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THE COVER

A year ago, when THE MAGAZINE'S current series of articles on life in foreign countries began, we made this statement: "The world comes to Westminster through the College." As more and more alumni and friends write articles and letters to the Hill it becomes evident that like the tide, the exchange not only comes, but goes.

In this issue readers can visit France, Vietnam, India, Italy and Greece. February—well, we'll still be traveling. The world is pretty big to anyone but an astronaut and Western Maryland alumni seem to cover much of it.

Meanwhile, Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all of you from the Alumni Office. Our cover package includes the traditional collection of articles from members of the faculty and a promise that this new volume will be as varied, and we hope enjoyable, as the last.

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Smooth Sailing in France

By Kathryn Chamberlin Flamanc, '56

When people ask me the usual question, after a few minutes of friendly chatter:

"Where do you live?"

The answer invariably draws a blank stare followed by the statement:

"A houseboat, of course. . . ."

At this point I cannot repress a chuckle as my husband and I are not precisely the houseboat type. As a matter of fact, we live on a tough sea-going 8-ton sailboat, a thirty-five foot bermudian sloop which may provide only cramped living quarters but also valiantly takes us to the wide open spaces we both love, whenever my husband obtains leave from his present duties as Public Relations Advisor to the U. S. Army in France.

It all started in the Army anyway. I had taken a position with Special Services in France and had been assigned to a small post whose name isn't to be found in general maps of the ancient gallic land, Camp Bussac. Jean was working in Headquarters and, very soon, the Special Services and Public Relations Divisions were joining heads in intra and extra curricular activities.

To cut a long story short, we were married on August 5, 1961, in a quaint Protestant church of the city of Morlaix, in Brittany, by an English minister, and amongst a crowd of colorful French and American people where French naval officers rubbed shoulders with U. S. Army field graders.

Placed under such auspices, our marriage was bound to be unusual. I had resigned from my job with the Army some two months before the wedding, and, when our honeymoon was over, I buckled down to house-keeping in a huge rented country home located ten miles from Camp Bussac and approximately twenty from my in-laws' vineyard.

A parenthesis here. My mother-in-law happens to be a South Carolinian who remains a staunch American citizen after living over forty years in France and my father-in-law is a retired naval officer and businessman who finds necessary action and adventure in the hazardous growing of an excellent brand of Bordeaux wine. Their house is an old typically south western French home nested in two centuries old elms.

Our rented house, however, proved too large for one still childless couple, and a bit too chilly. Besides, Jean and I do not believe in mixing generations, even in a twenty-four room parental abode. Therefore, we decided



to solve our housing problems and satisfy our love for the sea in one solution: Embellie.

Embellie literally means a clearing in the weather, or a lull in the wind, or a calm in the sea. She was designed by the well known British naval architect Alan Buchanan and built by the late Robert Bureau, a Frenchman who was recognized as a master in the craft. She is temperamental but sure and fast and we use the small Stuart Turner auxiliary engine only in case of complete calm or when negotiating tricky channels. Of course, we've tried to make our tiny accommodations as comfortable as possible, i.e., a main cabin with two sofa-berths, book-cases, lockers, a doghouse with galley on the port side and sofa to starboard, and a fore-castle with one bunk, sail and clothes storage space, and water closet.

When Jean is working, that is to say eleven months a year, Embellie is docked at Mortagne-sur-Gironde, a small port situated at the mouth of the Giroude estuary. We sail from there on weekends and holidays.

Vacations, of course, are devoted to longer cruises. This summer, between August 14 and September 4, we sailed around the coast of Brittany, visiting small fishing ports and islands. Our two-week winter leave, weather

permitting, will be devoted to Portugal. Another pet project for the future is gallivanting around the British Isles, especially Jersey and Guernsey. . . . Everywhere we carry our home with us.

I find "boat-keeping" a lot of fun. Granted, it is hard work for both of us, somewhat tough on the hands . . . especially for a pianist. But although my hands are sunburnt and sometimes scaly from handling lines and spars, I find I haven't lost too much when I practice on my mother-in-law's concert piano. Perhaps some day we will be able to afford a larger ship where we can have a small piano such as that of a Frenchman we know, Jean de l'Espee, who cruises around the world on a sailboat named La Clef de Sol. . . . But that would mean parting with Embellie and we couldn't even think of living without such a trustworthy member of the family. . . .

Our nautical way of life does not prevent us from traveling frequently by car. I find that France, besides her well known historical and architectural treasures, offers such contrasting scenery that a two hours' drive in any direction seems to take me to another country.

So far we have toured all of France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Holland, Italy, and Spain but we still find endless pleasure in exploring small villages, most of which possess lovely ancient churches and ivy-covered manor houses. Recently, as we were motoring along the Gironde River, we suddenly came upon an old stone windmill perched on a hill, near a hamlet named Conac. This medieval mill was in operation, its long slender wings slowly revolving to the western evening breeze against the vivid background of a crimson sunset. Through the narrow opening of a door, in the vague light of an acetylene lantern, we caught a glimpse of the miller stacking sacks of fresh flour. . . . The sight was breathtaking as, unlike the Netherlands, France does not make use of the wind any longer to crush grain. We agreed that this was probably the only windmill still working in this country and decided to return there shortly to take pictures and unearth the reason behind its survival.

Happily, our thirst for good music is easily quenched at the Opera of Bordeaux, a provincial establishment where world-famous artists and orchestras come periodically. Main event of the year, the "Musical May" of Bordeaux, is a thirty-day rendezvous for music lovers throughout Europe. . . .

Our social life? The answer to this question is contained in my husband's profession. A public relations man and journalist—I forgot to mention that Jean's basic trade is journalism—cannot neglect this aspect and a day seldom slips by without our attending some kind of function. I feel justly proud in saying that I received the kindest welcome from the French, on every social



The Flamancs were married in a quaint church of the ancient town of Morlaix, France. (For style experts, the dress was by Dior.)

plane. This stimulated me to perfect my conversational knowledge of the language.

On the other hand, there are many Americans in the area we live in: military personnel and their families, members of the consular corps, business people and engineers connected with local oil refineries. There are also some U. S. citizens who are permanent residents here. This amounts to say that I have frequent contacts with compatriots and all of them appear, as I probably do, very happy to be residing in Europe, in spite of the different way of life, the difficulty in finding adequate housing and the surprises of local plumbing.

These little clouds in the otherwise blue skies of south western France do not concern us in the least because, as I've said before, we live in a boat. . . .



The Flamanc home is an 8-ton sloop "Embellie," which occasionally races in the Class III of the Royal Ocean Racing Club. Here at Mortagne is a quiet basin surrounded by white cliffs.

Kathryn Chamberlin Flamanc is a 1956 graduate of Western Maryland. Kathy was a music major on the Hill and belonged to the French Club for a few years.