

The Rochester Eccentric

## Rochester native on round-the-world honeymoon

Two young lawyers with a mutual love of travel got married Sept. 2 and embarked on the trip of a lifetime.

Rochester native Shanna Singh, 29, and new husband Derek **Hughey**, 35, of Nashville, Tenn., jettisoned jobs, homes and anything they couldn't fit in four backpacks so they could spend a year traveling the globe. They began with a traditional, luxurious honeymoon in Paris; 17 flights, 12 boats, three trains and 14 buses later, they're currently in China.

At every step of the journey, the couple is blogging and posting pictures at their Web site, [www.oneyearonearth.com](http://www.oneyearonearth.com). Friends and family can keep in touch that way, knowing the travelers are safe and hearing all about their experiences.

"I just am learning so much about other parts of the world," said Pat Singh, Shanna's mother. She said she was initially worried about such a long journey.

"I was happy for their joy but then being the mom, I want them to be safe," she said. "I guess because it's 2007, I feel connected to them, I can still see her. ... So I don't feel I can't communicate with her."

The newlyweds met two years ago in Nashville, where Singh had moved to work as a law clerk. A Rochester Adams High School graduate, she attended the University of Michigan and George Washington Law School and has notched stints as press secretary to U.S. Sen. Debbie Stabenow and as an intern in the Clinton White House. Her parents, Patricia and S. Paul Singh, live in Oakland Township.

**Hughey** was a partner at a Nashville law firm and a homeowner when he met Singh in a Nashville bar. They quickly discovered a mutual love of travel and food.

Via e-mail, the couple said they put a lot of thought into their Web site so they could share their experiences and have a record for posterity.

"We are constantly trying to improve the functionality of the site (now we're trying to figure out the best way to share videos). Overall, Derek has really loved the technical aspect of blogging and is primarily responsible for keeping everything in good working order."

### FAR FROM HOME

As they move from one country to another, the couple provide details about the people, the food and their accommodations, from the luxurious to the Spartan.

From Thailand on Sept. 11, they wrote: "In the last 24 hours, I've learned that while \$9 will buy me a Coke Light in Paris ... \$9 on Ko Phangan will get us a place to stay for the night that is literally 14 steps from the beach."

Early on, they began rating their accommodations by the shower facilities provided. It also didn't take long to adjust to life without regular jobs.

"I could definitely get used to this," the travelers wrote from Thailand on Sept. 16, when their blog entry was titled "The art of doing nothing." In Borneo, **Hughey** had an uncomfortable encounter with a leech. But other than that, they said it's been smooth sailing.

"Surprisingly, we've had virtually no health issues, other than a couple of bouts of travelers' stomach. Notably, that struck Derek most severely in Paris, of all places. (We blame the beef carpaccio.)

"We always drink bottled water but, so far, we haven't avoided ice cubes made from tap water or vegetables washed in it. We quickly grew tired of brushing our teeth with bottled water ... so we've been using tap water for that and haven't suffered any ill effects so far."

Internet access has been readily available, they said.

"More often than not, especially when we're in urban areas, we have Internet access in our hotel room. (Sometimes we get charged for it; sometimes it's free.) Of course, we have our own laptop. ... Getting online would be much harder without one, nearly impossible in some places. ... The towns that are more geared to backpackers ... usually have Internet cafes in great supply, too, and we take advantage of those once in awhile."

'HOW LUCKY WE ARE'

They miss being able to call home on a whim and say homesickness has struck once in awhile. But they have no intention of cutting short their trip.

"The idea of not seeing friends and family for 12 months was fairly overwhelming, particularly because (Shanna) was able to spend a lot of time with everyone in the months leading up to the wedding. Derek, too, yearns for home sometimes, especially when his favorite sports teams are playing or when he hears about all the fun his friends in Nashville are having in our absence. Usually, the feeling subsides after a couple of days and a few reminders about how lucky we are to be on this trip.

"Also, a lot of our loved ones are joining us for different parts of our trip. Knowing we'll soon be seeing familiar faces really helps the homesickness."

Pat Singh said her daughter had been to India, where her father previously lived, four times and was a seasoned traveler before she met **Hughey**. The couple had also traveled to Burma and Bangkok before their marriage.

"Her dad likes to travel and growing up we have taken some family vacations," Pat Singh said.

"She's traveled quite a bit on her own. ... She's a Sagittarian; she loves adventure."

"We think being on the road for so long will really help us to grow both individually and as a couple, and we know it'll allow us to really appreciate our everyday lives in the U.S. once we return to them," the Hugheys wrote.

They also plan to participate in community service work along their journey.

Just two months into the trip, they say it's all starting to blur and they're glad to have the detailed record their Web site provides.

"We love looking back and reminiscing about all the amazing things we've seen. We both love the idea of writing a book."

Pat Singh said she hopes they do.

"Derek's passion in life is to just peruse travel journals. So this would be helpful for so many people traveling," she said.