

Hello everyone !

It seems like yesterday when I was writing to tell you about the Sydney Olympics. In the four years since Sydney, I have told you about the tournaments and qualifying process to get to Athens 2004. The good news for archery in Canada is that we qualified two archers this time around instead of just one in Sydney. And the second archer is a women - the first time Canada has qualified a women since the 1988 Olympics in Seoul. So it's progress.

The two archers are:

Jonathan Ohayon, used to be from Toronto but now lives in Redlands, California  
Marie-Pier Beaudet from Lévis, Quebec, near Quebec City.

This is our story.

PLEASE NOTE: This story and any photos that I may send CANNOT be posted on a web site anywhere. If you do this, we will be asked to leave the Olympic Village. Since it is written from inside the Olympic Village it will be seen as being a "reporter" and the press is not allowed in the Village. You may send it as an email to others if you wish, but I repeat DO NOT post it on a web site.

On Tuesday, August 3rd I rushed around in the morning like a whirling dervish and then an amazing thing happened. I was packed and ready to go to the airport an hour ahead of time. Definitely a first. I spent the whole hour worrying about what I hadn't packed - now I know why it's better to follow the "just in time" principle!

I arrived at the airport first and got in the line up. With exquisite timing, just as I was ready to move to the check in counter Jonathan arrived and joined me. His whole family was with him to send him off and about a gazillion pictures later, we vanished behind the security door and made our way to the gate. The Olympic Airways flight left on time at 7:40 pm and after a hour or so stop in Montreal we flew for 8.75 hours and landed in the brilliant sunshine in Athens at 2:05pm on August 4th. We met a few athletes on the plane and one of the Doctors on the medical team, who has been at every Olympics and Pan Am Games that I have attended.

As soon as we got off the plane, we were met by a person from ATHOC (Athens Organizing Committee) who shepherded us a very short distance to an accreditation centre. This is being done differently than in the last two games. We actually received our accreditation prior to coming here - they were sent by courier from the COC to Kathy at the FCA and she gave them to us at the first day of the Canadian Championships on August 2nd. When you get that in your hands, you start to really believe that you are going to the Olympic Games. Every gate at the airport has a small accreditation area just inside the gate so athletes arriving by air have their accreditation validated when they arrive, which also serves as going through customs and immigration. Since there weren't many of us on this flight the whole process (including the pictures) took about 20 minutes.

Then we were directed to follow the Olympic footsteps on the floor to the luggage area where we collected our bags and followed the footsteps and the ATHOC lady to the buses that took us all to the Olympic Village - about a 50 minute bus ride on a wide and modern highway with the brand new rapid rail line running in the median between the divided highway. We arrived at the village in a rainstorm but there were lots of people to help unload luggage and start to get it through the screening and x-ray machines. Both our bags were x-rayed and hand searched and Jon's archery equipment was thoroughly searched but there was no real problem and the equipment was then loaded on another bus and we headed out to the Canadian section of the Olympic village.

The village is made up of three story apartment buildings, all white, with six four bedroom apartments in each building. It looked very nice - the landscaping isn't done, but everything else is great. Soon we saw the Canadian flags and about 10 Canadians from the mission staff waving flags to welcome us. They hauled our bags to the Canadian Olympic Committee (COC) offices where we got keys for our apartment, blessedly we're on the first floor, and a lesson on making all the keys work - they all have their little tricks. There's one for the building door, then one for the apartment door and one for our room.

In our apartment, Marie-Pier and I will be in one room and Jonathan in another. We don't know who else will be here, but for the moment, there's just the two of us.

In case you are wondering, Marie-Pier will not arrive in the village until August 8th.

The apartment is gorgeous. It has white marble floors (slippery when wet) which are apparently considered a poor people's floor, but they look wonderful. There is large shared area which has a table and chairs, two modern bathrooms and four bedrooms with built in cupboards. Everyone has a full length cupboard, 4 drawers, a cupboard with three shelves and above that a large cupboard going all the way to the ceiling. There are large balconies about eight feet wide that extend across the front and back of the building so that every room has a walk out to them. There are sliding doors to the balconies, but they are double, the inside one is glass and the outside one is made of metal slats - when it's closed very little light comes in and not much heat. There is a night stand with a lamp and built in beds. I've never had such nice accommodation at a multisport games and I've sure paid a lot money for considerably less at many tournaments. Each room in the apartment has it's own air conditioning control and it was COLD in the whole place - we were shivering in no time. In fact, we turned all the air conditioning off before we went to bed but it was still freezing. Since these notes are being written after we've been here a few days, I can tell you that we have never turned the air conditioning back on - we don't need it. The apartment stays cooler than the outdoors at about 23 - 24 degrees and is just fine.

We spent a couple of hours getting unpacked and organized. Jonathan has brought a whole store of souvenirs, pins, pens, keychains, stuffed moose with Canada flags on them, lanyards, and he laid them all out and got them organized. At this rate, the whole country of Greece will have a memento of Canada.

When we were finished we ventured out to our street and took a village bus to find the dining room. It's not hard - it's the biggest tent structure you've ever seen. Seating for 6,000!! Of course, now it was largely empty, but we picked up an excellent meal and enjoyed being here.

We walked back to the Canadian section. The village has wide streets with a large central plaza down the middle of it that is about 70 - 80 meters wide. There are lots of trees along the streets and especially in the plaza but there is no grass, so there's lots of red dirt everywhere and plenty of weeds. Despite this, it's a very pleasant place and the evening temperature had cooled down a bit making it just about perfect.

We know that our practice range is supposed to be in an area known as Dikelia right beside the village which includes archery and about 12 other sports, so we went on a hunt to find it. Well, we certainly didn't have to go far - I could stand at our apartment building and throw a baseball into the middle of the field and you all know how good I am at throwing. We walk out of our apartment, 15m to the gate to Dikelia and then about 70m to the gate of the archery range and onto the shooting line!! Hard to believe - it's like having an international archery range right in our own back yard.

When we finally returned to the Canadian section, I went to Team Leader Services to receive my update and Jonathan went to Athlete services for his. We learned some of the rules of the road in the village, that if we loose our keys it costs 60 Euros (about \$100 Cdn) to replace them, that it costs up to 120 Euros to receive a package by courier (please don't send anything!!) that there are many, many dogs in Athens that often run in packs (in fact we saw some on our walk back from dinner) and that one of our sailors had already had a run-in with a pack - but wasn't badly injured. We learned not to lock the doors of the apartments from the inside, because you can't unlock them and then can't get out (there's got to be a story there!). I received the technical manual for the archery event and Jonathan received a gift bag of goodies from ATHOC (something lopsided there!). When the gift bags arrived from ATHOC, the COC people had a look through the bags and found that each one contained a bottle of Ouzo - a particularly lethal alcoholic beverage that tastes a little like licorice. Considering that the Olympic Village is dry and that the entire month that the village is open has been declared "in competition" which means athletes can be tested at any time at any place, and if the breathalyzer shows any alcohol, you have a failed test, this didn't seem like such an appropriate gift. So the COC removed all the bottles and athletes will get them back when they leave the village.

Then we did some homework with Mike Christie of the COC so that we can get a day pass for the archery venue for MJ Rogers, Jonathan's coach from the US who will be arriving on August 8th.

Finally about midnight we collapsed into bed and did not set our alarms clocks.

August 5, 2004

We got up when we woke up about 9:30. Showers were next. Our apartment has two bathrooms, both with handheld showers, but no tub. The floor is tile with a drain in it and the floor slopes to the drain. There's a shower curtain across the entire width of the bathroom but generally the water just goes everywhere. It seems like a good scheme, but certainly looks a little unusual to us.

We will try to get Jonathan's coach, MJ Rogers of the US a day pass to the archery range so that he can come on the field to be with Jonathan. This sounds like it should be a simple operation but I can assure you, it is not. I spent the last ten days in Toronto trying to figure out the system along with Mike Christie of the COC.

This morning we had to fill out some forms and they required a photo of MJ - which we have digitally, but everywhere in the COC offices there are laser printers - no ink jets and the photo has to be in colour. Eventually we burned the photo to a CD and Mike Christie will take it that way to the accreditation people and we hope it works. Getting this all done killed about 2 hours so we went for breakfast. Except there wasn't any breakfast anymore because it was really lunch time. So we had a great lunch instead. I met Simon Fairweather (gold medalist-archery from Sydney) on the bus and it was great to have a talk with him. He took 18 months off after the games and then started training again in late 2003.

The fruit at the main dining hall is spectacular and all beautifully cut and prepared. I am eating TONS of it - it's so good.

After lunch I went to find the Sport Information Services to visit the archery desk. I got on the village bus, but missed the sign on the road and rode the bus to the north end of the village, where it stopped and the driver motioned for me to get out. I did. There were lots of busses and lots of drivers standing around. They motioned me to a different bus so I got on. It continued around the village back to where I started, but this time I saw the sign for the Sport Information Centre and got off in time. I visited with them for a while and picked up some information and then headed back to the bus to come back to our apartment.

So I got on the bus going to the north end of the village again - I knew I would have to change busses, but I thought it might be faster. Except this time after I changed busses the bus went in the other direction so I went right back to the place where I had started! Eventually, after another grand tour of the village, I arrived back at the bus stop outside our apartment building just as the heavens opened and an absolute deluge began. I was instantly soaking wet with the water running down my face, neck and back and it's not like I can run or anything to get out of it. The rain wasn't cold so it was sort of pleasant and I just ambled (which is as fast as I can go anyway) to the medical apartment where I was to meet Jonathan for his medical review. Fortunately, they gave me a towel to dry off. Jonathan was already there and in about 20 minutes completed his medical review while I talked with the athletic therapist who taught me how to tape my ankles. I arranged an appointment with her to tape them for me (it takes me a hour and takes her 15 minutes!) before the ranking round and the opening ceremony later on this week. I also made an appointment for Marie-Pier for her medical review at 7:30 on August 8th.

By now the rain had stopped and sun was back out and we walked around to the building where the COC uniforms are given out for our appointment there. If I'd stayed out in the sun any longer, I am sure I would have begun to steam in the heat. We each got our huge bag of clothing and went into separate rooms to try them all on. There is a ton of great stuff, but the pants and shorts for ladies are "low rise" which means that they are cut way below the waist. This looks good on lots of young people - but on me - well, it's not a pretty picture. The outfit for the opening ceremony has a great top with red "capri" pants that come halfway between the knee and the ankle. All the pants were too long so they were put aside for shortening. The podium outfit is really nice, all in white with red piping and a section of the jacket is a mesh material so it won't be too hot. There is a cool pair of sunglasses and the athletes get a Kodak digital camera - but not coaches, and of course we all get a wonderful travel bag, a backpack and an shoulder bag. Both Jonathan and I had some exchanges to make to get the right sizes and a visit to the tailor, which the COC brings with them to Athens to make things fit properly.

Then we collected Marie-Pier's bag and took it to her room to await her arrival.

Then we had to go back to get our cell phones. Every athlete and coach has a cell phone. The athletes get 500 free minutes that includes long distance calls but coaches only get 250 minutes. The purpose of the phone is in part security. I am required to know where they are at all times so if they decide to go somewhere else they have to call me and tell me that. There is an extensive security plan in place for all Canadians in the village and the phones are part of that plan. The phones were to come with phone numbers for each team already programmed into them, but some of them were not done correctly so Jonathan spent some time with a team of people entering the correct numbers into the address books of the phones. The ring tone for our phone is Oh Canada!

By the time we got all this stuff put away it was time to go and shoot. The range has 24 butts (remember, only 64 archers shoot the ranking round at one time) so it's not very big. It is perfectly level with beautiful green grass and obviously no drainage. The heavy rain that fell for about a half hour this afternoon had not soaked in and there was about an inch of water in the grass. Jon took off his shoes and shot in bare feet. There are pine trees behind the butts but the earthen berm is covered in a green cloth - I guess they didn't have time to get grass there as well. There is a 5 foot sidewalk about 20 meters behind the shooting line where there are chairs and just behind the chairs there is about a 5 foot drop in the land but also plenty of pine trees which will be a great wind break if the wind blows from behind. At about target 14 on the field and behind the sidewalk there are steps down to an area in the pine trees where two butts have been setup at 5 - 8 meters. There is indoor/outdoor carpet down over the red earth which makes a nice tiny range in the woods. On each end of the main shooting line there are three tents set up side by side with chairs and tables and fruit and cold drinks so this would be a place to hide if it rains again. The range is open from 8am to 1pm and from 3:30pm to 8pm.

When we got there, the Australians were just leaving so there was lots of chatter. I just saw Dave Barnes and Time Cuddihy at Junior Worlds two weeks ago but Jonathan hadn't seen them since the Italian Grand Prix in the spring. The Greek team was also shooting. Because the Olympics are in Greece, Greece gets a full team automatically without having to go through any qualifying process. It was a perfect temperature, just between warm and cool and absolutely dead calm - a superb night for shooting.

Jon finished at 8pm when they closed the range and after putting his equipment away, we walked to the "casual" dining hall - a small version of the main dining hall. It has just opened today and since it's fairly close to the Canadian section, we might use it often. When it would really be useful is for breakfast, but it doesn't open until 10am.

From there we went on to the "Athena" Centre. This establishment has at least 100 pc's attached to the internet for doing mail and surfing, a large collection of video arcade style games in three or four different rooms with even an archery range. Jonathan shot a match against a German and won the match. There are pool tables, a little snack bar, a place to get a message and meeting rooms.

Then we carried on and walked over a bridge - but it's not over water, it's over an archeological site that was discovered during the construction of the village. Most of the site has been covered over but a portion of it has a glass dome over it so it can be seen. Apparently, they have discovered some walls and a drainage system.

Finally we made it to the main dining hall for supper at 10pm but even though it's late, there were more people there than the day before. Tonight I had 4 really great grilled lamb chops.....ummm.....ummmmm.....good. I can't get my family to eat lamb, so this month will be a special treat for me.

At about midnight I called Gary on my nifty teeny tiny phone but didn't talk for long - always mindful of those minutes!!!

August 6th

Again today, I got up when I woke up - about 9:30. Took my time getting ready for the day and took my computer to Team Leader Services and got it connected to the network and set it up to print.

The COC has taken the whole first floor of an apartment building and the basement to setup their village operations. For us it's the building right next to ours. They run the transportation, sport services, communication, press and anything else they need to manage from the first floor. The basement is totally unfinished with stairs coming down in the middle which divide the basement into two halves. They have laid burgundy indoor/outdoor carpet on the floor, put in some nice chairs, computers, television, fridge filled with nice cold drinks and smacks in each section. One half of the basement is Team Leader Services and the other half is Athlete Services. There are two people each of Team Leader Services and Athlete services who manage anything team leaders/coaches or athletes need. We can't go into the athlete's area, and they can't come in our area. The team leader services people hold a meeting of team leaders/coaches every morning, which will start on August 9th, and answer any questions you have all day long. They have an amazing amount of information and are the liaison between us and the COC and in some cases ATHOC for things that aren't sport specific. These rooms are open from 7 am until 11 pm. The two people that run them don't live in the village so have about a 40 minute drive to their accommodation at each end of the day as well as working 16 hour days - and they are volunteers using their holidays and taking time off their regular jobs to help us be the best we can be.

At about noon I went to the main dining hall for food and loaded up again on the spectacular fruit and then found a whole tray of Brie.....and some great Feta cheese..... I stole some buns and bananas for Jon and woke him up when I got back to the apartment.

We were both feeling lethargic and not like doing much of anything. We had most of the paperwork done so I put a chair on the balcony in the shade overlooking the central area which is surrounded by Canadian apartment buildings and tried to read. But in fact, I read two paragraphs and then fell asleep. A few minutes later, I'd wake up and read the same two paragraphs again and fall asleep again. This went on for the whole afternoon until we decided it was time to go and shoot. The temperature on the range was perfect and again it was calm.

After shooting for about a half hour, Jon's finger spacer broke. It's one of the new Cavalier spacers and it just broke where it is screwed onto the tab. He tried to crazy glue it back together, but it just broke again. One of the American archers lent him a spacer and when Don Rabska gets here and sets up his repair shop he'll get another one to replace it. I spent my time taking lots of video of his shooting for review later this evening. He shot until 8pm when the organizers came and kicked him off the field.

Then we went for supper but took jackets with us. The air conditioning the dining hall is a little vigorous and as we acclimatize to the heat we find the food tent freezing!

The remainder of the evening was spent reviewing the video and working on equipment.

So it was a slow day, but one that we needed.

August 7th

We're turning into a lazy pair - we weren't up this morning until 10 - again! Since Jonathan competes in the afternoon, he wants to practice in the afternoon so he learns what the conditions are on the range are at that time. Marie-Pier will be shooting in the morning so when she arrives this luxurious living will disappear as she will want to practice in the morning.

When Jonathan went for his medical review a few days ago, we saw a Athens 2004 poster of archers shooting with the Acropolis in the background. It was an awesome poster and we made several comments about it in the medical clinic. This morning when I went to check archery's mailbox in Team Leader Services someone had put three of these posters in our mailbox. I have asked the medical people if they did this nice thing for us, but if it is they haven't admitted it. We just wanted to say thank you for doing such a nice thing.

By the time we had picked up our email, admired the posters, dealt with the other mail in our mailbox it was noon, so we went and had a hefty brunch. We spent the afternoon working on a training plan for the rest of the competition and deciding what events we wanted to go to after the tournament was over. Some of them are fearfully expensive and we always have to remember to multiply the cost by 1.6 as everything is quoted in Euros. I also did some work on guest passes for the village for Jonathan's guests as well as arranging accreditation for them to get into Canada House. Then I typed up our schedule, colour coded it for Marie-Pier and Jonathan, printed it and delivered copies to the medical people and the press people.

Then I picked up Marie-Pier's keys so they are ready for her arrival tomorrow. 150 Canadian athletes will arrive in the village on August 8th so it will be a very busy day for the COC getting everyone in and settled into the village.

At 4pm we were off to the shooting range again and spent the time working with videotape as Jonathan had noticed that the string was on the side of his nose instead of the end and he wanted to work on that. So I video taped each end and then he would look at it. After working for about an hour, the problem was solved and his shooting was back on track.

Towards the end of the shooting session at about 7:30 the venue supervisor appeared on the range with his compound bow and shot for a while. Jonathan and Georgos (pronounced Yorgos) decided to shoot a match. The archers that were left on the range and the workers all got into the competition. After 18 arrows it was a tie, which was not settled until the third arrow of the shoot off. Jonathan won!

I took the bus to supper and Jonathan walked and dropped off our laundry on the way, but since it was after 8pm you can only pick up laundry not drop it off. Jonathan finally got the girl to take the laundry but it cost him about 4 of his best pins!

Tonight at dinner, the entire Argentinean team was there and spent about half an hour singing and clapping to songs that were about Argentina. This collected quite a crowd of everyone taking photos and videos and then joining in the clapping and meeting and talking to each other. Neat!

The village is starting to fill up. The dining room is almost half full now and at about 10:30pm a shooter (shotguns) arrived in our apartment, so we no longer have the place to ourselves. The main plaza down the middle of the village is now covered in grass and flowers have magically appeared in all the roundabouts. So slowly things are starting to change and gear up for the beginning of this wonderful festival.

August 8th

I was up earlier today and sat with the team leader from Waterpolo, Ahmed El Awadi and heard some real horror stories about referees in their sport. He says things have improved somewhat recently but teams have to take gifts with them to give to the referees, and some teams even give them money. Some countries even put money for referees into their budgets. He also told us of a recent important competition in Russia where everyone in the audience was openly betting on the game. Makes archery look absolutely pristine!!

My next stop was at the Sport Information desk to pick up forms for the archers to sign regarding the storage and carrying of their equipment. The equipment has to be kept in the COC's offices, cannot be carried in the village with the bows put together but they can carry the handle with the sight and side stabilizers separately. Then I did some more work on guest pass forms for Jonathan's guests and for MJ Rogers to have access to the field and answered a whole slew of email.

All the time I was doing this, I was keeping an eye on the entrance to the Canadian section of the village, as this is the day that Marie-Pier arrives. Her flight landed at 2pm but with the numbers arriving today we estimated that it would be 4:30 or 5pm before they arrived in the village. I had originally planned to go to the airport and meet her there, but ATHOC was not letting anyone go the airport - not even representatives of the COC. So we waited.

About 4pm a big truck arrived full of luggage which was unloaded onto the sidewalk. The team leaders all descended on it searching for luggage for their arriving athletes. It was easy to find Marie-Pier's tackle box, but not her suitcase. That's because I was looking for the mega-bag that she usually travels with and this time she had a nice small suitcase. So I was able to move her stuff to her room before she actually arrived. About 4:30 a large bus arrived with 45 Canadian athletes on board and Marie-Pier bounced out of the bus. We went to our apartment to show her around and then walked over to the archery range and she spent an hour meeting and greeting her many friends. One thing for sure is that Marie-Pier knows and is friends with everyone on the shooting line!

Then she had a quick shower and we started into her bag of clothing. Most of it was too big so we set those pieces aside to exchange. The pants were all too long and the sleeveless shirt has enormous armholes, so those went into another pile to be altered. Then she was off for her appointment for her medical review. After that we tried to take the clothing to get it altered, they were just too busy so we made an appointment for tomorrow afternoon at 3pm to bring it back for exchanges and alterations.

Then we went back to the range to wait for Jonathan to finish practicing and finally hauled him off the range at ten minutes to eight. We then had a quick meal and packed a very tired girl off to bed.

August 9th

Today's the day that reality sets in. Throughout the Games, team leaders have a meeting every morning at 7:30pm and today is the day that these meetings start. Of course, if you are competing and out of the village early, then you don't attend and just read the minutes that are published later in the day. So at 7am, my alarm went off and I crept out of bed and dressed quietly as Marie-Pier was still sound asleep.

After that meeting I went across to the practice range to see if MJ had been granted a pass to this venue. He had a pass, but it wasn't ready yet so I went back and woke up Marie-Pier and Jonathan. Then it was back to the range to pick up MJ's passes. So the first mission was accomplished in figuring out how to get these passes. The next challenge is to try and get passes for the competition venue downtown at Panathinaiko. I think that will be much tougher to do! But now it was time for breakfast.

After breakfast, I was back over to the Sport Information Centre but had to wait for the Egyptians, who seemed quite confused by all the instructions. I expect it's their first Olympics. I then got the final schedule for match play and talked over how to get day passes for MJ (Jonathan's coach) to the competition venue - the ancient Olympic Stadium, called Panathinaiko. The guy at archery's info desk really didn't know how to do this either and in fact I had more information about this than he did.

Marie-Pier went shooting in the late morning - she was just shooting today for "feel" and she came away feeling satisfied.

After she had a nap and we got all her clothing exchanged and altered and she headed back out to the range for a second session at about 4 pm. We noticed that the entire US ladies team is shooting PSE's which made her happy - they were all shooting together this afternoon.

The COC has provided all outdoor sports with "cooling vests". The point of these vests is to keep the athletes core temperature down as low as possible. As an athlete heats up, his/her heart rate increases and breathing speeds up. So for archery it would make sense to keep the athlete's core temperature as low as possible. I received these vests the day I left for Junior Worlds and with only 6 days between returning from that event to traveling here, we had no time to try them. The vests are made of neoprene with a fuzzy inside. Then there are little packets of "stuff" that are in a sheet and have velcro on them so they can be stuck on the inside of the vest in the configuration that best suits the athlete. We had decided not to put them across the shoulders, but to attach some up the front on each side of the zipper and sideways across the lower back. The COC's sport physiologist who developed the vests was with us on the range today. Jonathan has been a willing guinea pig.

Jonathan liked the vest but found it "busy" to be taking it off and putting it on after shooting and walking to the target all the time. Jonathan found that the sheet of packets on the lower back interfered with shooting and we took it out. Marie-Pier wore one briefly but decided not to try them at this late date. It was an interesting afternoon, but whether Jonathan uses the vests or not - we will see. However, they are something we should experiment with for the future. These vests were a gift to the FCA from the COC and they might be useful when teams are competing in South America where it's not only hot but very humid.

Pascal Colmaire was on the field in the afternoon and it was good to see him again. He is one of two technical delegates from FITA to the ATHOC organizing committee and says that the range at Panathinaiko is behind schedule. It appears to be a strategy of the Greeks to have everything looking good on paper, but then nothing is done. When you insist that it has to be done today or tomorrow, they say "Oh well, then the price will be ....." an name an amount much higher than is on the paper work, so the strategy is to push the price as high as possible. So it will be interesting to see what the archery venue looks like on the 14th which is the first time we get to see it.

We met Denise Parker (a former US Olympian in archery) who was with an NBC television crew interviewing and filming US archers. We talked for a while and she says that NBC will be broadcasting quite a bit of the archery competition, so be sure to check out the schedule for NBC to see them.

We talked a bit with the Mexicans to find out why their two women are not here. Apparently, there was some controversy over selecting the two that would compete here after the Italian Grand Prix. They then went to the German Grand Prix where there was such dissension that the women wouldn't even stay in the same hotel as each other, let alone in the same room. After all this, the Mexican Olympic Committee wouldn't send any of them and they gave up their spots. Very sad.

In the evening in the pine trees behind the archery range, I am sure there are katydids. These are cricket like bugs that live in trees in the southern United States. When we have traveled to the south for tournaments, I have loved the sound they make - They sound like a whole bunch of small chain saws. I don't know if that's what they are, but I love the sound.

Again, we weren't off the range until 8pm and not in the dining hall until 9. But we enjoyed another great meal sitting with the Americans and then poured ourselves into bed.

August 10, 2004

We were out in the patio at 7:00am this morning for a security briefing with Brian Rahill, the COC person in charge of security and the RCMP officer who is also here. It wasn't very long but gave us valuable information. Security has not been overwhelming - certainly they are careful at the gates with inspecting who and what comes into the village - this process is the same as going through thorough security at an airport. The fences around the village have sensors in them so cutting the fence is not a good idea. There is a "dead" zone around the village that can't be entered - including vehicles. Taxi's can drop people off but can't pick people up - so there are no taxi's standing around at the gate. The amount of information required for people coming into the village is much greater than in previous games and there are fewer guest passes being given out.

Then at 7:30am I attended the Team Leaders meeting. The sport physiologist spoke about the heat and how important hydration was and also mentioned that people usually become somewhat dehydrated overnight so it was important to make sure athletes drink in the morning. He also mentioned that the PowerAid drink used in Europe has a very different formula than the drink in North America. He recommends that athletes dilute the PowerAid half and half with water before drinking it.

Canada's team welcome ceremony in the Village is tonight so time was spent on clothing and setup rules for this event.

Then at 8:00am I met with Stephan Delisle who is a COC press person and one of the sports he supports is archery. We did a review of the event and the athletes and how we would work to maximize coverage. He had a request for Marie-Pier for a TV interview with french CBC for sometime today or tomorrow and Marie-Pier decided to do the interview tomorrow, August 11 at 3pm.

From here Marie-Pier and I went for breakfast and then I went to the Sport Information desk for archery to work again to try and get a day pass for Jonathan's coach, MJ Rogers. This time the forms were faxed to the archery venue manager who controls day passes. Later in the day, they called Denise Gariepy at the COC to say that I had used the wrong forms. Interesting - since these are the forms that were sent from ATHOC to the COC and then to me in early July. So we got a set of the new forms, filled them out and faxed them over along with a letter from the COC since there is confusion about whether he has to have a full accreditation to the games or if he just has to be in the ATHOC system so that he has gone through a security check.

Today is Jonathan's day off so he slept in and then went downtown to sight see with MJ Rogers.

Marie-Pier practised on the range and is settling in well with good feeling in the shot and her groups are starting to tighten up. There is sure no one on the range who is better at trading pins and she has the beginning of a really fine collection.

We collected the alterations to Marie-Pier's uniform and then got dressed for Canada's welcome ceremony. Every team has such a ceremony hosted by the Mayor of the Olympic Village to welcome the team. We were dressed in all red - T-short and shorts and our red Canada visors. Then the team walked to the International Zone along with the team from Palau, a small island in the Pacific east of Mindanao in the Philippines and Samoa. There was all kinds of press and many athletes were interviewed. There was a short ceremony starting with the Olympic hymn, a short speech by the Mayor who gave the Chef de Mission for each team a gift followed by the team's national anthem and a short performance by a Greek dance troop. There was a short reception and we were back to our rooms and in bed at a decent hour.

August 11th.

7:30am and I'm back at the team leaders meeting again. The main discussion this morning was about arrangements for the Canadian Team reception tonight. This event is held at a site away from the village and includes team members, staff and families and friends. I cannot go because the Team Leaders meeting for the archery competition is at the Panathinaiko stadium downtown starting at 5pm. This event is being held at the Nissus Estate and the main issues are getting invitations to guests and transportation for athletes who are living at venues outside the village.

Both Jonathan and Marie-Pier slept a little later and I went to drop off my laundry. Walking south from the laundry building, I saw quite a nice view that I had not seen before. In fact, the land slopes a little from the north end of the village to the south end so from this height of land you can see the whole central plaza and the city of Athens beyond that. It's quite nice.

After breakfast I was back again at archery's sport information desk where I found Denise Gariepy of the COC already there trying to find out the result of our letter and forms to the venue manager about MJ's day pass for the main archery stadium, but no one at the venue seems to know anything about it. The letter and the forms have just vaporized. We get a different story from each person we talk to. However, the lady at the desk today is really determined to get an answer for us. Denise went back to the village to fax a copy of the letter and forms to the lady at the Sport Information desk so we can try again.

At this time, I also picked up the start lists for the double 70m ranking round tomorrow. Jonathan will be on target 13 along with Jang from Korea and an archer from the Netherlands. Marie-Pier will be on target 22 with the lady from Cuba - only two of them.

Marie-Pier's shooting is really nice today. She is grouping well and shooting with confidence and excellent timing. At 1:30 we did a quick change, grabbed lunch at the main dining hall and after a little confusion finding the "Gate B" entrance/exit of the village we met several other athletes to travel to the International Broadcast Centre (IBC) in a van sent by CBC to pick us up. The trip took about 40 minutes and we were ushered into the small reception area of the IBC. There was a guest pass for the facility waiting for me, but none for Marie-Pier and two of the other athletes. Shortly, someone from CBC arrived and eventually it got straightened out but we were now late - but no one seemed to mind.

I have never been to the IBC at any previous games, but I've sure heard all about it. All the broadcasters from all the countries are housed here. In the Village there are about 10,000 athletes and another 6,000 or so coaches and team leaders, so a total of about 16,000 people directly involved in sports at the games. But there are at least 20,000 media people here - all working out of the IBC. The first impression is how enormous it is. There is a map of who's in what space in the lobby and NBC has almost the whole second floor. But CBC's space is also pretty big. We were ushered to the French area of CBC where Marie-Pier met her uncle who is a cameraman for CBC. Marie-Pier's interview is in a tiny studio stuffed with TV's, cameras and all manner of electronic equipment. She did a good interview - she presents well, speaks well without hesitation or doubt - it was well done.

Marie-Pier and the other athletes received a watch as a gift with the Olympic rings on the face - very cool. She and the group headed back to the village and a driver took me to the Ethnikos Sports complex where the team leaders meeting was to be held. This is a meeting always held before an archery competition with the organizing committee and the coaches/team leaders of all the teams to make sure everyone knows what is happening and any issues are sorted out. The Ethnikos Sports Complex is the warm up area for the archery competition. This trip was quite an adventure. The driver was nervous and did not know the way. Since I haven't been here before, I had no idea where to go either. We found the Ethnikos sports complex by following the Olympic maps but the question was finding the entrance. We could see the range, but because there was a practice for the cycling road race many of the roads are closed which sent us down some streets that are only a car width wide so it was quite an adventure. Eventually, we spotted an entrance and I walked across the road and looked through the fence and there was Pascal who came and let me in.

About five minutes later the bus from the village with all the other team leaders arrived and the meeting

began a tour of the Ethnikos site.

The warm up range at Ethnikos is in the middle of a track with nice green grass and an outstanding view of the Acropolis behind the targets. Ethnikos is an enormous sports club with all kinds of facilities. We are using the track and there are obviously some field events practiced here as well. We can see the 50m outdoor swimming pool and basketball courts. But judging from how long it took to drive around the complex while we were searching for the entrance for archery, there is a ton more that we can't see.

We then got on the bus and drove the route that the archers will take to Panathinaiko Stadium. The route goes in front of the stadium which is U shaped and has a small plaza at the open end of the U, so driving on the road in front of the plaza gives a spectacular view into the stadium which is completely made of white marble and in the late sun, it was just glowing. We then turned into a teeny, tiny street up one side of the stadium. There's no doubt that this driver sure knows how to drive a bus. We turned into the top of the stadium and walked 50 yards through security and into the small house that is at the back of the stadium or at the closed end of the U. I suspect that you've heard more of the history of this stadium in the press in North America than I have so I won't do details here, but the original stadium was built in about 320BC for athletics in the ancient Olympics. Over time, a number of rebuilds were done including one for the first modern Olympic Games in 1896. At some point in the early 20th century, Greece declared the stadium an historic site and said that the only event that could be held there was the finish of the marathon. This was not changed until the Olympic Games of 2004, when FITA received permission to hold the archery event in this stadium. When the archery is over and all the archery stuff removed, the marathon will also finish in this stadium. After the 2004 Olympics are over, the original rules will apply and the only event held here will be the finish of marathon races. The stadium is very narrow so the schedule of matches has changed from Atlanta and Sydney because only two matches will be held at the same time, so it will take a whole day to complete the round of 64 for the women and for the men.

In the ancient Olympics, the athletes entered the stadium through a tunnel appearing right at the edge of the floor of the stadium. The house that we entered at the back of the stadium sits above the entrance to the tunnel. When you walk in the door of house, you can either go up a wide flight to stairs to a meeting room or down the old stone steps into the tunnel. We all went down into the tunnel, which has been somewhat renovated. The floor has been improved and lighting added in the floor close to the walls, but the walls and arch of the roof has been untouched. The tunnel slopes down, then turns to the left and you can see the entrance to the stadium which glows brilliantly white. This was a very emotional moment to be walking in the footsteps of those Olympians of long, long ago. I wonder what they would have thought if they knew that nearly 2400 years later, Olympic athletes would still be celebrating this festival and going to their competition through this tunnel. As I entered the brilliant sunshine bouncing off the white marble in the stadium, I let my mind go and heard the cheers of the ancient fans as they urged their heroes forward. In 4 days I will make this walk again with a modern Olympian and hear the cheers for her as she enters this spectacular place.

But today there was not much time to let the imagination wander as we were here to inspect the venue and find out the details of how this modern competition would be held.

This Games is critical for archery. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has put a cap on the number of athletes at the summer games of about 10,000 athletes. One of the consequences of this decision is that no new sport can be added to the Games unless an existing one leaves. There are lots of sports with wide appeal and enormous participation and big television audiences that are knocking hard at the door. About a year and half ago, a selection committee of the IOC issued a report that recommended that 8 sports should be turfed from the Olympic Games and several others that were at risk of being turfed. Archery was NOT mentioned. I can't remember them all, but some of them were softball, modern pentathlon and the three day event from equestrian. As you can imagine, this report caused lots of consternation and the sports that were listed or mentioned are frantically working to revamp their sports so that they will stay in the Games. At the moment this same commission is also doing a study of all sports with a view to deciding which and which will stay. All international federations have been send a large questionnaire asking for information in 7 different categories. I don't know all seven categories, but some of them are about the history of the sport, how long has it been played etc. It asks about

participation - do a majority of countries play the sport and how many players are there. Is it dominated by one or two countries; or are there athletes from a wide range of countries? Does the sport have coverage in the media? These are only a few of the areas being examined for each sport. In the summer of 2005 the IOC will make a final decision on which sports will go and which will stay. Even though archery was not mentioned in the original sport, this certainly doesn't mean that we are not at risk - we know we are.

As a result of this, many changes have been made in archery for these Games. All extra people have been removed from the field of play to make the picture for the audience and simple as possible. The judges will stand well back from the archers. The people running the timing and the director of shooting have been moved off the field of play. Only one coach per archer will be allowed on the field and they will be well back from the archer. In between ends, the archer can walk back to talk with the coach, but the coach cannot walk forward. There will be no umbrellas and no chairs (a match is only 15 - 20 minutes long so they really aren't needed). The coach that is allowed on the field will not be allowed to carry cameras, video cameras or cell phones. The inner ten is on the targets but it's very faint so it can be used to record X's by the scorers, but it won't show on the big screen or through binoculars as people unfamiliar with the sport find this extra ring confusing. The lines on the field are gone. Instead different colours of green carpet have been used. There is about a 3 meter area where the coach stands and where the equipment is put is a darker green than the rest of the carpet. This dark area of carpet is 5 meters back from the shooting line. A second area of dark carpet 1 meter wide includes the shooting line. The archers stand just behind the back edge of the dark area and the front edge of the dark area is actually the shooting line so the archers actually stand with their back foot on the dark carpet and their front foot on the pale green carpet that goes all the way down the field. The three meter line is just a coloured string - not visible to the audience, but quite visible to the judge if it's needed.

The blinds for judges and agents are not in front of the targets, but behind the large wall that is behind the butts. (The shooting direction is towards the open end of the U in the stadium, so it would not be good to have arrows going out into the plaza - although that would be one way to get press!!!) The wall is painted with the blue design of these games. Hidden behind the timing and scoring clock that is under the butt for each archer is a camera pointing up at the target. The arrows will actually be scored by judges who are in the stands behind the archers with spotting scopes and posted by them to the electronic scoreboards about 6 meters in front each archers target. The judges and agents behind the backstop will have TV's and to see the arrows as they hit. If an arrow is questionable, the two agents will confer - if they can make a decision based on what they see on the TV - the arrow is scored. If they cannot agree on the value of an arrow the judge and agent goes directly to that target and makes the call after the end is complete. In the meantime the lower score is posted on the electronic scoreboards with \* beside it to indicate it's a questionable call. Of course - there is now only one call. However, if there are no questionable arrows, then the agents go directly to their archers target, pull the arrows and mark the holes, so the time between end could be as little as 20 or 30 seconds. Sergio Font from Cuba is the chairman of the judges. Skip Phillips of the US is the Director of Shooting.

After we left the field the meeting continued in a small room above the entrance to the tunnel and went on FOREVER!! Every question was asked over and over in just a different way. The meeting and tour started at 5pm and I didn't get back to the village until 9:45. Part way through the meeting I got a call that MJ would receive his pass but he had to go to the accreditation centre at the village to pick it up. So I had to leave the meeting, phone and arrange for MJ to get from downtown out the village. He uses public transport, so this is no small trip, but it is good news for Jonathan. When Denise (COC) and I wrote the letter asking for the pass, we thought our odds of getting it would be about 1% !! You never know the power of a letter!

When I got back to the village, I quickly got something to eat on my way past the dining hall and then headed to the north end of the village to get my laundry. But the people at the laundry couldn't find it. After about an hour it finally showed up and I headed home.

Meanwhile - the whole Canadian team was at the team reception party but neither Marie-Pier nor Jonathan attended. With the ranking round tomorrow morning, Marie-Pier was in bed and asleep by 7:45 and Jonathan spent an hour on the practice range and worked on equipment.

August 12th.

My alarm did not go off so Marie-Pier was up and about but I was a little late! Marie-Pier now has official permission to kick me if this happens again!

Today is the ranking round. The archers shoot 72 arrows at 70 meters and the purpose of doing this is to rank the archers from 1st to 64th so that the match play grid can be set up. It was another beautiful day - dead calm and it was going to be hot!!

We were a little late arriving at the field, but Marie-Pier had a good breakfast and was ready to go. The practice went fast and she got a good six ends before scoring started. There was a break as new targets were put on every butt and then there was about a 5 minute delay because something wasn't ready with the scoring but then the horn went off at about 9:10 am and our Olympics was started.

Marie-Pier was on target 22 shooting with Maydenia Sarduy of Cuba. There were only two archers on her target rather than the standard 3. There was an archer from Bhutan two targets away from Marie-Pier and there was a forest of press and TV people who were doing a story on her. Because the land drops off right behind the sidewalk that is about 10 meters behind the shooting line and there is only about two meters between the equipment line and the sidewalk, things were very crowded indeed. Someone forgot to read the rule book about how much space there is supposed to be behind the shooting line!

Marie-Pier's first end was a 50 - with a great group - just a little low in the 9 and 8 ring. And here I have a recording failure in my little note book. For some reason I didn't record her scores for some ends. Don't worry, I wasn't asking Marie-Pier for her scores - that's very counterproductive for an archer but the scores at the target were written on one scorecard and also entered into an electronic device that transmitted them immediately to a central computer each time the archers went to the target to collect their arrows. This was the same system that was used at the World Championship in New York last summer. There were TV screens on tables about 10 meters apart down the length of the shooting line and by the time the archers were back from the target the entire results were displayed on the TV screens. Pretty cool!

I do know that her first few ends were 50's or 51's and her group was generally on the left side of the gold and red. On the 4th end she had a 55 and remarked that things work much better when you are little stronger and don't think too much. How true! Her 6th end was a 54 and she finished the first 36 arrows with a very nice score of 312. I also did not write down what place that put her at the half way mark. Meanwhile the Korean women were shooting some incredible numbers and were in 1st, 2nd and 3rd place. Park who was in 1st place shot an eye popping 344 and don't forget that the distance today is 70 meters - not 30!

After a 15 minute break, we started the second 36 arrow round. Here my recording system worked better. Marie-Pier shot a 51 in the first end and was in 42nd place. Her next end of 50 dropped her to 45th. On the 3rd end she shot her first 6 - it wasn't as well shot an arrow as her others. Later in the same end she shot another 6 (low left, the same place as the first one) but to me, this looked like a well shot arrow and I was surprised to find it in the 6 ring. Despite this, she still finished the end with 50 points but she dropped two more places in the rankings to 47th. At the beginning of the 4th end she shot another 6 in the same place and again, it looked to me like it was quite a good shot. She finished the end with a 51 and moved back up to 45th place. When she pulled the arrows she changed the one that was in the 6 ring and substituted a new one and that was the end of the 6's. Her 5th end was a 50 and dropped her to 46th place and the last end of 51 moved her down one more place to 47th. Here total for the second 70 meters was 304.

Her shooting was disciplined and steady. From what I saw, she shot one bad arrow. Overall there were too many 8's and the group sat on the left side of gold/red despite a number of sight moves. But a 312 and a 304 is quite close to what she shoots in FITA rounds at home so I think it was an excellent performance. Meanwhile the Korean women were slaughtering the field. Park shot 338 for the second half for a total of 682 and a new world record. The other two Koreans shot 675 and 673 and the total for the team was also a new world record. However, these scores will not be Olympic records as they were

shot the day before the Games open so they can't count.

The womens round was finished at about 11:30. The mens round will not start until 4 pm so we have a nice break in the middle of the day. This will happen throughout the archery tournament so that the archers are not out in the heat in the middle of the day.

I was going to have my ankles taped last night since I would be standing most of today, but I was too late returning from the team leaders meeting and too early this morning so I took advantage of the break and made a visit to the medical room for a taping job. It's quite incredible how much difference it makes to my ability to get around comfortably. Then we grabbed Jonathan and headed over for lunch and much discussion about the new world records shot this morning.

We were back on the field with Jonathan at about 3:15. Jonathan is on target 13 along with Jang of Korea and Ron van der Hoff of the Netherlands.

One of the things I forgot to put into yesterdays notes about the team leaders meeting was all the changes about clothing that are in effect for these games. Part of making this archery tournament look like a great event it making the archers look great, FITA has added all kinds of new rules for what archers should wear - some of them are a good idea, some of them are a little silly. During the rounds today, two judges did a review the team clothing worn by each archer to make sure that it complied with FITA's rules and with the IOC rules about what and what size advertising that can appear on clothing.

While Jonathan was putting his equipment together, Sergio Font of Cuba, the Chairman of Judges approached me and said that this morning Canada was one of the few teams to have paid attention to all the clothing rules and we got a virtual gold star! That was good news! Our Canadian team shirts had to be changed to comply with the rules and when Marie-Pier received her new shirts the day before she left to come to Athens, she discovered that most of her shirts were way too small. Fortunately two of them, that were a slightly different style, fitted, but were a tiny bit short and I was concerned that they would not pass the new Olympic rules - but obviously they did. Both she and I were much relieved!

MJ Rogers, Jonathan's personal coach, arrived in good time and practice for the mens round started on the dot at 4pm. At some point during the afternoon I heard MJ talking about the "geotoxionics interface". I thought about this for a while, but it made no sense to me. Finally, I asked what on earth he was talking about. He defined this term as "the connection between the bow and the ground".....in other words, the archer. It is a nonsense expression used when trying to get the archer to pay attention and do what the coach wants. So instead of saying "I screwed up" you could say the "geotoxionics interface malfunctioned". Sounds better to me!

Scoring for the men started on the dot at 5pm. Jon's first end was a 51 and put him in 52nd place. Magnus Petersson of Sweden (the Olympic silver medalist in Atlanta in 1996) started with a 58 and was in 1st place. Jon's next ends were:

49 - 57th place  
54 - 55th place  
51 - 56th place  
56 - 52nd place and  
51 - 53rd place

His total was 312 and he was not very happy with that. He was just being too careful and too cautious and trying too hard to shoot well and achieving the opposite result!! This was the discussion during the 15 minute break as his "geotoxionics interface" was recalibrated!

At the front end of the pack, Magnus Petersson had the lead through most of the distance but at the end Im from Korea caught up and they finished tied with amazing scores of 345.

In the second half Jon shot quite a bit better. His ends were:  
55 - 52nd place

53 - 51st place  
52 - 51st place  
53 - 50th place  
56 - 4th place  
52 - 49th place.

While the TV's reported 49th place, when we received the results later in the evening, he was actually in 50th place. His total was 320 which was quite a bit better than his first round. His shooting was steady and looked good.

The leaders, Im of Korea and Petersson of Sweden traded places a few times and then Im took over, although Park from Korea was in the lead once after the 4th end, but then Im took control and finished with an amazing 687 total (perfect is 720) and another new world record!! This score means he shot an average of 57.25 every end. Truly incredible. Im finished first, Petersson was 2nd with 673 and Galliazzo of Italy was 3rd with 672.

The round was finished about 7:30 and after putting equipment away we all went for an enjoyable and happy supper. We chatted with Susan Natrass, a trap shooter from waaaaaaay back when I used to be at Pan Am Games. We have crossed paths regularly over the years and are sort of sport friends. Athens is her 5th Olympic Games.

We have a lot of requests from the press in Quebec for interviews with Marie-Pier and she spent some time in the COC offices doing them by phone.

The village is definitely filling up and the noise level is up everywhere. Bicycles are appearing as lots of teams have brought them for transportation in the village. The British have at least 3 different golf carts that have been dressed up to look like vintage cars. The chocolate mousse in the dining room is to die for.

Back at our rooms, I'd completely "had it" with the front door to our apartment which is the loudest squeaking door I've ever had to live with. I don't know what word is louder and worse than squeaking but we need one here. There's no way it's not waking up people in the entire building every time we go in or out. I've added a tin of WD40 to my list of things to bring when I'm team leader. But we didn't have any this time, so I decided to improvise and examined all the things in my cupboard that might work and settled on hair gel. I applied the gel to all the places in the hinges that I could with the door both opened and closed and then swung it back and forth about ten times and to my complete amazement - it worked! No more squawk.

So, David and Chris - how's that for a good McIvor-ism?

August 13th.

Opening ceremony day - no matter where you are on the planet - this is an exciting day.

The 7:30am team leaders meeting was all about the ceremony tonight. Each country is given enough "marching tickets" for all their athletes and six officials to march in the opening ceremonies. These are actual physical tickets which the athlete must have along with their accreditation to be able to march. This means that if all the Canadian athletes decided to march that no coaches or team leaders would be able to. However, many athletes decide not to attend the ceremony because they compete the next day and some, like the track and field athletes, aren't even here yet. The tickets that are not used then go into a lottery for the coaches, team leaders and COC staff that do want to march. The results of the lottery will be known about 1pm today.

The time commitment for the ceremony is about 8 hours with about 2.5 hours sitting, 2.5 hours walking and 2.5 hours standing. Once you are in the stadium you cannot leave. We won't be back in the village until about 2am. There will be no buses in the village after 4 pm and many of the bus routes in the city will also be shut down, as the enormous number of buses are organized to move about 10,000 people from the village to the stadium and the 75,000 people that will be in the stadium as well. IOC rule 69 and 59 were discussed regarding political statements and propaganda and athletes acting as journalists. Rule 59 is why you can't publish this story in a paper or on a web site.

Both Marie-Pier and Jonathan were on the practise range at about 9am. Marie-Pier shot only 43 arrows as her fingers were quite sore and she needed a light day of shooting. Marie-Pier loves to shoot and she would have loved to shoot many more arrows, so she wrote the number of arrows she shot each end on the back of her hand so we could all see when she had reached the 40 - 50 arrow limit. It sometimes happens that when archers shoot when it's very hot that their fingers will get sore, even when they've been fine for some time. Certainly in eastern North America this year, there hasn't been a problem with heat and it was also cool in England at junior worlds so she hasn't shot in much real heat this year. Marie-Pier has been using ice on them after each practice session and that helps too. She finished her practice session with a very nice 59.

When we arrived on the practice range we were surprised to find the ladies coach from the US, Sherri Rhodes with her right arm in a cast. She said that she tripped over her feet in the street last night and fell. She didn't realize right away that her wrist was broken, but knew from the swelling that she had hurt it pretty badly, but x-rays showed it was busted. Everyone on the range was lining up to sign the cast so she will have a very interesting souvenir of this competition.

The Mexicans have the best collection of uniform shirts on the range. They are always colourful with great patterns and are highly sought after. Today they are wearing a bright emerald green shirt with deep pink trim that is really spectacular. I will have to select something good from my collection and see if I can trade for one. It might be tough - if I was a Mexican, I sure wouldn't trade any of my shirts. The archers from the Netherlands have shirts that people either love or hate. They are Underarmour, mainly white but with bright orange panels under the arms and on the sleeves and other orange highlights. Underarmour is a brand name that makes great shirts out of a spandex like material so they are form fitting. If you are very fit they look great - if not.....better to shop for something else! On these guys, they look great.

We took our time with lunch enjoying the crowd in the in the dining hall and the pastime of watching people. From there I checked in with archery's sport info desk and then headed back to Team Leader Services to find out if I had a ticket to march tonight and I was successful. From there I went over to the medical building to get another tape job on both ankles so I will survive the evening.

Marie-Pier slept for most of the afternoon as we will have a late night tonight and an early morning tomorrow as our 50 minute slot to practice in the main Panathinaiko stadium is at 8:30am. Jonathan was out talking with everyone in sight. I think he already knows 50% of the people in the village!! I emptied the memory stick from the nifty little digital camera that my kids gave me for christmas so there's lots of room for tonight. The Canadian team has to be dressed and in the courtyard by 6pm. By 4:45 the line of buses

was forming on the street down both sides of our apartment block. By about 5:20 there were buses on every street in the village as far as the eye could see.

The organization to get athletes onto all the buses is being done a little differently at these games. There are six loading zones in the village - the teams have been instructed which zone to go to and what time to be there. The buses will be loaded alphabetically in order to minimize the amount of time spent in the basketball venue waiting to march into the main stadium. The theory is that the last team will arrive in the basketball stadium at about the time the first team is leaving the basketball venue to march into the main stadium. This worked quite well and was much better than the systems that were used in Atlanta and Sydney. After we were loaded on the buses and they moved through the village to the gates, it was fun to see other teams out in their uniforms.

As each bus went through the gates of the village, it picked up a police car creating snake of bus, police car, bus, police car, miles long. We drove in the Olympic lanes on the highway which are marked with the Olympic rings every couple of hundred feet. As of August 1st no one is allowed to drive in these lanes and if they do they will receive a large fine. At one point on the highway there was a long slow turn and it was an amazing sight to see the snake like line of buses and police cars moving down the highway.

When we got off the bus and walked as a team to the basketball stadium there were lots of people behind the barriers clapping and cheering for us. We have seen this at other Olympics as well and it constantly amazes me that people who don't have tickets to the main stadium will still come down to welcome and cheer the athletes.

The stadium where we are to wait will host several sports. At the moment it is setup for gymnastics. My guess is that it will seat about 17,000 people - it looks about the same size as Maple Leaf Gardens in Toronto. It will also host the basketball finals. We will be here about 2 hours or so. Marie-Pier and Jonathan spent the time talking with other athletes and trading pins. They are both really good at it and are going to have an enormous collection by the time they leave the games - in fact they may be out of pins to trade before the games even get going! Marie-Pier is also a huge collector of archery shirts from other teams. It's a very interesting process. She is constantly looking and judging shirts and deciding which ones she will go after. Then she plans a campaign to get the shirt first deciding which athletes are the best one to approach, what she will offer in exchange, what her negotiating strategy will be and what she will say to get the shirt. She is really good at it and has an impressive collection of international shirts including both Korea and Italy - two of the most difficult shirts to obtain.

There was a large jumbotron type screen in the stadium and we were able to see the video feed from the main stadium but not the sound. Other video boards in the stadium listed the teams that would leave for the main stadium in 30 minutes and the ones that would leave in 10 minutes.

The entire stadium roared when the bolt of flame dove into the pool of water lighting the Olympic rings and starting the ceremony. I am looking forward to viewing the video when I get home to hear what the significance of the many of the events in the ceremony signified, but it looked wonderful on the big screen.

Eventually it was our turn to march and we made our way out of the stadium past more laughing and cheering fans behind the barriers to the entrance of the main stadium. Everyone was bouncing with excitement, emotion and anticipation and I really enjoyed Marie-Pier literally jumping up and down with excitement and constantly reminding herself with disbelief that she was actually here. All the way we could hear the roar of the crowd in the stadium, then the glow of the entrance and finally we walking into the stadium with all of us waving out hats and laughing and crying all at the same time. Each time we saw Canadian flags in the audience we waved harder - I was really surprised at how many of them there were. Jonathan's friends and family had a small Canadian flag (about 3 feet in length) with a black border under it with the word Canada on it in white. He did this on purpose so that we could find them in the sea of people. About half way around the stadium there they were, in the front row seats in the first balcony.

Then we were lead onto the surface that had contained the water from the earlier part of the ceremony. It

was pretty dry around the outside edges but still wet towards the middle. The parade of athletes doubled back on itself so that we were walking in the opposite direction as the athletes entering the stadium which was also neat as we got to wave to them as they entered. Once we were in our final spot, an orgy of picture taking began as the athletes mixed together with other countries in our area. The teams from the African and middle eastern countries must have felt like movie stars as everyone wanted photos of their wonderful costumes. I particularly admired the Indian men in their wonderful electric blue silk jackets. Without intending to, I ended up right at the end of the infield opposite the flag pole where the Olympic flag would be raised and right next to the track. Surrounding the outside of the infield were people from the organizing committee in official jumpsuits with joined hands keeping us all inside the infield but doing it with a smile.

Im not sure of the chronological order of these events so I may have them wrong, but they are the impressions and events that I remember best.

Shortly after all the athletes were on the infield a large white cloth was slowly pulled over us. At our end of the stadium we didn't know what was coming next or what this signified, but afterwards people told us it was the skirt of the lady that was signing but that we couldn't see but saw on the jumbotron. This is one part we'll have to see on the video tape when we get home.

There was a camera that was "flying" above us taking pictures of everyone on the infield.

The lady who was chairman of the organizing committee gave a great speech that was inspiring and everyone loved it.

Everyone on their cell phones calling family and friends at home saying "Can you believe it, I'm here! I'm here!"

The Olympic flag came onto the track just to my right and then around the stadium and was raised not ten feet away from where I was standing. For me this is always the most emotional part of the ceremony as the Olympic flag was raised and the Olympic hymn was sung by an enormous choir, which was just to our right.

A young man stepped off the track and moved about 4 feet into the infield right beside us. He was dressed in a silvery version of a track athletes costume and wires were lowered from above and he fastened them to a harness that was hidden under his costume. He was holding a 3 foot long 4 inch in diameter light stick in his hand. What would happen next? Suddenly he was lifted into the air to the cheers of those around him and flew with other "athletes" as if he was running holding the torch in his outstretched arm as he "flew" towards the centre of the stadium. There was a huge roar of approval from everyone.

Then a lady director of the show came running towards us with two lines of "guards" running behind her with the front 5 making a wedge and shouting as they pushed themselves into the crowd of athletes moving them out of the way. The two rows of "guards" followed them and in seconds there was a four foot wide corridor created down the middle of the infield with the "guards" holding hands to keep everyone back.

The flame entered the stadium just to our right and began it's journey around the track to the deafening roar of the crowd. The final exchange on the track was made right in front of me and then the runner turned and started down the corridor that had been created in the middle of the field. As he disappeared everyone's attention was transferred to the other end of the stadium as they pointed at the large device starting to swing down to greet the flame. The roar became louder as the athlete climbed the stairs and reached his flame out to meet the device. As the cauldron caught fire and started to lift raising the flame to the sky the roar was again deafening.

The fireworks that were interspersed though out the event and the barrage at the end of the ceremony, reflected our total delight at being in this place at this time at what has to be the greatest show on

earth. We felt thrilled by the spectacle, awed by the superb way it had been executed and drained by the whole experience. It was wonderful and I think it was the opening ceremony that I have enjoyed the most.

When it was over the athletes were moved slowly out of the stadium in an orderly fashion and onto buses back to the village. They were moved slowly enough so that there wasn't a huge crush to get onto the buses, which were well organized. It was a very impressive move of 10,000 people onto buses and back to the village. We were in the village by 1:30 am and into bed and asleep by 2.

August 14th

Today is "familiarization" day at the archery range. All the archers get to shoot for 50 minutes in the Panathinaiko stadium. They have installed 8 targets and each country will have a target. Well, if a country has three men and three women, then they get two targets. The english alphabet has been used so Canada is in the first group which starts at 8:30 am. Why couldn't they have used the Greek alphabet today so we would be a K and not have to be up so early! So today is a dress rehearsal for everything that will happen at the tournament for both the organizers and for the archers.

You will recall that we got back from the spectacular opening ceremonies last night and didn't get to bed until about 2 am. My alarm clock went off at 5:15 am this morning - OUCH!! Our bus was at 6:45 am and it turned out that 5:15 am wasn't early enough. We were on the dead end to make the bus on time. We met the Australians in front of the dining hall where they had sent a scout to McDonalds to get egg mcmuffins for everyone. Jon hustled in and did the same for us, then we sprinted for the bus making it at exactly 6:45 am. The archers from Bhutan did not show up - we waited about five minutes and then the bus left without them. We're not supposed to eat on the bus, but we hid behind the seats and no one scolded us.

By 6:30 am all the cicadas were buzz sawing away in the trees - if they're doing that this early in the morning, it's going to be a really hot day.

The bus whizzed down the Olympic lane of the highway past all the other traffic and we were at the Ethnikos Sport Complex in no time. All the volunteers were there to greet us and we met some old friends from other countries who volunteer at the Olympics no matter where they are held. What amazing people - they work like crazy, pay their own airfare and accommodation just to help run the event.

Marie-Pier and Jonathan put their equipment together while I enjoyed all the volunteers running around trying to figure out what they were supposed to be doing. There was lots of shouting and pointing and talking on their two way radios. Hilarious.

MJ Rogers arrived about 20 minutes after we did and soon all the archers for the 8:30 practice session were shooting on the Ethnikos range.

It is quite a spectacular picture with the archers shooting, the green grass and the targets and above that the Acropolis with the Parthenon on top. I have a gazillion pictures of Marie-Pier shooting with the Acropolis behind her. Jonathan was shooting on a target with trees blocking some of the Acropolis so I don't have many of him, but I think MJ took some later in the day.

At about 8:10, we were called to the corner of the field and lined up by country, alphabetically which also happens to be by target number. Then we were marched up the steps in the corner of the field and onto the street to get loaded into special vans that have been fitted with bow racks in the back so that each bow is fastened down but remains

totally assembled.

The first problem was that the vans were lined up one after the other with only about a foot between them. So the back doors couldn't be opened let alone let the archers maneuver so the bows could be but into the bow racks in the back of the vans. This caused much more shouting and arm waving as the guy at the back of the line of 8 vans had to back up a long way to make enough room between the other 7 vans - of course, he didn't back up enough so there was only room to barely open the doors and the archers ended up in the street where the traffic was whizzing by. This caused a huge amount of shouting and arm waving as somehow the traffic was not supposed to be there at all - the street was supposed to be blocked off. Eventually, we all made it into the vans and the police at the corner stopped all the traffic and the vans were led by a police car onto the main street, passed across the open end of the U shaped Panathinaiko stadium, turned right and went up the hill to the back of the stadium and the house that is on top of the tunnel.

Carefully, all the vans pulled up to within a foot of each other again, creating a duplicate of the shouting and arm waving that had gone on when we got into the vans as they tried to get the guy at the back of the line to back up far enough so that the back doors could be opened and the bows gotten out. We were killing ourselves laughing.

We were ushered into the room where the team captains meeting was held on the 11th. Everyone here was even more frazzled than the people at the Ethnikos Sport Complex. In a few minutes they seemed to settle down enough to give the archers some more instructions on what exactly will happen when they come into this room for the competition. There are actually two butts in the room so the archers could even shoot a few arrows at about 3 - 4 meters if they wanted to.

Then it was time to go down the steps and into the tunnel and out onto the field. When I saw this stadium on the 11th, I thought there was probably ten days work left to get it in order for the competition, but today it looked like everything was in place. The sun was blazing and it would be very helpful to be able to shoot in sunglasses. The stadium is about 25 - 30 meters wide but quite long. The butts are only about half way down but are probably 90 or 95 meters from the actual seats at the back of the U. The floor of the stadium has been covered with plywood and then quite a thick outdoor green carpet has been laid on the plywood. In the middle of the field an enormous version of the 2004 Games symbol has been painted on the carpet with black paint with the Olympic rings painted below the symbol. We were not allowed to walk on the carpet and had to walk back and forth to the target on the track around the outside of the carpeted area.

Shooting started immediately as no one wanted to waste a moment of time. It was absolutely dead calm in the stadium with not a flag or a windsock even budged. This was disappointing because we had heard how tricky a little wind can be and I was hoping there would be some so that we could gain a sense of what it might be like, but there was not a breath this morning.

By 9:30 we were totally fried - I don't know how hot it was but it was

more than anything we have experienced so far. I think the heat gets trapped inside the stadium because it was much hotter there than it was at the Ethnikos Sports centre. Half of me is glad we shot early in the day because it would be even hotter in the middle of the day, but the other half wanted to be there later in the day so we might have some experience with the tricky way the air moves.

Both archers shot for a little while longer at Ethnikos and then packed up. Marie-Pier and I took Jonathan's equipment back to the village and he went off with his family and friends to the swimming competitions. Marie-Pier didn't even stop at the dining hall for food, she just made a beeline for her bed and slept until about 4 pm. She then had an appointment with the hairdresser for a haircut and some colour. About 6:30 I went down to see how it was going and got there just as she was finishing up. WOW is all I can say - did she look sensational. She has a layered cut with lots of blond highlights, blow dried straight - it's amazingly glamorous! She was absolutely delighted with it. Everyone we met at dinner did a huge double take - they could hardly believe it was Marie-Pier.

At about 10:30 when I was in Team Leader Services, Brian Richardson, the women's rowing coach, was there and mentioned that the rowing schedule had been changed for tomorrow because of a forecast for high winds.....Uh oh.....but the rowing venue is quite far from here and known for windy conditions. Last year the rowing pre-olympic event was at the same time as the archery event and they had high winds at that time as well. Jon said the main pictures in the papers that week were of rowing boats capsized and chaos at the venue. As a consequence, the Canadians have modified their boats to stop water coming over the edge, so they're prepared.

It was an early night for us all as we will be up at the same time tomorrow!

August 15th

### Competition day for Marie-Pier

This morning we were up at the same brutal hour as yesterday.....5:15 am. The bus this morning was at 7:15 - a half hour later than yesterday so since we were rushed yesterday we got up at the same time. The timing worked and we were able to sit down for a decent breakfast and be at the bus stop on time. However, since we were on time - the bus was late - in fact 20 minutes late. Marie-Pier's match isn't until 11:11am so there's no need to be on the bus this early, but there's not another bus until 11:25, so we have no choice, but the other archers at the bus stop who had earlier matches were starting to get a little antsy.

We arrived at Ethnikos to find it was sunny, warm and absolutely dead calm. Jonathan, who will be Marie-Pier's agent, retired to the athletes lounge and organized some chairs against the wall and was soon asleep.

Jennifer Nichols of the US was in the first match of the day at 8:30 am. She was ranked 19th and her competitor from Indonesia was ranked 46th. She won the match 160 to 151, but with an unfortunate issue during the match. In the round of 64, which will take the entire day to complete, there are two matches taking place at the same time, but each archer has her own target. On the ground about 6 meters in front of the target is the timing clock. The numbers, which count down from 40 seconds, appear in the middle of the clock. On the right side of the numbers there is a red or green light that indicates whether the right hand archer on the target should or not. When it is the turn of the archer on the right hand target to shoot, the red light is off and a green light comes on. On the left side of the numbers there is also a red and/or green light for the archer on the left hand target. There are the usual audible signals for the archers to go to the line and for the first archer to shoot, but after that the archers must watch the red/green lights on clock to know when to shoot.

Jenney shot first but then archer from Indonesia waited for an audible signal to start shooting and was not watching the lights on the clock or seeing her 40 seconds ticking away. In the last few seconds she realized that she was supposed to shoot and rushed her shot, but it was actually fired after the buzzer, so she lost her highest scoring arrow. When Jenny and Sheri Rhodes came back to the field at Ethnikos, Sherri came to me immediately to make sure that Marie-Pier understood that she would not have an audible sound to start shooting unless she was shooting the first arrow of the match. She didn't have to do this since Marie-Pier is potentially a competitor for Jenney so it was nice of her to give us this advice.

Marie-Pier warmed up slowly, shooting an end and then resting an end. She was shooting nicely and in good spirits and her fingers were not sore at all. At 10:30 we got the call from the marshall to be ready in 15 minutes. At 10:45 we were lined up in target order. Since Marie-Pier will be shooting on target #1 she was first in line. The coaches were lined up behind the archers, but in the same order as their archers. MJ Rogers was with me as well, carrying Marie-Pier's

spotting scope. At 11:00 am up the stairs we went and into the vans - by now they had figured out the spacing between the vans and the bows were loaded without any problems. This time the traffic was also stopped on the street. When everyone was ready, the police at the intersection halted all traffic on the main road and with the police leading and with lights flashing, we pulled out of the side street for the 5 minute trip to the stadium.

In the waiting room above the entrance to the tunnel the judge asked Cornelia Pfohl (the archer from Germany that Marie-Pier would shoot against) if she would shoot first or second. Since Cornelia is the highest ranked archer, this is her choice. Cornelia is ranked 18th and is a very experienced archer - this is her third Olympic Games. She is also about 6-7 months pregnant.

At the bottom of the tunnel we had to wait a couple of minutes and then the archers were led onto the field and introduced one by one to the audience. After the introductions were completed the coaches walked onto the field. MJ went to the right and sat in the stands to watch.

Marie-Pier's first end was decent - she shot 7, 10, 9 for a 26. Cornelia shot 8, 9, 9 also 26. OK - good start. On the second end, Cornelia shot first again (score is tied so the archer who starts first, shoots first). She shot a 7.

Then the "Twilight Zone" descended over Panthinaiko Stadium.

From a dead calm, what I thought was just an enormous gust of wind blew into the stadium. It hit me hard enough that I had to take a step to keep my balance. Marie-Pier but her bow down, looked at as if to say "what is this...???" and waited. But her 40 seconds were ticking away and the arrow had to be shot.....it was a 5. Cornelia's next arrow was a 10 - pretty impressive when you watched how much her bow arm was being blown around. Marie-Pier's next arrow was a 7 and Cornelia's was a 6. So Marie-Pier had an 18 and Cornelia had a 23 and a 5 point lead.

On the next end they were even - both shooting 23's. But Marie-Pier's group was low. Jonathan was sending notes back from the blind saying "move your sight" and she did but it was never enough. On the 4th end, Marie-Pier shot 8, 7, 3 and Cornelia had an excellent 7, 9, 10 for 26 . Marie-Pier's 5th end was 8, 10, 7 for 25, but Cornelia had 8, 9, 10 for 27. Marie-Pier's last end was 7, 6, 5 while Cornelia had 6, 8, 7 for 21. All of Marie-Pier's arrows were good groups, but below the mid-line of the target. She moved her sight, but it was never enough.

This was no gust - it was here to stay. There are flags of all the countries at the Olympics around the top of the stadium. The ones on the right side were going one direction, the ones at the back of the stadium and second direction and the ones on the left side of the stadium were going in the opposite direction of the ones on the right. The wind socks on the right and leftside of the field were going in opposite directions and all four flags on top of the butts were each going their own way. Al Wills told me a number of years ago that if flags were standing out and snapping in the wind that the wind speed was about 25 - 30 kph. These were straight out and whipping - all of them together made a kind of roar in the stadium. Basically the wind

was coming in the stadium from the open end where it was compressed and speeded up. It then hit the closed end of the U and went haywire. The archers were now shooting in a maelstrom. Hats were blowing everywhere. On Marie-Pier's second last and last end, the wind got under the carpet lifting about a 25 meter stretch up into the air and flipping it over. The archers bow arms were bouncing all over and no matter where you decided to aim - if you could aim, the wind direction changed by the time the arrow reached the target.

Cornelia's years of experience came to her rescue and she was able to score better than Marie-Pier - winning the match 146 to 128. Marie-Pier's groups were good in the wind but always low, even though she moved her sight. She was upset at her score - she could not believe she had shot such a low score and she was sure that she would finish in 64th place - certainly a distressing prospect. But if this wind continues, there is no doubt that she will finish higher than 64th.

We exited the field of play and Marie-Pier was immediately approached by the drug marshal - she had been randomly selected for drug testing. Then she went to the "mixed zone" - an area at the back of the field of play but in front of the seats at the back of the stadium, where the press can do quick interviews with the athletes. Her uncle was there as the camera man for French CBC. She did many interviews including both english and french CBC. Jonathan joined me from behind the backstop where he was Marie-Pier's agent and we went back to the waiting room to wait for her to finish with the press. About 20 minutes later she appeared, Jonathan took her bow and her quiver and she and I went with the doping marshal in a car to the doping control room at Ethnikos. Marie-Pier's first task was to blow into a breathalyzer and she said it was the first time she had been required to do this. Of course, it registered 0.000. She said this is the 5th time she has been tested this year and it was obvious that she was well acquainted with the process. We were finished in about 25 minutes.

All sports have some banned substances that are specific to their sports but are only tested for in competition but which are not tested for in out of competition tests. Archery has two - alcohol and beta blockers. WADA (World Anti-Doping Agency) has declared the entire period that the village is open to be "in competition". So even though the archery competition is only a week, archery athletes must be alcohol free for August 1st - August 30th - even if they are not in the Olympic Village. If an archery athlete leaves the village and returns home before the games end, they could be tested at their home and if their breathalyzer test was positive, it would be a positive drug test. In fact, the village is "dry" which means that no alcohol is allowed anywhere and they are being very strict about this.

The wind was blowing very hard at the Ethnikos Sports Complex but behaved in a more predictable manner without the swirling and vortexes that were at the main stadium. Everyone was shaking their heads in disbelief at how fast it had appeared, how strong it was and how impossible it was to guess where to aim. But things would get worse.

The afternoon matches did not start until 3:30 and the morning matches are over about 12 noon. Marie-Pier packed her equipment away, put it

in a secure storage room and we walked to an area known as "La Plaka" for lunch. We were quite slow because this area has very narrow streets, packed solid with all kinds of little shops selling everything possible. There are also dozens of restaurants with tables on the sidewalks and open to the air. Eventually, we selected one and sat under the shade of a big tree and had a wonderful Greek lunch. Of course, we rehashed Marie-Pier's match - several times in fact and talked about the wind. Marie-Pier was feeling better, but was horrified at the thought of placing 64th. We walked back to the stadium through a park and settled in to watch the strangest afternoon of international competition I have ever witnessed. The wind was stronger than it was in the morning.

The first match gave us a clue. Helen Palmer of Great Britain was shooting against He Ying of China. He Ying finished the ranking round in 4th place - so this is a very good shooter. Her score was 141 including one end of 15 when she shot a 4, a 6 and then a 5.

Then the archers started missing the target. I stopped counting when I had written down 12 people who had one or more misses. The misses hit the wooden backstop behind the targets where the TV's, judges and agents were with a bang. They must have been feeling a little shell shocked by the end of the afternoon. Janet Dykman of the US had two misses. Dola Banerjee of India, ranked 13th was defeated by Kirstin Lewis of South Africa, ranked 52nd when Dola had a 10, 10, miss. Kirstin shot one of the better scores of the afternoon - 141. Nataliya Burdeyna of the Ukraine, ranked 12th, was beaten by Sayoko Kawaochi of Japan ranked 53rd. The Japanese girl shot 137 and Burdeyna had 129. Her first end was a 4, 1, 4 for a total of 9. Burdeyna is one of the top archers in the world consistently in the top ten at Grand Prix tournaments.

Apart from the misses and the 1's and 2's and everything else, there were three amazing matches. And I use the word amazing to mean unbelievable or "how bad can it get". Two archers ranked 37th and 28th shot against each other. The 37th ranked lady had 622 in the ranking round so a little less than 26 per 3 arrow end. Based on that, you should expect a score in the low 150's for 18 arrows. The 28th ranked archer shot 628 in the ranking round or slightly more than 26 per end, again an 18 arrow match should be in the low to mid 150's. The scores in this match were 119 to 106! Imagine winning a match at the Olympic Games with a score of 119 - for a 12 arrow match yes, but for an 18 arrow match? As Marie-Pier repeated over and over - Encroyable!!

Natalia Valeeva was 9th in the ranking round with 650. She is a former world champion both indoors and outdoors and unquestionably one of the top archers in the world. She was shooting against Jasmin Figueroa of the Philippines, ranked 56th with a ranking score of 600. Natalia's opening end was a 22. Her next three ends were 18's and finally her last two ends were 27's for a whopping total of 130 which included a miss on the first end of 18. Jasmin shot 132 defeating one of the women who was considered a challenger to the Koreans - now she was gone in the first round. Her final placing was 53rd. She was devastated.

Natalia Nasaridze from Turkey has been one of the top women in the

world for years. In this tournament she was ranked 16th with a 639 in the ranking round. Her match was against an archer from Finland, Mari Piuva who was ranked 49th with a 615 in the ranking round. Nasaridze had a miss early in the match. Piuva was doing very well but even from the stands you could see how surprised she was to find herself in the lead. In the second last end, she got caught by a gust and this arrow didn't even make it to the target - it went right into the middle of the Olympic rings painted on the carpet in the middle of the field, easily visible against the black paint of the rings with its bright yellow fletching! Despite this, she still won the match 136 to 133 - another top shooter was gone. Nasaridze was crying because she lost and Piuva was crying because she won!

Two of the three Korean women shot early in the morning before the wind came up and had scores of 160. In the final results you will see one or two other scores of 160 and above - but they were all shot in the morning. After Marie-Pier's match the highest score shot was 154 by Bolotova of Russia in the 2nd last match of the day and Park of Korea in the last match (about 7 pm) when the wind died down a little bit. Park who finished the ranking round first, shooting a world record score of 682 for an average of 28-29 per 3 arrow end shot an average of 25.6 per end and even had a 5 and 6. No one could remember the last time they saw a Korean woman do that!!

Scopes blew over all the time. The cameras that were on the ground in front of the targets taking the video that was shown on the TV's in the blinds kept blowing over. The carpet that had blown up during Marie-Pier's match must have blown up at least a dozen times. I don't know why they didn't get a hammer and some nails and nail it down, but they didn't. The blinds for the photographers were low boxes - about 4 feet high with a small opening in the front for camera lenses but open at the back. One of them blew over and across the field, leaving a very startled photographer sitting cross legged on the field with nothing in front of him!! Paper was blowing everywhere and there was a continuous scramble in the stands chasing hats. My hat blew off several times, but there was a little boy behind me who chased it down every time and earned some nice pins for doing it. I think his mother was glad he was being kept busy.

Towards the end of the afternoon, Jonathan went back to the Ethnikos Sport Complex and practiced in the wind. He was psyching himself up for his match tomorrow. Of course, if you shoot strong enough shots and shoot them fast enough you can group quite well in the wind and he had a great practise. He worked all evening at talking himself into this way of shooting. Marie-Pier returned to the village for a snooze after lunch and we met her in the dining room at about 8:15 and regaled her with all the stories of the afternoon and the news that she was not 64th - her final placing was 56th.

Later we heard that rowing was postponed and that the majority of sailing races were put off to another day - too much wind!

We had many requests for interviews for Marie-Pier and she spent time that evening in the media office of the COC's offices in the village doing interviews over the telephone. Excellent for our sport.

August 16

Jonathan's match today is at exactly the same time as Marie-Pier's was yesterday so we thought we had another 5:15am day but the archery organizers have realized the bus schedule is not the best and developed a new one, so we will leave an hour later and sleep until 6:15. Still not a civilized time but better than 5:15.

The first thing we all did as soon as the alarms went off was to creep out to the balcony to see what was happening outside. The wind was still whistling.

Everything worked well and we were on the bus on time. Marie-Pier was with us as she would be Jonathan's agent today. The wind at Ethnikos was the same as it was yesterday afternoon. MJ arrived about the same time as we did and Jonathan started to shoot to get ready for his match at 11:11am.

The scores we heard coming back from the stadium were pretty low - not quite as bad as the women's but for sure not good. The reports were that overall the wind was a little less, but that there were more gusts of high wind and each one came from a different direction.

Ricardo Merlos of El Salvador very nearly defeated Weitse van Alten of the Netherlands. Weitse escaped by managing a 10 on his last arrow winning by one point 152 to 151. David Barnes of Australia, a favourite for a medal lost to Jonas Andersson of Sweden 151 to 160, one of only three scores of 160 or better shot all day.

The organization was now in high gear and at 10:30 we were warned Jon's match was approaching, at 10:45 we were called and had uniforms etc. checked. Marie-Pier had her little Coke bottle for the coke machines with her keys around her neck, so I took her keys and put them in my pocket. Even though she was agent hidden behind the backstop as an agent, she still has to comply with the no advertising rule! At 11:00 we were moved to the vans and again with all traffic halted and with police leading with lights flashing, Jon headed off to the stadium to do battle with the wind.

The procedure in the room above the tunnel was followed and Jon's competitor, Viktor Ruban of the Ukraine, elected to shoot first. We were in the room a little long than with Marie-Pier so Jon shoot a few arrows at the butt to keep his muscles warm. Then the archers were lined up with the coaches following and we were again walking through the tunnel and into the stadium. This time, MJ went onto the field and I went to the right and sat in the stands, of course with one of Jon's ever present cameras. If there is anything in Athens that he hasn't taken a picture of, I would be shocked.

In the first end, Viktor shot 8, 8, 10 for 26. Jon had a bit too much adrenaline and his shots were certainly high speed, but they were too forced. He shot 4, 9, 6 for 19. On the 2nd end Viktor shot 10, 8, 8 for 26. Jon settled down and shot 9, 8, 8 for 25. On the third end Viktor shot 8, 9, 8 for 25 and Jon shot 8, 8, 10 for 26. On the fourth end Viktor shot 9, 9, 10 for 28. As you know the archers are shooting alternately, each with 40 seconds to shoot their arrow. On the first

arrow of the 4th end, Jon had to shoot first because he had the lower total score. As he was called to the line a strong gust came up. He put his bow up once and put it down quite quickly and waited for the gust to subside, but started to run out of time and with 15 seconds left on the clock, he had to shoot. He shot a 6. The gust subsided and Viktor shot a 9 and his next two arrows were 9, 10 for 28. Jon's next two arrows were 8, 10 but the total was 24. He was now behind by 11 points. But MJ told him to be patient, a gust would hit Viktor and things would even out. On the 5th end, Jon again shot first and fired a 9 while Viktor shot an 8. On the 2nd arrow, another gust buffeted Jon - he waited as long as he could, but then had to shoot, firing a 4. Again, the gust subsided and Viktor shot a 10. Viktor's last arrow was also a 10 so his total was 28 while Jon shot a 7 for a total of 20. On the last end, Viktor shot 8, 8, 8 for 24 and a match total of 157 while Jonathan shot 8, 8, 10 for 26 and a match total of 140.

He was stopped by CBC radio in the mixed zone as well as BBC world service and many other reporters. Chris Grossgirth of CBC radio in Toronto talked with him and then came and talked with me for a few minutes. It was a good interview and he asked good questions. I hope some of it hit the airwaves in Toronto. Jonathan was still talking with reporters when I left and went back up the tunnel for the final time and waited for him with Marie-Pier and MJ. By the time he appeared the buses for the last match of the morning had arrived and one of them took us back to Ethnikos. There he packed up quickly, put his stuff into the storage room and we went back to "La Plaka" and had another nice lunch. But sadly, our Olympics are now over.

We headed back to the stadium to watch the afternoon matches, starting 3:30. In the very first match, Simon Fairweather, the gold medalist from the Sydney Olympics in 2000 and ranked 20th here shot against Anton Prylepav of Belarus and astonishingly lost the match 141 to 139. Simon had been shooting really well and while no gold medalist in men's archery has ever repeated, there was the thought that he might have a chance. So now two Australians were out in the first round - this certainly caused a buzz as their team is considered one of the powerhouses in the sport. Everyone was watching Tim Cuddihy's match later in the afternoon but he won his match quite handily. I am sure the Australians were breathing a sigh of relief! All archers have sent in biographies for FITA and George Tekmitchov, who works for Easton and is a pretty good archer as well as a fabulous announcer, told us that Tim had listed his profession on his bio as "stamp collector". Tim is still a junior and won the junior world championships in July in England so Australia's hopes are pinned to this young 17 year old.

In one of the later matches in the afternoon a definite favourite for a medal, Butch Johnson of the United States lost his match with Ron van der Hoff of the Netherlands 145 to 135. Butch had won some Grad Prix's this year and was on everyone's list to be a medalist here. Who could ever imagine Butch shooting 135 in an 18 arrow match. His third end was 4, 1, 7 for a total of 11 points. Both he, all the other archers and the US team were in a state of shock! Vic Wunderle, the silver medalist in Sydney had won his match in the morning, but John Magera, the third member of the team lost his match. He was in the second match that was on the line at the same time as Jonathan and it turned out that he was on the same shooting rotation and both he and Jonathan

had suffered from the same gusts as Jonathan and John had also lost his match. They both spent some time commiserating with each other. But it means that the US now only has one man left in the competition.

Alexandros Karageorgiou of Greece was in the second last match of the day and the volume in the stadium increased exponentially. They cheered wildly with every arrow he shot and when he shot a 10 they went mad. He won his match 147 to 143 and everyone was dancing in the stadium. We also yelled encouragement for him too, but we're no match for the greeks!

There were 32 matches today and 64 scores shot. Only 23 of the 64 scores were over 150. Under normal circumstances 95% of the men in this competition would consider a score of 150 to be an absolutely mediocre performance. Today, they were back slapping each other for scores of 150. With some of the big guns out of the competition right at the very beginning - it's totally wide open. There will be archers none of us would have expected on the podium on the 18th.

Part way through the afternoon, Marie-Pier decided to go back to the village. Sometime later my cell phone rang - it was Marie-Pier. Remember in the morning I took her keys because of the little Coke bottle that was on them and put them in my pocket? Well, they were still in my pocket and she was standing forlornly in front of the locked door to our apartment. I phoned the COC to find someone to help her, but she was able to find the cleaning staff first, who let her in.

We weren't back in the village until about 8:30 where we again re-shot the matches of the day with the Americans over dinner. Marie-Pier had more calls for more interviews which is wonderful. I had an email from my son David who told me that he had seen about 5 minutes of Marie-Pier's match on the CBC wrap up show last night. He is recording the whole Olympics for me on a computer and had taken it off line for a few minutes to fix something thinking that everything on the wrap up show had been on previously, when he looked at his TV and there was Marie-Pier. He frantically tried to get the PC back on line and recording, but he missed it. But at least it was on. If any of you were lucky enough to catch this on tape - please let me know.

August 17

Today is the womens round of 32 in the morning and the mens round of 32 in the afternoon. The first match is at 8:30 in the morning. There will be sixteen matches but with four butts on the field and two matches running at the same time, there will be 8 sets of matches in the morning and 8 in the afternoon.

We were all bushed and a little disappointed and we didn't get up early and go the field for the ladies matches in the morning. I went to the 7:30 team captains meeting and then parked myself and my computer in front of the TV in the team leaders lounge. I was supposed to be working to get caught up on this story, but doing that and also watching the archery on TV was not an effective strategy! As you all know.

The organizers of the Olympic Games are also obliged to cover every event and every session that takes place for TV. They usually form a separate company to do that and in Athens it is imaginatively called Athens Olympic Broadcasting (AOB). They olympic organizers broadcasting company often hire cameramen who are experts at certain sports. For instance, for ice hockey in the winter Olympics they always hire cameramen from the CBC's hockey night in Canada. So every event and every match is recorded. The TV companies of the world can then pick up the material put out by AOB and use it in their broadcasts. So CBC certainly didn't have a camera at the archery range when Marie-Pier shot, but they were able to pick up the video from AOB and use it in their broadcast. Of course, for some events which have a high profile in Canada, CBC will put in some of their own cameras and announcers. But sometimes, they may only send their own announcers and still use the feed from AOB.

There is cable in the Team Leaders lounge and along with that comes the direct feed from AOB. Every sport has a channel. Archery is on channel 28, so I could watch the competition live as it was happening. The cable also brings us CBC sports.

One of the cool things here, is that we can request a copy of all the footage taken by AOB for our sport and we will get it on CD's. We have gone and requested that material. As always here, what they say is often not what they mean. At first they told us that this was only for team sports. But we showed them the notice that clearly said a request could be made for individual sports as well. So our request has been submitted. After archery is finished on the 21st, we will start to bug them to get at least one set of CD's. There will be some wonderful footage here for everyone to study, so if you're REALLY nice and want a set, we'll make one for you. But first we have to actually get them. We'll keep you posted.

The conditions today were vastly improved over the last two days. There was some breeze - it certainly wasn't the dead calm conditions we had grown used to in our first week here, but it was definitely a good day for shooting. I was particularly interested in Jennifer Nichols' match at 8:30 which she won 163 to 160 so you knew that the scores had returned to normal. In one of the matches there was a tie that went to the third arrow of the tie break, which is measured to see who is closest to the middle. The judges measured and measured and measured. Then they declared that it was still a tie and the archers had to shoot a 4th arrow to break the tie. I have only seen this once before and interestingly, it was at the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta. But the results don't show the 4th arrow - I guess the people who designed the system didn't think there would ever be a 4th arrow required.

The timing clocks that show who shoots first that I described in my story on the 15th have had some difficulties, sometimes it's with the mechanism itself, but sometimes it's been with the judges running them showing who shoots first. In the match between Galinovskaya and Pfohl of Germany, something in the system failed and the wrong person shot first. The judge immediately signaled with her red card, meaning that the archer would lose her highest scoring arrow. Fortunately, the coach immediately notified the judge of a protest and it was quickly determined that the timing device was wrong and the archer did not end up losing the arrow.

The high score for the day was shot by the Korean Yun, Mi Jin a 173 - quite excellent. There were two scores of 166 and three of 163, including one shot by the Greek archer Evangelia Psarra.

I went out to the archery range for the men's afternoon matches. The previous evening, I had looked at the matches and decided who I thought would win each match. Jon discovered this and put in his best guesses on who would win. Sometimes they were the same, but mostly they were not. I had more right guesses than Jon did!

Yesterday afternoon, I sat on the side of the stadium that put the sun on my back. But since most of the archers are right handed, it also meant that I was watching their backs. Today, I sat on the other side - and boy, it's sure was hot. Everything was soaked! But it's much better to watch the archers shoot from this side.

In the match between the Italian Galiazzo and Serrano of Mexico, we wanted Serrano to win but I had guessed that Galiazzo would win. They were tied going into the last arrow, but Galizzo shot a 9 and Serrano shot an 8.

Vic Wunderle won his match against Liu of Chinese Taipei (Taiwan) 164 to 160. Viktor Ruban, who defeated Jonathan, shot a tied match at 167 with Wang of Chinese Taipei and won in the first arrow of the shoot off, 9 vs 8.

Larry Godfrey of Great Britain, a new name to me, defeated Magnus Petersson of Sweden, who finished 2nd in the ranking round, 163 to 162. This was a big surprise to lots of people. Magnus was another archer many people expected to repeat his medal performance from the Atlanta games.

In another shocker, the current world champion, Michele Frangilli lost his match to Hiroshi Yamamoto of Japan. Hiroshi is 42 years old and this is his 5th Olympics. He is tremendously popular, so while everyone was happy for Hiroshi, they were shocked to see Michele loose.

Stanislav Zabrodskiy of Kazakhstan very nearly eliminated one of the Koreans, Park, Kyung Mo who had won the ranking round setting a new world record. They finished the match tied with a pair of 164's. On the first tie breaking arrow, they both shot 10's. On the 2nd tie breaking arrow, Zabrodskiy shot first with a 9 and Park shot a 10, so Park advances to the next round.

The high score was 171 sot by the Korean Im Dong Hyun. There was one other 170 shot by the Chinese archer Chen Szu Yuan. The majority of the scores were in the low to mid 160's.

Jonathan learned that his long interview with the BBC world service was broadcast this morning.

Again we weren't back to the village until about 8 o'clock so by the time supper was finished, we had just enough time to pick up email and then head to bed.

August 18

Today is the womens round of 16 in the morning starting 8:30 again. In the afternoon, starting at 3:45 are the quarter finals, semi finals and the Bronze and Gold medal match.

I was again lazy and went to the Team Leaders meeting at 7:30 and then settled in front of the TV to watch the round of 16 in the morning. One thing this is doing is educating quite a few people as others come in to watch it as well and ask lots of questions. This doesn't of course, help to get these notes written but I thought it was an excellent procrastination tactic.

The Greek archer, Evangelia Psarra won her match over Gallardo of Spain, 160 to 152. Even on the TV you could sense the excitement in the stands and when she finally won, they literally all got up and danced. Allison Williamson of Great Britain won her match. This is Allison's 4th Olympics. She did her University at Arizona State in the US and I got to know her on the US circuit and have talked and emailed with her off and on over the years and consider her an archery friend. I often e-chat with her by email to get the news from the European circuit so I was delighted. Jennifer Nichols of the US fought hard against the Korean Yun Mi Jin but lost 168 to 162. Her high score will be the highest of the losers, putting her in 9th place in the final rankings. The high score for the round was a 171 by the Korean Park and there were 8 more scores above 160.

I again watched the afternoon competition from the sunny side of the stadium. It is desperately hot for about the first hour and then starts to cool off. By the time it's 5:30, it's quite respectable and by 6:00 it's downright comfortable. It's just getting through the first hour that kills.

The Greek woman, Psarra's match was against the Korean Park Sung Hyun. These matches are all now 12 arrows. The crowd was on their feet throughout encouraging her at the top of their voices along as well as using every other noisemaker imaginable, but to no avail. She lost the match 111 to 101. Nevertheless, she got an enormous ovation when she left the field. For a country that didn't have an archery program 7 years ago, they've done pretty well!

Allison Williamson of Great Britain won her match with He Ying of China, 109 to 89 but not in a nice way. Again there was a problem with the timing clocks and apparently He Ying shot out of order and the judge gave her a red card meaning she would lose her highest scoring arrow. The coach waved his arms which to me in the stands clearly indicated he would file a protest. Nevertheless, the judge waved He Ying on to shoot and her clock started to count down her 40 seconds. She refused to shoot, I guess believing that there would be a protest. Allison shot her next arrow and then He Ying shot her last arrow but she had now lost two arrows.

At the end of the match, the team leader for China, who was acting as the agent at the target rushed to submit a protest within the 5 minute deadline. But the person guarding the gate to the field would not let her on the field and she had to go around through the stands to get to

the Chairman of the Judges. The Jury refused to accept her protest because it was submitted too late. He Ying was in tears on the field and Allison looked distressed. These are the details as I know them now but I will ask some more questions tomorrow. The new rules that determine who shoots first in matches is way to complicated. We have seen two screw ups in this tournament and one in the trials in Canada. We need to revert to the simpler system that was in place before and worked just fine. If the judges at the Olympic Games can't keep this straight, the archers sure can't.

In the third match the archer from Taipei defeated a woman from Korea 107 to 105 - always a major upset when anyone beats a Korean. The audience was fully behind the archer from Chinese Taipei all the way.

In the semi-finals Allison Williamson came up against the Korean Park Sung Hyun and lost 110 to 100 putting Park in the gold medal match and Allison in the bronze medal match. In the other semi-final match, Lee Sung Jin defeated Yuan Shu Chi of Chinese Taipei 104 to 98 despite the loud support from the crowd.

In the bronze medal match Allison defeated Yuan Shu Chi of Chinese Taipei in an exciting and close match 105 to 104. So Allison wins an Olympic medal - what a thrill to watch.

It was no surprise to find two Koreans in the gold medal match, but this was Parks tournament all the way from the world record in the ranking round to a win over her team mate 110 to 108 and the Gold medal. She'll be a national hero at home.

The medal ceremony was held almost immediately with men and women in Greek national costume bringing in the medals. It was excellently done. Of course when Allison got her medal, I cried.

We were home a little earlier but then we talked longer over dinner so by the time we got back to our apartment, it was bedtime again.

August 19

Today was a duplicate of yesterday. The same Team Leaders meeting at 7:30 where we are already talking about procedures for leaving. Then I settled in to watch the mens round of 16 on the archery channel on the TV at the same time as getting some other computer work done. Certainly I have educated a lot of other team leaders and coaches by watching the archery in the morning. The one thing you can't see on the TV is the distance and it's to make people believe how far away the target is. Nevertheless, they are still impressed with the level of accuracy.

It was another beautiful day - no wind.

In the round of 16 in the morning Hiroshi Yamamoto won again, this time defeating Serdyuk of the Ukraine 168 to 160. So Hiroshi moves on to the quarter finals. By this time, the whole archery community was squarely behind this 5 time Olympian and after this win there was a buzz on the range and everyone was both delighted and surprised at his performance.

Tim Cuddihy of Australia, the junior world champion had a squeaker of a match again Jang Yong Ho of Korea winning the match on the last arrow, 166 to 165. Any time anyone beats a Korean they have cleared a major hurdle and this was an enormous accomplishment for Tim. The remaining two Korean men moved through to the quarter finals with no difficulty.

Sadly the two Italians, Galiazzo and di Buo met in this round. It's always tough when two people from the same country end up competing against each other, but the silver lining in this cloud is that it guarantees that there will be an Italian in the quarter finals. In this match, Galiazzo defeated di Buo with not much difficulty, 162 to 155.

Vic Wunderle of the US shot against the Chinese archer, Haifeng Xue in a see-saw match that he finally won by one point 165 to 164.

Larry Godfrey of Great Britain continued his winning ways defeating Viktor Ruban of the Ukraine (the archer who beat Jonathan) to advance to the quarter finals this afternoon.

After we had lunch in the main dining hall we headed out to the range for the quarter, semi and finals. We were again on the sunny side of the stadium in the broiling sun with Jonathan's family and friends and a special guest. Ryan Flannigan of Saskatchewan, a member of the Canadian gold medal winning team from Junior Worlds in England in July is one of two young Canadians who was selected to attend the Olympic Youth Camp. As soon as I knew my cell number here, I emailed Ryan in Canada before he left with the number. He called me when he arrived. He had some free time today and got tickets for this event. They were lucky to go to the opening ceremonies and have been to several events as well as having workshops and other activities. It was awesome that he was able to come to see the men's finals since he has taken up the recurve bow and has aspirations of attending the 2008 Olympics in Beijing.

The first match of the quarter finals pitted Vic Wunderle against Marco Galiazzo of Italy. Vic was the silver medalist from Sydney and he really wanted the gold this time around. They matched arrow for arrow on the first end shooting 9, 9, 8 for a total of 26. On the second end, Galiazzo shot 9, 10, 8 for a total of 27 for the end and 53 overall. Vic had a great end of 10, 9, 10 for 29 and an overall total of 55 and a 2 point lead. But on the third end the tables were turned and Galiazzo shot 10, 8 10 for 28 and a total of 81 while Vic could only manage 8, 9, 8 for a total of 25, putting Galizzo in the drivers seat, 81 to 80. On the last end Galiazzo shot a 10 and Vic shot a 9, so he was now 2 points behind, 91 - 89. On the second arrow, Vic got his point back when Galiazzo shot a 9 and Vic shot a 10, but he was still one point behind 100 to 99. Vic shot first on the last arrow - to have any chance of winning he had to shoot a 10 but it was a 9 just out, at 2 o'clock. Galiazzo had to shoot an 8 to tie or a 9 or 10 to win. He shot a 9 and moved to the semi-finals. Vic was eliminated and finished the tournament in 8th place. We were sad for Vic. He's been a good friend to all of us always encouraging us when we compete against him in tournaments in the US and we had really hoped he would earn another Olympic medal.

We were all keenly interested in the next match between the young Australian, Tim Cuddihy and Park Dyung Mo of Korea. Tim is just 17 years old and recently won Junior Worlds in England in July. We first got to know him at junior worlds in Nymburk in 2002 when he won the cadet world championships. He will need to have the match of his life to get past the Korean.

Park's first end was 9, 9, 10 for a total of 28. Tim started with a 10 to the roar of the crowd, who was clearly on his side, and followed with two 9's. Both had scored 28. On the second end, they both started with 10's. Then Tim shot an 8 to gasps from the crowd and Park shot a 9. On the last arrow, Tim shot a 10 and Park shot another 9 so they both had a total of 28 for the end and 56 for the match. On the third end Park started with a 10 and Tim shot a 9 but it evened out on the next arrow when Park shot a 9 and Tim shot a 10. They both shot 9's on the last arrow, again both shooting 28's and still had a tied score of 88. On the last end, Park started with an 8 - there was a big and audible intake of air by the crowd. Tim shot a 9 and took a one point lead to an enormous cheer. They both shot 9's on their second arrow. With one arrow to go, Tim had a one point lead 102 to 101. Park shot first and shot a 10 for a total in the match of 111. If Tim shot a 10 he would win, if he shot a 9 he would tie. A hush fell over the stadium. Tim came to full draw and calmly shot a 10, winning the match by 1 point and moving on to the semi-finals. This was the second Korean to be eliminated. There was only one left.

The last Korean, Im Dong Hyun placed first in the ranking round shooting a new world record. His match was against Hiroshi Yamamoto. We all thought that Hiroshi had shot a wonderful tournament to get this far, but that while we would all love for him to win, it just wasn't possible. Nevertheless, we shouted ourselves hoarse yelling for Hiroshi. On the first end they were perfectly even, each archer shot 9, 9, 10 for a total of 28. On the second end Im started with an 8 then 9, 9 for a total of 26 - ouch!! The door was wide open for Hiroshi and he walked right through it shooting 10, 9, 10 - a total of

29 and an overall total of 57 taking a 3 point lead in the match. Watching Hiroshi on the field you could see he was as excited as we were. On the next end he gave one point back shooting 8, 9 and 9 for 26 while Im shot 8, 9 and 10 for 27. The match was now 83 for Hiroshi and 81 for Im. On the first arrow of the last end they both shot 10's so Hiroshi was still leading 93 to 91. On the second arrow they both shot 9's so with one arrow left in the match Hiroshi still had a 2 point lead. On the last arrow, Im shot first and sunk a 10 right beside the camera in the middle of the target. For Hiroshi and 8 would tie, a 9 or 10 would win. He took some time at the beginning of his 40 seconds and then shot a nine - winning the match. Hiroshi stood and looked at the target. I don't think it sank in for quite a few seconds that he had actually won the match and then he turned and jumped, like a kangaroo, with his arms and bow in the air all the way back to his coach - just sheer joy. Then he came out to the shooting line again and bowed to the audience on all three sides of the stadium. There would be no Koreans in the semi-finals. The shouts and cheers and applause filled the entire neighbourhood.

I think it must be difficult for the Koreans. Whenever they are in a match against anyone, everyone is almost automatically cheering for the other archer. Their dominance, particularly in the women's competition, has become their own worst enemy. Everyone in the archery community is always wishing for anyone else to win except Koreans. If they loose, it clears the path through to the finals for other archers. They have been so dominant that they now have an enormous psychological advantage over everyone else. Knowing you have a Korean in your path in match play is not a comforting thought.

The last match in the quarter finals was Larry Godfrey of Great Britain against Chen Szu Yuan of Chinese Taipei. I did not know Larry and was interested to observe his shooting. He took control of this match right from the beginning winning it 110 to 108.

The semi-finals would be, Yamamoto vs Cuddihy and Galiazzo vs Godfrey.

In the first end of the Galiazzo / Godfrey match they both opened with 27's. On the next end Galiazzo shot a 9, 10, 7 for 26 and a total of 53. Godfrey shot 9, 10, 10 for 29 and a total of 56. It looked like Godfrey had good control of the match. But on the next end Godfrey shot a 6 on his first arrow, but he recovered and shot a 10 and a 9 for a total of 25 and a grand total of 81. Galiazzo shot 10, 9, 8 for 27 and a grand total of 80. Larry had a one point lead. On the last end, Galiazzo opened with a 10 and Godfrey shot a 9. Tied match. On the second arrow, Galiazzo shot another 10 and Godfrey shot another 9. Galiazzo is now in front by 1 point. On the last arrow Galiazzo shot a 3rd ten for a perfect end of 30. Grodfrey shot a 3rd nine - a beautiful group the size of a quarter, but just to the right of the ten ring leaving Godfrey two points behind and headed for the bronze medal match. Galiazzo would move on to the Gold medal match.

Everyone was waiting for the Yamamoto / Cuddihy match. We all wanted them both to win and they gave us a first class show. Yamamoto opened the match with a 10, 9 10 for 29. Tim shot 9, 10, 9 for 28. Hiroshi had a one point lead. On the second end they both shot 29's and Hiroshi maintained his one point lead 58 to 57. On the third end

Hiroshi shot 10, 10, 10 as calm as you please for an overall total of 88. Time shot 10, 9, 9 for 28 and giving Hiroshi a 3 point lead with only three arrows remaining. On the last end Tim shot first and fired a 10. Hiroshi shot an 8 to the groans of the crowd. His lead was now back to 1 point, 96 to 95. Hiroshi's next arrow was a 10 and so was Tim's so the one point lead stayed the say, 106 to 105. On the last arrow Tim laid down the gauntlet by shooting his third 10 in a row for a total score of 115 and tying the Olympic record. He stepped off the line to wait and see what happened next. Hiroshi had to shoot a 9 to tie or a 10 to win. We held our breath. He shot a 9 and his total was now also 115 and also a tie of the Olympic record.

In a tie, the archers shoot one arrow - whoever has the highest score wins. If it's still a tie they shoot a second arrow - highest score wins. If it's still a tie they shoot a third arrow and closest to the middle wins.

They came to the line and Tim shot first with a 9. The door was standing wide open for Hiroshi and he stepped confidently through shooting a 10 and moving on to the Gold medal match. He can now finish with no less than a silver medal. Tim will go to the Bronze medal match against Larry Godfrey.

In the bronze medal match Tim Cuddihy took the lead in the first end, shooting a 10, 10, 9 for 29 while Larry Godfrey shot 10, 9, 9 for 28. He extended his lead in the second end shooting a perfect 10, 10, 10 for 30 while Larry shot 10, 9, 9 for 28. Tim now had a three point lead. On Tim's last 10 he smashed the camera that is in the centre of the target. This little tiny camera sits on a set of rails in the middle of the target, so that if an arrow hits it, it will absorb some of the impact by sliding back along the rails. There is a hole in the middle of the target where the spider normally is - about the size of a dime, that the camera peaks through. The camera can "see" the arrow coming towards it. It's quite an interesting picture. Several archers have hit the camera this week and Tim was the 3rd archer to smash one. On the third end, Tim shot 9, 10, 9 for 28 while Larry shot 8, 9, 10 for 27 and now Tim was four points ahead in the match with three arrows left to shot. On the first arrow Tim shot another 10 and Larry shot a 9. Tim was now five points ahead. On the next arrow Tim shot an 8 and Larry shot a 10. Tim's lead was now 3 points 105 to 102. It was Larry's turn to shoot first and he fired a 10 so his total for the match would be 112. Tim had to shoot a 7 to tie the match or 8 or better to win. The crowd was quiet. Tim then shot the 8 he needed to become the Olympic bronze medalist - at just 17 years old. Bedlam broke out - it was just great.

Now for the gold medal match. The entire stadium wanted Yamamoto to win - except the Italians I expect. He's 42 years old, competing in his 5th olympics. I think he was competing internationally well before 1988 because I am sure I remember him and Matsushita from the days when I competed. He is a very popular archer - everyone knows him and likes him.

On the first end Yamamoto shot 8, 10, 10 for 28 points. Galiazzo shot 8, 9, 10 for 27. On the second end, Yamamoto shot 9, 9, 9 for 27 and a total of 55. Galizzo shot 10, 9, 10 for 29 and a total of 56. The

crowd was loudly encouraging Yamamoto on. On the next end he shot 9, 8, 10 for 27 and a total of 82. But now Galiazzo started to take control and fired 8, 10, 10 for 28 and a total of 84 and a two point lead going into the last three arrows. On the last end Yamamoto started with a 10 while Galiazzo shot a 9, cutting Galiazzo's lead to one point. We yelled like mad but Yamamoto's next arrows was an 8 which brought an instant hush to the crowd. Galizzo shot a 9 getting his two point lead back. On the last arrows they both shot 9's and Galiazzo was the Olympic gold medalist 111 to 109.

And then the celebrations started. Certainly, Galiazzo and all the Italians were leaping and jumping around - but so was Hiroshi and all the Japanese. The silver medal is a funny medal to "win" in archery, because in fact you don't "win" it, you loose to get it. You can "win" a gold or a bronze medal, but not the silver, so archers often feel bummed out when they end up with the silver. But in this case, you cold tell that Hiroshi didn't feel that way at all - he was thrilled. I talked to him briefly after the medal ceremony and he was pretty amazed at what had happened to him this afternoon.

What a day of competition and what exciting matches we had been privileged to see. It was exactly what you would hope for in an Olympic Games. I do hope that this was the day that all the IOC big wigs came to watch because this was archery competition at it's best.

There were a gazillion TV and press people in the venue. After the gold medal match, Juan Carlos Holgado who won a team gold medal for Spain in the Barcelona Olympics and was hired by the Athens organizing committee as archery's oeparations manager, had quite a job to get the archers out of the mixed zone, where they were talking to the press and back into the tunnel to get ready for the medal presentations. Tim Cuddihy had been in the mixed zone for the entire gold medal match talking with the press.

The medal ceremony was held about 5 - 7 minutes after the last arrow and it was moving and well done.

We headed back over to the Ethnikos sport complex to pick up results and enjoy everyone talking excitedly about how great the matches had been.

The targets for this tournament are made by Bjorn - they are the ones that we used to all love but never could afford with the threads through the paper so they lasted longer. I am a little surprised that they didn't use the new light weight Tivek ones that are so easy to store and don't stretch when they get wet, but I guess it rains so little here in the summer that's it's not an issue. In any event, the targets used at Panathinaiko have all been printed with the Athens Olympic logo in the upper right corner. Since I first saw one on the wall at archery's desk in the Sport Information office the first day we were here, I have been trying to figure out how to quietly steal one. I had it figured out that I might be able to get one that had been used and quietly fold it and get in into my backpack. I had been watching to see what they did with the old targets and eventually found the pile under a set of stairs. The question was when to do the dastardly deed. We had decided that tonight was the night.

But, when I went to pick up my results, we were given four brand new targets with the Olympic logo on them, one for Marie-Pier, Jonathan, MJ Rogers and myself. How awesome is that? Obviously, we weren't the only ones who thought they would be nice to have!! I'm not sure how I will get mine home without folding it. But we will try to find a Home Depot kind of store and get a length of PVC piping to make a tube and tape it to the outside of Jonathan's tackle box and see if that works.

We had supper late again - about 9 pm, but the really good news is that the wonderful, beautifully ripened blue cheese is back. I made a full meal of it. I don't want to even think of my next cholesterol test!

August 20

Today started the same as all the other days with the 7:30 am team leaders meeting. I watched the first matches of the women's team round, but then I was out voted by a large group that wanted to watch rowing events. But I did get to see the USA women's team defeated by the Greek team to the great delight of all the flag waving Greeks in the audience, but I was sad for the Americans.

As I was leaving the building, Betty Dermer-Norris stopped me. Betty is the Manager of Games for the Canadian Olympic Committee and was the volunteer that ran Team Leader Services in the 1996 Games in Atlanta when I needed lots of help. She was involved in the 2000 games in Sydney as well. She told me that the campers from the Olympic Youth Camp would be in the village later today. Ryan Flannigan, an archer from Saskatchewan, who was a member of the compound team that won the gold medal at the World Junior Championships in England in July, was selected as one of two Canadian youth to attend this camp.

She asked if I would be willing to meet with the Youth Camp people and accompany them on their tour of the village and then bring Ryan and Teryn to the Canadian zone and give them a tour of our facilities and an idea of how the whole system works.

I met the group in the cafeteria at McDonalds where they all had lunch. Apparently McDonalds is a sponsor of the Olympic Youth Camp. They all went on a tour of the village on the village buses. Then Ryan, Teryn and I walked back to the Canadian zone. We walked up the path that runs diagonally across the plaza and stopped to look at the archeological site. Then we stopped at the medical building and one of the doctors did a normal "medical review" with them as an example of what all Olympic athletes go through when they arrive. This is mainly a review of the drugs being taken and a discussion about doping. From there we went to the COC offices where each person described the kinds of things they do, the sports people, transportation, the people who look after the rooming, the press people etc. etc. It was quite interesting for me too!! Then we went down to Team Leader Services and Athlete Services and on the way we watched some events on one of the AOB sport channels. Then we went to our apartment and a visit with Jonathan and Marie-Pier.

The whole program took quite a while but I had them back with their group at the main gate at about 4 pm.

However, this meant that I had missed the bus to go to the archery range and see the ladies team event. I hustled around the place to try and find a TV with no one else watching it so I could watch the finals. I was able to catch only the Bronze and Gold medal matches. Earlier in the day, Jonathan and I had made a prediction that the medalists would be Korea-Gold, China-Silver and Chinese Taipei-bronze. So I wasn't surprised to find that the Chinese Taipei team won the bronze medal fairly easily over the team from France.

The match between Korea and China was surprisingly close. In a team round each member of the team shoots three arrows, so each end is a total of 9 arrows. A match is 3 ends. In the first end the Chinese

team scored 81 points while the Korean team scored 84 points taking a 3 point lead. On the second end the Koreans shot a 79 and the Chinese a 78 increasing the Korean lead to 4 points. On the last end, the first Korean archer shot 26 points while the Chinese archer shot 27 points reducing the Korean lead to 3 points. The second Chinese archer shot 27 again, but this time the Korean archer shot 25 points reducing their lead to a mere one point with one archer for each team left to shoot. On the first arrow they both shot 9's. On the second arrow, the Korean shot an 8 and the Chinese a 9 and the match was tied. On the last arrow the Chinese shot another 9 so the Korean had to shoot a 9 to tie and a 10 to win. The Korean shot a 10 winning the match 241 to 240 and the gold medal.

Marie-Pier has been out on the practice range for the last several days, not only shooting arrows, but working on her pin and shirt collection. She came back from the range about 7 pm and packed up her equipment for the trip home. The range will be closed tomorrow and she leaves on the morning of the 23rd.

Then we went for dinner. There is still blue cheese but this time I had a proper meal and then blue cheese for desert! Jon was out with his family for the evening and didn't return until late.

August 21st.

There was the usual 7:30 am Team Leaders meeting and then I got the TV for a while - enough to see that the American men beat the Swedish men 246 to 242 and the Australian men beat the Indian 248 to 236. Then I was back in the apartment trying to get these stories up to date. I do apologize for being so far behind.

At about 1 pm Marie-Pier left to spend the afternoon with her uncle and Jon and I went on the public bus to Panathinaiko for the finals of the men's team event.

In the first semi-final, the Korean team defeated the men from the Ukraine 242 to 239. In the second semi-final, the US was competing with Chinese Taipei. In the first end the Americans scored 80 points and Chinese Taipei shot 77 points so the US had a 3 point lead. On the second end the Americans shot 80 again, but Chinese Taipei shot an 82 reducing the American's lead to one point. Butch was the first archer up for the Americans on the last end and he shot a 29 and then the archer from Chinese Taipei shot a perfect 30 and the match was tied. Yikes!! The second archer to shoot was John Magera and he shot a 9, 9, 6 which had to be trouble. Chinese Taipei then shot a 27 and took the lead by three points. Vic Wunderle was the last archer for the US and he shot the best that is possible, a perfect 30, but then all the US could do was wait and see what the Chinese Taipei archers did next. Their archer's first arrow was a 9 -so the US had one point back. Their second arrow was a 10 so they still had the lead by 2 points. Their last arrow had to be an 8 to tie or a nine to win. It was a 9 winning them the match and relegating the American men to the Bronze medal match.

In the Bronze medal match the Americans shot against the archers from the Ukraine. After the first end, the Ukrainians had the lead by one point. On the second end, they picked up two more points and were ahead in the match by 3 points with one end to go. On the last end, the three Ukrainians shot a lot of 8's but so did the Americans and although they gained one point back, they still lost the match by 2 points 237 to 235 and fourth place. This is always the hardest place to be - it means you are the only archer or team that has lost twice. No one likes it.

In the gold medal match, there was to be no denying the Koreans this time around. They led the team from Chinese Taipei from start to finish ending with a score of 251 out of a possible 270. The team from Chinese Taipei shot well with a score of 245 which would win most team rounds, there was no defeating the Koreans today. I am sure that the Korean were upset because none of their men made it to the semi-finals and they weren't going to take a chance on not getting a team medal today. After the match was over there was a tremendous celebration on the field. The Koreans always have many and very vocal fans in the audience and today was no exception.

There was another medal ceremony and then the archery competition in the 2004 Olympics was over. The ladies marathon is scheduled to trace it's original path starting in Marathon and finishing here tomorrow and it only took about 20 minutes before people started working to take the

archery range down. We stole onto the main field and took some pictures in front of the butts and in front of the large Athens logo on the backstop behind the targets - the one that had been so well used during the first day of competition by the ladies.

Then we slowly left the stadium, hoping it enjoyed it's unique experience with an archery competition and leaving the ghosts of old and new Olympians to their peace.

Marie-Pier had come with her uncle to watch the finals and she went off to spend the evening with him. Jon and I and his family took a cab to their apartment part way up the Acropolis hill. Then we walked down the hill and found a nice restaurant where we enjoyed a feast of roast lamb, greek salad and a nice glass of wine outside on a warm and calm evening.

Then Jon and I took the subway and bus back to the village and off to sleep.

August 22nd

This was a kind of lazy day. As always it started with the team leaders meeting at 7:30am but there wasn't even much to discuss at that meeting. I watched some rowing in the morning and then worked on getting these stories up to date! I also read for a while - what a luxury.

Marie-Pier spent some time packing - she finished in the middle of the afternoon and actually got everything into her bags - much to my amazement. Yesterday she bought two very large stuffed versions of the two mascots for the Olympics. They are apparently representations of dolls that were found in an archeological site. You will recall that all the athletes were given a bottle of Ouzo in their welcome package from ATHOC - even though ATHOC has declared that this will be a dry village - no booze at all. The COC removed the bottles from the bags so one of my chores was to retrieve one for Marie-Pier to take home to her dad.

We had two tickets for the finals in individual events for gymnastics tonight so Marie-Pier had a big decision to make - go to gymnastics or go to a party at the Heinekin House with some of the young archers from the French team. In the end she decided to go the party, so Jonathan and I went off to the gymnastics competition in Oaka. Oaka is a collection of several sports - athletics in the main stadium with the Olympic flame towering above, gymnastics, swimming, diving and all aquatic sports, tennis, baseball and I think softball and there are probably some others that I don't know about. There is a bus that goes from the transportation mall to this location every hour, so I hopped aboard. After entering the site through security etc. I walked down a wide plaza with white structural arches over it. It's really quite spectacular.

My first stop was the AT"HOC Superstore. Every possible ATHOC piece of merchandise is sold here - except the one I want of course. I was hoping to find the poster I mentioned in one of my earlier message. It's an archer shooting at the Ethnikos stadium with the targets and the Parthenon in the background. The poster people at the superstore didn't know what I was talking about - but we know it exists because someone gave us three of them - you'll recall that they put them in my pigeon hole, so we each have at least one, but we'd like some more. I did find an opening ceremony poster, but they are all sold out! I'll keep trying.

I walked past a large reflecting pool on my way to the gymnastics stadium and then I started to see a most remarkable thing. I guess it is probably a piece of art and I don't know if I can describe it. At first I thought it was just an enormous type of screen made of long thin pieces of metal - probably 30 feet or more. Each piece is a square tube and is fastened to a bar at its middle. Each bar moves back and forth through about 10 - 12 feet. The effect is like an enormous curtain billowing and the folds gently moving. I'm pretty sure that you are having trouble picturing it in your mind. I took some photos and will send them tomorrow. Anyway, whatever it was, it was wonderful.

We hit the gymnastics right on time and it started with the mens floor exercise which had Kyle Shewfelt in it. I don't know that much about gymnastics and mens floor exercise except that they do gravity defying things. Even I could see that his program was really, really good. He received very high marks and after that we just held our breath until all eight gymnasts had finished. There were other gymnasts who had the same mark as Kyle, but he was listed first so there's some kind of arithmetic going on in the background to determine who wins.

What a thrill to be sitting right there when Canada wins it's first gold medal of these games! It was awesome to see the flag and hear the anthem.

After the men floor exercise, we saw womens vault, mens pommel horse, women's uneven bars and mens rings. The womens uneven bars are a favourite of everyone and seeing them live gives you a much better appreciation for the daring of these young women and they flip from bar to bar and let go of the bar, twist several times and then catch it again. The queen of the uneven bars since 1996 is a Russian woman, Korkhina (sp??), but her reign ended last night when she failed to catch the bar after a release move and fell flat on the floor. She got up and dusted herself off and finished the routine, but I think it's like shooting a miss in a match - you don't recover from it.

The mens rings was amazing - for two reasons. The unbelievable control and strength that the men have and that one of them was a Greek. The cheers and shouting started before the men even walked into the stadium. The Greek man went first, which in a judged sport seems to be a risky place to be, but he got enormous marks and as each man finished after him a hush fell on the crowd as they waited to see if their man was still first, and when he was, they erupted into shouts and applause. They were trying to be very polite to all the others, but they were so excited it was pretty hard. Finally, in the end when it was known that he had won the gold, bedlam reigned with shouting, whistling, cheering, clapping and singing. It didn't stop until the national anthem was played and then started again after it was over. We didn't think it would ever stop. It was really fun to be there.

Jonathan left Oaka and went back to the the apartment that his partner, Margaret, has with his friends. They are leaving tomorrow morning and will leave for the airport at about 4:30 am and then Jon will return to the village.

I had an adventure trying to find the bus to come back to the village. Everyone you ask gives you a different set of directions, but eventually, I found it and made myself a little map so I could find it again. On the bus I sat with a girl from Ireland who had competed in a race in Athletics. She was disappointed with her results and started to talk and just kept right on going - I think she'd still be talking if we hadn't arrived at the village. I guess she was just looking for a friendly ear. She had an appendicitis attack three weeks ago that was cleared up with antibiotics which had really put a dent in her preparation, but despite that she was still hoping for a better result than she got. Typical of athletes the world over.

I stopped in the dining hall for something to eat and Marie-Pier joined

me. She was back from her party.

Then she put some finishing touches on her packing and we went to sleep about 1:30am.

August 23rd

Marie-Pier leaves today and by tomorrow she will be back at school. We shall certainly miss her.

The alarms went off at 3:45. By the time we convinced ourselves to get out of bed, Jonathan had arrived. Marie-Pier came back into our room and told me to listen. Then I could hear the whine of the wind. We went and looked outside at the patio - the wind was howling. The four canopies that were tied together and tied down to various lamp posts were totally destroyed. And sitting next to the mangled mess were four athletes - who obviously did nothing to try and save the canopies. I was really ticked off.

Jon and I went out and took the canopy material off the frames. As soon as we started to do that, the four athletes got up and left. I decided not to say anything because I would have torn a huge strip off them - but I probably should have because they deserved it.

After we had finished Jon told me about his adventure getting back to the village this morning after Margaret and his other guests had left. He asked the cab driver to take him to the Olympic Village. The cab driver took him to the Media Village. Jon didn't know where he was and he didn't even know that there was a media village. In fact, the media village is bigger than the athletes village because there are almost double the number of media here than athletes. The athletes village has about 11,700 people staying in it. There are 21,500 media at these games. Staggering isn't it? In any event, Jon was able to convince the taxi to take him to the Athletes Village. He said he was really surprised at the number of people returning to the village at this hour - he sure wasn't the only one.

We got all Marie-Pier's luggage out on the street and then Kristen from the COC came along in the electric golf cart, we piled it in the back and Marie-Pier was off to the airport and home and her own bed - she was really looking forward to that. She has not been at home since the middle of July. We have strict instructions and a shirt to trade with an athlete from France.

I was back in bed again by 5:15 am. I was up again at 7:15 for the team leaders meeting at 7:30 am. Amazingly most of the wind was gone - certainly it was still breezy but nothing like it was a few hours earlier. At the team leaders meeting, all the details for leaving were discussed. Jon and I and almost everyone else will be leaving on August 30th. This will be the busiest day in the history of the Athens airport. Not only will the airport process more passengers than ever before, but more planes will land and take off than ever before in one 24 hour period.

Most of the athletes at the Olympic Village will be checked in for their flights here in village. We will give our tickets in tomorrow in an unsealed envelope which includes the number of bags we will have and the tickets and our boarding pass will come back in a sealed envelope the day before we leave. We then have to present the still sealed envelope, our passports and our luggage to the airline people in the Village the day before our flight. The baggage is tagged and then

taken away in locked vehicles for our flights the next day. We cross our fingers, our toes our eyes, say a loud prayer to the airline baggage gods that it will turn up in our home cities when we arrive there on August 30th. This will mean we can go to the airport and straight to the departure gates and only have leave here about 2.5 hours before our flight. If you have to check in at the airport on August 30th, it is recommended to be there a minimum of six hours before flight time. This I can believe. In Sydney in 2000 the Canadian Olympic Committee did this kind of advance checkin - which was pretty painful at the time, but when we got to the airport and saw the crowds waiting for all the flights, we were sure happy to take the pain the day before in the village.

I went back to sleep at 9:15 and got again at 11:15 and then rushed off to diving. Jon gave me two tickets to diving but when I asked at the team leaders meeting if someone wanted to go, no one did, so I traded the extra diving ticket for one to athletics that night for Jon. I arrived at the diving venue in Oaka right on time, but did notice that the wonderful art work I tried to describe yesterday, was not moving, it was still - probably because of the wind.

The diving was the first round of preliminaries for the mens 3 meter springboard. There are 32 men entered and the top 18 will proceed to the semi-finals and then 8 will compete in the finals. All 32 men today will do six dives. The great Canadian diver, Alexander Despatie was 7th after his first dive, 3rd and his second dive and 1st after his 3rd dive where he stayed for the rest of the day. It was easy to see that he was a better diver than the others. Phillipe Comtois, also from Canada, started out in 16th place, then slipped to 21st place, moved back up to 17th place then to 13th and finished the afternoon in 12th place. I felt sorry for an American diver - obviously he must be good to be in the 32 who have made it to the Olympics, but he really needs a good sport psychologist. He was just awful - everyone groaned for every dive. He fell out of one of the dives totally not completing any element of it and it was ruled a failed dive and he scored 0 points from every judge. On his last dive he jumped up to straight from the diving board and when he started to rotate in the pike position, he hit his feet on the board as he went by. Obviously, he finished in 32nd place. But it was a fun and interesting afternoon.

I hustled back to the village, met Jon at the main dining hall and gave him the ticket for athletics and off he went. I enjoyed doing nothing, read a bit, did one of these stories and watched some of the athletics on TV which was still going on when I left and went to be bed at 12:30 pm.

August 24th

The alarms went off this morning but they didn't do much good - I apparently shut them all off and slept on missing the 7:30am meeting. I wasn't up until 10:30 am - just a tad late!!

I spent the rest of the day doing the paper work to get ready for leaving, helped in Team Leader Services to get the COC books divided up by team and ready for distribution and then started work on updating the FCA ranking list with all the scores from the Canadian Championships. I was having trouble paying attention to entering scores and decided to go back to the apartment to finish the work - that was a poor decision - after working for about an hour, I heard yells and rushed back to see what had happened - I missed seeing the cyclist Muenzer win a gold medal. I had watched the first race in which she lost to the Australian but obviously, I should have stayed....

Two days ago David Ford from white water canoeing moved into Jonathan's room and Denise Gariepy of the COC has also moved in, so our apartment is full again.

We had tickets in the evening for the preliminaries for duet synchronized swimming. There were 24 pairs and even for our totally untrained eyes it was easy to pick out those in the top 8 - 10 pairs compared with the pairs that placed lower. We sure couldn't rank the top ones but there was quite a difference between them and the ones that came behind them.

August 25th

I managed to get up this morning and make the required meetings - again most of the talk was about the process for leaving. There was also talk about the little earthquake that occurred yesterday. We certainly didn't feel anything but apparently Greece is quite prone to earthquakes.

The sailing team leader talked about his sailer who was crashed into before the start of his race yesterday morning, his sail torn and hole put in his boat. He managed to sail the race anyway, placing last. He went into the race in second place. But under sailing rules since he was not at fault and still actually sailed the race, he is given the average points from his previous races. He was second before this mishap and adding his average from his previous races, he is apparently still in second place. The boat crew worked all night to repair the boat and when he talked them to them at 7 this morning they had just finished stepping the mast and he felt he would be ready to race again this afternoon.

When the meeting was over, I did some emails etc. and then had to dig through the ice packets in the freezer to find the packets for archery's cooling vests. They are frozen so thoroughly and are so cold that I could only dig for a minute or so and then I had to stop and thaw out my fingers. I have to get them thawed out, packed and ready to ship with the cargo back to Canada. I put them in a towel and laid

them out the balcony to thaw and dry off.

Then I hopped on the bus and went and picked up my laundry. The laundry goes into a mesh bag and gets washed in the bag but doesn't get dried. I guess they are worried about shrinking things if they are dried in a dryer. We all have a nice clothes rack which lives on the balcony and we hang it all out to dry. Then I headed to the main dining hall for breakfast and then to the international zone where I booked a tour of Athens for myself for the morning of August 26th. Then I got on the bus and went to Oaka to the big store at that site to get a poster of the opening ceremonies. When we were there for the synchronized swimming we had seen the sample but they were sold out and said that they would have more of them there this morning. However, when I got there, they would not let me onto the site because I didn't have a ticket even though I have full accreditation. We had actually wondered about this and tried it when we went synchronized swimming the night before by not showing our sychro tickets and there was no problem, but there was today. So I went to the accreditation centre for the venue and by begging a bit and using several good pins and they gave me a temporary pass and thank goodness that the posters were there. I wouldn't want to have to do this again!

In the afternoon, I did some computer work and read for a while and watched some Olympics on TV. I went early for supper and screwed up all my courage and had goat for supper. I have seen it offered several times before but didn't have the courage to try it. It wasn't bad.

Tonight the COC and Petro Canada is hosting a reception for coaches, so we all met in the courtyard at 7:30, walked to the north gate of the village and went to Canada Olympic House in a COC van. Canada Olympic House is a place in Athens where parents, friends and Canadians can come together to celebrate the games and meet with Athletes. It is located in the Plaka district of Athens. It took us about 25 minutes to get to the Plaka district and then another 40 minutes to get through the traffic to Canada Olympic House. The party took place on the roof with an unparalleled view of the Acropolis which its lite up at night. In fact, it almost doesn't look real - it looks like the backdrop to a movie or something. There were a few speeches about how important coaches are etc. and then we received a nice gift of a leather portfolio with the COC logo stamped into the leather on the front. It was a very pleasant evening.

I was back at the village at about 11:30, just in time to meet Jonathan who was on his way out to meet the Puerto Rican synchronized swimming team.

August 26th

I was up 6:00am, met Jonathan coming in when I left for breakfast about 6:50 and onto the X.25 bus to the Metro. The Metro is the new Athens subway which is awesome. It was completed in 2000 - prior to that there were just two trains for public transport. The Metro is modern and spotlessly clean. I rode the Metro to Syntagma square and then had to ask for help to find the side street and the bus for my tour.

We saw the parliament buildings, which are in the old royal palace. In fact we had driven past this building the whole week of archery without knowing what it was, but it's imposing enough that we knew it had to be something. Then we drove past the National Gardens and the University. Of course, we visited Panathinaiko stadium, now back to its original state with not a hint that the archery competition was held there. From there we went to the Temple of Zeus and Hadrian's Gate. Both these are behind the Ethnikos practice stadium and we had walked past them everytime we walked to the Plaka for lunch in the early days of the archery competition. From there we went to the Acropolis, which is a long climb on rough ground for me with my bum ankles but it was certainly worth it. It's an amazing structure which is undergoing a restoration which will be finished about 2008 and should restore the north side of the Parthenon to the way it looked about the 4th century. They are using pieces that were buried after it was ransacked centuries ago and recently discovered. The view of Athens is amazing and the building is awesome. It's hard to believe that something can survive for such an enormous amount of time.

We were returned to Syntagma Square which has been rebuilt for the Olympics and is a hot spot at night and is solid with people. I then walked slowly down Mitropolis Street to Canada Olympic House where I rested my ankles for while watching diving on TV and reading the Globe and Mail. I left and then walked slowly through some of the streets of the Plaka. They go in all directions, are very narrow with all kinds of shops on both sides as well as cafes and restaurants. The main kind of store - at least on the streets I was on - are jewelry stores. I examined the window of every jewelry store and since I was by myself, I didn't have to worry about slowing down other people. It was great. After I'd walked as much as I could, I stopped at a little cafe, had a lemonade and greek coffee - which should keep me awake for a week! Then the waiter came and asked if I would like some "sweets". He brought a plate with 5 different kinds of sweets - they were all terrific. I ate them all!

When I arrived back at Syntagma Square there was a changing of the guard ceremony at the Parliament building. The costumes of the guards are most unusual - it almost looks like a skirt. They have big pom poms on the toes of their shoes and the entire uniform looked incredibly hot. It is apparently a great honour to be selected to be a guard. As they moved during the ceremony, they lift each leg slowly, then extend it forward until it's straight out at waist height and then slowly put it down. A slow process indeed and I bet they have great lower abs and quads! In between the changing ceremony, they are required to stand absolutely still - nothing can move. Every 15 minutes they can stretch and they are changed every hour.

Then I was back on the bus and Metro and back to the village. I met some pin traders in the subway and stopped and traded some good pins. Actually, I haven't done a very good job trading pins on this trip - I've used most of the pins to thank people or to negotiate to get stuff.

Lamb again for dinner tonight - yum.

August 27th

The morning was taken up with the usual - 7:30 team leaders meeting - discussion again about the process for departure.

I spent the morning doing various chores relating to leaving. I got the cooling vests packed up, the box labeled and delivered to the building where COC is storing their cargo for shipping by sea back to Canada. I'll see them again in about 6 - 8 weeks. Then took my laundry in - sounds simple but you have to take the bus to the laundry place, then stand in line to hand it in and then take the bus back. Then I picked up our order for team clothing - what is left over is put on sale and team members have an opportunity to buy it at good prices. Of course, there are lots of sizes that are missing - such as the red T-shirt with Canada written on the front in Greek is only available in triple X large. Even that's too big for me!! Then I had to get our plane tickets, get them photocopied, decide how many bags each of us will have, put them in the special envelope and hand them into the correct place. They will come back to us on August 29th with the envelope sealed. We will "check in" with our luggage and passports, they will open the envelope and put our baggage tags on and take the luggage with them to the airport. So we have to put everything we need for the closing ceremonies and traveling into our hand baggage. The airline people will come to our area in the village and we'll "check in" here.

Then, I started to tackle the dreaded packing task. I have an extra bag which I planned to ship back with the COC cargo, so I have to decide what I don't need for 6 to 8 weeks. It will include lots of the things that I have received here - like some uniform clothing, the COC back pack and other "stuff". Then I started on the second bag with stuff that I want at home but wouldn't be using here in the next few days. And that's as far as I got.

I saw Jonathan briefly very early this morning (like 1 am) - he was at the beach yesterday with the Puerto Rican synchronized swimming team. He was working on getting rid of his archery tan. We met again in the afternoon for about an hour.

There are guys working today in our yard with large tools and digging out the weeds and we have noticed them working in other areas in the Village too. I guess they're going to get the landscaping done. It will look nice for the Paralympic Games in three weeks.

About 4pm I headed over to the library to pick up the CD's we had requested at the beginning of the archery tournament so that we would have a copy of all the video that was taken every day during the competition. However, when I got there, they didn't have it. In fact, they told me that they are only doing this for team sports.....not individual sports, despite what it says in the documentation. I persuaded them (a mega pin deal) to put specific matches onto videotape for me and they agreed. As well, I ordered the CD's from the team rounds since that now fits their criteria. This is too bad, I was hoping to have a mother load of really good video of everyone. It would have been great for the FCA coaching library. Having persuaded them to put some of it on videotape, I then had to hustle over to the

music store in the international zone to buy both video tapes and CD's because we also didn't know (because they didn't say) that we had to supply our own CD's and videotape.

I thought I would just make a quick stop to pick up the CD's with the video, not have to negotiate to try and get them to do it. So I didn't have anything to eat and was starved and late for the finals of Synchronized Swimming - one of my favourite sports. Not a happy camper. So I did something I never do - I went to McDonalds and got some fries, McNuggets and a yoghurt with fruit to go. I had to hide the McNuggets in my shoulder bag, put the yoghurt in my pocket and I ate the fries as I walked as quickly as I am able to get on the bus. (I had to hide the food because you're not allowed to eat on the bus!) Sure enough the bus left just as I walked up to the bus stop! I eventually made it to Synchro but missed the Japanese team swim and since they placed second, they would have been good to see.

The Russians won the competition and it wasn't hard to see why. They did the most amazing array of lifts I've ever seen. In case you don't know, there are 8 swimmers on the team. They are not allowed to touch the bottom of the pool and a camera checks that they don't. Somehow or other, they are able to lift a girl right out of the water and in some cases hold her there. In one of the Russian lifts, a girl came out of the water in a hand stand, standing on the hands of another swimmer, then she pushed off with her hands and flew into the water feet first. I know everyone thinks this is a sissy sport, but these are some of the strongest and fittest women in the games.

After the swimming was over, I met Jon briefly, just long enough to find out that he was off with Vic Wunderle to another party.

On the way to the bus, I went to the souvenir store and bought myself a nice polo shirt with the Athens logo on it, and went back to the village. I met Penny, the lady who runs Team Leader services and we had some dinner. Penny is a Sport Consultant with the Province of Alberta and has just recently moved from BC, so we had a long talk about what else sport - aren't you surprised??

August 28th

My alarm went off at 5:15 am. As soon as it went off, I could hear the wind howling again. Walking to breakfast, it was sure blowing hard, all the garbage cans are all over the streets and the bus has to keep stopping to move them out of the way....

Today, I am going on a day cruise to two Greek islands and I have to be downtown at the Grande Bretagne Hotel at 7:15 to get the bus that will take us to Piraeus and the ship. Everything worked well and I was on time! But, I did hope that it's not this windy out on the ocean.

We boarded the ship at 8:30 and were on our way and it was breezy, but not super windy like it was before the sun came up. As we were leaving the harbour, we sailed right past the new Queen Mary 2 parked in the harbour with enormous black buoys around it so other boats can't approach it - a new and very luxurious cruise ship. Normally, this cruise goes to three islands in a day, however, for some reason today,

we will only be going to two.

We traveled for about 2.5 hours and docked in the little, tiny harbour on the island of Hydra. We were given about 2 hours to explore the town. In the meantime our ship had to depart, otherwise none of the other smaller boats (some not small at all!) could not arrive or leave the harbour. The street along the harbour was solid with shops with all the touristy kind of things you would expect and again more jewelry shops.

I headed up the nearest street away from the shops. Street is perhaps a generous term. It was about a car width wide but in the entire time I were there I never saw a car, but I did see lots of every size, shape and kind of motor scooter. It was back behind the the harbour that I found what my picture of a Greek Island would be like. Everything was whitewashed pure white and the houses are "piled" on top of each other as they go up the hill. The doors are painted in strong contrasting colours. It was calm and quiet with doors that opened into little cafes that were shaded with olive trees or with grape vines. The "streets" were winding and narrow. I went up steps cautiously thinking I would be walking into someone's house and often found their tiny yard, immaculately kept with pots of brilliant flowers contrasting with the white of the walls and buildings. The walk ways just kept going, twisting and turning. It was a great two hours.

When we boarded the ship, they directed us in two different directions, based on the colour of the boarding card we had, into two dining rooms where we were served lunch along with a bottle of red and a bottle of white for each table. Both the wines were Greek - the white was great, but the red.....well.....it wasn't so great. Since I always have red at home, I enjoyed the white along with the roast lamb for lunch and fabulous little sticky sweet cakes for desert. At our table there was a man from Hawaii, a man from Belfast, Ireland but who has lived for the last five years in Cyprus, a couple from California and a couple from Grenada so it was a pretty cosmopolitan group. They were all in Athens for the Olympics. In fact the man from Grenada was the president of the Grenada Olympic Committee.

By the time lunch was finished, we were arriving at the next island, The town and harbour was much bigger and the harbour was filled with enormous yacht type boats that had to be \$100K and up. Again the area by the harbour was all touristy so I took off inland right away. This was also a better choice than the harbour, but everything is bigger and not as quiet and shaded as the town on the first island. However, way back I did find a tiny jewelry store with two people in the store making the gold jewelry. The women was the artist and did the designing and there was a goldsmith doing the work. There was a wonderful aquamarine necklace, quite big and junky for 7,000 Euros that was absolutely wonderful and I even tried it on. I would be great for the next time I have to visit the Queen. And I did buy a small pair the gold ear rings here with the famous Greek key design. They were hand made, but not unique so that was fun. Her prices were the first ones that were sort of in line with what I would expect to pay for gold ear rings in Canada.

Then we cruised back to Athens arriving about 5 pm, back on the bus and

subway to the village. There was goat again for supper, but it wasn't my selection but I did it once!

Of course, everyone here thinks that the whole world out there revolves around us but in fact there are lots of things happening out there that are also quite important. Today, I am missing one of them. My niece Franny Jewett is getting married today. I was thinking of her often on my cruise and what she would be doing as she progressed through this important day. In the evening, I text messaged with my son David to make sure his cell phone would work where the wedding would be in the country. It worked fine. Then I worked on packing and talking with everyone waiting for his text message telling me to call during the reception. It was about 3 am here when the message arrived, but I talked her with no problem and they had rigged something up so the call from the Olympic Village was broadcast to the people at the reception. It was pretty neat and at least I was there in a tiny way.

The Village is also getting noisier as most people are finished competing and the parties are getting going. Jon and Dave were in and out throughout the evening while they decided what parties to go to - the one at Heinekin House or the one Sports Illustrated was throwing - these were tough decisions that received considerable thought.

I went to the team leaders lounge and found a party going there, but my stamina is poor and I went to bed at about 4am!

You may not get the last two days of this story until we are at home. Tomorrow the network will be taken down and there's the closing ceremonies. So you might have to wait until Sept 1st or 2nd for the end of this adventure.