

GEVEVA TRIP

The germ of the idea started over a year ago when Amador Muriel, former physics instructor of Lisa in UP, whom we got close to in our NY/NJ circles, proposed jokingly to let close friends pull some pocket money into a foreign exchange trade account he was just starting, using his turbulence theory to accelerate the growth. He then said we can earn enough money to fly to Geneva and eat a good French dinner.

Well, it has been a year, and indeed there was enough. Since they again were going to Geneva for three weeks, they invited us to over, if we were amenable to share their studio, and of course we agreed. Amador was going to finalize some incorporation papers, and would be meeting with his “extended family” of former employees, many of whom were his UP students of 15-20 years ago. This indeed would be fun.

Lisa and I decided to stay 6 days, searched the internet, and found very reasonable rates on a NY to Amsterdam to Geneva flight.

We left NY Monday night and arrived in Geneva noon on Tuesday, without much sleep. Amador and Gloria met us at the airport. He had told us to travel light, which made lots of sense, because we then experienced the excellent city’s public transportation system, without having to lug any large load. The next couple of days saw us on buses, trams, “jitneys” and on foot.

Our hosts were also tired from some previous activity so all snoozed, and then got up and had a snack of swiss cheese and cold cuts, before going to the dinner engagement Amador had lined up. This was just around the corner from the Old Town area of Rives.



Here's a shot for Johnny or Lindus at the Schiphol airport and another shot for Bernie as the plane approaches Geneva (obviously, that's the yacht basin on the lake). Can you long-time residents place them?



Night shot of the church near the apartment. It used to be Catholic but was converted to Calvinist during the Reformation. This was the old part of town, an upscale hilly area near the swanky shopping strip near the south end of the lake.

The first impression we got was Geneva is not a tourist city, at least not in the scale of Rome or Paris; for one thing it is much smaller.



Here's a map of the downtown area, captured from Google maps. The red circle is where the apartment is. From there, it's a walk uphill to the center of the picture, where a plaza has a whole slot of small restaurants and coffee shops. The small narrow roads have apartment buildings, the tallest of which is about 5 floors, with the ground floor having small shops. One such shop had coins dating back to the Roman times - for sale, see lower left. One can just imagine the prices. Lower right shows Lisa's and Gloria's reaction to the prices of coats on a "banketa sale". The bigger buildings within the area were government offices, schools, and museums, churches, and a number of small hotels. The green area on the lower left is part of the University of Geneva campus. The roads parallel to the water front is the trendy shopping area of town.





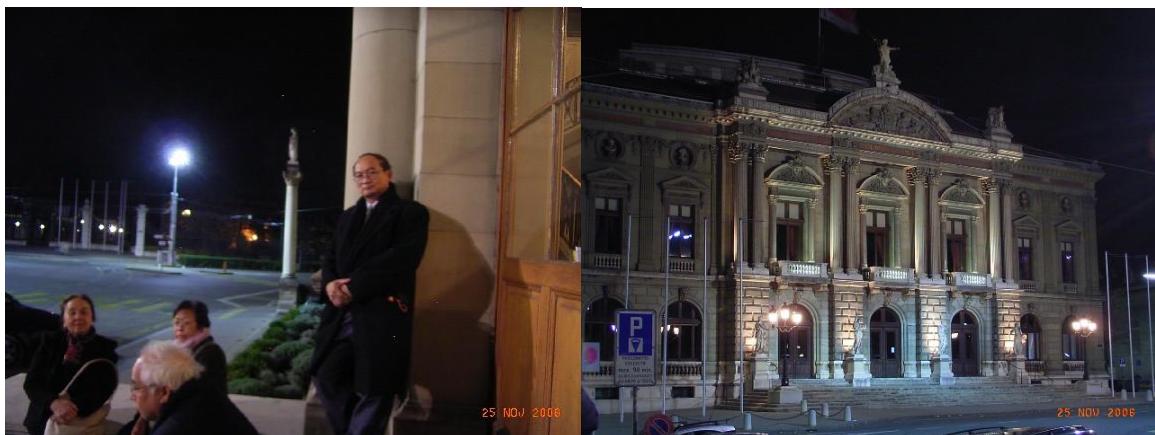
Above picture shows a close-up of the plaque on the wall which commemorates Jose Rizal. Not surprisingly, the building was modernized, located in the trendy part of town, as shown in the lower photo, left. Right photo shows Lisa, Gloria and Amador at one of the bus stops near the apartment. There is a choice of electric bus, railed tram, or regular bus. We managed to go to all various destinations with a maximum of just one transfer. A day's pass is equivalent to about US\$5, good for 24 hours. On weekends, ticket is good for two.



The Rizal Plaque was within walking distance from the apartment, and as we approached the area, I caught an exciting sign, shown above left, but Amador said there is no such district here; obviously that is the real name of the electrical panel. However, Amador pointed out a strip bar, shown above right, beside which was an entrance to a series of apartments. The name Charpak was on the door; he is a Nobel prize winner in Physics, and Amador says he teases the NY based daughter about how her dad still hasn't moved out from his pad right above the strip joint.



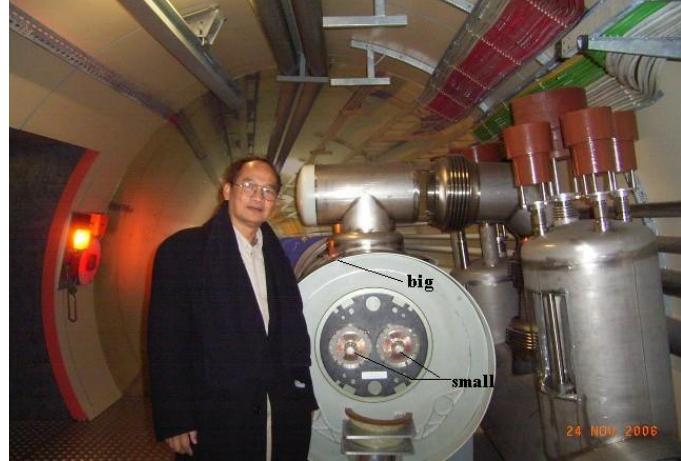
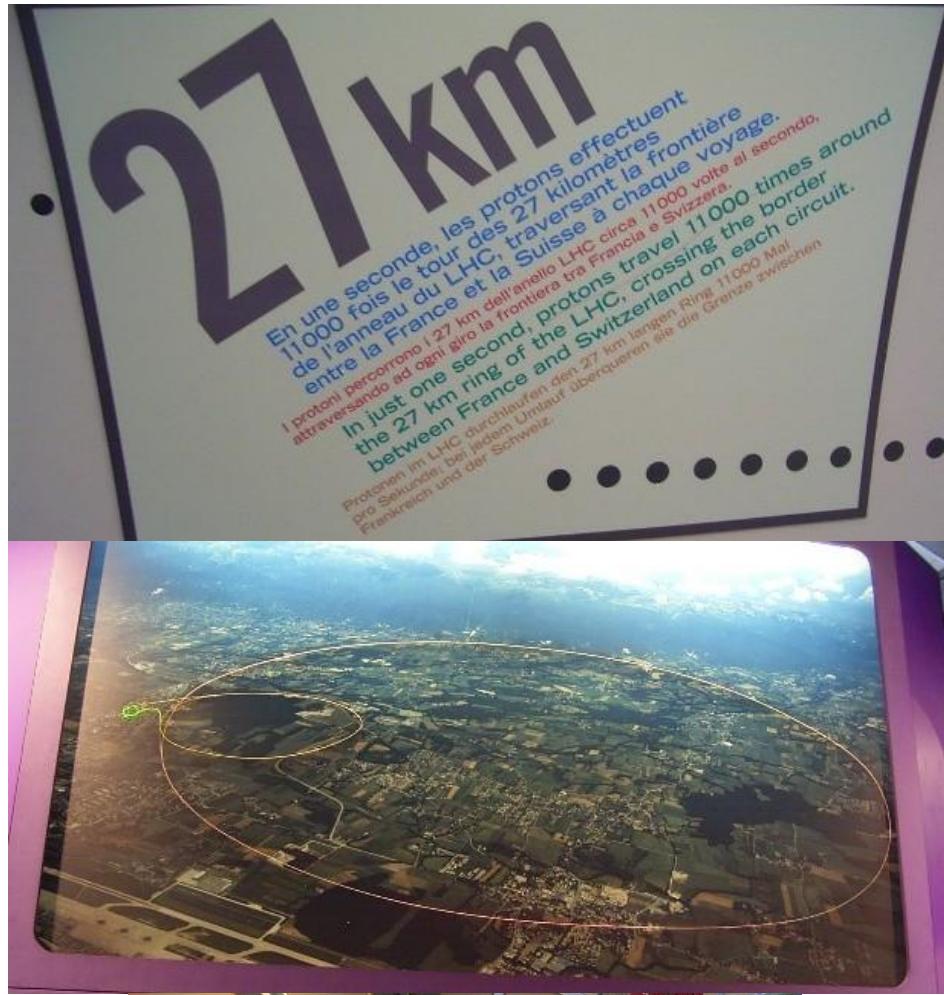
Shown above left is the supposed world's longest bench, overlooking the University of Geneva campus. Photo at right is just inside the campus, where large size chess pieces and chessboards etched on the pavements allows really interesting chess matches.



Waiting for the piano concert to start, and another gov't building across the plaza. We attended a piano concert of some French pianist who played beautifully, but the pieces were all unfamiliar to me, even though the program in French indicated familiar names of Ravel, Borodin, Chopin.



Not all time was spent as tourists. Above left photo shows Lisa and Amador (extreme right) discussing forex trading strategies with three of Amador's Geneva team. They used to be former employees of Amador when he was active 15-20 years ago in that area and he brought them in from Manila. All have since settled in other jobs. In another gathering, we met about 15 others like them. Above right shows me as tourist snapping away at a mirrored ceiling in a plush store.



At the world's largest atom-smasher in CERN, Switzerland. The write-up in top photo summarizes it all. That's me in a mock-up of the 27 km tunnel. The small marked circles are where the protons whiz around, accelerating to almost the speed of light, then in a smaller loop (see middle photo), go counter to each other, then smash head-on. The big marked circle house the vacuum chamber, and accelerating magnets, etc. If Amador still had his work privileges, we probably could have gone into some labs and deeper into the underground areas.