

IRIS SANDERSON JONES

Vacation at home with foreign guests

Some people travel by boarding a plane and flying across the world. Others travel by staying home and letting the world come to them. Both kinds of traveler are involved in "homestay" programs that encourage students to live in foreign homes and locals to host students from foreign lands.

These programs come under many names, but the name I am interested in at the moment is Nacel. What does it mean? I asked Evelyn Prince of West Bloomfield. She and her husband, Julian, coordinate Nacel Cultural Exchanges in Michigan.

"It's the short form of a French word, nacelle, that means the basket under a hot air balloon. It is our logo because it represents the adventurous spirit needed to explore new lands and cultures."

Jeanette Champine of Milford will be on her way to France and Jeffrey Harris of Howell will be on his way to Spain when the plane load of Michigan students takes off in July. There are still a few spaces for students who want to take part in a four-week summer stay in Europe.

Homestays have added new dimensions to the lives of Elizabeth Garvey of Howell and her two children. Susan was at Alma College and Christopher was still at Howell High School when they welcomed a Spanish student called Julien into their home five summers ago.

The following year, Susan visited Julien's family when she took the second semester of her sophomore year in Spain. "Julien warned his family to speak slowly, because Susan didn't speak Spanish well, but Susan had learned a lot of Spanish by then and she surprised them all," Elizabeth said.

Another Spanish student called Izaskun was the Garvey family's next guest. "She walked through the door and it was love at first hug," Elizabeth said. "Ten months later, Susan went to Madrid as a translator for an international law firm and spent the first month with Izaskun's family."

"Since then, several Howell students have been to those two Spanish homes."

Nacel was launched by language teachers in France in 1957 and came to America in 1969. The non-profit organization arranges 17,000 international exchanges a year.

That didn't surprise me. What did surprise me was the effect that Desert Storm has had on this year's arrangements. Everybody was canceling trips when the Saudis were landing in the Middle East last winter. Families that planned to send their sons and daughters to Europe canceled their trips, too.

As a result, Nacel still has openings on flights leaving Detroit in July and August for France and Spain. Nacel organizes summer programs in Europe and West Africa. The cost for students leaving Detroit is \$1,435 to \$1,620; in France or Spain, optional sightseeing is offered.

Students age 15-18 are invited to participate in three- or four-week homestays in France, Germany, Spain or Cote d'Ivoire.

Students age 16-19 can do homestay/study programs in Ireland and the Soviet Union. Language camps are offered in Paris and Madrid for beginning French and Spanish. Language students age 13-16.

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"Alas poor Yorick, I knew him well." Thousands will watch Hamlet say that on stage this summer at the Stratford, Ont.

tario theater festival. Also to be performed are "Much Ado About Nothing, Our Town, Carousel" and others.

Discovering Stratford's Style

By Iris Sanderson Jones
special writer

"Annas Bananas is a great place for dessert after the theater." "We always stay at a bed-and-breakfast by the Avon River." "Buy your festival tickets in February for the best seats." Village Studios has the best display of Canadian crafts in Stratford.

I heard those voices in my car as our tour bus drove into Stratford, Ontario, recently and I loved it. If you want inside information on a travel destination, ask somebody who has been there. Friends who picnic on the riverbank. Neighbors who stay at a bed-and-breakfast farmhouse. Readers who send insider tips.

It was late afternoon and the lowering sun was backlighting the velvet-green grass, glowing on red barns and sculpting the horses, cows and farm silos that are common to southwestern Ontario.

By theater time, there was a glass gleam of setting sun on the Avon River, downhill from the famous tent-shaped roof of the Festival Theater. Four trumpeters stood on the roof to blow the signal: 10 minutes to showtime.

Most people in the lobby had tickets, but a few lined up for rush seats ordered that morning. Cary Gersh of Bloomfield Hills remembers when he traveled to Stratford as a high school student, slept in the car and bought \$2 rush seats sold on the morning of the performance; they're \$28 now.

"Rush seats were at the top of the house, so they gave us a great view of the empty seats below. We would rush down at intermission and fill them!"

Cary, a graphic artist at Skyline Studios in Southfield, comes to Stratford now with his wife Thomai, a Bloomfield Hills schools psychologist. They buy tickets as soon as sales open in February.

"You can see pretty well from most seats, but when we come this far and stay overnight we want the best seats. Shakespeare is exotic sometimes and we like to see the expressions on the actors' faces."

The Festival Theater has 16 rows in a steep semicircle, with a seven-row balcony above it. There are no barriers, and you can see the stage quite well from any seat, but my experts favored the center seats downstairs and the front row of the balcony. Their least favorite were the least expensive seats on each end of the semicircle.

The lights went down and the audience hushed as a brace of lancers and laughing ladies began "Much Ado About Nothing" on the small circular stage.

Anastasia and Andy Morowaki, who sat next to me in the front row of the balcony, were in Stratford for

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—Cary Gersh
Bloomfield Hills

the first time. Stacy was one of the 10 winners of radio station WJR's Stratford Festival Contest. They were looking forward to exploring the town.

THE TOWN

It is easy enough to find your way around the well-known parts of Stratford, built around the city hall in Market Square. The city hall has been described as a great Victorian monster of red brick, frosted with white cupolas and a clock tower, but when developers



SCOTT WISHANT

Many visitors to Stratford take time out between plays for picnic lunches by the Avon River.

tried to tear it down in the 1970s, the citizens threw them out of town.

From city hall you can see the Avon Theater, second of Stratford's three important theaters, the shops that circle the square and the park that fringes the Avon River at the end of Downie Street.

I followed the park path downhill past the flagged skyline of the Memorial Gardens and the bronze triumph and despair of the World War I memorial to the bright plastic colors of paddle boats on the Avon River.

Joggers, walkers and bikers have worn a path down both sides of the river. They photograph the 19th-century bridge and the courthouse reflected in the early morning sun, picnic and play on the riverbanks beside the Festival Theater. The Iris is the official Stratford flower, but foot soldiers explore the Shakespearean Gardens for the 60 varieties of flowers mentioned in Shakespeare's plays.

Thomai Gersh advises: "Get a picnic lunch and sit by the river. You can bring your own or order from a list of places supplied by the tourist bureau. I recommend a great bookstore called Fanfare Books in an old Victorian house. Sometimes they serve tea in the back."

There is a visitor center in the small round building that hangs over the river near the war memorials. Ask for a list of the bed-and-breakfasts in town or the popular b-and-b farms just out of town. Or write to Tourism Stratford, P.O. Box 1818, 88 Wellington St., Stratford, Ontario, Canada, N5A 6W1.

For Stratford Festival theater tickets, call the Detroit number, 964-4668.

"The play's the thing, but not every thing"

By Lynne Loren and
Gene Loren
special writers

The high point of each of our visits to Stratford, Ontario since 1984 has been the Festival itself.

The first year we went somewhat spontaneously and purchased our tickets at the last moment. While we don't recommend that style, it will work in most cases.

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Learn how to tow a trailer properly

It's about that time to pile the family, the dog and the golf clubs into the family car, attach the boat trailer to the back and take off.

Vacations beckon, but unless you want to spend hours standing around a repair shop instead of chasing golf balls, you'd better think about that trailer and how you pack the car.

And, while you're at it, AAA Michigan suggests some routine car maintenance tips to help ensure a trouble-free trip.

Towing a boat, camper or dirt bike on a trailer not only takes getting used to, but makes your car work harder.

Exceeding the maximum rating for towing capacity could mean more than damaging your car, it can void the warranty. Consult your owner's manual for specifics.

"Further, this could drastically change the steering characteristics, which can lead to fish-tailing and veering into the next lane," said Robert V. Cullen, AAA Michigan Community Safety.

Basically, there are three kinds of hitches: Class A attaches to the bumper and, generally, is capable of pulling up to 2,000 pounds. Classes B and C attach to the frame of the towing vehicle and can pull up to 3,500 pounds and 10,000 pounds, respectively.

Hitches that attach to the frame distribute the weight of the trailer along the frame, which permits better handling of both units. Excess weight in the rear can make braking or steering difficult in an emergency.

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