

Chapter One Flat Stanley Arrives--The First Few Days

Day 1, 9/24/05

Flat Stanley arrived at the BearingPoint Camp in Baghdad Iraq this morning. I got my mail from the camp office, and immediately helped Flat Stanley out of the envelope he was in at lunchtime.

Flat Stanley traveled 7,408 miles from El Dorado Hills to Baghdad, Iraq. That is almost like traveling to Washington D.C. and back two times! Or from El Dorado Hills to Sacramento and back 123 times!

When I opened Flat Stanley's envelope, I noticed that he was so very thin and so very hungry. I decided to send him with some friends to have lunch at the U.S. Army cafeteria, where all the soldiers eat. The woman is Simona Marinescu. Simona is from Romania. She is a former Romanian Senator in their senate which is like our U.S. Senate in Washington D.C. Can you find Romania on the map? The man is Phil Clark. He is from Australia and works with many numbers and computers. He is very funny. Can you name a famous animal that only lives in Australia? Mr. Phil is NOT an animal so if you answered that you are WRONG. I mean a real animal, something you can find at the Sacramento or San

Francisco Zoo.



They are nice friends and took good care of Flat Stanley. I wonder how many desserts he had? The Army will not let you eat more than two at a time, but Flat Stanley was VERY thin and VERY hungry.

Flat Stanley went to the office after lunch. He found a map of Iraq. You can see Iraq on the map if you look really closely. And, if you look just to the left of the map, you can see a picture of Flat Stanley's brother Flat Frank hanging on the wall. Flat Stanley is quite at home here at the office even after one day. I hope he will do some of my work!



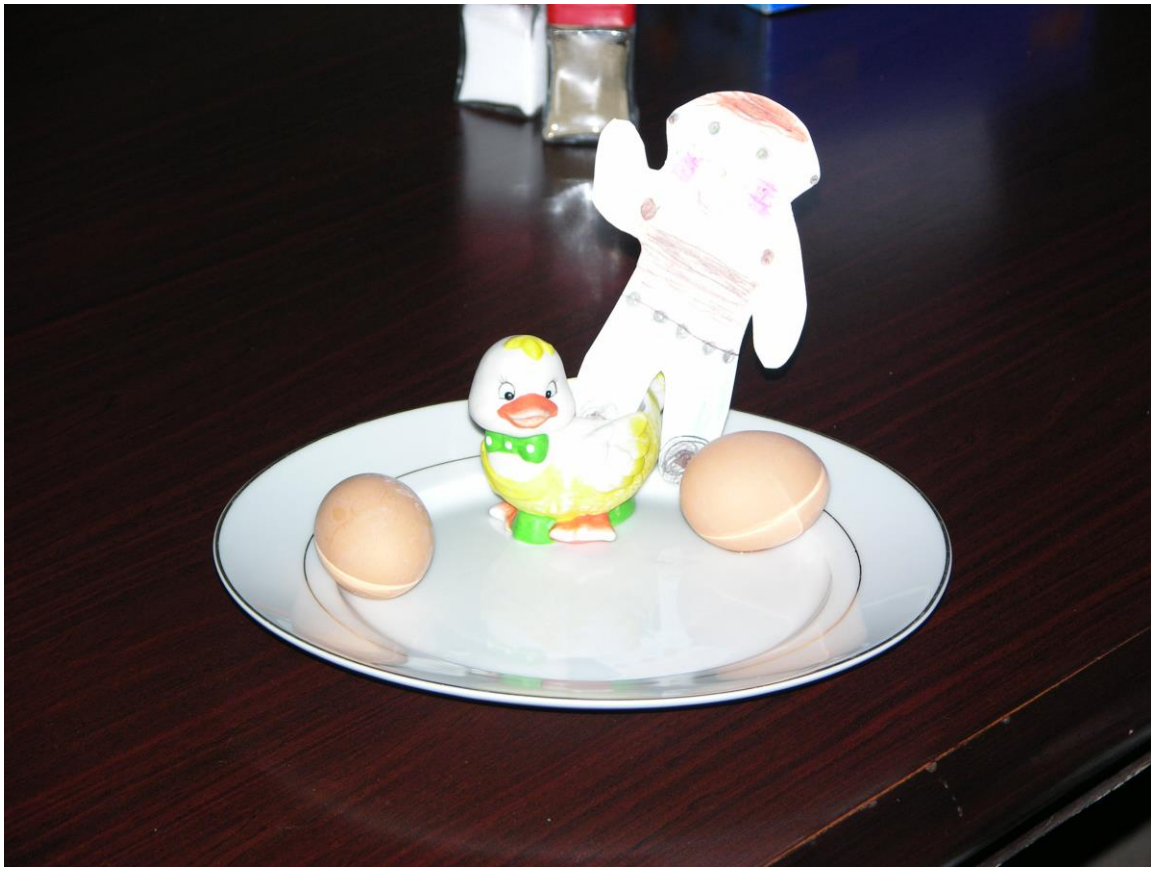
Day 2, 9/25/05

Today is Sunday. Flat Stanley went to breakfast this morning at about 7:30 a.m. He seemed to sleep well, even though he had just come from a long trip the day before. But, I have to tell you a little secret, just between us. Flat Stanley **SNORES!** Flat Stanley **SNORES LOUDLY!** Flat Stanley **SNORES** so **LOUDLY** that the bed sheets fly into the air every time he lets out a breath. Oh! Flat Stanley may have slept well, but I didn't.

Last night, Mr. Patrick and Flat Stanley worked out at the gym together. Although Flat Stanley was tired from his trip, he was still faster than Mr. Patrick on the machine. Look at the picture just below. Look how Mr. Patrick sweats! P.U.!



Anyway, Flat Stanley had breakfast. He met a very nice little ducky on the breakfast table. The duck is used to hold soft boiled eggs for Mr. Patrick. Mr. Patrick loves his little duck very much. Mr. Patrick was born in France but he is an American citizen. He is very funny.



Since there are only grownups at BearingPoint Camp, there is no *Captain Crunch*, or *Lucky Charms*. Just grownup cereal! Flat Stanley said the cereal was boring, but I told him that he didn't have a choice if he wanted to eat breakfast. Flat Stanley agreed and was quiet for the rest of the meal. He didn't even get excited when the cook searched the kitchen cupboards and found Flat Stanley a special box of *Fruit Loops*!

Day 3, 9/26

Flat Stanley seems to be suffering from jet lag this morning. Jet lag is something you get when you travel very far. Your body needs time to adjust to jet lag. Jet lag can be worse than the flu. But Flat Stanley, like others with jet lag, need to adjust to the new surroundings and the time differences which make you tired at lunchtime and hungry at midnight.

Do you remember a time you went into a dark movie theater for an afternoon movie? Your eyes need to adjust to the theater or you just might spill your popcorn and juice. Then, after the movie, you go outside, and it is hard to see where you are. Remember?

Anyway, jet lag makes you tired when you travel long distances and across many time zones. Flat Stanley traveled to Baghdad. When it is 12:00 noon in El Dorado Hills, it is 11:00 p.m. in Baghdad. Baghdad is 11 hours ahead of El Dorado Hills, but will turn the clocks back for Daylight Savings Time on October 1st, ahead of the United States. Then how many hours difference between El Dorado Hills and Baghdad? 10!

Flat Stanley's body still thinks it is 12:00 noon in El Dorado Hills when it is 11:00 p.m. in Baghdad. This is jet lag. Flat Stanley has jet lag. So, Flat Stanley doesn't sleep much when it is night here, but is VERY tired during the day. So, today, Flat Stanley spent the day in bed. He is trying to make his body adjust to Baghdad time. Let's hope Flat Stanley does that soon!

Day 4, 9/27

Flat Stanley seems like he is normal. Flat Stanley went back to the gym and found Mr. Bob. Mr. Bob is from Texas. Texas is not a country, but a big state in the United States. You can see from the picture that Flat Stanley was not working out too hard.

Chapter Two, The Big Meeting

Day 5, 9/28

Flat Stanley helped Mr. Chuck work on a project. He helped at the printer, and even stapled a few documents together. He had to be very careful NOT to staple himself. Staples could really hurt Flat Stanley. But tomorrow was the big meeting day, so Mr. Chuck had to make Flat Stanley work very hard!



Day 6, 9/29

Today was Thursday, the big meeting day! Flat Stanley went with Mr. Eric and Mr. Chuck to a security checkpoint. Mr. Eric is from Canada, and speaks French just like Mr. Patrick. I think. Anyway, I am not really sure, because I cannot speak French. Do you know

anyone who speaks French? It is an expressive language with more sounds than English, which makes it harder to pronounce than English, especially if you are trying to learn it as a second or third language.

Anyway, we went to the security checkpoint to get our guests. Our guests are Iraqis, but they live outside the area in which we live. Since the meeting was near where we live, inside a gated area protected by the U.S. Army and other soldiers, they had to come inside our fort that is called the International Zone to make the meeting. Flat Stanley met them. Since Flat Stanley does not speak Arabic, the language the Iraqis speak, they just smiled at each other.

Flat Stanley had lots of fun. Flat Stanley met Mr. Rich. Mr. Rich came to our meeting to listen to what Flat Stanley helped Mr. Chuck write. Mr. Rich works for Bechtel, a big company from San Francisco. Sophia's grandfather worked for the same company. Mr. Rich worked with Sophia's grandfather in Indonesia. Isn't it a small world? Can you find Indonesia on a world map or globe? Let's

try!



After the meeting, Flat Stanley met an important Iraqi who takes the taxes. He is in the suit. Some people do not like the people who take the taxes, even in the United States. But the man was very nice and Flat Stanley was happy to meet him.



Mr. Eric is in the blue shirt, and the important Iraqi is in the suit and coat. After the meeting, everyone was tired. Flat Stanley went back to Mr. Chuck's room. Mr. Eric and I went to get dinner and relax. It was a long day.

Chapter Three, At Work in Camp BearingPoint

Day 7, 9/30

Today there isn't much happening. It is Mr. Chuck's day off, so I let Flat Stanley wander around a bit in the camp. He found some interesting things to look at. We just relaxed.

The weekend in Iraq starts on Friday, which is the Holy Day for Muslims, like Saturday is for Jews, and Sunday is for Christians. All the stores are closed and no one works. Saturday we have to work, but the people of Iraq take the day off. Each week, Iraqis

get a weekend, but it starts one day earlier than weekends in America.

Day 8, 10/01

Today is Saturday, but it is a workday for me, so Flat Stanley has to roll up his sleeves and get to work reading and writing. As I explained, we only get one day off each week, but the Iraqis get Saturday off. Iraqis go back to work on Sunday.



Flat Stanley found himself in the main office working with Feras. Feras works very hard keeping the work we do in order. Yes, even grownups can be sloppy and forget things. Thanks to Feras, we are well organized. Feras is one of the many wonderful Iraqis working in our BearingPoint Camp. We are very lucky.

Virginie is smiling in the picture above because she got a moment to relax out of her busy working day. Virginie also does much to help us, including sending reminders to us all. Grownups can be

so forgetful. Virginie is from France and speaks both French and English. Mr. Chuck tries to practice speaking French with Virignie but his pronunciation of French makes Virginie cover her ears. Virginie is very polite to everyone, so she has never really told Mr. Chuck just how really bad his attempts at speaking French were.

Day 9, 10/02

Sunday is a workday for Mr. Chuck, so of course it is a workday for Flat Stanley. Flat Stanley wanted to sleep in today but Mr. Chuck told him that if he was too sleepy to get up he was probably sick. And, if Flat Stanley was too sick to get out of bed, he had to stay in bed the whole day. Funny, but next, Flat Stanley got really fast! Mr. Chuck dragged Flat Stanley outside for some sun.



Today was cool. It was only 97degrees. This summer, the temperature was as high as 130 degrees. In El Dorado Hills and Sacramento, even on the hottest days, the temperature never gets much hotter than 100 degrees. At 130 degrees, you can fry an egg!

Someone Mr. Chuck works with tried this during the summer, but the wild birds ate the egg before it was cooked.

Day 10, 10/03

Today was a busy workday. Mr. Chuck got very busy with a report he was writing, so busy in fact, that he did not realize Flat Stanley had disappeared until almost lunchtime! Mr. Chuck searched all over the BearingPoint Camp for Flat Stanley. Mr. Chuck finally located Flat Stanley in the Big Boss's office where he had taken the nice leather chair of the Big Boss. He was sitting in the nice leather chair telling people what to do. I guess Flat Stanley thinks that the Boss just tells other people what to do, but doesn't really do anything himself. What do you think Big Bosses like Sophia's dad and some of your moms and dads do as Big Bosses?



Anyway, it was lucky for Mr. Chuck that the Big Boss was gone on vacation or Mr. Chuck would have been in some very Big trouble. Look at Flat Stanley sitting comfortably in the fine leather chair! See the green bag on the shelf to the left of Flat Stanley? That is the bag for a gas mask, which we have just in case there is a chemical attack. We do have some danger quite close to where our Camp is, but we are still very safe. But Flat Stanley wouldn't need a gas mask if we had a chemical attack because Flat Stanley Flat Stanley is cardboard paper. Or is he?

Boy was Mr. Chuck mad with Flat Stanley. Sitting in the Big Bosses chair thinking he was helpful by "Bossing" everyone around. He won't get any dessert ton

Chapter Four, Ramadan Starts and a Big Meeting

Day 11, 10/04

If you are Muslim, like most Iraqis, today is the beginning of the month of Ramadan, which is an important month for serious thinking during the day and celebrations with lots of food at night. **Ramadan** is the ninth month of the Muslim calendar. The Western calendar, which we use in the United States, has how many months?

The Month of Ramadan is also the month in which it is believed that the Holy Quran, the Muslim Bible, "was sent down from heaven, a guidance unto men, a declaration of direction, and a means of Salvation."

It is during this month that Muslims fast. It is called the Fast of Ramadan and lasts the entire month. Ramadan is a time when Muslims concentrate on their faith. During this time they try to spend less time thinking about everyday life, like soccer games and television, and more time thinking about living in a good

relationship to God and family. So, the month of Ramadan is a time of serious thought.

During the Fast of Ramadan strict rules are placed on the daily lives of Muslims. Fasting Muslims are not allowed to eat or drink during the day. At the end of the day they can eat. Before they eat, they say a prayer. After the prayer they have a big family meal called the *iftar*. In the evening following the *iftar* it is customary for Muslims to go out visiting family and friends. The next morning they begin the fast all over again, and cannot eat during the hours of daylight.

Ramadan is a new experience for Flat Stanley. The Iraqis who work with Mr. Chuck and Flat Stanley celebrate Ramadan. We do not want to disrespect their fast or time of thought, so we do not eat our food or drink around them. Eating and drinking around Iraqis who are fasting would be disrespectful of them. So we eat away from our Iraqi friends so as not to interfere with their fast and religious observance.

Day 12, 10/05

We went outside the International Zone, into the city of Baghdad today. It was the first time Flat Stanley had been outside the International Zone where we live since Flat Stanley arrived in Baghdad.

It is very dangerous for Americans and non-Iraqis to go outside the International Zone. When we go outside to do work, we go with security men and women who protect us. They have guns and machine guns, and while we drive through Baghdad they talk to each other as they check out the cars, people and buildings we pass.

There is a driver and a bodyguard in one car, and no more than two people as passengers (Flat Stanley does not count). We also have

another car with a driver and bodyguard who follow us just in case our car gets engine trouble, or someone tries to kidnap us. It is still very dangerous in some parts of Baghdad.

We arrived at the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MOLSA). MOLSA is where we go to do our work when we go outside the International Zone. Sometimes we go to MOLSA two or three times a week, but always with security or bodyguards. Anyway we arrived at MOLA in time for our meetings, and Flat Stanley came along.

MOLSA is like our Department of Labor in the United States. President Bush or whoever is president, nominates the head of the Department of Labor and after the Senate approves the president's nomination, the person becomes Secretary of Labor. Our current head of the Department of Labor is Secretary Elaine Chao.



She really isn't a secretary, but we call the heads of our U.S. Government departments secretaries, just like the Iraqis call the heads of their government departments like MOLSA, ministers. Ministers are not really ministers. They do not run churches or give sermons. They run ministries, big departments with lots of people and things to do. Both types of secretaries and ministers mentioned here are very important in their countries.

While we were meeting at the ministry, we got a phone call. The Minister wanted to meet with us. So, we went to the Minister's

office that was in another building from where we were. So we had to walk, and our bodyguards and Flat Stanley walked with us. When we got to the Minister's waiting room, we sat down and waited for him to call us. The call came and Simona and the translator--the minister speaks some English and Russian, but really, like most of us, prefers his native language, Arabic--went into the office. Flat Stanley and I stayed in the waiting room outside and visited with the staff there.

Ten minutes later I heard Simona shout out "Chuck" from the hall just outside the waiting room. Apparently, once the meeting with the Minister was done, Simona mentioned Mr. Chuck was just outside with Flat Stanley. Since the Minister did not know this, he came out of his office and walked down the hall with Simona to the waiting room to say hello and meet Flat Stanley. He shook hands with Mr. Chuck and Mr. Chuck introduced Flat Stanley to him, and asked if Flat Stanley could have a picture with the Minister. The Minister said "of course" in Russian (we spoke in Russian not Arabic). So, Simona, the Minister, Flat Stanley, and I had a picture taken together.



Part of the Minister's job is to help very young Iraqi children who have no parents. Their parents might have abandoned some of them, leaving the children with no place to live and nothing to eat.

Or, the parents of the orphan children might have been killed during the many wars Iraq has had over the years. No matter what, the orphans have no family like we do, and it is very sad.

So the children live in orphanages that the government of Iraq provides, because they have no home or mother and father. Orphanages are like big houses where many children live together, often many sleeping to a room. They eat together too. It is pretty safe. But it is lonely without a family, and many miss their parents. It is very sad.

But the Minister's job is to make sure the government orphanages are run well, and that the children are well cared for. The Minister Flat Stanley met works very hard to do this, and he cares very much about the children of Iraq.

The Minister offered to take Simona, Flat Stanley and Mr. Chuck to an orphanage one day. Unfortunately for Flat Stanley, that will be after he must return to El Dorado Hills, since he is part of an important class project.

Chapter Five, Back in BearingPoint Camp

Day 12, 10/06

Thursday again! Wow! Time seems to fly, fly faster than butterflies and birds. It is the end of the week again. Flat Stanley and Mr. Chuck did some office work. At lunchtime, Mr. Chuck walked to the nearby PX where the soldiers and people like Mr. Chuck go eat lunch and buy some groceries, or even get a haircut. Flat Stanley did not want to walk to get a haircut. He said that he was afraid that if he got a haircut, they might take too much off the top of his head, like they did to Mr. Chuck. Mr. Chuck agreed that it was better for Flat Stanley to remain in the BearingPoint Camp.

While Mr. Chuck was gone, Flat Stanley walked around the camp. He met Mr. Greg, a nice man from Australia. Mr. Greg has a son named River. Imagine if Mr. Greg's last name was Mississippi? That would make his son's whole name River Mississippi. Do you know what big cities are at the start and end of the Mississippi River.

Wow, that name would be really neat for Mr. Greg's son, River. But Mr. Greg's last name really isn't Mississippi. I was only joking.

When Flat Stanley saw Mr. Greg he ran up to him and asked Mr. Greg if he would help him pick some dates from the date palm tree. In California, we have palm trees but most of them do not have fruit like the date palms in Iraq. Dates are a very tasty fruit, and even in El Dorado Hills you can buy them at the Raley's or Albertson's. But the date fruit of the date palm tree is native to Iraq, so the dates in Iraq are the best in the world! Do you like dates? Anyway, Mr. Greg was very happy to help Flat Stanley pick some dates for his lunch.



Just behind Flat Stanley you can see a building. The brown things are sandbags, and the roof is made of solid steel with more sandbags on top. The sandbags protect us just in case someone fires a rocket. Rockets and what the soldiers call mortars do not come around us very often. But just in case, we have the sandbags for protection. It is always better to be safe than sorry.

The building in the background is where some of Mr. Chuck's friends live.

Day 13, 10/07

Another Friday, another day off! Flat Stanley and Mr. Chuck just relaxed together, reading, listening to music, and wandering about the BearingPoint camp where we live.



Mr. Chuck was seated next to Flat Stanley in the brown chair. But when Mr. Chuck went to get some juice to drink while he and Flat Stanley relaxed, Flat Stanley got someone to take a picture of him sitting by himself. The next time, Flat Stanley can go and get the juice himself.

Do you see the sandbags Mr. Chuck mentioned just a few pages ago? This is a better picture of them. Really, they are filled with sand and are very heavy.

Day 14, 10/08

What do you do when you are playing a game or doing homework (yuck!) on your home computer and something goes wrong? Do you scream for your parents? Come on, raise your hands and admit it: You do cry for help from someone else! And if your parents are not busy, what do you do then?

Well in our camp, we do not have to yell if our computers do not work while we are trying to work using them. Some of us yell, sometimes even nice Mr. Patrick, but usually not.

Instead, we send a message to our IT department. No, IT is not pronounced "it". IT stands for Information Technology, and so we pronounce it "EYE TEE". The IT people work in an office quite close to Mr. Chuck. They are all local Iraqis, and work very hard to help us when we have computer problems, even Mr. Patrick.

So today, the IT staff invited Flat Stanley to follow them around and look at what they do. They are responsible for many things like the satellite dishes that connect the BearingPoint camp with the outside world, the wiring between our computers, printers, file servers, and many other things.



Here Flat Stanley is helping one of our fine Iraqi staff check the IT supplies. There are many big boxes with computer monitors, printers, and other neat IT things.

Next Flat Stanley went to check on the satellite dishes. The satellite dishes help connect the BearingPoint Camp with the rest of the world outside. Our satellite dishes are like the dishes you might have at your house for computer networking and television.



Finally, Flat Stanley joined the team in the IT control room. From this room the IT staff monitors all of the network activity within the BearingPoint Camp making sure that all of us stay connected with the network so we can do our work with the people of Iraq.



Chapter 6, A Final Farewell from Iraq

Day 16 10/11

As Flat Stanley helped Mr. Chuck in his packing, a little surprise happened. Do you remember the things I said about the orphanages? Do you remember what an orphanage is? Remember how the Minister--not a really one from a Church--works with orphanages throughout Iraq to help the children?

Well, today, a nice Iraqi woman who works with BearingPoint was kind enough to invite Flat Stanley to visit an orphanage. BearingPoint Camp members send donations of clothes, medicine and food to the orphanage, and today was a donation delivery day.

If Flat Stanley told the truth, he was pretty bored with all the old people he kept meeting. Mr. Patrick, Mr. Greg, even Virginie. But

today, Flat Stanley was lucky to meet 40 young Iraqis: kids. The kids were between the ages of just babies and a few months old to about 6 years old (almost in second grade like you!).



When Flat Stanley returns to Sophia she might notice just a bit of chocolate on his trousers. The orphan children LOVED Flat Stanley and wanted to touch him while they had a candy treat. I don't think Flat Stanley really minded.



10/13, Holy Sites of Jordan

Flat Stanley left Baghdad yesterday. The day began early, when Mr. Chuck and Flat Stanley climbed aboard a special protective bus for the U.S. Army escorted trip from the IZ to the BIAP (Baghdad International Airport). The ride was about 30 minutes, and the tanks and gunners were ready if anyone tried to surprise us and attack. As we drove to the BIAP we had Blackhawk helicopter escort, another way to protect the buses in the convoy.

From the BIAP, Flat Stanley flew to Amman, Jordan. Amman is the capital of Jordan. The flight from Baghdad took about two hours, and when we landed, Flat Stanley was happy to be out of Iraq and the dangerous areas he had visited. Still, he met many interesting and friendly people, including those wonderful Iraqi children at the orphanage.

Today, Flat Stanley took a trip with Mr. Chuck to some very important historical and religious places. The first, was the place that Moses, from the Old Testament, heard the word of God about the “Chosen People”. Perhaps your teacher can tell you more about that.



From this wonderful site, where Moses stood over two thousand years ago, Flat Stanley and Mr. Chuck went to the Dead Sea. There is so much to say about the Dead Sea that Mr. Chuck and Flat Stanley could go on forever. But the most fun thing about the Dead Sea is that it is so salty, that you cannot sink: you float.



Next, Flat Stanley and Mr. Chuck went to the River Jordan. The River Jordan is where Christ was baptized. The first picture is of Flat Stanley and Mr. Chuck on the Jordan River.



Then, Mr. Chuck and Flat Stanley saw the location where many believe that Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist. It used to be part of the Jordan River, but had dried up.



Finally, Flat Stanley had the chance to stick his foot in the River Jordan.



See the other Bank? That other bank is the country of Israel. Flat Stanley and Mr. Chuck are standing on the bank of the River Jordan in Jordan. The other bank is Israel. That is really close.

So, now Mr. Chuck and Flat Stanley are ready to head home. They have had some wonderful experiences. They hope that they were able to share their experiences with Sophia and her classmates. If these pictures made you think, and ask your teacher or parents questions, that is good. We talked about many things. Flat Stanley and Mr. Chuck sure hope you enjoyed the story. Farewell for now.