

Paris Journal 2010

February 23 - Visit with Claude and Jo Joseph in Lausanne

It was raining when we went to the Gare de Lyon by bus to take the TGV (train de grand vitesse = high speed rail) to Lausanne.



We were very early so we waited in the large waiting area. Eventually we bought sandwiches and ate them before getting on the train. On the train we had beverages only.



Here is the restaurant in the Gare de Lyon called the Blue Train. I find it interesting to find palm trees growing in this Paris train station.



Claude picked us up at the Gare in downtown Lausanne and took us by car to his home on Avenue Rumine. Parking is scarce even though he pays an annual fee to park on the street in his neighborhood. Here is their living room. Over the years they have acquired a lot of original art and prints and their

walls are like a gallery. The room has two sets of windows to the outside so it is flooded with light unless one chooses to close the shutters. To the right is their cupboard with their table ware.



Claude is a long time colleague of Ernie's. He is retired from being a professor of Physics at the University of Lausanne. When we lived '85-86 in Lausanne, it was Claude who was in charge of the Department where Ernie was a visiting professor. Since then the physics department (as well as math and chemistry) have been moved from the University of Lausanne to the larger EPFL (École Polytechnique de Lausanne).

The living area is very comfortable and it was there that we sat and visited. Here is Jo in her regular chair. Behind here is visible some of the beautiful art pieces in the living/dining area. I assume it is Jo who chose the colors on the walls that set off the art pieces beautifully. This area has a mixture of a hot pink wall and white wall and molding.

The guest room where we stayed has one wall painted black. It provides a wonderful background for the large colorful painting displayed on the wall above the bed.





That night Raymond Weill came to dinner. Raymond was a postdoctoral fellow at Cornell when Ernie was finishing his doctoral work. He is the one who suggested Ernie do his post doctoral work at the University of Lausanne and later made the arrangements.



Jo prepared lovely hors d'oeuvres – olives, crunchy savory mix of pretzels, peanuts, and sesame crackers, a mixture of grilled and marinated red peppers and a bowl of nuts.

Here is the Joseph's table set for dinner that evening.



Jo served ratatouille and I commented on it. It included red peppers. Claude laughed about the recipe that is in the Malamud family recipe book. He said that Jo was young and didn't know how to cook when she shared her recipe. The correct way to cook it is to cook each of the vegetables separately because they cook at a different rate. At the end of the cooking, then put them together. He cooked it for that evening and does not use garlic at all. The ratatouille was wonderful. The peppers added sweetness and the lack of garlic allowed the flavors of the vegetables to come through better than the way I have always cooked it (from the recipe book.)

The following day Ernie and I spent the morning walking around Lausanne. It is a short walk from their apartment to the City center. We had breakfast of croissants and café au lait and found an ATM to refurbish our funds. We found a papeterie where we succeeded in finding plastic holders to hold posters. Now we could hang a poster we bought at the Musee d'Orsay in our apartment in Paris. We bought several of the poster holders.

Then down cardiac hill to the train station where we bought the local train tickets to Bex for Thursday. On the way back to the Joseph's it was fun to revisit a city garden that has an entire stone wall covered in chicken wire to hold peat moss for a wall of flowers. Some of the flowers were already in bloom even though winter wasn't over.

The outdoor market on the streets of Rue Bourg was in full swing so we walked through it. Even though Jo had flowers in the house, it was impossible to resist buying tulips. There was a Russian bass singing for coins, lots of local color. It was just lovely to be walking around the streets of Lausanne.

That evening we attended the Swiss Alpine Club Soirée des Jubilaires, an annual event where they award pins (25 or 40 year pins) or certificates called (Diplôme) to their members who have achieved a

number of years of membership. The program began at 7 pm. We arrived before then and found the place already jam packed

The Diablerets Section (named after Les Diablerets, the highest peak in the Vaudoise Alpes, 3210 meters). Ernie and Claude belong to this section of the Swiss Alpine Club. Les Diablerets owns its own building in Lausanne. They have a large meeting room including a nice library (to which Ernie has donated several Sierra Club coffee table books) and a bar called the Buvette. For this occasion, the entire room was filled with long tables and chairs. Every available inch was taken. We were afraid we wouldn't find places for the three of us to sit, but we finally managed.

As we walked down the stairs into the room jostling with other people, all of whom were very jolly, we noticed that at the other end there was a small band of men dressed in a costume of some type and wearing hats. This was a band called "Musique d'Anzeinde," a group of musicians and singers that provide music at Les Diablerets events. [Anzeinde is a high mountain valley in the Alpes Vaudoises.] There was a head table with the current officers and the master of ceremony. To the far right was a podium with a microphone.

The first award was to an 80-year member. He was well into his 90's and asked to speak. He was tearful and told the story of meeting his wife right here in the Buvette and he pointed her out. He told about breaking a leg on a mountain in the snow and that a group from the Swiss Alpine club came to his rescue. They made a sled using his skis and ski poles and brought him down the mountain. After that he joined the Club himself. He talked about the joy that the mountains have given him.

This was followed by a 70-year member. There were only two of them and one person spoke. The theme of the importance of the mountains to his life was repeated.

Then there were 60-year members. By the time we got to Ernie's level of 50-year members, it didn't seem quite as impressive as it had before we heard the 80- and 70- and 60-year members speak. There were fourteen 50-year recipients.

The band played a few numbers. The President spoke. Everyone sang a song that Claude remembered learning when he was a school boy. The words to the song were on the tables so everyone could join in.

In between an award was given to the outgoing president. They gave him a green shirt with the emblem on it that the band players were wearing.

Then there were 40-year members and then they jumped to 25-year members. (called "members veterans") At 25 there was a man who spoke who has taken on the responsibility of organizing the young people's trips, which are published in each of the bulletins that has the list of trips. He organizes training and does a wonderful job of developing the younger generations into good mountaineers. He shared lots of funny stories.

At the end of the awards, people were invited to go to the food table and pick up bread and two types of cheese, both from Vaud. One was a Tomme de Vaud and the other was a Vacherin Mont d'Or. The award recipients were each given a bag with a few publications and a ticket for a bottle of white wine from Vaud. (from Epesses).

Then we returned to the apartment and reported on the event to Jo.

Jo told us a hair-raising story about her brother in law who was part of the French resistance. She then told us about being a Jewish child in Marseille during the occupation and how her father came to be the only Jewish man left in Marseille and how he and her family survived.

On Thursday morning we had breakfast together in the kitchen. Claude had some business to attend to and left but promised to return in time for lunch.

On Thursdays, their 17-year old grandson Roman, comes to lunch. He always wants the same thing, a steak, fries and green beans and salad. The tulips from the market are on the table.

Following lunch he retires with his grand father to his study for an hour of physics.



Roman is the son of their son Jean Marc and his wife Isabelle. Jean Marc is a physician specializing in research on childhood cancer. Roman is in a private school in Lausanne where there are many children of extremely wealthy people. Lausanne is full of Saudi princes and other people of outrageous wealth.

It was cute to hear Claude talk about teaching physics to Roman.

After the hour of physics Roman left and we piled in the car and drove to the campus of the EPFL at Dorigny to see the newly opened Learning Center.





Here are photos of the interior of this amazing building. It is a private-public cooperative project designed by a Japanese man and wife team. The Joseph's were critical of it because it eats up so much land and is only one story.

However, I saw it as being very user friendly. On that day, it was not quite finished but its grand opening had happened the previous day. Notice that it is already in full use by the students. The main difference between it and an older version of a library is the study carrels. They are set up for group study. Each pole has multiple outlets to plug into the Internet.



The rolling areas have outlets for Internet cables in the floor and there are bean bags strewn around and students lounge in them in all kinds of positions with their laptops in their laps, on their legs, on the



floor. It was interesting how quiet it was. People were talking to each other but softly. There are quiet zones where no talking is allowed at all, and other zones where quiet talking is allowed.



The Learning Center is a good name for it. It is more than a library. Actually, it contains several different libraries having to do with mathematics, and different sciences and engineering. There is a mixture of paper and paperless material easily available.

The exterior walls are of glass with blinds that are computer controlled and respond to light. They open and close automatically to conserve a constant temperature in the building. There is no other climate control and the windows do not open. Actually, there are no windows, only walls of glass. Whether the shades would ensure enough cooling is a question yet to be answered. It was raining the day of our visit and the shades were going up and down in response to the amount of sunshine.



Here we see Jo Joseph walking past the Index for one of the Libraries. The white lines on the floor are raised and are guides for blind people to find their way using a cane. The building is totally accessible, except that some of the ramps are probably too steep for someone with impaired walking ability or in a hand pushed wheel chair. [comment by Ernie “will be great for skate boarders”]

