

INTERSECTIONS

The long road home

Wischropp finds adventures, learns lessons through international experience

Jeremy Gaston
Staff Writer

The road of life is a crooked one, which can take you halfway around the world and bring you back to the same place. The journey is sometimes the adventure.

Carrie Wischropp had developed a bit of direction after graduating from Lyndon High School in 1998, heading to Pittsburg State University. She graduated from PSU in 2002 with a Bachelor of Science in nursing. The direction of nursing seemed right to her.

"I liked to take care of people around me," Wischropp said. "I had been set on it since the time I started high school. It seemed like the logical choice."

She found a nursing position in relatively nearby Ft. Collins, Colo., where she spent two and a half years. As she began settling into her career and contemplating buying a home, she stopped herself.

"I was 24, I wasn't married, and I didn't have any kids," she said. "I thought, 'Why am I settling so quickly?'"

Instead, she went looking for an adventure.

"I wanted to see more of the world."

Her criteria included a place that had English-speaking people and enabled her to practice nursing.

"I just wanted someplace where I really got to live while I was away," she said. "I didn't want to move across the world to just be working again. One of the Australian mottos is 'work to live, not live to work.' I read that and I thought, 'that's perfect.'"

Wischropp set out without the help of school-related or international organizations to find her way.

"I did it all myself," she said. "I went online, went over there and found my way."

She arrived in Australia on Feb. 22, 2005, three days before her birthday. She found that while some things were the same, others weren't, and getting acclimated to that part of the world would take some time.

"It took a lot longer than I thought," she said. "I think one of the biggest frustrations is that they're so laid back, and that translates across everything. I had to get used to chilling out a bit. Food didn't come right away, you wait at the bar longer, service at stores took forever, things at work, getting my visa."



Jeremy Gaston/Herald-Chronicle

Australians Ben Solomon, Mark Histon and Stefan Ellis enjoy cheeseburgers with their host and friend, Carrie Wischropp, at an auction April 20 in Burlingame. The three men were on a hop-scotch tour of the U.S., stopping in Kansas to see the Midwest and visit Wischropp, who had just returned from a three-year stay Down Under.

Getting used to a new place took some patience - literally. Once that happened, Wischropp found plenty of adventures. Memorable times included marching in Sydney's Mardi Gras parade, spending Christmas on the beach, and garnering a little bit of national media coverage.

"I was interviewed on A Current Affair during a seg-

ment on cosmetic acupuncture, and ended up in the Sydney Morning Herald," she said.

A doctor who worked with a friend, as well as with Wischropp at the hospital, needed a subject for the piece.

"They just needed a patient to get interviewed," She said. "It was bizarre to end up on national TV in

Australia." Wischropp credits her state of mind with opening doors.

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