For over 30 years, almost 90 percent of Kalamazoo College graduates have taken the opportunity to study abroad. Kalamazoo College offers the most extensive foreign study program in the United States, which allows students not only the opportunity of academic foreign study, but also the chance to complete their career development and Senior Individualized Projects abroad.

The Atlas is a publication of Kalamazoo College that contains student writing and photography taken from their experiences abroad. The magazine reaches students and their parents as well as alumni, friends of the College, prospective students, and current members of the College community. Students are asked to submit original prose and poetry, photography, and drawings for possible publication. Members of both the Department of English and the Office of Foreign Study supervise its production. Funding for the Atlas comes from administrative offices, alumni, and friends of the College. This edition of the Atlas was completed as part of a Senior Individualized Project.

Editor

Erin Miller

Associate Editors

Kathy Bradshaw
Kezia Pearlman
Erica Pulling
Kathy Wilkens

Advisory Editors

Joseph Brockington
Deborah Luyster

Technical Advisor

Hank Techentin

On the Cover—Quartier Vaugeux
Photograph by Kathy Bradshaw
On a small street in the Quartier Vaugeux in Caen, France, a black cat watches from the stairs.

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La Petite France

Paris rushes
through my veins like
the Seine surrounds the city
pulsing with the
metro transporting a
thousand different lives with
mine and the
gypsy girl (lips stained with tears) as she
sidles up next to me
chanting a foreign lullaby
twisting her body methodically around
my legs looking for freedom in my pocket to
survive another day.

I search elsewhere
on a train bound for Strasbourg where the
cathedral stands like a rose
pillar burning with the
sun sets on two brothers who lie
dead in their mother’s arms like a
statue in the square in which vendors sell
sausages on sticks like popsicles to a
herd of American tourists whose
chatter mixes with the dialect only
Alsacians understand
like you at the end of my journey
waiting to catch me as
I leap off the platform
into your heart.

— Elizabeth White

Along the Left Bank of the Seine
Photograph by Kathy Wilkens
The River Seine, which flows from
east to west, splits the city of
Paris. The Left Bank lies to the
south while the Right Bank lies to
the north.

Elizabeth White ’95, an English and French double major, studied in Caen, France last fall and winter. She is spending this summer in
France completing her Senior Individualized Project on French writer and filmmaker Marguerite Duras.
Sola a Firenze

While I was on foreign study in Florence, Italy, I was all alone. No one else from Kalamazoo participated in the program, and it was fabulous. It was a time for me, only me. My choices were mine and affected only myself. The world around me, the city of Florence, my new family and friends were opened up to me and for the first time in my life, I was permitted to explore freely. After a few weeks of confused wandering, Florence, suddenly felt like home. I no longer needed a map to find my way around downtown. I knew where to buy the best pizza or gelati. My attempts at haggling with the merchant vendors became successful. I was understanding more and more of the conversation at the dinner table with all eight members of my host family.

Although I loved every second that I spent in Florence, there were moments when I longed for the everyday events of home. In a letter home to my parents, I expressed some of these feelings:

2 October 1993

...I miss hearing dad getting a snack late at night. I miss the sound the washer lid makes when it falls while mom is doing laundry. I miss seeing dad’s footprints in the carpet. I miss carpet! I miss my teddy bear and my CDs. I miss daddy’s spaghetti and mom’s french toast. I miss two liter bottles of Diet Cherry Coke in the refrigerator that I can drink without a glass. I miss skim milk (or 2%) on Cheerios and orange juice for breakfast. I miss coming home late at night and making a peanut butter and jelly sandwich before bedtime. I miss the sound of both of you walking around the house in the morning when I am just waking up. I miss the sound of the pan cupboard. I miss kissing you good night, good morning, and good bye. I miss your voices and your hugs. I miss cooking. I miss getting ready for the holidays. I can’t believe I’ll miss Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. It will seem like my year is incomplete without them. I miss the sound of mom typing on the computer. I miss our doorbell (even the clicking of the back door bell that doesn’t work). I miss my room and my pictures. I miss talking with you about all of the day’s trivialities, which are too expensive to discuss long distance. I can’t wait to make dinner for you, great Italian meals the way my Italian mother makes. I miss having you seven digits away. I miss driving. I miss the sugar maples. I miss the Michigan fresh air. I’m going to miss fall. I miss the Montessori kids. I miss having a family size box of tissues in every room. I miss having the light left on for me (it uses too much electricity here). I miss my piano. I miss my hair dryer. I miss my pillows and blankets. I miss Meijer. I miss grandma’s silly stories about people that I don’t even know. I miss the smell of Daddy’s Polo cologne that always lingers in the hallway in the morning. I miss fabric softener. I miss the VCR. I miss hearing you guys on the phone. I miss getting phone calls. I miss baths. I miss getting tucked in at night. I miss having mom always know where everything is. Basically, most of all I miss just sitting at home with all of the sounds, smells, and comforts that have made that house “home” for me for 20 years. These “missed” things don’t make me sad, really. Actually they make me very happy. I took them, and you, for granted before, but you can never really know how wonderful things are until they are gone. Luckily, I will get them back in five months. Until then, I am having the time of my life, and I love you both more than ever.

Love always and forever—Amy

Now that I am home these events are once again a part of my everyday ritual, and they have lost some of the magic they seemed to have possessed when I was in Italy. However, every so often, as I’m adding fabric softener to the wash, or as I hear my dad open the refrigerator at 2:00 am, I feel a sense of comfort. There is security in the knowledge that some things never change, especially since I now have a whole new list of “Things that I miss in Italy.” It’s good to know that when I return for a visit, the Duomo will still be in the same place, the David will still be one of the finest looking pieces of marble I have ever seen, and my host mother will still be there waiting with open arms and a steaming bowl of gnocchi with pesto sauce.

— Amy Butera

Amy Butera ’95 is a health science major. She studied in Florence, Italy last fall and winter.
DUMB

Laugh
while I
Gag
on vowels unendurable.

Shout
while I
Choke
on words unpronounceable.

Scream
as you
Silence me
with a language that
excludes
Me.

They say it is easy to
Learn
to cope, adapt
integrate, assimilate
submit.

I kill myself
as I try to speak.

You call me
Dumb.

— Elizabeth Stands

The Singel Canal in Amsterdam
Photograph by Adam Afridi
The city of Amsterdam is separated
by many little canals, including the
Singel. After classes ended, English
major Adam Afridi ’95 traveled to
Amsterdam. He spent six months in Cáceres, Spain.

Elizabeth Stands ’95 spent six months studying in Clermont-Ferrand, France. She is a political science and international and area studies double major with a concentration in women’s studies.

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Five of us wandered into the taverna, exhausted after a day of exploring ancient ruins under the hot glare of the Greek sun. We were nearing the end of our time on the island of Crete, and neither my friends nor I were eager to get back to our classes or the noise and pollution of Athens. Settling around a table, we moved our chairs so that we could see the last of the sun as it sank into the Mediterranean. The waiter brought out a plate of olives, as well as some ouzo to drink, and soon the food and liquor loosened our tongues, and our talk became animated. We spoke of the travel we had done that day—the visit to the monastery, seeing the Minoan Palace at Knossos, driving through the mountains. As I listened, I gingerly touched my sunburned nose and marveled at the extraordinary fact that the sun in Greece manages to fight its way through even the most potent 30+ sunscreens. But it is not only the intensity of the sun that makes Greece different and special, I thought, but also the startling dark purple of the sea, the thousands of olive trees that silver the landscape, the white marble cliffs. “Really, I could live here forever,” someone said, and a chorus of nods wound its way around the table. Another gulped down a fiery sip of ouzo and declared, “I’m beginning to feel like I’m a part of this culture.”

We were so engrossed in our conversation that we failed to notice the Greek widow that was watching us from the corner. Bent by age, she wore a thick black shawl over her head, and her lined mouth was like a jagged seam across her face. It was not until she shouted out loud in boisterous laughter that, with astonishment, we realized that we weren’t the only ones there. Slowly, slowly she lifted herself up and shuffled across the floor. “Καλημέρα,” she said, and affectionately patted us on our heads as she walked out. Her smile was knowing; she had seen so many of us come and go. She had watched the strangers come by the boatload, clutching their guidebooks, struggling to make sense of what they don’t know. And even in the lazy, golden warmth of the Greek autumn, the ferries continued to be filled with travelers like my friends and me, eager to discover our own two-week paradise. But after the ferries stop chugging across the Aegean to deposit the sun-seekers and archaeological buffs, and after the cafe owners pull the patio chairs and tables inside for the winter, she will still be there, drinking syrupy Greek coffee, perhaps enjoying the sweet silence of the village during the rainy season. It is her place, really, for as much as we are amazed by the sun, sea, and sky, we will eventually go away and the memory of it all will be tucked away like the pictures in our photo album. But the rhythm of the sea, the gentle slopes of the olive groves will remain as familiar to her as the blood that rushes through her veins. Knowing this, she turned and waved good-bye to us, ancient dust billowing up in her wake as she walked toward home.

— Erica Pulling

Two Boats
Photograph by Jeffrey Lund
On a beautiful day in Monastraki, Greece, two boats sit tied up to the pier. Political Science major Jeffrey Lund ’95 studied for six months in Erlangen, Germany. He traveled to Greece during his Christmas break.

Erica Pulling ’95, an English major, studied for six months in Athens, Greece.
Some Positive Things

Orientation, Chicago
September 13, 1993

The signs are everywhere, that all I am wishing for is here, if I wish to take! The past two days have made me completely aware that I have the unique opportunity to educate myself on my own terms—take it to the extent that I desire. I finally feel as though I am ready to take that responsible step towards becoming a true student.

Berlin, Germany
September 26, 1993

The most anxious and nervous moments of my trip have come and gone and, as usual, there was nothing to worry about. The son of the homestay family, Gregor, picked me up from the train station and made a very easy transition for me. Extremely accommodating. Modest, warm, and nice—exactly the way I would want it to be. God is kind, It Is Official!

The mother of the home, Monica, was running around like mad, as every good mother does; I've been blessed to be able to recognize it. While I was being introduced to the father of the home, she was making dinner, setting up my room, and trying her hardest to start conversation—just perfect.

September 30, 1993

I am learning how to be comfortable while lost. I do eventually arrive where I'm going, but being on time is the real struggle. And that is what soothes my anxieties, knowing that I am never not going to find my destination.

Gransee, Germany
October 1, 1993

I would like to give thanks to those in charge of this trip. I am having the time of my life. It is at first sight, an extremely difficult transition in which I have been placed. Nobody speaks English with the exception of one student who has only had three years of lessons. But it is still a wonderful experience. I sat at the dinner table, ate an exquisite meal, and simply answered and raised questions the best I could. This is a family with whom, had I spoken their language, I would have become intimate. Tonight we went to their daughter's home and drank with the whole family. They tried their hardest to speak with me, and this was a comforting feeling. I am extremely lucky. Hopefully, I can assume that the two homestay families with which I have been, have also fed off my character which made our situations all the better. Now as I lay in a king size bed with flannel sheets, down comforter and pillows, in a small, rural village in Germany—nobody could ask for more.

Pozan, Poland
October 16, 1993

Today the World Series begins, but I will have to be entertained in other ways, I am sure. As we approached Pozan yesterday, my usual preliminary anxiety towards the upcoming homestay was eased. I do not know what it was, but a feeling came over me that calmly said, “Relax, this is nothing.” And the voice was correct. I think this will be the best homestay yet. No parent, just another 20 year old college student who believes in alternative music and appreciates the simple things in life. How do these things always happen to me? Even this trip as a whole—I was not at all sure what to expect, but it has turned out to be more than I could have ever anticipated. I thought, maybe I would feel out of place being an English student among economists, but I was kidding myself. I seem to be comfortable in every arena I enter.

I am learning how to be comfortable while lost. I do eventually arrive where I'm going, but being on time is the real struggle.

Last night felt like home. Talking about music over a few drinks and cigarettes. I wouldn't be doing anything different were I to dropout, however I am receiving college credit—amazing! But I have been working myself along the way. I've been searching, whereas at home I live typically and let routine consume me. Every day is monumental, so long, and
so different from the next. There is no pattern. Life has been treating me so well I feel I owe somebody. But I have taken the position that this trip is for me—to grow, learn, mature, and set the foundation for future success. Only then can I properly give a piece of myself to the world.

It is a trip like this that keeps my visions clear. All the good things and all the things I truly enjoy in life are brought to the forefront of my mind, making absolutely sure I do not lose track of my dreams.

London, England
November 19, 1993

The lecturer yesterday sparked something interesting when he spoke of America. He said the beauty of America, as opposed to the Eastern Europe communist standard of living, is that everyone in America is entitled to "have a go." The ability to pursue happiness in whatever manner desired—The American Dream. And what struck me is that the majority of Americans do not utilize their birthright. No one seems to follow their dreams, even though everyone is entitled to do so. It was this outsider’s perception of America that made clear for me exactly how fortunate I am, and how prosperous and fulfilling my future should be.

The really shocking facet of his lecture is that his description of Eastern European workers seemed to parallel the state of the majority of American workers. I find it exceptionally fascinating to think that the infinite opportunities for Americans, and the "do what you are told" atmosphere of communist Eastern Europe, both yield the same unsatisfied prosperities for the majority of their people. It seems as Americans we close off our options as we grow older. But we limit ourselves, nobody ever says don’t be what you desire to be. Once we enter college our minds, for the most part, are cemented into the profession which will render money, not fulfillment. The American Reality vs. The American Dream, what went wrong?

November 25, 1993
Thanksgiving Day

As I reflect on our time in Chicago, I really think I’ve done incredibly well. I was not completely confident whether I was ready to commit myself to becoming a true student, but I have discovered that, this was my time! I have been able to combine responsibility with creativity and realized that I can do both well—one just isn’t enough. I have made real and concrete accomplishments over the past 10 weeks. I have a journal which I can look back on with pride. I have never felt more sure of myself and my future. Although I will have to miss Thanksgiving Day football for the first time in ages, I know I am blessed, and I give thanks to all those who have made it possible.

— Suprotik Ghosh

English Major Suprotik Ghosh ’95 studied for three months overseas on the European Academic Team Program through Antioch College, which took him through Germany, Poland, and England. He would like to return to Poland someday.
Another Theory of Relativity

On the table in front of me,
I watch the apple begin to rock
with the new rhythm of the train.
The white flesh has lost its sheen
but hasn’t yet developed a brown rubber film
in reaction to the stale air.
Like a seesaw, it balances between
the faded brown vinyl of the seat across from me
and the passing view outside through the dry rain-stained window.
I stare at the familiar mountains
approaching and the grass
covering the plains as far as I can see.
I am acutely aware of both the critical
native eyes on my disheveled appearance
and of the relief of having the compartment to myself.
I sleep and write poetry at the same time,
musing about the afternoon calm and
marvelling at the dawn I’ve come into.
I only know that the apple is rocking on the table
and that this present is composed of
several.

— Jessica Haney

Near Chateau de Murol
Photograph by Jessica Haney
The Chateau de Murol is located just outside of Clermont-Ferrand, France.

An English major with a concentration in women’s studies, Jessica Haney spent six months in Clermont-Ferrand, France.
Japanese First Encounters

When I first landed in Japan, I was greeted by two individuals from Nagoya Gakuin University where I would be studying for the next six months. One of them was an official by the name of Nara-san and the other was a student. The greetings were all in Japanese and since all three of us from “K” had traveled together, we managed to muddle through with a small portion of dignity intact. This was quite a feat I thought considering we had just finished an 18 hour plane ride. However, immediately following this small moment of victory there was a long unsettling pause as Nara-san rattled on about something to us in Japanese. Our completely blank looks must have been the first clue to him that we had missed perhaps a small amount of what was said. Eventually somehow we managed to understand that Nara-san was going to pick someone else up at the train station and that our luggage was going with him. He then also added that we would be able to reclaim our luggage later that night. Furthermore we learned that the student, whose nickname was Moochi, was going to escort us back to the dorm by taxi and show us where we would be staying.

After saying our farewells to Nara-san we got into a taxi with Moochi and started the trip to the seminar house. In the car we all tried to make some semblance of conversation with what little Japanese we were able to recall at the time. Of the three of us from “K” who were going to this particular site, I was the one who had taken the most Japanese classes, therefore, felt that it was up to me more than the others to try and make some effort toward communication. With this in mind, I launched into a long narrative of our trip, college, things I saw out the window using just about any Japanese word I could think of. Do not think that this came out of my mouth with any amount of fluency. To their credit my fellow “K” students came to my rescue and at least helped me salvage some semblance of pride from the debacle I had just made of this first encounter. Thus the last half of the trip was made in great silence by myself while my companions chatted amiably away.

By the time we had arrived at school I had recovered sufficiently enough to manage a few introductions to my fellow students who had already arrived at the seminar house. After placing my things in my room I returned to the main lounge. To my amazement and further embarrassment there was Moochi speaking nearly flawless English with one of the other foreign students. My face must have changed into a deep crimson hue from the looks I received from the others in the room. Moochi just turned, looked at me, and smiled. At which point I burst out laughing about my own foolishness.

— Erik Burk

A Japanese Grandmother
Photograph by Susan Jevitt
International and area studies major Susan Jevitt ’95 photographed her Japanese host grandmother outside of her home in Daito, Japan. She studied in Waseda, Japan for 11 months.

Erik Burk ‘95 completed a six-month foreign study in Nagoya, Japan. He is a physics major with minors in economics and Japanese.
Rare Situations Yield even Rarer Results

Foreign study. These two words linger in Kalamazoo College conversation from the moment you step on campus. Of course foreign study gave me the opportunity to see foreign lands and to open my eyes to a new culture, to greatly improve my French, to essentially have six and a half months of fun without the pressing worries normally associated with a “K” College quarter, but most importantly, it gave me the rare opportunity to form new friendships and to reestablish an old one. And for these things I thank the experience.

I remember sitting in a classroom last summer with the other people going to Clermont-Ferrand. I sat there, looking around the room, desperately searching for a friend’s face with whom I would be spending the next half of a year. No such face. I surveyed the room again, willing to settle for even a familiar face. Again, no dice. The 10 of us in that room represented the most diverse group you could throw together. We all moved in different social circles, had different majors, different interests, different everything. However, we had one key similarity, we would all be going to Clermont and leaving behind our comfortable American lives.

I quickly learned that rare situations yield even rarer results. From moment one, I felt comfortable with the people in my group, these people whom I scarcely knew. I chatted with Elizabeth during the flight from Detroit to Cincinnati as if we were old friends. During our layover, Suzanne and I talked about how hard it was to say good-bye to our families. I joked around with Joanna and Heather. Laughed at Kathy and the other Elizabeth who were stressing already. Listened to Mike and Kathy argue. I sat there marveling at how quickly the whole thing had happened. This thing to which I refer is the friendship between the members of such a diverse group. I sat there talking and laughing with people to whom I’d never spoken. There was none of the usual shyness or reserve associated with individuals who do not know one another. We talked about school, about our families and friends at home, about being a little scared, a little anxious, and already a little homesick. What was going on?! A rare situation was beginning to yield rare results.

I sat next to Roopa on the flight over to Paris. We talked for a while and I teased her about all her hand gestures while she spoke. Several of us joined Jessica in a quick conversation with a Frenchman. After the long flight, we got to top the trip off with a four hour layover at the gare de Lyon in Paris. We piled all of our bags (which appeared to total just over 600, apparently we had something else in common, we were nearly all bad packers) on the floor of the train station and stationed ourselves around them accordingly. Bill, Suzanne, Sarah, and I played euchre. Everyone talked and laughed, especially at the bizarre looks and double takes we were getting from the métroers. The way we were behaving, one would have guessed we had known one another for years. The train ride was similar. Joanna and I talked (sans arrêt) the whole ride. Looking around, everyone else was chatting, too. After three hours we had finally arrived. With so many bags and only a two minute stop, we all quickly took on an assembly line formation and worked together chucking bag after bag off the train. Lynn began tossing a bag that did not belong to any of us, and we were quickly informed of the mistake by a rather hostile French woman. Exhausted, and no longer at the point of really caring about much, we all just laughed. We seemed to be doing a lot of that together, laughing.

Our first night in France we all met up and decided to go to a bar, after all we deserved a beer or two. I am sure we were quite a sight that night, not only to the French who saw us as an obnoxious group of loud Americans, but to the general observer as well, who would have seen us as a noisy group of misfits. Oddly enough, I found myself enjoying this odd group. How bizarre to think that I was meeting so many new people and enjoying it after having gone to the same school with them for two and a half years. I was asking myself why I had not been hanging out with Heather or Joanna before
The following 198 days were much like the first one described above. We did not always hang out together, we began to go in our own directions, smaller groups of friends emerged, but we always managed to remain friends. Those days had their ups and downs. Some days I felt confident, fluent, happy and at home; other days I wanted to come home, to give up on ever being able to speak, I felt sad and alone. However, one thing did remain constant, my new friends and je suis contente de dire qu'on soit toujours amis.

Foreign study also allowed me to make friends other than with those people from Kalamazoo College. At school, I met so many different people from so many different countries. There was Els from Belgium, Wioletta from Poland, Vera from Brazil, Mary and Amanda from England, Rob from Oklahoma, and there was of course Kenichi from Japan. I thank the foreign study experience for these friends and for allowing me to see other cultures, even beyond the French one in which I was immersed.

Living in a family gave me the chance to develop very close relationships with several individuals. My host mother and I developed a nice friendship. She treated me like a daughter or a friend from day one. We had our fights, but often it was because she acted too much like a mother. Looking back and hearing other people’s stories, I would have rather had a host mom that cared too much than one that I never got to know because she cared too little. Pierre-Emmanuel, my host brother, was like an old friend. He and I joked around at the dinner table, played with the dog together and occasionally went shopping together. Romain and Emmanuelle, the grandchildren, and I drew pictures, played with play-dough, played chez coiffeur (I wonder whose hair got pulled on and ripped out the most?), and watched cartoons. My host father was a bit of an odd character, but he did manage to always keep things interesting. He made me sample more than one of his fine basement distillery wines and had five stories and nine jokes for every occasion. Fabrice, my host brother, was quite unique. He taught me card tricks and card games, I taught him the words to American songs. He taught me swear words in French, I did the same for him in English. He called me his best friend, I called him my substitute brother for six months.

I also had the opportunity to see a friend of mine again, Christophe, a former foreign exchange student during my senior year in high school. For the first time in three years, we were able to make fun of one another again and argue face to face. He gave me a place to stay in downtown Paris and while reestablishing an old friendship, I was able to see his real life, much like he saw mine while he was in the United States.

Kalamazoo College, regardless of all the problems I may have with you, I owe you for six of the most educational and most unique months of my life. You put me in a rare situation, from which an even rarer result emerged. I came home with so many friends I would never have been able to find without the experience abroad. I also would like to make sure those people of whom I am writing realize that I owe the experience the thanks only for the opportunity, but I owe you the thanks for all the laughs, all the fun, and all the memories. And to those people to whom I do not make reference and with whom I did not spend any time, I hope what I wrote made you think of your own foreign study and reminds you of the diverse things you did and the bizarre situations you sometimes found yourself and may we never forget those six months abroad.

— Barb Sheehy

A health science and political science double major, Barb Sheehy ’95 spent six months in Clermont-Ferrand. She hopes to return to France to teach after graduation.
Recognizing the Homeland

Can you recognize the Homeland when it's Not your own?
Can you worship in a Gingerbread cathedral with Real gold stars and moons you Wish were in your Pocket, not painted on Dark ceilings where Tourists, not God, wander?
Outside my apartment building, Children and dogs Roam in a toxic waste dump, Looking in Chipped porcelain sinks and Yellow Volga car skeletons for Something taken away from their Grandparents during the Great Socialist Revolution.
Men and women Build a great bonfire, Outside the metro at night, Roasting fish and pulling Flesh off bones, they Hope communism will Burn, and not their Souls for obeying the Government and fearing Stalin, not God.

— Linda Shipley

Church of the Bleeding Savior Photograph by Linda Shipley Located along the Griboyedov Canal in St. Petersburg, Russia, the Church of the Bleeding Savior sits on the site of the 1881 assassination of Tsar Alexander II.

Linda Shipley '95, an English major, studied for six months in St. Petersburg, Russia. She plans to return to Russia after graduation to participate in an academic program based in Siberia.
Experiencing the Amazon

el 18 de diciembre de 1993

Dear Mom and Dad,

I am now safe and sound at my host family's house after an exhausting yet exciting six days in the middle of the rain forest. The trip there started off a little slow because we had to ride a dirty bus for 12 hours to get to this little old town called Coca. The first two hours on the bus I had to ride standing up, while some of the people in my group had to ride on the top of the bus because there were too many people crammed on already (even though we bought reserved tickets). I guess I can't complain too much since the ticket only cost about $5.00.

After reaching Coca, we had to take a six hour boat ride to get to the rain forest. The best way to describe the area I stayed in would be to call it a jungle paradise filled with bright flowers with green everywhere I looked. The place we stayed at had a dining area and an electrical generator which went off every night at 10 p.m. There were about 15 cabanas made of palm trees, each with two beds and a private bathroom. It was kind of weird crawling into a bed each night that was covered with mosquito netting, but I learned to really appreciate them after discovering the new and very large insects that inhabited our cabanas.

The first morning there I actually got myself out of bed at 5:30 am to go bird watching with our Spanish-speaking tour guide. As I crawled into the little canoe, along with three other early risers, we could hear the “howler monkeys” breaking the silence of the morning with their eerie moans. We paddled down the still waters of the Yuturi River, a tributary of the Amazon, through the light fog. We saw an incredible array of parrots, toucans, and other tropical birds during the hour-long canoe trip.

During the days that followed, our group took long hikes and learned the secrets of the jungle from our tour guide. We ate ants that tasted like lemon, tasted a reddish tree sap called sangre de drag, which is believed to cure many diseases (including cancer), and we waded through piranha-infested swamps. The most exciting part of this jungle adventure was the midnight walk I took with the guide, Patty, and my friend Steve. After seeing snakes, a tarantula, a scorpion, and big scary bugs, the guide made us stand in the dark with our flashlights off for a whole minute! It was nerve-wracking to know the jungle was full of these creatures but that we couldn’t see them. Afterwards, we lay in the grass near our cabanas and gazed into the sky at the endless number of stars. It was a great way to end our week in the Amazon jungle of South America.

Mil besos y abrazos,
Theresa

— Theresa Gutierrez

A Backstrap Weaver and her Child
Photograph by Rebecca Beebe
A member of the Salsacca community of weavers in Ecuador, this woman stays hard at work as her son watches over her. A biology major, Rebecca Beebe ’95 spent six months in Quito, Ecuador participating in an environmental studies program.
Trying to Speak English in Spain

It was the first week we were in Spain and I still hadn’t screwed up. I had heard all of those stories about people saying, “La palla está muy rico;” instead of “El pollo está muy rico;” or telling some Spanish student you were very “embarazada.” There were worse stories but I knew I wouldn’t commit such grievous errors. No, my fate was to be more embarrassed in front of my fellow English speakers than the Spanish. It was all right to mess up in front of your host family because they understood that you could barely understand them anyway, but when you bite it in front of your friends, that’s a whole different matter.

“IT all went well until I stepped up to the counter to ‘um’ and ‘ah’ myself a pastry.”

We all walked back from the facultad together, up through the Plaza Mayor, bars, shoe stores, and pastry shops. When all you have for breakfast is a couple of galletas and a cup of cola-coa, the smell of the pastries is nothing short of intoxicating. We could practically see the sweet scents swirl through the air, coiling around our heads, drawing us captive to the counter to stare drooling at the display. At first we didn’t quite know what each pastry was except for the obvious croissant. Still we were hesitant to order. But soon, in fear of seeming even more stupid and foreign than we already appeared, we plucked up our courage and stepped forward. Despite the elaborate and fluid speeches we had planned in our heads, all that came out were a series of “Ah...un...oops, una...(and pointing at the pastry) Si! Gracias!” The woman at the counter told us the price, but, unable to understand her, we just made sure to give her a bill big enough to cover the cost.

It all went well until I stepped up to the counter to “um” and “ah” myself a pastry. Miraculously, she understood me. The others had started to walk up Calle Pintores and I turned to follow them, but as I stepped away, cramming a corner of the napolitana chocolate into my mouth, I heard the woman cry out. “Oye!” I stopped and looked back. Was it me she wanted? It was. My heart froze in my chest and my friends turned to look at me. What did she want?

She pointed at me and said, “Tu no me has pagado.” Huh, what did that mean? Then it dawned on me and my face turned the shade of red on the Spanish flag. Stumbling forward, I jammed my hand into my pocket to search for money stammering out the line that would be the cause of my mortification.

“What...I no pay you yet!”

It wasn’t that I hadn’t said it in Spanish, rather, it was that I had said it so poorly in English. Even the poorest Spanish-speaking English speaker could still say “I haven’t paid you yet” under times of extreme stress, yet I had failed. And I had failed amidst the uproarious laughter of the only people who could understand me, my friends.

— Matt Murphy

Matt Murphy ’95 spent six months in Caceres, Spain. He is a history major with an art minor.

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Sitting in a Cafeteria at the Goldsmith Building in Jerusalem, Israel

In front of me, students are talking to one another, sipping Turkish coffee, choosing the sugar or the artificial sweetener.

In a diagonal corner, a tall man in a striped shirt blows out cigarette smoke, drinking Maccabees at eleven in the morning.

To my left, long dark hair veils a face intent on a prayer for Owen Meany. Above my head, fluorescent lights burn, goading us to be silent apart from the coffee conversations that we don't take notes of. I sit back and envy this moment when existence, yielding to habit, is easy.

— Helen Han

The Wailing Wall Photograph by Helen Han
On Yom Kippur, the holiest day in Judaism, Jews dress up in all white and pray at Kotel, or The Wailing Wall.

Helen Han '95 spent nine months studying at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in Israel. She is a religion and English double major.
Living the Life of a Tibetan Buddhist Monk

High in the Indian Himalayas, the glaciers loomed silently above and the gray morning sky was threatening snow. I climbed slim mountain trails between the leveled land of naked apple orchards which quickly gave way to steep-bodied pine forests and menacing rock faces. I tried my best to concentrate on the path before me, but my eyes were drawn inevitably upward. Catching sight of hundreds of small white prayer flags in the trees surrounding a humble little three story building built out of the mountain side, my destination became manifest: the hermitage of a Tibetan Buddhist master.

My ear to the door, I was greeted by the steady hum of mantra, chanted prayers and supplications, and in true Don Knotts fashion, I stumbled into the master’s room. The mantras stopped, the clackety-clicking of prayer wheels spinning ceased, and only the sound of fire crackling in the stove remained as I smiled a nervous grin at the three bald monks staring at me in curious wonder. Indeed, I was a sight to behold: a six foot four white boy sweating from the hike up and filthy from the four day journey from Kathmandu.

“So enchanted was I by the crisp winter beauty of the valley and the mystery of this mountain hermitage that I had not thought of a word to say. Even as I stood there in an infinite silence looking at the 62 year old braided beard master, his 15 year old student, and a seven year old incarnation of a high master (tulka), nothing came to mind. At long last I blurted out a few words of my shaky Tibetan, “Tashi Delek, Rinpoche (Hello Precious Master), I do a three month retreat, but there is no room. You help me please?” Rinpoche smiled gently as his prayer wheel began spinning again and I was served a breakfast of roasted barley flour and tea. Few words were exchanged and, after I had eaten the staple Tibetan meal, the 15 year old lama showed me a bed in the woodshed beneath their room which would be mine.

Over the next three months, a joyfully simple experience unfolded as I lived the life of a Tibetan Buddhist monk. Mornings spent in the single voice of mantra in Rinpoche’s room, prayers in the brightly colored temple above; they even shaved my head on monk shaving day which occurred once a month. Afternoons spent in meditation and study, various amusements with Tulku Tenzin, and pleasantries with the passing shepherds and their flocks. Often times, visitors came in the evenings with their assorted questions, problems, and ailments to which Rinpoche carefully calculated answers and performed puja, an ancient ceremony done in the darkness with bells, bone horns, chanting, and drums.

In shadows of maroon robes and echoes of laughter, the most menial details of daily existence became miraculous as a natural and subtle mindfulness arose in me. Our diet was dependent upon the offerings of Rinpoche’s patrons, though we lived basically on the communion of goat noodle soup, roasted barley flour, rice, bread, and butter tea. Our toilet was two boards on the edge of a cliff—quite an adventure to use in a blustery mountain blizzard. While life went on in the valley below, our neighbors above were birds, sheep, several dogs, and monkeys down from the mountain top for the winter.

As I followed the teachings of the master with meditation on death and the true nature of being, life began to rise like triumph in a dream and the world became like a child’s creation. I was aware of my every thought and action as the future blended with the past in the present and that most important moment evolved with clarity. Nothing else mattered and finally I live alive in love like soft passing clouds. In these moments of the truth no plans could steal me and no memories could hold me, a smile came to my face, and Rinpoche laughed at my young understanding, “You only have 17 years to go,” referring to his schedule for my studies. With that returned thoughts of the future and he had made his point.
There were days when I got more than I asked for: unmentionable nicknames, jokes, and teasing as I was welcomed into my new monastic family. There were days of frustration and irritation like Tulk Tenzin’s tears in sessions of rote learning. There were days of freedom and realization as clear as the cloudless blue skies above the snow white glaciers. There were days for mothers, when the absence of women tipped the scales of natural balance. But through all of the days there was the constancy of laughter and love; and through the simplicity of it all, there was the knowledge that we were truly living.

— Jon Voss

Through a program based at the University of Wisconsin, religion major Jon Voss ’95 was able to study in Nepal for 11 months.
Sea Lions in the Park

Living
in their man-made world
hardly enough room to
breathe.

Swimming
in circles, in cycles
always the same.

Indifference
to those who come to look
and want to touch.

Little boy asks
"Why don't they do something for me?"
old enough to know.

Little girl asks
"Why don't they do something?"
hasn't learned yet.

Come change the water
appearances are
everything

They lay
like dolls
glassy-eyed and cold.

They make sounds
speaking the language
man does not understand
Scream, cry
but remember
you've been judged
inferior
stay behind bars

They look to me
to use the key:
Free us
from
Life.

But
My reply:
I can't
No one's let me out yet.

— Elizabeth Stands

At the Musée Picasso
Photograph by Kathy Wilkens
The Musée Picasso in Antibes, France, was the site of artist Pablo Picasso's last home before his death. It holds pictures, sculptures, drawings, and prints of art given to the French government after the artist's death.

Elizabeth Stands '95, a political science and international and area studies double major with a women's studies concentration, studied in Clermont-Ferrand for six months this past fall and winter.
Imagine it won’t come as a surprise to you when I say that many Swazis have adapted Western style dress. I almost feel funny using the term “Western” since the culture of the West has made an impact upon virtually every corner of the world these days. Okay, it’s true, most of it was installed by colonialism and not by choice. Whatever the origin, this shrinking world has adapted “Western” culture as its main mode of communication, so the West can’t really own it anymore.

The university has become a training ground for young people who want to take part in the world. In such an environment, most people, I assume, don’t want to dress in a way that obviously signals their national identity. On special occasions, and sometimes just because they feel like it, a few of my classmates will wear the traditional attire, the emahiya (emahiya consists of two pieces of cloth draped and tied strategically across the shoulder and around the waist). They don’t reveal much.

But even this, I imagine, is usually worn with Western style underpants.

What I’m trying to say is that jeans and T-shirts have become the appropriate uniform for students at colleges across the globe. Jeans no longer tip off one’s national identity: the T-shirt does, or more specifically, what’s printed on it.

So, what’s printed on Swaziland T-shirts? American flags, of course. One popular shirt in Swaziland is emblazoned with such great American symbols as Old Glory, Lady Liberty, the word “hello” and the hundred dollar bill.

The American symbol I encounter here the most often, however, is the sports team logo. There’s no particular interest in American sports, mind you, just the fashion sense of our sports fans. After all, that’s what everyone wears in the movies and music videos.

Precisely because Southern Africans have little knowledge or interest in American sports, clothing designers can get away with perfectly passable styles that are no longer in danger of violating licensing laws. People are quite willing to show their support for the Detroit Giants, Baltimore White Sox, San Diego Phillies, or the Kansas City Dolphins on their chests.

Apart from being fashionable, T-shirts also are good promotional devices for developmental messages. Lately, I’ve been seeing one which lists the warning signs for pneumonia. Shirts supporting AIDS prevention and birth control abound. An organization promoting breast-feeding has come out with a “Breasts are Best” shirt worn by men and women of all ages. For those who prefer emahiya, the slogan and its siSwati translation has been printed onto Swazi cloth.

Finally, T-shirts advertising Tom and Jerry: The Movie are very popular. Shirts with cartoon characters are popular in general, but I single out Tom and Jerry because last year I interned at one of the many advertising agencies involved in promoting this cinematic nightmare.

Who could have predicted that there would come a time in the world’s history when advertising would go from Manhattan drawing boards to Swazi torsos in a matter of months? I think to have a part in producing a phenomenon like that is really something. I can’t decide whether or not it’s a good thing, but nevertheless it’s amazing.

— Suzanne Baumann

A Dlamini Princess
Photograph by Suzanne Baumann
This Dlamini Princess stands proud during the Umhlanga Ceremony in Swaziland.

Suzanne Baumann ’95, an art major with an English minor, was one of five students who studied in Swaziland, Africa for 10 months.
Reaffirmation Vacation

One evening after discussing parfumerias, Italian clothing, and the Donatello’s David in our Florentine hotel, we realized we were taking cultural relativism a little too far. Culturally speaking, foreign study in Europe provided us with the opportunity to experience those aspects many associate with all that is sophisticated and representative of Western culture. From the Prado to the Louvre, from the Vatican to the St. Charles Bridge, some of the greatest examples of art and architecture stood before us. What we were viewing on a daily basis was, indeed, powerful and often awe-inspiring. In reality, however, much of our admiration was a product of what we have been taught is the standard, the basis by which all cultures are judged and measured.

Continuous exposure to images desensitizes people to what they are viewing. Like seeing violent movies one after another, being barraged by constructed ideals of European beauty and historically male-defined cultural standards were taking its toll on us. We decided that what we needed was a “reaffirmation vacation.”

One month later…with the icy shore of the North Sea before us, we set out for the Danish coastal tour of Rungsted, the former home of Denmark’s famous author Karen Blixen (Blixen often wrote under the male pseudonym Isaac Dinesen). Finally, we thought, an opportunity to celebrate one of our most-admired writers, and at last the opportunity to visit a museum devoted entirely to the work of a woman.

With the frigid Danish wind in our faces, we managed to proceed about a mile up the shore in the wrong direction. Once we finally got our bearings straight and found ourselves on the steps of the Karen Blixen Museum, we were informed that it would not be open for another hour. Thus, we were forced back into the bitter elements. After an hour of defrosting ourselves before a roaring fire and a pot of coffee in a nearby bar, we headed back to complete our mission.

However, though Blixen’s house was indeed charming, the chronicles of her life daring and exciting and her work fascinating to browse through, we were a tad disappointed. Those who are familiar with Blixen’s work, or who have seen the movie versions of her novels (such as Out of Africa) know that the theme of colonialism is ever-present. Neither of us knew the extent to which Blixen herself was part of the Danish colonial structure in Africa. Seeing the various walls of her libraries, parlors, and sitting rooms decorated with the spoils of African safaris made us uncomfortable. Likewise, the photos showing Blixen and her family in front of their African plantation with their (what the caption under the photo read) “faithful servants” diminished our view of Blixen.

Compounded with the fact that the museum’s curators were rude to us, we left feeling as if our “reaffirmation vacation” had not begun so well. Being Americans and having studied in our respective centers in Germany and Spain, we were, of course, acutely sensitive to cultural imperialism. In short, discovering Blixen’s elitism was a crushing blow after traveling for two days straight in order to reach Denmark and begin reaffirming. However, our subsequent stay in Denmark was wonderful and the beginning of an adventure that we will never forget.

It is often said that traveling solo can be quite empowering for women. It can also be rough and frightening. Traveling with a dear friend, however, is a unique opportunity for female bonding and learning. We were beginning to realize that reaffirmation would need to come from somewhere other than a museum. So, after Denmark, we took a jaunt to the South of France. Luxuriating in the lush, herb-scented air of Provence proved to be the perfect end for two weary travelers.

Indulging in some of the world’s finest cuisine, although hedonistic, seemed to feed and refuel our souls; by the time we had left Avignon and arrived in Nice we were happy and feeling strong. Although we never ended up creating a feminist tour of Europe, we did ourselves a lot of good. The observations and critiques we made about the world and ourselves were turning points in our lives. The talks we had over café au lait and vin rouge rank among some of the best conversations of our lives. We found out that we didn’t need to be magically “reaffirmed” because self-validation is a continual process and one that must come from within.

— Annissa Hambouz & Kezia Pearlman

An international and area studies and German double major, Annissa Hambouz studied in Erlangen, Germany last fall and winter. She will return to Germany this fall to complete her Senior Individualized Project. Kezia Pearlman studied for six months in Cáceres, Spain. She is an English major with a concentration in women’s studies.
Two Thousand Sucres
Equals One Dollar

In the cosmopolitan bar trying hard to catch
the attention of a girl from the coast,
the gringita I am with battles her complex:
talkative yet whiny and very cuckled for
those incessant latinos and their unbuttoned buttondown shirts
revealing a hairy dark chest
with a gold cross of their Christ.
I, with both eyes churning
the dancing, laser show, speaker music, and Marlboro smoke
in some sort of mental butter—
easily spread and tasty some—
hold onto my can of World Cup Budweiser
—red, white and blue in a drippy perspired hand.
After the gringita is off dancing her complex
into the tile floor of the bar and
the rosy cheek of her 17 year old macho,
I calculate and find the price of comfort:
a thousand sucres change for the bar cashier
and a thousand more for the cabby
who takes the long way to mi casa.

— Peter Avis

Peter Avis ’95, a biology major, participated in the environmental studies program in Quito, Ecuador during the winter and spring of 1994.
What...Who...Why? How Could They?

On January 12th, 1994 the French CFA was devalued in all of the French-speaking West African countries. The exchange rate was previously 300 CFA to $1.00, presently it is 600 CFA to $1.00. After the devaluation all imported products doubled in price and all Senegalese products increased in price by a third.

January 13, 1994

They devalued the CFA. It'd be nice to think that the devaluation would force Senegal to diversify its products and start investing in itself—buying locally and all, but I wonder if it won’t just be the Toubabs (white people) buying into everything type of deal where the Senegalese lose out again while the West exploits them for all it’s worth. It doesn’t help that the government here is as corrupt as it is, not that there are many that are any less corrupt, because it doesn’t seem as though there is anyone looking out for the good of the people here. Sad. Really sad. What people do to people, or what people won’t do for people. All I see is a whole lot of people already struggling to survive on what they have, and now they’ll have an even harder time, with rising prices and paychecks that don’t even come close. Where is the justice in this world? Sometimes I really wonder.

— Kris Bennett

A Birds Eye View
Photograph by
Anna Rosenberg
This bird keeps watch over Capetown, South Africa. Anna Rosenberg ’95, a religion major, studied for 10 months in Swaziland, Africa.

January 13, 1994

They made me rich, REALLY rich over night. Didn’t need to, because I was already rich. But they did it anyway because it was in the “best interest of Senegal.” What about the poor people? The people who were just scraping by? Now prices are up. I guess they’ll starve.

They don’t know, they don’t realize it, especially the toubabs (white people) up there who are making all the calls. They can’t possibly imagine the effects, because they, too, live with a silver spoon.
I don't know, can't imagine what it's like,  
but I know a bit more than the people back home.  
Suma mbokk ci Amerik can't even conceptualize  
what's going on, because they've never been here.  
How can you possibly imagine the suffering  
that exists when you've never seen it.

If you have:  
nice clothes, Mercedes, shoes, food—as much as you want,  
a big house  
(for maybe four or five people at most),  
how can you possibly imagine a hard,  
sufferable, miserable life.  
You can't.  
You can grow up around it and not even know.

They took the word of the Toubabs and devalued the CFA.  
Doesn't touch them—they all have their Swiss bank accounts.  
I guess they won't starve.  
I guess that's what happens when the bourgeoisie rule in  
favor of the economy and not the people.  
But isn't ruling in favor of the economy,  
ruling in favor of the people. No, not in Senegal's case.

Defa graw de.

It's so big...this monstrous machine that "runs" everything.  
IT has all of the power,  
therefore IT makes all of the decisions  
and IT would never make a decision for the good of others,  
rather IT has made,  
makes, and  
will continue to make  
decisions that maintain it's power.  
I can't stop it, because I'm one, small, woman.  
And IT really doesn't exist  
as one thing that I can destroy.  
The destruction must start in the minds of my  
fellow creatures.  
Mentalities must change.  
"ME" needs to turn to "WE"  
and that "WE" should not just include  
the people of our own gender of our own race,  
but it should include all the peoples of the world.

Somewhere I fit into all of this. Where oh... where?

Bourgeoisie shit. I buy into it. I am guilty.  
I think I need things. I don't need anything.
I am RICH. I can get an education. I can get a job.
I can eat. I can clothe myself.
I can be free—I am a slave to no one because
I have $$.
I have a choice—I can do what I want because
I have $$.

Things I know:
There are people here on this Earth,
and a lot of them are suffering.
Senegal is in this situation because it depends on
Toubabs for money. Senegal must help itself, but
Toubabs must also help fix what they broke.
I was born into this world as a Toubab.
So I do have a place in all of this.
I am a woman. I have seen that the oppressed suffer.
I will help stop the suffering.
I have a reason to live.

— Sara Reschly

1 My family and friends in the USA.
2 This is a very serious matter.

Three Turtles
Photograph by
Suzanne Baumann
Taking things slowly,
these three turtles catch
some sun at Prison Island
near Tanzania.

A sociology & anthropology major, Kate Granfield '95 spent six months studying in Strasbourg, France.
The ABC's of Europe

A
t
ll I have to say is...

Australians, Atlantic Ocean, Apple strudel
Biaritz, Bayonne, Baguette
Backpacks, Baths in Budapest, Beds
Backpacks, Baths in Budapest
Barb, Bill, Beer halls
Cathedrals, Castles, and Christmas markets
Council of Europe, Clermont-Ferrand, Crazed Cat in Budapest
Carnival, Coventry, Costumes
Changing of the Guard, Chinese restaurants, Chocolate
Champion Maria, Chaucer
Dol, Drums, DooDoo
Friends, Firenze, Fabulous Food
Helping others, Holding Hands
Heather, Hastings, Hugs
Jessica, Jeremy, Jennifer
Kristie, Kronenburg, Koneigsburg
Languages, Lemington Spa, London
Louvre, Loving every minute, Luck
Meditteranean, Munich, Much laughter
Markets, Miscommunications, Meeting people
Mail, Massages, Money
Mercedes, Mozart, Margaret
Nice, Knowledge, New money
New Year's Eve, Notre Dame
Prague, Pope, Paris
Pretzels, Police, Parties
Pasta, Postcards, Prego
Running, Rome, Rigolleto
Rain, Rachel, Rates of exchange
Strasbourg, Sleeping in trains, Sand
Spending money, Sun, Stories
Suzanne, Sacré-Coeur, Sound of Music
Shopping, Choucroute, Shoes
Shakespeare, Showers, Champs-Elysées
Taxi, Tipping, Trains
Teasing, Toasters on fire, Tarot
Tourist Traps, Trafalgar Square, Telephones
Venezia, Vienna, Wienerschnitzel
White Cliffs, Waiting, Washing
Walking, Whispering, Wondering

...Been There, Seen It, Done It.

— Kate Granfield
El Río Escondido

It was Semana Santa, and everyone was going home. Unsure about where exactly this mysterious home was, I excitedly accepted the invitation to join my friend Alba and her brother in their family's traditional Easter week celebration on the other side of the country. Having recently arrived in Nicaragua only a short while before, I didn't have many friends and was thus thrilled at the prospect of such an invitation.

"It is a very long journey," she told me. I pulled out my map, still clean and with unwrinkled folds. Managua to Bluefields, it didn't seem all that far. Maybe a day, going slowly.

I was informed that we would leave by bus, and later to hook up with our next mode of transportation. Alba then told me that arriving at our destination would take around three days. I was amazed, but not nearly as amazed as I would be at the end of those three days. Unbeknownst to me, those three days were to challenge almost everything I had grown up knowing, or thought I knew. I had always grasped the concept that in other parts of the world people live differently than we do. After all, I got National Geographic as a kid. But this, this was different. This was real, tangible. During those three days I would smell the smells, hear the sounds, and hold the babies. Those three days were to change the way I looked at the world and my own place within it for the rest of my life. In retrospect I often think of my trip across that country as a complex mix of emotion and experience in a world where I didn't necessarily belong but somehow I desperately needed to be. It marked a coming of age and a loss of innocence.

We got on the bus at two in the morning to begin our sojourn. This in and of itself made me a bit nervous. Only a week in, I didn't know if I was ready to break any "rules" quite yet. Although, I was slowly learning that rules just don't always work, especially in a place like Nicaragua.

Stepping onto the dilapidated, old, yellow, school bus I was overwhelmed with a flood of sensory input. There were more people, baskets of fruit, crying babies, live chickens, and various other small farm animals crammed into the bus than I could have dreamed possible. Nevertheless, off we went through the night riding into the mountains of Central America. Upon entering the bus, the roar of the group seemed to quiet down as they began to look and point at me, the five foot nine blonde, blue eyed chelita, la norteamericana, walking around with a most bewildered look. With a mix of anxious enthusiasm, sheer panic and strength of will, I resolved to make this work. I resolved to become more than a side show to these people and to feel like more than an estranged outsider in this land. My first moment of respite came as I seated myself next to a young man near my age. He smiled, saying nothing, sure that I couldn't speak Spanish (and at that moment I was not so sure I disagreed with him) and offered me a piece of candy. I smiled back, sighed deeply, and finally began to relax.

As the bus left the station and then the city I saw things I never thought existed. Glued to the window trying to peer through the darkness, unable to sleep for fear of missing something, I was instantly enchanted with everything around me.

"I had always grasped the concept that in other parts of the world people live differently than we do... But this, this was different."

The image of this leg of the voyage which has been burned in my consciousness, came at dawn. It was the moment when the sky seemed on fire, yet in a peaceful and joyous way. We were cresting a mountain peak, and as we did a small straw house came into sight. It was round with a cone shaped roof. Next to the house stood a young boy. At the top of the hill the driver slowed to almost nothing (roads were far from great), and as he did the child came running to the bus and through the open window handed me the most beautiful bouquet of yellow flowers. I thanked him and turned to wave until long after he was out of sight. The whole event took not more than sixty seconds, yet it is a moment I cherish among those very special few from which I draw strength and understanding when events and circumstances of the world seem beyond comprehension.

Halfway through the trip the bus stopped. Everyone got off, and I seemed to be the only one utterly perplexed as to why we were disembarking in Rama, what appeared to be in the middle of nowhere.
Alba calmed my fears and explained that the second part of the trip was soon to begin, and pointed to the river. Roads only go halfway through the country, beyond that one must go by boat. The only boat I saw resembled what I imagine to be a combination of Huck Finn's creation and Noah's Ark. I smiled and thought to myself, "Well, we're not in Kansas anymore, but kid, if you can do this, you can do anything."

And so began my trip down El Río Escondido (the hidden river). I could feel the humidity on my skin and saw nothing but lush thick vegetation. The trees hung low over the slow current, making things seem kind of dark and somewhat cool. The woman next to me had more children than she could handle, so three year old Estrella became my best friend for the afternoon. She giggled at my ignorance and explained, through charades and Spanish (I felt as though we were on the same verbal level) what animals were making all of the intriguing sounds overhead and on all sides. Again, I was captivated, bewildered.

As we passed down the river venturing deeper into what I was unsure, people came out of their homes to stand along the banks and wave. I kept wondering to myself how a place like this can exist concurrently with my own world where concerns, preoccupations, and joys are so vastly different from those here. Then I closed my eyes and tried to imagine what my mother was doing at that very moment; no picture came into my mind's eye. It was the strangest experience, but I simply could not synthesize these two realities.

Upon arrival in Bluefields at night (of which day I was no longer able to tell) I was a little surprised to learn that our trip was not quite over. "Which part is missing?" I wondered. That was when Alba’s brother showed up with the horses and said that we were almost there, and not to worry. I just smiled.

Over the next several hours I found myself riding on horseback by moonlight through the jungle. Perhaps due to exhaustion or amazement, I finally had to question if this was really my life I was experiencing. At moments it just seemed so improbable.

The smells and sounds of the jungle at night really were the most incredible phenomena for a city girl to experience. As we rode we plucked fruit, fruit I had never seen nor heard of, from low hanging branches and munched.

Just before dawn came we passed through the gate to Alba’s house and were met by a whole slew of family members attacking us with kisses, hugs, and tears. I couldn’t help but get a little teary thinking of my own family and how they would have greeted us in exactly the same way had we pulled into my driveway instead. Alba’s mother, this woman whom I had never met, took my face in her hands and looked into my bleary eyes and tear-streaked face. She said, “You have come a long way hija, but now you are home. Welcome.”

— Margaret Skwira

Little Boy with a Red Hat
Photograph by Rebecca Beebe
This boy works with his family in the weaving community of Salasca, Ecuador,
After World War I Footage

History Class, Münster, Germany

Little bugs running, gray
with their short and stubby legs
across the equal grayness
of the landscape,
contorted time and motion,
as if shown through a strobe
that washes color, beauty, normalcy
from the scene.
Helmets bobbing, rifles jutting
legs-arms a jumble,
the mechanical action forward—
a march toward horrendously
comical, stumbling death and
the Schützengraben of the enemy.
The againsogray white noise of age
mixes with the whine of
guns-air-bombs and always death
in 9 x 11 reality, and I realize
with hardly a smile
that the churning of my stomach
is not so much caused by my breakfast of kraut
but by the sobering portrayal
of the anonymous death,
of the unmaking.

— Jessica Keeslar

A View of Nuremburg
Photograph by Jeffry Lund
The city of Nuremburg became the
home of Hitler and the Reichsparteitag
of the Nazi Party in 1927. The racial
purity laws, or the “Nuremburg Laws”
were also passed here in 1935. These
events have left the city scarred by the
memory of Nazism.

Jessica Keeslar ’95 spent six months studying in Münster, Germany, this past fall and winter. She is a music major.
Remembering Auschwitz

17 January 1994

...Auschwitz was the most depressing and horrific sight my eyes had ever seen. The reality of the Nazi people was never so real to me than it was today as we made our way through the concentration camp.

Originally used as an “instrument of terror” and a place of extermination for Poles, Auschwitz became the new home for people from all over Europe, namely Jewish. Citizens from the former Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, France, Austria, and Germany and others were among those held prisoners here.

Seven tons of hair, shoes, and clothing (remnants of a people once before) were strewn throughout the various prisoner blocks on showcase so all could see. Crematoriums and gas chambers stood erect in the frigid air — silence prevailed as memorial flowers decorated the overpowering gray “ovens.” As the snow fell, the silence was almost frightening.

Every fact and figure I had ever heard or read about was suddenly intensified by the actual buildings, articles, and land I was seeing.

My stomach grew sick as I saw the barracks of women and children. The cramped area housed thousands. Accented with photos of the prisoners — once again reality set in. There were actually eight living and breathing human beings sleeping in these beds (if you could call a piece of wood a bed) that were actually made for two.

A long, wide walkway surrounded on either side by barracks led up to The Execution Wall. This Wall of Death was the place where condemned prisoners were taken naked to be executed. Men, women, and children were killed for literally anything. Black and white photographs illustrated this monstrosity as three men were standing with their backsides out, painfully falling to the ground as three quick bullets hit them. Male prisoners, most likely the next to be executed, were shown carrying away the lifeless bodies.

I found my way to a cement block room, approximately one square yard, where men and women who dared to escape were sent to die. They were given no food or water, and left to perish. In cell block 21, drawings made by one inmate could still be seen. I saw a picture of Jesus Christ, illuminated by the museums lights; how did these people keep faith?

As I walked in silence, I found myself getting angrier and angrier. I saw pots and pan, hairbrushes and toothbrushes, sweaters and socks — these people had lives, real lives. And everything, literally everything, was taken from them.

As I was leaving, I again passed through the main gate of the camp, just like the prisoners passed through on their way to work each day. The rather cynical and patronizing inscription read “Arbeit macht frei” or “Work Brings Freedom.”

What?

The stark reality of the extreme power of the Nazi people hit me in the face and I don’t think I was prepared...

— Erin Miller

A Deserted Walkway
Photograph by
Amy Butera
Prisoners' barracks at KL Auschwitz 1 in Oswiecim, Poland. Auschwitz was the biggest Nazi concentration camp for Poles and prisoners from other countries.

An English major, Erin Miller '95 spent six months studying in Aberdeen, Scotland.
I decided to go to Caen, as opposed to Clermont-Ferrand, that is, singularly for the fact that it was closer to England. Not good logic, I suppose, but I had a certain tie to England, if you know what I mean. Caen had no appeal of its own for me, I'm ashamed to admit. Unfortunately, my English "contact" was soon lost, and I was left to suffer with my foolish choice made far too hastily, with no prior research, and for all the wrong reasons. I tried to join my more intelligent comrades who had quite cleverly selected Clermont, but it was too late. Unfortunately, The Foreign Study office wouldn't let me change. So, I had to face up to the misery, the destitution, the utter woe of being forced to spend six months in such a wretched city as Caen. You see, I'm not exaggerating when I say that, with a few glorious exceptions, I heard nothing, nothing, but whines and complaints from day one of Foreign Study Orientation right up until I stepped off the train in Normandy, about how awful Caen was. They said it was ugly. They said it was dirty. "Too modern, everything old was destroyed in the war." I even heard that one guy had affectionately referred to it as a "dump." How nice. It scares me to think I almost listened to them.

Actually, I was guilty of being something of a complainer myself, at first. And I was still complaining when we got there. I looked out the window of the train as we pulled into the station at Caen, and said, "They were right, it is ugly," to which our fierce and fearless group leader responded, "Shut up. You haven't even seen it yet." Of course, she was right. Another decision too hastily made on my part.

It turns out that Caen is a beautiful city, at last I found it to be so, and its accessibility to England—which, incidentally, I did take advantage of often enough—was only one of its many perks. It was not "too modern," but rather a perfect mixture of the old and the new (the McDonald's just down the street from the medieval chateau type of thing). And how anyone could have described this city as ugly defies logic in my mind. But, then, to each his own, as they say, and for me, this was a most wonderful experience. It wasn't always good, I should point out, but with the good comes the bad (they say that too), and at the very least I can describe my foreign study experience as "colorful." Never a dull moment.

Some of it was unpleasant enough, such as having my book bag, with wallet and all inside, stolen, and getting caught by my host mother with another "K" student sneaking in my window. Or the time the maid of our Holiday Inn hotel room got into our stuff and robbed us, walking off with, however, nothing more than one single piece of fruity chewy stuff out of an unopened box. And then there was the good.

"...we can be sure that 'K' students really are known all over the globe."

I think I really got a nice look at this culture. I guess I could say I did the French thing while I was there. I drank too much good French wine, and ate parts of animals I never knew it was possible to eat. I met some most wonderful French people who taught me how to speak French the way one should speak, but the way they'll never teach you in school. Someday I would like to submit a paper to "K" entitled "What I really learned in France." And I learned to make crepes. But the best thing by far was without a doubt my host maid who ironed my underwear.

This is just a small tribute to a dead center. I wanted to pay my respect to this unfortunate place which didn't deserve its early and unexpected demise. Yes, it's sad but true, but for those of you who don't already know, the six-month program in Caen has been discontinued. No more nights out at Vertigo. No more real camembert. No more Monsieur Rogues. It's a shame that so many of you will never have the chance to go on Foreign Study in Caen, but I'm happy to say I was among the last—the last to attend the Beaujolais party, the last to hang out with the rugby team. For those of you who know and love Caen, you can appreciate that. But for the rest, those who may never dine at QuikBurger nor use one of those famous electric toilets, I feel confident that we at least left a lasting impression on the people we left behind. And though there is now no one to carry on our tradition, we can be sure that "K" students really are known all over the globe. After all, the world is our campus, they always tell us.

So good-bye to an old friend, and let the epitaph read: "Caen. It rained."

— Kathy Bradshaw

Kathy Bradshaw '95 spent six months in Caen, France. She is a French and art double major with a concentration in photography. She is returning to France to complete a photography Senior Individualized Project in Paris this fall.
Separation

It is morgen fruh and I awake,
the chill air sneaking under my lump of a featherbed
reminding me how bare I am.
For I have done the deed; my hand is black—
I drag it as well as my life
across the crinkly blueness of an airmail page.
And there they sit, six of them,
huddled in the little yellow Briefkasten
a block or less away on the corner,
told with varying degrees of nakedness
and it is not only the air that makes me cold.

Sold for three marks apiece no matter what's inside,
(whether weather or travel or scream of my soul)
junk or jewels enclosed/concealed from all
save the chosen, whose name rests on the outside,
the dry saltine of an address for the posttrager,
who manages somehow, I don't know how—
Long ago would I have broken the fragile seals
exposing the meat inside,
lunching delightedly on the contents of those who,
being far away from those they love, must
rely on such a ponderous, worrisome medium to deliver
bits and pieces of themselves.
Let us be glad it is not me who has the task of transport,
For I am a glutton!

But captivity has outweighed cautiousness
and I cry out to the posttrager
Come take these things away, that a block away
have the power to tie me down, heavy, to this bed.
I want them gone (or in the ambiguous over-ocean stage)
for knowledge of their resting, far from their intended
leaves me frozen and unable
to enjoy the day's barrage of new experiences. I am bound
to my written past and yearn for liberation.
Take, please, these written parts away from the living whole,
and give them the breath of life
through the airways of the postal system,
so they may arrive safely,
wayward travelers coming home.

— Jessica Keeslar

Jessica Keeslar '95 spent six months studying in Münster, Germany. She is a music major.
Learning in France

Veronique, Mme. Verhey, Bierman-Fisher
Banana clips, umbrellas, fast walking
Jupiter, cookie decorating, Antoine
Mayonnaise recipes, no is yes
You can learn a lot in France

Mary, Mark, and Heather
Parapsychologists, shower mats
Fisher bottles, sleeping on floors, flinging friends
of host mother
Vegetarian, Feminism in France, Mysteriously
Moved Tables
You can learn a lot in France

Sara, Leah, and Ryan
Predictable host family, covered bridges,
cygognes
Blue jackets, airports, pâtisseries
L'Orangerie water, dancing in bars, good food
You can learn a lot in France

Paul, Bill, and Darrell
International words, losing luggage, Duke, and
pig's feet
Aujourd'hui, chou, Nelly and the Dinosaur
Mickey's, saxophone, Eurail Pass
You can learn a lot in France

Kate, Cory, Kris and Heather
Oktoberfest, Salon de Thé, Winemaker, holograms
Baeckoff, park benches, bus stops, and Gil
Fifty Francs, Frenchmen, THE SCARF
You can learn a lot in France

Kate
Monopoly, minnows, Mabroque
Dominique, Anne, Marie
Camille, Elise, Rufus
Cooking, cards, Christmas
Grandparents with silver shoes, Mélodie
Jean-Louis, green bathrobes, and Hélène
I learned a lot in France

— Kate Granfield

The Eiffel Tower
Photograph by Denise Merson
Built by Gustave Eiffel for the World
Exhibition in 1889, the Eiffel Tower is
Paris’s best known landmark. It
stands 1,000 feet tall. An art and art
history major, Denise Merson ’95
spent six months in Macerata, Italy.
Denise traveled to Paris during a
school break.

Kate Granfield ’95, a sociology and anthropology major, spent six months in Strasbourg, France.
La Maison des Esclaves

January 6, 1994
Christmas Break in Dakar, Senegal

Tanya, Amber, Delvida, Tiffany, Christina, and I went to Goree Island today. This island was used during the slave trade because of its strategic position in the Atlantic Ocean. While on the island we visited “La Maison des Esclaves” (The slave house). This was one of the intact slave houses on the island. I had seen slides of this place before, but nothing could prepare me for what I experienced.

The tour guide was off duty so we decided to take the tour on our own. I was glad because it gave us a chance to go at our own pace. As I walked into each of the rooms which were segregated by age and gender, I could see images of the people before my eyes. It was almost as if I was spying on history. This all became real to me when I reached “La Porte du Voyage Sans Retour” (The door of the trip with no return). This doorway was the last point seen by the Africans before they became slaves. As I stared at the big, blue ocean in front of me, I was frozen. In the waves I heard the cries of the enslaved. This was a feeling even the best slide show in the world could not reproduce.

When we reached the roof of the house something strange happened to me. Just like when we were on the Bunce Island (a former slave island in Sierra Leone) I could not get the song “Oh, Freedom” out of my head. The tears began to flow. This song always moves me, but this time it was different. I am no longer an African American imagining what my ancestors had left to go to America. I am an African American who had a glimpse of what my people had to sacrifice because of their enslavement. My perspective on the Motherland and the issue of slavery will never be the same again.

The feeling was further strengthened by a group of drummers we visited on the island. As I listened to the drums and danced along I began to appreciate even more my opportunity to have this unique experience in West Africa.

— Orma Christina Bradford

La Porte du Voyage Sans Retour in Dakar, Senegal
Photograph by Orma Bradford
“Through this door for a voyage with no return. They went their eyes fixed on infinite suffering.”

Orma Christina Bradford ’95 spent six months in Sierra Leone. She is an economics and business administration major.
Journal Excerpts from West Africa

November 6, 1993

I saw morning mist on the hills today. The sun rose invisibly, but there didn't seem to be clouds in the sky to hide it.

I'm in northern upcountry, sitting in Kama Kwie's lorry park, watching pickups go by with things painted on them like "Poorman's Transport" and "God Go With You." We wait for our special ride to come pick us up and take us all the way back to Freetown. Chris anticipates a tape deck will be in our transport.

A boy walked by with a shower cap on his head. The middle-aged women are dressed in beautiful African gowns with headwraps and they walk with a grace that transfixes your eyes to them helplessly. I think to myself, "I want to be dressed like that."

November 7, 1993

Tonight I floated up the mountain. We waited for over an hour for a ride up. There were just too many people who needed a ride and not enough rides; supply and demand were quite at odds. Actually, there were lots of cars—private cars—that went up all the time, rarely stopping. But when a car did stop, there was a mad rush to squeeze in. Impatience leads to violence, I suppose.

A car with blue light bulbs on the headlights (they looked like pupils) stopped, and everyone pushed and fought to get in. Probably about eight lucky people squeezed in, and once the doors were stuck in place, not a second passed before the car shot off like a rooster with its head cut off. But I don't think the passengers turned out to be so lucky.

Instead of going up the hill, the car did an outrageous uey and headed straight for town where it turned left without a brake or signal. All the people who had failed to get in the car found this very amusing.

So I want to know, were they kidnapped or what?

The car didn't return.

I'm glad I floated up when I did because now it's storming out. A student named Mohammed escorted me up the mountain. I think we helped each other float, our words consumed the time it took and made the climb effortless.

It seemed I was home in no time.

November 16, 1993

I am beginning to detest the American character. We may have access to quality education, but we are still dumb. What does it matter if you have gained some know-how when you can't even cooperate with your fellow man? The quality of education in Sierra Leone is indeed pathetic, but the people's ability to join together is brilliant. It has enough power to save this country. Unfortunately this potential power is not bulletproof.

Tonight the students gathered for a bonfire to protest in song and dance the injustice of an imprisoned student.

Americans are so concerned about impressing each other, they can't stop thinking about themselves for a minute. We are so adamant about dispersing each other into categories because it is necessary to identify which people we can associate with. That way you are always surrounded by like-minded people so you are less likely to fear you are messed up in the head. Then you have some buddies to discuss how messed up in the head everybody else is.

America's enclaves are like all the religions in the world: each relentlessly upholding its solitary truth. This mentality has only made a world in fragments. But each fragment is one piece of the whole—were these pieces ever bound as tightly as the hands and bodies that swept around the bonfire tonight?

Many agree there is one truth (most insist it is the one they pay faith to). It's not until we put each of our truths together and surrender our self-righteousness that we will discover what fools we have been.

November 19, 1993

An assortment of Americans usually don't get along very well. Especially if they each have a firm identity. What's an American's worst nightmare? To be proved wrong. But they are so insecure they are likely to deny it.

I was born in the New World. The New World's aim was to make New Things—of which there was plenty to build from—but to gather and create it all took lots of work, and the architects of the New World were anxious to see their ideas succeed because after traveling all that way from home, to fail would mean heartbreak and humiliation. They wanted their risks to pay off. They wanted the prize they were sure they deserved.
Due to this pressure which made a drive of fire (much like Devils’ fire), they were able to convince themselves that the requirements of their goals could be justified. In order to build the dreams of the New World, a New Mentality was the essential prerequisite. Otherwise, production wouldn’t be proficient. In fact, without the ruthless attitude, the entire society soon to emerge would not have been able to develop.

So if you’re packing up to go to the New World, leave these behind: compassion and respect for the worth and dignity of every human being. Say goodbye to community, because in order to survive in the New World, the only people you’ll have energy enough to care for is your nuclear family. You won’t miss the rest of your family too much because you’ll be too caught up in your own life, and your career that will end up defining you more than any friends or family could. Extended family will be shoved into out of sight, out of mind. This won’t even make you sad because you’ll be so marvelously busy, you won’t have time to be sad.

Eventually your drive to succeed will become so intense you won’t miss the time it takes to care for your community because it takes too much time. In the New World, community = hassle. Your energies need to be reserved for the playing fields. Whatever time is left after that is spent replenishing yourself to gather more energy for the playing fields. There are lots of ways to replenish yourself: you can gab to your friends or therapist about how much your life sucks and you can stuff yourself with anything from food to drugs.

In the New World, satisfaction is the Ultimate Goal. But it’s a scarce commodity, so be prepared for a price that could make you weep.

November 30, 1993

I hope I’m forgiven for all the food I’ve ever wasted. Sierra Leone almost beat the Gambia team tonight in soccer but it ended in a draw. How come in America there’s always overtime, but here they’re content to call it even. We must identify a winner, a loser — or else we question the point of the effort. I myself am all for effort for the hell of it. So what if there’s no light at the end of the tunnel? Didn’t you make some friends along the way?

Around the periphery of the game crawled a human millipede. In Krio, a millipede is a fatfut. There’s a certain way to stand in line in Sierra Leone: nipples to shoulder blades. Parades are similar, just not single-file. The parade moves as slowly as a line does, as if it has no appointed destination. But the music is quick and lively. It is a happy, human fatfut, spreading joy with leisure.

Anna and I recognized a wonderful characteristic of the Sierra Leonean today. They are often quickly forgiving. They may not like your quirks, but they don’t hate you for having them. Americans are victims of first impressions—that which inhibits truth and plants silent lies.

— Hannah Wells

Hannah Wells ’95 spent six months participating in the Senegal program. She is a human development and social relations major.
In the Midst of a Gas Crisis

29 January 1994
Saturday
Right now there is a small gas crisis in Ecuador. The government has raised the price of gasoline, by one thousand sucres, to between 2,500 and 3,000. That is more expensive than in the United States. They did this to lessen the federal deficit, not because of an oil shortage. There were long lines for gas just before the price went up.

30 January 1994
Sunday
Things are getting pretty serious here about the rise in gas prices. Apparently, there are going to be demonstrations tomorrow. Taxi drivers are charging more than what the meter shows because of increased costs.

1 February 1994
Tuesday
The gas crisis is actually getting kind of scary here. Students and workers have been demonstrating in the center of Quito and there are talks of strikes on Thursday. The students are meeting tomorrow and the workers, Thursday. If there are strikes on Thursday, there may be more widespread demonstrations and rioting. People are saying that the students at the university where we’re studying, as well as at the Universidad Catolica and at the Universidad Politecnica, normally would not be affected nor participate. However, it could be that we won’t be able to get to the University.

2 February 1994
Wednesday
Well, I survived today but tomorrow is when it will be bad. I live in the north of Quito which really isn’t going to be affected because the rich folks live here. That’s because the rich people aren’t as bothered by having to pay slightly more for gas. It is in the central and south of Quito where there are riots and demonstrations. It was kind of frightening to see buses lined up on the sides of the roads near the university because I thought this meant they were all striking. As it turns out, the cooperative’s headquarters, something like a labor union office, were located there and they were meeting about the price of gas. The prices of the bus fare did go up by 50 sucres. All of the schools have vacation tomorrow, except for ours. The administration hopes to appease the students with a day off and therefore to prevent them from demonstrating.

To make matters worse, another road collapsed due to rain, this one near Colacali. Along with the floods and the protests, Ecuador isn’t in the best shape. To watch the news and see pictures of tanks on fire, people throwing rocks, roads crumbled and cities flooded, it is scary to think that I am only a few minutes away. In the past, it has always been in another country, or another decade. But this is real, this is now, and this is here.

— Amanda Eldridge

Saturday Market
Photograph by Amanda Eldridge
Men and women comb the streets for clothing, jewelry, and food at this Saturday market in Otavalo, Ecuador

A sociology and anthropology and international and area studies double major, Amanda Eldridge ’95 participated in an environmental studies program in Quito, Ecuador during the winter and spring quarters of 1994. She plans to return to Ecuador this fall to complete her Senior Individualized Project.
I.
I am a wandering tourist flinching under the sun’s scourge. Feet pressing embedded stones, tombs. Rocks worn dull and smooth by centuries—my American feet can only tread lightly, an intangible, unimportant mist.

I suck my breath, feeling it loll against the moist walls, I let eyes contract and pop, I point, like a girl let loose. Do I care where I am? The granite wall I prop myself up against was erected by 14th century Romans. The cathedral I desecrate with my bad accent still steams with musty medieval air. I trespass under crumbling arches into a bleak past. I refuse to walk a straight line in La Ciudad Antigua. My flesh can’t be pressed into feeling past the slippery stones and vaulted stucco walls. I’m numb and blind;

My 20th century self processes this antique city into its data base. I’ll retrieve the disk later—but I won’t be released from the lukewarm clutch of my world.

II.
And at night, with the rain slithering serpentine through rocks, down the narrow calle into a café door, I could see and feel. The rain rebounded off the eternal rocks and pierced my eyes.

— Kezia Pearlman

The Alhambra in Granda, Spain
Photograph by Sara Frier
Founded in the 1240s by Ibn el-Ahmar, The Alhambra once comprised an entire complex of houses, schools, barracks and gardens. Today, only the Alcazaba Fortress and the Royal Palace remain. Human development and social resource major Sara Frier ’95 spent six months in Madrid, Spain. She traveled to Granda for a weekend during her stay in Madrid.

Kezia Pearlman, an English major with a women’s studies concentration, spent six months in Cáceres, Spain.
Losing

I am two continents and three countries.
Not always by free will
have I moved from place to place.
I was dropped
as a baby from the maternal mouth
in the middle of North America.
And for nineteen years
I stayed.
I stayed in a place
where everybody tries to speak the same language.
Adolescent tongue
learned to form words
about the common pool
where people drop their pebbles
and feel the weight of rocks, breakthrough.
Korean was my first language
and that country my first land.
Before possession had a chance,
the distance between there
and here
became like stone.

Second language came easy—
now words,
millions of letters in tandem
pedal about me;
my mind is a pole for these particles
that tug with fervent energy.
English has become a tool
for navigation.
Like a ship I have arrived and left.

In Jerusalem,
English is my possession.
They walk the university paths—my others.
We sometimes bow our heads
and always address each other
formally.
They remind me of a land
that shows on my face.
When I open my mouth
words betray me as
gyop-oh.
I wonder what I have lost.

— Helen Han

Helen Han '95, studied for nine months at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in Israel. She is a religion and English double major.
Why Russia?

I was scared. As I left my parents behind at Detroit Metropolitan Airport, the realization hit me for the first time. What was I doing? Foreign study in Russia? At “K”, I had heard stories of Spain—going to the bars and tanning topless. All of their stories were of exciting times, where students practiced their Spanish but could usually find someone who spoke some English. Almost all of my friends were going there. In contrast, I had heard only a couple of stories about Russia. Nothing about beaches or bar hopping until the wee hours of the morning. My Russian was weak, and English is not a common language beyond the former Iron Curtain. I wondered how would I make known my needs and desires until the middle of December? Because of the current political and economic chaos in Russia, would I still be alive in mid-December? Of course, I was overreacting, but boarding the plane I couldn’t help silently asking myself “Why Russia? Why not Spain?”

Fast forward to mid-December—I am leaving St. Petersburg. In only a few more hours, I will be making the toughest decision of my life. Which fast food place to hit first? Somehow, though, at this moment, food didn’t seem so important to me. Other things seemed more important. I walked through security at St. Petersburg Airport toward “civilization,” but I was also walking away. I was walking away from breathtaking architecture and incredible history. I was walking away from an appreciation of simple pleasures, such as finding a food that I liked in the store two days in a row. Most importantly, I was walking away from the kindest people I had ever known. They had next to nothing, but were always willing to share it. How many Americans could I say that about? The walk “away” was tearing me apart, but it was something I had to do. My program in St. Petersburg had ended and I was on my way to meet my friends for five weeks of backpacking through Europe. But what about Russia? Right then and there, I vowed to myself that this would not be the end of my relationship with Russia. Then, I boarded the plane.

Sure, my friends in Spain had a great time. Now that I have returned to Kalamazoo, I hear stories of endless partying and edible food. A twinge of jealousy hits each time, but only for a moment. Instead, I remember Russia, and realize that I would not trade any of my experiences in Russia with those of my friends.

— Aimee Santimore

A City View of Tallinn
Photograph by Pauli Kurtzman
Tallinn is the capital of the Baltic State of Estonia. Estonia is a port city about 50 miles from Helsinki. Pauli Kurtzman ’95, an international and area studies major, studied for six months in St. Petersburg, Russia. While in St. Petersburg, Pauli traveled to Estonia.

Aimee Santimore ’95 is a political science and international and area studies double major. She studied in St. Petersburg, Russia for six months last fall and winter. She plans to return to Russia after graduation.
Dear Aunt,

How are you? I hope that everything is pretty good. As far as I’m concerned, I’m not bad as I’m adjusting myself to Kalamazoo life. Since I’ve been on the plane that took me from Dakar to New York, I have been homesick for you, for Senegal, Africa.

Many foolish ideas were turning round and round in my head: if I could only drop down out of this plane and turn like Superman to Dakar, it would be fine. I couldn’t stop thinking about what I would find in the USA, namely here at Kalamazoo College.

I arrived at JFK Airport at 10:40 p.m on Tuesday, September 14, 1993. And there I met a Senegalese. He asked me where I was going and I told him that I was on my way to Michigan but I did not know what to do to get there. He knew that I was too tired, sad, and young, and also that this was the first time I had been abroad, then he helped me.

We went to his apartment in New Jersey, where he made me feel at home. I relaxed and listened to the tapes I brought from Senegal to relieve me a little bit. There he introduced me to a Senegalese family living in the same building. They invited me to eat a good Senegalese meal with them. I was so surprised that they had all the necessary things needed to prepare the food. I spent two wonderful days there.

Finally, I started for Kalamazoo. I changed buses three times. I spent nearly 24 hours on the road without exchanging a word with anyone. If I was in Senegal I would have had someone to talk to even if I didn’t know them!! However, I had the opportunity to see many cities, including Cleveland and Detroit.

At last I arrived at Kalamazoo on Friday, September 17—a date I will never forget. The sun was shining, but it was cold. I took a yellow cab called “All Stars,” which took me to the security office of the College.

A friendly hall director led me to my room. Alone in the suite, I felt like someone lost in the universe; one thing I wanted was to return to my country near you, my dear Aunt. Suddenly, the phone rang. It was Aissatou, a Senegalese girl living at the College. I remembered that I had asked her to come to see me so I could see where she lived. I asked her to meet with me because I was morally too weak, I really needed someone to calm me. Not long after, she came and we talked about many things: Senegal, the university, its problems, studies, people, the weather... She relieved me a lot by advising me to have courage. I knew that I had found someone who was going to help me whenever I needed it and moreover, I had found a friend.

The day after my arrival, Aissatou and I went to Dr. Baraka-Love’s house. She received us very warmly and had even stuck a sheet of paper to her window that read, “WELCOME TO OULEYE NDAO.” She was too kind. She gave me a lot of presents and even called me her daughter!! It was her birthday and I met many Americans. After some discussions, I found that we had more or less the same ideas about life, culture, and music. It was a great day for me.

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I have taken walks around the town and found that Kalamazoo is a very calm place—cold, with many cars. It is fall, and Kalamazoo College is very beautiful. The high trees are losing their yellow leaves. The campus has green lawns and many squirrels. The buildings are built in red bricks, mostly surrounded by flowers.

Two days after my arrival, the Orientation Week began with its many activities—what a tiresome week!! Every day I had to wake up early and go to the different meetings between professors, hall directors, and international students. With the latter I’m always in touch with them; we discuss together, and most of them chose the same course as me: English Freshman Seminar. They are from different countries, including France, Spain, Germany, Japan, Ecuador, Pakistan, Turkey, and Sierra Leone.
Pretty Lake Adventure Center was one of the activities which impressed me. While playing with the students I had just met, we helped each other without distinction of sex, religion, or race. I enjoyed this outing very much.

My advisor, biology professor Dr. Evans, helped me choose the classes I wanted to attend. Whenever I have problems, I go to see him without the least hesitation.

I'm a French teaching assistant; the professor with whom I work is very kind. I have students who are polite and intelligent; teaching them is not too difficult.

Americans are curious about Senegal. They are always asking me, “Do you have snow in Senegal? Do you have this and that, that and this?” I answer them, “NO.” They sometimes get on my nerves. However, they are kind and available.

The first day I went to the cafeteria “Marriott Food Services,” I was surprised—the food was not edible for me. I was not used to this kind of meal, consequently I was homesick for the Senegalese dishes such as Thiebou Dieune, Mafé, and Yassa.

The way students are dressed is not very good. Their rooms are always in disorder and they make a lot of noise without caring if they are disturbing their neighbors.

America is a place where I don’t have any opportunity to have a nap. Now I understand what you meant when you said that, “there is no rest in America.” I always have something to do. One has to work hard if one wants to make it.

How different Senegal is from the USA! In our country, we live together as one community. You will never see, for example, a son or a daughter sending their old parents to a retiring house. If you do such a bad act you will be banished from the society.

I am really homesick for Dakar; I will never be tired of repeating it to you, my aunt, and to the others. Here it is too cold. Everyone is in their own corner, that’s not what I am used to. I miss you all—my Dad, my Mum, my brothers, sisters, and uncles. You will greet all the relatives for me. I don’t know how to express what I feel deep in my heart. Whatever I say to you is nothing compared to it. I’m going to stop here until the next time. Please answer as soon as you receive my letter. Needless to say, you will be very glad to read mine, consequently, you will reply as fast as you can. You love me too much to wait a second more to do it. Everyday I go to the mail hut, to see if I have letters from Senegal. If it is the case, it is as if I have found a mountain of gold or diamonds!!!!

Thousands and thousands of big, soft, warm kisses,

Your niece,

Ouleye

— Ouleye Ndao

Ouleye Ndao is an English major at Université Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar, Senegal. She traveled to the United States to complete her fourth year of study at Kalamazoo College. She is uncertain as to whether she will return to Senegal to complete her studies or if she will stay in the United States.
Whispered Thoughts

Languid breezes
Dust a centuries old chateau
Slip noiselessly through the drawbridge
To sway carelessly in the towers,
Liberated.
Below the breathless view
of a city that shines
Beneath drops of pearly mist
Where women with aristocratic noses
Fight traffic with umbrellas
Feed bonbons to pampered dogs
And couples stroll the Sunday marché
Arms entwined to the cries of a vendeur
Singing the praises of his Camembert
At the strike of noon the streets will clear
The couple, the vendeur, the woman, her dog
Home to eat their Camembert
in true Normandy tradition
Leaving the breezes to sway carelessly in the towers,
Liberated.

— Kathy Wilkens

Sunday Marché
Photograph by
Kathy Bradshaw
In Caen, France, people make their way through Sunday market at La Place Courtonne.

Kathy Wilkens '95 is a French and international and area studies double major who studied in Caen, France. She plans to return to Caen to complete her Senior Individualized Project on 20th-century French history as seen through the eyes of a Caennaise woman.