

# The Goff Gazette

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## Barbara's Year

Following our tradition of sending our greeting in the language of a country we visited during the year, we send this "Merry Christmas" greeting in Arabic since we visited Egypt during our spring break. From our home to yours, we send the warmest greetings and wishes that 2005 be the best year ever for you and all those you love and hold dear. Once again, as we embark on a 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 be a friend to those in need. Be happy.

## Ed's Year

Teaching, traveling, and training filled my year. I'm teaching two new courses this school year, Cisco Networking and Information Technology Essentials. Both required extensive training. I spent three intensive weeks at West Virginia University last summer taking the "CCNA I and II" courses to prepare me to teach the Cisco class. I'm scheduled to go back next summer to take the "CCNA III and IV" classes. I also spent a week in Wiesbaden, Germany, in the fall, training for the IT Essentials course. These two classes along with two sections of physics, a web design class, and my extra-duty responsibilities as Bitburg High School's web master, keep me quite busy.

Travels this year included our annual visit to Florida during the winter break. We'll be back there this Christmas too. During our spring break, we journeyed down to Egypt for an exciting week in Cairo and up the Nile. During the river cruise, we stopped by a bridge spanning the Nile, so I took that opportunity to "run across the Nile" and back. That was fun. That was the first of two interesting bridges I ran across this year.

After school got out in June, we hopped over to Ireland for a fantastic week of travel before we headed to the States. Our first stop was San Francisco to visit Matt and his girlfriend, Valerie. While there, Matt suggested that I might want to run across the Golden Gate Bridge, so I did. It was a lot longer run than I expected, about 14 miles round trip from Matt's; but I'm glad I did it. It was quite a challenge at the end though, to run back up Russian Hill to Matt's apartment.  
*(Continued on p.2, Ed...)*



*Guess who? Guess where?*

## Matt and Sarah

Ed sent out messages to Matt and Sarah asking them to write an article about their years. Not only did they not acknowledge the email, we haven't heard from them since so.....maybe they're trying to tell us something.

Matt is still living on the top of Russian Hill in San Francisco and working for Intel in Santa Clara. The commute is a killer; but after visiting, we understand why he's willing to do it. As you walk in his front door, you see a panorama of the city and bay from the left wrapping around half of the apartment. Watching the boats and the weather changes, are as relaxing as when we used to watch our aquariums on Kwaj. Out his door within walking distance, is every kind of restaurant and shop imaginable. He has a won-  
*(Continued on p. 2, Matt & Sarah...)*

Seinfeld's seasons 1-3 is coming out on DVD today. I saw him interviewed on the *Today* show yesterday. When I sat down this morning to type Barbara's year, I really had to struggle. I went downstairs and went through my daily record book, which is usually fertile ground for the year's activities.

After many false starts on travel, hobbies, and personal goals, I heard in my mind Seinfeld's addition to our vocabulary, yatayatayata, however that's spelled. How many years can I write about my goals of losing weight and writing the great American novel? I have read every best-selling self-help book on the market. They were time well spent, if my goal was to increase my reading speed.

Yesterday, my Aunt Marla, told me I was the master of justifying bad behavior. Last week one of my good friends said that she always feels better after talking to me, because I can come up with more rationalizations for her than  
*(Continued on p.3, Barbara...)*

## Travel Log

In addition to day trips to local destinations here in Germany and nearby countries Belgium, France, Luxembourg and The Netherlands, we visited three distant places: Egypt, Ireland, and the United States.

### Egypt

We traveled to Egypt during our spring break. Highlights of that trip include the Egyptian Museum, Alabaster Mosque, and the famous Khan El Khalili bazaar in Cairo. The pyramids and the gigantic Sphinx on the plateau of Giza did not disappoint us. We were surprised, however, at how close these antiquities were to metropolitan Cairo. Photos that we have all seen make it look like they are out in the middle of a vast desert, they aren't. Hotels, shops, and markets come very close, probably not more than a few hundred yards.

Flying south, we landed in Luxor where we boarded a riverboat for our cruise up the Nile to Aswan. Along the way, we vis-  
*(Continued on p. 3, Travel...)*

## Ed...

ment. While in California, we also visited friends in Nevada City, Redwood City, and Modesto before moving on to Indianapolis, Indiana. We visited relatives there as we did in Elmira, N.Y. before flying down to Florida. For more detailed information about our visits, please see our "Travel Log" article.

I was in Florida only five days before heading up to West Virginia for the Cisco training. After that, it was back to Florida for ten "restful" days. Unfortunately, Hurricane Charlie caused us to be evacuated from our island house, but we were fortunate to escape without damage. In fact, none of the storms that hit Florida this year did any damage to our property. We returned to Germany, and I ended the summer spending three days at Mainz Kastel, Germany, for Distance Learning Facilitator training.

On August 12<sup>th</sup> I finished my twenty-fourth year of running every day, and I'm hopeful I'll be able to complete twenty-five years next August.

We look forward to retiring in the near future, but we have been advised to "hang in there" until our retirement issues have been resolved with the government. We were put in the wrong retirement program when we returned to DoDDS in 1998. In the meantime, I'm going to pursue my dream of getting one of my ideas patented and becoming a multimillionaire.

## Matt & Sarah...

derful network of friends and is enjoying this stage of his life immensely.

After Sarah finished at Parson's School of Design in NYC, she worked at L.A.M.B., Gwen Stefani's company. (We didn't know who Gwen Stefani was initially; but since then, we see her often. She sang with No Doubt, but she has just come out with her first single CD.) After agonizing, Sarah accepted a better paying job, with opportunities to learn more aspects of the fashion business, but with less appealing clothes. Sarah really agonized over leaving L.A.M.B. (clothes she liked) for Essendi (not really her thing), but she thought she would have more opportunities to learn the business while making a living (barely) wage with a few fringe benefits. I had asked her, when she decided to go back to school for fashion design, how a quiet girl was going to succeed

in NYC in the aggressive climate of the clothing industry. She said, "I am going to wear my stuff", which she did. That was how the president of her company "discovered" her. When she visited us in Florida this summer, she told us that the day after she got back to NYC was going to be decision day. Either her new line would be axed or funded. It was funded. Then she worried about her trip to the factory in Brazil. She had agonized over what the conditions would be like there. She was afraid that it would be a sweatshop, but she wouldn't have the power to do anything about it unless she became successful. Her good news was that the owners were fantastic, the employees happy and working in ideal conditions. They have natural light, free lunches, free transportation, and good pay. The water from the dye and processing is



*Matt and Sarah, Christmas, 2003*

treated/recycled so that it does not harm the environment. She just couldn't have asked for more. She and Matt have strong opinions about how they want to run their business if they get the chance. Neither is "into" money or too many toys. Sometimes, I laugh that they're really throwbacks to the 60's. (Sarah went to the last Pfish concert in Vermont recently....shades of Woodstock.) I don't think Sarah will mind my taking an excerpt from one of her emails. Here it is: "Yeah, now we're going crazy with trying to find a showroom, trying to rush the factory with the sales samples, figuring out who will model for free, who will do our website for free, who will do make-up for free, who will take pictures for free, making postcards to send to buyers to invite them to the show, getting sponsors for a launch party, finalizing the prices, making sales order forms, making sales line sheets, trying to get celeb-

rities to wear the clothes (I'm going for Gwen), trying to figure out how to get our photos to magazines....it's crazy."

Unfortunately, her Cinderella story may not have a happy ending. Complicated problems beyond her control, having to do with the "business end" may torpedo her Spring 2005 opening of the line. Despite the models for the magazine photo shoots wanting to know where they could buy the clothes and the enthusiasm of those who have seen the samples, they may not make it to the stores, which also means that the articles will not be published. The magazines need store credits to run.

The good news is that Sarah has learned an enormous amount about every aspect of the business. She has met people at *Vogue*, *Teen Vogue*, *Vanity Fair*, *Nylon*, *American Cheerleader*, and other publications. Her experiences at the factory were wonderful. The factory owners contacted her that buyers from France and Spain wanted to buy her things, which they had seen when they visited the factory. Despite all the buzz, things are presently collapsing. Essendi may be in the process of being sold.

At the very least, she has actively, and remarkably successfully, pursued her dream. Her dad and I have faith that if she continues to pursue this particular dream it will eventually come true.

This article was entirely lopsided with Sarah; but that's because I know and understand more about Sarah's life. When Matt and his dad talk on the phone, I realize how little I understand about Matt's high-tech job. I do know that he figured out how to save Intel millions and got some award. I thought he should have gotten a cut of the action...☺....but what do mom's know?

## Visitors

We were graced this year in September by a two week visit from Carol and Bruce Beavers, Ed's sister and her husband. We enjoyed their visit immensely even though we had to work. On weekends we took day trips to some of our favorite places; and during the week, they took off to explore on their own. They even journeyed further afield for a few days spending time in France and Switzerland. Carol really "got into" the local flea markets and couldn't believe how old everything here is. All of us hit the European chocolates and baked goods hard, too hard. They were fantastic guests, and we look forward to a return visit.

## Barbara...

she could ever do for herself. I felt that was a well-earned compliment. I can help my friends spend money faster, eat more, and put off nasty chores better than anyone I know, if I do say so myself.

Where was my self respect...my guilt? Somehow they had dissipated with the years. Suddenly, epiphany, I discovered that I liked yata.... Not only did I not win any awards this year, I feel released from wanting to win them. Instead of writing elaborate lesson plans, I spent my time focused on the children and doing whatever they needed. I figured I'd take the heat later if necessary. If someone wanted "pretty", I'd redo them. If I don't have all my objectives well in mind after thirty-nine year's of teaching, I should get chastised, but do I really have to write them down in minute detail?

Despite all my efforts at diet and exercise, I'm not any thinner. I even joined a fitness center and worked out for 1 1/2 hours a day, while Ed was in W.Va. Then I got back to Germany and celebrated a little too much. Carol, Bruce, and I really explored those German bakeries. (See what I mean about rationalization and blaming other people?)

When we get together with old friends after long absences, it takes half an hour to get through everyone's ailments and which medications we're taking. I can vaguely remember when we used to talk about our best 10K times, but I realized that seeing friends was what really mattered and not what we talked about.

So the bottom line is I'm having a wonderful life. Come on over if you want to see Europe. We won't be here much longer. But, if you don't make it, that's OK too. Just send me emails and promise to visit us in Florida in the very near future...as soon as the government straightens out our retirement mess. The contract has been "re-let" to a new one since the last one, screwed it up worse than it already was. "They" say not to quit until "they" get it right. I'm just hoping that doesn't translate to me sitting here in ten years, musing on the golden, retirement years...somewhere in my future.

Actually, I do have an old hobby, which has recently become an addiction. Even though I have little creative energy after school for writing, I have enough to stamp. My favorite new activity is borrowing books on tapes and disks from the library and lis-

tening to them while I stamp. I am actually painting. I'll spend an hour or two on a card. I usually start with a stamp, but then paint in hundreds of leaves on trees or shade with pencils, watercolor, and acrylics. I'm toying with the idea of just painting without the stamping or doing scrapbooking.

Oh, yeah, don't worry. I haven't given up on my goals to be healthier. The voice of my conscience is Ed, who amazingly enough hasn't given up on me after all these years. I told him he could trade me in on two thirty-year-olds, but it seems he wants to keep the same old girl....just fitter to last longer. Years ago when I met Ed's family, they told me that they had all looked forward to meeting me because they thought Ed would never marry. When I asked why, they said that he was such a perfectionist and that they figured he would never find the perfect woman. I laughed and reminded them how much Ed loved a challenge, and I figured that he was stuck with me for life because I had so many things he could improve. Guess I was right!

So yatayatayata! Like Seinfeld--albeit less successfully--I have managed to write about nothing.

## Travel...

ited incredible sites including The Valley of the Kings, Karnak Temple, Kom Ombo, Edfu (where Ed ran across the Nile), and finally Aswan and the High Dam. The dam, by the way, is not as high as we expected. It is big and it is long but....not that high but higher than the old one which apparently wasn't high enough to control the river.

Egypt is an impressive place, and we had a fantastic Muslim guide who took us to a mosque and explained Islam to us. We were heavily guarded wherever we went with police escorts and an armed (submachine gun) guard on our bus. The food was disappointing, and we both got the "pharaohs' revenge", which slowed us down a bit. The people, however, were kind but obviously subdued by events in Iraq. Nonetheless, it was an incredible experience.

### Ireland

After school got out in June, we hopped over to Dublin, Ireland. Knowing that a week wasn't long enough to see the whole country, we decided to explore only the south-eastern part. We spent nights in bed and breakfasts at Graystones, Ashford, Wexford, Tramore, Kilkenny, and Port Laoise and had wonderful experiences. We



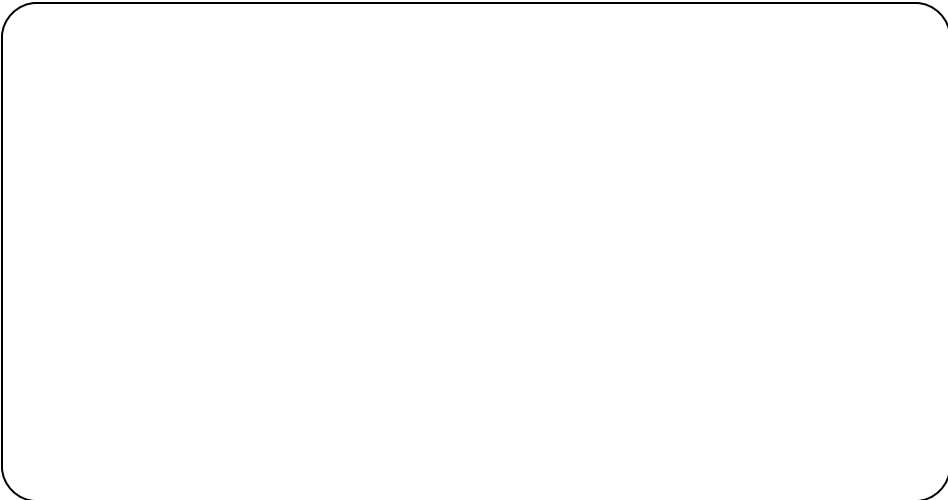
*Celtic cross in Ireland marking grave of relative, Denis J. Nolan?*

were prepared for bad weather, but it could not have been better. Among our favorite places were the incredible gardens of Powerscourt and Mount Usher. We followed the rugged but beautiful coast south to Ardmore and took an interior route back spending our last day touring the ancient ruins at Newgrange and Knowth which are a must if you get to Ireland. The burial tombs there predate (3200 BC) the Pyramids by five hundred years! The people, the sites, the pubs, and the Guinness were all outstanding. We love Ireland and intend to go back.

### USA

After a few days back in Germany, we took off for San Francisco. There we visited Matt who commutes to his job with Intel in Silicon Valley. He and his girlfriend, Valerie, advised us and took us to some of their favorite haunts. We took a side trip to Nevada City, to visit our good friends of more than thirty years, Larry and Carolyn Homan and to see Hika Todd, former Btibur resident. We took another short trip with Matt to visit the Rudholms in Modesto. We have known them since our days in the Philippines back in the 70s. Shortly before our visit they learned that their daughter, Claire, was terminally ill with cancer. In spite of that, we had a wondrous visit but sadly, Claire passed away shortly afterwards. We also drove down to Redwood City to visit Jim and Joan Kunde. Joan was suffering from a long term illness and also sadly passed away a few weeks later.

Indianapolis was next on our itinerary.  
(Continued on p. 4, Log...)



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### Log...

There, we visited Barbara's brother Gary and his family, Rene, Abby and Nick, but we missed Amanda who is living in L. A. From there we flew on to Elmira, N.Y. where we visited Ed's relatives: Connie and Jim Young, who hosted us, and brothers John, and Dave, and sisters Nancy, Judy, Dotty, Carol and Connie and their families. We crammed too much into three days to mention here, but we had a wonderful time. It is always fun when the Goff siblings get together.

Florida was our next stop. There we visited Barbara's parents, Harold and Wilma Gardner and dear friends, Bill and Sara Ryskamp before Ed headed up to West Virginia for his Cisco training. Upon his return we did more socializing including visits with more DoDDS friends and a two-day stay at the Gardner's, while we rode out Hurricane

Charlie. Then, it was back to Germany for the start of another school year.

#### Keukenhof Gardens

One of our best day trips of the year was a visit, last spring, to Keukenhof, Holland, to visit the incredible flower gardens there. Our timing could not have been better as we made our visit at the peak of the season and were rewarded with views of thousands of varieties of blossoming flowers. Words cannot express the splendor of that day. We can only highly recommend that, if you are in that part of the world during the spring, you make a visit to Keukenhof a priority.

### Gazette On Line

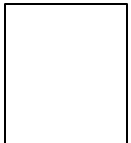
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ing on line is that the photos are all in color. You may also see archived issues by changing the number in Gazette04 to reflect the year.



*Tulips at Keukenhof Gardens*

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