Steve's Trip to Newfoundland

I'm back from Newfoundland. Saw a lot of relatives and made a lot of new acquaintances. Drank a fair amount of beer.

What you are about to experience is basically my stream of consciousness during the time I was in Newfoundland. It may not be easy to follow. I make no apologies.

Sunday:
We had Easter Dinner at my grandmother's place; aunts, uncles, the whole bit. I heard on the radio an ad for The Grumpy Stump Pub - 753-BEER. There are two black people in Nfld., I saw them both.

Monday:
Newfoundland is very rocky. Snow still abounds in most places. I visited the communities of Petty Harbour & Maddox Cove on the north side of the Avalon Peninsula, ate at the Captain's Table restaurant, and had the biggest piece of fish I have ever seen. Went into the Colony of Avalon (population 171) where there's an archeological dig unearthing a British settlement (Lord Baltimore) from 1620 or so. Took a few pictures. Saw a Neon w/ a big spoiler

There are only 2 places that I can find in St. John's that offer public internet access. One appears to be out of business and their space is for lease. The other is the Public Library which is, being a government building, closed for Easter Monday. I am going insane without the internet. I am glad I made the descision to buy the Palm that I'm using now. Hopefully I'll be able to at least check my email before the week is out.

My cousin David has finished his last exam of the year so he and his classmates are going on a big tear. I've been invited. Tomorrow I'll fill you in on whatever I can remember :)

Tuesday:

It's about 0400h. I am drunk @ a pizza place in Mount Pearl. I have no idea what time it is. I've just spent my last $5 of cash to get a greasy slice.

Woke up before my alarm around 7:15 or so. That always seems to happen after a night out. Big glass of water and a coffee later and I am involved in a futile attempt to try and get my handheld to work with my cousin's computer. I have a feeling it will take much patience. I actually don't feel too bad; kind of surprising given how much I drank. I definitely know I was out last night, but I think that could be the lack of sleep rather than the alcohol.

There is so much snow on people's lawns that they've taken to shoveling it onto the street just so it'll melt more quickly.

Attempted to use MUN's public access Internet terminals. What pieces of utter & complete shite. We're talking *minutes* to render a web page; not to mention that the right-click menus were disabled. Needless to say, I was not impressed.

So, anyway, I'm sitting at the terminal and the guy on the computer next to me goes to GAY.com. I couldn't tell if it was a porn site or not, but I did catch a glimpse of more than one shirtless man. I'm not one for eavesdropping but this was difficult not to notice. Then he starts chatting with his (presumably) gay friends even though the sign over both our heads plainly says "no chat". Some people.

Ate some seal flipper. Think of the most gamey meat you know, then add 50% more game and a few cups of rubber and you will begin to approximate the texture and taste of seal flipper. I guess it's some sort of delicacy. Mmmm...flipper. Sounds like I'm eating a friendly dolphin. I wonder what dolphin tastes like? Damn them for being endangered.

Wednesday:

Visted the brand new GeoCenter at Signal Hill. There are certainly a lot of rocks there. I can understand where Newfoundland got the nickname.

Until today I was sure that Signal Hill was named for Marconi's wireless message across the Atlantic. I have since come to find out that it has that name because the British military called it that in the 1700s.

Halifax has got nothing on St. John's when it comes to windy and narrow streets. Along the roads approaching the battery, which are skinnier than Bedford Row at George Street, there are enough tightly-packed houses to please even the most frugal of urban planners. And when there aren't any houses on the side of the road, there's a cliff as sheer as yer mammy's bloomers.

Saw the movie "Holes". It wasn't bad but you could definitely tell it was a Disney movie. Not one damn cuss word in the whole thing.

Thursday:

Looks like we're driving east today. Going to visit Conception Bay.

Crossed over to Bell Island on the ferry. I now have definitive proof that what I'm smelling while crossing Halifax Harbour is not the ocean. I smelled the ocean today and Halifax Harbour certainly isn't it. There isn't much to see here really, we drove around the whole thing.

There was maybe four cars on the ferry on the way over, but the way back was a different story: we arrived about 3 minutes before the ferry was scheduled to leave and it was chock full. To the ferry operators' credit, it took little coercion to get them to maneuver the existing cars enough to squeeze ours on. I didn't really feel like spending another 40 minutes looking at nothing.

Went through the communities of Bauline, Flat Rock, and Torbay. Got some very scenic photographs. Visited the Ocean Sciences Centre (unfortunately, it doesn't really open until June) in Torbay & took pictures of the seals. Check out the webcam. If I could only find some decent public internet access, I'd check it out myself.

I can't believe I've talked my dad into listening to a heavy metal radio show on the MUN radio station CHMR. It's certainly interesting to see his reactions to the titles of the songs as the DJ reads them out: "And that was 'Bring out Your Flesh' by Church of Misery." Or something like that.

Supper at my grandmother's house: delicious salmon, vegetables, and potatoes; but most curious was the dessert. It was cheesecake made with "bakeapples," or cloudberries, I believe they're called here. They have a very curious taste to them; curious but not unpleasant. Apparently they're expensive.

Went to a bar called The Republic. You can probably guess it's an Irish bar. Had a drink called a "car bomb." It's half a pint of Guinness with a shot of Bailey's dropped in and chugged. It really is better than it sounds. I think I may have inadvertently introduced a certain pattern of speech into the environment where it's probably suited best: "ass over teakettle". Some of my cousin's friends hadn't heard it before and now they're off to the races with it.

Friday:
I don't think much is going on today. The local media is all abuzz with the news of the closure of the cod fishery. I have been invited to my aunt & uncle's place for supper and my cousin has invited me out with his friends again. I don't know if I'm going to go, only because I really don't like flying while hung-over.

It's four o'clock and boy was I right about not much going on. I guess I'll be heading out to my aunt's place soon, at least I can look forward to getting on the Internet there.

BBQ at my aunt's. I ended up hanging out with my cousin Alison, her Finnish boyfriend, Petter (that's pronounced "Peter"), and some of their friends at Don Cherry's and watching the Ottawa/Philadelphia hockey game. Three periods and several beers later, the crowd dispersed and I caught a cab home. I am definitely looking forward to getting home tomorrow.

Saturday:
Woke up late, around 1030h. A shit ton of my dad's fiancé's relatives came over for lunch and to meet me. Some of them had met me the last time I was here. I was tired and it was a little too much for me.

I took refuge wherever I could.

And that brings this journey to a close. I am currently on the plane back to Halifax. All in all, it was a pretty good trip. If I'm sensible I'll have uploaded my photos from the trip so I can link to them from this story, but we'll see how "together" I am when I actually get home.

If you've read this far, then you deserve to see the photos. They are here.

It's been fun,
Steve.

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