

# The Homeschool Herald

## The Newsletter Created By and For Homeschoolers

The place to share your creative creations!

Winter 2009-2010

## See, Do, Go!

### A New Year's Letter to You

The New Year is here and it's time to think about all the fabulous things to come in 2010!

In reflecting on the past year, many wonderful things happened. But the highlight was definitely my Summer trip to the West Coast to visit old friends and my little sister. I drove for three weeks across the desert, up the coast, and then headed back east through the vast northern lands.

The United States is an amazing country! There is so much to see and do....it's endless! So my wish to you is to get out and explore! This doesn't mean that you have to spend three weeks in the car.... most people think I'm nuts for driving for that long. You can go to the a neighboring state, or a local park you haven't been to, or to visit friends or family that you haven't seen recently. Whatever you do, try to get out of your regular routine and environment for a while.

It's good to experience new things. And it also makes you appreciate what you have. I know that regardless of the fun I've had, I'm always happy to come home at the end of a trip.

A common misperception is that it is expensive to travel. This is true if you're taking planes, staying in hotels, and eating in restaurants. However, there is a much more affordable way to travel, you get to spend quality time with your family or other travel buddies, and it's also more fun because you see so much more! Like the Corn Palace in South Dakota... you can't see that from the plane window.

When I hit the road, I usually plan my route based on the availability of either good camping spots or friends' homes. Lodging is one of the most expensive parts of traveling, so camping reduces that cost, and

staying with friends or family eliminates it.

Food is another major expense that can be greatly reduced. When I travel, I always have a cooler with me. Sandwiches are a staple in my road-diet because they can be different at every meal and they're much more nutritious than fast food.

Fuel is the final major component of traveling. I have a car the runs on used veggie oil so my fuel costs are minimal. But even if you're paying for gas, reducing lodging and food costs makes the fuel expense seem more manageable.

I am lucky to have wonderful friends and family scattered all over the world. For this special issue of the *Homeschool Herald*, I have asked some of them to write about their traveling experiences. Enjoy!

I hope you send some articles about new things you see and do this year! You can write about a big family trip you took.... or you can write about an adventure you had just down the road. Whatever it is.... get out and **see** the world, **do** all the fun and interesting things that come your way, and **go** for it!

If you have something to share with us for the Spring issue of the *Homeschool Herald*, you can send it via e-mail or snail mail. Please contact us with any questions, ideas, or suggestions. We look forward to publishing YOUR creative creations!

Enjoy this issue of the *Homeschool Herald*!

**Happy New Year to you and your family!**

~Vered Kleinberger  
Director, Educational Excursions



# The First Step

By Julie Brown  
San Francisco, CA

One of the scariest things I've ever done was take a step. Not just any step though, a step onto a plane that would carry me 1000s of miles from home, from family and friends, from my native language, from everything I've ever known....alone!

When I stepped onto that plane to Costa Rica for my first solo backpacking trip when I was 21, I thought I might be making the



Queenstown, New Zealand---adventure capital of the world and great place for snowboarding in the southern alps.

biggest mistake of my life. I was a young woman traveling alone, I didn't speak Spanish, I had very little money to spend and I had no plan. Six weeks later, I knew without a doubt it was the best thing I'd ever done and solo world travel quickly became my greatest passion.

Since then I have visited scores of different countries, met the most fascinating people on earth, learned bits and pieces of several languages, and fallen in love with the beauty and diversity of the world. My adventures have led me to some of the most awe-inspiring

places on earth and into the homes of people so different from me yet so welcoming, so warm



At the Mayan ruins of Tikal in Guatemala



Boys playing soccer on the beach at sunset in Praia de Pipa, Brazil

that I felt like I was a member of their family, if even for just one night.

The connections I have made with others, whether

fellow backpackers, hostel owners, tour guides or locals willing to share a chat and a smile, have continued even after I've returned home, giving me a network of family and friends that spans every continent. It makes the world feel smaller, friendlier and more inviting.

Many such trips later, I've learned that the best way to visit a country is to go without a plan, go alone, take the budget route and talk to the locals. I can't tell you how many times I've simply asked someone for directions, only to be given a tour of a city and invited home for dinner. I leave myself open to whatever experiences may come and whatever direction the wind wants to take me, and I am rewarded every time.

I've also learned that world travel need not break the bank. By sticking to countries where the dollar is strong, avoiding resorts, hotels, and chains, and taking the recommendations of locals, I've been able to travel extensively and adventurously as a student and on a teacher's salary.

My favorite destinations so far are Brazil, New Zealand, Bolivia and South Africa but I've loved every country I've been to and am always thinking ahead to my next adventure.

And even though I still get a tinkle of anxiety in my stomach before each trip, I know that by the end of the journey, I won't want to go home.

# The Bent Pencil

Materials you will need:

- Pencil
- Water
- Clear Glass or Jar

Light can play tricks on your eyes!

This is a very fast and easy experiment.

Steps:

1. Fill the glass or jar half way with water.
2. Place the pencil in the water.
3. Look at the pencil from the top.
4. Look at the pencil from the bottom
5. Look at the pencil from the sides.

Straight or bent? What happens when you look at the pencil through the side of the glass?

Light plays tricks on your eyes. The pencil looks bent. This is because light travels slower through water than through air. As the light enters the glass of water it slows down(changes direction) and as it leaves the glass it speeds up again – therefore making the pencil look bent!

<http://www.kids-science-experiments.com/bendingpencil.html>  
<http://plus.maths.org/issue15/news/refract/pencil.jpg>



# Travel Fun Word Search!

R M O L G H T E X P L O R E Y  
 S E P M U S E U M R E A S L C  
 U O S P O K T Y L T O Y E K A  
 N I U T M A P N T O U R S L M  
 G Y J W S D I E A U K Y U S P  
 L R T S E T C P O R J N I W I  
 A B M L Y N O L Y I O G V I N  
 S P O W O H I P K S H L A M G  
 S I Y O R E C R O T I K C M M  
 E C R P K W A B S K G L A I U  
 S N L J V S N E M L H O T N S  
 P I R C A M E R A T W S I G I  
 Y C W A T I K M P U A M O L C  
 O V L R N P I N O S Y L N P R  
 M H T G A M E S B P A R K S Y

Look for these words hidden in the letters above:

tourist	camera	picnic	tours
swimming	souvenirs	parks	museum
sunglasses	camping	vacation	sightseeing
car	music	books	explore
map	highway	games	rest stop

## Upcoming Homeschool Excursions Programs

We hope to see you at some of our upcoming adventures!

Visionary Garden	Ongoing
Winter Tree ID	February 8, 2010
Mapping & Orienteering	March 22, 2010
Farm Project Day	April 7, 2010
Civil War Bike Tour	April 28, 2010
Wild Salad Walk	May 4, 2010
Backcountry Cooking	May 10, 2010
Cheese Making	May 12, 2010

And more will be added soon!

Check our Calendar of Events for updates.

# Weeds?

## What Weeds?

Compiled By Vered Kleinberger

I have been writing this column for many years and am constantly amazed that the list of useful 'weeds' doesn't seem to end. In this issue, I'm going to tell you about Purple Dead Nettle (*Lamium purpureum*). I've seen it growing prolifically, so hopefully after reading this article, you'll view it as a beautiful and useful edible and medicinal plant.



It's called Dead Nettle because its leaves resemble Stinging Nettle, but they don't sting... their sting is dead. Purple Dead Nettle is a member of the mint family so you can identify it by its square stem. The leaves are lobed and often have a purple tint. It has delicate purple flowers in the Winter and Spring, making it even easier to identify.

Purple Dead Nettle has many uses. Here are a few:

- The herb and flowers, either fresh or dried, have been used to make a decoction for checking any kind of hemorrhage.
- The dried herb, made into a tea and sweetened with honey, promotes perspiration and acts on the kidneys, being useful in cases of chill.
- Linnaeus reported that this species also has been boiled and eaten as a pot-herb by the peasantry in Sweden.
- The leaves and upper plants are cooked as pot herbs or added to salads.



- The plant is very nutritious; it's high in iron, vitamins and fiber.
- The whole plant is medicinal, used as an astringent, diaphoretic, diuretic, purgative, styptic and tonic.
- Lab tests show that *Lamium purpureum* seed oil possess high antioxidant activities and might be used as a future food-additive.
- The fresh bruised leaves can be applied to external cuts and wounds.

When you see Purple Dead Nettle, remember what a useful little plant it is!

Think twice before pulling that weed! You may be throwing away something delicious and nutritious! *Please consult your physician before making any medical or dietary decisions.*

Images and Information:

<http://www.botanical.com/botanical/mgmh/n/nettle03.html>

<http://www.marksukwildlifepotos.com>

<http://eryri.files.wordpress.com>

<http://picasaweb.google.com/lh/photo/xrejasCpV85tcP8qvMI9TQ>



# Where the Wild Meets the Familiar

By Derek Ferguson  
Yosemite, CA



Exploring new places has many advantages. One can meet new and interesting people, eat different types of food, and see the wonders that societies and Earth provide. By traveling and getting out of the familiar routine of our daily lives, we encounter brand new experiences that make us grow. Traveling puts us in situations



that we have never been in before and therefore demands that we be flexible and adaptable. Besides growing as humans, traveling is exciting just to see amazing new sights.

When many people travel, they go to unfamiliar places but stay in familiar settings. For example, if a family goes to see a new place, they might stay in a hotel and go out to eat at a chain restaurant that they have been to before but in a different location. At least these people may see new sights. However, if a family travels to a new place and stays in unique accommodations, like a bed and breakfast, and eats new food at an

ethnic restaurant, they will have more varied and original experiences.

Personally, I enjoy getting out further than the average traveler. I go to where the wild meets the familiar and hike from there. While many visitors park their cars and take pictures of beautiful scenery only to get back in their cars and drive to the next lookout, I park my car and spend a few days walking around and taking pictures. Hiking through the wilderness, getting to the tops of mountains, swimming in rivers, and photographing all the incredible beauty of wild places fills my spirit much more than any tourist trap could ever do.

I love smelling, feeling, hearing, and seeing new places in nature, but everybody enjoys different experiences. For whatever reasons you choose to travel and see new places, I recommend that you try as many new things



as you can and go beyond your comfort zones into the unknown. That is where you

will find adventure and excitement, and that is where you will grow as a person.

**"Experience, travel -  
these are as education  
in themselves"**

*Euripides*

# America the Amazing!

By Vered Kleinberger  
Jasper, Georgia

When I was little, my family always traveled in a car. I remember piling first in the station wagon, and later in the mini van, to head to Florida to visit my grandparents. Car trips were always an adventure!

Those early days on the road are the reason I still travel in a car. If I can drive to my destination, I would rather do that than fly. We live in a beautiful country and it can best be seen from the ground. I have done my share of flying, which is great when in a rush or when crossing the great blue oceans. But if possible, I'd rather slow down, take my time, and drive.

My first big road trip was during my sophomore year in college. Two friends and I decided to take a tour of the country, in 11 days! This

would be our Spring Break adventure! All our friends thought we were nuts and that we wouldn't make it back in time for class. But we made it! And it was fantastic! We drove up to the Badlands in South Dakota, then across to Astoria, Oregon, down to San Francisco, California,



The Oregon Coast

over to the Grand Canyon, and then home to Atlanta. It was a quick trip, but we saw lots! And had a blast! And it was only the beginning....

My little brother turned 18, so I gave him a trip around the United States as a gift for his birthday and graduation from high school. I divided the country into six regions and let him choose which one he wanted to explore. He picked the Pacific Northwest, so off we went! Nobody thought we would survive... brother

and sister in the car for three to four weeks... but it was an amazing experience!

We began our trip by heading to Detroit and then over to the Badlands. We camped in the bottom of the Badlands for a night, which was unbelievable! Then we moseyed through Montana and into the mountains of northern Idaho. It was summer, but there was still plenty of snow and freezing glacial rivers! We camped on the cliffs of the Olympic Peninsula in Washington, camped in the rainforests of northern Oregon, camped in the Redwood National Forest, and camped in the canyons of Utah. It was a fabulous trip!

My little sister turned 18 in 1996 so I also gave her a trip for her birthday and high school graduation. This time, however, I didn't give her a choice of destination. I told her we would be driving up through the



Athabasca Falls in Jasper National Park, Canada

Canadian Rockies.... one of the many parts on our amazing continent that I haven't seen yet. So we drove to Eugene, Oregon to find her an apartment for college. Once her school details were finalized, we were ready to go! So we headed up to Vancouver, British Columbia. From there, we drove across southern British Columbia to the Alberta border, and then up to Calgary. This was the gateway to the mountains! We first went to Banff National Park, and then ventured north through Jasper National Park. It was a windy road, and around each turn, our eyes popped further out of our heads. It was so beautiful! Words cannot come close to describing the massive mountains, turquoise water, and abundant wildlife.

Once out of Jasper National Park, we picked

Continued to page 7

up the Al-Can Highway in Dawson's Creek. We were off to Alaska to visit our friends Barak and Kim; they had moved there from Georgia to live more self-sufficiently and sustainably. We stopped by for a quick visit and were treated to a canoe trip at 10:30 at night. It was July so it was light almost all night. But the mosquitoes were unforgettable! Here in Georgia, our mosquitoes are mild compared to the Alaskan onslaught!

After our visit, we drove to southern Alaska to catch a ferry down to Washington. The ferry trip took four days; it was fantastic! We wove through the islands and saw areas that are only visible from the water or air because there are not any roads. We made friends with some of the crew and were treated to a visit to the Captain's Bridge, and from there we saw whales and hundreds of bald eagles!

The ferry dropped us off in Washington state and I drove my sister back to Oregon before heading home. It was an excellent trip!

This past Summer, I embarked upon a solo journey (with my dogs, of course). I drove across the southern US to Austin, Texas and then over to San Diego, California. From there, I picked up highway 1, the Coast Highway. This road literally hugs the western coast of the United States.... one wrong move and I'd be in the Pacific Ocean. It was one of the most incredible roads I've ever been on! I took it north to San Francisco, then up to the Redwoods, and continued north to Eugene, Oregon to visit my sister. After a few days of meeting her friends and hanging out, I headed back to the coast and then north to Seattle, Washington where I



The Badlands in South Dakota

picked up I-90 and drove east across Montana, Wyoming, and South Dakota to Chicago for a visit, and then headed home.

It was

definitely a very different experience taking a road trip on my own, but I visited friends along the way so I had plenty of folks to talk to. And it was really nice to be completely on my own schedule. I could do what I wanted, whenever I wanted. It was fantastic!

So, as you can see, I have done lots of driving. You may be wondering how I have been able to do all of this, and the secret is flexibility and creativity. I camp or stay with friends, eat from a cooler, and go with the flow! It is really easy to travel affordably if you take what comes your way, and you'll usually end up seeing things you would have otherwise missed. Waking up on top of a plateau in the canyons of Utah, or eating lunch near a glacial lake in the middle of the mountains in Canada, visiting friends I haven't seen in many years, or watching the sunset along an empty stretch of highway in South Dakota, and then watching the stars emerge in that humongous sky... all this would have been missed if I had flown or stayed in motels.

Food is a large part of traveling, and eating from a cooler rather than each meal in a restaurant completes the road-trip experience! The food quality is



better, and it's so much more fun. One my daily highlights when traveling with my brother was watching his insane sandwich creations... three pieces of bread and so much in between he could barely hold it!

And there is so much more I want to see! I haven't been to Yosemite, or to Yellowstone, or explored the northern coast of Maine, or been to Mammoth Caves in Kentucky... my list is endless!

Many folks think they need to travel overseas to 'see the world.' I highly recommend that you start with our backyard... America is Amazing! Go explore it!

# Living in Amsterdam The Netherlands

By Kaaren Davoli & Jeff Povlo  
Amsterdam, Netherlands

My partner and I have been living in Amsterdam for almost 7 years now. It is such a beautiful city, seeped in history and rich culture. Most people around the world have a “preconceived” Idea of what they believe Amsterdam is like. Contrary to popular beliefs, even though they celebrate their tolerances, Amsterdam is a very conservative city. The people of Amsterdam have a strong belief in family, their heritage and history, and acceptance of other cultures. The city has a population (including suburbs) of 1.36 million. With 176 different nationalities, Amsterdam is home to one of the widest varieties of nationalities of any city in the world.



Amsterdam is one of the most bicycle-friendly large cities in the world and is a centre of bicycle culture. There are about 465,000 bicycles in Amsterdam and mothers take their children to school in a “bakfiets”, a bicycle with a wheelbarrow-like box on the front. It is not uncommon to see 5 children on one bike, with mother pedaling.

Amsterdam owes part of its romantic personality to its watery existence. There’s just something surreal about a floating city. Dubbed the “Venice of the North”, Amsterdam’s canals are not only attractive, but they’re also a great way to travel around the city, enjoying the sights of this free-thinking European metropolis.

The canals of Amsterdam have been part of the city’s landscape since the early 14th century. However most of the current canals were built

during the 17th century, Amsterdam’s golden age. At that time, officials of the thriving city decided to build a series of three concentric semi-circular canals around the old city center. As time passed, hundreds of narrow streets

and smaller canals fanned out from the center, crossing the semicircles and creating 90 islands



and 1,280 bridges, all within the city limits. The canals ended in squares on the outskirts of the city, which were often used as parking spaces because, for years, vehicles were not permitted in the city. Canals are sealed from the North Sea via locks, Bridges at the Prinsengracht purportedly a Dutch invention of the 14th century. The canals in Amsterdam also provide a popular place for recreational activities, from boating to parades. Many of the city’s special events are held upon the waters of the canals. In the winter, locals ice skate on the frozen waters and then retire to the local eatery for a traditional cup of “snert” - pea soup. Thirdly, the canals serve as a home for those who choose to live on one of Amsterdam’s many houseboats. You’ll find many throughout the city and may even be able to arrange to rent one for your vacation. To maintain sanitary conditions, the canals are flushed three times a week when the locks are open and water flows in from the North Sea. Despite this, it’s important to remember that the canals are used as sewage dumps for the many houseboats that line the city’s waterways. For that reason, it’s never a good idea to go swimming in the canal, though you’ll see barges regularly cleaning out debris.

Images:

<http://blendinabroad.files.wordpress.com/2009/11/amsterdam6.jpg>

[http://www.ski-epic.com/amsterdam\\_bicycles/](http://www.ski-epic.com/amsterdam_bicycles/)



## Sudoku

		7				1		
			8			2		9
			1	6				8
	1				3	5		
6	2			5			1	7
		5	2				6	
7				9	5			
3		2			1			
		4				7		

The numbers 1-9 must be in every column, row, & box

## So... You Think You Know Everything?

- Antarctica is the only continent without reptiles or snakes.
- Proportional to their weight, men are stronger than horses.
- Iceland consumes more Coca-Cola per capita than any other nation.
- Heinz Catsup leaving the bottle travels at 25 miles per year.
- A mole can dig a tunnel 300 feet long in just one night.

<http://funny2.com/facts.htm>

## Some Interesting Places to Visit



### The Enchanted Highway, ND

Turn off I-94 at Gladstone, North Dakota, for 32 miles of weird, oversized art installations including a tin family, the world's largest grasshopper, and a flock of pheasants with a 40-foot-tall, 70-foot-long rooster.

### World's Largest Pencil St. Louis, MO

City Museum is now the proud owner of the World's Largest Pencil. This mother-of-all writing utensil stretches 76 feet long and weighs 21,500 lbs. It writes--and erases. It's a No. 2, so it's accepted for standardized testing.



### The Corn Palace, Mitchell, SD

The original Corn Palace, called "The Corn Belt Exposition" was established in 1892. Early settlers displayed the fruits of their harvest on the building exterior in order to prove the fertility of South Dakota soil. The third and present building was completed for its first festival at the present location in 1921. The exterior decorations are completely stripped down and new murals are created each year.

## Have Fun!

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**Thank you for your support!  
We're looking forward to a fantastic year!**

**Mail form to:  
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# Special Edition!

## Winter 2009-2010

**This issue of *The Homeschool Herald* is a little different... we hope you enjoy it! Traditionally, the submissions for the *Herald* have been created by homeschoolers. This issue contains contributions from students, teachers, and more!**

**This Winter issue of the *Herald* is focusing on travel. There is so much to see and do and experience... these articles are some examples of the fabulous adventures that await you!**

**Enjoy these articles and photos. We hope you will send submissions for future issues describing some of your excursions.**

**Happy New Year!  
We look forward to seeing you and your family in 2010!**



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