

AROUND THE WORLD IN ~~21~~ 20 DAYS

or

**HOW I AVOIDED KIM JONG UN, THE SULU PIRATES
AND ISIS (BARELY)**

BY

LAWRENCE H GLICK, CIRCUMNAVIGATOR

I do not normally attempt to bring higher mathematics into these pages, but I was forced to use the red marker on the title page for the following reason. Most people who travel from the USA to Asia go westward and in the process lose a day crossing the International Date Line. After the visit they then return home going eastward and regain the day. In my case I kept going westward and never regained the lost day. So, I was gone 21 days, but really travelled only 20. Now if that explanation is enough to stop you from reading any further, I APOLOGIZE, and promise no further mathematics.

As usual I will use as paragraph headings the notes I jotted down after each day to help me remember an unusual event or place. So, we have the following- Would you like one apricot, or two; KOMODO SHMODO; Private Forest, United States Army; 6 of 50; Orangutangled; Marco Polo slept here; Ben-Hur; Leech socks; He wants to be Sultan; Ripley's Believe It Or Not; Whitehead's trio; Singapore Sling and Champagne Cocktail at 7:50 AM.; Was your grandfather a headhunter

PRIVATE FOREST, UNITED STATES ARMY

“From this moment forward you will obey every command I give without exception. Is that understood? If so, please respond with SIR, YES, SIR.” Those words, spoken in a very authoritarian voice, were my introduction to the most dangerous place on earth, the Joint Security Area. The JSA is where the two Koreas, still technically at war after the signing of the 1953 armistice, meet to resolve issues. It is also an area surrounded by land mines and, as you will soon note, trigger-happy snipers. We had spent the morning touring sites in the Demilitarized Zone, DMZ, an area 2.5 miles wide and 150 miles long, a no man's land separating the North and South, which incorporates the JSA.

Private Forest, from Chicago, Illinois was to be our guide into the JSA, and was all business, as noted in his initial greeting above. Our final stop before entering the JSA was Camp Bonifas, a US military base on the edge of the DMZ. There we left our tourist bus, went on an army bus and met the Private. Kim Jong Un, the son of long-time dictator Kim Jong Il, had been firing off land-based missiles, submarine-based missiles, testing alleged hydrogen bombs*, making direct threats to the US mainland with the provocative payload of Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBM's) and making tensions as high in the DMZ as had ever existed.

Being a recognized iPad guru, I had down-loaded Google Earth, and was able to see the JSA, and the fabled blue buildings where meetings between the two combatants occurred. Now, as we exited the military bus and filed through an introduction center, there were the blue buildings, just 30 yards away. I bent down to take a picture, (isn't that what photographers do),

and was chastised by Private Forest, and ordered to stand at attention- SIR, YES, SIR! North Korean snipers were literally within an easy shot of our group, and needed no justification for target practice. Moments later, inside the middle blue building, I was standing in North Korea. Wow!

(*The Democratic People's Republic of Korea, AKA- North Korea is the ONLY country to test a nuclear device in the 21st Century. Think about that for a moment.)

KOMODO SHMODO

The Turtle Islands are just off the coast of Borneo. Some of the islands are in Malaysian waters, while others less than 300 yards away are part of the Philippines. They are all located in the Sulu Sea. The Malaysian islands were the first in the world to practice sea turtle conservation starting in 1966. Green Sea and Hawksbill turtles come on shore year-round to lay eggs. A special treat for overnight guests is to observe one turtle laying eggs, the collection and transfer of those eggs to secure facilities, and the subsequent release of newly hatched baby turtles into the sea (the incubation period is about 60 days).

These activities all occur at night, after a call is made by the park rangers. Prior to that, guests are free to snorkel, swim, or observe the island's diverse wildlife. One specialty is giant monitor lizards, at least one I observed over eight feet long. Having never been to see the Komodo Dragons (a species of monitor lizard I hope to see one day) of Indonesia, I am not sure how much scarier those could be. While traipsing through the woods our hiking party almost stepped on one faux dragon and nearly tripped on another while backpedaling. A peaceful, mid-day, nightmare-filled, nap seemed appropriate to all at this juncture.

When our call was made at about 8:30 PM to go to the beach, it was without flashlights and a warning to be as quiet as possible. The female we observed laid 96 eggs. She was tagged. As this miraculous event was occurring, I noticed two Malaysian soldiers armed with AK 47's, and in two-way communication with unseen others, following our group. They were not there to protect the turtles! The Sulu pirates, AKA, Abu Sayyaf, a Jihadist terrorist group, have replicated the success of the Somali pirates. Hailing from the Philippines, they have abducted tourists for ransom and seized ocean-going freighters. Their threat is palpable as evidenced by the assault rifles.

ORANGUTANGLED

When most travelers think of Borneo the first thing that comes to mind is Orangutans. The second thing is- where is that located and is it a country? No, it is not a country, but contains parts of two countries (Malaysia, Indonesia) and all of the Sultanate of Brunei (I made a brief, but fascinating visit) , and is generally in an area called SE Asia, and is the third largest island in the world. On this trip we would be visiting two Orangutan rehabilitation centers in the Malaysian states of Sarawak and Sabah. But we would also be spending considerable time in vast areas of jungle-like Borneo where the Orangs are totally wild.

In each of the rehab centers Orangs are nursed back to health from injuries or mistreatment by owners and are free to come for the twice daily feedings or rely on their own instincts for food. When the flowering fruit trees are in bloom Orangs are seldom seen at the stations. In other times it is hit or miss, especially for the more seasoned apes.

The younger Orangs who have spent most of their life in the centers are very curious of humans (we are closely related with 97% of the same DNA) and have a sense of mischief not dissimilar to some young humans. On one occasion, while walking the boardwalk connecting two feeding platforms, our group was confronted by six playful Orangs. Our group leader had warned us of this behavior, but also noted that any Orang was ten times stronger than the average human. In this particular instance two Orangs seemed to take a unique interest in my monopod. Again, we had been warned of Orangutan felony theft accompanied by misdemeanor hit and run. I didn't want to lose the monopod, but would fight the Orangs for the camera body and long (think expensive) 500 mm lens attached to the monopod. WWE/ MMA competitors would have nothing on me in this pitched battle for truth, justice and the American Way.

After the fact, this simian confrontation seems humorous, but there was a level of panic among our group as our narrow path was momentarily blocked in both directions by the transgressing Orangs.

6 OF 50

Yes, I am a birder. Never say birdwatcher! We birders keep life lists. Mine currently stands at just over 4000 after a recent trip Down Under. Not bad in a world with over 10,000 different species. Besides quantity, I also appreciate seeking out the most elusive birds in our planet. The top 50 birds have achieved that honor because they are mainly in inhospitable places and far from the beaten path. Certainly the island of Borneo qualifies in both categories. What Borneo does have is an amazing number of endemic birds- those found nowhere else on the planet. Included among those are 6 of the top 50 on the most wanted list.

The Bornean Bristlehead is one of the most unique looking birds in the world. The best place to find the Bristlehead is the Danum Valley. Danum has been called the most pristine rainforest left in the world, and also qualifies as the world's oldest. No hunting, no farming, no clear-cutting, no palm-oil plantations, and no habitations have ever occurred in this idyllic patch of earth. The Bristlehead is so popular with tourists that the guides simply refer to it as the "BB". Authors refer to it as the Borneo Superstar and one well-known birder, upon finally viewing the "BB", called it his bird of the year. Because I had gone off in a different direction than the others in our touring party, I was the only one who had not seen the "BB." What I had encountered in my jaunts into the jungle were several rarely seen endemics- the spectacular Great Argus (top 50), the Crested Fireback, and two species of hornbills that had eluded the whole group throughout our many days in Borneo- the Wreathed and the critically endangered Helmeted Hornbill (top 10!!!).



So now it was the last morning of our stay in Danum. The guides had, I believed, understood my singular passion for birding and got together to offer me one last chance to find the "BB". So that morning, with about 75 minutes to spend in the field, we were off to search for this, the most famous avian species on the island. The intra-guide network had indicated that a siting at daybreak pointed to a spot about 20 minutes from the lodge. The unforeseen clock started ticking as the time to depart approached. If this were a baseball game it was now the bottom of the ninth; a football game would have us in the last two minutes of the fourth quarter. And if this were a presidential election, the last hanging chad was about to be counted. And then in this magnificent forest containing the world's tallest tropical trees (slightly shorter than our coastal temperate Redwoods) we found a flock of 12 "BB's". Using the spotting scope and my powerful binoculars I could now leave knowing #3617 was in the books and, of course, another top 50.

WAS YOUR GRANDFATHER A HEADHUNTER

I am proud of my upbringing. My parents taught my brother and I the correct way to behave in public. Specifically they mentioned that two subjects never to be discussed were politics and religion. For the most part I have followed that sage advice with the exception of this year's Presidential election. So why would I possibly be asking someone "was your grandfather a headhunter," without a doubt politically incorrect. Please allow me to explain. The island of Borneo is one of those mystical places we read about as school children. A foreboding place with amazing, indigenous flora and fauna, unknown in other parts of our planet.

Where else could you see an orangutan standing next to a carnivorous pitcher plant. I did.

Where else could you see caves that make Carlsbad Caverns seem like little tunnels. Yes, the magnificent Mulu Caves. I did.

Where else could you stop to look at a tree that produced poison so lethal that scientists have never found an antidote. I did.*

Where else could you see a pygmy elephant strolling along a river bed, and understand this is the smallest breed of Asian Elephant in the world, and only found on this one island. I did.

Where else could you go to buy souvenirs and be asked if you would like to test your skill at shooting a poison dart gun. I did.

Where else could you see an animal universally proclaimed as among the weirdest on the planet, the fulsome-nosed, big-bellied, Proboscis Monkey. I did.

Where else could you watch squirrels flying (soaring) from tree-to-tree over incomprehensible distances. I did.

Where else could you experience a clouded leopard and a leopard cat within four hours. A stupendous daily double that had the world famous resort in an uproar**. I did.

Where else could you observe a bearded pig searching for food at the base of a tree, and suddenly notice the same tree held a Colugo (flying lemur), an animal so rare our guide thought it could be the highlight of the trip (but see above and below**). I did.

Where else could you have the inexplicable joy of seeing a great ape and a lesser ape in contiguous trees. The orangutan is one of 4 species of Great Ape. I have seen 2 others in Uganda, the Chimpanzee and the Mountain Gorilla. I'm still missing the Bonobo of the Congo, but that could occur in the near future. The Gibbon sits alone as a Lesser Ape. It is only found in Southeast Asia and is almost impossible to spot high in the forest canopy because of its unique coloration. My guide, a Bornean veteran, was amazed at the lengthy, unobstructed sighting we had and had never experienced this juxtaposition. ** I did.

And so as our guide explained his ancestry dating back hundreds of years, and that his grandfather was a tribal chieftan, I sheepishly asked the question. The answer- "Yes He Was"!

*One of my fellow travelers to Borneo was a PH. D. working for a very famous drug company. Specifically she was a toxicologist. When we stopped at the tree she asked many questions about the process the natives used to make the poison. I asked her if the claim made about the lack of an antidote was true. Yes, she said. We joked that she might sneak away that night from our lodge and purloin (that's a nice way of saying steal) a few samples to take back to her lab. At least I think we joked.

LEECH SOCKS

“When visiting the Danum Valley it is advisable to wear leech socks.” This was in the first few pages of the pre-trip briefing materials from the Borneo tour company. OK, so I was off to REI in Dallas, my first stop for all things outdoors. Neither the clerk nor the store manager had ever heard of leech socks. The on-line catalog did not list the item, either. Was this possible? So, I emailed the tour company who noted I could easily purchase the socks on arrival on the magical island.

We were a group of 10 travelers and one tour guide. Because I would be doing some special birding activities I did not join the group on the second morning's tour. When they returned I joined them for lunch. Despite each individual wearing the leech socks, 8 of the 10, including the guide had been bitten by leeches. It was not a pretty sight. In fact, and I hope you have not just eaten anything, one leech was still on one of the guests who noticed fresh blood on his shirt. The leech was quickly dispatched to the floor and destroyed. Each of the guests got a special, frameable certificate from the lodge indicating their bravery.

The next morning I ventured with my guide to what one of the bitten guests described as “leech valley”. While I should have been looking up in the trees for hard to find birds or mammals, I must admit I checked out each shrub and blade of grass we passed on the alert for the blood-sucking villains. Suddenly I felt something slithering up my arm and alerted my guide who ordered me to shake my arm repeatedly and quickly unbutton my shirt. The “something” dropped to the ground and we both assumed I had acted quickly enough not to leave any blood in “leech valley”. When I also was awarded my certificate for bravery my fellow travelers had a raucous time questioning my lack of blood-letting. Where is Stephen Crane when you need him for a sequel. Although my **badge** was not **red**, I did have the **courage** to enter “leech valley.”

WHITEHEADS TRIO

A British ornithologist, John Whitehead visited Borneo in the late 1800's and discovered three new avian species that bear his name and exist only on one mountaintop- The Whitehead's Spiderhunter, The Whitehead's Broadbill and the Whitehead's Trogon. Any of the three qualify as a world top 50 bird. I had arranged for a brief birding tour of Mount Kinabalu, yes, that mountaintop, in Sabah State, Borneo. I would be picked up at 4 AM and driven to the mountain for a 7 hour birding tour.

My guide asked on the two hour drive to the top of the mountain if I had any specific birds in mind- of course, I answered, the same ones everybody else comes to see. That was the Kinabalu BIG FIVE, consisting of the 3 Whiteheads as well as the Fruithunter and Everett's Thrush. He replied that if we had about 3 days, not just hours, we could probably get all except the Thrush, as it hadn't been seen on Kinabalu, it's only home, for over a year. Had the Everett's Thrush gone extinct?

We reached the mountain about 5:45 AM, just as dawn was breaking. Driving slowly up the serpentine road the guide abruptly urged our driver to pullover. "Get out of the car," he urged me. There in perfect light was none other than the orange-bellied Everett's Thrush. The guide quickly radioed other guides on the mountain the possible whereabouts of the now non-extinct Thrush. *This was going to be a very special day.*

Almost immediately rare species endemic to only this specific dot on a map appeared. Check, Check, Check, Check. We heard the Broadbill, but it never showed. Finally, after recording over 20 extremely rare species it was time to head back to the airport. My guide suggested we take a leisurely stroll down the mountain while our driver followed close behind. Who knows, he intimated, what we might find. After about ten minutes the guide said in hushed tones, "Two Trogons."

Can these two words get ones heart pumping to unknown levels. Mine was. The Whitehead's Trogon is thought by some to be the most beautiful bird in the world, topping the Central American Resplendent Quetzal and the Greater Bird of Paradise of New Guinea. In fact the Quetzal is part of the Trogon family. The legend of this Trogon grows because of its remote location and the difficulty in getting to Kinabalu, especially after the disastrous 2015 earthquake. Suddenly the male Trogon appeared and then the female. I immediately understood the reasons this bird is revered



throughout the world. Then the male flew away, was gone 2 minutes, and returned with a giant-sized Cicada in his beak. He proceeded to transfer the Cicada to his mate. Just at this moment the driver, having wondered what we were observing, appeared. His became the third mouth wide open in astonishment.

Can one get high on life? On observing nature at its most magnificent. Of seeing sights that are beyond comprehension. Of witnessing things that are ineffable. I have written in previous reports about some of these happenings. The list has now been extended.

RIPLEYS BELIEVE IT OR NOT

For those who travel extensively it is implicit that magical, sometimes dangerous, and sometimes unbelievable things happen when we step out of our comfort zone. You have just read about such an occurrence. I have written about being surrounded while on my belly, by two herds of cape buffalo, the most dangerous animal in Africa; being charged by an 8000 lb White Rhino; while on a walking safari; helping carry an injured baby llama down the steps of Machu Picchu as the last tourist on site; of seeing perhaps 100,000 animals cross the Serengeti's Mara River, very possibly the largest such crossing ever witnessed; of being this close (measured in feet not yards) to the largest gorilla in the world while on my knees; of waking up in a hotel room on the fifth floor in Iguassu Falls, within the sight and sound of the most magnificent waterfalls on the planet, and finding a Black-capped Capuchin Monkey (monos) going through our luggage; of breathing the freshest air possible at 21,000 feet in the shadow of Mt. Everest; of being the first tourist on site at the Taj Mahal as dawn broke and having numerous pictures tourist-free; the exhilaration of seeing not one, but four and a half tigers in the wilds of India (yes, 4 ½); of teaching an impromptu birding class to 250 strangers speaking an innumerable number of languages on the floor of the Ngorongoro Crater; of climbing centuries old Buddhist and Hindu temples in Kathmandu just prior to the devastating earthquake that rocked Nepal and destroyed portions of these seminal antiquities; of viewing the "Fabulous Fifteen" Moai in a torrential Polynesian downpour on Easter Island and believing this to be just the perfect weather; of having an Orca (killer whale) jump over our boat off the San Juan Islands of British Columbia.

So maybe you will believe the story I am about to tell. It begins with a connecting flight from Borneo through Kuala Lumpur (KL), Malaysia to Bangkok, Thailand. I have always wanted to see the magnificent Petronas Towers of KL. Also called the twin towers and for a short time between 1998 and 2004 the tallest structures on earth. (I have been to the top of the Burj Kalifa in Dubai, currently the tallest by a large margin. To show the immensity of the Burj, placing the twin towers on top of each other would just barely top the Burj). My time in KL would be

about 3 hours, and the airport was not close to downtown KL.. I asked my long-time assistant Jean to call the Malaysian Embassy in Washington, D.C. to determine if there was a place close to the airport where the towers were visible. No, was the definitive answer. So, about an hour before my flight was to land in KL, I asked the flight attendant if we would be able to see the twin towers from the air. She checked with the pilot who indicated our landing path would be distant from downtown KL. At this very moment a traveler seated a row in front of me, having overheard the conversation, was nice enough to indicate he flew this route often and had never seen the towers. Thanks a lot!

So, after landing it was to off to my next flight headed to Bangkok. While waiting in the lounge, I noticed the flight crew approaching and it turned out to be the same group from my first flight. I approached the pilot and asked if it would be possible to see the twin towers on takeoff (dogged persistence is a quality I am known to possess). He indicated the flight path on takeoff is controlled by the tower. About five minutes later the same flight attendant from the original flight returned from the plane and told me to sit on the right side of the plane and if the captain announced after takeoff that it was a beautiful sunset in KL, it would be my signal to look for the towers. I immediately changed my seat from left window to right window.

As we prepared for takeoff I took out my binoculars. The gentleman seated next to me asked the purpose. I told him they were to see the twin towers. He indicated he takes this flight often and had never seen the towers. Thanks a lot!

Right after takeoff the captain got on the loudspeaker and said, "Look at that beautiful sunset over Kuala Lumpur!" And immediately thereafter was a magnificent view of yes, The Petronas Towers in all their glory. *Believe it or not.*

WOULD YOU LIKE ONE APRICOT OR TWO?

I had never before been in a hot air balloon. Cappadocia, in central Turkey, is known as the balloon capital of the world. Kappadocia Balloons who I used, owns 26 balloons on their own. The most of any balloon company in the world. On lists of the top balloon rides in the world, Cappadocia usually takes first place.

Cappadocia is listed by several travel sites as #20 in the world to visit. Seasoned travelers rave about this incredible, but somewhat off the radar destination. Early Christianity developed in this area, just North of Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and Israel. Fleeing the Romans and being persecuted, these early adherents built homes in caves and vast underground cities in which to hide. It is possible today, as I did, to visit these amazing labyrinth-like subterranean cities, as

well as the old cave dwellings. In fact, a rather cool feature (no pun intended) of Cappadocia, are the cave hotels where most tourists stay. My cave room(s) was as unique an experience as you are imagining, and I would recommend a stay to everyone.

Cappadocia is also known for the amazing rock formations, some known as fairy chimneys, and multiple colored mountains. These are the vistas seen from the balloons. Our pilot was amazing. A senior member of Cappadocia Balloons, he was in his 18th year of ballooning. He maneuvered the balloon effortlessly. We passed directly overhead of two separate wedding parties enjoying the dazzling sunrise and the sight of approximately 50 hot air balloons floating by. At one point he glided the balloon down into an apricot orchard. His helper jumped out, picked several fresh apricots, and asked on his return whether we wanted one or two to munch on. I can still taste those incredible apricots.

SINGAPORE SLING AND CHAMPAGNE COCKTAIL AT 7:50 AM

Those who have read my earlier trip reports will note that I normally don't refer to food or drink. Especially alcohol since I am not a drinker. On very rare occasions I might partake. When I was in Boston visiting the Freedom Trail I promised myself I would have a Samuel Adams Beer if the opportunity presented itself. Sure enough, at the end of the inspirational walking tour we stopped at the Green Dragon Tavern where, allegedly, Samuel Adams himself, helped plot the American Revolution as a leader of the Sons of Liberty. So, naturally, I had my first beer in thirty years, toasting one of our Founding Fathers, and have not had one since.

Now being in Singapore, I had heard of a famous drink that originated in the City-State, known as the Singapore Sling. My tour guide indicated that the drink was first concocted at the historic Raffles Hotel, but since I wanted to visit the Marina Bay Sands Hotel (known as the most expensive hotel in the world with a jaw-dropping infinity pool on the roof-top), it was off to imbibe there. Unfortunately the roof-top bar was closed (it was 7:45 AM), but I was able to see the world famous pool. So down in the lobby I ordered a Singapore Sling and watched the bartender mix the drink. I still don't know what he put in, but it did taste good, and I didn't collapse.

At the end of the Cappadocia balloon ride there is a traditional celebration, a champagne toast. In this case a champagne cocktail with raspberry juice. So, again, at about 7:50 AM, there I was, the teetotaler, hoisting a champagne glass, although I must admit it was about 80% raspberry juice.

BEN HUR

There has recently been a remake of the famed classic Ben Hur. The most famous scene from both movies is the chariot race in the Jerusalem Hippodrome. Now, I was in Istanbul, Turkey, formerly known as Constantinople and prior to that Byzantium. When the Romans, under ruler Constantine the Great rebuilt the city they imported many of the staples of Roman life. The first area I visited was the remains of the hippodrome, where carving on the obelisks showed chariots races that occurred there 1700 years ago. With the simulated racetrack in my mind, I was ready to take on any and all comers from around the Mediterranean.

Istanbul is one of the great destinations in the world. The Sultanahmet, the inner city, is an area that would compete with any city for sites to visit. Foremost is the Hagia Sophia, ranked number 10 in the world by Lonely Planet. Properly pronounced Aya Sophia, it began in 543 as an Eastern (Greek) Orthodox Church. For 57 years (1204-1261) it served as a Roman Catholic Church. Then back to Eastern Orthodox. After the Ottoman Turks captured the City in 1453 it was converted to a mosque, and then after World War I Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, the founder of modern secular Turkey, converted it into a museum. Ask any student of architecture and they will confirm that one of the first structures discussed in class, probably in the same lecture as the Pyramids, is the otherworldly Aya Sophia. Just down the street (literally) in either direction are two additional world class attractions, the famed Topkapi Palace and the Blue Mosque with its six towering minarets. Just across the street (literally) is the amazing Basilica Cistern, an ancient underground waterworks designed by Constantine and enlarged by Justinian in the sixth century.

As a little boy I developed a love of geography and maps of all kinds. One of my boyhood dreams was to someday sail on the Bosphorus Strait, a narrow body of water dividing European Turkey from Asian Turkey (AKA Anatolia or Asia Minor) and connecting the Mediterranean / Aegean Sea with the Black Sea. And YES, that is another treat that I partook of while in Istanbul. Movie fans of TAKEN 2 will recall Liam Neeson and Maggie Grace taking the same cruise.

Five days after leaving Istanbul, and having traversed the Istanbul Airport 3 times, tragedy struck as agents of ISIS bombed the facility. Watching newscasts of the devastation, I clearly noted areas I had just frequented.

HE WANTS TO BE SULTAN

Yes, I know that I wrote above that I never discuss politics except for the recently concluded Presidential election. I lied! What I have discovered is that those in other countries are fascinated with the United States and are more than willing to talk both our politics and theirs. I learned of a possible separatist movement in Borneo (questions of religious freedom and tax dollars being spent and misappropriated on the mainland were the issues); of the illness of the beloved Thai King and difficult road to succession (he passed away on October 13 and his son Maha Vajiralongkorn did not immediately ascend the throne); and the agony over Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Turkey. Specifically I was told that Erdogan would rather be crowned Sultan (the last Sultan abdicated 94 years ago) than merely President, and it was hinted that I shouldn't be shocked if a coup attempt was made to remove Erdogan. Chillingly, less than a month later a coup attempt failed and Turkey has less resembled the democracy begun by Ataturk than at any time since 1923.

MARCO POLO SLEPT HERE

My last activity in Cappadocia, and for the entire trip, would be a visit to watch the famed Whirling Dervish ceremony. The Dervish's are part of the Sufi sect of Sunni Islam. As we approached the venue for the show my guide explained that the uneven, gravel road we were now entering was once part of the Great Silk Road, and the building we were about to enter at the end of the path was a way station on the fabled road. Built in 1249, the Sarihan Caravanserai (caravan palace) was constructed by the Seljuk Sultans. I, of course, joked that Marco Polo must have slept here. Now sometimes he laughed at my poor jokes and sometimes he looked askance. This time, in all seriousness, he indicated that yes, indeed, Marco Polo, had slept at this very site. He proceeded to unfold a map of Polo's journey which indicated he traveled along the Cappadocia route going and the Black Sea route returning from the Orient. So, yes, Mr. Polo, his father and his uncle did stop at this very building for the customary 3 days, later returning with remarkable tales to enthrall the Venetian Court. The Dervish ceremony was breathtaking, but now I can top anyone who says they know where George Washington slept.

POSTSCRIPT

Why travel? Yes, I have mentioned Kim Jong Un, Sulu Pirates, and ISIS. All certainly dangerous and possibly life-threatening. So why leave home?

- When I was in Bangkok I visited the Imperial Palace, home to the world renowned Emerald Buddha. At one point I said to my guide that I needed to stop. “Are you tired” she asked. “No, I am having sensory overload.” Words cannot adequately describe the myriad colors, shapes, precious metals and gemstones comprising the Palace grounds. My only basis for comparison might be the Palace of Versailles, outside Paris, and I think Versailles would lose.
- Walking into the Third Infiltration Tunnel in the DMZ, hard hat snugly in place, built by the North Koreans in 1978, for an attack on the South. It appears to be a coal mine shaft, but, of course, there is no coal in the area.
- Touring the Singapore Zoo (I’m a zoo nut) to understand why it is number one in the world.
- Helping release (holding) baby green sea turtles into the Sulu Sea.
- Watching 5,000,000 bats leave the Mulu caves.
- Seeing the ruins of Ayutthaya, the remains of what might have been the largest city in the world (circa mid-18th century) as the Capital of the Kingdom of Siam (now Thailand).
- Watching a hammerhead slug crawl along the forest floor, and understanding the origin of the first half of **its** name.
- Watching Rhinoceros Hornbills fly and understanding the origin of the first half or **their** name.

Travel for me is about experiences. Those can never come from a comfortable couch at home.



Danum Valley Conservation Area
SABAH, MALAYSIAN BORNEO

CONGRATULATIONS!

This certifies that
Lawrence Glick

.....
has donated blood to the

TIGER LEECHES

of Danum Valley Conservation Area


On 15th June 2016
.....

&

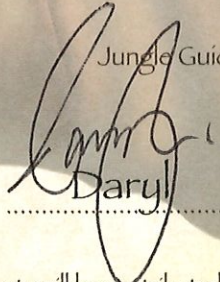
is now a member of the

“Danum Valley Blood Donors Society”

Operations Manager


Henry Llanes

Jungle Guide


Daryl

MYR 2 from the sale of this Certificate will be contributed to
Conservation efforts within Danum Valley