G-Wagon

MADISON KAY / KNIGHT LIFE

Phillip Johnson busts a move in front of his 2007 Nissan Pathfinder whichs boasts an impresive sound system.

Madison Kay
Webmaster

Have you ever been stopped at a light and had someone pull up in an awesome car that you would really like to have? That car that pulled up next to you might have been junior Phillip Johnson's Nissan Pathfinder.

Johnson owns a greyish-blue 2007 Nissan Pathfinder. Being a 2007 model this car looks like it belongs to a movie star. Johnson's car looks very similar to the new 2007 Suburban: very square, but awesome.

"There isn't much that I don't like about my car, but I would have to say that the things that I don't like about my car are the fact that it is really big, and it doesn't come standard with a passenger shut-up button," Johnson explained.

Johnson co-owns his car with his father. Johnson's father is gone most of the year so when he is gone Johnson is the main driver.

One way to tell that you have a G-Wagon, is if your only complaint about your car is that "it doesn't come standard with a passenger shut-up button." This is the case with junior, Phillip Johnson.

Hoopty

MADISON KAY / KNIGHT LIFE

Lindsey McMullen stands by her 1988 Buick. McMullen's car is very old, and she experiences many difficulties with the windows, doors, etc. freezing in the winter.

Madison Kay
Webmaster

Lindsay McMullen is one of those people who wishes that they had a new car. McMullen is the sole owner of her grey 1988 Buick Century which she got used for just 800 dollars.

Much like Ms. Pankop's car, McMullen's car also has a state of the art security system. The doors in McMullen's car tend to freeze shut, and so do the locks.

"The only difference with my security system is I can't climb through my trunk to get in to my car," said McMullen.

Sometimes McMullen's antenna freezes into the hood of the car, so she tends to pick up cell phone conversations. So a word of caution to you all, be careful what you say when on the phone in the Loy Norrix parking lot. McMullen's doors are not the only thing in the car that tend to freeze; the windows also freeze on both sides of the car. Having the windows freeze over like that should make driving more fun for McMullen.

Puddle Evasion: A Necessary Skill In Budapest

Daedal Derks
Staff writer

CAROL DERKS / GUEST PHOTOGRAPHER

Senior, Daedal Derks, feels on top of the world in Innsbruck, Austria in the Alps.

America, "the land of the free and the home of the brave." This is the classic American motto and is well known around the world. The United States is also often called the "land of opportunity" by those who wish to live here. I never understood why so many people would ever want to live here in the U.S. so badly, but after a recent adventure to Europe, a new point of view has presented itself and I now realize just how lucky I really am to be living here.

Over the holidays this year I traveled with my family to Austria and Hungary to visit my sister who is studying abroad in Budapest, Hungary. We flew out of Kalamazoo and had layovers in Detroit and Amsterdam before arriving at our destination, Budapest. We arrived on Christmas day at about noon, and all the airline workers were in a festive mood.

The holiday cheer and charity of the airline workers turned out to be very beneficial to us because ALL of our checked luggage got lost. Here in the U.S. if this happens, travelers are told to come back the next day or call in and hopefully their luggage will have made it on another flight, but if not, well, tough luck.

Hungarians treated the problem a little bit differently. We received 175,000 forints, equivalent to about $100. After arriving at our hotel we found out that our luggage had been found and would be arriving very early the following morning, so we celebrated and went out to dinner at a very fancy restaurant called Abszint that took its name from the hallucinogenic drink Absinthe.

Since we arrived on Christmas day, we expected the city to have much the same feel as any U.S. city, however we quickly realized that Christmas in Hungary is much different than Christmas here in the U.S.

In Hungary there is no Santa. Instead, they have an evil hairy elf that breaks into your house in the middle of the night to put goodies in children's shoes. This however, only happens to the "good" kids, which is also how Santa is supposed to work in America, but somehow the "bad" kids always seem to find a loophole. If Hungarian children are bad during a given year, instead of goodies in their shoes, they get whipped by the evil hairy elf. This is one reason that I'm quite glad to live in the U.S.

When I go to bed on Christmas Eve, I do not have to worry that I might wake up to a hairy elf standing over me with a switch, I simply get to look forward to a Christmas morning with presents under the tree and stockings full of goodies.

There are several significant differences between the Eastern European countries that I visited and the United States. Not the least significant of which is the size of their roads. Being in Budapest allowed me to see the extreme of busy roads. The roads are about as wide as I am tall (6 feet if you are being generous), and the drivers do not even seem to notice, they still drive about 50 mph down them.

Busy roads are usually two or three lanes going in each direction but the trams that travel above ground have tracks that take up at least one of them. It is perfectly acceptable to drive in the tram lanes, but if a tram comes and you cannot get out of the way, you're pretty much out of luck.

> Traveling abroad might make you appreciate all that you have a lot more.

At one point I saw an H2 attempting to navigate the streets of Budapest without much success. The car took up about a lane and a half on most busy roads and could not fit down any of the side roads. Also when the Hummer had to park, it wouldn't fit in any of the parking spaces, so they parked up on the sidewalk instead.

Another difference that was hard to miss was how dirty the streets were. On our first day in the city, the streets and sidewalks were quite wet because snow had melted during the day. As I was walking to my sister's apartment we saw a lot puddles. These puddles weren't really deep enough to try and miss, so I just walked through most of them. This strategy immediately changed when my sister said, "Be careful, you never know what's in those puddles…"

Now, at first it didn't really register what she meant by this statement, I was thinking maybe she meant people dumped out drinks and other beverages in the streets or something along those lines. Just as we approached the door to her apartment however, I noticed a man standing a little farther down the street, urinating right in the middle of the sidewalk. The true meaning of my sister's caveat instantly struck me and I just looked down at my shoes and decided they would need a good washing ASAP.

There was obviously a troublesome language barrier that was annoying most of the time we were in Europe, however this would be the case in just about any foreign country so I don't want to say that this was a bad thing. One thing that was problematic was that almost every store is closed on Sundays, and during the week they close no later than about 7 p.m. This required much planning ahead, which is hard to do when you're a tourist in a foreign country where very few people speak the same language as you.

So while Europe has a number of things that make it an enjoyable place to live: Mini Coopers, great public transportation, lower drinking age, and amazing architecture, the cons outweighed the pros at the end of the trip. If you ever do have the opportunity to visit a European country, I strongly advise you to take it, and enjoy your stay. Traveling abroad might make you appreciate all that you have a lot more. Oh, and one more thing, avoid puddles at all cost.

CAROL DERKS / GUEST PHOTOGRAPHER

Daedal Derks is shown here on top of the bell tower of St. Stephen's Cathedral in downtown Vienna.

The Positive Environment of a Fast Food Restaurant

Through The Eyes of Melissa Pelikan

Chrissy Minar
Beats Editor

"I wanted a job because I wanted to not fully rely on my parents, moneywise," said Melissa Pelikan, a junior at Loy Norrix High School who has been an employee at the Burger King on Stadium Drive since August of 2007. BK wasn't Pelikan's first option though.

"Before I worked there [BK] I would have rather worked at Ground Round [a local restaurant]," said Pelikan.

Even though BK wasn't Pelikan's first option, she still accepted the job with an open mind and she found the job enjoyable, mainly because of the positive environment.

"I find myself lucky that I have a job and that I'm friends with my coworkers and managers, so it's easier and less stressful because you know when you go to work you're going to have a good day," said Pelikan.

Pelikan's job isn't all sunshine though because she has to balance school work and work, and it's difficult for her to find time to spend with friends.

"It frustrates me because most of my hours are on Saturdays and Sundays and that's when everything happens," said Pelikan.

Pelikan still finds some time during the week to hang out with friends. Pelikan also manages to keep her grades up.

Though the work environment is mostly positive, Pelikan still has a few coworkers that bring in negativity and create tension.

"They complain so much that you just don't want to be around them," said Pelikan.

Working has changed Pelikan in some ways.

"I think better of myself now because I have this job and I've maintained it. And now I have nothing but good remarks from managers," said Pelikan.

Also because Pelikan has so little time she's changed her study habits too.

"Now when I do my work in classes like homework, I get it done fairly quickly because I know if I don't I won't have the time to do it later because of work," said Pelikan.

A poll taken by 185 LN students reveled that most LN students are open to fast food jobs.

LN junior Danielle Matlick would work at a fast food restaurant if she needed to.

"If I need money, yes. It's just a job. Someone has to flip burgers," said Matlick.

Many students respond similarly to Matlick, such as sophomore Klay Nitasuwan.

"I think they [fast food jobs] are good for everyone. A job for the ones in need and a good service for others," said Nitasuwan.

Before the survey was taken Pelikan thought people would think a lot differently since fast food jobs are stereotypically viewed as "at the bottom of the totem pole."

CHRISSY MINAR / KNIGHT LIFE

Junior Melissa Pelikan serves a customer at the Stadium Dr. Burger King. Pelikan enjoys working at BK because the people she works with have a positive attitude.

"I was suprised that so many people didn't really look down on people with fast food jobs," said Pelikan.

Needless to say Pelikan is a high school fast food worker who likes her job.

"There is a whole bunch of stereotypes against fast food restaurants, but I love working there because I love the people," said Pelikan.