

# Travel

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2007

Adventure • Tips • Leisure

CSVWE SECTION

## Tripipedia

### Snap! Fizzle! It's Pops

The slogan pretty much says it all: "Food, Fuel & Fizz."

Pops on historic Route 66 in Arcadia, Okla., opened in August and sells almost 500 kinds of soda pop, along with soda fountain-type food, shakes, souvenirs and gasoline. And it's impossible to miss, thanks to a 66-foot-tall soda bottle, complete with straw, that lights up and changes colors at night.



Although the store is in the middle of nowhere, it sells an average of 9,000 bottles of soda a week, says Jessica Ockershauser, marketing manager. She adds that the restaurant serves about 700 people weekly, with wait times sometimes topping two hours on weekend nights.

During recent storms, the store did close as travelers were asked to stay off the icy roads.

— Dallas Morning News

### Now that's customer service



In August, Chad Older, of Washington, D.C., was flying on Southwest Airlines when his father-in-law, on the ground, called the airline to say that Older's wife had gone into labor, six weeks early.

When Older landed in Albuquerque for a connection to Las Vegas, Southwest agents hurried him to a gate with a flight returning to BWI. Although the flight was full, the airlines provided incentives to get someone to voluntarily be bumped. A ground crew member rushed off to find his bag. "Despite my insistence on paying the return fare, Southwest refused," writes Older.

He arrived home in time to see his first son, Owen, born. And when he sent Southwest a thank-you note recently, he got back a note thanking him for thanking them, plus a present for Owen.

— Washington Post

### Island getaways



"MY WIFE AND I had discovered how traveling can shape one's thinking. We wanted to give this experience to our children," says John Higham, with his wife, Septen and children Jordan, left, whose choice it was while planning their yearlong trip to climb the Great Wall of China; and Katrina.

## 28 countries in 52 weeks



**M&M'S SAVE THE DAY** by plugging up a hole in a hose on the Highams' rented unimog truck used for crossing Bolivia's salt flats, the Salar de Uyuni, above right. "I offered grass to eat, and made friends with it," said Katrina, explaining why her elephant-ride experience in Thailand, above, exceeded that of her parents.'

### Family of four circumnavigates the planet

By Jackie Burrell

STAFF WRITER

**F**IVE CONTINENTS, 28 countries and two children — it's not every family who would embark on such an adventurous trek, especially one involving elephants, piranhas and Armageddon-like breakdowns in an idyllic Bolivian landscape. But then, John and September Higham are not exactly your average Samsonite tourists.

The aerospace engineer and software database expert were seasoned travelers. They'd honeymooned in Mexico, lived in Japan, backpacked the backcountry and traveled the globe. And their dream of circumnavigating the planet with their young family dated back so far that their children didn't even blink when a giant world map was pasted across a wall in their Mountain View home, and a stack of sticky notes was carefully placed nearby. Jordan, then 8 years old,

added a sticky note to China, jotting down his fantasy of climbing the Great Wall and seeing the Forbidden City. Katrina, 10, carefully placed hers over the Serengeti.

Aflutter with yellow stickies, that map became the itinerary for their trip around the world — a \$120,000 journey, if you include the costs of maintaining the mortgage and car payments back home, as well as travel expenses and private medical insurance. It took years of saving to make it all happen.

"My wife and I had discovered how traveling can shape one's thinking," John says. "We wanted to give this experience to our children."

And so their yearlong, around-the-world hopscotch began.

The Highams quit their jobs, put their possessions in storage and took off, bound first for Iceland, then England. They did the obligatory tourist sights — saw



**SCALING THE ANDES** to Machu Picchu was just another day in the life for the Highams.

See FAMILY, Page 3

