

Jane and Joel Buchanan - world travelers and extraordinary photographers
(As published in *The Oak Ridger's Historically Speaking* column on March 20, 2012)

Over 35 trips from 1963 to 2007 ranging from Europe to Mexico to India to China, Indonesia (with National Geographic guides), Arctic Russia, Canada, Chile, Australia and New Zealand, Cambodia, Laos and Thailand, not to mention the vast majority of all the USA. Jane and Joel Buchanan are indeed world travelers. And they made exceptional photos on every trip.

If you are a member of the Camera Club of Oak Ridge, you surely agree with me on that point. If you have seen any of their many public shows or seen any of their photographic work in galleries, then you also know and agree they are serious accomplished photographers who have produced an extraordinarily excellent body of work.

Take a look with me at a selection of Jane's and Joel's comments about some of these memorable trips: "September, 1963 - Oak Ridge National Laboratory Recreation Department *Dream trip to Europe - England, Holland, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland and France* (A tenth anniversary celebration and our first trip to Europe, still recovering from World War II. The dollar was worth something then.)" Makes me remember when Y-12 had a Recreation Department...I miss that!

Of this very first trip taken together, Jane noted, "Incidentally, that first trip to Europe sponsored by the ORNL Recreation Dept. was priced at \$549 for three weeks -- airfare, lodging and meals included. A KLM DC-7 flew into the Knoxville airport to pick up the 79 ORNL employees & spouses who made the trip. There was still a lot of war damage everywhere, and most of the countries were struggling, putting their treasures up for sale in order to survive. Americans were greeted warmly, and of course our American dollars were most welcome. It was a truly exciting trip for us -- we were celebrating our 10th anniversary; Joel's mother stayed with our two young sons at home."

Then in August, 1964, Joel and Jane attended an *Atoms for Peace Conference* in Geneva, Switzerland, and toured Italy and Spain on their own. One word described this trip for them, "exciting!" In June 1965, they took the first of several family auto trips. This first one to Mexico City, before completion of interstates. it was a very long drive, but certainly a great adventure for the whole family.

In June, 1968, they took a family auto tour of the spectacular scenery of the Southwest. Then in August, 1972, it was a family auto tour of the Oregon coast, Yellowstone and the Grand Tetons. In June and July, 1975, Joel had a consulting assignment in Paris, where they toured the Loire region, took a land tour of Turkey and a merchant ship cruise on the Mediterranean. Their American Field Service "son" Zafer Malazgirt, served as their guide. Of this trip, their comment was "Memorable!"

In March, 1978, they returned to Mexico (Yucatan). It was again an anniversary celebration, their 25th. Of this trip they commented, "we loved Merida. Seeing the Mayan sites was a highlight."

In January, 1979, they travelled to India, Pakistan, and Nepal. Of this trip, they said, "our introduction to Asia, a dream come true. Seeing the Taj Mahal (a goose-bump experience), visiting Kathmandu and seeing Mount Everest --truly exciting."

An International Atomic Energy Agency trip to Vienna, Austrian, occurred in December, 1979. Then in June, 1980, they took a trip that included China, Singapore, Thailand and Indonesia. Of this trip they commented, "China was just coming out of the 'Gang of Four' Era and was poor. Thailand and Indonesia was a step into another world. Hospitable people."

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An auto trip with friends in England and Scotland occurred in May and June, 1983. Then in October, 1987, they traced their roots in England and Wales by auto. In August, 1988, they visited Egypt and England and said of this trip, "consulting in Cairo, a Nile Cruise. Seeing the ancient landmarks was thrilling!"

Note: It was this trip that resulted in Jane's interest in photography becoming a serious endeavor. Joel saw the quality of her images and encouraged her to take the images to a friend who was a prize-winning photographer.

This photographer saw in Jane someone who had a natural eye for exceptional insights in simplicity, what he called the "complexities in simplicity." He encouraged her to enter her photographs in an upcoming photography contest. She won and has continued to win many awards for her photographs ever since.

In April, 1989, they again visited Vienna, Austria on a consulting trip. On this trip, they also visited Budapest, Hungary before fall of the Iron Curtain. In July, 1991, they visited Barbados and again were tracing their roots.

June, 1992, saw them returning to England, Scotland and Wales as they returned to favorite spots and explored new ones. In June, 1993, they went to Russian Volga with a group of Oak Ridgers. January, 1994, saw them on a trip to Mexico, Honduras and Belize, their introduction to Central America.

In September, 1994, they visited remote Indonesia which was a real adventure with National Geographic guides. And in September, 1995, they took an auto trip circling "sleepy" Portugal, "a country just coming to life after many years of dictatorship."

A group of photographers were their tour friends in May, 1997, for a memorable trip to Morocco, termed by them as a "fascinating country."

A photography safari in May, 1998, took them to France (Paris & Provence). In August, 1998. -- Western Canada; Calgary, Banff and Lake Louise, "beautiful country!" In September, 1998, they were off to Venice, Florence, Tuscany and Italy for yet another photography safari.

In June, 1999, they returned to France (Burgundy) for another look at "always lovely France." In October, 1999, they stayed three weeks in Ireland and said they could have stayed three months.

In June, 2000, they visited Scandinavia and Arctic Russia on a "most interesting" cruise with friends. In September, 2000, they visited Prague, Czech Republic "probably our favorite city" and Vienna on yet another photography safari. Then in August, 2001, it was back to England and Scotland for an auto trip with their older son Joey as they visited ancestral sites.

A cruise in August, 2002 took them to Georgian Bay, Canada and also to Toronto. In March, 2003, they visited Chile, Argentina and the Falkland Islands and enjoyed a 50th anniversary trip around Cape Horn on the ship Explorer. Among highlights they noted were Penguins and Patagonia.

In September, 2003, they returned to France (Bordeaux) and took an auto trip exploring new areas. Of France they simply stated, "we love France."

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Then in October, 2003, Jane and Joel followed the famed Lewis & Clark route into the North West. In October, 2004, they travelled to Australia and New Zealand of which they said, "we would go back tomorrow if we could!"

Finally they visited Cambodia, Laos and Thailand in November, 2007, to visit Angkor Wat and other sights of northern Thailand and Laos. They found wonderful people here as i am sure they have found in many other locations where they have visited. I think it is just simply wonderful to see a couple enjoy so much travel and documenting it all with some of the most artistic photographs I have ever seen.

Next we will look at this remarkable Oak Ridge couple in more detail and explore how they came to be such exceptional photographers.



Joel and Jane Buchanan shown with the map of their travels