



REGIONAL TRIPS
● NON-CREDIT U.S. TOURS

10 TOURS	200 MEMBERS (EST.)
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ADULT TOURS
● INTERNATIONAL "ALUMNI AND FRIENDS" TOURS

27 TOURS	'81-'08 YEARS	868 MEMBERS
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• MERLENE OGDEN:
FROM ANDREWS

CONVERSATIONS WITH LES AND GREGORY

Reveling in the "adventure of the unknown," **Gregory Snell** (BA '91, MA '95) taught English in Asia the last five years. Continuing the cultural exchange, he currently teaches in Poplar Bluff, Mo., where he is plotting a return to Ravenna, Italy for a mosaic workshop. A deliriously happy marriage with **Lisa Karpenko** (BA '96) keeps **Leslie Rollins** (BA '98) in a near constant state of joy. He's fixin' to get his head more fully 'round living in "The South" after relocating from Howell, Mich., to Nashville, Tenn. Leslie currently is crisscrossing the U.S. for Thomas Nelson Publishers as a retail marketing Bible consultant.

Asked to share their European Study Tour experiences with Focus readers, they settle in for a cross-country phone call, reminiscing about their first travel experiences together.

Rollins: I first met Dr. Ogden on tour. My aunt and uncle's pictures of a past Ogden tour had enthralled me, and I knew I had to get a ticket into that world.

Snell: Well, that's the glamorous way to meet Dr. Ogden. I knew her from working together for seven years, assisting on her tours as a student and renting her basement apartment. The tours are amazing, but Leslie's approach ignores her attention to detail. Traveling in England on the 4th of July—hardly a country to celebrate our independence—she bought watermelons for dinner. The hotel served each wedge with an American flag on top. I asked the waiter where they found 60 American flags. He said, "Your tour leader provided them." She hadn't known how she would use them,

but planned ahead to make our holiday special.

Rollins: Yes, Dr. Ogden tries to ensure that everyone has a good time. And she makes you feel comfortable no matter how grand the situation or clueless you might be within it—even if you wear shorts to St. Mark's Basilica in Venice and have to wear a scarf around your waist to gain entrance. At the Windemere Hotel in the Lake District [England], she offered an evening tutorial for fine dining. She set a table with all the glasses and silver and taught us how and when to use each piece. After that, I felt prepared for any situation, no matter how many forks were used!

Snell: Her tour preparation begins a year in advance. One entire summer was spent copying, retyping, and compiling information for the tour resource book affectionately called "The Thing." This hefty binder features literature, history, economics, fine arts, architecture, religion, biographies, maps, essays, floor plans and songs. It's an encyclopedia customized for your trip.

Rollins: Encyclopedia? It's more like a hodge-podge of things you find on



THE "GRAND TOUR" OF EUROPE

• FOR CREDIT IN ENGLISH, HISTORY AND FINE ARTS

14

TOURS

'64-'93

YEARS

635

MEMBERS

WITH VISITS TO COLLEGES AT: NEWBOLD, ENGLAND • COLLONGES, FRANCE
VILLA AURORA, ITALY • BOGENHOFEN, AUSTRIA • MARIENHOEHE, WEST
GERMANY DANISH JR COLLEGE, DENMARK • TYRIFJRD, NORWAY

OTHER WORLD TRAVEL FOR A.U.

• AS DEAN OF AFFILIATIONS, MERLENE WORKED WITH OUR SCHOOLS IN:
AUSTRALIA
ENGLAND
GHANA
HAITI
INDIA
JAMAICA
KENYA
MEXICO
NIGERIA
PERU
PUERTO RICO
RWANDA
SOUTH AFRICA
THAILAND
TRINIDAD
ZIMBABWE

TOUR TOTALS

51

TOURS

1,703

TOUR MEMBERS

...TO THE WORLD

someone's refrigerator—to-do lists, fun drawings, little articles. Separately, they seem disconnected, but taken as a whole a great collection emerges, revealing a thoughtful personality. I never appreciated the wealth of information we were given until I took a fine arts class at community college. When showing slides in class, the teacher had to sigh and ask, "How was it in person, Leslie?" If it wasn't in Greece, Egypt, or Asia I could say, "Been there, seen that."

Rollins: I was amazed at her energy. Though always busy, she never appeared flustered. If you asked a question, she always explained things and never seemed impatient, even as she hurried you back to the bus.

Snell: Dr. Ogden has one speed on tour—steady. Climbing up to

Neuschwanstein Castle, she may not start in front of the group, but she's waiting when you reach the top. Yet, she is sympathetic to "tour fatigue." After one long day, she said, "Get out 'The Thing' and take notes on..." An audible sigh echoed through the bus. Rather than maintain her lecture schedule she said, "Well, we can do that later. Let's just enjoy the scenery awhile."

Rollins: That sigh was probably after your 45 minute monologue about King Arthur, Gregory! Even co-leader Malcom Russell fell asleep. Fortunately, Dr. Ogden shares practical information—shopping advice on what each area is famous for or quality souvenirs that fit student budgets. She suggested keeping a photo journal to help identify pictures after the tour, as well

as saving 15 minutes each evening to journal your impressions of the day.

Snell: It's ironic that you praise those tips now since you didn't follow them and still can't identify some of your photos! Dr. Ogden certainly plans ahead. In Ravenna, Italy, she bought a stack of postcards showing a Byzantine mosaic of the Three Magi. The following Christmas she sent them to tour members—it was her holiday card and a fond memory of the tour.

Snell: Even though the trips are action-packed, she deliberately carved out space for spiritual enrichment, too. Whether singing a chorus in a cathedral, worshiping with a local church, creating our own service in a Swiss Alps meadow or writing Psalms of Travel, each Sabbath is a special memory.

Rollins: Her trips foster great personal connectedness—to history, people and cultures. Even off-paper Dr. Ogden can neatly tie everything together, like a community version of "The Thing." Dr. Ogden showed me a part of the world and a way of thinking about it that still deeply effects me today. I learned that treasure is available anytime if you just open your eyes and show an interest in learning.

