

The Diaries - Mexico--Tour '06

WARNING!!

(The following may not be suitable for religious people, sexually sensitive people or any normal person, maybe not even child molesters - read at your own risk!)

April 27th - Jenni

So who's idea to have a concert the night before we leave at 5:30 AM on a bus tour to Mexico. How was I supposed to get enough sleep that night to have the energy to party on the first night of the tour? Any way, I am digressing. Getting up at 4:30 wasn't actually that bad. I have heard that many people had a similar story to mine; either not bothering to sleep at all, or staying up late and then not being able to sleep well for fear of not waking up. I guess Bruce scared me enough about not being on time. I wouldn't want to be the one who was late on my first Prima tour. I personally woke up at least every half hour, wide awake each time and truthfully it was a relief to get up. Everyone was surprisingly chipper when we met at the bus. But the energy level seemed to die off pretty quick.

The bus trip was rather uneventful – Smooth ride on the ferry, smooth ride to the border. Then we had to unload everything, just to walk through a customs gate and answer “no” to a bunch of questions. I said “no” when she asked me if I had food, then realized I did have food and told her I had a sandwich and she glared at me and asked if it contained beef (what, they still don't like our cows?) And then glared at me some more when I said “no” as though there is no such thing as a sandwich without beef. Oh, and Steinar had to pay to get across the border, not sure what the story is there exactly, but must be something to do with his lack of Canadian citizenship. Good job, it was only 10 dollars or something. After we all said “no” to a bunch of questions (or “yes” in my case because I'm a chicken”) we stood in line to get off the bus. What's the point of taking all our stuff off the bus was, I'm not really sure, but I'm glad it was relatively simple in the end. They did not detain Laura's nuts... or my trail mix. We stopped for lunch in Yakima, WA, and I learned that I'm not allowed to take forever to get off the bus. I lost pretty much everyone and walked a couple of blocks by myself to try to find people. Then a crazy guy started yelling out of his window at a red light and then jumped out of the car and ran after another car going the opposite direction, cursing about what a bitch the driver was. Somewhat scary – needless to say I started walking the other way and found some people in a cute little Mexican diner attached to the Greyhound station. I'm glad I wasn't hungry, I'm not a huge fan of Mexican food (editorial: you're doomed!!!) (too spicy) (editorial: doomed!!) and I'm probably going to get enough of the real stuff in Mexico. Yakima was HOT. I think I got sunburned and heat stroke just from being outside for 10 minutes at 3 in the afternoon. I had such a headache, and , really, I just wanted to be at home in bed. So there I was, day 1 of the tour, already saying “I want to be home,” hopefully I won't have to feel that way anymore – got it over with early.

We took a little “detour” near Richland, WA, during which I thought we were having a bathroom break leading my body to need to which made the time until we got to the gas station (where we actually COULD pee), rather uncomfortable. Did anyone else have this problem? Chelsea? (Editorial: I pee in my sock)

And that's it, we got to Baker City, went to our hotels, had a quiet dinner and went to bed like good boys and girls, ok, that's a bit of a lie, well, after the dinner party, anyway, there was some consumption of alcoholic beverages (some is probably the wrong word, but in comparison to what is probably to come, I think it's accurate). When I got back after dinner, I had no key to my room, so I asked the front desk guy if there was any chance I could get a key temporarily. First he thought I was asking for a copy of the list of who was in each room, which he was happy to give me. Then he gave me the master key for ALL the rooms, and asked me to bring it right back. All of this was without checking any ID. He didn't even ask my name. I'm glad he did it, but I know I'm honest. Kind of scary if someone else could do that. Anyway back to the partying...

I can't really say much about it, as I was only involved for half an hour or so before going to bed (with a back massage that was fabulous, by the way) (editorial: thanks!) I do know that the party continued quietly at the hotel, or at least quietly enough that no other guest complained, and then a movie was watched in my room. Some people went and found karaoke at the “local”, and there were lewd comments and ascribing, and making fun of the cabbie's future test drive on the way home. All of this fun I missed being asleep, but I'm glad of it. I think we will be able to have a better time tomorrow night. (well, actually, tonight, but I was supposed to write this yesterday) Oh yeah, and one of the highlights of the night was Even getting locked out of his room, and dropping a case of beer cans right in front of my door, some on my toes, and getting SO very frustrated. A fabulous first day, In my humble opinion. Yay for Prima tours.

April 28th - Nancy

Slept surprisingly well last night. Maybe I won't be as sleep-deprived on this trip as I thought.

A relatively uneventful trip for the most of the day. Beautiful warm weather, and lots of chatting, and bonding with people on the bus. Too bad we missed the turnoff to Twin Falls, (Idaho?), so we got to have a gourmet lunch at Jack in the Box, and to buy a pillow in Burley. No wonder I slept so well on the bus after that.

Yay! It looks like we're in an actual city tonight. Salt Lake City reminds me of Calgary – so clean!) Anyway, our uneventful trip, of course, had to be interrupted by someone who kept going while our bus was turning into our motel parking lot. Was he asleep, or something?

More time to check out our new room while Bruce and Jason work things out with our not-so-bright driver.

Meagan finds a Thai restaurant close by in one of the local listings and so we head out to find it. I can't get over how clean the city is (Bruce's editorial: get over it). Who would have thought that we would find a great Thai restaurant in Salt Lake? It was actually very comforting. I got to speak Thai again with our Maitre D. He must have felt really sorry for our poor little Thai girl deprived of Thai food. He gave us complimentary shrimp balls which was very nice for the appetizer, and the freebies kept coming. He brought us cha yen, and then kaeng pa, which nearly killed me, both on the house. My tolerance for heat has definitely gone down. I ordered som tam with sticky rice – gosh – I hadn't had this stuff since I left Thailand. Boy was I a happy camper. Free desert to top things off. I'm coming back to Salt Lake City again, if only for the Thai Food. Meagan, Caitlin K, Sarah T, and I walked around the temple grounds downtown which look amazing when illuminated at night. And then (my idea of a good time), we rode the trams for fun. (editorial: We walked around ALL night, and public Transportation was free!?) Public transit in downtown Salt Lake is free, so we rode it back and forth until it was late. What a fun day.

April 29th - Breanna

I'm actually writing two days later. The day ends with a late night powwow behind our bus in the parking lot of our Montecello hotel, made up of a small group of people who want to be outside, yet far enough away from Bruce's room that he doesn't hear us. Isaiah produces half a twixer of rum and, feeling nauseated, decides to turn in. Albuquerque in the first place which was warm enough to remain in the parking lot of the hotel, as we were definitely in the prostitution district. Before the night charades began, some of us had our first real meal in days: vegetables, meat, and noodles at a local Vietnamese restaurant for a little more than 6 dollars a meal, people were more than content – more restaurants should be like that. We arrived in Albuquerque relatively early, around 3:00, so with so much of the day left calling to downtown was a popular option, and, if food and liquor was your fancy. Also available was hitting up the local ford market/grocery store for bottles of \$3 to \$4 wine. The event of the bus ride was pretty much crossing the border from Utah into Idaho, and (wait for it) and then into New Mexico in one day. We're just breezing through the state borders – no actual stopping involved. Why aren't all places like that? Picture it in your mind – you're driving through New Mexico , all of a sudden, a sign appears on your left, reading “Welcome to the USA”... people can dream. Back up to route 66, into Montecello, for our 8:00 ride, and remember today's “things you don't see every day” : “a real arch” and “what looks like a big tent” April 30th, starting and ending by the bus. PS – fruit decaf continental breakfast.

Written by Breanna, who likes the color pink

April 29th - Robert

The Sun arose from the horizon early on day three of the trip. We awoke to the ring of the phone. It was Bruce; not a very pleasant thing to wake up to. When we finished packing, we said goodbye to the paint peeling room, realigned the bathroom door, and bade farewell to the toilet that overflowed the night before.

The bus ride was... interesting. We encountered our second crazy motorist – a motorcycle was run off the road by oncoming traffic.

We also stopped and took many pictures of canyons, ourselves, and a lost gecko on the bathroom wall. The discussions today on the bus were about the Darwin awards and polls were born as well.

We finally arrived at our destination and checked into the Best Western, which was completely different from the hotel before. With the discovery of the microwave in our room, we raided a local grocery store for the frozen dinners.

Apr. 29 - Connie

“A new tour record” according to Bruce: 8:05am departure for an 8am call. “Congratulations!” Driver Jason “Crunch” Neufeld gingerly pulled out into the unpredictable Salt Lake City traffic on a cool but sunny day, with lots of smiles on board. Initial conversations centered on which singers have ADHD vs. Asperger’s Syndrome - the latter quickly became “Assburger” and conversations about lunch ensued.

At a 7,400 ft. pass in the Continental Divide en route to Price, the many Canadians on the bus expressed boredom with the patches of snow on either side. Most also slept through the “Bugaboos” (odd rock formations), others perched near the front with cameras. Until the wandering creek passed under the road, some actually believed Jason’s observation that water on the right went to the Pacific and that on the left, to the Atlantic.

Just before noon, after full-bus run-throughs of 2 South African Prima pieces that some Chamber Singers need to learn, a smaller group convened at the front of the bus to learn the Cuban song “Mercedes”. This sent me to a mid-bus seat, where I was happy to get to know Stephanie T. and Jenni W. a bit better, plus practice names and share thoughts with several others. Just as highway 6 joined Interstate 70, our bus suddenly braked as a motorcyclist cut in front of us to go to the aid of another cyclist who had crashed just beside the road. I successfully called 911 but probably wasn’t the first to do so.

Our sight seeing stop today was Canyonlands National Park in Southern Utah - first to “Grand View Point Overlook” where the “ooh’s” and “ah’s” began. Since we didn’t lose anyone over the precipitous edges there, we tried again unsuccessfully (even egged on by James R’s French Horn peals) at Green River Overlook, where I stepped between 2 rocks into air the width of my foot - oops! Many photos later, we left for tiny Monticello, Utah.

Arrival brought tragedy in the form of a message for Cam W. that his sister died yesterday. Several in the group knew Amanda (a former VIVA/Prima singer) which broadened the pain. Breanna Mc & Andrew S. in particular consoled Cam, and the whole group reacted first with shock and then with support.

Other forms of bonding happened with the pink beach ball that Bruce had provided for group activity... and in the pool /or hot tub...and after grocery stops for beverages. Altitude of 7,000 ft. computed with consumption of low alcohol US beer caused a few experiments re. tolerance, and it appeared that all slept well.

April 30 - Curtis

April 30th – Curtis

It’s warm, warm like a cigar after a long day of sweat and I’m casually dodging drunkenness as I sit shirtless on stairs just as hot as the stagnant air around me.

I don’t know why movies make me think or why I enjoy this group of people, but I can feel the weight of fatigue and my leaden tongue. There is nothing sacred on this tour.

Here I am nipping at people who only show me kindness; alcohol and flirting does nothing to drown out reality.

... Fatigue always wins – no matter how many hours on the bus we pass in silence, and reality always returns no matter how many hours I miss of sleep.

I just consistently end up where my mind and responsibility are not – like describing the events of the day; there were many yet nothing is compelling me to write them.

... I just watched “THE JACKET” and found myself pondering death; I have a bottle of Jager, Sun-tan lotion and an Orgy-Kit to keep me company, but they are hardly comforting.

A little hotel called the Ambassador in Albuquerque, N.M. isn’t helping either. People stumble by and drink their spirits up, but they hide their broken promises and feed their rebellion. I’m no better – I just feel like I’m floundering for real fulfillment in a world of inane possibilities

... According to the surgeon general, paying \$25 for a bottle of gut-rot in New Mexico is not worth the liver-failure.

Well love stinks, and life ain’t much better, so let’s drink our fears away and sleep off our pride – only to almost get run over by a bus the next day, and wait too long for a cab. Let’s lie to our friends, take pictures, tell stories, keep up the neighbors, molest each other, goad our way into stupidity, and sleep it away with someone we don’t even know so that we can wake up and do it all again in the morning.

GOD I LOVE TOUR.

May 1 - Sara H.

A thin line of sweat trickled down the outline of Juan-Pablo’s back as he scanned the latest border patrol report. Something tugged at his lower-intestine. (editorial: sounds like the opening line to one of Steinar’s horror novels) Was it the day-old taco he had eaten for breakfast or the realization of the profundity of the news he had just read?

“You are sure this report is accurate?”

“Si señor. Alejandro said there can be no doubt.”

“It is as I feared then. José, you know what we must do.”

Juan Pablo sighed. He sat back in his chair like a man weakened by old age. The task awaiting him would be his greatest challenge yet. As he looked up, he saw his friend José’s face altered by a mixture of fear and anxiety.

“José? Did you have anything more to report?”

“No señor. Well... I mean... it’s just that... how bad could it be? After all, they’re only singers”

“I know, José, but, we cannot be deceived. We have intelligence that there music is inappropriate for our country, and that they, in fact, do much more than sing. I have heard rumors of riotous, destructive parties filled with drinking and nudity, and the libidos of their men are rumored to be so strong that it seduces even the most devout and chaste of our local beauties. No, our path is clear. The UVic Chamber Singers and Prima Choir must not be let into our country!”

The normal cacophony of the bus was/had been blanketed by a soporific silence (editorial: (spelling)“soporific”: Inducing or tending to induce sleep). What once was an eager and excited group of 40 singers a week ago, was now a disheveled collective of slumbering bodies. All was quiet as the group slept off the effects of a late night of shenanigans and hijinks. Through my sleepy haze I looked out of the window to see the desert landscape sliding by. I closed my eyes again looking forward to an uneventful bus ride – time to sleep and recuperate for the first night in Mexico. Little did I or any of our group know of what awaited us at the seemingly innocent and routine border crossing.

“Senor! Senor! They are coming!”

Juan Pablo started out of his reverie and looked towards the United States border line. Sure enough, a black coach bus was moving towards his border. His moment had arrived. “Alright José. Prepare the men. Remember, they must not be let in.”

“Si, I understand. But what are we to say?”

“Surely there is some bureaucratic loophole you can exploit. Tell them their emissions are not acceptable or that they are lacking the correct forms. Since it is a holiday in our beautiful country the forms will not be available today and they will be forced to give up and return to their frozen wasteland of a country.”

“Ah Juan-Pablo, you are right of course. But enough talk. They are here!”

“Alright everyone! Wake up! Make sure you have your passports! Sit up straight and look Sharp! (editorial: Curtis Sharp) We are at the border, and we don’t want any

trouble!”

The choir wiped the sleep from their eyes and gave a collective stretch. Everyone sat up a little, infused with a new sense of excitement at the prospect of entering Mexico at last. However, time passed and no one moved. Why were they still at the border? Had something gone wrong? Another quarter of an hour passed before Bruce, Jason and our lovely interpreters Cam and Anne returned to the bus.

“Okay folks listen up,” Bruce announced to the bus. “We have been denied access Mexico. (editorial: in Nina’s original manuscript, the original words “the bus” were present before “Mexico” was written to replace them) We are going back to El Paso and we’ll try again tomorrow. Apparently we are missing some documentation and we can’t obtain it until tomorrow. All we can do now is hope for the best.”

The bus turned around like an arthritic hippopotamus (editorial: Hands down the best simile I have ever heard) and was escorted back to the United States. An uneventful day had been injected with uncertainty. The bus made its way back to El Paso where, fortunately, accommodation had been found. While no one knew what tomorrow would hold, the present was there to be enjoyed. An outdoor pool proved blissfully relaxing. Entertainment was provided by the newly established UVIC Men’s synchronized swimming team. To cap off the day, a group meal was held. The atmosphere was mellow, the meals were large and the singing was plentiful. Kalinka was performed for its first lesbian, and a western steak house heard its first and probably last rendition of an Ave Maria. All in all, an eventful day.

May 2 - Stephanie

Are we there yet? Yes... yes we are FINALLY in the hot country of Mexico. Today was one of our earliest starts of the trip (6:30) and I didn’t even get any coffee! We said goodbye to our gorgeous hotel in El Paso, Texas and headed to the border for round two, but oh, wait, buses can’t cross at the crossing we went to first, so we drove around to another AFTER packing up our lives and walking through the US check in for the second time in 12 hours. Unbelievable! We didn’t even step foot in Mexico but because of the funny setup and NO communication between the countries, our patience was tested again. Finally at the proper crossing, we got an escort into Mexico where we could attain the bus papers we were lacking for entrance. Cam and Anne worked their Spanish magic while we all waited on or beside the bus. Some of us celebrated before noon with a refreshing cerveza and some pizza.

The best part of the whole painful experience is that we now sit here in Mexico without them ever viewing or scanning our passports. After we got the paper, dropped it off and headed to the next check-in, we never had to go through any inspections... how does that work?

The next 5-6 hours were spent on the “home sweet bus” entertaining ourselves by listening to music, reading books, playing card games, playing magic, and solving Sudoku puzzles. I had to pee for the last 2.5 hours so bad; that makes the trip so much longer.

Finally at our hotel with funky one-way windows and see through showers, we split up for dinner. My group wandered through centre town to find nothing open except a little café with sandwiches. After we saw some sights, and watched a Mariachee band put out a carfire, we headed back to the hotel for some drinks. If we learned anything tonight: don’t lock the bathroom door if you’re drunk and going to pass out.

All in all, a successful day. Welcome to Chihuahua; I’ve had two sightings of a Chihuahua in Chihuahua, Chihuahua.

May 2 - GRob

(- After 5 hours of bureaucratic hell, never knowing whether we would be allowed into Mexico to sing our 5 concerts....we finally got in!

- Much praise to Cam and Anne - our fabulous translators!)

Prologue:

We enter Mexico a day late. A day in which the American customs officers are sticklers about who knows what again. 3rd time’s a charm. A day while during a journey made to Chihuahua (the pronunciation of which is not the sounds of possibly an asian couple fornicating but more like a conversation between a parent and child during dinnertime), sand and wind-filled pillars descend from the heavens as if a power greater than that of humankind is intent on charging whirling sentinels the task of overseeing our dry dusty trek across the Mexican plains. A day when a quest is bestowed upon a group of magnificent eleven to seek out the house of miracles (casa de la milagro) and communication is sporadic but traditional tequila shots and table stacking in the name of Imelda Alcalá are welcome. A day where e mail is checked and large showers with stone floors and glass walls can be found in all Hotel Mirador lavatories. An eventful day.

May 3rd - GRob

- To Monterrey

Desolation

On the bus

Again.

I don’t know where we are or where we’re going

...

One day flows imperceptibly into another

On the bus.

We forge on against the columns of gust and dust

Through the desert.

I have ceased travelling through time

For the terrain is monotonous and

My perceptions don’t change from

One moment to the next.

On the bus

Again.

Singers gravitate to polar locations

With dynamic card dealing done and

Technical electrical intellectual cultural

Charging, sandwiching relaxing

Static individuals.

I find similar trends occurring in other

Contained communities.

Consider county, country, continent.

“Where are you sitting today?”

Off the bus

Lunch.

Evan and I support local street meat

Then consume spicy chicken gorditas instead.

Water, banana and a dirty bathroom.

On the bus

Again.

Some gather for Rum
“E”

Some gather for magic.

Nina enchants herself with

A sausage of bad luck and becomes unwinnable.

Some gather for a movie.

Khan’s wrath is defeated by

A charismatic youth with a day off

(A day off is how today appears on the itinerary

although such is not the case. Is it possible that

a film

based on such a day is chosen only to live vicari-

ously through?).

Some gather for a song.

An online love song lament

Rings too true.

Some gather that it would be a good idea

To grow porn star badges on their faces.

On the bus.

Still,

Most are while we are escorted

To the place where we will find eat and drink

tonight.

Still

I don’t know where we are and

I couldn’t tell you with a map.

Women and machetes,

Men and bats

Riot “just down the road”

In Mexico City.

Still

I get off the bus and

Go to sleep

An uneventful day.

May 4th - Epilogue: GRob

A day where one wakes up to no health and an unbreakfast (continental). A day that will not stop us from picking up and moving a car when faced with tardiness. A day wherein jokes are told on the bus and Evan does a rendition of the brick joke that would make Darryl Neville proud and I try to remember just how much "Ah luhv mah shaip!" A day in which Canada treats Mexico to some choral singing and Mexico treats Canada to some heaping plates of meat. A day when I can say "It feels good to be singing again". A day when a stereotypical homosexual Star Wars fan can say "May the fourth be with you." An eventful day.

Bang!

By Graham Robinson

P.S. An honourable mention goes out to Cam Wallace for keeping me entertained with live music while I composed this.

May 3rd - Kim

Chihuahua-Monterrey.

Well, so I am told, somewhere along our 12 hour bus ride to Monterrey, we got stopped by both random customs people and a group of armed militia. Apparently, at a checkpoint, we were supposed to fill out another form similar to the one needed at the border crossing. Our future is uncertain, but I cannot complain due to the cheap tequila found at the supermarket. Bad directions or a wrong turn extended the trip by an hour or two so many people turned to playing card games, Magic the Geek-land-Gathering (editorial: Geeks are a diverse and cultural group) and Boggle. Ok, yes, I know how to play Magic (editorial: HA!), but only when the 8/8 dragons come into play :P (editorial, yes the colon and capitol "P" were both included even in the hand-written text).

Onwards we drove and drove (well actually Jason did, how he manages it we will never know) and when we finally arrived at 9:30pm-ish, it was a baking 28 degrees. We ate, we drank, we massaged. All the good things about these trips. You know what I'm talking about. Another successful happy-go-lucky day ends. Good night.

Kim Barnes over-and-out.

New Song: (Tequila, Cerveza, Rum y Vodka)

May 4th - Laura

Woke up today ready for our shortest bus day yet. Only 4 hours to Ciudad Victoria Woo Hoo! It's amazing how tour changes your distance perception. Normally, a long drive for me is driving to Duncan (Sad I know). Now, spending 12 hours on the bus without a bathroom break every 5 hours is no problem at all.

I was also happy because today is my birthday and I won't have to spend it entirely on a bus, as was my fate last tour, where my 23rd birthday was spent on a 14 hour bus ride from Rumania to Bulgaria.

So anyways, I woke up in the morning and had a shower (old, but that was a bit of relief considering our air conditioning unit was broken). Then, we packed up and went down to breakfast, which consisted of pastries and fruit, real delicious fruit! (editorial: fruit does not equal breakfast)

Afterwards, we transported all of our luggage down to the bus which had been backed down a little alleyway. Much to our surprise, a car had been parked (illegally) right in front of the bus. After the owner apparently refused to move said car, our manly bass and tenor sections were dispatched to push the car backwards out of the way.

The parking attendant seemed quite sympathetic (at least he didn't call the cops on us)

So back on the bus again, but only for four hours. For the first two hours, everyone mostly slept, but for the second half we had the immergence of the infamous Prima Open Mike Hour. It started as one would expect with that glue that binds all Prima Tours: The Brick Joke. Afterwards, we had two straight hours of increasingly groanful jokes. In my opinion, the worst stinker was Bruce's golden screw joke, though several of the Scottsmen and sheep jokes gave it a run for its money.

In the meantime, the country side had changed from stark desert and cacti to lush tropical rainforests with flowering trees. Ciudad Victoria was incredibly warm and muggy.

We had lots of fun trying to unload the bus. The problem was that the road in front of the hotel was one way such that the bus could only pass the hotel on the left, meaning to unload the bus would require us to block off all lanes of traffic on a busy Mexican street.

Upon stopping, we found out that we were supposed to park in the lot adjacent to the hotel. Jason tried, but to have any chance of backing up the street and into the lot, he would need to be in the opposite lane and either way we needed to block off both lanes of traffic. Bruce (bless his heart) tried, where as most of the rest of the choir was slightly more terrified of death. This led to Bruce's first (I hope) shouting match with the locals. A guy in a fancy black truck was partially in the lane we were in trying to block and Bruce knocked on the back of the truck to indicate his displeasure with the situation. The truck driver then got out of the truck and started shouting at Bruce. When his companion got out of the passenger seat, I started to worry about the fate of our choir director. Luckily, Jason provided a distraction by zooming off with the bus. Eventually, he came back (this time in the farthest lane and we managed to back the bus in.

The hotel was pretty nice; the air conditioning even worked (and there was much rejoicing)(editorial: yaaay) We had a quick practice in one of the little hotel meeting rooms, then had the afternoon off. Deb, Robert, Kuran and I had some lunch of peanut butter and banana sandwiches (mmmm gummy) and then went for a walk about town. We found a nice little park (ah green things, how I've missed you!) Eventually, we came across a grocery store and picked up more treats for a pre-dinner snack.

Our concert was an excellent success, especially considering the really tough acoustics of the auditorium. The concert took place at the local university (located just 50 meters from the hotel). By the time we left it was pouring with rain, a novelty after spending a week in the desert. First, a local choir did a set of four songs. They were pretty good with some really impressive soloists. The even finished with La Cucaracha!

After the concert, we all piled into a really old bus, and drove to a restaurant. Jason looked particularly nervous near the back (he was standing as there weren't enough seats for everybody on the bus) We were taken to a really nice restaurant where dinner was being provided to us by our hosts. Anyway, it looked pretty good (I couldn't eat most of it because I'm a vegetarian)(editorial: It was the peak of carnality). The restaurant also had an excellent live band, who played lots of American rock songs. We also had a toast to Amanda, Cam's Sister, who passed away a few days previous, with her favorite drink, Cogniac.

After dinner, our choir decided to dance. We were the only people in the crowded restaurant to dance, may I add. The band even seemed surprised to see dancers. I guess their regulars are too cool to dance, or maybe they decided to keep clear of los guerros. Even Bruce and Connie were seen dancing to "Sweet Child of mine"

At midnight, the bus left the restaurant for the hotel. We got in at about 1:00am but most of us were too buzzed to sleep. So we had little mini parties, and drank Evan's Tequila of guilt. A pretty nice birthday!

May 5 - Evan

"I wet my toothbrush with Tequila"

Well, here we are on the 9th day of tourdom. There is a general contentment thusfar unknown. Today, we were treated to a fantastic breakfast (defined as one containing protein and not muffins) that we just found out was financed by Bruce's jedi mind trick, or, possibly, just the looming threat of a Bruce spazz.

I, personally, was overjoyed to be able to replace the fantastic carnal feeding frenzy of last night. I unfortunately lost the porcine, bovine, avian feast to the porcelain goddess along with a tonic of "sublime" tequila... although the name of that particular potent potable is somewhat deceptive.

Judging by the exuberant noises coming from the sought-after card table seats, Matt just scored a 24 cribbage hand. This revelation was accompanied by what sounded like a victory cheer from "Bring it On"... snap, snap...snap

I will certainly continue this journal soon, but the weight of my eyelids from the 9th consecutive 9:00am or earlier morning was too much to bear that I didn't even finish writing this sentence until several hours after I started.

Now, a short poem about the activities of the bus riders
Pikinini naps
While Bruce is checking maps, and
Connie's taking snaps
Steve is contemplating
Tim is educating
James is bending pitches
Jay avoiding ditches
Laura's softly snoozing
A bible Deb's perusing
Steinar has a blinder
Meg, an open binder
Ann is off translating
Katlas ponders mating
Sarah's smiling sweetly (sarah T)
Nancy chats discretely
Hell-Boy's tamely sitting
Robert's book is fitting (editorial: The book was about dragons I think)
Caitlin's arms are chomping (Caitlin K)
Scambler's feet are stomping
Cam is children's singing

Kuran, sing-a-longing
Neil is backwards-sitting
Marsha freely knitting
Breanna's mind is elsewhere
Curtis loves his man-hair
Jenni's outward sprawling
G-Rob's deftly scrawling
Nina's closely huddled
Kim is being cuddled
Matt has on his game-face
Scott has more than one ace
Steph is softly snoozing
Nicole is sadly losing
Corrine's phones are screaming
Britt, as always, dreaming
Caitlin's into napping (Caitlin R)
Hell-girl, soulful clapping
Drei and Chels are kissing
Sometimes hitting sometimes missing
Isaih may as well be dead
Me, I'm going back to bed

"You have to push it towards the thing... or pull it... depending on what angle you're coming from" --- K. Dobbs

Now back to free verse. With the rigors of metric constraints and rhyming schemes gone, I can describe the countryside. Humid sub-tropical landscapes elapse as we speed down a crowded 2-lane highway.

The lunch stop provided me with a very valuable life lesson: the coolest sounding thing on the menu can be the worst thing imagination could conjure.

"It's called Mondongo... how could I go wrong?" ---E. Fabri

"Mondongo"... it sounded kickass; however, it turned out to be a heinous concoction of entrails, pre-entrails, and post-entrails all blended in a tomato-based goo. I am at a loss for words to truly capture the execrable disgust that this brew so inspired, but let me say this: were this soup to be set before me on the show, "Fear Factor", I would have walked out on the \$50,000 without a moments thought.

Unbelievably, Nancy managed to finish the entirety of the broth. She truly is a trouper, or, as was just coined, a triper: one who can stomach stomach.

Mentally retarded, creationist orangutan would be a sterling compliment to the atrocious driving tendencies of the average southern-Mexican highway driver. We followed a two-trailer truck with a bent axle, fishtailing haphazardly down narrow roads with the words "transporta material, peligroso", or, "DANGEROUS GOODS". This provided great excitement for those watching this cretin, who wondered whether the next shawshank would be enough to send this rolling juggernaut careening into a small jungle community. 4:45... Mangos, bananas, oranges, more retarded drivers, fruit trucks, guys riding in fruit trucks, more retarded drivers, more dangerous goods trucks, and, of course, more retarded drivers driving dangerous goods trucks - this time, Pikinini recognized the number of the dangerous goods code... sulfuric acid.

Hi, you probably don't know this, but this paragraph is being written 48 hours after the previous one. Hopefully, this fact will at least partially convey the degree to which Poza Rica kicked ass.

The hotel was everything we dreamed it could be: double beds for EVERYONE (no cuddling with Tim), adjoining doors, a balcony with a view, a huge A/C, and a roof that would later be the location of some ground-breaking tour moments (Stay tuned for tomorrow's entry, but if it isn't mentioned, remember that Isaih wins!).

The dinner was Steinar's favorite: chicken balls of chicken's balls... I ate his, and then a giant giant burger. The street meat in this city is rapture defined. The only experience that outshined the tequila, streetmeat, and the potential to sleep in PAST 7:00 am was the Cinco-de-Maio party at the local club (1 peso cover). We truly got our drink on. The club featured the greatest drunk special ever encountered - 20 beers for 30 bucks. It even came in a couple of buckets. After a round of this, and a few indulgences in the fermentation of the agave plant, (editorial: tequila, for the lay person) Neilio and I decided to schmooze with the locals by purchasing a bucket of beers and parking our bucket and our butts in the midst of the highest hottie concentration we could find. We both found success and made some new acquaintances south of the Tropic of Cancer. I didn't hear of the fates of anyone else until the next day, as I soon found myself isolated and proceeded to defy all of my Aunt's precautionary suggestions for this tour by walking home alone at 4:00 AM while eating street meat... oh yes... I went there.

Evan Fabri

May 5 - Neil

Feliz Cinco de Mayo!! (Takes shot of tequila)

Day 8. Our journey has taken us through many a dreary, dangerous landscape; The many depths of the canyon lands, endless barren terrain that stretches to the horizon, sandy rolling dunes of scorching desert, dust devils closing quickly from all sides, only now to venture deeper into the tropical jungle of central Mexico.

Surrounded by nothingness, we trudged forward through the endless wall of heat that beat down upon us. Poza Rica approaching on the horizon, the brethren of unruly cantadores was overtaken with anxiousness; urine filled bladders and stomachs devoid of sustenance causing them to tremble in their very seats. The uncontrollable throng erupted with anticipation as the motor-coach grinded to a halt, bodies spilling out as the door cracked open. The plethora of multi-colored luggage ejaculated from the underbelly of the motor-coach was quickly snatched up and hauled into the acoustically pleasant hotel lobby. With keys divided and belongings now secure in the living quarters, haggles of curious venturers set out to discover the mysteries of the vast city. With further inspection and an hour's time past, every location within a 10 mile radius that sold alcohol had been noted for later use, as well as directions to the most prestigious night club in Poza Rica. With a less than adequate meal in our stomachs, the group digressed behind closed doors to prepare for an evening of alcohol, spectacular music and dance.

After a short while, well dressed peoples emerged from their rooms half cut and ready to party. Regrouping in the lobby, the mass of riley drunkards departed into the night. Fortunately, for the excited travelers, 10 blocks and half a 26 of rum was all it took to reach El Gabino (the club). We invaded the club without second thought, despite the mediocre appearance from the outside. To our surprise, we stumbled into the finest geode of Poza Rican nightclubs. The interior of the club was a massive two floor room, with a dancing floor on the ground level and more then sufficient seating on all sides. The club also had a well lit bar placed at the back center of the first level. Seeing as e were the first people there, and the bar line was none existent, we concluded it would be best to order 4 large buckets of beer and start the night off with tequila body shots off the ladies on the bar which the bartenders and waiters, who had been watching closely, found most amusing.

From then on in, we only got louder and drunker. Many more buckets of beer were ordered and many MANY more shots of tequila were consumed. As the night progressed, a most excellent and delicious band took their place on the stage above the crowded dance floor to serenade us with songs of love, life, and fiestas. By this time, the club was brimming with locals; Hot...exotic.... locals (wink wink). When we gringos came to this realization, it was only fitting for certain "ambassadors" to extend a hand, or some other extendable body part, to the surrounding locals. So naturally, Evan and Neil bought another bucket of beer and fully immersed themselves between two groups of beautiful women in hopes of making first... and second... and third... contact. Fortunately for their good looks and mongoose quick reflexes, they managed to swipe two seats directly between these two target groups. With much tact and precise timing, Evan and Neil began the "Greeting" dance, keeping a keen eye on the locals possibly interested in "communicating". In short time, the contagious dancing spread to the tasty ladies on either side. Cracking two beers and

slipping a victorious high-5, the ambassadors were quite successful in the first contact mission. With the orgasmically delightful band filling the air with sexual prowess, opposite gendered bodies began to move closer, hips both swaying in time to the seductive rhythm. Each beat caused a pulse of sexual yearning to flow through the now entwined bodies. (editorial: Neil is referring to his dance with the locals at this point, and not with me) Words were no longer necessary as the lingo of the body was so loud and clear (which is good because we couldn't understand what they were saying anyway). As heads tilted and lustful gazes filled with fiery passion were exchanged, the lips, swollen with sensual anticipation, of the ambassador and hot local, somehow met as the sands of time ceased to fall. After a moment in eternity, time caught speed once more, and their surroundings, including the rowdy on-lookers, became quickly apparent. The horde of amused spectators were so pleasantly taken back by the wave of passion that was released, they quickly pointed to another most beautiful local, as if sacrificing her, like a virgin to the gods. The vibe coming from this local's aura's aura was strong, as she clearly wanted to also be part of this first contact endeavor. The ambassador could feel this intense vibe and slide across the floor, with a suave, flowing motion, to welcome the enthusiastic local. Their bodies emanated with passion as tongues locked and hands discovered the curvatures of each others body.

The ambassador was so overtaken with drunken passion and sexual tension, that the rest of the evening became a blur. But, I can only imagine it went something like this: HEY SARAH!!.....*running away down the streets of Poza Rica*....Isaiah in hot pursuit of drunken run away..... interruption of sweet sweet love making.... pass out in bed... wake up in the other bed wondering why another roommate is in his bed, but clearly it is the roommates bed and the run away drunk is not quite sure how he got there.

May 6 - Nicole

Mission Impossible: Again

Time: 12AM

Location: Hotel Xanath, Poza Rica, Vera Cruz, Mexico

Agents Involved: Big Bird, Mother Earth, Windsock, Keeper, Devilled Egg, Papa Smurf and Kajungas

The Mission: (should they have chosen to accept it (and they did)); To reveal intel on the hotel and its shifty owners.

Brief: After all of the agents were contacted with self-destructing devices, they congregated on the first floor. Windsock was in the lead and was ambushed by an unknown number of enemies and shot in the leg. Big bird administered a shot of adrenaline to him and the mission continued. After checking every room on the floor, Keeper used his scanner to locate a hidden entry and exit point. After securing them, the agents proceeded outdoors through a sliding glass door.

Outside, there were giant trip wires everywhere and Papa Smurf took a hit. Several searchlights passed by but all of the agents evaded their piercing gaze successfully. After receiving intel that further trouble awaited them a few floors up, the team moved stealthily onward. On the 7th floor, another entrance to the roof was discovered. Switching to their infrared goggles, the agents searched for human heat signatures. Boobytraps were discovered and explosive devices were laid. After a brief encounter with rookie squad orange, the team's position was compromised and Windsock was forced to through down his weapon, "The Newt's Eye". Papa Smurf and Mother Earth climbed to a new level and acted quickly to neutralize roof security. Papa Smurf leapt from one roof to another in a phenomenal acrobatic feat and verified the security of another area of the premises. When Windsock tripped a wire, the team ran and hid in yet another level of the building.

Keeper logged into the security system and made the film start looping in the security cameras for easier access to surveyed areas. Windsock and Papa Smurf mounted a counter-mission to retrieve his weapon in front of the authorities. With the use of clever disguises (Canadian Tourists) and covert maneuvers, agents Windsock and Papa Smurf nabbed the "Newt's Eye" and returned to the base of operations without further injury.

The agents were debriefed at a local near-street meat vendor. Their efforts were rewarded with a fulfilling meal. The mission was completed at 02:53:54. (Upside down !)

A new tour custom from the trip to Mainland China was revived and possibly made into an annual occurrence. 'Naked Chamber Singers', or a version thereof, was played at Sonaba Beach.

Oh and we journeyed to Vera Cruz. We had some free time and I personally explored the boulevard and all of its tacky splendor. Next we glitzed and glammed ourselves up for a concert. In a mall, in a supermarket. We sold our souls, and maybe our bodies, when we sang that night. It was a horrendous venue acoustically speaking, but it was a glorious personal experience that I'm pretty sure none of us will soon forget. Oh and we found we're singing at a mass wedding; does it get any better?

Signing off, Nicole, aka agent Kajungas.

May 6 - Cam

Today we were given the privilege of waking up late to the sounds of Hustle and Bustle of the thriving metropolis of Poza Rica. Most of us needed the extra sleep after breaking it down till the wee hours of the morning in the club the night before

By 10:45 we were all fed and dressed in our finest casual performance attire, loading up the bus and ready to go, everyone taking their preferred medication to ease their individual sore throats and lack of voice. Through the Halls, Fisherman's Friends, oil of Oregano, Pepto something we were able to croak out our numbers and drive to the university

By warmup, we were right as rain. It was a nice large white room that must have sat at least a couple hundred. During our warm-up, we were greeted by the local director of the university, who gave a long, elaborate and warm speech about how young people like us were the future, and how important it was to connect with people of other countries and that we could promote peace and harmony and so on and so forth.

We were brought to a back room where her daughter, fluent in English, somewhat continued the speech, but mostly told us about the pyramids we would be seeing that afternoon and about the local clubs. Bruce came back from an interview a few minutes later and informed us that the place was packed. It was.

The concert went swimmingly, at least in my opinion. Unlike the last one, we were singing to a full house and we could actually hear each other. What else can I say, the concert was great. You would have had to have been there to get it. Basically the only way I could put it is that we sang the shit out of the University of Poza Rica. (But that's a little crass)

After the show, I had to miss some mingling with the locals to help Steinar fix his glasses (that he just got fixed), but to no avail as the place he went to was closed for siesta. We managed to run and catch the bus back to our hotel where we could not enjoy a meal of crappy fish and vegetables and spaghetti. I think our hotel had the idea that we were in Mexico to eat some sort of bastardized version of gringo food. I ate it anyway; it was free.

We were soon on our beloved bus again, rolling over the... rolling... hills of the Mexican jungle. I was asleep, but I saw it on the way back so I can testify that it was beautiful. We reached the sight of the pyramids and were greeted by a host of people of somewhat Mayan descent, toting bottled water, parasols, sunglasses, shorts, and many other goods for sale.

After a small confusing wait, (we were getting pretty used to these by now, but it was hot so we were a little bit cranky, at least I was) we sorted out our fee and entered pyramid land. We had forty five minutes to roam around the ruins of an ancient and great civilization in the blistering hot sun, It's hard to imagine the amount of work and heat stroke that had to be endured to build these gigantic sacrificial shrines. It was totally worth it, though, they made one of the coolest looking places I have ever seen. Their pyramids are still perfectly suited to the sweltering humid jungle landscape thousands of years later... I want one (pyramid that is)

We all got back on the bus, tired, hot, and dripping buckets of sweat. Our next stop was the village of our host, Eric, (I can't remember the name) and we had to decide how long we would stay there to shop and such. We democratically decided that it was too hard to count the votes between those who wanted to stay one hour and those who wanted to a half-an-hour, so we used shitty democracy (editorial: is there any other kind?) to ensure that the latter party won by dividing the vote into 1 hr, 45 mins, and ½ hour. I was hot, sick, and weary and at this point, government corruption really pissed me off. I can see how people in hot climates could be into revolutions.

In Eric's town, we couldn't find the same tourist knick knacks that were offered at the pyramids, but it was really nice to walk through the streets and local shops

and such. It was a hilly, jungly, place with a church and a square on a hill that offered some of the most supreme vistas around. In front of the church, there was a huge pole (Many stories high) on the pole, there were five men. They sat and played music to honor the gods, then, in order to make sure that the gods were really happy, four of them slowly lowered themselves upside down on ropes while spinning in circles while the fifth kept jamming. It took a few minutes for them to get to the ground, and it looked really cool. If I were the gods, I'd be pretty happy. I would also be pretty happy if it were my job to hang upside down and get lowered from a giant pole three times a day.

We all piled on the bus again and drove into the sunset (Note: this sunset was epic and beautiful) over the Jungle hills back to our hotel where there was a meal of crappy Mexican food waiting for us (Breakfast was good at this place but they pretty much shit the bed as far as lunch and dinner goes).(editorial: thank you for the proper use of the term "shit the bed")

Feeling fully dissatisfied, Breanna and I went in search of street meats to wet our pallets. We were soon comforted by the succulent flavor of tacos and the refreshing goodness of ice cream and flavored ice water. (delicious creamy stuff filled with fruit) At the Weladeria (ice cream shop) a young man asked if I knew where we would be singing in Vera Cruz the next day. He was from there and wanted to see the show. I was somewhat taken aback but very complimented that he had heard of us. Of course, I hadn't the foggiest idea what to tell him. (editorial: In hindsight, it's probably better he didn't find out!!!)

We went back to the hotel and went to sleep. Others went to the movies or swam in the pool. Some extreme troupers found the energy to drink. This was a long day of many sights and oppressive temperatures. I went to bed exhausted and happy to be in this country where I feel like I could live forever drinking Sol and margaritas and watching senioritas. I am a cheeseburger and this is paradise. (editorial: thank you for the Jimmy buffet reference)
Cam Wallace signing out

May 7 - Author unknown

May 7th Poza Rica to Vera Cruz

Author's note: I am a lazy bum and didn't write this entry until May 17th, so my memory is a little rusty. So sorry folks!

Hooray! Today, whatever horrible bug and/or food poisoning I had has passed. Unfortunately, whatever I had seemed to be contagious, because several other people were sick. I still suspect that it was the unpurified water that the people at the University gave us.

Anyways, as promised, we stopped at a beach after a few hours of driving. The beach was beautiful – exactly what we needed in the extreme heat of Vera Cruz. We had to pay 50 pesos to use the private beach, but Cam talked the guy down from 100 pesos and all our money went towards food at the Restaurant which was on the beach.

It was a little overcast, but the water was wonderful. The waves were strong and could carry you out to sea and the water itself had an excessively salty taste. Swimming was so refreshing and exhilarating, so much so that a few people (The usual suspects: Kim, Steiner, Hell-boy, Neil, Matt, Curtis et al...)(editorial: me? Somewhere lumped in with the "et al") went swimming in the buff.

Our food took forever to be made, causing Bruce to have a little panic attack; we were only supposed to be at the beach for 1 hour and 45 minutes, but it turned out to be closer to two and a half hours. In my weakened state, I didn't feel like braving any interesting Mexican food, so I had rice and fried bananas, which were a little bland, but still good.

In the evening, we got dressed up in our formal choir uniforms for a concert at... a supermarket? (editorial: ckchhhhhchk... Clean up on aisle 6... ckchhk) Yes, indeed, we sang on a little miniature stage next to the check out stands while the P.A. system bellowed out price checks and little kids ran wild. It was hilarious! Steinar could not stop (editorial: khhhhhk Alejandro to bags please... Alejandro to bags khhk) laughing at the ridiculousness of the situation. Of course, Bruce shortened up the concert a fair bit; I'm pretty sure all of us agreed that "Epitaph" would not go over well with this crowd.

The acoustics weren't really great, obviously, but we made the best of it. At the very least, the concert will make an interesting and funny story for back home.

We headed back to the hotel and a few of us (Evan, Caitlan K., Hellboy, Brittany and I) wandered around the city once it got dark. The heat was stifling, even next to the water, and when you factor in the smell of heated sewage and hundreds of cockroaches, well, let's just say it wasn't the most beautiful place on earth. Don't get me wrong; it was an amazing place, with so much culture and different looking architecture. I just could have done without the bugs.

I kind of freaked out about the cock-roaches. (editorial: understatement) Everytime I saw one (which was about every 2 seconds), I screamed and did a little creepy crawly dance/run. Evan and Caitlin bugged me (no pun intended) mercilessly about my irrational fear, claiming that cockroaches are harmless. By the end of the walk, the constant exposure to the plum-sized cockroaches made me a little less jumpy, but I still maintain that cockroaches are fricking creepy as all heck!

We headed back to the hotel, where some people, (who shall remain nameless for their own protection) smoked a little (editorial: "Cold Milk"). It was a pretty mellow night all in all. Caitlan got what looked like the most amazing back massage from Evan (ooo!) (editorial: Hey everybody! Come and see how good I look!)

Around 2:30 to 3 am, we hit the hay. I had to wake up Nancy and Anne in order to get in the room (Stupid one-key-only policy: sorry Nancy and Anne)

All in all, it was another sweet day in Mexico, definitely high-lighted by our kick-ass supermarket concert.

May 8 - Anne

We began the day with a morning concert in a theatre in Vera Cruz. For reasons that were never explained, our audience consisted of 126 couples participating in a mass wedding in the same theatre before and after our concert. The concept of a mass wedding, epitomized by the seats which were numbered in pairs, was disturbing, humorous and bewildering to various members of the choir. Nevertheless, the newlyweds made a fairly appreciative audience, if somewhat lacking in the area of clapping along. The valiant efforts of Jason, our bus driver, went unappreciated by the audience thought not by the choir. Later, many singers decided to hit the beach. While in the water, the idea of moving their swim trunks occurred to several of the boys, whose names include Neil, Matt and probably Steinar. Curtis was a late addition. Photographic evidence of this episode is available upon request. Not all the other beachgoers, however, appreciated the boys' efforts to improve the landscape. One such person called the police, who showed up in droves to see the spectacle. By the time they arrived, the boys were dressed again to their possible disappointment. After attempting to lecture of perhaps encourage the wannabe nudists (who can tell in Spanish anyways?), the police departed, although some were to reappear later on, apparently to check whether anyone had lost their shorts again. It was a day of many run-ins with the police for Curtis, whose wallet was stolen from his pocket in the day. The only suspect was, unfortunately a man with no legs. When called identify him late that night, Curtis appeared rather uncomfortable with the situation. It was no use anyhow since the man was not in possession of the wallet and could neither by charge for its theft nor help recover it.

A recent report places both Steinar and Hellboy getting naked at a different beach that afternoon. They managed to avoid talking to the police, unlike their less fortunate counterparts. Notably Steinar was heard to have discussed getting naked at the hotel pool that night for twenty five minutes, but did not follow through. It is unknown what caused this aberration in his normal routine.

Other events of interest include a snowball fight in room 208 and the purchase of a least one speedo. All in all, I would certainly recommend Vera Cruz as a good place to return to on vacation. After all, you won't find such a friendly police force just anywhere.

May 9 - Brittney

This morning we were finally given the opportunity to sleep in past 10am. Thanks to the fact that the drive from Vera Cruz to Xalapa was only two hours, we didn't have to leave till 12 pm k. Upon our arrival, we were notified that our lodgings during this particular stay would not be in a hotel as per usual, but in a hostel. There were some cheers and some groans, but I think the general sentiment was disappointment. Our fears and doubts were quickly laid to rest, however, one a thorough inspection was had be all. This hostel was nicer than some of the hotels we previously enjoyed! Almost immediately a majority of us flocked to the terrace facing the street. There were three terraces in all, one on the 3rd and top floor, with a generous view of the busy streets below. The other two were on the second floor, and were separated by a small restaurant, which unfortunately was not in use during our stay.

Those of us on the front terrace laid out towels and blankets, and did our best to soak up the afternoon sun. Around 3, we all walked about 100 metres maximum, to

a beautiful restaurant which served us a large, delectable meal. To the awe of the vegetarians, the restaurant also provided one of the largest veggie meals they had the pleasure of devouring so far k.

Upon our return to the hostel, out came the beers, the bongos and the guitar, and together we drank and sang until the sun no longer graced our past Canadian bodies with its presence.

At 8 we walked to the hotel in which Connie and Bruce were staying (that's right, they left the entire hostel to us....) and had dinner. Of course the boys sang Kalinka to a poor helpless Mexican lady that looked like she was going to run away or crap her pants, either of which would have been equally amusing. After returning to our hostel, a rather large game of Psychiatrist was begun, with almost the entire choir in attendance. Steinar and Meghan were in the middle and they triumphed over the game within an hour. Quite remarkable really.

It was at this time that Evan and I simultaneously experienced a craving for cold milk. You see, cold milk is very rare in Mexico, but we knew it was around and we just had to look hard enough and we would find it. Even had already lucked out twice this tour, and I can guarantee you he didn't find it at OXXO! So, we set out on a journey to satisfy a ridiculous craving that had been plaguing many of us since we left the abundant cold milk lands of British Columbia. After walking the streets of Xalapa for over an hour, and asking many a Mexican loiterer where cold milk was found, and developing several blisters each, Evan and I decided to head back to the hostel. In a last ditch effort, Evan asked a young man hurrying past us, and lo and behold! Success! He told us he would bring us some of his very own cold milk! Christian, which was this generous young lad's name, told us to meet him in front of a convenience store, and it was one block away from the hostel! All that walking and it was one block away! To put a cherry on top, while we were waiting at the store, two different boys approached us and asked if we needed help. Evan and I looked at one another, and posed the question we had repeated for the last hour and a half, "Donde esta la 'leche frio'?" And these boys also agree to bring us some of their own milk! The left, and said to expect their arrival within one half hour. Christian returned with more cold milk than we could ever have imagined! Evan gave him 200 pesos and thanked him. Within 15 minutes the other two returned and gave us about half as much cold milk as Christian, and they gave it for free!

Evan and I returned to the hostel to find the choir split into four groups. The first being those that decided to sleep in the single bunk beds originally assigned. The second was a small group that were still away at Karaoke. The third was a line of sleeping beauties on the back terrace, all curled up in their matching blue fleece blankets and white pillows. The fourth group was awake and listening to music on the middle terrace, and this group we joined. We shared our cold milk with those who were so inclined, and viewed a slide show of Steinar's wonderful pictures.

Finally the time had come for me to end my day, and I pulled myself upstairs to my room. As a last minute thought, I decided to check and see if the double bed was taken and to my great pleasure it was empty! I grabbed my pillow and my blanket and claimed the ginormous bed for myself. And consequently, I slept until 12pm the next day in the spread-eagle-in-the-middle-of-the-bed-glory k. Sweet Dreams!

May 9 - Corrine

I awoke with a start, looked at the clock, 7:52 and realized that the numbers were crystal clear and squinting was not needed in order to read the time, Damn it! I emerged from the warmth of the covers into the icebox that was our room; the air conditioner had only one setting. I popped out my contacts all the while thinking about the night prior. I did not remember falling asleep. The last thing I remember is faking an orgasm for a crowd of 9 in my room with Caitlin snuggled beside me. We must have passed out shortly after that and remained spooning until just then. Crawling back into the warmth of the bed & Caitlin's hot naked body we proceeded to make hot rampant animal sex.

me-me-me-me-me-daddy-daddy!

Soon enough Nina and Nicole awoke and joined the fun, after an extremely long stream of orgasms we all fell back asleep. Okay so we didn't have a mass orgy, but how cool would that have been?

Today was one of the few days when the bus didn't leave until 12 noon, meaning we could sleep in! After eating the free breakfast of eggs, ham and beans, we loaded the bus and began our drive from Vera Cruz to Xalapa.

The bus ride was fairly normal with some Chez Geek going down in the back which made the bus ride pass by quickly. By mid-afternoon we arrived at the hostel in Xalapa.

I've never been in a hostel before and was quite impressed with the quality. In my mind I was expecting lodging with dozens of army cots lying in an open room. The setup was quite the opposite. With 6 beds to a room, storage lockers and a sink, the rooms were cozy. There were 2 terraces where you could get some nice sun, a kitchen quarters and internet downstairs.

Right away we went down the street for lunch. The rest of the afternoon was left open for whatever our hearts desired. Some got in the Mexican spirit and had a siesta, some went exploring the city and others stayed and sun-bathed on the upper terrace with a few beers.

That night the group had supper at a different restaurant and afterward a nice game of Psychiatrist with Steinar & Megan being the psychiatrists. A few lawn chairs were broken in the event. Isaiah also broke a big glass pane; how he failed to see it, none of us know.

Later in the evening there was a mass spooning fest on the lower terrace. Being a hostel, there was no air conditioning but that night there was a nice cool breeze so many people opted to take their pillows and blankets and sleep outside under the stars.

May 10 - Editorial summary

- trip to Museum of Anthropology

- free time in Xalapa

- Evening concert at State Theatre - small but extremely receptive audience.

May 11 - Scott

11:46 am - Number of heads I can see: 26/41 - what does that mean? The old saying must be true - people don't kill people, bus rides kill people. And hippos. Those bastards are nasty. Just ask Graham. Oh wait, you cant. 2:03 - Mexico. The final frontier. These are the voyages of the bus McCullough. Our current mission - watching the Wrath of Kahn. Kirstie Alley's finest cinematic performance. Isaiah giggles! Part of me dies. 10:18 It's raining. I'm cold. That's because I'm out in it. Why? Who can tell. There is no logic here. 11:45 pm The Burger Kingdom is overrun. Those poor, Mexican minimum-waters didn't even see it coming. And now, it's too late. Much too late.

May 11 - Author unknown?

May 11 will haunt my memories as one of the most bone crunching, ass kicking, heart racing, and nail biting days on our trip. I started off like any other day: an early morning, a packed bus. But what we didn't know was that our tame little bus ride would soon become a life threatening struggle of huge proportions. WARNING! The following journal is not for the faint of heart. Be afraid, be very afraid!

9:47am: My back was cramped. I had been sitting in the same awkward position with my right arm caught underneath me for the last 14 minutes.

10:13 am - The air on the bus was hot and stuffy, making of a rich broth of Eau de Pieds, not suitable for human inhalation. Each breath weakened my grip on reality.

Silently, I slowly slipped from sanity. sss... sss... sssomethin's wrng with me ssssbalance*%#@!

10:45am I awoke in a daze. My first sensations were numbed by the frigid ice batyu in which I found myself. I tried to stand but a pain from my low back crippled any attempt. I could feel shoddy cross stitching, clumsily holding together an infected incision.

Searching for the source of agony, my fingers blindly felt their way around the small of my back, finally resting on a swollen sore held closed by a few shoddy cross stitches. As my eyes grew accustomed to the dark, I realized where I had been discarded. I was in the aft. bathroom of the motor coach. Assuming my abductors would soon be back to finish me off, I quickly jumped to my feet and felt my way in the dark to the door. Still naked, I slowly opened the door. It was empty...searching the overhead compartments, I managed to find a random pair of pants and a Budweiser shirt. Just then, 47 ninjas jumped out from behind one of the seats. I had to think fast. In one fluid motion, I jumped 9 feet into the air and did a round house kick which hit each one of the ninjas square in the teeth...they dropped like flies... I made my way off the

bus to find myself in the middle of a nobel peace prize award ceremony.. and they were calling me up to the front.
I had won an N.P.P. for being super cool.
I then built a wall to keep out those damned Mongolians.
The end!

May 12 - Deborah

You know, according to physics if no distance is travelled, no work has been done. By this logic, we had done no work by 1 pm. We left at 8:30am. Breakfast was toast which left many hungry but suited me well enough since I'd been ill. We got tea for the first time all tour and there was coffee to help with the wake up. We were all loaded and set by 8:45 and we were off! I should have been suspicious when, an hour later we passed the hotel again.

Some time last night, during our escapades in the alleys and back streets of San Luis de Potosi, a little alarm went off in the bus and no one knew why or what to do about it. As we were travelling this morning it was still going off, though Jason could switch it off. He contacted his home base as we drove, and it was eventually decided that he should not drive the bus, as the alarm indicated a problem with something to do with the transmission. It was start and stop for a while. He'd pull over and check/fix it and so on, until he could do no more and we turned around.

The good news is that we got back on the road later in the day. After a few hours of waiting and card playing, we were told by the truck repair people (thanks are due to our translators again, but that seems to be true everyday) that they could not fix it. Then just as it seemed we may be stuck until Monday, someone asked the question, "Can we drive it the way it is?" Sure! No problem! Go! Go! Go!

It was 3:30 and we were starting our journey anew. If you thought Elmer Fudd does Bruce Springsteen was weird, you're in for a surprise. We had a 9 hour drive ahead of us, and we'd already been on the bus for 7 hours. We were all getting the biggest case of cabin fever.

But we'd hit the freeway - straight roads with high speed limits and great views! The thunderstorm was particularly impressive, though we only skirted around the edges of it. There's something spectacular about a rainstorm in a desert. Cacti in puddles, sunlight through rain. I loved it. It even distracted me from the movie. We were finally making good time. We even amended our ETA to 11pm, which was an improvement. Then it happened. What else could go wrong? After passing through several military check points unmolested, we got stopped. There was no reason - Luck of the draw I suppose. Everyone had to get out as they searched our holds, played or drums, investigated our spare tire, checked our passports, scoped out the xylophone and thoroughly rifled through our food. I don't know how they expected to find anything in the bus. This being day 15 of tour, the bus is a bit of a disaster zone. Bruce claims they also made off with a package of Viagra off the dash, but I don't know whose it was. I suppose no one will claim it now. Maybe that's a tactic for dealing with military check points - strategic placement of desirables (beer, Viagra, money etc.) in obvious locations to put the personnel in better moods.

All things considered, they were pretty nice. There was one, clearly the officer in charge, who was a little more grouchy. He was the one who refused to let some of the others take pictures. In fact, he answered the request with (truly!) "Negativo!" But they found no reason to detain us, and we were back on the road before too long.

Dinner was grocery store goods and the bus was on the move.

Boggle, cards, music and obscene PA announcements. At least we didn't get lost. The rumour that the hotel was in a lagoon of gasoline which would be lit before our arrival was unfounded, but we had at long last learned our lesson. We hired a taxi to lead us to the hotel. It cost us \$150 which is a bit of a rip-off (actually \$15 -ed.) but I'll happily consider that the cost of not getting lost. That makes it a good investment in my eyes. In at 12am, out at 9 am. Tomorrow we cross the border, hopefully only once. Wish us luck!

May 12 - Stephanie

Today was a long day of travelling and waiting. After Jason and Hellboy finished surfing on the top of the bus, we were on our way With nothing but toast and coffee in our tummies. Just after getting out of San Luis Potosi our poor home sweet bus got sick, so we had to drive back and get her checked out. On a long stretch of nothingness and whistling soccer fans we all found food and drink or sorts. Gotta love a little Italian food in Mexico. Once we got the okay that the bus would be fine to drive we were back on the road. Card games were played, Z's were caught, beer and spirits were consumed and songs were sung along with Cam's guitar. We were blessed with a random check by the Mexican Military with their big guns. Isaiah and I were quite turned on by their uniforms. The full 15 hours passed and we finally arrived at our hotel in Gomez Pallacio, Mexico. Without unloading the bus we ambushed the Burger King across the street that was minutes away from closing. 43 starving Canadian Choraliens are not a force to be reckoned with.

Bed.

May 13 - Ryan

Pikinini's perspective:

Started the day of with a loud laugh when I noticed a sign on the sink that said in both Spanish and English, "This water is not for drinking." I hoped starting with a laugh was a good omen for the day's travel to El Paso. It did not take long for a delay. Less than an hour after we left the hotel we hit a military checkpoint. In keeping with the lack of logical operations in Mexico, they stopped us. Why the couldn't care less about checking out the bus when we were headed into Mexico, I don't know. Apparently they are more concerned with what the gringos are bringing out of the country than in. One of the soldiers was most amused by the fact that we were a bus full of white folks. He kept laughing, saying "Todo Gringos". Thankfully they only opened up the luggage area and poked their heads in quickly. We didn't ever have to leave the bus. It took all of 2 minutes. Barely exciting at all.

The lunch stop was fun. Wait, no it wasn't. At least in didn't take too long to find a supermarket in Chihuahua. We only drove around the outskirts on the highway for about 15 minutes, which was pretty good for trying to navigate within any Mexican city. All the food was really cheap, which was somewhat annoying as we wanted to get rid of our pesos. I wound up giving a pocketful of coins to Megan, since she's coming back to Mexico on a student exchange. Would have only gotten a buck or two back for it anyway.

After lunch, we drove, and drove and drove. There were some people (read EVERYBODY) who really needed a pee stop, especially 5 hours after the lunch stoop. Bruce gave everybody the impression that he did not want to stop for just a pee break, unless we could put some diesel in the bus tank. Every damn Pemex station we passed had no diesel, so we finally stopped at a mall. Oh, the release, so good, better than sex!

We hit a bit of a snag at the border. Figures, the one time we are going into the US from Mexico that we want to be that there are issues. It amused me that numerous items were left on the bus after Jason very clearly told us EVERYTHING must come off. That wasn't the snag though. Several people swept the bus while we took the luggage off and removed items that would otherwise have been potentially confiscated. No, the snag was that Britney had some fake Cuban cigars and of course the Americans get testy at customs when the word Cuba comes up. Even when the cigars are fake cubans. Thankfully she was only detained for a short period of time. Steinar, Hellboy and Chelsea waited for her and took a cab to the hotel. Very nice of them to give her some friendly faces to see after satisfying US Customs that she had done nothing wrong.

Other than that, no really exciting stuff. Went to Fuddrucker's for dinner. The make a decent burger. It was just, really nice to eat some food. I was damn hungry. Most of us wound up there, scattered throughout the restaurant. Uneventful. Got the shits late that night. That was unpleasant. Thank God for Immodium. Sadly, the Speedo wearing, mustache sporting "kedi pompong by the pool didn't happen. Bit of a communication break down there. I was looking forward to it, as this time my sore ankle would not prevent me from partaking. Well, that is about all for May 11. Mostly up, sat in the bus and drove north.

May 13 - Cam

Today was our last day in the United States of Mexico; before we crossed into the united states of America. We woke up in our hotel in Gomez Palacio in time for a nice early 8 am start. I decided to pay for the buffet breakfast next to a gorgeous pool that we would not use due to time constraints.

After fortifying my body with fresh beef and carrot juice (the hotel obviously had a juicer an totally strengthened my desire to own one). I was ready for the bus ride. I slept. I chose to spend my last hours in this glorious and strange country in unconscious oblivion. But who could blame me. This bus is giving us some crazy form of cabin fever. I wake up occasionally to strange and weird conversations that made me question whether or not I was still asleep. At some point Matt and Neil had made an elaborate catamaran Battleship. Fully equipped with a catapult, out of plastic forks. Even Jason was cracking jokes that could only belong in an insane asylum. After driving past a plethora of small local independent businesses offering delicious cheap and authentic Mexican cuisine we found a desolate supermall on the outskirts of town to stop for our last Mexican meal. We all de-bussed at the best place we could find and went in search of nourishment. Evan and I went in search of street meat and foraged for a half hour past fast food outlets and rich private school playgrounds protected by razor wire fences to eventually be graced by a "tacos orientales" restaurant. We hiked back to the bus to enjoy a delicious last lunch. Unfortunately we forsook our opportunity to stock up on any tequila or anything else to take over the border, but no big deal. Others got the chance to purchase some nice bottles so I'm happy for them. After lunch we were stopped at a military checkpoint where we were all asked to get off the bus and present our passports. Most of the military guys were pretty "Amable", sharing cigarettes with Steinar and asking what we were up to, except the hat and sunglasses stick-up-his-butt commander who replied with a stoic and sinister "negativo". Obviously he had to show his troops that you have to be a bastard terminator robot when dealing with gringos. I don't think either of us bought it, but he did have a big machine gun so we didn't make fun of him until we were well on our way. Then I slept till the border, or if I wasn't sleeping it was the usual monotonous bus ride purgatory, limbo, laps in space time through desert. Actually I find desert landscape quite beautiful but after many weeks on the bus it gets hard to bear. Well we eventually got to the border and went through the motions of getting all our stuff off so that the guards could make sure we weren't bringing anything bad into their country. Most of us got through just fine. Unfortunately there is a small island in the Caribbean called Cuba that wont let the United States have its big fat way and so any goods from this country are deemed evil. (Oh yea, Cuba is communist as well which is about as evil as you can get.) Well anyway Brittney got interrogated for an hour and told that her Cuban cigars were not allowed to pass through the land of the free and home of the brave. She was pretty pissed off and I don't blame her. We were all happy to get to our hotel after another long day of travel. Many headed to the pool, many went for food, I ordered pizza for delivery, embracing civilization and the assurance that Pizza hut would be delicious no matter where I was. And that was it. We were out of Mexico. No more translating, no more street meats, no more 30Km/h highway traffic, no more armed military stops (at least I hope to God we don't run into one in Texas), no more..mexico...well at least not as much..we'll drive through deserts and towns with Spanish names until they basically fade out and we can only see the remains of the Spanish empire in such things as Quadra Street, or Cortes Island. I'll miss this country, land of tequillas and guitars, señoritas, gorditas and salsas. Goodbye Mexico, hello long drive through the U.S. Cam signing off.

May 14 - Sarah

El Paso, Texas to Blythe, California. It was another yucky 7am departure time this morning, however, we didn't end up leaving the La Quinta Hotel (which is apparently Spanish for every hospitality-like phrase in existence) until 8am. We all used the toilet on the bus a little too much yesterday - it must have been all the beer we were trying to consume before reaching the U.S. border. At any rate, kudos to Jason (or J-Rock, J-fresh, J-Dizzle...) for taking care of it yet again. The dull landscape of the southern states has returned: barren & flat, and the heat is stifling. I think we all miss Vera Cruz and Xalapa. We stopped at Arizona Mills shopping centre (or center, since we're in the USA.) Jason boasted about the mall's legendary food court & he did not disappoint. Meagan and I ate at a Japanese restaurant, but the food tasted and looked much more like Chinese. After a few more hours passing through the desert landscape, we crossed the state line into California. Bruce got us to our hotel within 5 minutes of leaving the freeway - a new record! It isn't nearly as adventurous as getting lost for 2 hours in a strange Mexican city, having the bus stuck in the tiniest alley, and getting the guys (including Neil in a topless wearing a wrestling mask) to move random cars, however, I think we all appreciated an early arrival time. Everyone hit the pool as soon as we got to the hotel and played water polo for a couple of hours. Maximum capacity of the pool was supposed to be 22 people, but I think we had at least 30 in there. Basses & Altos won out against the Sopranos & Tenors. Most people went to dinner at Sizzler, but I totally missed out because it closed at 9pm (good old Blythe, California, it's like a little taste of Powell River). I met up with everyone (Even, Caitlin K, Meagan, Steinar, Hellboy & Katlass) at the local Starbucks where we heard an amazing singer-songwriter-guitar player perform. His name was Brad Colerick (google his name if you want to find out more). This music is a kind of a mixture of folk, rock & hint of country. When he heard we had just been in El Paso, he sang us an amazing song about Juarez, Mexico. He also gave us some free CDs. We all headed back to the hotel and hung out by the pool for a bit. Jason supplied Megan and I with some beers (which was awesome of him). I suddenly felt a wave of exhaustion and needed to get to bed at midnight, which isn't as lame as it sounds because we went through a time zone and it was technically 1 am. Considering we were in such a small town, it was an awesome evening.

May 15 - Meagan

After a sweet 3 hours of sleep, we launched off from Blythe, California (woohoo!) toward Anaheim. I don't remember the bus trip, because I was having a sweet, sweet, nap. I guess it was Cam's 23rd birthday. (Yay Cam!). Upon arrival to smoggy Anaheim, which apparently wasn't too smoggy today, our lovely group divided into the Disneyland goers and non-goers, and then those who wanted to be really different & go to Knotts Berry farm. Anyways, \$59 American Dollars later, I had given in to one of the world's most terribly yet beautifully disguised child-about corporations. When someone is there, it's really better not to think about it. The happiest place on earth where altogether our meals consisted of chili cheese dogs, ice cream and churros. Mmm. the healthy American way. Since I had been there 4 times previously (plus once to Disney World, I got to be my group's personal tour guide (Caitlin, Sara, Ann, James & Jenny). We explored all the best rides first; Indiana Jones, Space Mountain, Matterhorn, Splash Mountain (where I opted to sit in the front and get soaked), and Thunder Mountain Railroad. Somehow I was dragged into "It's a small world", as all my friends were convinced that it was an essential part of the Disney experience (none had been there before). I can't remember how it happened, but I think they may have dragged me. We took a picture of the only representation of Canada - a mountie (bucktoothed at that) with a stupid bird on his head. Afterward Caitlin & I felt slightly dizzy & brainwashed. After that, the parade & then one last spin on Space Mountain. It made me feel drunk and I only needed to proceed to have one beer and two shots of tequila to keep my buzz. Were booted out of D-Land and proceeded to the hotel where we were bombarded by people's friends from the area (A few Chaucharinos as Steinar called them). That night, Hellboy left us. It was a very sad moment. The rest of the night's activities will not be mentioned !!

May 16 - Editorial summary

- Drive to San Francisco
- AAA rated hotel turns out to be a dump with a hoodlum owner.
(for fear of legal action, I won't mention the name of the hotel, but it's initials were:
THE BROADWAY MANOR HOTEL - VAN NESS AT BROADWAY IN SAN FRANCISCO.
- Evening of varied activities
May 16 - Steinar
Holy Shit, What a Day! (Cuckoo for Caca)
With Hellboy gone and Tim sleeping in a different room for the night, I had to take upon me to be the one to make sure that Evan and I were up in time. With a wake up call from the lobby at 6, I packed and went to buy some breakfast. Evan was somewhat awake when I left for 7/11. He made it on time, with Chinese food from last

night spilled all over his last somewhat clean shirt. Evan was in a great mood, as always, but it almost seemed like he was a little more so than usual. Was there something special about this morning? Had Evan been involved in some extra-curricular activities?

There were tired faces on the bus as we were preparing for a 7 AM departure. Bruce was almost ten minutes late, but was overshadowed by Katlas being twenty minutes late. Still, I must say a 20-minute delay after a day like yesterday is not too bad. Only one person on the bus seemed to think it was a problem. I will not mention names, but he is the one who sits all the way up front.

Although we had been instructed to buy our own breakfast, there were several people who had not thought ahead. This led to some irritation on the bus. Jenny was so obsessed with the "in and out"-burger joint that she seemed to break down when the group voted on not having a fast food lunch at 11 o'clock. Somehow though, we stopped at 11:20 for lunch at this burger place. When confronted with the fact that this was punishing those who had been up early and eaten a grand breakfast (me included) and that this was a decision favoring the minority on the bus, Bruce replied; "Sometimes the leader has to be an asshole." Profound words from our own elegant fascist leader. The burger tasted like fast food and after an hour, it had been digested and escaped as my body as one big cloud of intestine gas. We continued to watch a "Kings of Comedy" video. Well, I guess it is comedy when it says so on the cover, but I heard very few people laughing. I could hear Evan of course. Maybe other people were laughing on the inside?

The hotel received few kind words from the group already from the start. The rooms smelled like ass and although the beds were considerably wider than the ones we had been sleeping in for the last ten days. I didn't care much. Tim and Evan made sure our room smelled like their ass anyway...

I must mention that for some reason, I had images of a bear devouring a mouse in my head much of the day

Heading downtown, Tim, Jason, Noakes and I split from the group and went to the Apple store. It was grand. FCUK was also sweet. I needed time to clear my mind as I had some unresolved issues I needed to deal with before I got back to Victoria, so I decided to walk around downtown on my own. San Francisco is extremely beautiful. I made some phone calls and afterwards it felt like so much weight had been lifted off my shoulders that I walked around San Fran smiling and singing out loud in the streets. Evan slapping me on my back interrupted me. Isiah, Britt and the happy couple Scambler and Hellgirl were walking back to the Motel. I decided to join them. We saw some great architecture and the walk was beautiful. Scambler and Hellgirl holding hands and kissing.

Evan and I took a little detour on our way back. We wanted to see some of the real people of the city, the crack heads and the junkies. I always like to see what the dark side of a city is like. Evan bought a dime bag full of one of the local flora, and while he was shopping, I gave Rodney, a local heroin junkie, some of my coins. We laked for a while and before I knew it, a German Shepard was sniffing me, followed by a police officer in uniform. I got really scared for Rodney, and I was relieved not to be wearing my "BC- jeans". Think they might have been slightly scented.

Back at the motel, things were getting shitty in Neil's room. G-Rob had filled the toilet with crap, and without considering the amounts of shit he apparently had accumulated over the last days, he managed to leave little cables all over their bathroom floor. Neil and G-Rob spent the rest of the night cleaning their own feces, as the manager at the motel was a stupid, ignorant motherfucker. Apu, the motel-manager refused to take any responsibility for the toilet and showed little interest in making this a less crappy stay for the boys in the "turdroom".

Brittney, Sarah, Evan and I had a few drinks at a local joint called "The Tonic". Evan won a free beer by betting the bartender on whether or not he could chug a pint in two seconds. The bartender told Britt that she was a lousy tipper, and I was just hammered. I had not eaten since the In and Out (of your colon in an hour) Burger. Well, not counting the hot dog I had to eat when walking through downtown. I wasn't hungry, but the alcohol percent seemed much stronger than I am used to.

Back at the motel again, we woke Nancy up. Why? Because it was fun! She was a little grumpy at first but by the time I stumbled out of the room heading for my own quarters, she was playing truth or dare with Evan, Caitlin and Sarah. I cannot remember passing out, but I do remember waking up. With a brutal head ache...

"What goes up, must come down..."

-Blood, Sweat and Tears

May 17 - Chelsea Rose

Grass! That's all I thought upon waking this morning. I can't believe I actually laid down in the bed, in that room, in that AAA approved 1 star motel. I think everyone would agree that even a hostel in Mexico was better than that Motel in beautiful San Francisco. A few people decided to head down to Fisherman's Wharf in search of breakfast - instead Sarah Helgeson slipped on poo and Laura got the poo scared out of her by a bored homeless man. I hope this all doesn't sound horribly negative, please don't get me wrong! I loved San Francisco. I thought it was breathtaking - but that doesn't sound half as interesting as a crappy motel, bum scaring and poo slipping. After being on the bus for about 5 minutes we stopped off at the Golden Gate Bridge - which didn't look entirely golden to me at all... in fact I don't remember seeing a gate either come to think of it... I barely saw a bridge. We got some sweet group photos in front of the the goldenless - gateless - barely visible bridge. I don't remember what happened for the next few hours because I passed out on the bus. I remember something about "slack" and "how can I get rid of mushrooms?" creeping into my dreams. And when I woke some crazy, subtitled Rustafarian movie was playing. The movie wasn't too far in so I thought I'd catch up - um - yeah - no idea what that movie was about. Couldn't understand what they were saying audibly and I couldn't understand what they were saying by reading it either. We made a delightful stop at a grocery market/ fast food area in Yreka, unfortunately we passed by Weed. Tired of searching for things in a supermarket, I opted for Carl's Jr. where, being a vegetarian, I was swamped by the many meatless choices they had - Fries or Fried zucchini. Even their salads had meat. I went for the zucchini, which I immediately regretted.

Only 1.5 more hours until Grant's Ass, Oregon - you cant just fell the excitement growing on the bus:

3 restaurants (none chain), 4 motels, 2 gas stations, 3 bats, 1 black widow, 1 Safeway (passport required for booze) no pool, 1 loud-ass train track directly beside the hotel. We went for dinner and tour awards at a local restaurant/pizzeria/brewery where everything in made on site. Some people got pizza, most people got beer and a couple of people got a pint-o-veggies which was the most interesting, alien-like dish served. Had I not been feeling ill from the Fried Zucchini, I probably would have gone for that alien dish.

When Evan was finished "polishing the plaques" he began handing out tour awards.

Kim was cute, Britney was sleepy, Tim was a grandpa, Caitlin was loud, Marsha was "morning glory", Corrine showed her tits, Kuku was punny, Andrei spent money - I was Iron Bladder, which I guess was to be expected. So what? I pee a lot! Is there anything wrong with peeing?! It was great fun, I knew I'd get made fun of - for peeing. The awards were great fun! As soon as that was over everyone rushed to the incredible open until 1am SAFEWAY; where everyone got turned away at the cashier for not having their passport to buy booze. That's right - passport. No a license will not do - the must make sure you are from the country you say your are from and prove your date of birth.

Currently everyone is "gettin' er done" in a couple rooms in the motel. I feel like a party pooper sitting alone, writing a silly journal entry. I'm gonna grab some booze and party for the last time on tour.

Buenos Aires Everybody.

Chelsea Rose - AKA Ironbladder

MAY 18 - Editorial summary

- Long day's return drive to Victoria