along with geysers, mud-pools, and other smelly vents. The Maori name

for this place started with Te Whakarewarewa and went for at least 20 more characters. I had to take a picture of the sign just so I'd have it. The cultural show was great. The performers were very talented, and very entertaining. I never really thought about it, but the Maori sure are very polynesian in culture. The show reminded me alot of the Polynesian Cultural Center in Hawaii.

After the Institute, we drove over to the SkyLine (a gondola above Lake Taupo) to see how much it costs. It was a little to pricy just for the ride, but at the top they have three separate luge runs, two concrete and one stainless steel. I should have gone, but what the heck. Maybe I'll lie, and say it was raining, or something like that. So... We drove up another road behind and above the skyline for pictures. Toobad it was heavily overcast. The pictures would have been beautiful.

We headed back into Rotorua for a quick lunch at McDonalds, and then back to the Pilmer's, picking up our one-day fishing license on the way. When

we got back, we picked up Tony and his boat (actually we went with Tony) and headed out onto the lake for trout fishing. The fishing wasn't too good, but it was fun sitting in the boat, swilling a beer, and watching the rain fall all around. It wasn't a real problem, since the boat had a canopy, but it sure made fishing hard. In fact, I caught the only three things we caught all day: fresh water mussels, all at the same time. Somehow there were two on the hooks, and one about 2 meters up the line, just holding on. Weird...

We managed to stay fairly dry, though, and when we got back to the house, we all sat around the house trying Tony's stout and the German lager, two more of his home brews, both very tasty. I guess I'll have to look into brewing when I get home. We sat down to a nice steak and potatoes dinner, with broad beans (very good, but I hadn't ever heard of them) and followed up with a very good strawberry cake-like think called Pavlova. It's basically just egg whites and sugar. It was very good and very light. We stayed at

the table talking until about 11:15pm, when we finally wrapped it up.

Thursday : Up to breakfast by 9am today, in preparation for our departure from the Pilmers. We headed south to Waiotapu. This place was really unusual. It cost us \$8.00NZ, and the walking track took us almost two hours to complete. There were mudpools, huge bubbling craters of various colors, a large, shallow "pond" with different colors in it, nice silicate encrusted terraces and waterfall, a pinkish pool called Champagne Pool, and more. There was even one steaming crater about ten meters across, where myna birds and starlings nest in holes in the wall. Biologists are still not sure "whether the heat incubates the eggs".

We then headed south, stopping at a place called Huka Falls. This is a narrow gorge, about ten meters across, where the Waikato river comes through. Apparently the eight hydro stations on this one river generate 33% of New Zealand's electrical needs. Of course, this is just what they say. Everybody

in New Zealand tends to exaggerate greatly. The falls are about four meters high at the end of the gorge with clear, turquoise water thundering down. It was quite a sight.

Continuing south, we went by the shores of Lake Taupo. It's the largest lake on the north island, besides that small one to the east they call the "Pacific", and it's about the size of Lake Tahoe. It was too overcast to get a really good picture, so we kept on going into town. We stopped at yet another McDonalds for lunch. This one had a real DC-3 mounted on stilts right next to it, with stairs going up into the cargo section. The cargo section was filled with dining tables. The cockpit was behind a plexiglass wall, still in its original condition. What a trip.

Back on the road south, we passed to the west side of three active volcanoes, Mt. Tongariro, Mt. Ngauruhoe, and Mt. Ruapehu. I'm not sure about Tongariro, but Ngauruhoe erupted as late as 1975, and Ruapehu erupted in 1971. To show you just how thrill-seeking these Kiwis are, there's

even a ski area on the west side of Mt. Ruapehu. We actually drove up there to check. It's really there! Crazy people!

The weather started getting nastier as we continued southward to our next farmstay in Ohakune. We stopped in town for Chinese food, and drove out to our next mansion. The "apartment" is about 1800 square feet, sleeps eight, has a full kitchen, and full laundry facilities, which we needed badly. Underneath us is a five car garage. Both the garage and our apartment are attached to a house at least three times the size of this place. The whole place sits on an immaculately manicured eleven acre garden, with a stream, waterfall, and backs up to a golf course. To top this all off, snow-covered Mt. Ruapehu is completely visible out the front windows. Unbelievable. That's three for three on the homestays.

Laundry should be about done by now, so I'll wrap it up and call it a night.

A weird Wednesday night dream: I was a new English teacher at Pollock Pines elementary school

(the old school). I was supposed to work in the room I attended first grade in (across the hall from the room in the south west corner). I didn't know what to do, except that I was supposed to start at 8:30am. I got there at 8:30, but there were not students. Around 9:15, the teacher for the next class walked in and told me there wasn't an 8:30 English class. I walked down to the Teachers Lounge (Dad's old office-in-a-closet) and it was full of new, young teachers with the same problem. Then I woke up. Talk about strange...

**Monday, 11/15/93,
10pm**

Boy, am I behind! I've got to catch up with Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and today. I'll see what I can remember...

Friday, 11/12/93 : We spent the evening with Trevor and Noline Reynolds in their huge place, as mentioned before. We were up at the crack of nine for breakfast. Noline made "whitebait" omelettes. Whitebait are little fish, about an inch long, and maybe 1/8" thick. They are considered a spring delicacy down here, and were

actually very good.

After breakfast, we talked about their upcoming trip to the US. We spent a couple hours doing this, and Bill and I both offered a place to stay if they get near our houses. They had a wonderful signed painting by Ammigoni, called "Barrie" that I'm going to have to get a print of. It was captivating.

We got a detailed view and explanation of their beautiful garden and fish pond, which cover about an acre. Unbelievable what they've been able to do.

We packed back into the car about one in the afternoon, and started our continuation in the rain and the drizzle. We went through Waiouru, which is a big military base in NZ, past more planted forests, row by row, mile by mile. We worked our way down to Palmerston North (there is no other Palmerston in New Zealand), and then east to what was supposed to be a beautiful drive through Manawatu Gorge. It was kind of neat, but nothing really special, so we turned around and continued south all the way to "Windy Wellington". On our way

into town, we missed the turnoff to our homestay, but managed to get luck just by heading in the general direction where we thought it was. We stopped at YAFNC place (Yet Another Fish'N'Chips) for a HUGE meal (I over ordered) before going up to the house.

This place belonged to Theresa and Jack Stokes, and sat high up on a bluff facing southeast over the entrance to Wellington Harbour and the Cook Strait. We had a strong (I thought) sou'easterly blowin' that I thought could push the house up the hill. The house creaked and moaned all night long. The beds we slept in this night were the worst on the trip. They were literally the pits. I didn't sleep more than an hour the whole night. This house made our record of fantastic houses choices four for four, if you don't count the beds. So far, they have all been spectacular.

Saturday: We had to get up early this morning (6:30am) to catch the ferry to the South Island. We had a nice breakfast with the other guests who were staying at the house. This was the first time we had shared a house

with other guests.

We drove to the ferry building, where we had to drop off our little Nissan Sentra, and then boarded the ferry as passengers. The crossing cost us \$30NZ each. While we were still in port, I started talking to the steward (is that the right title?) about this ferry. It's the small one of four ferries. Small is kind of a misnomer, since this boat was about 120 meters long, and had 6 different decks. The bottom deck held train cars, four wide (480 meters of train), two car decks, and three passenger decks. The deck we sat on (the middle one) must have been at least 15 meters above the water. And to think that this was the small boat! They even had a movie theater for passengers onboard, where they were playing "Sleepless in Seattle"!

South Island, New Zealand

We spent three hours working our way southwest to Picton, in medium to small seas, still facing a few squalls. Along the way, we met a couple from Germany, named Manfred and Linda Barth. Linda grew up in Winter Park,

Colorado (just over the hill from where I live now), and her parents still own two hotels there. Manfred works for Luftansa, so the got to come on this trip for very little money, but they have to fly everywhere on standby. It was really fun talking with them, and the three hour crossing passed quickly.

As we entered the bay north of Picton, fingers of this bay seemed to go on forever. It only took us about 1 1/4 hours in the strait, and almost 2 hours in the long, interwoven sound (is this the right word?)

We disembarked in Picton, and picked up our new car. We loaded it up, and sat in the parking lot for an hour, trying to figure out what we wanted to do, and where we wanted to go to begin our South Island tour. We finally ended up driving about 30Km south to Blenheim, where we checked into our next homestay.

The scenery all around us has changed considerably. There are now low, rolling hills covered with dry grasses, much like the foothills of the coast ranges in California in early fall. I was a little surprised by

this shift, but then I never did understand Mother Nature.

Our hosts in Blenheim, Rex and Adrienne Handley, were pretty amusing. All the people we've stayed with so far have had an interesting/unique sense of humor and an even more interesting/unique outlook on life. It's definitely made the homestays fun. Rex is an ex-pilot and current tinkerer. He has his own glider, rebuild Model-T, miniature working steam engine, and much more. Adrienne just liked to talk, and was very good at getting us to talk about all kinds of things. We had dinner that night at the "Top of the Town" where our food was "Spot on" (meaning Great). The only problem with dinner that night was a disappearing napkin, but you'll have to ask Bill about that one. I promised I wouldn't tell.

Sunday : Up again for another day that went by too fast. We said our good-bys after promising that I'd send them some Iced Tea samples (they've never had Iced Tea). We headed west, since Rex promised us good weather once we got there. Weather patterns,

on the South Island in particular, are rather unstable, and move fast. So, if you have bad weather on the east, head west, and vice-versa...

We followed the Wairau River about 100Km to St. Arnaud, which is a beautiful little chapel on the edge of a beautiful mountain lake. We're now only 100Km from semi-arid desert, and have huge snow-covered peaks in the background. Exactly like a trip from the high-desert in Nevada into the Eastern Sierras.

Next we picked up the Buller River, heading due west, over to a quick

diversion down to Lake Rotoroa (not Rotorua). Another beautiful high mountain lake similar to Lake Arnaud.

We continued down the Upper Buller Gorge, through the Buller Gorge, and out to the Tasman Sea. Driving south on Highway 6 is very much like driving north on highway 1 in California at this point, right near the Monterey Peninsula. It becomes very obvious very quickly why only 5000 people live on the entire west coast. It's pretty vicious, even on a calm day. However, Rex was right. It was a beautiful day. We headed due

south now, and stopped at a place called the Punakaiki rocks, or Pancake Rocks and Blowholes. These are weird layers of sandstone eaten away by the sea, until what remains looks like a stack of pancakes. A rather large one. There is an interesting phenomenon here where the ocean has eaten away underneath a bluff, and made a huge underground cavern. Eventually the cavern collapsed, and leaves a huge arch near the sea with a large pit. During high tide, the sea rushes in under the arch into the ex-cavern which now has no top, and goes straight up into the air. Another spectacle, courtesy



of Gaia.

A short distance further south brought us to our next home on the coast. Our hosts, Tony and Ib Pupich, have a very nice home on a bluff at Nine Mile Creek. The house sits about 100 yards back from the sea, looking towards the west. This house was another great choice. We went for a brief walk down on the beach to look for jade. It washes down the Grey River and out to sea at Greymouth, where it's polished by the wave motion and sand, and then just washes

up on shore. Apparently a lot of the locals do these walks regularly.

After the walk, we jumped back into the car, and drove down to the town of Greymouth for burgers at Steamers (a bar). We stopped at a jade shop in Greymouth to see some of the boulders that have washed up in the river. Some of them were almost solid jade, weighing in at 100 Kilos or more! We headed back to the house, and stayed up talking until very late. We need to catch a helicopter early in the morn-

ing, so I'll catch up with Today Tomorrow, which will be Yesterday then...

**Tuesday, 11/16/93,
9:00am**

I better get this done ASAP.

Yesterday, which was today before today: We got up for breakfast which was also attended by an older couple from Kentucky. I really hope they aren't the typical American tourists, or the locals must have a pretty poor opinion of Americans.

We finished up and headed south on highway



6 through Greymouth (the Jade River) to Mokitika. Since this was the last big town on the road south, we stopped so I could buy a poncho (I forgot to bring a rainproof jacket). I paid \$13.50NZ and just the simple fact that I bought it should prevent rain for the next week or so. A quick fact: Hokitika gets over 3 meters of rain per game.

Leaving town, we swung inland for a few kilometers to "Shantytown", a re-creation of an early gold mining town. This country was big in gold production in the late 1800's. It was my first ride ever on a live, working steam locomotive. That part was kind of fun. It was kind of eerie how closely this place resembles any gold town from California, right down to the rockers, Placer mining guns, and huge piles of displaced slag. Then we find out that alot of the miners down here had been in California during the 1850's

We continued the drive south on highway 6, with the ocean on the right, and the mountains on the left, partially obscured by clouds. We began to catch glimpses of very

high, snow-covered peaks through gaps in the clouds. I just wish it could have been a clear day. We took another side trip to the coast, and a little place called Okarito. This "town" consisted of maybe 15 houses, if that many.

Back on the highway, and into very high country with the Franz Josef glacier right in front of us. We took a dirt road right up to a viewing platform about 2Km from the terminus of the glacier. It's a "dirty" glacier, filled with mud and rocks, but still quite a spectacular site. The valley walls climb vertically almost 1000 meters. We took a few pictures, and headed back to "town" for dinner at a tavern/bistro, and checked into the first hotel we've stayed in since leaving Auckland. It's a nice place with a view of the canyon (you can't quite see the glacier from here). It was quiet, with good beds, but we'll sure miss that homemade breakfast we've been used to.

Today (Tuesday): We woke up to broken skies with the sun actually showing up at times. We're scheduled to fly at 10:30, so

I'm starting to get a little excited about the whole thing. Stay tuned for what may be the longest entry yet!

**Tuesday, 11/16/93,
8:30pm**

Well, it isn't going to be the most exciting entry yet, since we couldn't go. The weather at 8:00am was beautiful, but by the time 10:30am came around (our scheduled flight), it had clouded over and they were cutting back on two thirds of the trip, so we skipped out and headed south (with almost no gas) to see the Fox Glacier. We put in enough gas (at 11 cents per liter more than anywhere else) to get us to Haast. We parked and walked up to the terminal end of the Fox Glacier. It's impressive, and much larger than it looks. The exposed faces are a light, chalky blue, and the rest of it is white. You really have to see it to believe it.

We continued on southward to Haast. There's only two gas stations in town, and the next one is over 150Km down the road. Because the gas was so highly priced, we calculated that we'd need 12 liters of gas to get us there. We had a strange lunch, mine

was a chicken burger with coleslaw. On the burger. It was kind of surprising, but no too bad. At Haast, we turned due east, heading up the Haast river into the Southern Alps and the most spectacular country we've seen so far. The river must be quite a site when full after an intense rain. The valley is almost 1/2 mile across.

We turned due south again, and climbed up and over Haast Pass. Looking back up the valley, you could see Eureka Mountain, over 1860 meters high, no more than 50Km from the coast. Then we started down the Eastern side of the Alps. We came across Lake Wanaka and Lake Hawea, both about 50Km by

5Km and mirror smooth. It was really weird to see that big of a lake as smooth as glass, and nobody on them, either water-skiing, or even just fishing. We took some pictures, and then decided to take a shortcut to Queenstown through Cardena. The road we took was about 25Km of sealed and 25Km of gravel/dirt. It went through the back country and was quite a lot of fun just to be "four wheeling" our way down south.

We pulled into our homestay here in Queenstown about 6pm. The house sits on a hill above Lake Wakatipu, in a suburb of Queenstown called Frankton. Our hosts were Louis and Ivan Lindsay.

Another beautiful view out of the windows. We still seem to be picking all the right places!

We headed into Queenstown for dinner and a walk around. This is, by far, the most tourist oriented place on either island. There are shops everywhere, all with jacked up prices. It's someplace we want to get out of, since neither of us are interested in this type of place. For excitement, we are planning a river jet-boat trip with a company called the Shotover Jet boats.

In the homestay, there was also a couple from Australia, and two men from the UK. It proved to be quite an interesting dinner table conversation when



the different personalities got going.

**Thursday, 11/18/93,
9pm**

Boy, the days are starting to fly by at breakneck speed. On Wednesday we got up for breakfast at 9am, with the English, Aussies, Kiwis, and Yanks. It was quite tasty. Another good start for the day.

We started up towards Arrowtown, which is a small, rural, ex-ghost town which now caters to tourists. It wasn't too big, or too interesting, so we did a tramp up to a monument on a hill, and through an early-day graveyard. A "tramp", by the way, is used to mean walk or hike. We took a "side" road that went up to Coronet Peak, the local ski area. The road climbed very quickly from Lake Wakatipu at 1060 meters elevation towards the peak at 1651 meters. That's a 600 meter change in less than 15Km (1800 feet in 7 miles). On the way up, we notice a small dirt road to the left that said "Skippers Canyon". Being the adventurous people we are, we went up. An up. And up. It finally came to a pass (not "it came to pass"). Right at

the top, there was a sign that read "STOP. Budget and Avis cars are not insured past this point". Seeing as how we rented from Hertz, we decided that we needed to continue. Straight down. One lane. With a sheer cliff of 200 meters on the right (Bill's side), and a sheer cliff going up on the left (my side). Through a cutout in the bluff called "Hell's Gate" and it's sequel, at this time unnamed. Further and further we went, eventually deciding we should turn around, since we didn't know where the road went. Needless to say, turning around was another unique experience.

Once we worked our way back up to the main road, we continued up to the ski area. It was pretty strange seeing a ski area with no trees, but that's the way they all are here in New Zealand. The views from up there were amazing.

Back down the mountain, it was time for our jet-boat trip on the Shotover river. We put on damp, stinky full jackets filled with foam so that we'd float when the boat hit a rock wall and sank. Then twelve of us piled into this

little red boat that sounded like a hot-rod. We pulled out into the current, and started upriver. After a brief trip, we turned around and the driver opened the throttle. The only acceleration I've ever felt like this was in a nearly empty jet in Santa Barbara. Intense. The boat skipped up onto the surface of the water (it has only a four inch draft), and then we went flying down the river into a gorge with vertical granite walls. Nigel (our driver) was very good. I swear we missed the rocks on both sides of the boat by less than an inch! It was exciting and petrifying at the same time. We went under one ledge where I had to duck, or my face would have been paté (is that "duck paté"?). After about two hours of this (OK, maybe two minutes) we came to a wide spot in the river where another boat was waiting to come upstream. Nigel zoomed towards it at nearly full throttle, yanked on the wheel, and did a complete 360° turn in about 20 feet. It was wild! After deep-breathing for a moment, we were off downriver to do more close calls and crazy

spins. It was a GREAT ride that anybody who comes to New Zealand should do. It seems slightly expensive at \$54NZ, but when you consider it's only \$27US, it's worth it. What a rush.

Once we warmed back up from the ride, we headed back to Queenstown to walk around, take pictures, and pick up our tickets to Doubtful Sound (for two days later). By this time, the wind that had been picking up all day decided to get serious. It must have been blowing about 80Km/hr. Bill's camera is still freaking out and rewinding rolls of film far too early, but we really don't know what to do with it.

We headed back home and picked up "hot-dogs" at the local grocery store to cook for dinner. It was a very unhealthy dinner, but did the job: we lived until the next day. As evening progressed, the wind really kicked in, even blowing stronger than Wellington. It blew hard all night long, but we awoke to a gorgeous, sunny day with no wind at all.

Thursday : After breakfast, we packed up (yet again) and headed

off to Te Anau and Milford Sound. Even though Milford is only 50Km due west of Queenstown, we had to go 150Km south to Mossburn, 30Km west to Te Anau, and then 150Km back northwest to get to Milford. We began to understand the roundabout trip when we started to see the main part of the Souther Alps. Very impressive, very vertical, very large country. It was a beautiful drive, getting more and more impressive by the mile. Vertical granite walls hundreds of meters high, waterfalls everywhere, glaciers, huge steep ravines, and much more. Up and up into the high alpine country we drove, finally driving into a tunnel drilled right into a 300 meter high granite wall. We came out the other side halfway up an even large granite wall, with a birds-eye view of a huge glacial valley. A camera just wouldn't (or can't) do it justice, which isn't to say I didn't waste a roll trying.

When we got to Milford Sound, it was beautiful. The sun was out, the birds were singing, and the waterfalls were falling (the Sound was sounding?) We parked

the car and decided to take the cruise out on the sound, since we were doubtful about the weather for the Doubtful Sound cruise tomorrow (a fortuitous decision). It's very hard to describe how large everything actually is. A huge waterfall (Bowen Falls) started the trip out into the sound. The peaks on either side raise almost vertically to 1,600 meters (over a mile!), and underwater, the sheer sides drop down just about as far. Almost any size ship can cruise within 5 meters of the walls, since they are so steep. I seem to remember the guide saying something about some of the large cruise ships tying up directly to the shoreline! The day remained beautiful for the entire trip through the sound.

It was pretty funny when the boat finally docked. Everybody who drove up to the sound in their cars practically sprinted back the 100 meters to the parking lot. The lot turned chaotic as everybody tried to back up at the same time. You see, everybody wanted to beat the busses to the road at any expense, which nearly included

yours truly.

Driving back to Te Anau (our next stop) was just as beautiful as the way up. We still had sunshine and very high peaks, but this time we seeing the other side. It was awe-inspiring.

We stopped for dinner in Te Anau, where I had to finally try venison. It was actually very good, and not nearly as strong as I remember as a child. Maybe it's because the deer are raised in captivity by

the thousands down here, but I'm not sure. Bill had his standard Fish 'n' Chips dinner that night.

A quick side note: For the last couple weeks, we've been amazed at the number of birds that sit in the road until the last possible second. Well, today a seagull waited just a little too long. It hit the protector screen over the left front headlight (that's what those plastic screens are for!). I made the local news that night as "Tourist Seagull

Killer at Large!"

After dinner that night, we headed to our next homestay just south of Te Anau. Our hosts were Barry and Pam Eaton. We had a good evening sitting around, shooting the bull. Pam and Barry were the youngest hosts we've had yet. Barry was raised in Fiordland, working with the Department of Wildlife. Apparently New Zealand had only two native species of mammals, and all others were introduced. With no



natural predators, the introduced species went crazy. After awhile, deer were classified as a “nuisance species”. So young Barry (and alot of other locals) were employed to “trim the herd by helicopter”. After a year or so, they realized that they could sell the pelts, and started bringing them out by helicopter at the end of the day. This made a nice profit for the young kids. Shortly thereafter, the venison market started to pick up, and some of the local sheep farmers decided to switch to deer instead of sheep. To be able to do this, they obviously needed a couple live animals. So Barry and friends started jumping out of helicopters to TACKLE LIVE DEER. Talk about gutsy. It was very interesting and entertaining listening to their stories. Now Barry is a guide for fishing, backpacking, hunting and whatever else needs doing throughout Fiordland. He leads a wonderful life in a wonderful location.

Barry was able to show me the real Southern Cross. Remember that I had tried in the north island with Thomas, Beatte and their son, but that night ended in

an argument about where it was. It’s quite strange looking up in the sky, and recognizing nothing...

Friday : We were up early for our trip. Actually we were up even earlier (like 4am) when this stupid peacock started crying for it’s mate. It was a very overcast, heavy day, looking like rain could come at any moment. We drove down to Manapouri, where the first leg of our journey would commence. We met Linda and Manfred again (the couple from the Picton Ferry). They were seeing off a friend on the same trip we were on. We picked up our sack lunches and boarded the ferry across Lake Manapouri to the power station. There was a light drizzle falling, so most of us stayed inside the ferry, going out only for pictures.

We got to the other side of the lake, climbed into a bus, and took a short trip down inside a huge, solid granite mountain, where somebody decided to put a power station. The tunnel we drove down was a 2Km long spiral that ended 200 meters below the surface of the lake. There was a fairly

large cavern at the bottom (maybe 50m x 200m?), holding 7 generators. Unfortunately we were only allowed on the top level where the exciters are (not very exciting), and didn’t get to see anything actually working. This station was constructed specifically to provide power for a single business south of here (an aluminum smelter). Currently the smelter gets 80% of the power, and only 20% is shipped back into the national power grid. Pretty nice arrangement if you ask me. The country builds you your own power station...

The water used to power the turbines gets discharged through the tailrace tunnel, which is bored through 12Km of solid granite right to the top of Doubtful Sound. Quite a feat of engineering once you see the mountains they drilled under, and the fact that they get over 200 earthquakes a month on this part of the island!

We got back on the bus for the trip from the lake to Doubtful Sound. This road only connects the lake to the sound, and goes nowhere else. The only way onto this road is via boat! It was

used to move all the heavy equipment from the sea to the powerstation.

The area around here, with the clouds and mist, has a mystical property. It was a completely different perspective than Milford, but by far the most common, since this area gets over 9 METERS of rain per year! The record in one day was 21 inches. Now that's rain!

We got to the sound, boarded our new catamaran ferry for the third leg of the trip. This sound is thirteen times as large as Milford, and very primitive. Other than our boat, there were only six other fishing boats working in the entire area. The permanent population around the shoreline is one, the caretaker for the New Zealand school district hostel.

We spent three hours cruising around the sound, stopping and turning off all the motors for awhile, just to listen to nature how nature intended it. Very nice. It was just as amazing as Milford in a different way. Clouds partially obscuring the peaks all around us. The rain remained very light, so it wasn't a really bad day, just quite different. I experi-

mented with different types of pictures, and I hope they come out good.

After riding around for three hours, we were all ready to head back. We got back on the busses for Lake Manapouri as the weather started getting worse, but after eight hours, most of us were too tired to really care. Once we got back to the car, Bill and I headed back to Te Anau for dinner. We ended up back at the same restaurant as last night, but this time we both had fish'n'chips.

Back at the house we sat around with Pam, Barry, and two of their friends who had just bought an 82 foot yacht to do tourist and research trips. It's quite a boat. We had actually seen it in Milford Sound, went Ohhh, and Ahhh, but didn't thing about it further until this evening. It was also quite interesting to find out that the other woman was a certified open-ocean boat pilot. She had actually piloted the nice, new catamaran that we were on in Doubtful Sound from Sydney. Even more interesting what the boats history in Sydney. Apparently it was a run-down all male

floating strip joint in Sydney Harbour. What a strange world that we'd find this out sitting in a homestay from the person who brought the boat to New Zealand in the first place.

The other houseguests showed up shortly thereafter. They're a young couple from Tuscon who are on their honeymoon. He's a programmer named Henry, who's an expert in whatever's being discussed at the moment, and she's conspicuously silent. Another friend of Pam and Barrys showed up (his name was Murray), and then things got real interesting. We started talking about the early life of these native Kiwis, and their current plans with their boats. It was pretty funny. Five very informed, very intelligent Kiwis with very casual attitudes towards life, and Henry from Tuscon providing them with expert advice on things as diverse as what type of sails to buy for their new yacht, and how to survive in the rainforest. We all decided to call it a night around 10:30pm, before Henry got really out of hand.

Saturday: Up again

(not with the peacock this time) We had our breakfast with Pam and Barry and talked for quite awhile before we decided to head for Mount Cook. Just as we were piling into the car both Pam and Barry remembered that we had forgotten to pay. WHOOPS! It was a little embarrassing.

We headed north, back to Queenstown, before turning east for the rest of the trip to Mt. Cook. We pretty much just blasted our way north, with two exceptions. We stopped at a bridge just outside Queenstown to watch the bunjy jumpers. We parked at the entrance and walked to the observation stand to watch. I was pretty sure I didn't want to do it, until I got there, and saw some people jump. If I hadn't left my wallet in the car, I probably would have gone. But it's too late to think about that now. Maybe when I get back home. The second stop was for a huge, technicolor display of lupins on the side of the road. They were everywhere, and just about every color. Purple, blue, pink, yellow, white, and more. We even bought seeds to bring back to the

states!

We had an expensive fish'n'chips lunch in Oamaru. It cost us almost \$3.50NZ for a large platter of food and a soda. It was pretty good (not the best) and seemed to do the trick. Continuing on north, we stopped around 3pm in the exciting town of Twizel to call for directions to our next homestay. For some reason, they decided to cancel our stay with no warning. I was slightly agitated (OK, really p—— off!), since I figured a Saturday night stay would be very hard book on such short notice. I nearly told her what I thought of her business practices. We started driving around, looking for other places to stay, but there weren't any available. Not just places to stay, but buildings in general. We ended up driving up to Mount Cook town to see if there were any hotels/motels with available rooms. There are only two hotels in Mount Cook; a Tavelodge and the Hermitage. They ran \$185NZ and \$300NZ+, with only one room remaining in the Travelodge. We found out that they also rent little A-frame cottages for \$106NZ per night, and

they had only two of these available. We took one, and considered ourselves pretty lucky.

We tossed our luggage into the A-frame, and headed for the Tasman Glacier Terminal. We drove up a huge glacial valley, to a giant pile of rocks (giant, like 1/2 mile wide, about 100 meters high). We parked the car, and walked up to the top of the moraine to a lookout point. You could see about 20Km up the valley over what appeared to be a gravel covered valley floor. A sign at the lookout told us that there are 1 to 3 meters of rock, covering a glacier. It was really weird. You could see huge crevasses in the rocks (glacier), and some blue walls where the glacier ended in the terminal lake. Bill and I sat and tried to listen to the glacier (how do you say "shut up" in Japanese?) Hopefully the clouds and rain will clear up tomorrow, so we can get out and really take a look this place.

We came back to the cottage, made our own dinner (curried rice with chicken and string beans), and started updating journals around 9:00pm. It's now

10:45pm, and I'm finally caught up completely. Bill was a few days behind, but he's even starting to catch up to this week. He's got two days to finish before he's done. Hopefully that will be tomorrow, since we'll be starting over with more activities then.

Sunday : We got to sleep in today, and made it to almost 9:30. The day is overcast, with new snow (!?!?) on the ridge directly opposite us, almost to the canyon floor. It's about 10:30 now, and it's starting to snow again. Very lightly, but snowing non-the-less. I thought I left the northern hemisphere to see spring and summer! This would be like getting a snowstorm at home towards the end of May. Not impossible, but unlikely. I'm pretty sure that they won't be flying today, so we may have to schedule our trip for tomorrow morning before driving to Christchurch. We'll just have to see what happens.

Sunday, November 21, 1993, 8:00pm

Today we took a tramp (a walk, not a person) up towards the Hooker Glacier. We headed up a canyon covered with huge gravel

moraines left when the 6 glaciers that worked this valley retreated at various times. We continued right on past the terminal of the Mueller Glacier, up towards the Hooker (Glacier, that is). We crossed two swinging bridges through kilometers of gravel and rocks. Up and up towards the Hooker Glacier terminal. On the way up, there were huge ice shelves hanging high up on the left side. They're called "ice falls" when the terrain is too steep to keep the ice up there. The Hooker Glacier is just as dirty (covered with gravel) as the Mueller and Tasman. All three of them have from one to three meters of gravel on them. Both sides of the valley have huge walls of gravel on them. There are rock slides everywhere, which may be the primary reason the glaciers are covered with gravel.

After 5 kilometers, we reached the terminal lake. Very large, and very cold. It's only 0.4°C all year round. Chalky white water. Small to medium turquoise blue icebergs floating around. Sitting there listening to ice cracking and rocks falling wasn't as easy as it was at

the Tasman, since the river was running right next to us. It's still a very weird place, proving once again that we can never understand what Mother Nature is up to.

The walk out was done rather quickly, since it was starting to spit rain and snow again, although by the time we got back it tried to clear up. We went to the store, picked up pasta, sauce, and veggies for dinner. We ended up making far too much food, which we felt we had to eat. Now we're sitting here updating journals. Mine's easy. Only about a half-hour of work. Bill's just starting to work on November.

We have a tentative reservation for a helicopter ride tomorrow at 11:00am, but at the price, it will have to be a spotless day before we go. I'm not quite as excited as when we were at the Franz Josef, since it's supposed to be "clearing" tomorrow, but we'll have to see what happens.

I can't believe that we only have two days left. It seems to be only a few days ago that we were in Cairns. But it's been four weeks since we were there. Pretty amazing, the way time flies

when you're having fun.

**Monday, 11/18/93,
9:00pm**

Well, today started out with a bang. Literally. Actually it was more like a whoop-whoop-whoop. A New Zealand Air Force helicopter landed about 100 feet behind our A-frame, and the Alpine Center. It must have been Search and Rescue training, since the loaded up with people in bright red-orange jackets, and took off about an hour later, heading up towards the Mueller Glacier area. About an hour later, the helicopter came back empty (well, there was a pilot), did something else at the Alpine Center, and then flew away, back down the valley. The weather was definitely breaking up, but predominantly cloudy, so we ended up cancelling our helicopter flight.

Driving back south to hiway 80, we turned to the northeast, towards Christchurch. The mountains all around are beautiful with their fresh coats of snow. It's too bad we can't see the tops. We did finally catch a brief glimpse of the top of Mount Cook, but it went away pretty fast.

We stopped at a winery just outside Geraldine that makes Elderberry Wine. The only place in the whole southern hemisphere. Most of you know how much I like Elderberry jelly, so I thought the wine might just be tasty. Unfortunately they were out of it, so I couldn't bring any home. C'est la vie.

We continued on north, stopping from town to town, trying to find another home stay for the night. Apparently our reservation at the hotel got screwed up, and they ended up cancelling us. So now we have no place to stay. Since it's Monday, I don't think we'll have any problem finding a place to stay.

We stopped at a place by the side of the road for fish'n'chips, which were great. As we continued towards Christchurch, we drove right on through town, turning where ever we felt like it. We wen through the industrial center of town, took a right turn, and ended up at the base of the Gondola that runs up the side of a hill right on the outskirts of town. We decided to go up and see what the city

looked like. But the road we were on didn't have an exit. Instead, we ended up in a tunnel going under the gondola, and came out the other side in a little bluff-side town called Lyttleton. We finally found a place to stay, owned by a pub, and recommended by another homestay owner. We took the hill road to Sumner, just back to the east around the same hill we just went under. It turned out that the place is a semi-renovated 2 story Victorian. There are 6 bedrooms in the place, exposed wiring around the circuit breakers, and only about four other outlets in the whole house. We know, because the temperature in the house is about 4° centigrade, and we tried to find a place to plug in a little space heater to warm it up. We eventually found three little heaters, but could only plug one in, or we'd blow the circuit breakers.

So we plugged one in by the TV, one in the bedroom, and turned the electric blankets on high. It's finally starting to warm up in here. I'm just not looking forward to the morning. It's going to be freezing in here, and the rest of the bedroom

will be sub-arctic.

Back to earlier. We walked across the street to the beach where there's a weird formation called Cave Rock right in the surf line. It's a large rock with a cave in it that you can walk through about 30 yards out towards the ocean. There's about eight different holes that you can crawl out through. In high tide, it must be kind of weird the way the tide must move through the cave.

We went back to the pub, had a couple of beers, and a small mince pie (hamburger). After 30 tons of fish'n'chips for lunch, it was all we needed (wanted). Now we're back in the house praying that we don't start an electrical fire with the way we've rigged the heaters. It's much warmer here now, but I'm not looking forward to the iceberg that will form in the front room over night. I hope I can finish my journal, but I may have frostbite.

Tuesday, November 23, 1994

It was an interesting night. I got to bed around 11pm, but to sleep about 11:45pm. At about 12:15, I was woken up, by two

things: My arm got caught in the power cord for the electric blanket, and a floodlight outside our window came on. It has a motion sensor that was apparently picking up the wind. It would go off for a couple seconds, and then come right back on. So I ended up moving to another of the vacant rooms where there was a queen sized bed, and no window to the side where the floodlight is. It was even colder than I was prepared for. I froze solid for a few minutes before thawing out for a decent nap.

I got up around 8:30 to try and take a shower. The water was hot, but the bathroom was huge and drafty, so it was a real quick shower. We didn't get breakfast so I guess this place wasn't a bed & breakfast. We packed up the car and drove into town to try and locate a store that sells brewing kits. We spent awhile trying to find one, and finally located a place called "Brewers Hop". They must have had about 50 or more pre-made kits to choose from. Bill bought a can, but I'll wait until I can get one with US measurements instead of metric. It will make things much

easier.

We headed back to Sumner to take the "high road", which runs a ridge-line high above Christchurch. We went to the eastern end of the peninsula, where there's a farm with sheep and cattle sharing an unbelievable view north-west through Christchurch with old gun emplacements. Military tranquility. World War II again...

We headed back west along Summit Road, not really knowing where it would come out. It was a beautiful drive, but would have been much better on a bright, sunny day.

We spent about an hour and a half up on the hill before deciding to come down to try and find lunch. We spent another two hours driving around, trying to find someplace to eat other than a hotel restaurant. We eventually ended up at McDonalds, and by then we were ready for anything. I had more fish'n'chips (Filet'o'Fish and fries). Not quite what we've been used to, but it hit the spot.

We got to the airport around 3:30pm, checked in our car (with the poor little sparrow still in the grill)

and are now sitting in the departure lounge, watching Monday night football on Tuesday afternoon. San Francisco is up 28-0. It was nice to see football again. We'd completely forgotten that it was football season.

Create a mental picture: An old series on TV, about a serviceman named Gomer Pyle. What was that phrase he used to say all the time? "Surprise, surprise, surprise..." Guess who's on the plane with us? Remember Linda and Manfred? The German couple who we met on the Picton Ferry, and again at our departure for the Doubtful Sound trip? The came walking down the aisle of the plane just after we got seated. Did I mention that he works for Luftansa? They have to fly standby on this vacation, and they're leaving today, since the flight isn't full.

We talked a little about Linda's tandem parachute adventure on the day we went to Milford Sound. She actually jumped out of an airplane at 3,000 meters with a guy strapped to her back. She may have talked me into trying parachuting again, since I now live about 5 minutes from an

airport that offers parachute lessons. We'll see if I have any money left for things like this.

We just helped a guy who speaks absolutely no English fill in his travel documents. I don't know Spanish very well (at all), so he just gave me all his tickets, passports, and everything else, and we just did our best. The stories he must be able to tell. He was born in España in 1914. I wish I could speak Spanish...

Wednesday, 11/24/93

Last night and today have been relatively uneventful. We got off our plane, picked up the baggage, and went through customs. Bill had to go through the "Things to declare" line, since he had the lupin seeds I bought him. After a thorough strip search, they let him through. The didn't really do a strip search, but did look up the seeds in a "book" before letting him through. We got picked up and taken to our hotel, the Sydney Airport International Hotel. Talk about a generic name!!! We checked in, kicked back, and watched the movie "Curly Sue". A cute movie that

tugs a little at the old tear ducts.

After sleeping almost 11 hours, we got up and got psyched for the next 48 hours. The hotel van brought us to the airport at about 11:30. Only about 4 hours early. Since then, we've been just "hanging out", watching airplanes and people. I get such a kick out of watching everybody. There's the business traveller in a suit who looks bored to tears, while the "suit" next to him is furiously preparing materials for something. The family with three young children, trying to keep them entertained. Groups of students. Huge throngs of Japanese tourists chattering incessantly. I wonder if they actually talk more than other nationalities, or if it's just their language that makes it sound that way.

Germans are everywhere, just like they've been everywhere we've been. We were talking to Manfred and Linda about the number of German tourists, and they mentioned the fact that all Germans get 30 days off, per year! They feel that's why so many Germans can take vacations so far from

home. We get to board the plane, but neither of us are looking forward to 14 hours on the plane, even if it is a direct flight.

Wednesday, 11/24/93
(again - Thanks to the date line!)

Well, we are about an hour and a half from Los Angeles, on Wednesday again. I went to sleep about 10:30pm on Wednesday evening, and now it's 8:30am on Wednesday morning. I watch two good movies on the little movie screens built into the seats: The Fugitive, and Sleepless in Seattle. The screens are little LCD screens, about 6" across, that run nine different movies over and over again, so you can watch one at just about any time.

I slept as well as can be expected on a plane, which is to say very little. Now we have an hour and 38 minutes left in this flight, followed by the rest of the day going to Dallas, and finally to Denver. I get the feeling I'll be slightly exhausted by the time I get home.

Friday, 11/26/93, the day after Thanksgiving.

I better do this before I forget. LAX to Dallas was rather uneventful, with two

exceptions: Dennis Hopper was on the plane with us, and for some reason, sat in coach seats with his entourage; and some rock star with his scantily clad girlfriend were on the flight as well. I was far too tired at this point to really worry about it.

I made the connection at DFW on time, but the airplane wasn't. Apparently they replaced some part of the cockpit computer, and had to re-test everything. We left about an hour late. The pilot came on as we got up into the air and said that our flying time to Denver would be about two hours, and the weather in Denver was clear, with light winds and the temperature of about -4°. I didn't realize that he was talking about Fahrenheit! About this time, I decided that I should try to find a jacket, if I even remembered to bring one. It was definitely cold when I got home. There was about 3 inches of snow every, crystal clear, and felt much colder than -4°F.

I think I'll be able to sleep for at least three days...

Steve Parker
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First Class Mail