

THIS KOREAN LIFE

Fall: September, 2009

America Trip Edition

Welcome to America!~



OREGON

LOS ANGELES



Meet Aaron's
Family pg. 8-9

Letters pg. 10



- ❶ Grandma's backyard
- ❷ Bulgogi dinner for my family
- ❸ TaeKwonDo demonstration
- ❹ Pastor's Farm



THIS SUMMER'S TRIP TO AMERICA with Sarah was quite a unique experience. America is a very diverse country: geographically, politically, racially, and socially. Just looking through a few of the pictures in this magazine is enough to give a small taste of just how diverse the US is.

We traveled to the West Coast of the US: Oregon and California. But, our Amtrak train trip from Portland, Oregon to Los Angeles, California revealed dozens of different landscapes. From vast grain fields, to huge bodies of water, lakes, rivers, and the ocean, to mountains, evergreen forests, deserts, and even palm trees. In a matter of less than 36 hours, we were able to witness and experience some of the best, most scenic views that part of the country has to offer. And yet, even that was only a taste. What of the Grand Canyon, New York City, and Niagara Falls?

Even still, it was nice to get back to Korea. Here, we are both comfortable. The food is excellent, healthy, and has lots of vegetables. Korean culture, customs, and traditions are as colorful and unique as the landscape America offers. Public transportation is ubiquitous and cheap and health care is just as good and far more affordable than that in the US.

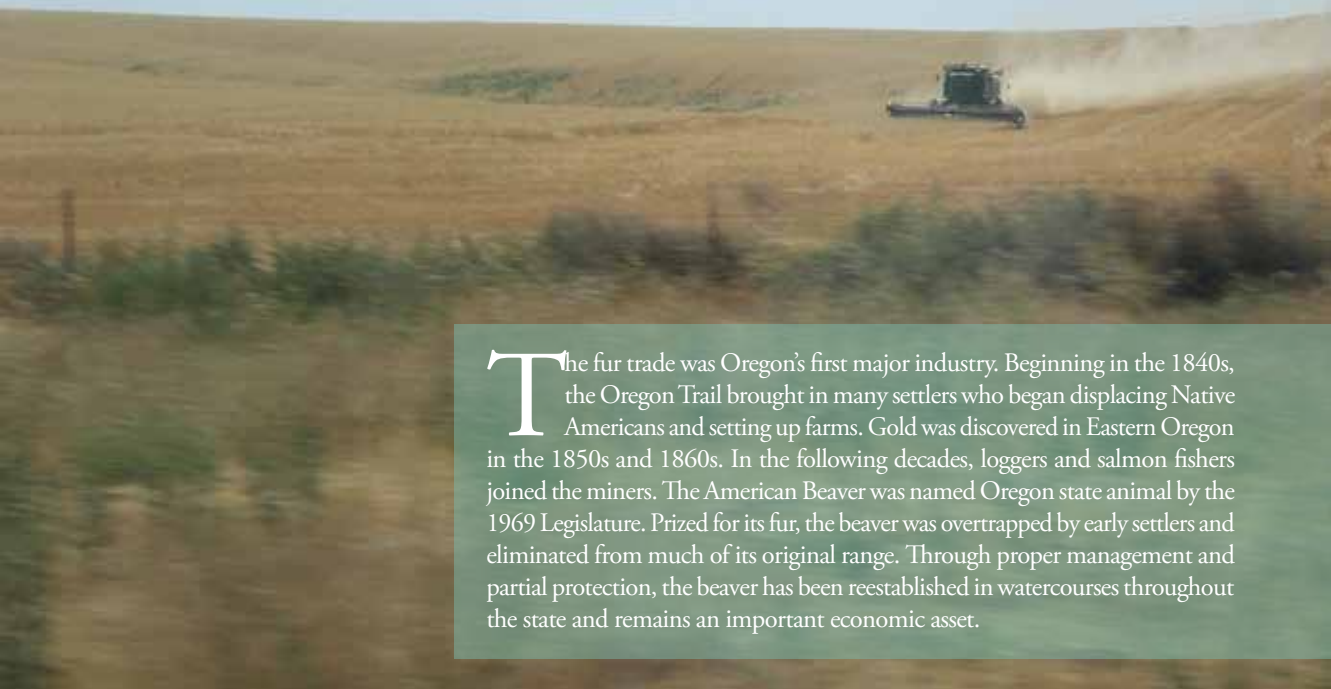
People in the US love relaxation and it shows. They spend lots of money on their toys: boats, cars, campers, guns, and electronics. People in Korea love relaxation no less than those in America, but there is a different atmosphere surrounding relaxation in Korea. Here, people work hard, play hard, and relax hard. In everything they do, there is focus and purpose. It is stimulating.

In Korea, I am challenged. My mind and body are stimulated and I am a better man. *I must* work hard to keep up with the pace of the people. After all, how can I live in Korea without being part of it?

Even still, America is a part of me. So, please enjoy this magazine memoir of our journey to America. ^^

The Beaver State

~ Oregon: Pendleton, La Grande



The fur trade was Oregon's first major industry. Beginning in the 1840s, the Oregon Trail brought in many settlers who began displacing Native Americans and setting up farms. Gold was discovered in Eastern Oregon in the 1850s and 1860s. In the following decades, loggers and salmon fishers joined the miners. The American Beaver was named Oregon state animal by the 1969 Legislature. Prized for its fur, the beaver was overtrapped by early settlers and eliminated from much of its original range. Through proper management and partial protection, the beaver has been reestablished in watercourses throughout the state and remains an important economic asset.

Oregon enjoys a diverse landscape including a scenic and windswept Pacific coastline, the volcanoes of a rugged and glaciated Cascade Mountain Range, dense evergreen forests, and high desert across much of the eastern portion of the state. Mount Hood is the highest point in the state at 3,429m.

The soil in the Willamette Valley is the source of a wealth of agricultural products, including potatoes, peppermint, hops, apples and other fruits. Oregon is also one of the four major world hazelnut growing regions, and produces 95% of the domestic hazelnuts in the United States. Wine

production became a significant industry beginning in the 1970s. In 2005, Oregon ranked third among US states with 303 wineries. Oregon is also home to many breweries and Portland has the largest number of breweries of any city in the world. Due to regional similarities in climate and soil, the grapes planted in Oregon are often the same varieties found in the French regions of Alsace and Burgundy. In the northeastern region of the state, particularly around Pendleton, both irrigated and dry land wheat is grown. Oregon farmers and ranchers also produce cattle, sheep, dairy products, eggs and poultry. Oregon also has one of

the largest salmon-fishing industries in the world.

In Oregon, we spent a lot of time at both of my grandparents' homes as much of my extended family also came. We visited the Oregon Trail museum, an American Indian museum, and took two tours: one underground, and one at a woolen mill. We went shopping with my grandma, and went on the boat with my grandpa. Sarah even got to drive!

Overall, my family received Sarah with much warmth and affection and were quite pleased to have her join us. She was a pleasure to have along in all that we did. ●

OREGON



- ① Playing the “Mexican Train” domino game at Grandma Eula’s house (Dad’s mom).
- ② Grandma Donna & Grandpa Cur’s backyard & house.
- ③ Eating dinner with the whole family in the backyard.
- ④ Indian teepees at one of the best Indian history museums in the US called
- ⑤ In a covered wagon at the Oregon Trail museum. Pioneers crossed the US in these little wagons to come to Oregon.



6

6 Grandpa Curt getting his boat ready to go out on the Columbia River.



7

7 Sarah got to drive the boat!

8 A tour of Pendleton's underground. We saw decades of history, from bars, to ice cream shops, to rooms for Chinese railroad workers.



8

9 The Pendleton Woolen Mills tour where we saw how they make woolen clothes, blankets, fabrics, threads, and other merchandise.

10 Sarah is feeling the blankets and looking for a good one to pick out. My family bought her and her family blankets from here.

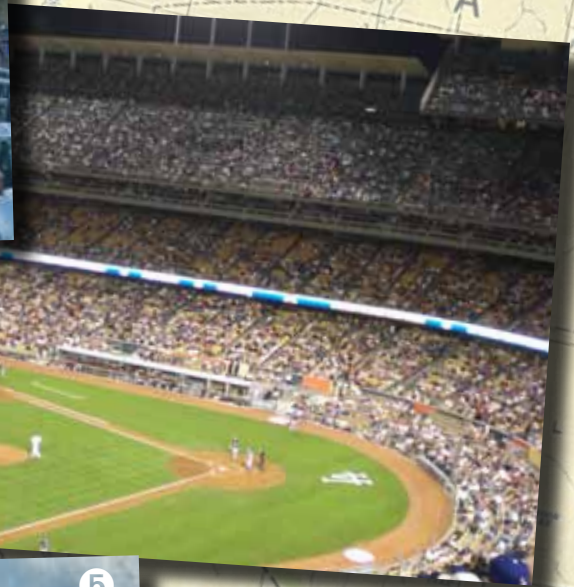


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LOS ANGELES





The City of Angels

Los Angeles is a very diverse city with nearly half of its population being born outside the United States. It has the third largest Mexican population in the world behind Mexico City and Guadalajara, and is home to many people from more than 140 countries speaking 224 different identified languages including: Salvadorans, Guatemalans, Iranians, Armenians, Thais, Chinese, Filipinos, Japanese, Indians, Koreans, Cambodians, Vietnamese, Israelis, and Samoans. Spread throughout the city are many ethnic enclaves such as Koreatown, Chinatown, Filipinotown, Little Tokyo, Little Armenia, Thai Town, Little Persia, and Little India. For the most part it's also a fairly gay-friendly city, especially the Westside, Hollywood, and West Hollywood where even the police cars bear rainbows. ●

<< Opposite Page

- 1 Getting on the Amtrak train.
- 2 At Dodger Stadium, Aug 1.
- 3 The crowd at Dodger Stadium.
- 4 Going to the beach at last!
- 5 This beach is right next to the airport, so airplanes fly overhead.
- 6 Calling travel agents and friends, trying to work out our return trip.

LA: The City of Angels. A perfect getaway, and "Entertainment Capital of the World." It is home to Hollywood and leads the world in the creation of motion pictures, television production and recorded music. Yet for all its glitz and glam, its "perfection" leaves something to be desired.

What a wonderful idea, a perfect life, or even a perfect vacation. But an idea is all it really is. Anyone living on this earth for any length of time can definitely agree that there is no such thing as a perfect life. Life is messy, it's a struggle, and it's often unpredictable. However, the longer we live, the more comfortable we get in our lives and routines, and the more "perfect" our lives often seem to become. And that's often when life has a tendency to throw us a bit of a curve ball we weren't expecting. At least, that's my experience.

Our curveball came in the form of a botched return plane ticket to Korea. We were forced to purchase *two* new plane tickets and return a day late. But through it all, we gained something far more precious than we lost. Our pastor wrote to me:

"You've heard me say before that a life of faith in Christ is about enduring and overcoming difficulty. The process is one which glorifies God in a very practical way. You've done well my friends. You didn't give up or lose control, you didn't allow the situation to dominate you, but you took control of the situation. Peter said the testing of our faith would produce gold. What a priceless treasure you two have. Money can be replaced, but what you've gained through the experience will be an eternal treasure that no one can snatch away." ●

Snowbergers, Alexanders, Vorhees



FA M I L Y



BRUCE AND ROBIN SNOWBERGER

My dad Bruce (62) and mom Robin (52) have been married now for more than 30 years. They moved to Rock Springs, Wyoming in the Rocky Mountains shortly after they were married, and when my mom saw how barren and desert-like it was, she started to cry. Her new home was also about 13 hours away from her mom and dad by car. I think she never expected to come to love Rock Springs so much and raise her family there. She originally worked at the Rock Springs hospital, and after a 15 year break to raise three kids, she's returned to the job she loves there. My dad works as a mechanic at a coal-burning power plant 30 minutes out of town. ●



EULA SNOWBERGER

My grandma Eula (83) was married to her husband, my grandpa Owen for 49 years and 9 months before he passed away about 12 years ago. We always used to have big family reunions at their house for Christmas. My grandma used to work at the state hospital in Pendleton, Oregon which later became the state prison. My grandpa welded airplanes in the army for World War II and was stationed in North Africa and Italy. Later, he went to work for Pendleton Grain Growers (PGG) in Oregon. He bought land in Reith (3 km out of town) and built his entire house by hand (minus the original one-room). They have 3 sons and one daughter, of which my dad is the oldest. ●



CURT AND DONNA ALEXANDER

My grandma Donna (72) and grandpa Curt (75) have been married for 52 years now. They have one son and one daughter, and my mom is their oldest child. My grandpa went to Japan years ago for work on Hodaka Motorcycle's Wombat and other research and development for Hodaka. He has also built his own hot rod cars, and was one of only a handful of specialized Sikorsky helicopter gearbox mechanics in the US. My grandma worked at State Farm insurance in Southern California for 9 years before taking a break to raise her kids. Later, she was hired at their Pendleton church as an administrative assistant, and kid's ministry director for 17 years. ●



“ It was wonderful spending time with Aaron’s family. I already miss them badly. They are a beautiful family in God.”
~ Sarah

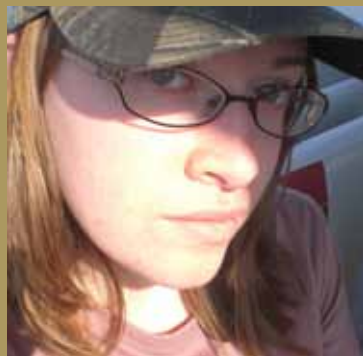
TOM SNOWBERGER

My brother Tom (26) is only 19 months younger than me. As such, we have many shared experiences and similar interests. He is and will always remain my best friend. When we were both in the University of Wyoming, we studied Chinese for 2.5 years. In 2005, I took him to Weifang, China for a month to teach English. However, he decided that teaching wasn’t for him. After finishing his Bachelor’s degree in Business Administration, he moved in with some friends in the university city and has struggled to find a good job - most recently due to the poor economic situation in the US. We continue to pray and hope that he finds God’s best for him even in this hard time. ●



MEGAN SNOWBERGER

My sister Megan (22) is 5 years younger than me, but has a personality very similar to my own. She loves to travel and experience new things, and her thought process is very similar to mine. She has studied French for 7 years since High School and last year studied abroad for the year in Tours, France. She has also studied Chinese for 1 year and is also interested in Asia and Asian culture. She said she hopes to spend time in Asia in the future as well. Possibly teaching English like me. She is finishing up her university studies this year and is looking for either a job or graduate school in the summer or fall. ●



BILL, SUNNY, ALAN, EIRENE VORHEES

The Vorhees family has been very important to Sarah and I, and continue to be so. Bill was the pastor at Antioch International Christian Fellowship where Sarah and I met through Georgia. He mentored me after I was baptized, and his whole family has given us great support these past three years. Bill and Sunny were also very important to us in Los Angeles when we had trouble getting back to Korea. Bill helped me to find and purchase new plane tickets and let me use his phone in the airport when we had trouble with the second set of tickets. Sunny and the kids have always been smiling encouragements to us, and Bill has always helped us try to do the right things and guide us. ●



Hi Aaron and Sarah,

You may be regretting the problems you had with your flight arrangements, but personally, I don't regret them. I hope that you will be able to recoup the losses of purchasing another ticket, and that all will work out in your favor. The reason I don't regret the event was because I was deeply blessed to witness the way you two handled the difficulty. Aaron, you'll probably come down on yourself, and think that you should've handled it better. However, from my perspective, you handled it better than ten men in your shoes would have. Spending time with you two kind of hammered it home that you two belong together. I kept thinking to myself, "This is not the same young man I met three years ago." Your response to a bad situation was testament that the Spirit of God has been greatly working in your lives. One of the best things I love about my wife is that even in the worst of times, as long as we face the difficulties together, I know we'll be OK. Sometimes, it doesn't even matter to me whether or not the situation works out OK. All I know is that I am in the presence of my God who loves me, and in the arms of my wife whom I love with every fiber of my being.

In short, whatever amount of money you may have lost on that ticket, doesn't compare to the wealth of faith and love with which you two faced the challenge. First, you did it together. Second, you supported each other. Third, you kept your eyes upward on the Lord. And fourth, you didn't love each other any less having endured the difficulty.

You've heard me say before that a life of faith in Christ is about enduring and overcoming difficulty. The process is one which glorifies God in a very practical way. You've done well my friends. You didn't give up or lose control, you didn't allow the situation to dominate you, but you took control of the situation. Peter said the testing of our faith would produce gold. What a priceless treasure you two have. Money can be replaced, but what you've gained through the experience will be an eternal treasure that no one can snatch away.

Aaron, I am very proud of the man you have become and the man you will become for your future bride. I was very deeply blessed by your relationship. I wish your father could have been here to see you handle it, I think he would have been prouder.

God bless you two in your lives now, and in the future.

*In Him, by Him, for Him,
Bill Vorhees, Pastor of English Ministry
Miracle Land Baptist Church*



Mom and Dad,

Let me start off by saying what a wonderful daughter you have. I can see why you love her and care for her so much. I'm very grateful that she has parents like you who only want to protect her and give her all the wonderful things in life. You really are a blessing to her, and I can see that you're also blessed by her.

Our recent obstacles at Los Angeles International Airport, and with her house problems, and our future have been far from a perfect life. But I kind of like that. I'm grateful that God has brought such a wonderful, caring, patient woman into my life who can help turn my eyes toward God in

our times of trouble and doubt. I'm reminded of a verse in Ecclesiastes in the Bible that I really love:

Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves.
A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

Ecclesiastes 4:12

I know a romance and marriage between a Korean and an American are a little unconventional. I understand your worries about the difference in culture and the difference in language. But with God as the third strand of our lives and relationship, we won't be easily broken, or battered by the storms of this world. And though our lives are not completely perfect, our joint trust and dependence in a perfect God are just perfect enough.

I'm so grateful to see the ways that God continues to provide for us - with tickets back to Korea, Sarah's new house and new furniture, and Sarah's new job. God is here, God is now, God is with us, and I love it. And with your blessing, I'd like to wait for more of God's blessings, in marriage with your daughter. Please grant us your blessings for our marriage.

I promise to always love and take care of Sarah and to do my very best to be the best son-in-law I can be.

Your faithful son -- Aaron

