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# Lifetimes

Return to your senses  
Train your imagination  
Pamper your palate

Week of March 18-24, 1998

Patuxent Publishing's weekly entertainment and lifestyle guide

## Guide helps 'amateurs' get on the road

BY JILL YESKO

Chronic globetrotters may be different than other people, says Baltimore travel writer and publisher **Jeannette Belliveau**. She cites a recent article about Israeli scientists having identified a gene linked to "exploring tendencies."

Whatever the cause, Belliveau can recall her countless experiences backpacking through Europe and Asia — and that was long before beginning

what she calls her "serious" adventures.

"We roam the globe partly out of simple curiosity, or sometimes because we've just plain got a bad case of ants in the pants," concedes Belliveau, 43, whose first book, "An Amateur's Guide to the Planet: Twelve Adventure Journeys and Lessons for the Contemporary Traveler" (Beau Monde Press), chronicles her six continents' worth of peripa-

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tetic globe trotting.

The book, which is used in several college geography courses, covers subjects ranging from how to avoid panic attacks when climbing vertigo-inducing temples in Guatemala to tips on lemur watching in Madagascar.

Belliveau says her love of the remote and exotic began as a teenager growing up in post-Eisenhower era Rockville. The peppy former Washington Post and Baltimore Sun editor used to spend her weekends exploring the woodlands of Montgomery County instead of hanging out with classmates at local malls.

In 1985, with mouth-watering visions of Peking Duck, flickering lanterns, lacquered pagodas and without speaking a word of Mandarin, Belliveau undertook what she laughingly recalls as a "voluntary and senseless act" — a solo trip deep into the heart of China.

The grueling adventure included a claustrophobic, 32-hour train ride where Belliveau says passengers were so closely packed into compartments that she was unable to sit down for the duration of the journey.

"People can't imagine the kind of crowding that occurs on Chinese trains," she says. "It's like telling 18 people to stand in a corner and then have people walk over them with hot tea and propaganda. It's something Americans have no conception of."

Belliveau says the trip became the catalyst for her "Amateur's Guide." "I wanted to write a book that went beyond the 'go here, see this' directive of standard guidebooks."

In place of lists of cheap hotels or what kinds of knickknacks to buy, her guide offers up a series of anecdotes, lessons, maps, graphs and even jokes aimed at presenting life lessons for people whose

## **A batik from Java adorns the Fells Point home of author Jeannette Belliveau.**

idea of adventure extends beyond surfing the Discovery Channel.

### **Belliveau's agenda**

"I'd like to see people get out and explore," the author says, "even if it's just their own neighborhood. If you're paying attention, Fells Point is as rich and diverse a place as any corner of Africa or Asia."

Recently invited to address the prestigious Century Club in New York City — a group whose members who have visited 100 countries — Belliveau said she has no desire to travel just for the sake of accumulating more stamps in her already well-worn passport.

In fact, Belliveau says she's happy to hole up these days with her husband Lamont and beloved Shetland sheep dog, Beau (after whom her publishing company Beau Monde Press is named). She's also hard at work on her next project, a compendium of essays about women's romantic adventures on the road.

"Adventure traveling gives you the chance to step out of your everyday persona," Belliveau says.

But even on the most exotic trip, Belliveau admits that adventure sometimes takes a back seat to more practical matters. "There are some days that you see lemurs," she chuckles philosophically, "and some days that you wash your dirty socks in the sink."

*Jeannette Belliveau will read from her book and present slides of her travels at the Ellicott City branch of Barnes & Noble (4300 Montgomery Road, 410-203-9001) April 4 at 2 p.m.*

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