

Monday Sept. 21

Madrid Spain!

Not as exotic as it sounds, since we're sitting in the airport. So far things have gone unbelievably smoothly. In Abidjan we waited less than an hour, and there were plenty of empty seats on the plane to stretch out & snooze. Only flaw was a stop-over on Grand Canary Island at 3 AM. We had to get off for a few minutes while they changed crew. The hop to Madrid was even emptier, and I had 3 whole seats to sleep on! To my relief my fear of flying seems to be diminishing. This will be flight #4 in less than 12 hours. Madrid is 2 hrs ahead of Loko. They've been feeding us non-stop. Pretty good food too. DC-10 to Abj.; 727 to Madrid.

Fri. 25 Sept. 1987 Paris

So here we are in Paris!

We arrived Monday midday, and here it is Friday night, and at last I attempt a journal entry. Much to write about of course, but we've been busy. And I'm not alone this time, so any empty spaces are filled with chat. We've been tired too. Half a day out & about and all I'm up for is a bath (hot, in a real tub!) and a snooze.

My cold is on its final dregs, but Mike appears to have inherited it.

Larry was away on a business trip until Thursday night, so Jan & Mike & I have been traipsing around. Jan's been here almost a year now, and knows the city well. It's nice to just follow her lead, and not have to work too hard deciding where to go. There is so much to see! Paris really is delightful - better than I remembered it.

Tuesday we wandered the rue Mouffetard - a narrow cobblestone corridor of food shops. Artful & bright display of produce, cheeses, meats & fish, Pike Place Market style.

A grilled chicken & fresh vegies picked up on the way home made a luscious meal - including steamed cauliflower with mustard butter!

Wednesday Jan had errands to run so we spent the morning lazing around the house, and in the afternoon walked a big loop: north to the Palais de Chaillot, with its series of wide stone steps gazing out to the Eiffel Tower, packed with roller skaters + African trinket sellers; then down under the truly ugly tower itself, through the bright green strip of the Champ de Mars, and back along the river and the mid-channel "Allée des cygnes".

Jan took us out to dinner in the geek district of the Latin quarter. A maze of

overpriced, touristy, but "atmospheric"
eateries serving mediocre ~~but~~
but edible greek food.

Thursday morning we
struck out for Sacré-Coeur
& Montmartre, breezing past
the piles of discount merchandise
lining the Blvd. Rochéchoart.
The beauty of this church is
really the view looking up
at it from below the steep,
colorful gardens. The flowers
are stunning. All of Paris'
parks & gardens are immaculately
~~then~~ trimmed & sculpted
& lovingly nurtured. Floral
beds are dug ~~up~~ up & replanted
seasonally.

From the basilica we
wandered through the colorful
sea of artists & tourists at the
Place des Lerges?, and down
the back of this high hill,
through a tranquil, woodsy
neighborhood of old, elegant
mansions. Then to Les Halles
and a beer & sandwich
by Pompidou center (here we
ran into acquaintances from
Dapaong!). Then to Lee's apt.

(Seattleites living in Paris), a tiny place 6 flights up. We all walked over to the Gobelins factory where the legendary tapestries & carpets are woven. Unfortunately the tour was only in French, so Jan & Iee had trouble. Fascinating to watch this exacting & highly skilled work.

Larry came home Thursday night, Jan invited Iee & her husband Ralph over, and we prepared delicious fish filets, baked potatoes & salad, with of course wine & ~~some~~ a selection of legendary Paris pastries. It was Jan's birthday.

Jan & Larry have a wonderful apartment in a fairly ritzy part of town (the 16th quarter). His company pays or they could never afford it - \$2000 a month! They have a nice life, with many amenities otherwise too pricey in this city of high prices. Things really are expensive here, and you have to watch it or before

you know it you've spent a fortune. It is so incredibly wonderful staying at Jan &

Larry's - honey and comfortable, and of course we're saving a fortune on hotels. They leave Sunday for a 10-day diving tour, and have offered us the apartment while they're gone!

The weather's been crisp & fairly clear, with occasional showers, and it's delightful!

Monday Sept 28

Saturday was Jan & Larry's last full day in Paris before their 10-day tour & return to Seattle. In the morning Jan & I shopped at an open-air market nearby for fresh fruits & vegetables, cheeses & snacks. These "portable" markets take place once or twice ^{a week}, taking turns in various locations around the city. Very picturesque. Then we all piled into their luxurious BMW and headed out of the city 80 kms to the famous cathedral at Chartres.

I feel terrible saying it, but I was a little disappointed. I had heard so many incredible things about Chartres, I suppose it's inevitable the reality couldn't live up to it. I expected an enormous edifice alone in an expanse of fields. But Chartres is tucked away in ~~the~~ crowded warren of medieval streets & stone houses. From the outside it's a profusion of carvings & intricate stone work, so busy it becomes a blur in the monotone light brown of the stone. Inside its walls soar 37 meters to the vaulted ceiling, in tiers of stained glass dating from medieval times. The windows were protected during the 2 world wars by removal! But despite its charms the church is sombre, and the windows, of dark, thick glass, let in very little light.

Sunday morning Jan & Larry left. We spent the morning luxuriating in "our" apartment, then headed for the musée d'Orsay. This brand new museum

in the gorgeous old glass-domed Orsay train station, houses works of art of the late 19th & early 20th

centuries, incl. the impressionist works from the old Jeu de paume. It's a gorgeous museum, as much for the building as the contents.

I don't know if it's because I've seen the paintings before, or been to many museums, but the impressionists just didn't thrill me this time the way they did the first. The colors seemed drab, and the place was packed, it being Sunday, so there was no place to sit & rest or contemplate, and a constant push & juggling for space.

From here we walked across the street to the Tuileries for a picnic lunch in the flower gardens. It was cold, with a brisk wintry breeze, and I wore a stocking cap all day. Then we walked toward Les Halles, a huge metal & glass shopping complex. To our delight we discovered the Eglise de St. Eustache, sort of a miniature version of Chartres, with gorgeous, brightly colored stained glass windows and a huge

organ. For myself I found it more delightful than Chartres.

Out front is a large cobbled courtyard, and the juxtaposition of Les Halles & modern sculpture & fountains. Very nice. From here a short hop across the river took us to Notre Dame, France's religious center, ~~the~~ immortalized by Victor Hugo & the hunchback Quasimodo. There are free organ concerts on Sunday evenings, but this night there was an English choral ensemble, who were very good. Home on the metro after a souvlaki sandwich & cocoa in a café (the cocoa cost as much as the sandwiches!), we curled up in front of the TV. Then I called my family & talked to everyone but Mark (who's away at Western~~U~~) for the first time in 2½ years! We talked for an hour! Called the Michals, who invited us over to spend the day Sunday, and Agnès from Logo. She invited us over today, Monday. She met us at the metro and was so happy to

see us. We had tea in her tiny apartment, then took the metro to the section of town

with north African boutiques. Here you can buy African foods & cloth & trinkets. We bought fresh gumbo and went back to her apartment to cook wheat pâte & gumbo sauce - yum! Who would imagine pâte & sauce in Paris!

Space is really at a premium in this city. Apartments cost a fortune, parking is practically non-existent, and shops & cafés are packed to the gills, with people sitting cheek to jowl even in restaurants. And it's an expensive city. A tiny espresso is over a dollar, and a beer runs \$3-5. But you're basically paying for table space, and a single drink rents you the table for several hours.

Thursday Oct. 1 Paris

Tuesday was spent shopping, with the corresponding expenditures of money that this entails. The

main purchase was a small Sacs
Millet backpack for me. I think
we spent the whole day spending

money. Wednesday, after a
leisurely morning (they all have
been - it's been wonderful) we
headed to the top of Notre Dame.
A fairly vertiginous experience,
but a nice view, and a
gorgeous blue day. We are really
having great weather!

~~So~~ At Notre Dame we met
a real all-American older
tourist couple. She wasn't up
for climbing 400-some steps
so he went alone. He was full
of helpful hints for sightseeing,
living up to every stereotype
imaginable. His pronunciation took
the cake though: "We're goin'
out to that Versailles place,
what's it called, tomorrow".

From here we traipsed
over to Ste. Chapelle. An
expensive disappointment. Gaudy
& very frayed at the edges,
10 min. in its 2 small rooms
cost as much as admission
to the Louvre! After that
we'd had enough of guidebook

tourism for one day, and headed over to the Pompidou center to see the performers in the front

square. A group of stringed instruments played gorgeous classical music, and nearby a group of South American musicians played Andean flute & pipe music.

After hot chocolate we walked back to the river, crossing the quiet, residential île - St. Louis, then back along the river with a gorgeous view of Notre Dame. A metro dash over to Pl. de la Concorde to see it all lit up, then a walk up the Champs Élysée past the glamorous boutiques and restaurants lit up, and we were very tired. So nice to have a place to call home after a long day. In the morning we'd shopped at the open-air market (an easy place to spend lots of money), so dinner was extra-special: turkey chunks in a mushroom-cream sauce, served over fresh steamed spinach, baked

potatoes, and a very yummy white wine, from the friendly neighborhood wine merchant.

Having a kitchen we can take advantage of the wonderful food available here, without paying restaurant prices. As it is, we're spending plenty. Many temptations, from crepes & pastries to clothes. Fashion is still the main preoccupation here. The "in" wear this fall is sweaters in purple or green, black suede shoes, and big shirts & coats with huge colorful emblems on the front, often ~~is~~ a camping motif of some kind.

Today, Thursday, again dawned blue & clear. Had to be back at 2 for the TV to be picked up, so spent a few hours shopping for sweaters.

Saturday Oct. 3

Yesterday we took the train out to Versailles. A pleasant 30-minute ride in a comfortable, nearly empty double-decker train.

I had been to Versailles 7 years ago with the Michals. But it had been a brief visit and I remembered it as a blur. Nevertheless I was skeptical, and wouldn't have gone if it weren't for Mike who'd never seen it.

As it turned out it is very close to Paris & well worth the visit. The chateau is enormous. A guide took us through the choicest rooms, explaining each in picturesque, heavily accented English. Much had been renovated since my previous visit, incl. some new Gobelin tapestries, and a lot of gold leaf.

The rooms are really stunning, esp. the King's & Queen's bedrooms. Unfortunately, much furniture is missing, having been sold during the Revolution, yet you get a real feel for the splendour that once was.

We then walked through the gardens, out to the grand & Petit Triangons, "small" chateau hideaways on the property, and beyond this to Marie Antoinette's infamous hamlet, a cluster of Normandy-style village buildings she had constructed so she could play at being a peasant. These are exceptionally picturesque,

clustered around a small
man-made pond full of fish.

Saturday we wandered a
bit in the Latin quarter,
then went out to dinner at
the Studio, an atmospheric
Tex-Mex restaurant tucked away
in a cobblestone courtyard.
The food was yummy, the
margaritas good if a bit strong.
Excellent mild hot sauce with
chips. Not cheap, but worth it,
at about \$30 for 2.

Thurs. Oct 8

At the Gare du Nord, en
route to Brussels! 17 days in
Paris - hard to believe. It's
been wonderful. There's lots to
see, enough for many more days,
but you do get tired. Sunday
we took the train out to
Gif sur Yvette to visit the Michals.
We had a wonderful time!
Their son Denis, who was 7
last time I was here, is now
14, and a big guy! He's
very nice, polite, and seems
mature for his age. He helped

his mom a lot, clearing dishes
& serving coffee, while we chatted
(in French, which was great. They

speak fluent English, but agreed
to let us practice our French.
Who knows when we'll really get
a chance to use it again).

They also have a darling 4 year
old son, Renaud. After a delicious
lunch of coq au vin & numerous
other courses we drove to visit
the nearby Chateau de Breteuil.
Built in 1605ish it's beautifully
preserved and boasts living
wax figures & dioramas in many
rooms, depicting famous
scenes & people from the life
of the castle. It really brings
it alive.

Monday was a lazy,
drizzly day, with a walk to
a nearby Fred Meyer - style
super supermarket. Thought the
hugeness of it, and wealth of
products would freak me out,
but it really didn't. Tuesday
we roamed the Marais

and discovered felafels - incredibly
delicious - the best I've
ever had. So good we went
back again yesterday! Wednesday

we finally went to the Louvre.
Crowded despite its being mid-
week, the section we most wanted

to see, objets d'art, was closed
for remodeling! ~~As~~ A cold,
windy, rainy day. Luckily I
finally found some gloves. A
quick side trip to pick up

Berthillon ice cream (I agree -
the best in the world) and off
to say goodbye to Agnès. She,
in true African style, had
prepared a monumental platter
of rice & chicken. We really
had a nice visit. As we were
leaving she piled on little

gifts - I was really touched.
It was hard to say goodbye -
she is really a sweet person.

From there we went back to
find Jan & Larry home from
their tour, then prepared
dinner for all of us, and Lee
& Ralph. After German beer-
tasting, white wine, champagne,
& Bailey's, not to mention
food & chocolate & ice cream, we
slept quite well!

Thurs. Oct. 15

Innsbruck, Austria

A very full week has passed. From Paris a comfortable 3 hour train ride took us through ~~the~~ populous farmlands & into Belgium & to Brussels. The Grand Place, though very beautiful, wasn't quite the thrill as last time. After our first Belgian beer (delicious & strong), we called the Verhulsts. Christianne came to pick us up and we spent 3 very enjoyable days at their "suburban" home in Turnuren. Everyone's grown up: Annick, now 26, is head nurse for a home care company; Dirk, now 23, is a new pilot for Sabena!, and Mark, 13, is in high school. They took us out for beers, and for a lovely dinner & evening tour in Antwerp, where Christianne & Roger grew up.*

Sunday night they drove

* Mike & I borrowed their bicycles to ride through Turnuren park in the sun, and to visit the Royal African museum. Wonderful museum, mostly of Central Africa.

us to the train on which
we'd booked a sleeper to Munich.

It worked out perfect:

we slept well all night
and woke up just before
our 9 AM arrival in Munich.
My dad was there waiting
to meet us at the station!

I was so excited to see
him, I started crying.

We had a wonderful 2-day
visit. Monday we walked
all over the city, stopping
for delicious Bavarian lunch
& dinner in cozy restaurants.
It was very cold, but clear.

We found a nice room in
a pensione for \$30 a night,
near the train station to
drop our stuff. The woman
spoke hardly a word of
English, and our German
isn't much. Lots of pantomime.

We walked through the
beautiful English gardens, a
large woodsy park, and
saw a flock of wood ducks
on a pond - gorgeous!

Dad filled us in on some
news from home, not all

good: Dennis & Lisa Fox are breaking up after less than a year of marriage. And Bob

& Donna Clifford are having problems - he's moved out!

What a shock. So they've cancelled their move to Tacoma

Mom & Dad are pretty serious about building on their new lot, and selling the old house. That makes me sad.

Oh well.

Tuesday Dad had a mtg. in the morning so ~~we~~ Mike & I first walked to the main square - Marienplatz - to watch the Glockenspiel in the Rathaus. This is the famous clock with the life-size figures that joust & dance in a pageant before the king & queen. At the end a little rooster on top lifts his wings & crows 3 times.

It's fun to watch. Then we took the lift to the top of this clocktower for a lovely view of the Alps 50 miles away, and the town spread out below us.

In the evening we had a delicious dinner at Piroshka, a Hungarian restaurant with lots of charm and a live "gypsy" band. Dad had to fly out early Wednesday morning so we said goodbye after dinner. He looks great - slimmer & a lovely shade of silver.

Wednesday we got up a bit early, had hot baths, packed, and strolled over to the station.

To our surprise the train for Garmisch was leaving in 5 minutes, and the next one wasn't for 3 hours! Luckily you can buy tickets on the train.

A lovely 1 1/2 hr. train ride through fir forest, with glimpses of lakes, until just out of Garmisch when jagged rocky peaks with a fine new dusting of snow suddenly loomed above. Garmisch is a beautiful setting, but very Touristy. And we couldn't

find Joel, our PC friend from
Togo. Neither the address or phone
number he gave us was correct.

Feeling disappointed, and
not too enamored of the
town, we decided to skip a
visit to King Ludwig's famous
castle, Neuschwanstein and
head for Landsbruck. (also
Garmisch pensions are pricey).
So we hopped on a 3:30
train and arrived here in
Landsbruck 75 minutes later.

The train trip is breathtaking,
through fairytale alpine scenery.

We'd just picked Landsbruck
out of the blue, figuring if
we didn't like it we'd move
on. But it's a nice place -
it's small & welcoming,
and very lovely. Found a
great pension, full of young
Americans, a maze of rooms
in an old castle. We have
a private room with bath &
kitchenette & lots of timbered
beams & skylights, for \$30
a night! Breakfasts & dinners
are yummy & cheap.

Today we just wandered around town. It was warm, though clouds hung on the higher peaks. Innsbruck is a wonderful place - very small & personal, with a rustic old town. Went for lunch at a Gasthaus off the beaten path, ~~with~~ the kind of place the locals go. A huge meal cost \$3.50 - roast pork & gravy & potatoes & dumplings & salad. Good beer around here too! And prices seem lower.

Visited the Olympics museum, with lots of videos of highlights. Then the churches & the Volks museum, it's huge, with 3 floors of Tyrolean furniture, tools, houseware, art & clothing. The costumes were especially gorgeous.

Friday Oct. 16

This part of Austria, down into northern Italy, is called Tyrolia. It looks just like Leavenworth - I never realized that place was so authentic! And yes - people here dress the

part: beautiful felt wool skirts, capes & feathered hats, and the men in knickers & knee-socks.

Yesterday walking through the lovely Hofgarden we watched an animated game of giant chess, and met a delightful old man who spoke impeccable English and showed us photos of his life as a ski instructor.

Today we woke to a gorgeous warm & sunny day. What luck we're having with the weather!

We hiked up to the Alpenzoo, which has all the vertebrate species found in the Alps.

I was fearing another depressing zoo, but this one is phenomenal - the best I've ever seen. Integrated into the side of a steep slope, the cages are large & airy, full of trees & bushes. The animals are magnificent & healthy-looking. We spent 3 hours there! Then we hiked on a lovely trail through the woods up to Hungerburg, a town set on a plateau several hundred meters above Innsbruck. From here a cablecar goes to

the top of the mountain, and a maze of trails takes off in every direction. We followed one steeply upwards, got lost, and ended up in a beautiful valley blazing with fall color, steep rocky slopes all around us. The only part I didn't like was looking down on the city: it's small & clean, but still incongruous on a high mt. hike.

Sunday Oct. 18 Venice

We wake up in get another city. Yesterday morning in Innsbruck was overcast, the mountains invisible. How lucky for us we hadn't planned to hike that day. In a café for coffee before catching our train, a friendly German woman came up to ask where we were from. She quickly explained that as she was ill & unable to work, her hobby was pen-palling. Here in Innsbruck she met people from all over the world, especially Americans. Some have kept up a regular correspondence. Her dream

now is to go to America & ~~meet~~ visit each of these people. So she sat & had coffee with us & practised her

English - ~~so~~ she did all the talking! She was very nice, and it was nice to meet a "local" for a change.

The 6 1/2 hour train ride was really beautiful, through first the southern alps in fall color, then the Dolomites of northern ~~Spain~~ ^{Italy}. Lots of unrelated fortresses perched on rocks, ~~and~~ acres of vineyards, and a rushing mountain river grey-blue with glacial flow.

We were expecting Venice to be a big, touristy disappointment. But it's one of those famous places we wanted to at least see once.

And we needed a stopover before going to Yugoslavia. The train station, even in October, was a zoo. Long lines of tourists at every info desk. The steps in front of the station lead right to the grand canal, not exactly a beautiful sight, but enjoyable & a bit exotic. These too were swarming with travellers.

The ' off season' rooms can be hard to find year-round. So we phoned a place listed in "Let's go Europe" (which we did break down & buy in Munich - for \$25!). They called it "family run w/ pride". It's tucked away on a quiet street in the SE corner of the city in the Dorsoduro quarter (the city is divided into 6 quarters). Venice's streets are a real maze, but with a good map we haven't been finding it too hard to get around. And the walking is very pleasant - through narrow streets, over ancient bridges, with views down winding canals, of flower-filled windows and soft waves lapping at the foundations. Our pension is called Locardo ca' Foscari. It's \$30 for a double, and is clean & comfy in a big room. The family lives downstairs. Their big, friendly son speaks English. Our train arrived in the afternoon. After settling in we set forth to look for food. Venice ain't cheap. Snack food abounds at

reasonable prices, but if you want a sit-down meal it's \$10 per person minimum. We had pizzas -

ironic that some of the worst pizza I've ever had is in Italy. Like Mexican food, it's one thing us Americans have improved upon. Apart from the train station & the Plaza San Marco, the city is quite peaceful. We saw few foreigners, lots of Italians, and hundreds of cats. Venice is full of them, and they're all fat & healthy-looking. Well there's certainly plenty of pigeons to eat.

In the middle of the night a deafening crack of thunder woke us. After several bright flashes followed instantly by thunder, it began to hail and we rushed to pull the shutters closed, afraid it would crack the windows. In the morning there was a lot of rubble in the streets. (In Munich we saw evidence of a hail storm several years ago with stones the size of eggs that dented cars & roofs, broke windows, and even killed people). The morning began overcast & rainy, but now at noon it's

warm & sunny. Had morning coffee at a ~~little~~ crowded stand-up bar/pastry shop. Reminded me of Portugal very much. ~~The~~ Caffé Latte, a glass of coffee & hot, foamy milk, was delicious.

(You pay 3x as much at a sit-down place). Then walked to Plaza San Marco to join the throngs (it's Sunday). Like most of Venice it's a bit crumbly & frayed around the edges. But it's cozy & humble, like a little old lady who was beautiful in her youth. Venice is truly a city of boats, and the boats are beautiful. The gondolas are always a shiny black. The operators, from big ^{motorized} "bus" boats to gondolas, are very skillful.

(No cars or motos or bicycles in Venice). Watched a colorful rowing race on the canal, then went to the top of the bell tower for a beautiful view of the city & the Dolomites in the near distance (with a fresh coat of snow from last night). Then a stroll along the water, and now we're on a bus boat the length of the grand

canal to the train station. The ride is 1 hour.

Monday 19 Oct.

Rijeka Yugoslavia

Found out the train left early this morning, so decided not to spend a second day in Venice. We're eager to get to Greece and have as much time there as possible. When you don't speak the language or know anyone in a strange place, it's hard to really see more than just its surface. Sometimes after only a day or two you're bored by these limitations & ready to move on. In

Venice there's only so far you can walk before you've "seen" every street.

Only so many snacks in cafes before you either get fat or run out of money.

There's something to be said for brief visits - most of us have a limited amount of time & want to see as much as possible. I'm feeling both older & richer this time around - less inclined to scrimp and suffer!

We woke early this morning, 5:15, packed, and walked to the station. In the streets half-lit by dawn light Venice was pretty awake. The smell of fresh bread...

The 7 hour train ride to Rijeka was very pleasant, just Mike & I in the compartment with an Italian woman who slept the whole way. The landscape of northern Yugoslavia is lovely; scrubby pine forest with neat patches of pasture & small fields lined by piles of stones & shrubs. In Rijeka we got very lucky - the boat was leaving in 2 hours, and there wouldn't be another one for 4 days! We got a cabin for about \$25 - it's very nice. Sleeping on deck would have been cold & windy.

Also splurged on a delicious 5-course meal. Yugoslavia is much cheaper than western Europe - our dinner was \$15 for 2. We've been splurging a lot lately, but it's nice to be able to. We figure when money runs low we'll scrimp. ^{Tues} Slept extremely well as the boat chugged along, and woke to a gorgeous sunny blue day. It's a 24-hour trip, and we arrive at Dubrovnik at 4 PM.

The boat is sparsely populated, with a good half of the passengers Americans; 31 are a tour group of older people. The scenery is very nice. Crystal blue water & a practically uninhabited coastline of steep mountains that plunge sharply into the sea.

It's a bit hazy, so the more distant coastline becomes a mirage of ghostly shadows, the whitish rock blending into the haze.

We've rented deck chairs for 65¢ and are lounging in the sun, just enough breeze to maintain a perfect temperature. We've stopped at 2 ports today, both on islands, Hvar & Krčula. Picturesque clusters of ~~stone~~ stone & red tile roofs, with lots of crenellated ramparts & old castles. Hvar looked especially inviting, with lots of palm trees, and is a favorite German hangout. Very few sandy beaches here. The coast is steep & rocky, with ^{thick} dark green shrubs interspersing the whitish sandstone. No trace of soil or water, but a few fields are visible, somehow cultivated on very steep slopes.

The water is calm as glass, sailboats glide about. Most of this coast appears only accessible by boat - but really few flat places for camping.

The boat docks in the new section of town - modern Dubrovnik. Old Town, or Stari grad, is the big tourist draw. A medieval fortress^{to the} east, surrounded by double walls & a moat, its interior is a maze of stone & stairs, narrow alleys & terra cotta tile roofs, pigeons, souvenir shop, and yes, tourists.

Thousands of them; and this is the off season! And to our astonishment, well over half are American. Hotels in Yugoslavia are expensive, so many rooms are in private homes. There are 2 varieties - registered & unregistered. The latter, we later learned are cheaper.

But following all instincts we headed for the old town, ignoring the dozens of older women at the port begging us to rent their room. I wish we had.

We're paying twice as much for a not-very-nice room. It's

right in the old town, which is nice, in a family's apartment with mom & dad & 2 of their 4 daughters. ~~But she~~ Both of the girls speak English, especially the older one, so that's a treat. She says in the summer they have visitors every night, and in the winter sometimes, and most of them speak English. So she gets to practice a lot. She says she goes to school from 8-1 one week, then from 2-7 the next week, changing with another group of students. The ice cream & pastries here are excellent, and prices lower than where we've been, but still reflect tourists' pocketbooks. ~~Wed.~~ We woke this morning to the noise of jackhammers right outside our window - so that's why the shutters were closed when we looked at the room - and to cold showers. Oh well. At noon now it's hot & sunny, as we walk atop the city walls. We're high up in a tower now with a splendid view of the old town below us, the calm blue waters of the

Adriatic, and forested Tokum Island.

The off season has definite advantages, but a few sacrifices too. Many nice cafes & restaurants close or move indoors, the beach & swim scene slows down, it's not as hot, there's less going on. Also a lot of construction/renovation projects. The ice cream here is really excellent - soft & creamy.

Found a very nice bathing suit today for \$10. Prices here are so much lower than the places we've been recently it keeps amazing me. Not really cheap, but reasonable. Our money is holding out well, and it's a pleasure to spend it without flinching & scrimping constantly.

Had delicious cabbage stuffed with rice & meat, and a local version of beef stroganoff - with mustard, ham & pickles! The local wine & beer is quite bad, but the food is great. Spent the afternoon strolling outside the walls, along the rocky shore, ~~and~~ lounged in the sun for a while and almost, but

not quite, tried out my new swimsuit.

One thing that has really struck me about Dubrovnik is how well-kept it is. The buildings & streets are clean, almost scrubbed, the stones in the street literally polished to a gleam from centuries of feet. The interiors, from what we've seen, are ~~also~~ new & modern. What a contrast from Venice, where the brickwork is crumbly & faded, or Belgium & Paris, where the facades are black with the grime of the Industrial Revolution. But in the old city itself there is little greenery - it's a monotony of stone, the main promenade street resembling nothing so much as a shiny, well-lit shopping mall. In the evening the local kids come out to "cruise". In a town without cars they use their feet. Like young people the world over, dressed to the hilt, they stroll & gossip & make eyes at the other sex.

Thurs. Oct. 22 Skopje

Spent the morning in

Dubrovnik soaking up sun, then headed for the airline office about 1:00. They provide a shuttle service to the airport, where we went to fly to Skopje, just north of the Greek border. The trip overland is long & tortuous, and the boat is discontinued for the winter, so the 1-hour plane trip, at only \$25 each, was hard to resist. Yugoslavia's rugged, mountainous interior was perhaps more impressive - and certainly more comfortable to traverse - from the air.

There is no interruption from the hills, no expanse of flat land, just rock & trees, a few windy roads, and ribbons of rivers snaking through the tightly-packed hills. It was hazy, but we caught occasional glimpses of enormous high mts. like spectres. In Skopje it's cold & a bit foggy, and was dark by 6 PM. The train station is a bit grimy - I feel we're regressing from the modern cleanliness of Paris towards the grunginess

of the poorer parts of the world:
Lago to Paris to Skopje... The train
leaves at 11 PM, arriving in

Thessaloniki at 5 AM. Unwilling
to lose yet another precious day
in transit we've decided to take
it - without a couchette. Couldn't
justify an additional 20-some
dollars. Everything here is
written in cyrillic - the Russian
alphabet. Skopje around the train
station at night is singularly
uninspiring. Met a very pretty
young prostitute on a dark corner
when we went hunting for
a restaurant. All in all
Yugoslavia hasn't ~~pr~~ impressed
me with hospitality. While
many people have been friendly,
most are pretty darn surly.
They appear to love tourism -
~~constant~~ it's obvious they've done
very well by it - but to hate
tourists. I get tired of being
the object of this - put up with
only for my money.

Sat. Oct. 24 Thessaloniki

Arrived here yesterday at 5am, after 5 pretty grueling hours on the train. It was packed like a sardine can, and we spent the first 3 hours standing in the aisle between cars, people & luggage packed around us. The worst part was the smoking. Most everyone lit up, incl. the young women, and we spent a lot of time breathing out an open window. The last 2 hours we shared a folding seat in the aisle. Thessaloniki's train station at 5am wasn't terribly inspiring. A cup of coffee on an empty stomach and we walked into town past ~~streets~~ shop windows stuffed full of merchandise, much like the commercial streets in Lomé. The tourist office opened at 8, so we sat on a park bench for a while, but it was chilly. We found a hole in the wall for hot milk & greasy pastry. All I wanted was to get some sleep. At 8 we found a nice room at the Hotel Tourist (what else) for \$15.

Big & comfy - but no hot water!
Slept for 4 hours - glorious - then
got up at noon and went prowling

for some lunch. Thessaloniki is
not a beautiful town. It's a
big, busy city of over a million,
congested, noisy, and smoky
with diesel fumes. But it's a
port city, with a long expanse
of waterfront promenade, and it's
a historically rich city - once the
second most important city in
Byzantium, after Constantinople.

Alexander the Great is the local hero.
The city boasts some very ancient
buildings & monuments tucked
away here & there, especially old
Turkish baths, crumbly brick &
tile bubbles like clusters of mush-
rooms, held upright by wooden
supports & scaffolding. Which brings
us to lunch. In one of these
old bathhouses is a small
restaurant, frequented by locals.
One of those rusty old places with
old gypsies drinking retsina &
playing with prayer beads, and
lots of low-key atmosphere.
And a menu in Greek. We
figured we'd ~~just~~ manage by

sign language, but there was a young American fellow sitting there who spoke pretty good Greek, and he offered to help. We sat down, figured out what we wanted, and no waiter came. This fellow says he's been waiting a while also, so he calls the waiter over & proceeds to tell him off in Greek. Great way to make a good impression. Then a big Greek man comes over, a Greek American as it turns out, and very friendly, asks if he can help us order. He calls the waiter over and orders for us.

Our food comes, but no forks, so this American guy starts bitching again. So the Greek fellow comes over and says it's OK, you don't need a fork to eat fried fish. He tries to borrow the American guy's fork to squeeze our lemons, but Mark holds on tight and screams for 2 more forks. So Leo, the Greek gets disgusted, says screw you to Mark, and goes back to his table. After Mark left I went over to Leo and apologized for

Mark's behavior, hoping to salvage the reputation of tourists in general somewhat. He says thank you. A

little while later he offers us a glass of retsina. I'd forgotten how good it is! Then he invited us to the table where he was sitting with another older Greek fellow, Spelios. An old guy at another table offered us a litre of retsina, and we all drank everybody's health. It turns out everyone was glad to see Mark leave! Leo was a bit drunk, and somewhat overbearing, but he seemed like an intelligent, good guy. So when he invited us home to meet his wife we went, expecting some matronly Greek woman making pastries in the kitchen. What a surprise to enter a nice building and walk into a lush € 7th floor apartment. His wife, who looks about half her age, is a cute, tiny thing, wearing jeans & a sweatshirt, who speaks better English than he does. While dad went to take a nap, we had a delightful afternoon talking with her and her

17 year old son Dimitrios. Born and raised in the states, he's finishing up high school here, and thinking

of a foreign service career. She's very active with the American farm school, an agricultural school here in Thessaloniki for young Greek kids, to encourage farming as a profession. Apparently well-known, it receives funding from Americans and sponsors student exchange programs.

We watched TV for a short while and saw a program on the Vicos - Gooos ntl. park in NW Greece - a remote region of canyons, rivers and ancient stone villages - gorgeous! They invited us to call this evening. We finally left about 8 PM, and on arriving back at the hotel, ran into Mark, who asked if we wanted to go to dinner. He's a tour guide writer, researching for updates on his books, and knows a lot of good places. ~~so~~ we hopped on a bus way to the other end of town to a real neighborhood place. A nice taverna, where they bring a tray full

of dishes to your table to choose from. A delicious meal, with cold white wine, was \$8 each. Today

we made train reservations to go to Meteora tomorrow, and are now sitting in the sun drinking ice coffee. It's nice to be back in Greece!

Sunday Oct. 25

Although we set both of our alarms, so we wouldn't miss the train, we slept right through them, waking 20 minutes before departure time. Our stuff wasn't packed, our bill paid, and the station's a good mile away.

Bleary-eyed we stuffed everything into the packs, ran downstairs, practically throwing the money at the desk, and with ten minutes ~~to~~ left, decided to splurge & grab a taxi. As it turned out it only cost a dollar, and got us there with just enough time to jump on the train

as the whistle was blowing. Another hazy day, and the scenery unspectacular, of

marginal farmland (cotton, tobacco, sheep), scruffy coast, weatherbeaten shacks, & a lot of garbage. The train bounced mercilessly on worn-out springs, and the passengers looked like dancing puppets, going up & down in their seats. It's chilly - I hope we find sun farther south.

Larissa is a large town - an unattractive hodge-podge of flat-roofed cement buildings, antennae sprouting like weeds on top. Our train, as best we can figure, doesn't leave for 4 hours (ironically, if we'd missed the train this morning the next one would have gotten us here on time), so we're sitting on a park bench waiting, watching the Sunday strollers. Bought yogurt for breakfast, and croissants that turned out to be soaked in honey, like so many of the pastries here. Sickly sweet. I'm already tired of the heavy, oily, lukewarm food, and hoping for good salads down south.

After wandering all over town, came back to the train station.

Turns out it's the nicest part of town. Despite the flies & dirty bathrooms, which are everywhere.

Mon. Oct. 26

Turns out we should have stayed on the train until Farsalos, 2 hrs. south of Larissa. ~~B~~ So we got on the next one, and in Farsala made the connection with a narrow gauge, 2-car train for Kalambaka. A real rural express ^{with a toy whistle to match its size.} The train backs out of the station, a worker jumps off & manually switches the tracks, and off we go forwards. At one point the train stopped for a few minutes so someone could get off & pick some fat mushrooms!

Kalambaka is a small town at the foot of Meteora, the famous pillars of ~~so~~ eroded sandstone on which are perched a series of ancient monasteries. Kalambaka has done well financially by tourism, and its

evident from the many hotels & restaurants that this place must be mobbed in the summer.

Found a very nice hotel, and ended up sharing a triple room with a young American woman travelling alone, Tracy. She was really nice.

So this morning we all got up & caught the bus up to the monasteries - about 10 kms. up a steep mountain road. They are very impressive, perched on pillars of rock.

Once accessible only by rope or ladder, there are now safe stairways & drawbridges. Built mostly in the 14th & 15th centuries, there were once 24 monasteries. Only 6 or 7 remain, 3 of which are nunneries.

They once housed hundreds of monks seeking refuge from persecution, and are gorgeous pieces of architecture & construction skill. Each boasts churches covered in icons - the Greek Orthodox paintings representing scenes from the scriptures.

In the first we met a

fascinating Greek man. He lived in London for years so spoke perfect English, but now lives

at the monastery, studying. He was downright passionate about the iconography of the church, and spent about an hour filling us in on fascinating tidbits about the symbolism of the frescoes. He had some interesting ~~etc~~ criticisms of the Catholic church. How Mary shouldn't wear white because in Palestine white is the color of assassins & murderers.

A series of windows in the church, of odd shapes & sizes, ~~was~~ allows light to illuminate each saint in turn on his name day! Also, each icon had to be started & finished in 2 hours or the plaster would dry.

From here we walked down to another monastery, and then towards another, several kilometers away.

But a nice Greek man stopped to give us a lift, though I was scared to

death as he careened around the narrow corners inches from sheer drop-offs. Then we

walked back to town, a beautiful walk in warm sun (it's been cold at night & in the morning). Stopped on the way for a great meal at a roadside café, of juicy barbecued cutlets & Greek salad.

Wed. Oct. 28 Athens

Today is a big Greek Nat. holiday - Ohi-, or No-Day - to commemorate the day in 1944 when Greece said no to Italy's WWII ultimatum to surrender. Yesterday, after 8 pleasant, but not very scenic, hours on the train we arrived in Athens to find it wintry cold & hazy. But today, though it's still chilly & very windy, it's clear & blue, & from here on Lycavettus hill we can see for miles: even to some of the coastal islands. Our hotel last night was

pleasant & cheap, if small, but the bed was awful. The first double we've had since Innsbruck,

but terribly uncomfortable. We both woke with stiff necks, and decided to move down the street & hope for the best.

Athens, like Venice, is home to hundreds (thousands?) of cats, and the Greeks seem to like them. "Kitty cats of Greece" calendars are on sale everywhere. Here at the café we just counted 5 big, fat ones, each a different color, and up on top of the hill we met a beautiful tiger stripe who loves tourists and clambers demandingly onto any available lap.

Athens in late October is pretty quiet, though Athenians are out in force today, enjoying their holiday. But best of all is the lack of pollution.

I remember August here 7 years ago, wearing a bandana over my face against the thick pall of diesel fumes.

This morning we realized there'd be a parade today, so

joined the crowd lining the road in front of the Parliament building. Here the Evzones, or Presidential guards, in their traditional short white skirts, embroidered vests, tights, tasseled caps, & pom-pom'ed shoes, stand guard 2 by 2 at the Tomb of the unknown soldier. Once an hour they change places, going through a slow, stylized marching ritual. When we arrived, a marching band & group of soldiers were standing in formation near the tomb, the Evzones at attention, still as statues. A procession of about 20 shiny Mercedes flying flapz, drove up under moto escort and disgorged a herd of military brass & Papandreou, the Prime Minister, who stayed long enough to place a wreath on the Tomb, to the accompaniment of the band. I thought it was a very touching moment, even though I'm not Greek. The band then played the Nat. Anthem? and all the brigades drove off. The band & army marched

off, and the crowd surged forward to ogle the Euzones, who aren't supposed to talk or

smile or otherwise acknowledge the crowd. It was fun to take part in this national event, and to see the P.M. I guess deep-down we all love a little pomp & circumstance.

This second visit to Greece is, inevitably, full of comparisons. It's colder, there's fewer tourists, many shops and cafés are closed for the season. So there's a feeling of emptiness almost, as if we've missed the party.

Perhaps September would be a better time to come. Here at the end of November it's really cold.

Taking advantage of the clear day, headed up to the Acropolis in the afternoon. The scaffolding has finally come off the Erechthion, which has been much repaired with bright new marble. All the monuments are roped off and crumbling badly, & under continual repair & the scaffolding this requires. Despite the desire to be awed, and the knowledge

that you're in the presence of one of the greatest creations of human-kind, you can't help feeling how sadly run down it all is. Part of me wishes they could reconstruct it, creating a replica of what it once looked like. This to me would be a real thrill - a living ~~data~~ diorama of history. How can we imagine what a place was like if it's but an eroded remnant of its former self. Who, never having seen Katherine Hepburn or E. Taylor Young, could really appreciate them old?

Our new hotel room is much nicer, especially the bed. A very friendly, inexpensive, well-run place called the Lempi on Eötvös st. near Syntagma square. The cold weather takes a toll on sightseeing energy. We retreated to the hotel to warm up, and ended up sleeping from 6-9 PM! Went out for a snack to a nearly 1950's-style fast food joint,

complete with old rock 'n roll music. Unfortunately a trio of past-their-prime old German alcoholic hippies started hassling us for money. Really pathetic specimens, young brims in the making. Leftovers from Greece's hippie heyday 10 or 20 years ago, who never left.

Thursday Oct. 29

good thing we "sight-saw" yesterday, as today is overcast & almost drizzly. Took the bus out to New Philadelphia, the quarter where the Papageorgiou's live, as we couldn't find their phone number in the book.

Expected to have trouble finding the address, and once there, to find they had moved or something. But we found it without much trouble, getting pantomimed directions in very animated Greek from a local postman. Once there an old woman peered out the window (I recognized the house, and thought the woman looked familiar).

No, she shook her head, they're not here. All in Greek. Did that mean they didn't live there anymore, or just not home? Luckily at that moment a young woman came up to the house, and in minimal English explained that they were out of town and would be back tomorrow. So we got the phone number and will call.

After a huge & surprisingly good lunch (the food here isn't as good as I remembered it - lukewarm and oh so oily), we siesta'd (we've been sleeping too much). Now we're wandering about seeking warm cafés to sit in. Prices seem a little high to me this time around.

Another thing I notice more of: blatant pornography magazines in every kiosk, and really tacky naked women post cards.

A delicious meal at a wonderful restaurant: Eden, in the Plaka. Vegetarian, with healthy, fresh food like bulgur salad - and no oil! Wish we'd discovered it days ago!

Friday Oct. 30

En route to Hydra, a tiny island in the Saronic Gulf, nestled between Athens & the Peloponnesian peninsula. It's been drizzling since yesterday, blowing my theory that it doesn't drizzle here, but pours and gets it over with. And it's cold, somewhat diminishing the excitement of going to the islands. So much for my new bathing suit!

After the trip out to Papageorgiou's, turns out we were given the wrong number. So frustrating. So I sent a card telling them we'd be back in 10 days, and to please send us a message at the hotel. Poor Mike, who doesn't even know these people, is wondering why I'm spending all this energy trying to find them. But to be here and not even try; and I remember them as such wonderful people. So much of travelling is the people, and we're finding that as a couple it's

difficult to meet people. Did meet a nice couple the other night, from Vancouver B.C.

They're currently living in Papua N.G. with their 4 year old son - a real bundle of energy.

Sat. Oct. 31 Hydra

It's Halloween, and guess what, we're having the same weather here as we usually have in Seattle on Halloween. Cold, windy, and drizzly.

We arrived here about 11:30 yesterday to find it cold & overcast. A pretty, if barren, island, but oh so touristy. Yet now perhaps ^{half} the stores & cafés have closed down for the season, and the place is very quiet. We find ourselves longing for the crowds of tourist season, and certainly for the sun. We were surprised, in getting off the boat, to have noone come try to sell us a room. After a bit of looking we were also surprised to find prices higher than in Athens.

So we took a dumpsy room, simply because it was cheap.

Then regretted it. We could have had a really nice room for only a few dollars more. But by then we had paid for 2 nights, and the fellow has left town. The place is deserted, and very cold. I got very depressed yesterday, thinking of 2 cold, boring days in this place, and 10 days until our flight out. After much moping about we decided to stick it out here, and head back to Athens on Sunday.

Monday we'll see if it's possible to move our flight up. Meanwhile we'll keep hoping it will warm up. The paper says it was 13°C (55°F) here yesterday - as well as in Amsterdam & New York. It was warmer in Seattle! In a way it's worse here because buildings aren't heated. Also, we have few warm clothes with us. Found a comfy restaurant here on the waterfront with pretty decent food, and got to

see MTV in English. Nice to hear western tunes. Reading Michener's 'The Source'. Very depressing, and rather than increasing my tolerance of Judaism & Christianity through understanding, it's made me much more disgusted with all of it.

Sunday Nov. 1

Leaving Poros for Athens, effectively giving up on the islands. Decided to take the hydrofoil from Hydra to Poros, a 20 min. ride, to see what the ride was like. Huge engines that almost roar like jets, lift the boat off the water onto fins, reducing drag and allowing high speeds. I was surprised how choppy the ride was, either from wind buffeting the hull or the fins catching on swells. In Poros it was cold & began to rain. The thought of staying the night evaporated, and waiting till 5 for the

boat pretty cheerless, so we were happy to find a boat leaving at 2:45. Plans are to find a nice hotel, try to catch a movie, and have dinner again at the vegie restaurant.

Tomorrow we'll try to change our plane reservations, and to contact the Papageorgiou's. Then we'll play it by ear.

Yesterday we went hiking on the high hills above Hydra, up to a Monastery. The walking kept us warm, and it didn't rain. It was nice to leave the town behind and see again the rugged island landscape from which these people have somehow scraped a living since long before tourists came along. The beautiful chiming of brass goat bells brought back memories of how much I loved Greece last time I was here. Mike bought me a beautiful sweater to try to cheer me up, and we met a nice couple from California, our age, and we had a nice

dinner together.

The smoke on this boat is so bad I have a headache & can hardly breathe.

Tuesday Nov. 3 Delphi

Back in Athens on Sunday the Temple was full, so we stayed at Thisios Inn, a combo hostel/hotel. Very cold, but friendly and has a nice kitchen/lounge. ~~Monday~~ Treated ourselves to a good dinner & the new James Bond movie, The Living Daylights. It was very good, and the new Bond is very good and very cute!

Monday the sun actually came out and it was much warmer. Went out to Papageorgiou's, figuring if we couldn't find them this time we'd give up. But they were home, and we had a wonderful visit! They've invited us for sightseeing on Thursday.

Today we took the bus to Delphi, 3 hours in the fog & rain, and again

it's very cold.

Friday Nov. 3 Athens

Back in Athens Wed. nite after 24 hours in Delphi. The hotel was completely unheated & very cold, and the snow level wasn't far above us. It never stopped drizzling, and though we had a nice stroll through the ruins we were happy to get back on the bus, and to a heated hotel in Athens. The scenery at Delphi really is beautiful, but with the low fog & rain we couldn't really appreciate it.

Thursday the Papageorgiou's took us for a drive out along the coast west of Athens, first to ^{the ruins of} Eleusis, site of ancient religious ceremonies, now surrounded by factories spewing out toxic gasses. Then to their summer home, and for lunch at a taverna nearby, where we stuffed ourselves on 3 types of fresh fish!

Today was finally sunny, and we wandered here & there.

Must admit we're eager to be off tomorrow morning, that much closer to home. Had dinner with a couple from Maine that we'd met in Delphi - really nice people. The alarm's set for 4 AM!

Monday Nov. 9 London

The flight from Athens went smoothly & comfortably, and we arrived at Heathrow around 11 AM on Saturday.* For the first time in 2½ years we're in a country where everyone speaks English! What a treat. Found a nice hotel near Victoria station for £24 a night. Expensive, but not by London standards. Includes breakfast. It's cold here - about 6°C, but feels good. Sunday, unbeknownst to us, was Remembrance Day, the annual day of war remembrance. We arrived at Buckingham Palace to find a huge crowd. Thinking the changing of the guards was imminent we pressed up to the gate, only to see the Queen

* Had gorgeous views of the Alps sticking up above a layer of cloud, into the blue sunny sky.

drive by in a brown Rolls Royce!

Turns out she was off for the ceremonies at the Tomb of the

Unknown Soldiers. By luck we ended up along the street she drove back on. First came the Queen, then Charles & Di, then Andrew & Fergie, and a few other important folks - it was really exciting to see them close up! * Wandered around a bit & ended up at Westminster Abbey for Evensong, a mass with beautiful choir song. Here is where all the Coronations are held.

Found a great place for dinner called The Stockpot, in Soho.

* This procession of Royal Royces was followed by a long military parade: first war veterans, then all the various divisions of active military in their varied & beautiful costumes, with 4 different bands playing marching music.

Wednesday Nov. 10

Monday morning we arranged our plane tickets home - much cheaper than we'd thought; less than \$450 each, all the way to Seattle!

Then went to a free concert at St. Martin-in-the-Fields church - a trio of chamber music playing Beethoven. Then a huge wholefoods lunch at Crank's, and off to see the new Steve Martin movie, Roxanne. Yuck - a real stupid one. Probably would have been OK if Daryl Hannah hadn't played the leading lady. She will always be a dumb blonde to me. Then had a beer at the local pub called "Slug & Lettuce" and back to the hotel. A drizzly day, and cold, but we're getting used to it - sort of!

Tues. Nov. 10

Much warmer today - probably all of 50°! Dashed off to Buckingham Palace today, but the Changing of the Guards is tomorrow. As we wandered through ~~the~~ St. James's Park, wishing we had bread for the swans & pelicans & ducks, we saw a troop of the Queen's Calvary go by,

on black horses, dressed in red caps & gold helmets with tassels. Followed them down to Whitehall Horse Gallery and got to see a changing of the horse guard. The British sure do love their Pomp & Circumstance! Then had a Fish & Chips lunch before walking through Hyde Park & Kensington Gardens. Damage from the "hurricane" a month ago is extensive: huge trees toppled & branches everywhere.

Then we headed over to the Victoria & Albert museum, passing the enormous, gaudy Albert Memorial on the way. The museum had a display of Royal Photos taken by Sir Cecil Beaton from about 1935 - 1968. Beautiful photos of many royal folks.

Wed. Nov. 11

A rainy day. Actually began as a drizzle, so we headed over to the Palace to watch the changing of the guards. But soon

it began pouring, so we gave up.

In the evening we were invited over to Dave Story's cousin's, Red Shively. She & her husband Jerry are quite wealthy, and live in Chelsea. Their apartment is incredible - I don't even know how to describe it! ~~Each~~

Each room is a unique decorating scheme, using bold colors, and crammed with art objects & classy knick-knacks. Jerry calls it "elegant clutter".

The kitchen is all modern chrome, bright & shiny. They took us out to a restaurant nearby for a delicious meal.

The place is owned by a chubby little flamboyant gay man, a frustrated singer, who fits every gay stereotype in the book. A very entertaining place! Called Gramma to tell her when to expect us!

Thursday Nov. 12

A brief visit to Saint Paul's Cathedral, then a delicious lunch at Chi-Chi's Mexican - 3 margaritas each!

Then to see the play "Luv
For Your Wife", a farce. Had
great seats for 1/2 price. A
good play, very funny, but
not great. Picked up our
plane tickets - we fly home
in 1 week!

Friday Nov. 13

A lazy, drizzly day spent
taking busses all over instead of
walking. First to the Tower of
London, a lovely medieval fortress
on the river where the crown
jewels are kept, and the
nearby Tower Bridge, lovely
stone with curvilinear steel
beams painted lovely shades of
blue, and white. Then back to
St. Paul's Cathedral, where we
climbed up onto the dome for
a view of the city. Not
exactly beautiful, but interesting.
Though I've had enough of
steep, narrow, spiral stone
staircases in these last 2
months for a lifetime.

Then to Harrod's - a huge,
overwhelmingly crowded &

expensive department store in Chelsea. A lot of not-so-rich people strolling around trying to look rich! Then back for a snooze (I was feeling really wiped out), and out later for a delicious meal of Indian food - very nice!

Saturday Nov. 14 -
Thurs. Nov. 19

Sat. morning we hopped on the train to Mike's cousin's in Surrey, passing across Westminster Bridge with its lovely view of the ornate Parliament bldgs. & gilded Big Ben clock. All were sparkly in a cold blue sun.

Jerry picked us up at the Farnham station in his 1950-some Mercedes - one of 5 or 6 cars they own. Their house sits on about 13 acres in the countryside, amid beautiful green pastures, woods and apple orchards. It's a

modern house by local standards, perhaps 50 years old, most in

the area being lovely stone or half-timber farmhouses several hundred years old.

Theirs is a one-story rambler with many wings. It's a bit of a maze really, and would drive me nuts to live in. Must be a 1/4

mile from the living room to the kitchen, which is immense in itself (3 ovens, 2 stoves, 3 sinks, 4 frigos, all at opposite corners of a giant island you're forever running around). However, they went

away for Sat. night and left us the place, which was fun.

Sunday we saw 2 excellent BBC documentaries: one on Bengal Tigers, one on the volcanism in Hawaii.

Monday morning we caught the train to London with Jerry. There his driver picked him up and then dropped us off at our station.

Then we were off to the Jones' in Cornwall. A 4 1/2

hour train ride through beautiful scenery, though I slept a bit and missed some of it.

We spent 2 very nice days with them and were lucky to have very decent weather & almost no rain.

Highlights: A walk along St. Anthony's Head above a beautiful beach and rocky coast. Saw a large sea lion laying near shore on his back. A ride on the King Harry Ferry, which crosses a fairly narrow, wooded creek. To our amazement there were 4 enormous ships anchored here, seemingly miles from the sea and quite out of place. Turns out the creek bed is unusually deep here and provides a quiet anchor.

Then Wednesday Margaret was working so Ray took us on a tour to the west: first to St. Michael's Mount, Britain's equivalent of the attraction in France. It's a magical place, accessible by a stone causeway by only a few hours, otherwise

by boat. It's an old stone castle perched high on a chunk of rock

240 feet high. It was built first as a monastery. The most notable thing were the gardens, unfortunately inaccessible to the public. From there we drove on to Penzance, made famous by the Broadway play about pirates. Piracy and smuggling have been and still are major enterprises in Cornwall. And of course Daphne Du Maurier made it famous with her wonderful novels.

From Penzance across to St. Ives on the more rugged north coast, it's a lovely town of narrow streets and stone houses, with a very Mediterranean flavor, with lovely sandy beaches that attract surfers and kayakers. Cornwall really is beautiful; no wonder it's one of Britain's top tourist areas.

Back in Falmouth I got my hair cut "professionally" for the first time in 3 years - since my wedding. He cut it a bit short I suppose, but it

looks good. The shampoo felt wonderful!

Last night there was a tragic fire in the London subway, killing many, many people. So instead of taking the train back to London we got off ~~and~~ at Reading and took the bus to Heathrow. We're flying on Kuwait airlines because it's cheap, but it's turning out to be a great flight, on time, friendly, great service. Their safety talk was a film, and very good. Now they're showing flight info on the screen: speed, altitude, and maps of location. We're on a 747, flying westward in a perpetual sunset/twilight. It's beautiful. Everything, including announcements, is in Arabic & English.

Tuesday Nov. 24 1987

En route to Seattle!

At long last we're going home!
Our Continental flight unfortunately
is via Houston - but that's life
I guess. Actually it works out
well, as it means we arrive in
Seattle at 8 pm - so everyone can
come to the airport after work.

Spent 4 days with Gramma
& Pat & Ed on Long Island