

visiting granddaughter

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Last Wednesday I drove down to Boston and on Thursday collected my granddaughter and her best friend, both 13, who had flown in from Germany, and on Friday brought them back to Maine. Fortunately the weather has been fabulous here and they've spent time at the beach, and had a boat ride on the lake with thier uncle, aunt, and two cousins. In the evening we've watched movies...last night, "Aquamarine"...and done jigsaw puzzles, and just hung out.

Today my German daughter-in-law arrives...she has been in New York....and probably some serious shopping will have to take place, since the weak dollar against the Euro means that things are a great bargain here for her, even if it is a nuisance schlepping stuff home.

Luckily teenagers sleep late in the morning, which means that I do have these early hours—it is 6:20 AM as I write this—at my computer, and today I can mail off the completed Gooney Bird manuscript (now titled "Gooney Bird is So Absurd") and then turn my attention to the stage adaptation of "Gossamer" before I head to Milwaukee August 12th to work on it with the theater director there.

I stopped in yesterday at our wonderful Bridgton Books, the local bookstore, and when my

friend Perri, who works there, commented that she was weary...and I asked why...she said, "Have you been living under a ROCK?" Of course: Harry Potter. In this tiny town they had had 500+ people lined up at midnight the night before. Even as we talked, Perri was fielding phone calls from people wondering if she had a copy available for them. Nadine and Annika, when I mentioned it, just shrugged. They aren't HP fans. Cornelia Funke...yes. They would have stood in line at midnight for one of her books.

It is interesting to see the cultural differences that fascinate the girls. At the supermarket here, they were astounded that someone put our groceries into bags. In their European village, you take your own shopping bag to the store (I often give my daughter-in-law the canvas tote bags from various conferences or libraries)

And they are very impressed with the libraries here. The one in this town is - for a small town - an impressive building; but I showed them, also, the tiny libraries in the nearby villages of Harrison and Waterford and Naples (where the library is housed in an old house, and has lovely hanging plants on the porch) To go to a library where she lives, my granddaughter explained, one would go to the nearest city, and then the library itself would be huge and austere and unwelcoming. Here, she loves the bright colors, the cheerful people..the computers ("Free? People don't have to pay?"), the posters of children's programs ("Every town in America has this?")

Today we have an excursion to the dump...or, as we call it now, the "Transfer Station"...and the kids will get to see recycling in action. Nothing like that where my granddaughter lives.

(But she gets free medical care, and later, almost-free University education)



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