

2003

Christmas News from the Browns

Email Gord - gbrow@basicbusiness.com

Email Marilyn - marylebones@telus.net

Home Phone - 604-538-1943

Home Fax - 604-538-6673

Adventures in Turkey



The magic of travel called to us once again and, this time, it was off to Western Turkey for the last three weeks of October. This time, we escorted a group of people for Royal Heights Tours, a company that we had traveled with before. Assuming the role of tour co-coordinators, we were responsible for seeing that the tour stayed on track, the meals were acceptable and that everyone stayed healthy and out of trouble. All went well and since there were two of us, it was more like a working holiday. (see pictures at <http://www.browfamily.ca/photos/vacations/Turkey2003/index.html>)

Western Turkey guarantees a unique holiday experience. It is a land of mystery and deep historical significance, rich in culture but also robust in modern infrastructure. Traveling over well maintained roads and sometimes toll freeways, we moved from one ancient city to another, experiencing the vastness of the original Roman Empire. We started from Istanbul and traveled down the West coast through Gallipoli and Troy. Then on to Kusadasi where we visited Ephesus, a Roman City built originally in the 2nd Century AD, and then on to the massive marble Temple of Apollo at Didyma. As we traveled South along the water the weather got warmer and we were treated to some hot days in Bodrum and Pamukkale. We left the coast at Antalya and headed inland to the regions of Cappadocia where 7th Century Christians fleeing from persecution took refuge in huge underground cities carved out of soft sandstone . . . a truly magical place. Following part of the "Silk Road", we visited 12th century caravanserais which were fortified hotels built to protect the caravans which traveled this route. Although we saw incredible archaeological sites, award winning museums and spectacular mosques the hospitality of the coun-

try will stay with us always. The people of Turkey were warm and hospitable and always helpful. Of course, every visitor to Turkey is a millionaire as CAN\$1.00 equals 1,000,000 Turkish Lira. It takes a little getting used to paying 250,000 TL to use the bathroom or paying 2 Million TL for a Coke. Although everything is modern in Turkey, the Turks have a way to go when it comes to maintenance. We learned this the hard way when we got stuck between floors in an elevator moments before the bus was scheduled to leave on a day trip. Anxious moments were spent in a hot, dark elevator as a maintenance team worked feverously to extract us. The elevator finally settled at the very bottom of the shaft and we had to walk up several floors to reach the lobby. We stayed on lower floors during the remainder of the trip. Managing a tour group has its interesting moments. Normally, when we were checking into a new hotel, we are provided with the room keys and make a note of the room number for each guest on a master booking list. After everyone has gone to their rooms, we match the room numbers to the luggage so that the bellmen can deliver the luggage to the corresponding rooms. As we marked the luggage one day, the wind blew the current page over so that the previous day's hotel booking list was showing. Marking the luggage with room numbers that did not exist proved to be baffling to all as a parade of sweating bellmen began returning with bags in hand trying to explain that the room number did not exist. There was so much to see and so much to do. Whirling Dervish ceremony; ferry ride along the Bosphorus; dinner at an ancient caravanserai; strolling through the old part of Ankara were all part of the experience. It was a trip full of wonder and excitement.



The Clancey Brothers

Ben (8years old) and Mattie (5 years) are growing like weeds. Both are active in Cubs and Beavers respectively. They attend a little country school close to home where Paige obtained her elementary education. The neighborhood is starting to fill up with the third generation kids. A lot of them who grew up here are originally are moving back near their parents and the fami-



lies are starting to grow.

They are looking forward to Christmas and it is always fun for us to have them so close to home.



Bits 'n Pieces

♥ In April, Paige & Mitch went on vacation to *Costa Rica* while we spent much of the time with the kids.

♥ New condos in the neighborhood have generated some renewed interest in our property. We accepted an offer from a developer the day before we left for Turkey. Paige & Mitch have also been approached so we all may be moving if the subjects are re-

moved in January.

♥ In October, Paige and Mitch were off to Hollywood for a business/pleasure trip with one of Gord's suppliers.

♥ The unusually long hot summer here at home was plagued with forest fires and over 300 homes were lost in the interior of the Province.



Caption



Retirement

Last Christmas letter, we announced Marilyn's 60th birthday in December which was followed this year by retirement. Marilyn put the time to good use by re-decorating the house. It was a period of some stress as one could have been painted or wallpapered if they were to sit in one spot for too long. Although the process was a little disruptive, Marilyn has fine tuned her painting skills

and will be ready and able to give direction to the tradesmen if we ever build a new house. After a month of heavy duty work at home, Marilyn returned to being a legal assistant three days a week, which she found to be much easier to manage. Gord, on the other hand, is still waiting for his gold watch and is unlikely to retire any time soon unless one of the kids comes up with the goods.



Port Hardy / Hornby

In February, Gord was off to Hornby Island to dive with the Sea Lions. Weighing in at over a ton, diving with these creatures was a little intimidating at first. They proved to be playful, however, and most of the dives were spent interacting with them. Diving in September took Gord to Port Hardy again this year. Spectacular diving there as Port Hardy continues to be his favorite place to dive. He is off diving somewhere at least once every month and can now



boast that he is the oldest of the "Old Farts Diving Club" members. Last month it was the Sunshine Coast and plans are already in the works for another run at the Sea Lions early in the new year. He says that it is no fun golfing when he is still healthy enough to dive. Besides, Ben and Mathew will be old enough to dive with the old fart in a few years.

Texas Green Horns

In May, we visited friends in La-Porte, Texas. We met them on a bare foot cruise the year before. We had purchased their B&B gift certificate at a charity auction held on board ship to raise money for an orphanage on Grenada. Before we could use the certificate, we got to know them a little better when they came to visit us here in Canada. They stayed for a couple of days so we were able to show them the sites and also took them to Whistler. After that, we looked forward to visiting them where they had a whole mess of things for us to do in Texas. See, in Texas, you're always "fixin'" to do something and they had a lot of fixin' for us to do. Ron and Jeanne McElvogue and their entire family showed us what great hospitality was all about in South Texas. We started with a tour of the historic homes of Galveston. We visited the Houston Space Center and Ron took us down town Houston where we discovered some of the history of the city and of Texas

as we drove around the older parts of town. When we weren't on a boat discovering the Port of Houston or traveling to historic monuments, we were relaxing in their spacious 19th century home which was fully restored and beautifully decorated with antiques and memorabilia. Situated right on the wa-



ter's edge on the Gulf of Mexico, we spent time walking the dogs along the beach or having a quiet meal on a porch overlooking the water. We packed so much into such a short visit that it is impossible to mention it all here. What is worth mentioning, however, is the great South Texas barbeque the McElvogues hosted on our last night at their house. There is nothing like a Texas barbeque. Brisket cooked for 48 hours in a smoking barbeque can be cut with a fork and Jean's home made ice cream was something truly special. It took us many hard and painful hours at the gym to get back to normal.

Driving from Houston to San Antonio on a 12 lane highway with no perceptible speed limit was an exciting experience. In San Antonio we stayed with an old friend we had met in Mexico on one of our first trips out of the country over 30 years ago. Anne



and Marilyn sat down over a glass of wine and took right up where they had left of all those years ago. We visited the famous River Walk, did the Mission trail which ends up at the Alamo and shopped 'till we dropped at the largest outlet shopping center in San Marco.

