



## Haiti also has good side

By Angela Hunter  
SPECIAL TO THE POST

Most times when we think of travel, we see in our minds eye; Resorts, beaches with blue water and white sand, tour guides for hiking and snorkeling, or maybe just traveling to another state to visit family and friends.

Well, what about another country, or what about the poorest third-world country. Yes; Haiti, my latest travel in 1997.

The single's ministry at my local church made a trip to Haiti to a town called Gonaives. We assisted a local missionary facility that our church supports in teaching Haitian students, ministering to the sick, visiting and witnessing to the unsaved, and

all the while, living the way they lived. No running water, limited electricity and making trips to the market to cook and serve three meals a day.

We left Charlotte at 6:30 a.m. to fly to Miami Airport, from there to Port-au-Prince, Haiti, where we met our hosts for the week. The Haitians that at the airport were very eager to see Americans come in. Several begged to assist with our luggage, while others pleaded for money. Anything to help them get their needs met. They were hungry, they had little money for food, no real jobs to support their families, just an open door to ask and plead for assistance from travelers coming into their country.

From the airport, we were escorted to a graffettied school bus that some Haitian beggars were hanging on to, so that we could be driven to Gonaives. The bus ride was three hours long as we drove through the night on forgotten roads. When I say "forgotten," I mean half-paved roads where portions of it were potholed and eaten up along the sides and middle, almost making it impossible to drive on. Even though our Haitian driver made his way along just fine, as he dodged every pot hole and bump in sight. (Which made for a very zig zag sort of a ride.)

After reaching our destination, we were escorted to our home for the next week. No air conditioning, no carpeting, no showers, no



Angela Hunter, center, with students from her English class. Hunter was a missionary.

room service or wake-up calls. Just bunk beds, two half bathrooms, and a rooster with a terrible set of lungs.

The Haitians that we were around spoke Creole. Though French is the official language, 90 percent of the people spoke Creole. They were very nice and welcomed us with a special love. We responded gratefully, and returned the love by speaking as much of their language as possible, eating everything on our plates and helping with kitchen duties.

We learned more about the Haitian lifestyle each day we were there.

There were college students at a

local University in Gonaives whom we taught through the missionary that we visited. This particular class was an English class on an advanced level. Because they were advanced, this made for easy conversation and allowed us to really communicate with them regarding both Haiti and the United States. They asked us questions regarding the economy, our welfare system, how much it cost to buy an average home, Christian schools versus Public schools and how we worshipped.

This made for interesting conversation even for someone who would normally rate this as boring "political" topics. Their eagerness to learn and know this infor-

mation motivated me to be as accurate and detailed as possible.

Each of the students, five men aged 21-33, had a desire to preach in the United States.

As we loaded up to head back to the United States, photographs were taken, hugs were given, clothes and shoes were disbursed to the Haitians as a gift of thanks and memories were embedded.

The trip was successful, customs and travel was smoother than anticipated and we had in our hearts a real view of Haitians, than most people would ever believe. The beautiful side that is hardly ever revealed, the clean side, the genuine side.



Gonaives, Haiti

## Alaska has spectacular scenery

By Maxine Silverstein  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Unforgettable. Breathtaking. Inspiring. These are the words people use to try to convey the extravagant beauty of Alaska. The problem is, the experience of sailing the Inside Passage defies description. The only alternative is to describe the sights along this incredible journey and trust that you will allow your imagination to run wild.

Most Inside Passage cruises depart from the beautiful city of Vancouver. As your ship travels northward you enter a network of islands, glaciers and fjords along the Alaskan coast. And so it begins.

The spectacular scenery is enhanced by a wide variety of wildlife that includes seabirds, otters, seals and breaching humpback whales. The ports you visit are warmed by the hospitality of the rugged Alaskan people and the reminders of their ancient cultures. Hand-crafted totem poles and native dancers keep the spirit of the Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian people alive.

The Inside Passage is perhaps most famous for its glaciers. These massive, slowly gliding mountains of cobalt blue ice appear to hang from cliffs along the waterway. Far from silent, they creak and then thunder as chunks break off and plunge into the waters below. Seeing these wonders close up makes you feel like a small part of a very big world, and suddenly you know that this, not the NationsBank building, is a true skyscraper.

While viewing a glacier from your cruise ship is very satisfying, flightseeing provides a truly riveting experience. Soaring in for a closer view on a bush plane, or

actually landing in a helicopter and strolling around on top of a glacier are two advantages of letting a pilot be your tour guide. On the way, you'll enjoy an eagle's eye view of the unspoiled wildlife, which includes orcas, sea lions, porpoises, seals and sea otters. All of these feast on the seafood we humans love as well - shrimp, crab, herring, salmon and more. You'll see plenty of these delicacies on your menu aboard ship, too.

When your ship reaches Glacier Bay, the captain will drop anchor to allow you to view the whales. If you have never seen a whale in its natural habitat, this alone will make your journey worthwhile. Bring along an extra roll of film as this is an experience you will want to record and remember.

To get the most from an Alaskan vacation first-time visitors should look into a cruise and land tour combination. Most cruise lines offer pre- and post-stays on land that will complete your picture of our last great frontier. Some even incorporate a visit to the six million acre Denali National Park and Preserve. Fast becoming one of the state's most popular attractions, the park is home to nearly 200 species of wildlife.

See your travel agent to plan the perfect Alaskan trip, and prepare to see sights that will make a lifelong impression, yet defy description.

- Maxine Silverstein is co-owner of Charlotte-based Mann Travels (1-800-343-6266).



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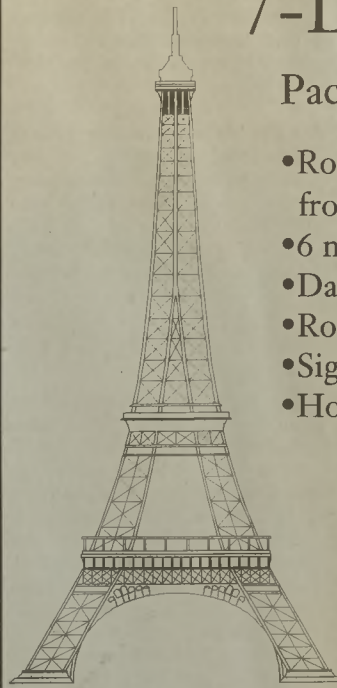
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