

Community Voice

Thursday, January 31, 2008

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Travelogue France, England, Italy

Finding the truth in the land of croissants, Big Ben and wine

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Before I went on my trip with my family to England, France and Italy over winter break, I heard many of the stereotypes that most Americans hear about those countries. Things like Londoners are snobbish, the French are mean or don't like Americans and Italians are cute, laid back and fun. With all of the people who told me these things from their experiences, I was surprised to find my own was quite different.

We met some of the nicest and most helpful people in Paris. Perhaps I only remember these people because they went against the stereotype, but they continue to stick out in my mind.

On our first night in Paris, we were hopelessly lost trying to find our hotel, while dragging around far too much luggage and painfully sticking out as American tourists.

Without being asked, a man stopped us and asked where we were staying, then directed us to wait. He surely went out of his way, to find it and come back to get us. I am fairly certain that it would have taken us at least an extra 30 minutes to find our hotel without his help.

Similarly, I did not find Londoners are snobbish. Besides the fact, they have the cleanest city I have ever seen. The closest thing to litter I saw while we were there was the multitude of gum that speckled the sidewalks.

Yes, Londoners do seem to think very highly of their country, but I



Above, Metz with her family at Hôtel des Invalides in Paris. Right, A photo of Stonehenge in Wiltshire, U.K.

found them to be very nice people who were pleasant to talk to. The people who served the breakfast at our hotel knew our names after the first day we arrived and provided some of the best service I have had for a hotel continental breakfast.

Sadly, according to my tastes, I found the stereotype that London doesn't have great food to be true. In comparison to Paris and Rome, which both have delicious food offerings, it greatly lacked. It reminded me of America in that

you can get almost anything, but nothing was particularly outstanding. However, being a person who doesn't like seafood, I did not try London's most famous dish, fish and chips. Perhaps this may have changed my mind.

As for Italy, I found the majority of the stereotypes I heard to be true. The Italians are incredibly nice people, who are very helpful.

They also have a very laid back culture. We didn't have to do anything special for customs when

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we got to Italy. We just walked right through the customs office in the airport.

Their idea of closing most of the stores from around noon to 2 p.m. is something we should institute in America. Most of us could greatly benefit from a daily afternoon nap.

On the disappointing side, I did not find the strapping young men in Italy, sure to melt a young woman's heart, that are portrayed in the films Americans see. This may be because it was the middle of winter and they were mostly covered up, but there were none I could see. In fact, while we were

looking at Michelangelo's statue of David in Florence, my mom leaned over and whispered that he was the most attractive man she had seen on the trip.

There are a few things that struck me about European cities overall that I wish we were more in tune with here in the United States. For example, from my experience Europeans are much more environmentally conscious than Americans. They drive the smallest cars I have ever seen, and that is coming from someone who drives a Mazda Miata.

While I was in Rome, I decided

I would try to count the number of Smart Cars I could see in one minute on the bus. When I reached 13, I decided to stop.

Overall, the trip was an amazing experience and taught me a lot about how I view the world and how much credence I give to the stereotypes so many Americans take for granted.

Starting Feb. 14, the Travelogue will feature stories from students studying abroad this semester. Sarah Moore will open the feature with an article from Oman where she's studying anthropology.

Ghosts of Campus Past

This semester *The Blue Banner* will feature excerpts from previous issues of UNC Asheville campus newspapers. *The Kaleidoscope* started publishing in 1982, renaming itself *The Blue Banner* in 1984. UNCA's first paper, *The Ridgerunner*, published from 1965 to 1979. The *UNCA Free Press* published one issue in 1974. *The Rag and Bones Shop* published from 1979 until 1982. For complete copies of past issues of student newspapers, visit our new Web site at www.thebluebanner.net.

From the *The Kaleidoscope*

January 26, 1984

"Basketball breaks into brawl"

Basketball breaks into brawl



Fists went flying at a UNCA vs. Mars Hill basketball game after an incident on the court between two players in the spring semester of 1984. After Mars Hill's Rocky Spaulding fouled the Bulldog's Tom Haus, both teams left the bench to brawl. Security personnel Arnold Jones used Mace to end the fight. Mars Hill Coach Bob Ronai said Jones directed the spray at his players, while then Athletics Director Ed Harris said there was no preferential treatment. No one was seriously injured in the brawl. This was not the first violent incident to break out at a UNCA vs. Mars Hill game. In 1965, 20 people, including fans and players, were hospitalized in a fight during a game. According to an editorial in this paper, "the two teams hate each other."

Before the Bulldogs moved to Division I in 1984, they were 23-17 against Mars Hill. The last time the two teams met in 2006 preseason play, the Bulldogs lost 67-64 after Mars Hill's Stoney Polite nailed a buzzer beating 3-pointer. Early the next morning, Mars Hill students put a Mars Hill T-shirt on the Rocky the Bulldog statue outside the Justice Center. But in the riot game, UNCA won 71-57.

The Soapbox

Student shares experience following Edwards campaign

I've been on the road for 14 hours, and all I've eaten is a biscuit. Now, under the glaring lights of the Hilton hotel in Greenville, S.C., I stealthily move towards a presidential candidate's bus, in search of leftover food.

A campaign aide I've become friendly with over the past few days motions to me with a flashlight, giving me the all-clear. I walk up to him, and we climb aboard.

I'm surprised to see several people still on the bus, their faces glaring at me from leather seats.

We move towards the back of the bus, eyeing many boxes of food, including Krispy Kreme donuts. As we reach the back, our eyes come to rest on a box of gourmet pastries.

I climb off the bus, my face smeared with chocolate, and my empty stomach enjoying John Edwards' chocolate pastry.

"Someone might as well enjoy it," the aide says. "Otherwise, it would just go to waste."

Over the course of the past five days, I've photographed the Democratic presidential candidate, and former N.C. senator, in 16 South Carolina cities and towns, doing everything from shooting hoops to mingling with hundreds of supporters who showed up at campaign events.

I've jostled for photo opportunities with a *New York Times* photographer and a CNN camera crew, chatted with actor Danny Glover and been interviewed by a tricky BBC reporter.

With campaign aides and reporters furiously typing on their BlackBerrys, and more often than not seeming frazzled, it seems I might possibly have the easiest and most entertaining job on the campaign. At one point, the *Newsweek* correspondent asks me if my job is to "hang out."

But for the campaign aides and reporters who have been traveling across the country with Edwards for many months, life on the road can become an exhausting experience.

Sitting in my dorm one night, I read an article about a teen who traveled with Edwards in Iowa as the campaign's volunteer photographer. Last summer, and also during winter break, I interned for a combined three months in Edwards' Chapel Hill headquarters. After finishing the story, I immediately e-mail two of the women I worked with in Chapel Hill, volunteering to travel as the campaign photographer in the week leading up to



Column by
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Walczak poses with John Edwards in South Carolina.

the South Carolina Democratic Primary.

I arrive in Columbia, S.C., the location of Edwards' South Carolina headquarters, at about 10 a.m. on Martin Luther King Jr. Day. The press bus I'm supposed to be on is miles away and is departing for the day's first event in six minutes. As a staffer races to get me to the bus, we discover that many of the roads in downtown Columbia are blocked for a King Day celebration. She miraculously finds an alternate route, and we pull up just as the bus is about to drive away.

At the event, I stand on a mound of mulch ringing a palm tree on the grounds of the South Carolina State Capitol, angling for the best picture possible from the back of the crowd. A small girl and her mother stand behind me glaring, but don't say a word.

Edwards makes brief remarks. Unfortunately, an obnoxious Sen. Hillary Clinton supporter blocks my view for much of the event with a sign that also blocks out the sun, if that provides any clue to its size.

With shards of palm tree splinters imbedded in my hand, and only a few semi-decent photos of Edwards, I jog back to the press bus.

Later that night, I am standing in the road waiting for Edwards to arrive so I can photograph him shaking hands with supporters before a presidential debate in Myrtle Beach, S.C. As he arrives, I hurry toward his car and trail him as he walks towards the crowd. I have a nightmare image that I will somehow tumble backwards, taking both a presidential candidate and the national press down into the gutter.

My first day as the Edwards campaign photographer complete, I retire to my hotel room overlooking Margaritaville.

After photographing Edwards the next morning at a peanut warehouse, we swing by the tiny airport in Florence, S.C. to pick up a reporter.

CLASSIFIED ADS

Babysitters/Nannies Needed!

Large group of professional parents soliciting childcare. Experience, CPR/BLS, transportation recommended. Contact Vanessa Binns 273-3535 vanessab@avlcsurgeons.com