

 010917 Dawn

## Traffic Woes

I forgot to mention in my last email that if you have a bike, you must buy lights if you want to ride at night. There are these square "flashlights" that you can buy in red and white that can be attached to the bike and they are the cheapest way of meeting the law. Therefore, most students, including myself "splurged" for a set of these. The only bad part is that they slide onto brackets that are attached to the bike and you must take them off and carry them with you so that they don't get stolen. Therefore, you must always remember to pack them in your backpack if you are planning to stay at school until after dark.

The lights aren't the only thing to be stolen. There is a booming bike stealing business which is why most of the used bikes on the road have come from police auctions. If the police can not track down the owner of a recovered bike, they sell them to the public. I may be going out on a limb here, but I think that the reason that so many bikes get stolen is that the Danes do not lock their bikes to anything solid. Instead most bikes, including mine have this lock on the rear tire that goes through the spokes. So when it is engaged, the lock prevents the wheel from spinning. But, the thieves can just carry the bike off. I brought my Kryptonite U-lock with me and I lock it to the bike racks except when it is in the cellar of my building over night. Then, I just lock the rear tire since the door to the cellar is locked and there is nothing to lock the bike to.

Traffic lights here in Copenhagen are a bit unnerving at first. Everything is orchestrated so it is very clear when to drive or when to walk. When I am crossing a street, I wait like everyone else for the walk signal to come on before I step out into the crosswalk. But then, the traffic that has a red light will come roaring up to the stop line. I always just kind of stop, watching, waiting, wondering, "will they stop?" But they always seem to do so.

The Danes also have an additional light sequence. They have the green, yellow and red lights. They also have a red and yellow combination that fits between red and green. But, red and yellow might as well mean green because everyone therefore gets a warning that green is coming and they jump off of the line.

## Danish Vocab

The Danish are missing from their vocabulary so many words that I use in English! Not only is the word please missing (how can you have a language that is missing the word please?), but also words like really, maybe and whatever.

## News

I have been following the news closely at home. I am fortunate to get not one, but two BBC stations, BBC World and BBC Prime. BBC World which has English news 24 hours a day so that I can keep up with the latest developments. Prior to finding out that I had a TV, I had been planning on buying a short-wave radio so that I could pull in the BBC signal as I did for my news in China. The BBC is by far my favorite news source in the world. It is nice to get a news source that does not have a US slant (although it does have a British one). I also think that BBC is more objective and has better coverage of the world response than CNN. I believe that CNN lacks the journalistic integrity of the BBC in favor of sensationalism.

## Weekend

On Friday, I went to a little get together with two Finns, one person from Iceland and a German. With our small rented rooms, big gatherings are difficult lest we upset our landlords, but the German decided to give it a shot. I learned a lot. For one thing, the Fosters that we drank that night is brewed in Germany (yes, the Australian beer). I also learned that the dish to eat on Christmas day in Finland is reindeer. That is enough to give little kids nightmares as they think of Santa's reindeerless sleigh. Anyway, occasions such as this have been a lot of fun and I am learning so much about the world.



Riding to Louisiana, Santiago and I on our bikes. Courtesy of Micah Allen.

On Saturday, my friends Santiago, Micah and I decided to ride our bikes to a museum Louisiana, about 30 km up the coast. The ride was beautiful as we first went through parks and then along the ocean. Sweden was to our right across the small channel and beautiful houses were on our left as we followed the road. These are the houses of the wealthy of Copenhagen. There was sporadic rain, of course (this is Denmark), but they were the ten minute variety that occur several times a day. (The weather service might as well leave a permanent cloud over Denmark. But, the ten minute downpours followed by sunshine have made for some spectacular rainbows).



Photo courtesy of Micah Allen.

I am not a big fan of modern art, but the museum proved to be interesting nonetheless. There was also a big display about architect Norman Foster who has designed that new building in London as well as the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank building in Hong Kong. All are amazing buildings.

After such a long ride, we decided to take the train back when we were done with the museum. Here in Denmark, there are specially marked subways onto which you can take your bikes. The train that we rode actually goes all the way to Malmo in Sweden which will be a neat day trip one weekend. The cars of the train were beautiful with bathrooms and even vending machines. The bad part was that we were supposed to buy a special ticket for our bikes which we did not know about until one of the conductors caught us. But, since I had clipped my ticket 5 times instead of 3 (paying way too much for the train), she saw that we clearly had no idea what we were doing and so she did not fine us. Whew.



Micah and Santiago. Photo courtesy of Micah Allen.

Next Friday we are planning on taking the boat from Copenhagen to Oslo, Norway. The boat ride takes about 16 hours, putting us in Oslo in the morning. The next day, we will catch a train to Bergen. The train ride has been called the most beautiful one in all of Europe as the rails wind through the mountains and the fjords. The tickets will allow us to hop on and off of the train, so we plan to catch a boat through part of the fjords and meet up with the train later. Once in Bergen, we will catch a flight back to Copenhagen on Monday. None of us have classes other than our Danish class on Monday, so we wanted to take this opportunity to explore Norway before the weather became frigid up north.

I will let you know how it goes!

Jeff

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