

Delaware native leaves First State to meet global neighbors



Claire Bushey

*Note: Freelancer and former Teen Board member Claire Bushey wrote *The Wedding and Fashion Ambush for Sundaylife* until she left to go around the world. Her reports from the road will run occasionally in *Sundaylife* as she circles the globe. Here, she explains why she chose to go.*

It may be a small world according to Disney, but it ain't that small.

Look at a map of the world and locate every city, state and country you've ever lived in or visited. Then stand back and gauge the remainder. If you're like me, your personal Terra Incognita stretches from pole to pole.

I grew up in Delaware and graduated from Ursuline Academy. The knotted suburbs of North Wilmington, the reservoir on Franklin Street and the congestion of I-95 map the bulk of my 25 years.

Compare that with my perception of Australia. For me, that lumpy mass signi-

fies cheap wine, kangaroos and gorgeous men. Maps of Australia show me shape without meaning.

That's how I relate to most of this world. I've visited 10 countries, which sounds like a lot until you remember there's more than 190 countries spread over seven continents, and 6 billion people call those places home.

It's time to meet the neighbors.

I left Delaware June 10 with plans to travel around the world for at least a year.

International travel hooked me at age 13 when my family flew to England to visit my uncle. The plane sped east, and as light reached across the sky excitement mounted. We were literally flying into the sunrise. Possibility seemed as immense as the horizon as we descended into Heathrow airport, and the unknown.

Every trip I've taken since has possessed an element of that flight. The journey can be a nightmare of sleep deprivation, bad food

and uncertainty, but when the captain says, "Fasten your seat belts for landing," I twist in my seat to look out the window.

My world tour idea started with the book "World Stompers: A Global Travel Manifesto." After I finished it, I started telling people I planned to travel around the world. It was important to say it so much I believed it. A promise witnessed is harder to break.

I read books and Web sites. I opened a savings account. My parents gave me a backpack for Christmas.

In March, I bought my ticket. It flies me to Lima, Peru. Then it's two months in South America before heading to New Zealand and Australia. Next I cross Asia to reach Europe and then home. I'll be staying at hostels and with local residents I've met through traveler exchange programs like Couchsurfing.com and Women Welcome Women Worldwide.

See TRAVEL — G5

