

Hi everyone,

It has been 2 weeks now and jet lag is about over. I have been riding the train and the bus to get around. We have opened a bank account and found a house to live in. We can't move in until 2/16/09 and so we will survive in our small efficiency apartment. All groceries must be carried in from about a mile away and stored in a very small refrigerator. This is my job since I am not working. We can only buy about 2 days of food. I am cooking in a very limited situation. Good thing I am creative and Bill is very supportive. We can go out, but everything is pretty expensive.

As I mentioned, we will be living in Subiaco, Western Australia. If you want to google earth it. It is a 1920 Federation style "character" house. It is located just west of Perth. The area is a bit like Venice, CA or Santa Monica, CA or Berkeley, CA.

It turns out we were very lucky to get the house when we did as there is a major theater acting company coming into town and all the actors want fully furnished, fully equipped house like this one. But we got it first!! It is worth the wait.



Our "soon to be house" in Subiaco



The front brick entrance to the house



Living room of house



Ceiling detail of hallway



Back patio looking toward house



More of back yard and patio

We are also waiting for our air shipment, which has our bikes in it, to clear quarantine. We don't know yet if there will be any problems. Bill is going crazy not being able to ride his bike. We have heard stories about the tires of the bikes being confiscated. We won't know for another week.

When we get our house we will have a regular Internet connection and we have a vantage phone that we can receive and call the US very cheaply. Right now I only have access to an Internet cafe across the street from the hotel. I have been exploring the city a lot while Bill is at work. It would be great if you were here and we could explore together. I haven't met many people yet, but I plan to take some art and cooking classes and maybe do some volunteer work.

We went to an Australia Day (1/26) brunch put on by the Perth Friendship Force Club. We were picked up by the president and her husband and driven to the home of a member who has 5 acres of park land near Fremantle. They cooked breakfast meats and tomatoes on the barbecue. Everyone was/is very friendly. They are getting ready for the national conference starting on February 12th. I will be attending the sessions and Bill will be joining in for the evening events. They expect about 175 people. We are being honored as the only international attendees!!!

I love how the Friendship Force does its thing so well all over the world.



Sign at Australia Day Picnic



We were guests at this Friendship Force Australia Day barbeque



Australia flag over flown over Swan River



Air show of Vintage airplanes

I am really blown away by the British influence on Australia. In many ways it is a bit of Britain. People are more proper than the US and I have been asked many times about my accent and where I am from. I really didn't think I had a noticeable one. As you know every single thing is new and unfamiliar. I like the challenge, but at the end of the day I am tired and Bill is ready to walk more and see things as he has been in the office all day. I bought a pedometer and I am walking about 18,000 steps per day. (about 6 miles) I will be in great shape to fit into my wedding dress.

Bill is really interested in any news about the Steelers, He got invited to a "Safety Meeting" by some American drillers from Chevron at 8 AM Monday morning. They are going to watch the Super Bowl as part of their "Safety meeting" . They have even printed an agenda for everyone. I can't go because I am not an employee. He is really looking forward to it.

More later, Hope all is well,

Cathie and Bill