

POSTCARDS HOME

Adventures Begin with the First Step™

by W.D. Mast



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My sincere appreciation to my wonderful family and great friends for keeping and then returning my journeys' chronicled postcards. Without this treasured support system, this book would not be possible.

DEDICATION

A deserted beach on La Digue
SEYCHELLES

07-01-91

Dear Grandma + Gus

Hi! from sunny Seychelles Island!
Here's another postcard for your growing
collection. So, travel with me again.

Just a note to tell you how much I
enjoyed my last visit to see you. I was
so surprised to take "your journey
around the world" with me at your
house. That special present, when
Gus took those sheets of plywood and
taped your postcards onto them, showing
all those pictures. Then you put them
along your hallway. So, we could
travel 'around the world' together. Wow!

That was indeed special. It amazed me
to see my travels visually displayed in the
postcard I had sent over the years.
Thank you for our trip down memory lane.
Thanks for sharing. As always,
Love, Bill

SEYCHELLES



ZIL ELWANNYEN SESEL
SEYCHELLES



Mr. + Mrs Gus

Bloomington, Illinois

USA

61701

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PREFACE

Why postcards? I write and send postcards to memorialize the trails I travel, the world I journal and the images I capture. I am a dreamer, restless by nature, and a wanderer at heart. I have traveled the Earth, its places and people, over and over and I have found the visual symbolism from postcards to be a perfect way to communicate my sentiments and thoughts to my loved ones. I enjoy affixing a note and stamp on each postcard and sending the message and picture from one place to another.

Postcards Home, Adventures Begin with the First Step represents the central focus of my dream. Postcards I once sent now return to forever validate a place and point in time. Those who received the hundreds of postcards I have sent over the past 30 years, unbeknownst to me, kept many of those cards. Now over 410 of those same cards have been returned to me. My journey returns as vivid memories flash through my mind. Reading the scribbled notes and viewing the pictures allows me to relive all those adventures. Validation is sweet. Storylines go beyond the single image reflected on any given postcard. So the story goes. This book is meant to share with the reader my true experiences through the postcards I wrote and sent and through my photographs taken contemporaneously along the way. Enjoy the stories; feel the adventures.

~ W.D. Mast
Mesa, Arizona

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ADVENTURES BEGIN WITH THE FIRST STEP™

A PICTURE OF THE WORLD ~ Originally from Illinois, W.D. Mast is a born dreamer whose spirited sense of adventure has led him around the world many times. Mast, an Eagle Scout and Veteran, worked, lived and traveled exclusively overseas from 1977 through 1992, and continues to travel extensively. Mast was in Iran during the evacuation in 1979, and in Saudi Arabia during the Gulf War in 1990. From Mast's culturally diverse travels, he has captured vivid and characteristic images from 126 countries.

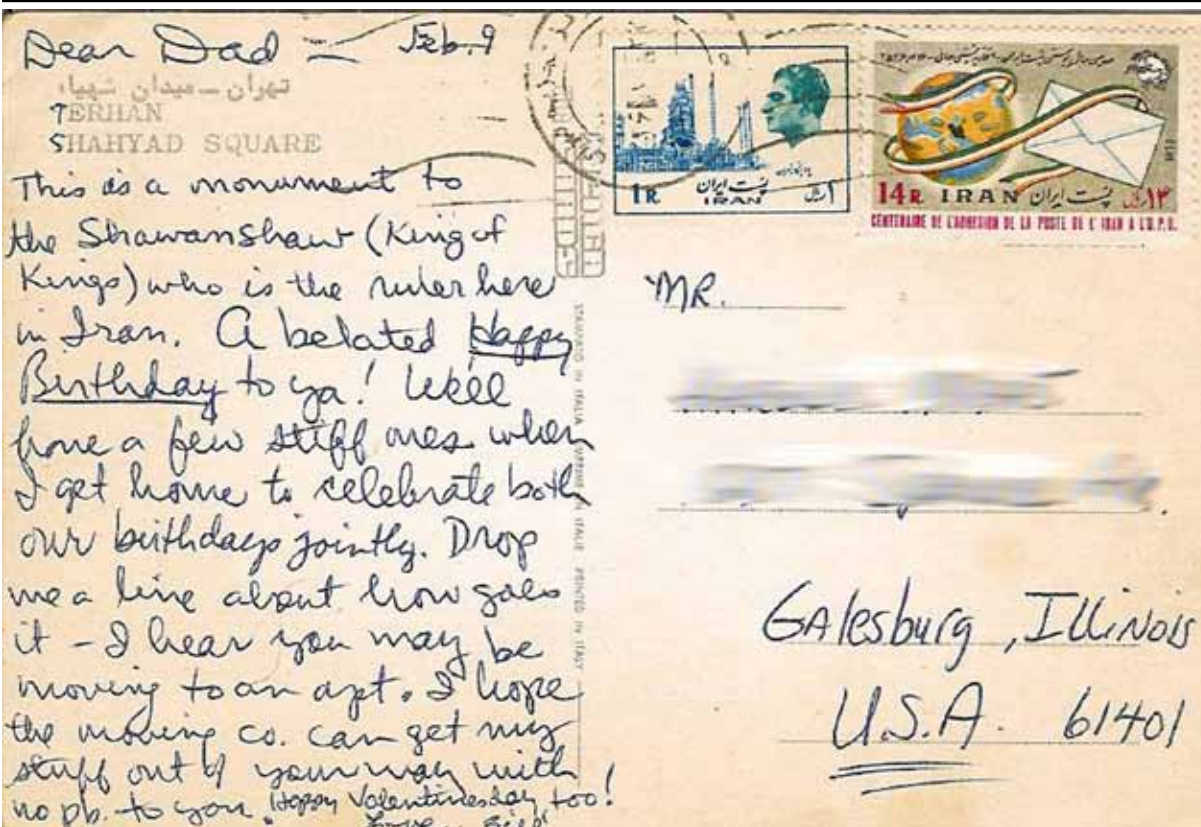
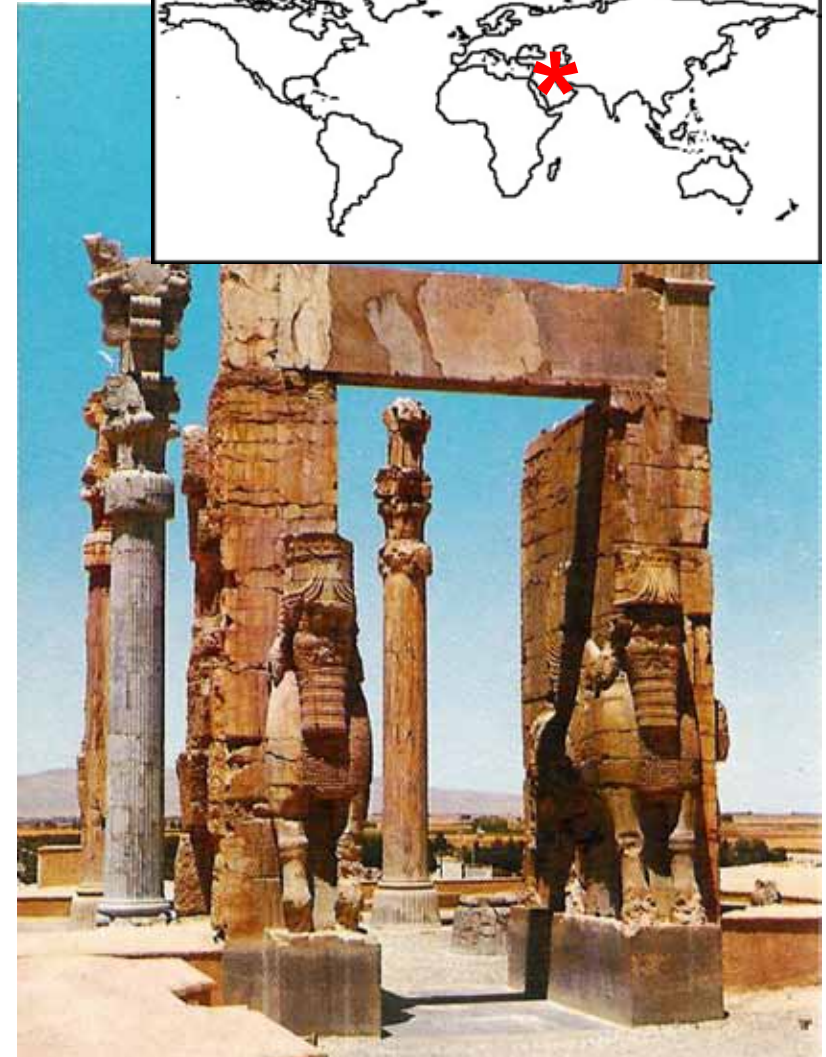
MOST TRAVELED PHOTOGRAPHER ~ Mast has earned this title with a long list of adventures, including skiing off the Swiss Alps and para-sailing 7000 feet to the village below; bungee jumping off a 120 foot bridge in Queenstown, New Zealand; being chased from a Kenyan tent camp by a charging elephant; finding himself confronted, eye to eye, with a white rhino and her young calf while on an Zambian walking safari; taking the longest train journey ~ 9300 miles, from London to Hong Kong in 43 days; traveling by train across Canada and the USA over 10,000 miles; camping in a 4x4 vehicle for four months through 32 national parks and covering 25,000 miles across North America.

IMAGE MAKER ~ As a result of Mast's many travels, he has produced over 120,000 kodachrome slides. From selected worldwide images, he has created fine art limited editions for collectors and commercial use. Additionally, Mast's photographic artworks have been presented at the best juried shows/festivals in Arizona, where he now lives. His photography has appeared in magazines and books, nationwide. To date, Mast has produced nine photography books highlight international and southwest photography. Mast's custom enlargements of his real of-the-moment, untouched photography have been featured in Arizona galleries and statewide as distinctive artwork and home decor.

AUTHOR: Mast-er Travel Portfolio #1 ~ International Travel Portfolio ~ A Continental Sampler
Manhattan Beach We Love ~ Arizona Desert Botanical Garden ~ Manhattan Beach: Home & Garden
Manhattan Beach Book ~ Nature Rules: AZ Sonora Desert Conservancy Trails ~ Desert Botanical Garden, Arizona



POSTCARDS HOME ~ HELLO: JUST SAY "NO" ~ IRAN



HELLO: JUST SAY “NO” ~ IRAN

Arriving on a flight from Afghanistan into Iran’s Mehrabad Airport, I leave by local bus to Tehran. I am a backpacker gone wild around the world. It is November and this is my last stop since leaving the United States in February, thirteen countries later. Reaching the city by public bus, I explore Feradosi Boulevard which is at the time Tehran’s take on Melrose Boulevard in southern California. Shops for the wealthy Iranians and tourists abound. I pass a wonderful Iranian rug shop to which I would later return.

After several hours exploring my city du jour, I reach the main post office. Through my extensive travels, one of my first missions is to buy postcards and airmail stamps, even before I see and explore any major site. Outside the post office, one can find many vendors. I choose from various local scenic spots and take my cards to a nearby bench and begin writing. With ten to twelve cards addressed to family, friends and loved ones around the world, I go inside the post office to buy the correct postage. I select colorful, unusual stamps as many recipients treasure the unique stamps affixed to the pictures communicating “a thousand words.” One learns early on that countries require different currencies and different postage for air mail. After I exchange money to the local currency and purchase local stamps, I dutifully lick each stamp. Sometimes several stamps are required on each card nearly filling it and allowing little space for comment. I deposit the cards into the foreign post box. My recollections and stories are now on their way!



I am now off again exploring Tehran. I decide to call my father in the United States to let him know I have arrived safely in Iran after nearly ten months of travel. I expect he will ask, as usual, "how's the weather?"

I find the Communications Center and walk inside this tall, sprawling government building, mostly dark but with long neon lights illuminating many numbered booths. A travel treat is being able to book a telephone call home. I do this infrequently, usually on birthdays. On this occasion, however, I find it compelling to advise my family that I am alive and well and safe in Tehran. After booking the

telephone call to my father from one of the many call booths, I wait. Sometimes you wait several hours. Finally, I hear the public announcer say, "Mast, number 3." I proceed to Booth 3, pick up a big black receiver and hear the operator say to my father, "Mr. Mast, do you accept this Iran collect call from Bill?" There is a slight delay and a pause. Then I hear the reply from my father. "No." Click. He hung up the telephone. Family can sometimes be full of surprises!

I leave the Communications Center a bit dejected although I know my family knows where I am and that I am alive. I am excited to explore my new environs.



POSTCARDS HOME ~ LAST SUPPER (BBQ, that is!) - MOOOO ~ IRAN

The Empire is cracking. The “Crash of ‘79” is occurring. Revolution is spreading. Since November 1977, I have been working for Bell Helicopter in Iran. I am now at the end of my tour, living in a city southeast of Tehran named Kermanshah. The city which was once home to Ayatollah Khomeini’s family is anticipating his return. It is early January, word is spreading that the end of our employment and our ex-patriot departure is near. We gather into groups and communes for shelter and safety in numbers.

We watch the movement grow. I have received notice it is not safe to stay in my rural apartment. A co-worker suggests that we “have a farewell BBQ before we all leave.” As a US Midwesterner, I quickly agree and exclaim, “good idea, let’s have a party!” We do ... a BBQ in fact.

I walk across the dirt road in front of my apartment for a couple blocks to a main market street in Kermanshah. I pass many small stores selling bread, eggs and other staples while looking for a meat shop. Where’s the beef? Down the row of shops, I come across a meat shop. I see one large Iranian man wielding a meat cleaver behind a table. I fight off the swarm of flies hovering over the shop doorway as I enter. I walk toward the man with cleaver in hand. He looks up and says, “Salam Ali Cum [hello],” and I reply, “Ali Cum Salam [hi back at you!]” in Arabic. He then goes into full Farsi, the native language of Persia/Iran (which I do not speak). I do, however, anticipate that he is most likely asking me what I want to buy. I look puzzled and tell him what I want. “Beef,” I exclaim, whereupon the butcher repeats something in Farsi. “Beef,” I repeat. He again speaks Farsi. A bit exasperated, I say “Moo!” The butcher smiles and retorts, “Baaah!”





Most Iranians eat primarily lamb, so there is no beef at this shop. I thank the butcher and he responds by telling me in Farsi to 'go out, go right, go straight' and ends his instructions with a "Moo!"

I leave the shop and follow the directions in search of beef. After I pass a few more shops on my right, I find another meat shop. I walk through the doorway through a second swarm of flies and am immediately greeted with "Moo!" To my surprise, the first butcher had run to the back door of the neighboring butcher and forewarned him of my arrival and request. I laugh and smile and say thank you. Pointing to the desired meat selections for our BBQ, I request the meat I need, then return home with my hard-earned beef to several waiting friends. We enjoy the cook-out and share stories of this interesting land.

Note: I have learned through such adventures to laugh and allow real life experiences to simply unfold before you, no matter where you are, no matter who you encounter. Most importantly, maintain a positive attitude, and you too will find wonderful experiences as well as wonderful people wherever you travel.