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Cover photo by Diane Osborne K’91. Diane just graduated with a degree in political science and would like to work in Washington D.C. as an activist for environmental or feminist groups.
Welcome to Kalamazoo College's foreign study magazine *The Atlas*

The idea behind this magazine was to give a taste of our foreign study experiences, although the true experience does not readily translate into words. Nevertheless we tried, and despite the trials of a first-time publication, we've succeeded in part! Hopefully, this magazine will become an annual event and tool for students departing for faraway lands.

This year, the Persian Gulf War became the topic of many excellent essays and stories submitted to the magazine. I elected to include all of these submissions because it gives an accurate picture of the Kalamazoo College student's foreign study experience during 1990-91. Also, foreign study can be a time to view one's homeland from a different perspective and come full circle with what it means to be an American. These war submissions capture that aspect of foreign study.

On the lighter side, many submissions capture part of the frustration, the learning, the funny-now-but-it-sure-wasn't-funny-then of foreign study.

Something personal about the author of each piece is added to paint a picture of what kind of "K" student goes on foreign study. The composite picture you wind up with is of an English or Chemistry or Spanish or Economics or Art or Sociology or Math or Theatre major, close to fluent or barely able to speak, dying to get on that plane or frightened out of their mind to be getting on that plane.

Finally, to those of you preparing to jet off to foreign lands, I hope your foreign study is meaningful. Please come back and share your experiences through this magazine!

Thank you to my SIP advisor, Dr. Mick Vande Berg—it is a tribute to the K Plan that I had the opportunity to edit a project of this magnitude for my SIP. Big thanks to the Kalamazoo College Public Relations Department, especially Sandy Fugate and Anne Dixon—it is another tribute to a school of our size that I was allowed full access to their resources. Thanks to everyone who took time out of their busy schedules to submit your articles! Thanks to Ann Mees and Kim Plaxton for helping, and most importantly, thanks and love to my family and friends.

Maria Carlson  
Editor-in-Chief

*Kalamazoo College houses the most extensive foreign study program in the United States, including the oldest and most extensive African Studies program of an American undergraduate institution. During the past twenty-five years and more, fully 85 to 90% of each graduating class has studied abroad. Aside from academic foreign study, a substantial number of students opt to complete their Career Development and Senior Individualized Projects abroad. The S.R. Light Trust has for many years provided financial support to all "K" students who attend one of the College's fifteen foreign-study centers, and the Chamberlain Foundation has in more recent years subsidized the Senior Projects Abroad of a growing number of students.

Foreign study, CD and SIP create the innovative K Plan, a four-year academic plan that has set Kalamazoo College apart from and ahead of other liberal arts colleges for close to thirty years.*
CONFlict AND CELEBRATION
Fear marks historic German reunification

Over the past two years, the fall of Communism, the collapse of the Berlin Wall, and the reunification of East and West Germany have marked profound changes in German history. These sweeping changes, however, brought along predictable problems as four decades of division were swept under the rug in a matter of months. Nathan Eddy and I, studying in the mathematics program in Budapest, Hungary, were fortunate enough to be able to see some of these problems first hand.

When the German government announced that the two Germanies would formally complete their reunification on October 3, Nate and I decided to play hooky for a week and witness the historic event in Berlin. We started by traveling by train to Prague, where we met three Californians who were heading to Berlin and agreed to take us along. As we passed the Czech border on October 1, we were entering a country on its deathbed—in less than 48 hours “East Germany” would be banished to the history books. Driving through Saxony, we noticed Trabants (an East German car popular in Eastern Europe) with altered East German identification stickers. The original stickers read “DDR” (for East Germany), but most of the owners had torn off the “R” and one “D” to leave only one “D”—representing one Deutschland.

When we entered Berlin, our first instinct was to look for the wall. However, so much of it had been removed that we had to have a native point out where sections of it had been. Later, we found sections of the wall which were still standing and managed to pry off a piece of concrete as a souvenir.

As we walked around East Berlin, we learned some of the difficulties of meshing capitalist and socialist systems. Riding the newly completed U-Bahn line which connected East and West Berlin, we learned that a trip from West to East cost two DM, while the same trip from East to West cost only 50 pfennig. The East was only gradually coming to terms with the market prices of the West.

"Viva Deutschland. Just like 1933, it will happen all over again."

The reunification festivities began on the evening of October 2, since the political boundary between the two Germanies would officially and magically dissolve at midnight. Approaching Brandenberg Gate, the center of the festivities, from the east, we were only able to get within a half mile of the gate, because of the mobs of people. Here we got our first taste of the political hostilities brought on by the reunification. Some demonstrators carried old German flags or shouted political slogans. Others often tried to tear down the flags or shout down the demonstrators, and the shouting matches sometimes degenerated into shoving matches. Despite the conflict, however, fireworks erupted over the Brandenberg Gate at midnight, the beer flowed, and the two Germanies were reunited.

The next day was a national holiday, so once again the streets were packed. The conflict from the night before, however, was even more noticeable. As the day wore on we noticed more and more arguments, with an occasional shoving or throwing of beer bottles. The police tried to make their presence felt, but the effort was obviously inadequate for the huge number of people in the streets.

The tension was present throughout the day until it peaked at dusk. Standing at Alexanderplatz in eastern Berlin, my California friends and I watched as a youth walked down the street shouting “Viva Deutschland. Just like 1933, it will happen all over again.” He was followed fifteen minutes later by approximately 100 youths, masked and carrying sticks, who ran down the street smashing shop windows and car windows. One man near me was roughed up, and the windows I had been leaning on were reduced to shards of glass. I was scared out of my wits, and I tried to be as unnoticeable as possible as the wave of rioters passed. The police arrived a few minutes later, but the damage had been done and the rioters had moved to a different part of the city. I was simply thankful that the main target of the youths was property, not people.

Needless to say, I left Berlin frazzled the next day. The conflict and celebration of the previous days left me drained. We had witnessed a momentous event in a city full of momentous events. We stood where Hitler addressed the people. We had walked the “death strip” which formerly divided East and West. We had witnessed history in the reunification. Nevertheless, I at least was glad to return to the relative sanity of Budapest.

Andy Portinga K'92 and Nate Eddy K'92 are both math majors and also talented Kalamazoo athletes. Nate is a 1991 All-American selection in tennis as a part of the National Championship team and Andy will help lead the mens' cross country team to what may be their best year.
SPIRIT OF THE GREEK

Train ride reveals the true nature of the Greek people

My best foreign study story has to be my train ride back to Athens from Kalambaka. I had to see the unbelievable monasteries at Meteora. The monasteries literally "hang in the air" atop finger-like mountains which were carved out by a prehistoric river much in the way the Grand Canyon was formed. Monastic life there continues simple and untouched. Until the last twenty-five years there were no roads to the monasteries and brave pilgrims made their way to the monasteries in perilous baskets, suspended on a single rope, winched slowly to the top. Traditionally the rope was not replaced until it broke—a literal "test of faith."

Anyway, I was persuaded to try the train rather than the bus back to Athens where I lived by a French companion who could only rave about the speed of French trains. For the rest of his life he can now complain about the slowness of Greek trains. The first small train we boarded was right out of an old Western movie, but this connecting ride lasted only thirty minutes. If only things had improved. At the third station—a totally isolated country station—where we were to wait fifteen minutes for our train to Athens, we waited four hours. We were the only non-Greeks for miles and this was one of the times that I truly regretted going to a foreign study center where I did not speak the language.

The true trial began once we boarded the next train for our six-hour return trip to Athens. There were no seats long before the train had reached our stop, and being young we could stand. We stood near a man who was not so young. He was the stereotypical Greek shepherd type. His aged face was deeply wrinkled and had been hardened an uneven brown by the strong sun. He wore all black: slacks, an old loose jacket, dusty black shoes and a cap. He didn't have teeth and his mouth rolled inward. In his left hand he carried a staff and in his right he carried a skinned goat in a large plastic sack. He had been separated from his wife during the boarding and had difficulty in managing his prize. The young Greeks on the train treated him without any consideration. Three college-age men had seats near him and never offered him a chance to rest—the old man's pride would not have allowed him to accept the kindness anyway. He scowled at us: the invaders into his countryside world.

We stood in the end of one car facing the old man and the goat in the end of the adjoining car. Each car had its own set of doors and a catwalk connected the two cars. As we slowed at each stop (and we stopped at every one) the steam from the brakes filled the cars. My friend reached over to close the doors of our car. The steam rushed into the other car and the old man became enraged. Shouting at us in Greek he shoved open our doors to prevent all of the steam from filling his car. My friend, shouting in French, closed them again. This continued at each stop and tempers began to rise until a merciful gentleman closed the doors of the other car as well.

Minor skirmishes took place every time anyone passed between the cars without closing the doors. I will always wonder exactly why the old man insisted that the doors stay open. Was it that he did not mind the steam when both sets of doors were open? Did he not notice the second set of doors? Did he just resent us as foreigners?

The old man, his wife and the goat left the train at a small station outside of Athens. The goat no doubt was a special gift for a large family celebration. It would be roasted on a post in a pit the next day.

I learned a lot about Greek country folk on that ride. Dignity and pride of the Greek are the secret of their deep inner strength and resolve. I also learned what it felt like to be an intruder. In the Westernized metropolis of Athens, the majority of the population is non-Greek; the shopkeepers and the waiters speak broken English; there is little to make the traveler feel uneasy. In the countryside, old values and custom prevail. That is the spirit of the Greek.

Stephanie McLemore K'92 is a religion major.

Monastery in Meteora, Greece. Photo by Stephanie McLemore K'92.
HITCHING’S HARD WORK
Clermont to Lyon brings plenty of exercise

It was Friday, November 16. We’d thought of the whole thing before, weeks ahead, while still in Vichy even. Now it was finally coming to pass. We were going to do it.

At about 3 p.m., we started off. We had our small packs filled with sandwiches, water bottles, and an extra sweater. But most importantly we had our little sign, the sign that was to bring us to our destination: Lyon.

That’s right, Glenn and I were hitchhiking, or as we later told our families, du stop, to the nearby city of Lyon for the weekend. It was a mere 200 km, two hours in a car driven by any normal Frenchman. Or woman. With directions from Glenn’s papa, we found the road to begin our journey.

Luck was on our side, at least for a bit, as we caught a ride right off. Not even 15 minutes and we were in a car. The luck remained for about 30 more minutes, at which time we realized the toothless guy was taking us towards Lyon, but off the main highway. Thiers, a picturesque city on a hilltop, was his destination. But, looking on the bright side, we were still on a road that went to Lyon, it just wasn’t as convenient. Ten kilometers and an hour later, we were still on that road, now trudging along in the darkness, trying to get a ride but avoid being smeared across the front of a truck. Finally we found our way back to the main expressway, just about as it started to mist.

For those of you who don’t know, hitch hiking is illegal on the expressways in France. It’s perfectly legal anywhere else, even outside of the entrance ramps, which is where we presently found ourselves. Beginning to wonder if the ramp was ever used, Glenn and I contemplated just about every means of arriving anywhere that you could possibly imagine. Just as we had decided that even a ride back to Clermont would suit us, a car drove up—from the other side of the road. But mind you, this wasn’t the first car we had seen at this ramp/toll booth; several had gone by already, and as all the previous drivers had done, they shook their heads at us, signifying that they were out of room (must have had lots of small things covering the remaining three seats), or that we were doing something either illegal or unethical. Thus, when this new car coming from the expressway passed us and then turned around toward us, both Glenn and I thought we had surely found a place to stay for the evening—cheap, dry, and probably some good, ahem, company—known to the natives as la prison.

Yes, our new-found friends were none other than the famous gendarmes, the equivalent of our state police but on the national level. Well, the three gendarmes in their little blue Peugeot wagon asked us for our identification: Glenn’s passport and my carte de séjour. As the driver was calling our names in to the office, thus putting us on a national list, the other two were calmly, even nicely, asking us about our stay in France. You know, all the normal questions that everyone asks: why are you here (in France)? How do you like it? The people? the food? The women? After giving us our papers back, the one in charge, so we were to assume, asked us if, were we to get a ride, did we want to go back to Clermont or on to Lyon. Nervously we said Lyon. Their response: “Allons-y!”

A typical French street in Aix. Photo by Margie Petrof ’92 who spent six months in Aix. Margie is a psychology major.
What? Did I hear you correctly? You’re going to find us a ride to Lyon? You can do that? And they did just that. Since by their accounting this entrance was slow, they thought nothing of taking us to a busier entrance, where the real action was. At this new ramp we began the search: look for cars with the number “69” on the plates.

Another little tidbit: in France, each department has its own number, from 1 to 96 or 97 (not even the French know how many departments they have), in alphabetical order. These numbers appear as the first on license plates as well as in the zip code. Clermont is 63, Lyon is 69.

Fortunately, they found a car. After directing the man to the side (the cars need to take a ticket upon entering the ramp so the drivers know how much to pay when they finally exit the expressway), the gendarmes politely asked him to give us a ride to Lyon, since he was going in the general direction. It also helped that the lad (only a few years older than ourselves) was working for the police commissioner in none other than Vichy! *Quelle coincidence!*

To make a long story a bit shorter, the guy was incredibly friendly. Not only did he talk to us about the present political situation of the world, the Gulf Crisis included overwhelmingly, but he told us all about the city of Lyon and all the things to do there: restaurants, hotels, sights, bars, etc. He even told us, after having driven around the city a bit as he dropped us off, that if we were ever in trouble or needed something, to get in touch with him at the office in Vichy—located right across from the school we attended there.

Five and a half hours after leaving Clermont, we were standing in downtown Lyon, in the dark, wondering what to do. After walking around a bit we decided on a nice two-hour dinner, which began at 10 p.m., and then to grab a seat and mellow out. We lived it up with the meal, as we had decided to save cash and not sleep anywhere—a favorite activity of ours! After dinner we covered the whole city, from gare to gare, from the modern Part Dieu section to the Roman amphitheater and ruins, from the river up the Stairway to Heaven, to the hill overlooking the city (a climb, I might add, which we did three times that morning—not something for the weak-hearted or the intelligent). Around 3 a.m. fatigue started to set in and, what luck, a small park with benches was to be found not twenty meters away. Throwing on our sweaters, hats, gloves and scarves (we were close to the Alps you know!) we stretched out on the benches and slept for a few hours. This, however, was a frigid way to sleep and so, knowing that the metro opened at 6h30, we headed through a cemetery to bask in the underground warmth. Despite the odd looks we got from early morning Saturday workers we managed to capture a few more minutes sleep.

But alas, the cement floors were not made for sleeping, so after having bought our much cherished (and now missed) baguettes, as well as having captured on film much of what we had seen the night before, we two urban adventurers decided we’d better start trying to get home. This was perhaps one of the few brilliant ideas we’ve come up with in our collective lives.

It was only 11 a.m. but we were tired and home was calling. Making a good guess as to which road to take, we whipped out the old thumbs and turned more cruelly, nearly to being dry, threw us a loop and sent a hippie couple our way. They marveled at our stupidity for being off the expressway but were good conversationalists none the less. They dropped us off 10 km later, but we were immediately picked up again, only to be dropped off 20 km later. It wasn’t a fast progression but it was slowly bringing us closer to home and food and our beds. Our next ride was perhaps the worst thing that possibly could have happened to a pair of novice hitchhikers. Not only did we get dropped off on the expressway, but we couldn’t even see an entrance ramp anywhere—a very good joke on the part of the driver; he probably laughed all the way home after that one! After another hour’s worth of mileage on our shoes we got to the ramp. And a nice ramp that was—if you
like being in the middle of nowhere! This time we waited for an hour and not even a car went by to reject us. But our tired minds were racing, ideas forming—even slow minds can be brilliant in desperation. We saw, kilometers down the expressway, another toll booth where we could get a ride. Risking the remaining months in France as well as our pride, we began to walk down the expressway towards the booths. But, as luck would have it, traditional France was to throw a barrier our way—in the form of the majestic and beautiful Loire River. Yep, the autoroute went right over the river. The bridge was too long to crawl across and walking it would have been Foreign Study suicide—being a federal French crime to even be walking on the shoulder. Realizing the river too cold to swim across we found out from some off-roaders that to walk around the river (the next bridge) to the next entrance ramp was only 25 km. Hey, no problem!

Having no other choice, the boys from Fruitport began the long haul around the river I had previously thought so neat due to some stupid chateaus. Darkness and danger descended upon us as we made our way along the road, our thumbs getting windburned from the passing trucks. Fortunately, consistent with all of our other rides, a French youth in his miniscule Citroen pick-up pulled over in the encroaching blackness (the consistency here being that everyone who gave us a ride had sometime been in our position before). After we squeezed in enough to be able to pull the door shut, we buzzed off, the young Frenchie giving us hitching tips all the way. It was at this time that we found out several things. First of all, we were doing this all at the wrong time—he said that people always offer you rides in the summer when they’re on vacation.

Secondly, he alluded to the fact that the center of France, precisely where we were, is the worst place to hitch hike, as people just aren’t in the habit of giving rides. Most importantly, as we were still only half way home, he told us how to get cars. He was taking us to an on-ramp and told us to stand right by the automatic ticket booth, and as people rolled down their windows, ask them then if they were going to Clermont, and that if they were they would usually feel pressured enough to give you a ride. With this sage advice in mind we thanked the lad without end until he sped off leaving us at the ticket booth.

Overcoming our pride and diving into the humiliation of begging, we began our task of inquiring. Hitchhiking is a very humbling task. After several failed attempts, we began to despair. Finally despite all odds and our anticipation of a “no” answer, a single woman drove up and said she was going all the way to Clermont and would take us. Glenn and I slapped each other to make sure it was real and then quickly scrambled for the car. The woman was visiting a university friend in Clermont for the weekend and was in a hurry—she tooted along at about 140-180 km/h. Needless to say, we made the second half of our trip, more than 120 km, in less than an hour. Unfortunately, the first half of our trip, up to the point where this woman picked us up, took us about seven hours; only an eight hour trip in all!

When she dropped us off chez Glenn, neither of us could walk. There is this curious phenomenon which occurs during hitching when you spend more time trying to get a ride than actually riding. It happens with the knees so that when you finally do sit down for awhile, your knees will no longer stretch out straight. This eventually moves down towards your ankles and then up your back, causing slight paralysis. The French woman apparently didn’t know this as she stared in disbelief when we fell, due to this occurrence, while getting out of her car. But alas, the ordeal was over, never, or at least as of now, to be undertaken again.

Mike Durbin K'92 is a French major and Glenn Ehrean K'92 is a political science and history double major.

It's a long ways down from the top of a French cathedral in Clermont. Photo by Claire Grover K'91.
Dear Mom & Dad,

Bonjour! (That means “hello” in French if you didn’t know.) After being met at Marseille airport and escorted to Aix by Dr. Fugate, I had serious doubts about France. A few days later, I realized that the mandatory orientation meetings had left me unprepared for:

1) Culture Shock: the shock which occurs when you realize that you can not even communicate with small children or the fact that a French three-year-old has a larger vocabulary than you do.

2) The realization that my French family actually spoke French. (God obviously didn’t hear my pleas for a bilingual family.)

3) The markers on the streets of Aix, which are supposedly there to take you on a walking tour of Cezanne’s life but in reality lead nowhere.

4) I was so excited when I found the MCM, the French version of MTV, on television. Yet, it didn’t take long for me to realize that they played the same ten videos over and over and over and over and . . .

Overall, I am having a pretty good time. I really like my French family and my French seems to be getting a little better. I can hardly wait to start traveling. Paris here I come! Now, if I could only figure out the bus schedule . . .

Denise Chasko K’92 is a political science major.

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**Foreign Exchange**

Somewhere it is 1:30
but here the sun sets on a red-roofed world.
It is 7:30 in Vichy—
 suppertime.
I push aside my cheerful collection of postcards, English verbs, and several damp kleenexes.
Slowly, I climb up from my basement fortress, thinking:
This house is older than my homeland
and the stairs groan the subjunctive tense much better than I.

Mme. Billard listens patiently
over the banging of pots and pans.
I tell her about flocks of starlings sprinkling the September sky like black pepper.

Madame listens and smiles blankly.
She hasn’t understood a word
I’ve said.

Claire Grover K’91 graduated with a degree in psychology after having studied in Clermont-Ferrand. She now works with homeless women.
War in Strasbourg
Persian Gulf brings personal struggle of identity

A Halo of Blood

It was a week or so before the Gulf War officially began. I sat in the living room of M. et Mme. Jacquemin, the elderly French couple I visited about once a week. The food is horrible in the Restaurants Universitaires where most students eat in Strasbourg. So, I should have been very satisfied after Mme. Jacquemin’s meal. My mood was, however, one of extraordinary dissatisfaction. I was angry about the threat of war and what seemed to be the general French reaction to said threat.

"Les étudiants français sont fâchés," I complained to M. Jacquemin. Angry French students... I was sick of them. They carried this chip on their shoulders about the war but didn’t seem to do anything to ameliorate the situation. “Why don’t they stage a protest or write to their government or something? Anything. If the people don’t support the war, why is France acting so involved?”

Actually, I was pretty ticked about the threat of war myself; who wasn’t hoping for a peaceful resolution? Still, I was getting pretty darn tired of French students bitching at me simply because I was American; I especially disliked it when they had no idea what they were talking about (or maybe that was my French).

“Why doesn’t France just stay out then?” I concluded.

M. Jacquemin looked chagrined. Apparently, I didn’t understand the real situation. He proceeded to tell me the story of his survival during WWII. Of the Nazis who broke down his door to get at him because he was French. Of his furniture factory modified to build airplane parts. Of the forged documents he obtained to be committed to a mental hospital. As a matter of fact, he was sick and nearly died of tuberculosis. However, these documents said he was insane... so the Germans running from Strasbourg at the time wouldn’t want to deal with him. The ruse only lasted long enough for him to recover from TB. Then he was forced to hide again from the Nazis... exiled to the Vosges with another pseudo-mental patient.

It was in these wooded mountains, foraging for food one day, that he and his companion met their first American... a soldier.

“About your age now, Ruth, perhaps half my age at that time... he was there. This young American, lying in the snow, dead. He must have just been killed, I shall never know by what. LYING THERE... très calme, très tranquille. He could have been from Michigan, Ohio, Indiana... just like all the students we’ve had as guests. And he was dead. A halo of blood (and here he made a circlet of his fingers and raised his hands over his head so I wouldn’t miss the sands who came to our land and died for us. I will always see that halo. France and America will fight together if necessary... c’est l’amitié.”

I often wonder which I am more of: Filipino or American. After M. Jacquemin had finished, this ambiguity struck me so hard I felt I couldn’t stand. I didn’t know which I wanted to be more a part of: a people that makes war but inspires such friendship or a people that understands about blood spilling on their own soil.

A Quintet of Mourners

The morning of January 16th. The fifteen of us “K” students in Strasbourg have been dealing in our own ways with the pre-war situation. We all know, however, when the...
Did I know him? I remembered. My roommate's birthday party nearly five months ago. He had been a guest, a friend of a friend. He was, I recalled, Algerian, Moroccan, perhaps Tunisian.

I was about to return his greeting but I never even got the “s” out of my mouth. He beat my reply with the beginning of an angry tirade.

“Mademoiselle Américaine,” he spat, to begin with. You always read in novels about people spitting words. This was the first time I'd ever seen it done. He was off and running after that. “Américaine” he would repeat and then rant about “war-hungry, money-hungry Americans who were trying to destroy the cause” or something like that.

I was cornered and rather scared. His voice kept rising, his questions became more fevered and insolent. “What do you think of Saddam Hussein?” he taunted me. “Are you a patriot? Do you love your country? Why don’t you answer?” he'd cry.

“Answer in English, salope américaine.” I'd stopped answering him, even in French, by that time. And each repetition of the word “Américaine” seemed to call more people into the room... angry people, dissatisfied people, people whose faces seemed to spell out how wronged they felt. I headed finally for the door and was so relieved that nobody followed me, that nothing followed me except his furious words, still ringing out over the spinning of the wash cycles and the rumble of the dryers.

I locked and barricaded my door that night. .. against the person with whom I had danced only last September, the person who had been so delighted to learn I was American. Maybe I bolted it against other things, too, things I was much too frightened to contemplate. I did not sleep that night. I think that was the time I have least understood what it means to be American.
DIARY OF AN AMERICAN
Starving for news, student waits out the war

1/9/91
Today's the big summit between Baker and Aziz in Geneva, a week before the January 15 deadline set by the UN for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait. It's now about 5:30; they've been talking since 10:30 this morning. Who knows what they're doing? The fact that they've been in there for more than a couple of hours means they're at least not giving up too easily. Thank God! So after a day of discussions the diplomats succeed in pulling the world closer to war. Thanks, guys!

1/10
There was a report about military patrol in airports and government buildings in relation to the likelihood of terrorist attacks provoked by the Gulf Crisis. Great! "Americans and their allies"-I've never been a target like this before, and frankly, it scares me! I've got to be careful in making my travel plans!

1/12
So it's Saturday. I'm going to do some shopping after lunch and hopefully find some gifts during all of these after-Christmas sales. There's also a protest against war in the Gulf. Maybe I'll check it out. Then again, it might be an American-bashing theme, and I know that would upset me and change my plans for the day. We'll see where my feet take me.

1/13
The general secretary of the UN met with Hussein today in Baghdad. Hopefully there will be some good results from it on the news tonight. We'll see . . . Nope. I've got the radio right here telling me Hussein will in no way give up its "19th province" and can "win" a war. Pleasant. By the way, we Americans are the "infidels" (unfaithful, evil). Yeah, I've always thought of myself that way . . . Well, Congress went ahead and gave its approval of war. Thank everybody. What a wonderful world we live in . . . Gorbachev is making war in Lithuania because he doesn't want it to become independent. That's definitely taking advantage of the Gulf Crisis; to go and do something not good. Do it while everyone's back is turned. Yeah, so much for Gorby's Nobel Peace prize!

1/15
Well, the big question is will we be at war when I wake up tomorrow? It's like Christmas Eve, the anticipation of finally finding out something you've wanted to know for a long time. The package (the troops) have been in place, now it's a question of opening them. I'm really scared, and really sad . . . I dread tomorrow. War? The preparations for it scare you enough. Damn politicians! If the only way to stop them is to become one, where do I sign up?!

1/16
No war yet. The weather's messing up the electronic equipment so they can't start yet. And of course they won't announce it on TV. That would be a dumb strategy! But everyone says there's definitely going to be war. I feel more French than American when it comes to the Gulf. I know a heck of a lot more about what the French are doing and the mind of their government than I do of my own at the moment! Having left the States before the Gulf Crisis escalated, now I don't know what our government has been doing (in regular citizen depth). The French know as much as I do.

1/17
7:25 a.m. Now the war has begun. The US, Saudis, and Brits bombed Iraq around 1:00 a.m., Paris time. Right now the radio is reporting that the air raids were totally "successful." They claim to have wiped out the Iraqi air bases/chemical weapons areas. They say there is no now threat for bombing of Israel (really?). Ground troops haven't been used, and they say all planes returned to their bases. Only a handful wounded and a couple of deaths (which side?). Hussein calls all Arabs to the war against the US and Europe. Now I feel tense. I wonder what'll happen during the day . . . more air raids. 18,000 tons of bombs. They don't indicate "losses." We'll see what the evening news says . . . They just did a Gulf update on the radio. Same stuff, but more protests in Paris and a bomb threat in St. Lazare. That's where we make our train switch tomorrow for Nice. How scared do I feel?!

Madame and Monsieur went out for dinner. I kind of wish they were here. It's lonely to be in a war all alone.

1/18
We arrived in Paris at St. Lazare to the Friday afternoon crowd and suspicious people. That's to say that the fear of terrorism had created a tense atmosphere. Police and bomb-sniffing German shepherds wandering around the station, and security announcements on the p.a. system . . . Iraq bombed Israel this morning.

1/21
Jacques Chirac is on the news right now talking about the Gulf War. Hussein showed American and British pilots on TV today as beaten hostages/ p.o.w.'s So, new phase of the war: psychological. Fun. I just don't know if the end is near at all. I fear not.
I called Steven tonight in Strasbourg. The Strasbourg trip to Paris over the weekend was cancelled by Dr. Fagate. Wonderful. I imagine he'll give us some juicy precautions for travelling, like don't go anywhere.

1/23
The war is a real inconvenience to so many people. Stupid diplomats, quit your bickering! It's a waste of time and money. And lots of it.

1/24
I just talked with Dad. He's been sick, poor guy. Otherwise, he says things are going well, besides the war. Dad says the media is really promoting the war. Even Mort Crim (Channel 4) is being a shmuck. Nerd! What is this world coming to?!

1/26
The war is really pissing me off. Hussein set oil places on fire today. Consequence, death to helpless wildlife. It's one thing to fight amongst ourselves, but it's even a worse crime to destroy so carelessly the species in the world. They have absolutely no right to take their lives at will.

2/3
I'm staying with the Saha family in Germany now. Mrs. Saha and I sat at the table and talked after everyone went to bed about the problem of the Gulf. The Germans, she said, have been supplying Iraq with all kinds of weapons and consumer goods throughout history, so cutting relations with them now is bad for the German economy. And Marc says that if Hussein uses chemical weapons against Israel, it'll be the second time the Germans will have gassed the Jews. Good point.

3/1
Today is Steve Sanchez's birthday. It's also the beginning of the end of the war in the Gulf. Cease-fire and beginning of negotiations. What a coincidence that the war started while I was in Nice and also ends when I'm back in Nice.

3/2
I talked with Mom and Dad today, and they say that it's scary and disgusting how the media has created a glamorous picture of the US and the Gulf. I feel totally isolated from "propaganda," but I guess the fact that the paper has kept me from all out condemning and rather supporting the war shows I've been brainwashed. Scary! I have to get home and straighten things out. I just don't know what to believe!

Julie Purvis-Smith K'92 is a French major with an International and Area Studies concentration. Julie is returning to France during Fall '91 to complete her SIP at the American Embassy in Paris, thanks to a Chamberlain Fellowship, and is also considering diplomacy as a career.
REMINDERS OF ANOTHER WAR
Peace movement occupies Germany

The old men wandering the streets of Germany don't normally attract my attention, but this one did. He stood up on a post, and screamed in a rough and raspy voice: "Nie wieder ein Krieg!" (Never again a war!) Although there were upwards of 20,000 people at this demonstration in Nuremburg, this one old man said it all. A veteran of the largest, bloodiest conflict in human history railing against the inhumanity and barbarism of war is a brave one, indeed. He must have relived some nasty memories.

As the deadline approached for Saddam Hussein to withdraw from Kuwait or be forcibly evicted I received a letter from my mom, who had talked to her father about the impending war. Grandad was a tank commander in North Africa in World War Two. His own horrible experiences of war were redeemed by the fact that he survived, and that he met my grandmother. He said in early January with an apprehension in his voice very unlike the jingoistic atmosphere of the country at that time: "Yeah, the country's in a really patriotic mood these days." The subtext of his comment: I'm not, because I know what desert warfare is really like.

I was in Erlangen, Germany on Foreign Study for the entire duration of the Persian Gulf War to "Liberate-Kuwait-and-Fight-for-the-Values-We-Hold-True-and-Keep-That-Cheap-Oil-Coming." Being in a country that had been laid low and humbled in 1945 influenced my opinion on the war tremendously. Certainly I had my problems with the war which had nothing to do with Germany: the United States was once again playing the role of the Self-Righteous World Cop; the approval of the United Nations was a fig leaf for George Bush's lust to attain the status of Foreign Policy God and Fearless Wartime Leader; oil isn't worth fighting for; the Emir of Kuwait is a ruthless slime; and, the U.S. has its own fish to fry.

A proponent of a war in Germany voices his/hers opinions as a member of a tiny minority. The use of force as an instrument of statecraft has been thoroughly delegitimized. In every city we visited you could buy postcards of the town in ruins in 1945. Nuremburg, a city just outside Erlangen, was pounded into rubble in the winter and spring of that year. The generations that can remember the war, remember death and destruction. Foreign study in Germany could only reinforce anti-war leanings.

The Erlangen group was in Berlin when the war started. In the afternoon of January 15 we boarded the train having heard no news from the Middle East. Arriving at the youth hostel we learned that the jamming of Iraqi communications had begun. So we went out for a beer. We came back to the youth hostel to hear that the bombs had started falling. The entire group was news-hungry like never before, and we all stayed up clad in pajamas to listen to the news, and at 3 a.m., to Bush announcing: "The liberation of Kuwait has begun." We were at war.

Against that backdrop we embarked on a bus tour of Berlin the next morning. One of the main stops of the tour was a Soviet war memorial in what had been East Berlin. The weather was cold and dreary. The tour guide gave a little speech about how we were commemorating the dead of past wars as we fought a new one. Several people commented that the war gave a new meaning to a place which would otherwise have been simply another monument for tourists. Nothing drives home the message of a past war than the start of a new one.

I could never square myself with how the war began. It seemed like Bush was eager to settle the issue by force. The United Nations ultimatum expired and we went straight to war less than 24 hours later. If ever economic sanctions could have an effect, this was the time. I would be the last to argue that
sanctions alone could have solved the crisis, but the fact of the matter is that we will never know. This instrument of diplomacy offered a glimmer of hope for a peaceful solution. But we’ll never know.

The Germans organized instantly against the war, and I was glad to be a part of it. I did some work with Erlangen Friedensinitiative (Peace Initiative) under the banner “Kein Blut für Öl!” (No blood for oil!) The climax of the work we did was a nationwide demonstration in Bonn on January 26, 1991. I have never seen so many people in one place at one time. Newspapers reported 300,000 demonstrators filled Bonn’s elegant Hofgarten to hear speeches and songs denouncing the war. People teemed through the sidestreets to explore the multitudes of stands, run by groups who sought to make their views known. Commies? Yep, lots of them. But there were also plenty of representatives of the mainstream German political parties. Forget the leftist wacko explanation for this demonstration.

I’m glad I had the chance to work with the German anti-war movement, although disgusted at the reasons for the war. The First World War brought a shaky era whose collapse gave us fascism, the second a state of neither war nor peace. Now this war on the Arabian peninsula for a tiny oil-rich sheikdom is supposed to usher in a New World Order? The surest solution to the seemingly perpetual task of mending fences is not to destroy them in the first place.

Carter Dougherty K’92 is a history and German double major who will be returning to Erlangen, Germany during Fall ’91 to complete his SIP as a Chamberlain Fellow.

... and during the rally for peace held January 26, 1991. Photos by Carter Dougherty K’92.

HIGHLIGHTS OF HANNOVER
Fall of the wall; city keeps students occupied

During my stay in Germany, a wondrous thing happened: the Wall came down and the road to a united Germany had begun after 29 years. During my stay in Hannover, my group went to visit Berlin and East Berlin (November 6-9, 1989). We were probably some of the last people to ever cross the border between the two countries. The crossing seemed to strip the freedom from your being.

The day after our trip to East Berlin, the government started to crumble and the security barrier between the two countries became relaxed, relaxed beyond all expectations of the world. It was incredible to visit the Wall one month later and then again before going home in March. Each visit showed mounting changes taking place. Though the words which I write can never truly convey the feelings of the experience or the experience itself, for that matter, it is something which I never expected to happen, or to be a part of my foreign study experience. The fall of the Berlin Wall was a historical event which I will always remember. It is as Dr. Fugate told us, “Expect the unexpected.”

But before leaving for Germany for foreign study in September of 1989, I felt a great deal of anxiety. There were just so many questions and I only had a few answers. The Who, What, Where, Why, and How’s were coming at me from all directions. What would I see and do? What would the university be like? Would Hannover be a big enough city to be entertaining for four months before my Eurail went into effect? What would my family be like?

Hannover itself is a city mostly renovated after World War II, and it is now a thriving metropolis in northern Germany. A few sites within the city are a complete must for the unaware tourist.
Get your “Let’s Go Europe” books out and ready for underlining. The Hannover Zoo is a great place to go for an afternoon. There are lots of kiddy playground toys for college students to play with and look ridiculous on. This is a great wild n’ crazy photo opportunity for the adventurous and kid-at-heart types within all of us. If that isn’t enough, you can even get licked in the children’s animal petting zoo. This is a great wild n’ crazy photo opportunity for the adventurous and kid-at-heart types within all of us. IT that isn’t enough, you can even get licked in the children’s animal petting zoo.

Don’t get me wrong, there is a great deal more to Hannover than this, but these were some of the highlights on my trip. Hannover does have a great deal of shops and other sites. Hannover is also ideally located, a mere four hours west of Berlin. Thereby making it only a quick jaunt to a really big city.

Kirk Hedlich K’91 graduated with a degree in computer science.

Das Unerwartete erleben:
Ein mehr oder weniger wahrer Bericht


Mein Gastvater, der Herr X hieß, kam zum Hauptbahnhof und holte mich ab. Ich wartete allein, als er eine Mehrfahrkarte für mich kaufte.


Mein Gastvater kam zurück und leitete mich zur Halteestelle, wo ich jeden Tag einsteigen und austiegen mußte. Er schien mir, richtig nett zu sein. Er erklärte mir, wie die Bahn geht, und was die Nummer der Linien bedeuteten. Ich könnte meinen Zug nicht verpassen, da mir alles erklärt wurde.


Meine Gastmutter, Frau X, war genau so nett. Zum Beispiel machte sie sich immer Sorgen um mich, als ich an Heuschnupfen leidete. Sie machte das Essen richtig gut, wenn auch manchmal ein bißchen fettvoll für meinen Geschmack.

Ich hatte diese Regeln schonmals gehört, als ich noch in Amerika war, und fand sie nicht unvernünftig. Mit dem Telefon, sagte sie uns, könnten wir kurz anrufen, wenn wir müßten. Wir hätten die Differenz aber bezahlen müssen, wenn die Rechnung viel höher gewesen wäre.

Mit anderen Worten ging alles nach meinen Plänen. Meine Gasteltern waren sympathisch, die Sprache war mir nicht zu schwierig, und allgemein hatte ich keine Klagen.

Oder?


Leider sah uns jemand. Es war die Nachbarin, Klara. Sie hatte einen angenehmen unscheinbaren Blick auf die Haltestelle, die etwas zu hundert Meter von ihrem Haus auf der anderen Seite der Felder lag.

Wir erfuhren davon, nachdem Frau X an dem Abend uns fragte, ob wir unser Butterbrot immer auf unseren Brötchen geschmiert hatten. Sie erzählte, daß Klara früher zu ihr gekommen war und berichtet hatte, daß ein Student, der bei der Familie X wohnt, heute das Butterbrot weggeworfen hatte. Frau X war nicht böse, daß wir das nicht gegessen hatten. Es war ihr nur peinlich, daß das ganze Dorf jetzt dachte, daß das Brot bei der Familie X altbacken war. Sie sagte nur:

"Wenn ihr das Brot nicht ißt, bringt es nach Haus!"

Was Peter und ich wissen wollten, war, wie Klara, die aus einem weitem Fenster schaute, gewußt hatte, daß wir unser Butterbrot weggeworfen. Wir fragten Frau X also. Während sie lächelte und grinst, sagte Frau X uns, Klara sei nach unserer Abfahrt zu der Haltestelle gegangen. Sie habe durch den Müll nach der zweifelhaften Aluminiumfolie gesucht, die die Sonne vom Osten in ihren Augen geschwänzt habe, als sie neben dem Fenster gestanden habe. (Pirsonlich glaube ich, daß der Klara ein gutes paar Feldstecker gehört.) Mit ihrem treuen

Pflichtbewußtsein sei Klara direkt zu der Frau X mit ihrer peinlichen Entdeckung gekommen.

Jetzt kam alles zusammen: die bewegenden Vorhänge in den Fenstern, die vermessen an der Haltestelle ausgetauschten Worte, und das merkwürdige, komische, seltsame Gefühl, als wir durch das Dorf wanderten, daß irgendjemand uns beobachtete!

Die Reaktion der Frau X auf Klara's Verhalten ließ mich ein paar Gedanken machen. Sie hatte gesprochen, als ob es ganz normal war, was Klara gemacht hatte.


Bikes are one of the most popular modes of transportation in Germany, Münster has the highest bicycle population. Photo by Tracie Palmer K’92.
daß nichts los war. Peter blieb aber nur bis kurz vor Weihnachten bei der Familie Z. Danach war ich ganz allein.


Ich war zwei Wochen weg und wußte gar nicht, was auf mich in dem kleinen Dorf wartete. Ich erinnerte mich an den Ulk, erst als ich nach der Rückkehr in mein Zimmer trat.


Ich fragte meine Gasteltern, ob es während meiner Abwesenheit etwas in meinem Zimmer zu tun gegeben hätte. Meine Gutmutter entgegnete sofort: "Ja, wir mußten die Türangeln des Wandschranks ersetzen. Wir mußten einen Schreibtisch verringern." Es kam mir verdächtig vor, daβ sie so eifrig auf meine Frage antwortete, als ob sie eine Antwort vorbereitet hätte, und freiwillig wiesen Grund für die seltsame unordnung innerhalb meins Schreibtischs gab. Ich ging zu meinem Zimmer zurück.


Was konnte ich tun?

Ungefährt zwei Wochen danach saß ich ganz allein im Zimmer. Auf der Uhr stand der Stundenzeiger um fast Mitternacht. Ich hatte mir studenlang Gedanken darüber gemacht, was ich nun machen sollte. Plötzlich fiel mir eine phantastische Idee ein. Ich nahm einen Kugelschreiber zur Hand und schrieb folgendem Maßen:

Gnädige Hausfrau,
Ihr Verhalten ist höchst unverschämmt gewesen. Ihre Respektlosigkeit gegenüber meine private Spähre ist unakzeptabel. Wertet Sie sich nicht, fragen Sie sich, was Sie müssen ja das waschecken reinigen und den Staubsauger in meinem Zimmer benutzen. Das heißt: "aufräumen/putzen".
Was Sie mittlerweile zusätzlich machen (zum Beispiel: meine persönliche Dinge in und auf meinem Schreibtisch und im Schrank durchsuchen), ist eine geistige Krankheit. Es ist wahnwitzig und kindlich, ein Benehmen kaum vorstellbar für eine Frau in Ihrem Alter. Meine echte Mutter in den USA wäre so leiderfüllt, wenn sie wüsste.

In der Zukunft wäre es besser, wenn Sie nur anschauen würden, was Sie angeht. Denken Sie darüber nach.
Ich habe Recht.

Ihre Untersuchungsobjekt

P.S. Ich werde wissen, ob Sie diesen Brief gelesen haben, weil ich zwei Haare eingeschlagen habe, die bestimmt rausgefallen sind!


Ich verbrachte ein paar genießwollen Tage in Paris aber dachte oft dieses Mal an meinen Streich. Ich konnte darauf kaum warten, zurückzugehen.


*N.B. die Namen der Personen dieses mehr oder weniger waren Berichten sind geändert worden, um die unschuldigen zu schützen.

Peter Klein K'91 graduated with degrees in French and German. Peter will return to Germany in the fall to study for two years as the recipient of the Hanns-Saidel scholarship.

The translation to this story begins on page 17.
THE UNEXPECTED EXPERIENCE:
A more or less true story

My plan was pretty simple. I wanted to live and study in Germany for six months. This way I could experience Germany. Since I had never been to Europe before, I was afraid of the unexpected. On the day I arrived, all my fears disappeared. My host father, Mr. X, came to the station to pick me up. I waited alone while he bought a ticket for me. A bum came by and asked for some spare change. I struggled, deep into my memory; to pick out the right sentence and finally spit out “Um, no man, I’m broke.” I was afraid he would say something else but he left.

My host father came back and took me to the stop where I would catch the train everyday. He seemed really nice. He explained to me how the train works and what the numbers and routes meant. I couldn't miss my train because everything had been explained to me. The ride took about 20 minutes. That wasn’t a lot of time. The train almost didn’t stop at all and was going very fast. Suddenly we were outside the city. Soon we were riding through the suburbs. “Now we have to get off,” he barked, as he pointed to the door. We got out and were in the middle of the field outside of the little village. My host mother, Mrs. X, was as nice. For example, she was always worrying about me when I had fevers. She cooked really well, although sometimes a little too greasy for my taste.

Another American, Peter, also lived with Family X. He had an internship downtown and our position in the household was exactly the same. Mrs. X was joking and told us she would take five cents for every English word she heard. That meant we could only speak German. Other rules were: don’t use hot water when someone else was showering; no phone calls; no visitors when Mrs. X was not home. I heard these rules before when I was still in the U.S. and I did not think they were unreasonable. With the phone, she told us, we could make a short phone call if we had to. We would have to pay the difference if the bill would have been higher. In other words, everything was as I planned it. My host parents were nice, the language wasn’t too difficult, and in general I didn’t have any complaints.

Up to this time, Mrs. X gave us a sandwich to go everyday. Peter and I didn’t have a problem with that, except the rolls always had too much butter. We asked Mrs. X not to put butter on the rolls. She was nice, but told us we needed butter: “It has a lot of vitamins,” she told us. Finally, we reached a compromise. She promised to put on less butter.

The next morning Peter and I were standing at the bus stop and quickly checked if she really had put less butter on the rolls. It was exactly as much butter as on the previous rolls. We felt sick and didn’t want to take the rolls. We decided not to take the high cholesterol packages; we simply dumped them.

Unfortunately, someone saw us. It was the neighbor, Klara. She had a clear and open view of the bus stop, which was about 200 meters away from her house at the opposite side of the fields.

We found out about that when Mrs. X asked that night if we always ate our sandwiches. She told us that Klara had stopped by earlier and had told her that a student who lives with Family X dumped his sandwich this morning. Mrs. X was not that angry that we didn’t eat it. She was embarrassed that the whole village now thought the bread at Family X was old. She just said, if you don’t eat the sandwich, bring it home.

What Peter and I wanted to know was how Klara, who looked out of a distant window, knew that we had dumped our sandwiches. Thus, we asked Mrs. X. While she was smiling and grinning, she told us Klara had gone to the bus stop after we had left. She looked through the garbage for a piece of aluminum foil that the east sun shined in her eyes when she stood next to the window. (Personally, I think that Klara owns some sharp binoculars.) With her faithful sense of duty Klara went immediately to Mrs. X with her embarrassing discovery.

Now everything came together: moving curtains in the windows, sharply spoken words at the bus stop, and the strange and funny feeling as we were walking through the village that someone was watching us. The reaction of Mrs. X towards Klara’s behavior made me thoughtful. She spoke as if what Klara had done was normal.

Was Mrs. X used to this?

It was always strange that my things in and on my desk had been touched before I came home from the university everyday. I remembered that Mrs. X asked several times at dinner about my girlfriend in the USA. I thought about the many letters I received weekly from a good American friend every week. I asked myself if my nice host mother with her small town nosiness did not want to know further details about the heart-covered letters. I couldn't support the accusation, because I did not have evidence.

The suspicion was unbearable. I talked to Peter and asked him if he felt uncomfortable. He just said to me that this simply was the way it was. It wasn’t our fault and we had to endure it. I couldn’t accept it. No phone calls I could understand. If I could only use a little hot water, o.k. The other students didn't want to visit me anyway because I lived so far from downtown. But the
thought that I was always under the curious observations of the others was a little too much for me. I started immediately to distrust my host parents even though Peter tried to calm me down and said that nothing was going on. But Peter remained just till shortly before Christmas with Family X. After that I was completely alone.

During the Christmas vacation I went by train to the south of France. I left a sample in my room. My desk had a drawer in the middle and two bigger draws at each side. The drawers could by locked with a key. I put my letters that I had received so far in chronological order. I put them in the front of the right drawer, so they could be seen if someone opened the drawer. I locked the drawer. I hid the key under some papers and magazines in another drawer. I was gone for two weeks and did not know what awaited me in the little village. J just remembered all this when I entered my room upon my return. Curious, I went to my desk and carefully opened the drawer. Everything was messed up. It was a real surprise to me that she answered the question as if she had a prepared answer and voluntarily gave a reason for the weird untidiness in my desk. I went back to my room.

The doorframes were really exchanged. Despite that I asked myself why they had to move my desk since it was sitting on the opposite side of the room. They would have had to turn over my desk tp produce such a mess in my letters. All the other drawers were untouched and the key was exactly where I left it. I was disappointed, but knew that I could not do much about it. I didn’t mention my suspicions in the next talks with the couple. I wanted to know exactly how intense their nosiness was and I wanted them to be ashamed.

What could I do?

About two weeks later I was sitting alone in my room. The clock showed nearly twelve. For an hour I had been thinking about what to do. Suddenly, I had a fantastic idea. I took a pen and wrote the following:

Dear Housewife:

Your behavior is very, very rude. Your lack of respect for what is my privacy is unacceptable. You are asking what I am talking about? You are supposed to clean the sink and vacuum in my room. That means cleaning up. What you are doing now (for example, looking through my personal stuff in and around my desk) is a mental sickness. It’s crazy and childish. A behavior hard to imagine for a woman your age. My real mom in the USA would be very sorry if she knew. In the future, it would be better if you only looked at what concerns you. Think about it, I’m right.

Your Victim

P.S. I will know if you have read this letter because I put in two hairs, which must have fallen out by now.

The next day I took the letter into town and sprayed a nice cologne on an envelope with hearts, love drawings and female handwriting.

The next day was Friday.

Always courteous, I told Mrs. X that I would spend the whole weekend in Paris—which was the truth. I repeated ten times that I would not be back until late Sunday night. I put the letter with only one hair in the drawer and left the house. As I walked to the bus stop, my baggage in my hands, I heard my host parents calling after me from far away: “Bye, Peter! Take care!” I turned around, waved good-bye and hurried along the way as if a bomb was about to explode behind me.

I spent a couple of enjoyable days in Paris but this time, I often thought of my test. I could barely wait to return.

Curious, I quickly ran back home from the bus stop. I was very happy about the results of my trap. It had worked. Now I knew how far she would go in nosing through my stuff. Now I also knew that she knew that I knew whatever she was doing, and what I was thinking about that—without her assuming that I knew that she had read this letter. For I found two hairs in the letter.

That night I happily enjoyed my victory with four bottles of Kölsch. I was content because I could predict the unexpected.

Translated from the German by Susanne Koch, assisted by Carsten Lemm and Corinna Weihe. Carsten and Corinna studied at K for the summer and are from the Universität Hannover. Susanne’s foreign study at K turned into more than she planned, as she just graduated with a degree in Biology. Susanne also served as head resident for the German House and plans to do graduate work in the United States.
What it was like
Surviving and enjoying the details of foreign study

I spent my six-month foreign study in Bonn, what was then West Germany. There were six of us in the Bonn group that year—five women and Peter Klein. Darcy Draft, Linda Hadrich, Ann Sheehy, Renee Anderson and I gave Peter the run for his money as group leader! His German was by far the best, through, and our decision to vote him in as group leader was a wise one.

The six of us formed close friendships in Bonn that fall and winter, struggling through classes such as Platon, Der Junge Goethe, Peter Paul Rubens, Grammatik, Oberstufe, etc. We had no clue what these classes would be like when we signed up. We didn't even know what Oberstufe meant. But that's what foreign study is all about—you really can't know it until you've been there. No one can tell you exactly what you'll have to do; it's a process of figuring it out for yourself.

The first month in Bonn was by far the most challenging, and the month in which we all grew the most. The Auslandsamt (foreign study office) at the Universität Bonn, led by Herr Rexhausen, was superb at helping us out with anything. We managed to get ourselves registered with the city and the university, then we handled buying our Monatskarten and figured out the bus, U-Bahn, and Strassenbahn routes. The other 50 or so American students in Bonn from Wisconsin, Florida, Vermont, etc. were all in the same boat with us. We survived the intensive program the first five weeks, making new friends and embarrassing ourselves regularly in front of one another. We explored the city, the cobblestoned winding streets lined with shops and cafes, the flower market, the fresh food market. We conquered every possible service at the yellow post office and learned how to make long distance calls home and across Europe, speaking a bit of French, or Italian, or Spanish to get through.

We were spread out like stars across the city, none of us closer than 10 minutes apart by U-Bahn. I lived on the northeast side of town in Gielgen; it took me half an hour by bus to get home from the university. One of the neighbors had sheep in his yard. Darcy lived way on the other side of town, and she could get home in 10 minutes with the U-Bahn. Linda was fairly close by—I could walk to her place in a good 45 minutes through the fields. Her busses stopped running at about 11 p.m. every night, so a lot of the time she'd have to take a Strassenbahn and walk a really good distance. Ann lived south-west of the city and had to take a combination of busses and the U-Bahn to get home. Renee lived somewhere near Ann, and Peter lived out in the boonies northwest of the city.

My host sister was fourteen years old, and my host brother was eleven. My room was in the basement of the house but the house was set into a hill so my bedroom window was the first floor window from the back of the house. I had my own bathroom and shower, and as much privacy as I needed. The room was large with a sink, a couch, two chairs, a table, a dresser, a wardrobe, a nightstand, and a roll-away bed that functioned as a counter next to the sink. I really had it made. Darcy’s room was really a hallway, in comparison.

Darcy, Linda and I bought what the Germans call TramperMonatskarten—Student Rail Passes. These passes were good for travel anywhere within Germany for one month—exactly like a Eurail. If I remember correctly they were about 240DM. We learned how to handle the trains as we went shopping in Münster, Köln, visited Hannover, Bremen, headed to the border of France and paid an extra $2 or so to head into Strasbourg. We toured Heidelberg, following our noses to the castle hanging over the city. Our first adventures with the train were exciting and hilarious, especially compared to later trips. At first we were so nervous about which track, what minute and second the train would arrive, which car we should be on, which compartment had the least scary-looking individuals in it, etc.

We also traveled to Berlin in late October with the Auslandsamt, taking extensive tours of both the East and West sides of the city. We went to the discos, shopped some more at the incredible stores all over Berlin, toured the Gedachtskirche, went to the zoo, and went to some lectures that were part of the package. Shortly after our Christmas break, five of the six of us went to Paris for the weekend, relying Germany
heavily on Peter's French to get us by. That was really a great weekend.

The classes at the University came to a close in early February. We had oral exams from the professors of the Vorlesungen (lectures). The moment we discovered this was a terrifying one, although we had been blessed with tutoriums for these classes. But somehow we all managed to pass. We set off for independent travel, Eurails in hand. Our appetites had been whetted over the Christmas break, when we had three free weeks to cruise the continent. The six of us set off, somehow managing to avoid running into one another while running into everyone else on foreign study. I traveled with Darcy and Ann and Peter and Linda to Vienna and Budapest, then I split from them and joined my boyfriend for a tour of Switzerland, Florence, Nice, Barcelona, Seville, and Lagos, Portugal. Lagos was by far my favorite city in Europe. It was gorgeous and incredibly romantic. The sun and beaches were fantastic and the people were lovely.

Fredrick-Wilhelm Universität Bonn. Photo by Sonja Gary K'92, a biology major.

I returned to Bonn after a 50 hour train ride from Lagos and joined Darcy and her parents for our flight home from Brussels to Chicago. We landed in Chicago in a blizzard, so my connection to Detroit was repeatedly delayed. I thought I would never get home!

It's amazing to me how much time has passed since then. Foreign study was the scariest thing about the K Plan for me, and to think how far it is behind me now, and what an incredible time I had in Bonn, I wonder what the heck I was so nervous about!

Mary Lou McCuen K'91 graduated with a degree in English and is now embarking on a career as a high school teacher.

“We are remembering the victims of the war” reads the sign in protest in front of Fredrich Alexander Universität in Erlangen, Germany. Photo by Tracie Palmer K'92, who studied in Erlangen.
One of the things I really liked about doing the Eurotravel thing was that a truly terrible situation (or, at least what seemed like a terrible situation) could suddenly, without warning, turn into a glorious one. My experience on New Year's Eve, 1989-90, is a good example.

I was traveling around Europe, Eurailpass in hand, in December, 1989. This was a heck of a time to be doing it. Communist governments were falling left and right, the Berlin Wall was down, Europe was set to party. A friend and I agreed to meet in Berlin to get a chunk of the Wall and greet the new decade. We figured half of Germany would be there with us, but heck, a cultural experience is a cultural experience.

I arrived at Berlin Zoobahnhof at 7:30 the morning of December 31 as planned. Only my friend wasn’t there. So I waited. And waited. West Berlin’s train station is a cold place, particularly when you’re just standing there hoping you won’t get stood up. I waited for hours, but my friend didn’t show up. So much for New Year’s at Brandenberg Gate. So much for Berlin. All our great plans—shot. I was about as disgusted, disappointed, and cold as could be. There was nothing for me to do, nowhere for me to go (there was literally not a room available anywhere in town or the Berlin burbs), so I decided to get out of Berlin and spend New Year’s somewhere else, alone.

But where? The first thing I had to do was get out of East Germany. Eurailpasses weren’t valid for the portion between West Berlin and the West German border. I’d bought a ticket for 33 marks the night before for my trip into East Germany, but the East German conductors hadn’t collected it. So, considering how broke I was, I figured maybe they wouldn’t try again, and if they did, the worst they could do was toss me off the train and leave me in the East German wilderness. Considering my mood at the time, that didn’t seem like a terrible fate.

I was lucky. On the way back into the West the East German train conductors didn’t check my ticket and I was able to sneak back into Eurailpass territory. I got off in Hannover, figuring I could make a connection of some kind, any kind, there. I saw that a train was leaving for Vienna in a few minutes. That was good enough for me. And so on it I went.

I got to Vienna the next morning and after a day of sneaking into museums, gazing longingly at the menus of fancy restaurants, and worrying about what I would do that night to celebrate the new year and decade, a revelation suddenly hit me: I remembered that the Vienna State Opera offered standing room tickets for a dollar or two, and that as this was New Year’s Eve, they would be showing Johann Strauss’s Die Fleder-maus (don’t ask me how I remembered that, but I did). I didn’t much care for opera, but heck, a cultural experience is a cultural experience. I ran to the opera house to wait in line for a ticket.

I didn’t understand the opera, but everyone was waltzing a lot, on the stage and off, and the extremely well-attired audience seemed to be enjoying
it, so I figured this show wasn’t a tragedy. The majesty of it all was just starting to lose its luster when all of a sudden I heard a voice behind me that sounded familiar for some reason. I looked behind me and standing there was a friend of mine I hadn’t seen since high school. No joke! We’d lost track of each other, but here we were meeting on New Year’s Eve at the opera in Vienna, a place I hadn’t even intended on being in. Who needed Berlin? Needless to say, after the opera we toasted our totally incredible meeting, the new year, and the new decade long into the night. It was the best, and most unlikely, New Year’s Eve I’ve ever had.

Aaron Elstein K’91 graduated with a degree in history and also completed his SIP in Spain. Aaron is now teaching English in Czechoslovakia.

From naive to native and back again

Every day on a train is a fish.
Fisherman’s bobber,
suspended,
hooked on mere instinct,

I sway with the current of different cities,
wishing that I could stare until they cried

stop

at times
Thick and sleepy
the afternoon newsprint
staggers toward
inevitable evening, when the train will rock

me to

sleep

like a drunken nanny.

************
Dandelion traveler
just a whisper and I am gone.
Once green
nothing but sticky newness holding me up
then golden

with my jagged courage, I can make me

mine.
Now I surrender myself to the albescence
of winter,
and to the wind to
find a home.

Erin Louise Rooney Lendzian K’92 studied for six months in Madrid, Spain.


At right: A rural church in a mountain area outside of Baños, Ecuador. Photo by Tessa Swiftney K’92, a religion major.
THE SODA BAR OF TRAGEDY AND FIESTA

Life had become so exciting for Kevin Sinderman that he could not believe he still suffered from periods of intense boredom. He felt that his life resembled an unedited movie, the parts where the people took showers, went to the bathroom, or just sat around—between things—all left in. For instance, what he was doing now—traveling across the coast of Ecuador in South America—would have made great movie stuff in itself. Only now he was sitting, between things, busses to be exact, bored in a dinky and dirty soda bar.

“This,” thought Kevin Sinderman, “I, if director, would definitely snip out.” Leaving in scenes of campesinos riding on top of busses with live chickens under their arms, and of the truck that had flown right off the mountain cliff today because it had been trying to pass a herd of cows that was going just a little too slow. Then, for comic relief, he would leave in as well the part about his diarrhea and how he had actually crapped his pants in the bus terminal, right before the stall finally opened up. He didn’t mind tragedies as long as they held the interest, didn’t make things drag.

Right now in the soda bar, tragedy and fiesta both seemed to be absent in a nothingness of sweat and bottled coca-cola. He had just gotten off of a beautiful but boring six-hour busride. Now, staring at a table of Hemingway-type fisherman who were eating complete rice and meat dinners at 9:00 a.m., Kevin began to feel as if the boredom was really all his fault.

“The only bored people,” he’d read once on a bumper sticker back home, “are boring people.” Yet he could hardly admit that he was boring. It was not his fault he’d gotten sick of waiting around for busses in soda bars, unless of course his standards were just too high.

When he noticed the tail-less parrot picking at a plate of crab meat, he wondered if he should in fact blame himself for his boredom. Coming back from the kitchen, the Señora of the soda bar screamed at the bird, which climbed up onto an electric cord, seemingly unoffended by her attack. It was then that Kevin noticed the Christmas lights, made possible by the cord, and how they, along with some red and green tinsel, had been draped gaudily across a cardboard Santa and a painting of the Last Supper. He thought about what an interesting setting this would make in the movie about his travels, and remembered once again how neat, how entertaining his life actually was. Yet although he couldn’t wait to write home about the fat Señora who yelled at her shirtless husband, and who smiled incredibly at her clientele, and who sucked intently on a crab, Kevin Sinderman was still somehow bored out of his mind.

When the Señora noticed how much he liked to look at her parrot, she smiled at him even more incredibly and he began to fear that she would try to seduce him when he paid for his coke, that her burly husband would come after him with a machete because that was how exciting his life was. Still, the boredom remained as he sat there sipping his soda without ice. The parrot, although in a similar state of inactivity, seemed content enough. It paced a little on the electric cord, the red and green of its feathers blending terrifically with the tacky, latinized Christmas decorations. Watching its eyes blink so expressionlessly, even while embedded in such fiesty plumage, made Kevin’s coke taste syrupy and flat. His head began to ache in the coastal heat, and he no longer swatted at the flies that napped rather than buzzed around his glass.

“That bird is gorgeous,” he thought, “Brilliant. It gets into the film.” As he finished his soda, the bird began to squak, grabbing onto the electric cord with its beak. Although it was only 9:00 a.m., the Señora had all the Christmas lights going full blaze so that when the parrot somehow managed to bite through the cord, a wave of electricity fried its feathers and the soda bar got redder and greener. Kevin Sinderman left the money for his coke on the table with a slight tip for the parrot, and fled onto his ten-hour busride before the Señora could wink at him across her plate of crabs.

Although he liked looking at the scenery through the window, he soon got tired of the trip. “Why can’t we just stop for a coke?” he though, his brain and buttocks aching from lack of motion. But they still had hours to go as they sped through miles and miles of grass huts and banana plantations.

In Ecuador, the center of the world.

Erica Wagner K’92 is an English major and plans to do a creative writing SIP.

Kenya Germany France China Senegal Japan England Hungary Ecuador Italy Spain
January 14, 1991, the day before George Bush declared war on Iraq, I was in my bedroom in Quito, Ecuador, (well-equipped with my personal t.v., bathroom, and maid), thinking of how to phrase my feelings as a U.S. citizen in a third-world country. The huge rally for peace through downtown Quito was the next day, and I wanted to make a poster that could sum up my feelings about the coming war. I knew that there would be many eyes on me tomorrow, being a representative of the U.S., and I knew I would probably have to face much ignorant stereotyping. I wanted to prove to those at the rally that not all U.S. citizens professed the same beliefs as those of George Bush and Ronald Reagan. I realized that the word “peace” was the clearest and simplest message I desired to pass on to others. I painted “La Paz-La Unica Respuesta” (Peace—the only answer) on the backside of an old piece of poster paper, and hoped that my meaning would be clear and understood.

Getting on to the bus the next day, I looked in the eyes of Ecuadorians around me and shrank beneath what I felt to be their persecuting glares. It was overbearing to think how the actions of my government were having a direct and detrimental effect on the people of Ecuador. With the threat of war there had been rumors that the price of oil would be increasing—meaning an increase in the cost of transportation. Ecuadorians would have to use money laid aside for their subsistence, down to their last sucre, to help them ride the bus... So this is what happened to economically dependent countries when the U.S. went to war.

Despite warnings from my host Mom, Clarita, over the possible danger I may have been on the verge of facing, my desire to march became stronger and stronger as I approached my rendezvous spot with Lindsay.

Together, we set out to pick up some Ecuadorian friends. On the way to their apartment, we received encouraging honks from the cars who noticed our posters. Although we initially felt
Santiago: Fast subways and thrilling soaps

If you look at a world map, you’ll see that Chile is one peculiar-looking country. What I found during my three-month internship experience was a country more fascinating than even its own weird shape.

With over four million people, I knew Santiago was a king-size city. However, while exploring it during my first few days before my job started, I was shocked by how spread out it was. Beyond the downtown, most of the houses are one story and you can literally travel for hours and still not run out of Santiago. The santiaguinos told me that lots of room remains for more expansion. That’s reassuring because from the moment I arrived, it was clear that Santiago isn’t going to stop growing.

Headed for work in the morning, I’d be accompanied by hundreds of other people as I left the apartment building en route to the subway station. These men and women were all dressed for success in their business suits and it amazed me how much this could have been a scene from any large U.S. city. The only big difference that struck me was that the subway comes to pick you up every three minutes, so you really have no excuse for being late to work. Nevertheless, I was thankful that it made my commute so quick.

I worked at a franchise of the Manpower Temporary Services organization based in the U.S. Part of my duties included interviewing applicants seeking bilingual positions to test their spoken English. Through these interviews I got to know Chileans and the way they saw their own country. At the outset I’d ask pretty mundane questions like “How did you learn to speak English?” But soon we would move on and talk about more interesting topics like Chilean food, recent soccer matches and especially what happened on last night’s episode of Chile’s ratings-busting soap opera Villa Napoli.

I’ll be the first to admit that Villa Napoli was infinitely more interesting than anything you’ll ever see on “Days of our Lives.” Don’t, however, get the impression that we spent most of the day talking TV. We worked. In fact, I was quite impressed by the work ethic of my fellow employees. When going home from the office each night at 6:00 p.m., I think we were all pretty tired.

Being in Santiago did take a lot of energy. I thought that this experience was going to be a nice pit stop between the truckloads of work back at “K.” But frankly, Chile wore me out. It’s a good thing we get vacation time while on foreign study in Ecuador. I’ll definitely be back.

Al Hannah K’93 is a political science and economics double major. Al spent a year in Peru while still in high school and will heading off to Ecuador for six months to practice his fluent Spanish.
IRAQI-KUWAITI CONFLICT
Pizza bill the only dispute in unlikely friendship

JOURNAL ENTRY 11/29/90
The war with Iraq ended for me today.
Actually the war hasn't started yet, but from what I can get from the newspaper (albeit always three weeks old) it looks like the boys in Washington are getting ready to teach Saddam Hussein a lesson.
Anyways, it all started over a pizza. I knew it was going to be a good day when the only pizzeria in town (and probably the only one around for a few hundred miles) was open. The sign saying "REPAIR" that had graced the locked doors for over a week was finally removed and the doors were open. (Actually, I've learned that "REPAIR" in this case usually means "no cheese.")
Since the place only has six tables, I always end up sharing a table. Today, a couple of Arabic students from the medical institute down the block joined me. It turned out one was Iraqi and the other Kuwaiti.
We couldn't say much... they spoke no English and I can only say "hello" in Arabic, so we had to converse in Russian, which limited the conversation. We argued, and argued, and argued... but only over who would pick up the check. These guys were the best of friends. They joked a little bit about the situation in the Gulf, but we didn't talk about that. There was no need. They weren't a part of it. The Kuwaiti guy didn't steal Iraq's oil and the Iraqi guy didn't send the orders to pillage Kuwait. Hell, I'm more responsible than either of them because, as a citizen of a democracy, at least I have a say in who's running my government.
Trust me, if we declare war on Iraq, Saddam Hussein and the Emir of Kuwait will live through it. Who won't? Maybe these two guys will die, their families, their friends, my friends, me... Who knows? But, those responsible for sending us to fight their battles will survive to start the cycle all over.
For this reason, WAR IS WRONG! Let them fight their own battles. As I sat there, facing the "enemy" in a country where I'm perpetually surrounded by the "enemy" of my parent's generation, I knew that no amount of propaganda could convince me that the human being sitting across the table from me deserved to experience the horror and pain of war.
I've been living for the last three months in the old Stalingrad, a place that was the center of Hell less than forty years ago. I've seen how war affects not only soldiers, but the innocent mothers, and children. I would never wish that on my worst enemy... and never on my new friends.

Adam Lewin '92 spent fall and winter of his junior year in Volgograd, Russia. Adam is a political science major with a concentration in Russian studies. He would like to return to Russia after graduation to teach English.

Above: The largest statue in the world loomed outside Adam Lewin's dorm room.

At left: Leningrad photographed by Adam Lewin.
**Unexpected Growth**

*Travel a foreign land and you might find yourself*

Dear Grandma,

It is two o'clock in the afternoon and I got back from church and dinner a little while ago. I had settled down to study for the day when I realized that I had some things that needed to be shared with you.

My foreign study experience is one that I am still digesting. I talked about it some when I got home, but all that was discussed were the surface details about what I did and where I went. I never really got into how things affected me or how I grew in any way. This is mostly due to me myself not knowing how I had been affected. As I distance myself from the whole experience various things come to light. Some of these things I would like to try to share with you.

First, the amount of information that I learned in that period of time was overwhelming. I so quickly went from being totally unaware about so many things to trying to understand the extreme complexity of certain issues that I really became conscious of how much we as individuals do not know. And I am not talking of just you and me but rather all people in general. There are so many individuals that live lives of need and concern as well as love and joy that we are just unassociated with and unconcerned about; we know that these people exist but it just never hit me in the face so squarely before. With the realization that these are precious creatures of God deserving of God’s compassion and grace as well as our equality and respect I became a little more aware of the tiny but yet very real role we each play in God’s plan. It was humbling while at the same time inspiring. It seemed to put the things that I worry about and have concern about into a little different perspective. I think this is good, and I am still working on how this changes my response to issues and concerns on a personal as well as a more public level.

Second, the place that I find myself within life is more defined. I feel more sure (or should I say reassured) about my plans and goals for the future. This is not because I have figured it all out in some order or fashion but, rather, because I have not. Working within the authority of God and through faith in God I have assurance and promise that I will be o.k. This does not mean that I am leaving everything all up to chance, selling my possessions (not that I have any), and moving into the wilderness. But what it does mean is that I feel I am taking steps toward focusing my career in a way that I would be able to better serve. It does mean that I am finding joy and happiness in the direction of these goals that fortify faith inspiring hope for the future. And it does mean that working within the freedoms we are all given I should have no worry of shame or of being forsaken. Admittedly, this does not mean there will not be disappointment and even what appears to be downright failure. This will likely happen. All I am saying is that I feel excited about the future, and that I feel reassured about the paths I am taking. Many decisions are not yet made and choices seem unclear, but the fog does not worry me. I realize the need of caution and careful decision making this unclarity creates, but that is part of life.

Thirdly and lastly, with the fact that I feel like things are going in the right direction, comes the issue of patience. Coming back to the States, I felt as if I had aged about five years and it was weirder! I just did not know what I was to be doing. I had no normal routine or commitments to structure my day like I do at school or did working in London, and I felt really out of place and seemed to need to stay out of everyone’s way. Not that they did not want me or enjoy my presence, and not that I did not enjoy their presence; but rather, I was not needed as a daily presence in their lives, and I felt that I should be getting on with my life as well. I do not see this as being bad. But I feel that I handled it badly. Many people felt that I shoved them away and viewed me as being ungracious, and looking back I do see how it would appear this way. If you felt this way or had similar feelings I hope you can except my sincerest apology. I consider my family one of my greatest treasures and sources of strength. You are part of what and who I am. Thank you does not seem to say nearly enough. I am excited about things to come and hope to do better in not wanting to rush life along. This also includes taking better appreciation of those who care for me. Please bear with me as I struggle to do better, and do not think that your love and prayers are not appreciated.

Well, I have to go. It has been good writing this letter to you. I hope it finds you well and in peace.

Jeff Mason K’92, who spent six months on the Urban Term program, is a religion and political science double major.

Urban Term
THE BUCKET BATH

During fall and winter of 1989-90, I participated in Kalamazoo College's foreign study program at Fourah Bay College in Freetown, Sierra Leone. From late October until the time I left, the government rationed the students' water supply on campus. As a result, we frequently took bucket baths outside on our balconies in the late afternoon. As time progressed, I grew to love these bucket baths. They gave me a lot of time to think about what I had learned in Africa, and how I felt about the changes that had taken place within me during my time there. I wrote this poem in my journal in late February as a summary of my thoughts and feelings as I approached my departure from Africa. Ann Mees '91 graduated with a degree in history and wants to teach high school social studies.

She stands on her balcony
    Like Eve at the dawn of awareness.
It is the same Earth.
It is the same sky.
But now she has awakened to it,
    And has been given eyes to see it.
Naked,
She spreads her legs
    To let the wind rush through.
She thrusts her breasts
    Toward the sun.
And raises her hands
    To catch its rays.

A bird spirals downward before her,
    One wing pressed along the sleek black body,
    One wing battling with the wind.
Stretch.
The short wings struggle
    To balance the long torso.
"Why did God give you wings, Bird?"
    She asks.

Adolescence.
To try.
To practice.

Like an arrow,
    It shoots across the hazy sky.
Then arches its back
    And curves upward.
Stretch.
    Balance.
    Glide.
Find the Way of the Wind
    And align yourself to its course.
Let the wind support you--
    Not suppress you.
This is freedom:

The Atlas
28
photo by Diane Osborne K'91 in Sierra Leone.
Not to be without Force,  
But within Force.  
She smiles.  
Adulthood.  
Where the restless spirit  
Wrestles  
With Nature  
In search of a common home.  
Adulthood.  
Where the two meet.  
Where the two mesh.

"Welcome home,"  
She says  
To the reflection in the water.

And then breaks the image  
With the dip of the calabash.  
Tiny ripples bounce  
Against the sides of the iron bucket.  
A whisper of thunder  
Aroused an image:  
Waves crashing.  
Sun setting.  
Rocks roaring,  
As they tumble.
Carved away from the precipice  
On which she sits,  
By the Sea-Artist  
Sculpting the shore of Senegal.  
Accept the Force.  
Where you stand is never solid.  
It never will be.  
But it needn’t be solid to be beautiful.  
And it needn’t be solid to be complete.  
The stubborn rock reluctantly gives way  
To the inevitable.  
The turmoil itself is beautiful.  
The change itself is beautiful.  
And the end result?  
"I won’t see it in this life."  
She thinks.
She smiles.  
Adulthood.  
Where insecurity and confidence sleep together.

"Peace to you,"  
She says  
To the reflection in the calabash.

And tips the cup.  
Water flows freely.  
Cascading through her hair,  
Narrowing to a stream  
Between the blades

The Atlas

30
photo by Diane Osborne K'91 in Sierra Leone.
Of her shoulders.
Trickling downward.
Forming a reservoir
At her feet.
A hint of mist
As the water strikes the hot ground
Revives a vision:
Water rushing,
Weaving with tremendous power
Through boulders and decaying wood
Before leaping
Without hesitation.
Falling.
Falling.
Crashing
On the rocks below.
Huge clouds of mist
Foster tiny rainbows.
Don’t be afraid of the Force.
To risk is to be truly alive.
Whatever the experience,
The outcome will always be hope.
She smiles.
Adulthood.
Where trial doesn’t lead to discouragement,
But vision.

“Live and learn,”
She says
To the reflection
In the puddle.

She stands in the sun to dry.
Kenyan Journals
Collins Fellow returns to womb of humanity

And now it has begun to rain. Beautiful, light night rain - like a soft lullaby. I think this is what it must sound like inside a mother’s womb. The gentle rush of life-giving water encircling you. Very dark. Very warm. Very nourishing. And that is what it is like being in Africa. Like being in the womb of human kind’s mother. This is where human life began. I am almost on that very spot. And who knows, perhaps the dirt on my heals comes from the grave of Eve. Perhaps she ate sukuma wiki too, and had bowls of little fish with all their eyes staring up at her. Perhaps she romped through the grass and skipped on the hills of Kisii, marvelling at how much she suddenly understood now that she was human. Perhaps there is a part of Eve in me. Perhaps a cell. Or maybe I have seen something she has seen or something she has touched, or at least something she breathed.

When Jesus called his disciples he gave them new names - names which denoted their position in the Church and fit their characteristics: Peter the Rock, James Son of Thunder. I wonder what he would call me. I think it would be Eve. The fallen woman. God’s challenge. The lover he can’t seem to let go. The survivalist who endures his wrath. The sadist who chooses the wilderness instead of paradise, always keeping gardeners on the edge.—Ann Mees K’91

The world is alive with the peaceful yet eerie power of woman tonight. The moon is full and it calls signs of life forth from us. Like a tidal wave, our bodies churn and rupture and men shy away, like they closed their eyes at the crucifixion. Some unable to bear the suffering. Some unable to grasp the power. They are uncomfortable with our connection to each other and to the earth. It almost seems as though the electricity of industrialized, ordered society was designed to isolate women from each other and from their home. To get us off kilter, away from the moon.

The world is so alive tonight. As much as I live being able to see billions of stars in the dark sky, I find the madness of the full moon much less frightening, because I am at home in the noise of crickets and dogs howling and howling, the clouds lit bright, outlined against the night sky by the radiance of that moon. And the lightning.

Tonight there was lightning - constant lightning in the southern sky - but no thunder to be heard - streaks like neon rods strung along a crooked tree branch and large flashes like explosions and clouds of smoke in a great magician’s disappearing, or perhaps appearing, act. I could almost visualize God with a conductor’s stick, directing a huge orchestra - waving it and pointing it. With each cast of her wand a zigzag of lightning shot from the tip toward the instrument with next solo. The west, the east, the south. God must have been standing behind me in the north. I could not see her, only her orchestra. And the wind came like music, blowing from left and right and front, very gently, enveloping me. The silhouettes of the trees and rooftops illuminated by the moon told me I was not alone as audience. But they seemed more a part of the performance than an audience. And I realize that I, too, am more a part of the chorus than an observer.—Ann Mees K’91

Above: Ann Mees K’91, pictured on the Equator, returned to Kenya to complete her SIP as the recipient of the Paul Collins Fellowship.

At right: The tour guide of the Djenne Mosque, Mali, is captured on film by Ann Mees K’91.
Life in Japan

I am glad that I was able to come to Japan. People often ask me why I came to Japan. I wanted to understand Japan better and I wanted to try to speak to Japanese people. But once in a while, people are not able to understand what I am saying. It's because I mistake one word for another. For example, I will say "carrot" instead of "pregnancy" or use the word for "doll" instead of "goldfish."

But the Japanese also sometimes make English mistakes or pronounce words a little bit strangely.

So far what I have enjoyed the most has been the trip to Shimaneken that I took with some friends. I did some skiing and everybody enjoyed the hot springs. I'd love to go back there.

Something that I thought was interesting in coming to Tokyo was the number of drunks roaming the streets. Last Saturday I went to Shibuya with some friends. I saw two people who looked like students sleeping on the street. So we took pictures of them. And then on the way back from Roppongi, Jennifer and I got on the subway. We were reading a newspaper article on sexual harassment in other countries. While we were laughingly reading this, a businessman standing in front of us who apparently didn't approve said, "hello," and walked away. We laughed harder afterwards. It was really funny.

Living in Japan has had its bad points sometimes and then has its really fun points other times. Overall, it was just right.

Mika Osaki K'92 translated this essay from the Japanese by Karen Volk. Mika is a political science major and studied in Clermont-Ferrand for her six month foreign study.
Above: An old Chinese man sells candied fruit on the street. Photo by Melissa Rennie K’92, a chemistry major.

At right: Turkish bridge built in 1400’s in town of Mostar in Republic of Bosnia – Herzegovina, Yugoslavia. Photo by Geoff Galster K’92.