



Letters from London

**"Why
London is
Bloody
Smashing"**

BY KEIR BICKERSTAFFE
Freckled Expatriot

No matter what the Registrar's Office tells you, being in London is an intercultural experience.

Perhaps we don't have to speak another language, or master any terribly strange customs. And sure, maybe we DO have a

McDonalds, Burger King, KFC and Pizza Hut on our street. But it IS different. Really.

So, as I recognize the latent humor in bulleted lists, and as I wouldn't want Gregory Rinaldi to "think" too much (re: 10/31 Guilfordian—you've riled up a

psych major, Greg...), I've put together this little collection of the quirky little things that make London, well, London.

* Escalator Etiquette: For those who are in no hurry, they MUST stand on the right hand side of the escalator, so that all the suits late for work (or the students who are late for their theatre class) can zoom by on the left. It really is a beautiful system to watch. Also beautiful to watch are the tourists who mess it up, causing many bulging veins and "harumphs" in the line behind.

* Kebabs: Available at pretty much any street corner, these culinary jewels of the Middle East make every afternoon better. Essentially, people in white aprons will cut hunks off of revolving spits of chicken or (more ominous) pork and serve it up in a pita with ranch dressing and chili sauce.

For 4 bucks, you can get your recommended fat intake for a whole week.

Yummy.

* Crazy people: Surely every city in the world have their fair share of weirdos, but London has a great breed. Last week I saw a woman walking down the

street, systematically kicking every piece of trash on the ground, and then spending a minute or so screaming at the offending garbage in a smattering of different languages. Yikes.

* Brian Heagney: He wanted his name in this article. And everyone thinks he's cute.

* Pubs: Imagine being able to go to a place to get a drink, and meet friendly people, and sit in upholstered chairs, and not leave deafened by bad 80's heavy metal. I've seen such a place...

* "O h , dear...": The British reaction towards anything bad, from losing keys to genital mutilations.

While a little, well, emotionally retarded, sometimes the Stiff Upper Lip mentality is a calming influence on the chaotic world.

* Women in black: Sometimes, your faculty advisor/professor dresses up in black, puts on black makeup, and goes out to a goth show on Halloween. Just sometimes.

So there you are, a good six or seven prime examples of wacky interculturalism.

There's more, but frankly, I can't think of it now. The Simpsons are on.

Imagine being able to go to a place to get a drink, and meet friendly people, and sit in upholstered chairs, and not leave deafened by bad 80's heavy metal.



Summaries of the week's top news

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•Clinton Has Little To Say On Fund-Raising Probe

WASHINGTON — President Clinton has little to say about a possible independent counsel

probe of his campaign fund-raising. Attorney General Janet Reno must decide today whether to seek an investigation of phone calls placed from White House offices soliciting contributions from big donors.

Clinton told reporters her decision should be based on law and no one should attempt to influence it.

•Nichols' Defense Team Calls First Witness

DENVER — Lawyers for Terry Nichols have begun their defense of the Oklahoma City bombing suspect. As their first witness, they called FBI chemist Steven Burmeister, who testified earlier for the prosecution.

After the government rested, defense attorneys asked the judge to acquit Nichols, saying the government had not proved a key element, intent to bomb the Alfred P. Murrah building. The routine motion was denied by Judge Richard Matsch. The judge excused the jury for a brief recess, advising

them to "keep open minds" because the case was "far from over."

•Clinton Calling For Crack- down On School Violence

WASHINGTON — President Clinton is calling for a new crackdown on violence in schools after the killing of three high school students in western Kentucky.

At a White House ceremony, Clinton said he was "shocked and heartbroken" by the shooting yesterday in West Paducah that also wounded five others. A 14-year-old freshman at the school is being held. The president said a motive for the attack may never be known but the country must redouble efforts to protect all its children, especially by keeping violence and weapons out of schools.

Clinton was announcing the nomination of Army Secretary Togo West to lead the Department of Veterans Affairs.

•Louisiana Election System Violates Law

WASHINGTON — The Su-

preme Court has ruled that Louisiana's unique "open elections system" for selecting members of Congress violates federal law. The decision will force the state to recast its voting plan. In a decisive ruling the justices upheld a lower court, finding the October primary system effectively allows the state to choose senators and representatives before the official November election day set by Congress.

A candidate who runs unopposed or who receives a majority of the votes is elected.

•Pakistan's President Resigns

ISLAMABAD — Pakistan's president has resigned after a bitter power struggle with his nation's prime minister.

The nation's chief justice has also been forced out. The military is believed to have mediated the crisis to avoid a constitutional deadlock and ease fears on the national stock market.