

The Goff Gazette

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¡Feliz Navidad y Próspero Año Nuevo!

That's Spanish for "Merry Christmas and Happy (Prosperous) New Year". No, we are not in Spain; but we did spend a good portion of the summer there. From our house to yours, we send the warmest of greetings and the wish that the year 2002 be the best ever for you and all those you hold dear. As we start the new year, let us all take a moment to reflect on the good in our lives and to share it through an act of kindness to a loved one and to a stranger. Be good to yourself and a friend to those in need. Be happy.

Family News

Barbara's parents are building a new house in Sarasota. They will take possession in mid-December. Many have marveled at this courageous 80-year-old pair, relocating at their ages! The move will undoubtedly be tough, but the advantages are many. They are in a lovely, new community located close to all their shopping needs. The community will maintain the exterior of the house and grounds. They will still have their privacy, but with much less work. Of course, one of my favorite advantages is their being close to our retirement home.

Matt is well into the second of his two-year MBA program at Chapel Hill. He's thoroughly enjoying the experience educationally and socially. We're hoping the economy improves by the time he's ready to re-enter the job market; but we also hope he can take some time off to travel, if just the right job doesn't appear.

Last summer he worked for IBM in an entirely different capacity. He worked with a team choosing which companies would receive IBM seed money. He chose this particular internship because it coincided with his entrepreneurial interests.

Sarah is finally off on her long-planned adventure. After traveling the rails through Europe, she wanted to see the USA. An ardent patriot, she is traveling in a vehicle, which is red, white, and blue from its interior to its exterior. Along the way, she is visiting schools in NYC and LA. Despite her double major and degrees in natural sciences and fine arts, she wants to try to pursue her dream of becoming a fashion designer. The NYC schools are primarily for clothing design, while the LA school is costume designing for movies.

Ed and I are still trying to figure out what

we want to do when we grow up. I think we're hoping to have fun right up to the very end. Our "three years in Europe plan" is over as we're a quarter into the fourth year, but as always, we like where we are so much we don't want to leave. Teaching is still fun, fulfilling, and challenging; but we can also see retirement as a time for pursuing some of our nonteaching creative ideas.

Barbara's Year

Since September 11, I have heard many people on television say that they have become more focused or that their focus has shifted to what really matters to them. When



*Clockwise - Barbara, Ed, Matt, and Sarah.
Photo by Matt at family reunion last summer.*

I determined that nothing in my life or attitude had shifted, I realized how fortunate I was. My family and friends have always come first, along with my meaningful work. How blessed is that? Our formula of teaching children in places interesting to us has enriched our lives for over thirty years. (I can't believe that on April 8, Ed and I will have been married for thirty years.)

The pace of our lives seems quicker
(Continued on p. 2, Barbara...)

Ed's 2001

Yikes! Another year. Travel and professional growth summarize my year. Spring break found us vacationing in Provence in southern France (see article) while in June and July we took a 4,600 mile trek through France to Spain and Portugal with side trips to Andorra and North Africa (see article). After returning to Germany for a little R & R, we flew to the States for the Goff Family reunion in Upstate New York and to visit Barbara's family in Florida (see article).

I continue to teach physics and computer classes at Bitburg American High School in Germany. I have enhanced the physics program by introducing computer based lab activities (MBL) that allow my students to do more experiments in less time, a great productivity booster. As the Distance Learning (DL) facilitator, it is my duty to monitor DL students who are taking courses over the Internet. This is a unique Department of Defense Dependents Schools (DoDDS) program which allows students in my classroom to take courses such as AP Physics, C++, Visual Basic, and AP U.S. History (to name a few) from DoDDS teachers all over the world. Our school, which has an enrollment of approximately 350 students, could never justify offering these courses when the enrollment would only be a few students each. It makes our course offerings much broader and allows students to take courses whenever they can fit them into their schedules.

DoDDS has sent me on a number of training sessions this year. Just a few weeks ago I spent a week in Wiesbaden learning about the Computer Service and Support (CSS) course which I will be teaching next semester. My students will actually build their own computer in this course. These are high-end, state-of-the-art Pentium IV computers, which the students may keep if they pay for the components, only about \$500.

As webmaster of our school's web page, <http://www.brus-dso.odedodea.edu/~biths/>, I was also involved in several web development training sessions at SHAPE,
(Continued on p. 2, Ed...)

Barbara...

every year. I don't know if it's just because we're older or because we live in such an interesting place. We roll from one season, holiday, trip, or fest to the next—loving every minute. When it's over, we don't mourn. We know the last will come again, and the next is beginning. One of my favorite holidays is St. Martin's Day. Next November, I will again look out our front windows to see the cloaked St. Martin ride up on his horse and present the village children, who are carrying the traditional lanterns, with treats, while the village band plays. This year's round of Christmas markets, from tiny Dudeldorf to Koln (Cologne), is almost over, but Fasching parades and costumes are almost here, and the time in between will be spent with smaller celebrations and travels.

Personally, I have spent this year trying to silence the inner critic. She's the voice that I hear criticizing my creative efforts, when they're barely begun. After years of enjoying other people's arts and crafts, I'm finally really getting into my "stamping". Remember if I send you one of my cards or bookmarks that they took me hours and hundreds of dollars to make. Ed still delights in telling me that people would be happier with a \$3 store-bought card with a \$50 check inside. Actually, he's extremely supportive and never complains when the credit card bills come. My next project will be my memoirs. The inner critic is behaving herself about my improving card skills, so I'm hoping she'll be quiet while I try to capture our thirty-year adventures on paper. The kids have promised not to have a big yard sale with our possessions garnered from around the globe. Next, I'll have to make them promise not to use my memoirs to light the logs in their fireplaces. (Darn! Was that the voice of the inner critic again?) Surely, that wasn't Matt or Sarah!

I hope your year is blessed with as many wonderful people and as much joy as a year can hold.

Ed...

Belgium. I also found myself as a trainer for the MBL software, which I previously mentioned in relation to physics experiments.

I continue to run at least three miles every day; and on August 12, I completed year twenty-one without having missed a day. Am I compulsive or what?

We are starting to think about retirement, but we are still enjoying living in

Europe, so it will probably be a few more years before we take that hugmougous (Is that a word?) step.

A Week in Provence

Little did I imagine as I kicked back in the sunshine of Kwaj and read Peter Mayle's *A Year in Provence* that, only a few years later, we would be spending a week in Provence at a charming gite, a French farmhouse, with old friends Bill and Sara Ryskamp. The title of this article is stolen from Bill who cleverly stole some of it from Peter.

We left the cold, gray winter of Germany and followed in the footsteps of the Romans and Vincent Van Gogh into the blue and yellow sunlit spring of Provence. Our French farmhouse—near Isle Sur La Sorque, a town beloved by antique seekers—provided us with a living and dining room, kitchen, two bedrooms, and a bath and a half all for the amazing, total cost of \$200 for the week.

Each day we headed out in a different direction to a morning market. Our afternoons were spent exploring the areas around that town. In our travels we gathered many experiences along with soap, olives, honey, lavender, spices, almonds, and wine. We bought brilliantly colored lengths of fabric, tablecloths, placements, and napkins and marveled over the light glowing across the countryside illuminating almond and olive groves. No wonder Vincent Van Gogh painted as he did.

In Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer, I saw the actual spot where Van Gogh painted the three boats, a painting very familiar to me since I received an oil copy of it as a signing bonus when I opened my first checking account back in 1964! (I think the frame only cost me a week's salary. I've been making deals like that ever since.) In Arles, where he lived for fifteen months, completed 300 paintings, and cut his ear, we learned a fascinating tidbit: the painting he gave Dr. Rey of his garden, the good doctor used it to patch a leaking ceiling of his house. Fortunately, the painting was not lost as he put the painted side facing into the house.

I know I should be waxing poetic about my favorite towns of Gordes, built on a hilltop, or Roussilon, a red-orange-yellow

town, or the goat-cheese and tomato sandwich warmed in a microwave (yes, even the French have succumbed to some modern shortcuts). I know I should tell you of the fabulous quality of the wine we purchased from a vineyard, which had come highly recommended by a German, exporting acquaintance. But instead of telling you how fabulous the towns were to explore and the wine to drink, I feel compelled to share the interesting image burned in my memory of the charming vintner filling the plastic container, he had just sold us, with wine using what looked like a gasoline nozzle. What a contrast of quality!

Unfortunately, we didn't have enough empty wine bottles at home. (The wine needs to be transferred quickly into bottles and corked.) Despite borrowing several, we were forced to put the rest in a stainless steel pot. We didn't drink it quite fast enough. I thought it might make a good wine vinegar and, unbeknownst to me, Ed thought it might be an excellent toilet bowl cleaner (Metterich water is filled with minerals). One day after school, I decided it must be time to bottle the vinegar. When I opened the pan, an acidic cloud shot into my face burning my eyes, nose, and mouth and curling my hair, which has been that way ever since. I stepped back, recovered, and poured the pungent liquid down the sink, hoping that the puce stream didn't dissolve the pipes.

Expecting praise for my sacrifice, instead I was greeted by Ed's, "Oh, no, where's my toilet bowl cleaner!"

"Your what?" I said and you can fill in the rest. Oh, and in case you're wondering, those commercial products just don't cut the calcium; but, thus far, we have been unable to sacrifice any more red wine to the experiment.

Oh, no, I've done it again. Instead of doing justice to one of the nearly perfect places on the planet, I've digressed; but then Provence is a place to be experienced not described. Come for yourselves to discover old Roman bridges, miraculously engineered to stand for 2,000 years; opulent Papal seats at Avignon, and hill towns with diverse personalities and located so close that they can be enjoyed in a week of minimal driving. Provence is a paradise to all who visit, despite those Mistral rumors that just happen to be true.

Summer 2001 – Part I

School got out on June 15th and a few days later we headed south on our long anticipated adventure to Spain and Portugal. And an adventure it was. In twenty-nine days we drove 4,600 miles through seven countries (Germany, France, Andorra, Spain, Gibraltar, Portugal, and Luxembourg). We also took a side trip to Tangier, Morocco, in North Africa. There is no way we could describe here this incredible journey. The sidebar on this page will give you some idea about our route and time schedule.

The highlights that stand out include the beautiful Alsace area of eastern France, the huge fortress at Carcassonne, the towering Pyrenees mountains of Andorra, the white sand beaches and blue Mediterranean waters of Spain's east coast, and Barcelona. Ah yes, Barcelona, there we especially enjoyed sitting on Las Ramblas sipping a cool drink while an unforgettable mélange of humanity paraded by. Gaudi's structures, some still under construction, were uniquely beautiful and intriguing. Madrid is a beautiful large city; and further south, we discovered the windmills above Consuegra (of Don Quixote fame) and the endless rolling hills covered as far as the eye could see with olive trees.

The cathedral at Toledo was especially impressive, and it gave me a chance to say (You guessed it.), "Holy Toledo". The Alhambra at Granada was fantastic, and we happened to stumble upon a wonderful gourmet restaurant, where we and were seated on a balcony overlooking the Alhambra as the sun set and the fortress was illuminated with lights.

We didn't especially like the built-up Costa del Sol area, nor were we impressed with Gibraltar, which we climbed. Although, the monkeys were cute and looking across the strait to Africa was cool.

Our excursion to Africa came the next day. It was both exciting and scary. We did manage to bargain for an authentic Berber carpet, which I ended up carrying through numerous bus breakdowns and transfers.

Arcos is one of the white towns of southern Spain. It is an ancient fortress city with streets so narrow that we had to fold back the mirrors on the car and then just barely squeezed through. Barbara told me later that she didn't think we were going to make it back out of the city. Sevilla is another large beautiful Spanish city where we didn't linger too long because we were tired

and anxious to get to the Algarve in southern Portugal. However, we did take time to take in flamingo dancing and visit the very unique cathedral that was once a mosque.

Would a vacation be a vacation if Barbara didn't buy some dishes? I have to admit that I did encourage her to get a few more than she might have otherwise, but who could resist those hand-painted Portuguese plates? And, they weren't too expensive either.

On to Lisboa (Lisbon), a pleasant surprise. Definitely a renaissance city in the process of being reborn. The side trips from there to Belém and Sintra were definitely worth the effort. On the way to Coimbra, we took an interesting side trip to Fatima where we observed the faithful ending their pilgrimages sometimes walking long distances on their knees.

Back in Spain, we were pleasantly surprised by Salamanca, now one of our favorite Spanish cities. The Roman aqueduct of Segovia was very impressive. It is hard to believe a structure that old could still be in such remarkable condition.

Our last Spanish stop was Bilbao, site of the famous and incredibly beautiful Guggenheim Museum. The building itself is worth the visit. Bilbao is another renaissance city. We departed Spain late in the day, spent the night in France and were back home in Metterich the next day.

Summer 2001 – Part II

After returning from Spain and Portugal, we spent the next two weeks recovering and preparing for our next sojourn. On August 3rd, we flew from Brussels to Rochester, NY, where my sister Judy and her husband, Jim, met us. After spending the night at their house, we drove down to Seneca Lake to attend the Goff Family reunion.

I cannot even start to mention everyone who was there. Besides all my brothers (3) and sisters (5), there were numerous aunts, uncles, nephews, nieces, cousins, and other people from several generations. Our kids, Matt and Sarah were there too. It was great to get reacquainted again and to meet those who have joined the family since our last reunion many years ago.

Three days was not long enough to visit with all those people (over 100) and catch up on all those years that we didn't see each other. The organizers did a fantastic job, and I hope they know how much we

Spain-Portugal Trip

Metterich, Germany [home]
 Hunawirh, France [Alsace] (1)
 Besançon, France (1)
 Carcassonne, France (1)
 Andorra
 Gerona, Spain (1)
 Sant Feliu De Guixocs, Spain (1)
 Barcelona, Spain (2)
 Madrid, Spain (2)
 Toledo, Spain (2)
 Granada, Spain (1)
 Piedra Paloma, Spain (1)
 Gibraltar
 Tarifa, Spain (2)
 Tangier, Morocco [N. Africa]
 Arcos, Spain (1)
 Sevilla, Spain (2)
 Salema, Portugal [Algarve] (2)
 Lisbon, Portugal (3)
 Sintra, Portugal
 Fatima, Portugal
 Coimbra, Portugal (1)
 Nazare
 Salamanca, Spain (1)
 Segovia, Spain (1)
 Bilbao, Spain (1)
 Saintes, France (1)
 Metterich, Germany [home]
 * Numbers in parentheses indicate number of nights spent there.

appreciate their efforts.

Now I'm going to go out on a limb a little because there were several people with whom I briefly chatted, but wished I could have spent a lot more time with. These include Joe Gott, John Brennan, Evelyn Adams, and all my brothers and sisters. There were others, too, but these few stick in my mind now.

Following the reunion, we flew to Florida to visit Barbara's parents, Harold and Wilma Gardner, and her aunt and uncle, Marla and David Gardner. As luck would have it, Barbara's brother, Gary, and his wife, Rene were able to visit while we were there so we had a reunion there, too.

We were also able to visit our property on Anna Maria Island and were visited there by Dorothy and Richard Turk, parents of Brian, Sarah's friend. The "kids" were there, too; but Matt had to work so we were not able to see him again before we flew back to Brussels on the 14th.

Visitors

We were happy to entertain a number of visitors in our German home this year. These included former Kwajalein students Richey Hubshman and Ray Wiehe. Ray is in the Air Force and is stationed at Spangdahlem AFB, where Barbara teaches but he works at Bitburg, where I teach. We enjoyed seeing the boys in their new adult roles and reminiscing about the “good ‘ol days” on Kwaj.

Dan Beavers, son of my sister Carol and her husband Bruce, also spent several days with us. Dan was vacationing on the continent during a break in his studies in England. Talk about a great guest, my sister is affectionately known as “Mrs. Clean” and that trait is apparently inherited since Dan stealthily did the dishes and cleaned up the kitchen while we were working. It was great to see him again and learn about his future plans.

Frank Robey, a good friend from Kwajalein (now living in Massachusetts), graced us with his presence briefly while on a business trip to Germany. Although his visit was short, it was fantastic to see him and to be brought up to date about his family and some of our other Kwaj friends.

Sara Chiu and her husband, Patrick Franz, spent several days with us before departing on a driving tour of Scandinavia. You may recall that former Kwaj student, Sara, was a Presidential Scholar and had named Barbara as her “Distinguished Teacher” which led to our White House visit a number of years ago. Sara has just started her residency after earning her M.D. degree and finishing her internship. We really enjoyed showing them some of our local sights and visiting with them.

Last, but not least, Robert and Patricia Knapp and their son Guy visited us. It was super to see them again and to meet Guy who is four years old. Patricia had just finished her homeopathic medical degree, and they were touring parts of Europe before moving to Hawaii where she plans to practice.

Hope we didn’t leave anyone out!!! Next year maybe you, too, will be on our list of visitors. Better hurry, we won’t be here

forever.

And... we have just learned that Anne-Marie Goff will be visiting us on December 15th. We’ll fill you on that event next year.

Christmas 2000

The HG’s, DK’s, Gary’s, and the Goffs celebrated Dad and Mom’s sixtieth anniversary a little early. Getting everyone together, including the “kids”, seemed easier at Christmas than in the summer. We discovered another advantage—Florida in the winter is a treat, especially since we live in gray, cold Germany. All of a sudden, retirement looked like a more immediate goal.

Our reunion couldn’t have been more perfect. Getting to know the children as adults was great fun. Spending our first Christmas in the USA since 1969 was incredibly special.

Christmas 2001 Plans

On December 19th we will fly from Brussels, Belgium, to Tampa, Florida. Barbara’s parents are moving from Naples to Sarasota on the 14th so we plan to help them get settled in their new home. We’ll be spending Christmas in Spring Hill, Florida, with Barbara’s aunt and uncle, Marla and David Gardner. Matt and Sarah and Barbara’s parents will be there too.

If you plan to be in the area or just want to say “hello”, give us a call, (941) 778-2113. We’ll be departing from Tampa on January 5th. Classes resume on the 6th!!!!!!!

New Teacher at BHS

Dr. Becky Briley joined the Bitburg High School staff in November after a vacancy developed due to the sudden retirement of one of our English teachers. Becky’s being hired was no accident. We knew her in Kwajalein when she was teaching there for the University of Maryland. When the vacancy developed, I emailed her and the rest is history. She did have one big advantage though, she already had an application on file with DoDEA in Arlington, VA. We are all very pleased that everything worked out for Becky and for BHS.

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