

# Summer memories

by Laura Borawski  
Collegian Staff

Summer is almost here, bringing to mind all of the great times I've had in the past during those months of sun and fun (and work and hangovers), and leading me to wonder what will happen this particular summer.

The summer also reminds me of various vacations I've taken. The memories are priceless, and I'm sure you all have your own from different things you've done and places you've gone.

You know what I especially miss? I miss the vacations I used to take with my family every once in a while when the time came to just get away from it all.

I was fortunate enough to be able to travel to various places thus far in my life, and I'll always remember the great times, as well as the not so great times spent with my family.

One special vacation remains most prevalent in my mind. One summer I took a trip with my mom and two sisters to sunny California. We left my dad and brother at home, and headed west on an Amtrak train. And, oh,

what a long, long trip it was.

It all began in the middle of the summer before my freshman year of high school. My mom decided to take the girls to California to visit our aunt and uncle near the San Bernardino area. Mom thought that then was the best time to go, since my dad and brother were busy at work and we were pretty much free for the summer. (It sure was nice to know that summer time meant "vacation time" instead of more school and work...)

Anyway, mom believed it would be more fun and adventuresome to hop on a train instead of a plane, and journey to Aunt Caroline's and Uncle Ed's. We packed our bags, got up at 5:00 a.m., and were on the train by 6:15 at the old train station. I was hesitant to go; I had no idea what to expect, and it would take three days to get there. (AAAAGHI!)

The first part of the journey took about eight hours, if I remember correctly, and our primary destination was Chicago, Illinois. Actually, I think it took a bit longer, as some adolescent misplaced his pet trantula. It

was creeping around somewhere on the train, and we had to wait until it was found. Supposedly it was retrieved after a good half hour and we continued on.

When we reached the Windy City, we had to board another train. For the second part of the trip, our car was more spacious and our seats were equipped with



more comfort options. The seats were good, the food was O.K., the conductors were nice, and the scenery was absolutely fantastic.

We crossed rivers thinking we would skip the track and fall in, we passed through tunnels and mountains, crossed desert land,

and even rode under a rainbow.

One of the train cars was designed especially for sightseeing, so we had a great view through windows around and above our seats. We saw the border between Utah and Colorado as it was marked with white paint on rocks next to the train tracks. We also saw many beautiful rocks sculptured by nature's articulate hand. One was a spitting image of Donald Duck's profile! We passed Robert Redford's ranch but I can't recall which state it is in.

The sight that really caught me off guard though was this one (if you have never seen the movie "The Goonies," then this will mean nothing to you): One day on the train my sisters and I were walking through different train cars and I couldn't help but notice this chubby boy looking at me from one of the seats. I nearly fainted. I didn't tell my siblings right away; in fact, I waited until we sat down in our seats about three cars away.

I tapped my elder sister on the shoulder and blurted, "Guess who's on the train?! Guess who's on the train?!" She looked at me annoyed and said, "Who, Lor,

who?" I jumped from my seat and yelled, "Chunk!" She was obviously embarrassed because of my outburst and sunk in her seat. My other sister laughed and said, "Yes, Laura. You're weird." I refused to give up and dragged them to the car in which I saw him. They couldn't believe who they saw. I wasn't kidding. I wanted him to do the truffle-shuffle, but had to settle for a photo and an autograph instead....

The rest of the trip was just as eventful and crazy as any other family vacation. We went to Disneyland, ran into a few too many spiders (including a Black Widow that I named Bailey), and saw many beautiful sunsets. I was happy to be home though; home is where the heart is.

I hope each of you has an opportunity to experience some form of travel. Don't be afraid to try something new or to go somewhere you've never been before-- the world is full of great places! Even if it's your own back yard.

# Dave's trip to England

by Dave Barry  
Syndicated Columnist

Recently I went to England on a selfless humanitarian mission to sell books. It was a very relaxing trip until about 35 minutes after the plane landed at Heathrow Airport, which is when a British person cheerfully informed my wife and me that terrorists had been shooting mortar bombs onto the runway. Really. They have political organizations over there that, having apparently received public-relations advice from Charles Manson, believe that the way to garner public support is to bomb and mortar the public. "Hey!" the public is apparently supposed to respond. "Homicidal loons are trying to kill me! I am feeling supportive toward them!"

Shortly after we arrived, there were two more mortar attacks on Heathrow. None of the bombs detonated, but I was starting to wonder about the quality of the airport security. I envisioned squadrons of Scotland Yard detectives wearing Sherlock Holmes hats, crawling on hands and knees, scrutinizing every blade of grass through powerful magnifying glasses, not noticing trucks rumbling past them with large signs that said, "CAUTION! MORTAR BOMBS!"

Don't get me wrong. I live in

South Florida, and we have our problems, too. The very week I was in England, a German tourist, checking out of a South Florida hotel, complained about an odor in his room, which turned out to be emanating from -- I am not making this up -- a corpse under the bed. (Apparently he failed to put out the little doorknob sign that says "MAID: PLEASE REMOVE CORPSE.") But we South Floridians pride ourselves on our mortar-free runways, which enable us to guarantee that our tourists will be safe and secure. Unless of course they are foolish enough to actually get off the plane.

Anyway, the mortars were scary, but we had a MUCH scarier experience in England: Somehow -- probably because of another massive screw up at the CIA -- we got invited to dine at the U.S. ambassador's residence. We were the only people on the guest list whose titles were "Mr. and Mrs." Everybody else was something like "The Lord Earl of Gwebbing and Her Worshipfulhood the Viscountess Lady Huffington Prawn-Armature." So when we arrived at the ambassador's residence, which is approximately the size of Wales, but with more bathrooms, we were feeling socially intimidated.

Fortunately the ambassador and

his wife were extremely nice, which was reassuring, as was the fact that they had three dogs (one main, two backups) with no sense of etiquette whatsoever (I know! Let's sniff the viscountess!). Nevertheless, when it came time to eat dinner, I developed severe Table Manners Paranoia. I estimate that there



were about 27 forks at my place setting alone. Plus, it turns out that at these formal dinners they have rules about whom you talk to: Before the main course, you're supposed to talk exclusively to the lady on your left as though she is the most fascinating person on the planet, but when the main course arrives you're supposed to drop her like used chewing gum and talk to the lady on your right. It's amazing to watch the changeover. All

heads of the room swivel simultaneously, like synchronized motorized elves in a Christmas display.

Of course I didn't know this, so midway through the dinner I suddenly found myself having an animated conversation with the back of the head of the lady on my left, who, despite having been, only moments earlier, my closest personal friend, no longer seemed to realize that I existed. (To this day, she never calls, and she never writes.)

Speaking of exciting social adventures: Several nights later, we were at a party, and the host came up and said, "I'd like you to meet Salman Rushdie." Really. Apparently Salman has turned into a major party animal. So there I was, chatting with him, trying to appear cool, but in fact wondering if I would have been safer just staying at the airport. "So, Salman!" I wanted to say. "Perhaps we would be more comfortable if we were lying face-down on the floor away from the windows!"

But other than these few anxious moments, we had a wonderful time in England. They were having some highly entertaining government scandals. We Americans tend to have obscure boring complicated financial Whitewater-type scandals that nobody understands; whereas the British have scandals

involving straightforward, clear-cut issues of obvious significance, such as high government officials paying for sex with fish.

Speaking of food: The British are definitely getting better at cooking, and they have discovered the ice cube. Fortunately, however, some things have not changed: they still have the Royal Dysfunctional Family, and it is still a constant source of entertainment. (The day we got there, Prince Charles made the newspapers by asking, on a tour of a cosmetics plant, if anybody wanted to -- I am not making this up -- lick mango butter off his body.)

Also the British still speak in British accents, so that no matter what they say, it sounds really intelligent to Americans; and they still say things like "bloody" and "smashing." Plus they keep inventing wonderful new expressions. For example, I saw a newspaper front page that had a photograph of a man, with the headline: "MR. CHUCKLETROUSERS." I asked a number of British people about this expression; they had no idea what it meant but they all agreed that they would definitely try to use it a lot. So should we, I think. We should maintain close ties with our friends across the Atlantic. But we should also remain out of mortar range.