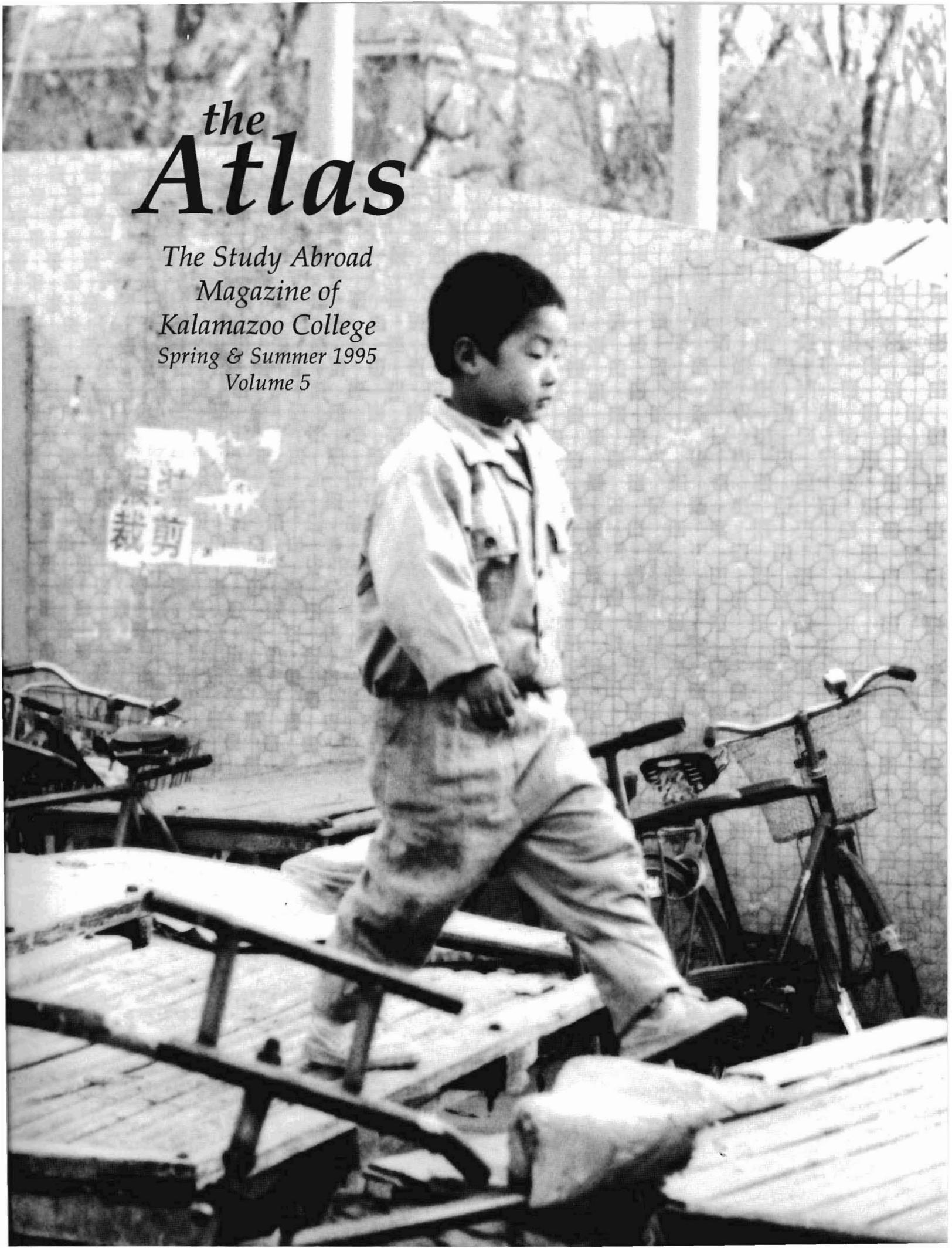


the **Atlas**

*The Study Abroad
Magazine of
Kalamazoo College
Spring & Summer 1995
Volume 5*



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Spring & Summer ◦ *Volume 5*
The Study Abroad Magazine of Kalamazoo College

The idea of “students in motion” is a continuous theme at Kalamazoo College, the goal being to challenge students mentally and keep them in a constant process of growth. The college’s extensive Study Abroad program has been the vehicle for this growth, motion, and series of “next steps” to more than 85 percent of graduates in the past 30 years it has been offered.

The *Atlas* is a Kalamazoo College publication containing works and photography by students (and, this year, by a visiting professor) who have participated in the Study Abroad experience. The magazine circulates to students and their parents, alumni, friends of the college, prospective students, and current members of the college community.

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by Jessica Fritz, who spent her Study Abroad in China

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Antidote

An after-dinner cry was not what I'd expected; a drink, conversation,
or sleep, maybe.
Leaving the table in a bungled rush,
but not forgetting to be polite and do all the things
my mother had said were good:
"Merci, c'était très bon," crossing my fork and my knife on the plate,
folding my linen napkin, and sweeping *ma copine*
up onto my hip and singing to her in French as we
spun into the kitchen
where I put the mustard away, dumped water from the pitcher, kissed the dog,
said "*bonne nuit*,"
and climbed the stairs to my safe-haven.
Here, the words did not confuse me or choke me,
and mustachioed men did not frighten or harass me for
speaking flawed French.
Alone, where nothing seemed foreign at all, I could begin to understand
why I was attacked at the table for mispronouncing a word,
and why it *hurt* me so deeply.
My tears were
the antidote to
those venomous words,
and I stored them in my pillow for the next time:
Inevitable at our dinner table
because choking on words was easy,
and so was my retreat to another world that was all but French.
Somewhere in between
it was harder to conceal my defeat
when I wanted to formulate elation and
have an after-dinner drink,
leaving last night's tears to evaporate on a feather.

- Amanda Quick



**Lonely Carousel in San
Raphael, France**

by Suzanne Brucker

Six months in Clermont-Ferrand, France proved to be the most demanding and rewarding experience for Amanda Quick, who wrote this poem upon her return to the U.S.

learning the third tongue and finding my place (the beginning of my life in Japan)

What do **you** think of when you hear the word “Japan”? Trade wars, short people, rice cookers, computers, cell phones...perhaps these and much more. I don't think of any of these. Sure they're there, but these cosmetic generalizations have become completely overshadowed in my mind. Instead I think of my friends, my university, my house, the newspaper, the man in the ceramic shop (who I saw every morning on my way to the bus station, so many times that I think of him as a good friend), the kids down the street, the sun setting beyond the mountains. To me, Japan has become a third home, a place where I can comfortably lay my head and know that there are people who care about me as much as I care about them.

My year in Japan was not one of travel, trains, nor hotels. No JapanRail passes or backpacks, and no sleepless nights on a station bench. My year in Japan was spent building relationships, losing my Western identity, and soaking up like a sponge everything about Japan that I could; no judgments, no bias.

I have so many memories from my year abroad, so many feelings that I simply can't seem to put into words. But there is one thing, one aspect of Japanese society (or Nagoya society at least) which I have come to appreciate as fundamental and perhaps something from which we all can learn; at least I did. The issue is “patience.” It seems to me that the Japanese have perfected this philosophy, and it is rather natural to everyone. As soon as I returned to America via Portland I was greeted with complaining. Just sitting in the waiting area it hit me, like fighting words which make you want to cringe. After not hearing complaining for nearly a year, it took a while to get used to....I still don't know if I have.

Perhaps it's due to the cramped living conditions; or perhaps it's due to the fact that people have respect for each other and each other's property; or perhaps it's the way that Japanese are brought up. The fact is, I don't know why. But it's such a wonderful feeling, a fresh feeling. In Japanese there are two words, like the Japanese Yin and Yang, “honné” and “tatémaé” which can't really be translated to English. *Honné* basically means “that which one wants to do,” but *tatémaé* means “that which one should do in consideration of others' desires and wishes.” This distinction appears so pervasive throughout every strata of the population. People find the perfect balance of repressing individual “wants” which creates a harmony that you can feel. It's a vibe so hard to explain but yet so easy to understand once you feel it and live it. You find people taking care of each other, making sure that friends' needs and wants are fulfilled without having to ask directly.

So where does patience come into all this, this quality of *gamman* which I find so awesome? Well, it seems that people don't rush to reach an end; instead they take time, patiently waiting to reach the end in due time. *Aru-ga mama*. Perhaps this is something which Americans could learn from. I'm sure that it would reduce the number of law suits, feuds with the neighbors or the relatives, and parents yelling at their children in stores. It's difficult to learn, but when you find yourself living with it every day, it becomes a part of you. It has become a part of me.

Beyond the cars, the technology, the tariff fights, and the workaholic image of the Japanese salaryman, I have found a Japan of sensible people, of people who accepted me for me and who welcomed relationships that will span time zones, oceans, and lifetimes. The infamous “they” say that if you are not Japanese you will never be “accepted” by the Japanese. That's a lie. But it takes lots of energy and patience and time to learn the language. Everyday you work so hard, you study until you fall asleep, you get mad at yourself for not learning fast enough or for not learning enough, you force yourself to lose yourself in Japan — it grows on you... and then the reward comes. You find yourself getting asked to “see you later” parties in your honor every day of the week before you leave. And then you arrive at the airport to find eight of your closest Japanese friends who have come to wish you the best of luck, tying the bonds of friendship even tighter which will keep you united to them.

This is Japan to me...not the sights nor the travels. Japan has become part of me and I part of it. This is true now and will be true forever. I wrote in my journal: *...The memories are in such vivid Technicolor, and I don't want them to end. Another reason why I shall return to Japan, my third home, as quickly as I can. I leave in two weeks time and I shall prepare myself and I shall try to fulfill my promise to my friend: at the airport crying is not allowed, only smiles and laughter to get us through to the next time we meet, soon.* My tears ran dry on the airplane.

Michael Bäk spent ten months in Nagoya, Japan. This essay reflects his thoughts on human relations as the most essential and successful aspect of his time spent abroad.

Gypsy Child

Christmas, Cold,
The Saints and Devils play a fierce game of tag around the Cathedral
 gloaming pink stone,
 statues,
 glass,
 stained.

A girl,
 She is four years old.
 Six, my father says, *malnutrition*.

Gypsy,
 The first sight I show my parents and two brothers in Strasbourg.
 Alone, hidden in the folds of the bright fabric covering her tiny black-
 haired head.
 Golden teeth laid tight.
 Dark eyes deep to her bare toes, purple in the wet wind.

She doesn't smile, she cannot speak,
 holding a tiny accordion and something resembling a winter coat,
 clenched in her mangled hands.

I never believed she existed.
 A fairy tale of stories,
 intertwined with strong culture.
 Alive with music,
 silk skirts,
 glass beads.

I was not prepared for her homelessness,
 her denied infancy,
 her malnutrition,
 her rows of cardboard boxes housing her mothers, brothers,
 grandmother.
Her homelessness no different from the cardboard boxes in New York.
 Her family.

I try to walk towards her.
Hold out a thick security blanket from my American upbringing.
Take her in my arms.
Cradle her childish tunes.
Point out stars in the night.

 But I can't,
 I am held back.
 She, untouchable,
 unattainable,
 lost.

They live in Germany, our French mistress tells us.
 The French are not responsible for them, the Germans don't care.
 refugee.

Her father stands behind the Cathedral walls near the post office.
After sundown he collects her francs,
 throws her few worthless centimes to the pavement.
He could work,
 feed his lack of sexual control with his hands.
But she is a more profitable
 prostitution.

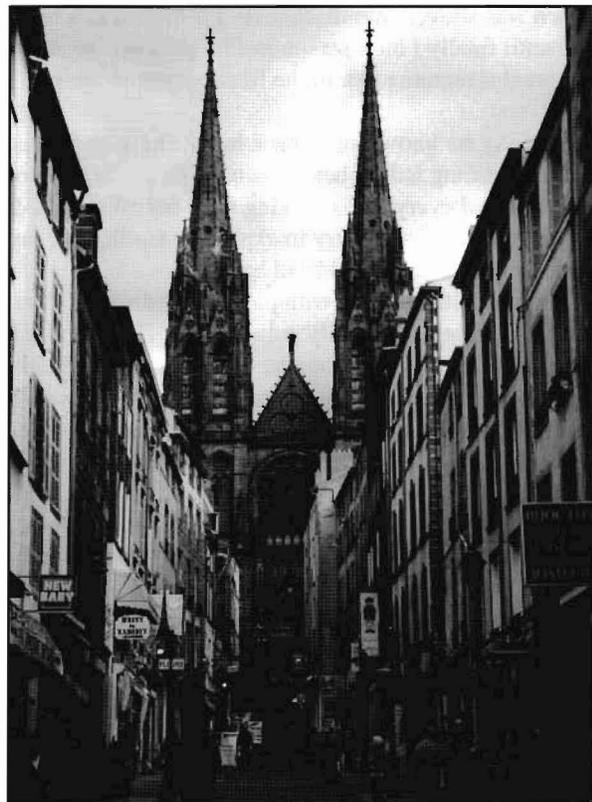
It is the last time I came to see her.
I have been away for three months,
 she is still there.
Do you hear her? I ask him,
 I cannot bare to point, coming too close to her winded world.
She's little, he says quietly,
 knowing my want for the first time.
Can't you do anything about her?
No sweetheart, we are here to defend America, not save everyone else.
 He is right, social activism is a phrase never uttered in the mouth
 of the pentagon.

She is a thief, a burden.
She accosts tourists at the Coliseum, crafty,
 at St. Peter's,
 at Sacré Coeur,
 at Notre Dame.
She holds out her hand in Les Brasseurs,
 in front of the university,
 on the bus,
 my walk home.

She is everyone else's problem
She is no one's
 responsibility.

She holds a worn accordion, still
 encircled with saints and devils,
 silent, four years old.

- Elizabeth Kazarinoff



Cathedral in the centre-ville of Clermont-Ferrand, France

by Jennifer Mrozowski

Elizabeth Kazarinoff studied in Strasbourg, France for six months. She is especially dedicated to children's issues after having completed a Career Development at the Children's Defense Fund in Washington, and she plans to become a child advocacy lawyer in the future. While on Study Abroad, Elizabeth learned that child welfare concerns are not only a national, but an international problem.

Dear Dad, Mom, and Andrew,

20 septembre 1995

Well, I don't even know where to start. First off, let me define *bizutage* for you. Hell on earth which ran my life for the last week. "Bienvenue en France, Lorna. How would you like to go through freshman hazing with a bunch of French students during your first week in our beautiful country?" Please, can I? *S'il vous plait, s'il vous plait!* Let me just say, integration beyond my wildest dreams.

It all started early on Saturday morning. We, "the group," flew to the train station in Vichy to catch the 8 a.m. to Clermont-Ferrand to meet our new families and go to the Ecole Supérieure de Commerce (business school) for our chance to experience the truly French tradition of hazing. Now, let me just preface this with the fact that Jaqueline and Aurelie were telling me the night before that I might not want to wear my hair down because they might CUT IT OFF! What? Did I understand right? Needless to say, we were a tad nervous.

So, we get to the school and it's really modern and all the French guys are really good-looking, but I can't understand a word they're saying. I keep telling myself it must be because they are speaking slang, but I doubt it. There is a big meeting in the auditorium with fire sirens blaring everywhere and firemen (pompiers) directing us around. They gave a lecture (of which collectively we understood about 25%) on the rules and procedures we would have to follow when we got to the Michelin fire training grounds. What? We're going where? That's right campers, pile in the buses and off we go. By the way, it's raining and cold out.

The next scene is the Michelin training grounds, a series of abandoned burned-out warehouses in a big field with perfect, wonderful views of the Puy de Dome and the surrounding mountains. Each person was assigned a number and alcoholic drink. I was vodka 7. When my group was called, off we went on a little obstacle course. We ran up hills, through tires, carried fire extinguishers for what felt like miles and then started seeing people emerge from a warehouse, their whole bodies smeared with black grease. We were next. I stood in line outside a warehouse not understanding a word, and then was shoved into blackness. I panicked in a big way. I was, for all intents and purposes, blind. I kept hitting walls until finally I hit a person and he grabbed me and started touching me EVERYWHERE and smearing grease all over! I started screaming at him; he freaked and let me go. Finally, daylight....but I'm covered in grease! Hey, this is fun.

Next thing we know, we're back in the city with instructions to go home and clean up for our evening soirée and report back to the dining hall. I head down the Cours Sablon toward home with Suzie and Erin. The three of us are covered in grease and everyone is looking at us but all we can do is laugh. This is crazy! But in a fun, scary way. I get back to the mansion and have to try to explain to Guillaume, my strange 15-year-old host brother, what has happened to me. I shower, get dressed up, and head back.

Dinner is waiting, along with plenty of red wine. Yum. No one touches dinner. They're too busy dancing on tables and singing songs. Generally going crazy. This is too much culture for me to handle, so I look at Amanda and Erin and the unspoken decision is made. Bring us wine, and lots of it. Erin takes the plastic Evian bottle and fills up. Wow, things are getting interesting. Look, there are six guys with no pants dancing on tables in a line. Hmmmm. And so the night went. My French improved with every sip of wine I took and before long I was talking to a really nice guy, Thomas. And then I was talking to a not so nice guy, Jerome, in the bathroom (they're communal). A day of extremes, in more ways than one.

I stumbled home — that French wine is much more potent than I thought. I was so drunk that my host dad, François, had to help me up the winding staircase to bed. He thought it was hilarious but I wasn't laughing the next morning when I had to get up for the second stage of the *bizutage*, cleaning a national park. Let me just tell you, trekking in the mountains and picking up trash wasn't high on my priority list that Sunday morning. Bed was a better idea. But I did it. After that, we went to Super-Besse, a really cool ski resort. The two day retreat was for orienting our class, through business exercises and parties. It even snowed while we were there! Never mind that my roomie was Mark from England. We'll talk about that some other time.

Interesting doesn't even begin to cover the last week. Parts of it were horrible, and I've never felt so alone in my life. Other parts were amazing. Just being in the mountains and hearing French all around is incredible. I don't know where any of this is leading, but if things keep going this way, I'll be a changed person in six months time. I can hardly wait to see what tomorrow has in store. I love you and miss you.

Lorna

*Lorna Baldwin, a senior International and Area Studies major, spent her six months Study Abroad in Clermont-Ferrand, France and just had to write home about her *bizutage* ordeal.*

Ode to the Golden Arches

There is no McDonald's in Aix. Apparently the corporation has been trying to open a branch there for years, but the village elders won't let them in. It would ruin the atmosphere of the centre-ville; it would contribute to the decline of the French way of life which is already slowly absorbing American pop-culture (the movement from downtowns to malls, etc.—basically the same move the U.S. made 20 or 30 years ago). The elders are paranoid that death of the village they grew up in is close at hand. So the next closest thing is Quick Burger which sits in all its charmlessness on the Cours Mirabeau along with all the charming and overpriced cafés. I agree with them. I worry about the movement to malls. I frequent the cafés, overpriced though they may be, and I refuse to eat at McDonald's (or even at Quick Burger, for that matter). Not even one fry.

So normally when I see a McDonald's on a sundry voyage to a town less anal than Aix, I feel vaguely disgusted; it looks so out of place, so brilliantly neon and plastic in the ornate architecture. Normally.

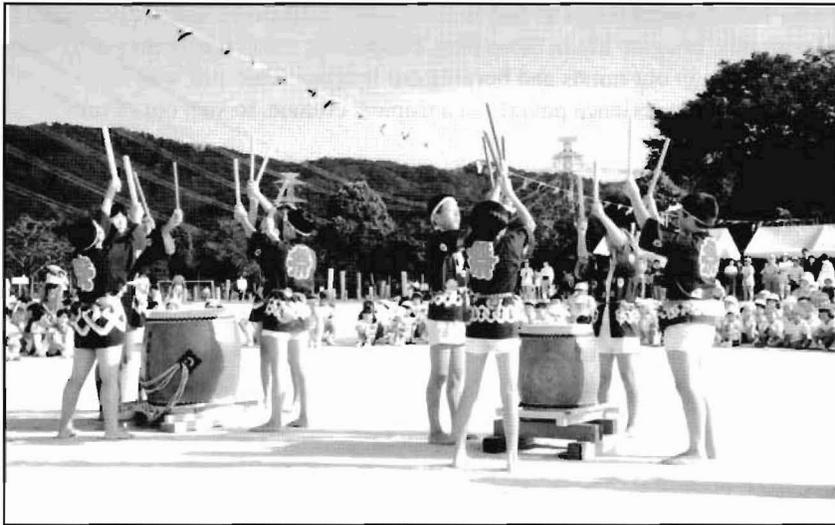
Enter Nice. I was trapped there due to my own stupidity. (I'd neglected to check if there was a train to Florence, naively assuming that there would be one.) Presented with this situation, I decided to make the best of it, find a room, and spend the day on the French Riviera.

Unfortunately, my good relations with this city were not to be — it just started out badly. I awoke the next morning (wondering where the hell I was — never a good sign) to the sound of raindrops on the roof. Fat grey drops fell continuously from the sky from that moment until I boarded the train that night, keeping me somewhere between soaked and uncomfortably damp for a good twelve hours. My miraculous Canadian boots sprung their first leak as I picked my way around puddles and reflected crossly that, for all the hype, the Cote d'Azur seemed only to be some weird melange of Florida, Paris, and Las Vegas.

I was just wondering whether I was completely lost in addition to being completely wet, when I rounded a corner and saw the Golden Arches before me, glowing brilliantly and plastically against their red background. For once, the feeling of nausea didn't well up in my stomach — it was a familiar sight, and I could smell the salty, warm oil from across the street. It looked very warm and dry inside.

I didn't go in or even stop to consider it. Instead I gathered up my tattered courage and continued marching...I had a picturesque café with a view of the Mediterranean to find.

Irene Backus studied in Aix-en-Provence for six months.



The Kamishinano Elementary School's annual Sports Day Festival, a yearly event at all Japanese schools.

by Michael Bäk

Dumb Gaijin (Foreigner)

They are patient with me
as I struggle to understand
them or count out the correct change.
I am excused — she's only a
dumb gaijin.

What could I do that wouldn't
be excused with that phrase,
even by my own usage of it?
I haven't found anything yet.
In some ways I hope I never
do — in other ways I would
like the excuses to run out so that
they see past my whiteness to me.

- Elizabeth Gray

Elizabeth Gray is an International and Area Studies major who studied in Nagoya, Japan.

The MILAGRO of Ecuador

As seen by two gringitas

Grades from Fall quarter at Universidad San Francisco de Quito had long since been figured, the ethnographies from January were handed in, and Spring quarter at “K” didn’t start until late March. We were determined to have our own set of adventures within a two-week time span! The two of us were in love with the Ecuador that we had experienced up to that time, and desperately sought to discover all which remained unknown.

We had heard of a famous train which left every morning at six a.m. from a town less than two hours from Quito. The track, named “The Devil’s Nose,” was considered one of the continent’s most brilliant engineering projects. The many tourists that could be found on the train in early morning were aboard simply to experience the landscape: a true cross-section of Ecuador. We, the privileged foreigners, were allowed to sit in the “Primera Clase” (first class) while the natives were herded into a large cabin (“the cage”) from which they emerged periodically to sell their goods. Amy was especially excited about the pink popcorn balls and even chased the man who bore this good in order to acquire more! We were scheduled to arrive in Guayaquil, which was the end of the line and our ultimate destination, before dark. However, there were many complications along the way.

One must realize that we were not on a TGV or Amtrak train. Ours was a rickety museum piece that traveled slower than any mode of transportation we had experienced. It halted for painfully long periods of time in random small towns where we examined the faces of the standers-by and wondered if they ever left their pueblo. It was popular to sit on top of the train rather than within, and many of the daring Ecuadorians actually stood on top of the moving train. We spent most of our time on the roof, where we met a number of interesting people, and where we were told that MILAGRO would be a good place to stop for the night. We were not prepared to face ladrones (thieves) in Guayaquil at night, thus the dusk forced upon us this town called Miracle.

“The very best hotel is called Azuay. It’s right next to the tracks. You can’t miss it.” Of course these words had come from a Milagro native. He didn’t know that we were two North American girls unaccustomed to tolerating dirty, cockroach-infested hotel rooms. He was probably used to worse conditions. “Watch your maletas (bags).” The conductor’s words shocked us. We then departed the train in search of a safer place.

We stepped off of the train and into the hotel, pleased that it was so close. Beth bounded up the stairs and negotiated the price of 15,000 sucres (\$7) for the room. We offered the money before being introduced to the quarters. It was not a pleasant meeting. Proof of our reaction lies in a photo snapped by the dueña, who had never before held a camera. Corpses of cockroaches scattered by the door were an immediate deterrent. Dirty, tired, hot, and hungry, we wanted luxury. This was supposed to be the very best. Cement boxes as bed frames, holey mattresses, and bleak walls were not what we had in mind. “We can deal with this. Imagine life in those huts. People live much worse than this. Why can’t we handle it?” This was the question racing through our minds and burning our tongues. This was why fate brought us to Milagro — to learn to live as “they” do, to experience poverty in a tropical climate, to step out of our-



Twin craters in the Galapagos Islands, formed by lava seeping out of hydrothermal vents in the ocean

by Rob Cavagnol

selves. But we couldn't. We could not shed our gringo-ness, having been raised with all of the comforts we had come to depend on. This hotel room. This heat. This town full of trash. It was unacceptable. Until now, Ecuador had been a comfortable home — host families equipped with maids, sprawling bedrooms, a tennis court, VCRs, e-mail, cellular phones, and nights out in high-class restaurants. But we were still in the Third World. Milagro was a reality check. We can say that now.

Dinner that night brought more fear and disgust. A dog with a case of diarrhea was the accompanying entertainment. This was followed by a boy threatening us with his shoe held in the air in demand of 5,000 sucres. This sum, slightly more than \$2, was an outrageous amount for anyone to beg. We were chased by him back to the hotel, where the first true feeling of fright set in. Two women traveling alone — maybe it was not such a great idea. “Take off your watch.” The dueña was watching out for us. They had even chased away the boy, a known thief. On our second venture through the trash-infested streets, we came upon three Germans who had been on the train with us. The relief that this provided cannot be expressed. The feeling of safety overwhelmed us. We made it through the night together, both of us almost too afraid to sleep. An early morning bus to Guayaquil was our escape from the layer of Milagro filth, fear, and frustration that had covered us.

Upon arriving in Guayaquil, we sought a very comfortable and reasonably priced hotel. It was a four-star establishment with air conditioning, cable TV, movies in English, and a stocked refrigerator. We had run straight from our Third World into a U.S. comfort zone. No more cockroaches or humidity. No more bleak walls or dirty streets. No more sickly dogs or begging boys...no more Milagro.

But then, we stepped outside. It was time to face the Ecuador which we have grown to love — those same small huts, street dogs, dark-skinned faces, and tropical humidity were pieces of our Ecuador. OUR Ecuador. People overflowing with affection and patience, breathtaking beaches, ice-capped mountains and mysterious jungle. Little girls in beads who don't know what the United States are. Host mothers who cry if you arrive three hours late from Cuenca. The billy goat next to the post office in Quito. Street parties in Baños. Helados de Salcedo. The fisher boys in Puerto Cayo “de mi corazón” (of my heart). Memories that, like a quilt, are varied. The beauty of the quilt, though, is only attained through this same variety. We laughed and cried in Ecuador. Intense frustration and joy. This is how a country, which at times was “unacceptable” and at other times a romanticized piece of fiction, became our home. Our Ecuador.

Amy Kleine and Beth Bowden found each other to be great travel companions. Their adventures will continue this fall in Ecuador where they will complete their Senior Individualized Projects.

What makes us different

It is incredible how going to another country affects both one's perceptions of oneself and of others. Before going to Japan I viewed myself as, if not a typical American, at least fitting well within the boundaries of what a normal American is. However, in Japan I found myself perceived as so different: in my whiteness, blondness (and I'm not really blond), blue-eyedness; in my speaking of English; in my speaking of Japanese, eating of Japanese foods, use of chopsticks; in my Christianity; in my interest in Japanese religion and Japanese culture in general. It seemed anything I did was remarkable. If I did “typical American things” I was noticed. If I tried to fit in and do “typical Japanese things” I was noticed.

It wasn't just that I was different from the Japanese. I was different from the Americans, too, even those from the same regional or economic backgrounds. The similarities I had perceived in the cultural comfort of my home were totally lost in Japan — a situation where I had thought I might cling to any similarities I found. I realized that while I perceived myself as a good representative of America, I would not want the Japanese to think that Americans were like most of the Americans I met in Japan. Perhaps (probably) they would not want me to represent them either. I found Malaysians and Singaporeans and even Japanese who were more like me than other Americans there.

But upon returning here and reflecting, I see the differences as both the beauty and the frustration of American culture. No one has something in common with everyone, and, at the same time, everyone has something in common with someone. We each have to find our niche here just as I had to do in Japan. I am not advocating a splintering of our society into special interest groups, but rather a recognition of the fact that we can't expect perfect commonalty (that we shouldn't desire perfect commonalty), and that we must live with that and work from there. For, in reality, I am the only one who is exactly like me, whether I am in the United States or in Japan.

Elizabeth Gray spent her Study Abroad in Nagoya, Japan.

My Auschwitz Grampa

Saw my name on the list of those who died,
fell to my knees and cried, head against the glass,
touching that Polish name, the name that is mine,
the name that sent my grampa to the camps.

My grampa did not die. He was a survivor
whose wife birthed my dad whose wife birthed me.

My grampa used to sit me on his knee,
and I used to take what little hair he had
and make two tall horns on the sides of his shiny head.
He would laugh and sing me the Polish song
about the two cats sitting on the fence.

My Auschwitz Grampa never told me that he
was fenced in for two years, away from his family,
away from his Leokadia, away from his future me.
Wondered if it is always cold there as I tied my
red scarf in a knot at my neck to keep out the wind.

Used to like that scarf, that showy, red plaid
with the green stripe scarf. Wanted to hide it
that day, bury it in the ground -- six feet deep.

My Auschwitz Grampa never told me he
put his friends in the ground, all piled on top
of one another, naked and the same, no longer
bodies, but rather papered ribs and cheek bones -- starved.

I had a big yellow apple in my pocket, thought I'd hurl it
at the ugly sky, ugly gray Oswiecim streets the minute
I walked out of there. But my grampa taught us not
to waste. He made me butter and jelly sandwiches,
never scolding if I couldn't finish, but always finishing
them when I left the kitchen. Sometimes I'd come back
to get a sip of my milk, but the glass was always empty
the second time around. My Auschwitz Grampa didn't tell
me he ate rats when there was no more food to be had.

Wanted to throw out my tough black shoes with the Auschwitz
dirt and what I thought to be the Auschwitz stench, but I
knew, even though my Auschwitz Grampa never told me,
that he worked shoeless in that snowy Nazi camp.

So I saved my big yellow apple and my red plaid
with the green stripe scarf and I walked out of there
with my tough black shoes and my name.

- Jennifer Mrozowski

Jennifer Mrozowski went on Study Abroad knowing she would have to visit Poland, the homeland of her grandparents. There, she confronted her history. Her grandparents were not taken to Auschwitz during the war, but another work camp of which the name is unknown to her.

Opening Locked Doors

Maria and I settle awkwardly onto the single step in front of the locked door next to her house, the house that will also be mine for the next four months. We have just gone on one of my first evening walks, on a route which will become comfortably familiar during my stay in Cáceres: down the hill to the Plaza, up Calle Pintores with its bakeries that constantly emit the smells of chocolate and buttery pastries, through Canovas Park where the old men gather to smoke Ducado cigarettes and talk in disgruntled tones, up the other side of the hill to Number 4, San Jorge. The walk is perhaps two miles, yet we've been gone for over an hour. We walk with Spanish slowness and attempt to chat despite my clumsiness with the language.

Now, sitting here, we are locked out, and Maria's son is taking his time bringing his extra key. I look down the street at the other homes. Most of them are like this one—a modest single story, a window with an iron grate on either side of the door. Simple. But scattered among these older houses are two-story, modern, asymmetrical homes with so many windows that they almost seem to be made of glass. They look out of place, wrong.

"Were all the houses like this one?" I ask. The sound of my own voice in this strange tongue surprises me.

She sighs lightly and licks her lips — this is what she does when she is thinking of how to phrase something so I can understand. "Yes. All the houses used to be like this. Those," she says, pointing at the newer houses and wrinkling her nose, "are ugly, don't you think?"

"Yes," I say. Maria is encouraged by my understanding of what she has said, and she starts to speak freely, earnestly.

"Whenever somebody dies now, they tear down their houses and build one of those. They've offered to buy this one, you know. But I won't sell it," she says resolutely.

"How long have you lived here?" I ask.

"Thirty-five years," she sighs, growing serious. "This is the house my husband bought when we were married. You know the bed I sleep in? I've slept in that bed every night since we moved in. All five of my boys were born in that bed. This house is where they all grew up. It was such a busy place, always happy and full of people. And my husband...when he died, almost 24 years ago..." Maria trails off. She stares down at her hands and twists her wedding ring. Her knuckles are swollen with age, so much that she can't remove her rings.

Neither in English nor in Spanish could I have ever come up with words to comfort her. I reach out and put my hand on hers. She smiles sadly and says, softly, "The years go by quickly, my child. Remember that — they go so quickly."

I remember those words, the tone of her voice, the smoothness of her hands. I remember during my four months in Spain and my month of travel, which are filled with hundreds of moments that I want to last forever, and not a few moments that I want to forget. And I remember them as I return home, see my friends who, among them, have conquered the world, and realize that we all look older, wiser. We all have a lifetime of stories to tell, and every one could end with these words: "The years pass so quickly."



Church in Candelária, Spain

by Jessica Walsh

Jessica Walsh is a Spanish/English double major who studied in Cáceres, Spain.

Istanbul

Muezzin

Enchanting, haunting quarter tones
at five o'clock in the morning
My introduction to Turkey

Turkish coffee, thick and potent

The Blue Mosque

Proud, soaring minarets ringed in light
for Ramadan

Turkish baths, steamy and sensual

Tall lady want to buy a carpet?

Grand Bazaar

Rainbow-colored chaos reigns
Carpets, *kilims*, gleaming brass
painted tiles

Ebony eyes

Women in *purdah*
beautiful behind their veils

Turkish delight

A sticky sweet
or
a sticky hand in mine as a little boy
leads me to his postcard stand
Five thousand lire? Twelve cents.
I'll take four and try to capture some of
the Magic

for later.

- Joy M. Campbell



Children's Day in Istanbul, a national holiday in Turkey

by Joy M. Campbell

Joy Campbell spent five weeks in Turkey after completing her Study Abroad in France.

Cambele Joyce

After several weeks on the road, I had one day back in Aix-en-Provence before returning to the United States. That day *should* have been used for last-minute shopping, packing, and good-byes. However, a certain *aixois* police inspector had other plans.

Waiting upon my return was a notice from the Police Department of Aix-en-Provence. I was to appear before an Inspector André two weeks hence. Hmm. What's wrong with this picture? Kalamazoo College student, eight-month resident of Aix, with visas and other papers in order, is summoned before a police inspector. Though leaving the country the next day, and thus unable to appear, I called M. André to discover the reason for my summons.

Explaining that I had returned only the night before and was leaving again the next morning, I asked what it was that required my presence at the station. "I'm sorry, Miss, but I can't give you that information over the phone." "I see. Well sir, as I'm leaving the country, I simply won't be able to come in." "Oh, but you must. You'll have to come today." "I'm sorry, you don't understand. I haven't got time..."

And so it went.

I walked to the station. After consuming what seemed an interminable amount of my packing time, I was waved into the depths of the building by an irritated functionary who *obviously* had better things to do with her time, such as filing her nails. As I wandered through the subterranean labyrinth, the stale odor of smoke assailed me. Eight and some months in Europe had toughened my olfactory system somewhat, but the smell seemed particularly pungent near office 107 -- that of M. André. I found him, smoking, balding, and sporting a rather shocking yellow t-shirt that didn't do much for his wine-gut (the French would never dream of cultivating anything so *gauche* as a beer-gut), sitting behind his somewhat battered desk.

"Well, Miss, it appears you're quite the traveler. However, you seem to have a small problem with the local transportation system." My mind scrambled to find a reply that wouldn't make me appear as confused as I was. The inspector noted my lack of response and opened a file folder. Helpfully jogging my memory, he went on, "It appears that on 18 November, 1994, at 17:30, on bus line number 3, you were caught with an invalid bus ticket."

Suddenly images from that ride, nearly six months before, filled my mind. I had boarded the bus with an (admittedly) invalid ticket, and was smugly taking yet another free ride when it happened: *the bus police*. They got on and made their "show us your tickets" announcement. No problem, I thought. My contingency plan for just this situation wasn't very complicated: play stupid American.

Ticket? Validation? *Je ne vous comprends pas*.

Somehow my deliberately garbled French translated itself into my standing in a police station six months later. "Yes, sir, you're absolutely right. I remember now. So, is there a fine?" I was opening my purse, eager to get it over with and start doing things that *really* mattered, such as trying to shut my suitcase. More gleefully than I felt necessary, he nodded, "Oh yes, there's a fine, but you don't pay here. You must go to the bus company's administrative offices."

Right. I love French bureaucracy.

Forty-five minutes later, I stood before another nail-filer as she dug through the records from the previous autumn. I wasn't in *novembre*. Nor was I under *décembre*. It became evident that I wasn't in 1994. Picturing myself running through the airport with the accumulations of eight months spilling from hastily packed suitcases, I suggested, "Try looking under 'Joy.'" Lo and behold, there I was: Miss Cambele Joyce. After paying my fine, I turned to leave and the woman held out my receipt. "Don't forget this -- the inspector will be in until four o'clock today." "I beg your pardon?" "You need to return this receipt to the police station."

This isn't funny.

I trudged back to the station, vindicated only by the feeling that I'd done my civic duty. Relating the incident to my host family on our last evening together, I realized my error when they incredulously asked, "You mean you actually *paid* it?" I had missed a once-in-seven-years opportunity: when a new President is elected, he or she traditionally grants amnesty to all those with parking tickets, minor infractions, and yes, bus fines. Jacques Chirac had been elected the week prior to my return.

How do you say "Aaargh" in French?

Joy Campbell is a French/International and Area Studies double major who fell in love with Provence during her six-month stay. She will return to Aix for her Senior Individualized Project.

La Feria de Abril

The flashes of the carnival rides reminded me of those lightning bugs my dad used to point out — the ones we used to clasp our soft hands around, trying to peek between our pudgy fingers before they flew away and left only an etching of light in the wet night air — their shine barely whispered to us as they floated out of our night.

As we followed the *caballeros* from the polished metal and glass of the train station, down the winding roads that aged with every step, the colored flashes began to dance with the bottom-heavy music amid a background of laughter rolling from the mouths of *los niños* — their innocence tickled our ears like a feather hovering in the air.

We looked up from our upside-down seats of the carnival ride, our faces lit up by the blinking yellows, reds, and blues — we could see the Spanish girls who were transformed into women for this week in April in their *flamenco* dresses of yellows and reds and blues with their dark hair coiled and elegant — their beauty stung our eyes like a sunrise chasing away the last remnants of sleep.

The night struggled to stay with us as morning promised to arrive like a mist that slowly climbed the walls of the striped *casetas*, where the carafes of white wine promised to cool our throats, dry from screaming and laughing with each other in the fledgling Spanish we ventured to practice with Spaniards — the words teased the backs of our minds until we could catch them with our tongues.

They circled our table like moths — attracted to our weariness and determined to keep us awake in the Spanish tradition by dancing *La Sevillana* until we began to see the shadows of the decorated horses — we were drunk-dizzy as we tried to mimic the turns and passes of our new *amigos* who coached us with smiles — the foreign music became so familiar it seemed to come from a past life.

We took the bus back to the station where we picked up our backpacks from the overnight lockers used by those travelers who could only stop for a taste of Sevilla — our tired bodies could barely stay awake as we waited for our *Ave* back to Madrid and the overflowing plates of *paella* and *pan* with *naranjas* and *plátanos* to follow —

the images of *La Feria* promised to beckon us from the yellowing pages of our memories, like symbols carved into the dark side of a tree.

- Andrea Cha



La niña at La Feria de Abril in Sevilla, Spain

by Andrea Cha

Andrea Cha went to La Feria de Abril in Sevilla, Spain while on Study Abroad in Madrid. The mystical quality of this Spanish "Brigadoon" inspired her to write this piece.

Meeting Natasha

Wandering, I found a small park off of Nevsky — a block off the main drag in Saint Petersburg — just past the invisible border that keeps most tourists in the tidy, western center of the city. The tired but cozy park attracted a patchwork of different people. An elderly couple sat together, not speaking but gently rubbing each others' hands. Four men sat stinking of the local brew, arguing and laughing, while an ancient woman quietly stood to the left, waiting for the emptied bottles. Children crawled over large carved wooden rabbits, bears, squirrels, and a turtle. Hundreds of small legs and hands had worn the paint to a distant memory, while the brightly clad children formed a moving rainbow. I sat on the only empty bench writing letters. The soft wooden slats creaked softly under my weight every time I moved.

A babushka arrived. The old woman sent her granddaughter to the others, and smiling, asked if she could sit. I nodded. She introduced herself as Natasha and sat close beside me. She asked my name; the stale beer breath traveled through her mossy teeth as she began to speak. We chatted for a few moments then lapsed into silence. Pointing to the young girl, Oksana, she lamented.

"Look, you say she's a beautiful girl. She's not though — not at all. See how she's teasing the other girl? Oksanichka plays mother to her doll, then tires of it, and throws it to the side. But she doesn't let the other child touch the doll. Noooo — it's hers. She can't share. Oksana is no beauty. You see, everything has changed. My granddaughter, the whole generation is selfish. All because of money. Money makes people suffer.

"Here, I'll explain. You, your country can be democratic. People with money can be democratic. It's easy when everyone has enough to get by. But without money, people only suffer. Here, now, everywhere, people without money have nothing — no choice, no hope, not enough of anything. The few here with money, they have choices, they have democracy and don't have to care about anyone else. So those without — they suffer. They suffer here, now, everywhere.

Natasha slipped into a long tale of the heroic Grandpa Lenin. She spoke of him as if he were still alive, alive and weeping at the state of things.

"My generation, we all shared. Nobody did without. You'd go into the stores, and there would be only one — maybe two brands of each item. But, everyone could afford to buy everything that was sold. My children, they all had the best toys. It was fair because everyone had the same toys. Now look — Oksanichka's mother works hard and gets good money, so Oksana has a pretty doll. The other girl has to do without. Moreover, Oksana thinks she's better, she had more. We never had that before. Such inequality was your problem, you gave it to us. Now, we walk into stores, and there are thousands of choices, thousands of items. But, there's no choice really because I don't have the money for even the things that I need, let alone for those I would like to buy. Is that the way democracy, the way Capitalism, is supposed to work?"

Natasha spoke for a long time, slowly and simply, so that I could understand her. The garbled voice grew raspier as she spoke, bristling through her tangled lips, so she pulled a cheap beer from her sack. Natasha, in her mountainous purple overcoat, spoke, her judging amber eyes too close on a crooked face disfigured by a baby-skinned scar crawling from her ear to the bottom of her crooked jaw. Natasha, with the jaundiced skin of someone well-accustomed to the cheap Russian vodka, told many stories; her own interest waxing and waning as she randomly changed subjects. Natasha's sister married a German shortly after the war — the last she saw of the only other surviving member of her family. Natasha's pension from forty years of factory work doesn't even cover the beer she drinks. Natasha plods casually through her memories, slightly nodding her head. Her thinning hair is twisted into a garish purple rhinestone barrette. Thirty years ago it must have been a fetching style.

Natasha could be like some of the other old-style Soviet women I had met — grunting at my Phillip Morris cigarette and eyeing the American backpack and boots. Together my backpack and boots would have bought school clothes for their grandchildren who no longer enjoy the uniforms which emphasize the fairness and equality of everyone. Like them, she could have seen me as the embodiment of everything Western, everything that she had been taught to disdain her entire life. She could have cursed or ignored me like some of them. I was a representative of all the Western stores crowding Nevsky — from the Matel Barbies store to Subway. Instead, she tried to explain why things are so difficult now; why she misses the Soviet days — the good old days. Natasha spoke without blame, without accusation. Natasha showed only a melancholy patience, shedding a few tears for Grandfather Lenin and a granddaughter who would never know him.

Sarah Lyberg is a History major with a Russian minor. She studied in St. Petersburg, Russia.

“My memory walks with me”

through the city of Quito
the sun blazing, beating down
on streets paved in stone
past the vendor on the corner
her fish frying and the smell
filling the air and my senses
my mouth waters
i see her every day
on my way back to
mi casa
and she smiles at me
her wide-set eyes content
her face round and smooth
bright scarves wrapped around her neck,
her waist
a clear-faced baby on her back
the air is crisp and clean and the altitude
high
and i have learned over months to breathe
easily and deep.

i reach
mi casa
and my key clangs in the gate
like a bell, like a charm
and i mount the steps and
mi sobrino
toddles up to me arms outstretched
because he has learned over months
to love me
easily and deep and
mi mama
fixes me
un té
and queries
como te fue, mi hija
and the sunlight films through the filmy curtains of
mi cocina
and in
mi cuarto
i know the view
of the city and the brick buildings
with the sheet glass windows and the fences
and the yards enclosed
and the laundry of
mi familia
fluttering in the brightly colored breeze

and
my memory walks with me

through the village of Baños
mountains arise on either side
green and majestically
huge and vast and high and mine by days
and toffee is wrapped rich and sweet around pillars
by men with strong and lean brown hands
and one hostel room with a narrow bed and a basin
and a view of a brick church with a bell tower in the
parque central
became
mi casa
and the air was golden and kind
and i learned
easily and deep

my memory walks with me
outside of this city and this college and
these classes and these friends
it walks with me through
mi familia y mis amigos y mi casa y
mi país. mi vida.
it walks with me ruthless, brutal, frank, true, beautiful.
it knows
seis meses
it knows terminado
it knows final
it knows
deseo y amor.

- Nicole Quackenbush



Nicole worked in a soup kitchen in Zampiza, Ecuador. These are three girls who ate there and would go to the park with her after lunch.

Nicole Quackenbush studied in Quito, Ecuador.

Imagine this:

It's four o'clock, and you just got out of your exciting, if barely comprehensible, lecture on German history. Your professor, with his big wool trench coat and little black briefcase, had sprinted out the door faster than you ever saw Tommy Quiver, the kid who hated social studies more than anything else, ever leave the room in high school. You, with your still-wet backpack and coat, mill out of the room with the rest of the students, surrounded by the murmuring of German talk about discos, homework, and food. It's obvious as you walk by the window that the five-day drizzle has yet to turn off. That's OK. After five days of getting soaked on the way to and from school, it hardly matters anymore. It's been a great lesson learned in Germany; you're actually NOT a sugar-cube, and if you can handle getting up everyday to a new language and culture, you can sure handle a little rain.

The bike ride, however, is a different story, for it is even more challenging than translating *Faust* into Sanskrit. On a map it's not a problem, as anyone can see. It's only five kilometers; the little brown line of the road looks somewhat windy, but not too difficult. Heck, you can cover the whole distance on the map with your index finger! That's another lesson learned here; maps are great but, unlike life, they are two-dimensional. For maps, as a general rule, fail to mention such factors as traffic, slick spots, where the mean dogs live, and, let's not forget, altitude.

The only consolation is that you're not alone. It's almost like a ritual here in Erlangen; everyone, and this is no joke, everyone rides bikes. Many of your fellow students join you in heading for the bike racks on this wet February day. It's not even that you have developed any great friendships riding your bike home, but rather that you can look at a stranger and, without saying anything, get across the feeling of "yeah, another ride somewhere." Accompanied by the usual array of German promises to meet later at this-or-that café, curses, and simple good-byes, the bike locks come off and bikes themselves are rolled through the mud and pointed in whatever direction you call home.

This direction takes you past the university library, through the intersection where one of the last Nazi leaders surrendered in '45, up Bismarck street, and right on past the sign to Rathsberg, three kilometers away. You flick on your bike-light in the growing darkness as the paved road turns to dirt and stone. Germany is amazing this way because, for such a modern country, it retains something of a rural identity, at least outside of the biggest cities. Erlangen is a city of 100,000 people, and yet it is not unusual to see a tractor on some of the side roads on the outskirts of the city. There is very little blending between city and country; the line is a distinct one, and you have the opportunity to cross this line as you ride home. You say good-bye to a couple of other bikers as you split off the main trail and through a small, oak-filled park, slowing down only to let an old woman and her poodle cross your path. She is dressed in a black wool trench coat against the cold and her hair is tied back in a knot which is covered with an old shawl, and she mutters encouraging words to her dog as you speed by.

Your legs begin to complain about the effort being expected of them, and you curse yourself again for not looking into buying a bus pass of some sort. A man in a suit cruises by you; his leather briefcase is tied to the back of his bike with two bungee cords, and you think, hell, if he can do it, so can I.

The drizzle slackens as you reemerge with the road for the last part of your trip home; it's as if the gods of weather know you don't need the extra hassle and are impressed with your fortitude in making it this far. Riding up through the woods, the tangled mess of trees on either side of the road, you miss the leaves you remember from September and lament about the nakedness while wishing for a spring you'll never see. You shake your head at the unfairness of it all as two Volkswagens speed by you, their drivers warm and dry and fast.

In old German fairy tales, the woods are always places of mystery and magic. They are deep and dark, and, regardless of the angle from which you look at them, they remain unexplainable. As you struggle up the path, you begin to understand why this is so. You're not the first to make this trek, and you surely won't be the last. What kinds of woodsmen, hunters, knights, witches, and, yes, even German automobiles have gone before you? The newly-risen slice of moon peeks out from behind the quickly dissipating clouds as you finally reach the summit of the hill and your safe neighborhood, leaving the misty stretch of woods behind you.

Marty Mechtenberg is a History major with a minor in German who studied in Erlangen, Germany.

Take-out

The white box with the wire handle had been sitting in the same position in his fridge for about a week and a half. He had forgotten what was in it, and, in the eight p.m. ritual of rummaging for something to eat, he grabbed at it like a grizzly might pluck a rainbow trout from an ice cold mountain stream. Once the box was open, he carefully inspected it with all of his available senses. First his eyes scanned the contents of the box to make sure nothing was crawling around in there. He then jabbed at the box with the index finger of his right hand; the contents made a slight squish and a small but noticeable indentation was left by his finger. Next he thrust his nose into the box, and, inhaling deeply, he realized the smell was not pleasant but tolerable. Deciding everything was still good, he trotted from the kitchen and fell into the couch just as the announcer's voice came on the television.

"The book says to watch out when you first eat Peking duck. They say a lot of times people eat too much and get sick."

"Oh, have you seen my lip stuff? I just had it and now..."

"It's in the pocket of your brown coat. Hey, do you think they'll give us dog? The woman I worked with this summer joked with me and told me not to eat any, but I really think you can get it if you want."

"Don't make me sick. I just want to get this over with, and I'm not feeling too well as it is. Is this supposed to be a formal thing? Because I really don't feel like dressing up — all my clothes are still wrinkled in my suitcase."

"I don't think you need to worry about it too much. We're just going over to his house for dinner and to be introduced."

"But they made such a big deal out of us coming over here and about inviting us... where are my cigarettes? I really need a smoke."

"You left them on the table by your bed, right there under the lamp. Can you sit still for a minute and look at the guide book with me? There are so many places I want to go, and I need help."

"Oh, you just decide where to go, and I'll follow. Does my hair look okay? I feel like a big fat slob. All I need to do is go out and eat something. What happens if I don't want to eat what they give us?"

"Just taste some, say you really like it, and smile. It'll be all right — just relax."

At exactly twelve, students began pouring out of the classrooms and charging down the stairs. Their swarming bodies filled the stairwell, and the stamping of their feet along with the clamoring voices made it hard to hear. The teachers stayed safely inside the classroom until the last student had broken the threshold of the double doors that lead outside. It was a clear day, and the sun shimmered off the bicycles that stood in two rows deep along each side of the street. The mass of two-wheelers looked like Manhattan at rush hour, reflecting metal and black rubber. The students struggled to free the bikes from their locks and each other. With amazing grace and speed, bicycles snaked their way in and out of the pedestrians. There was an accident when a bike carrying two women, one on the seat and the other hanging desperately on to her, hit a student listening to a pair of yellow headphones. No one was hurt, but no one stopped to check either; the crowd parted and merged around the dazed threesome. Where the road parted, most students headed for the cafeteria, carrying small tin boxes which clinked along and glistened in the sunlight. The inside of the cafeteria was incredibly dark, and the students stumbled upon each other until their eyes adjusted. A long line formed in front of the grumpy woman who would take your cash in exchange for meal tickets; most students dealt with her as little as possible. The food lines were labeled "Chinese Food," "Western Food," and "Staple Food." There was no noticeable difference between the first and second line. At the head of the third line, men in severely stained white coats shoveled out blocks of sticky, white, gluttonous rice. The block would hold together indefinitely; the students were convinced it could be used for building materials. As each student made their way to the seating area they would grab a set of wooden chopsticks wrapped in white paper. The snap of the two sticks being separated echoed in the dining hall.

"I don't like the way that dead duck is staring at me."

"Just try some, and don't make a scene. It's not bad, pretty good actually."

"I know, but its head is split open, and the eyes are just burnt up little black balls. They look kinda like raisins, and I really don't like raisins."

"Come on, quit being silly and try some. What you do is take one of these flat pancakes and spread the plum sauce on it. Then put on a little of the meat and some onions, wrap it up, and... Umm Good!"

"I know it must be good, but I can't stop looking at that scorched little head, ugh."

"Well try something else. What's that over there?"

“Oh, they told me it was eel, and I tried it, thank you very much.”

“You tried eel?! What’s it like?”

“I liked it, but it’s hard to pick up. Here, give me some more.”

“How can you eat eel?? It makes my stomach turn. Look, it’s all dry and shredded into little bits.”

“It’s good. Stop making a big deal out of it, or they’ll say something to us.”

The market was always a busy place, children running, men and women shouting, and fish jumping from their tanks. There was never a dull moment. It was separated from the street by a white plaster wall that ran around all four sides. Inside there were about five or six rows of stalls, each containing their own specialty. Green vegetables, red turnips, and yellow yams were stacked until their toppling seemed unavoidable, yet they always held strong. A few stalls had cooking utensils, great iron woks, small bamboo steamers, and red plastic buckets; everything was for sale. One side of the market was dedicated to meat — pigs skinned and cut in half hung from metal hooks. Large knives, black with age, were used to cut paper thin slices of frozen meat. The slices curled as they were cut and then were carefully stacked. At one stall, a young girl leaning against a post was sleeping; in front of her, three mountains of rice stood solemnly. All around her were sacks of rice, their pearl innards waiting to burst. Old women, their heads covered with worn cloth, held straw bags in each hand. After five or six stops at different stalls, the bags bloated with food. Men squatted in the corners of the market playing cards or chess; every so often an argument would break out, and people would swarm to watch the excitement. The market was a very busy place.

“I feel sick. Can we walk a little slower?”

“You were the one who said not to eat too much duck, and what do you do...”

“But it was so good, that plum sauce. OH, my stomach! Anyway, I think it was the eel that did me in. Why did I let you talk me into eating that stuff?”

“That was the best part. I was a little nervous going in there, but they were nice people, although my communication skills were limiting.”

“You certainly did more talking than me. I just sat there and smiled. I don’t know how I’ll be able to survive here.”

“Hah, well, we’re here, so I guess we’ll find out. I hope all our meals are as good as this one.”

“I just hope my stomach can adjust. Can we hurry? I need some Pepto.”

The white box lay on its side, completely empty. The flicker from the television made his face pale blue. While the announcer talked on endlessly about the day’s events, he lay silent, eyes closed and mouth hung slightly open. She entered the room quietly, not wanting to wake him. He murmured when she cautiously covered him with a blanket, but he remained asleep. She crouched and retrieved the empty box from the floor, snatching it up in one swift, smooth motion.

- Stew Markel



Inner Mongolian man on his way to the market to sell garlic

by Jessica Fritz

Stew Markel rides around town on his low-rider bicycle.

Seven Shorts *Written on the tube to Wimbledon*

1 In my time in London I have met No one Who wears the same shoes that I do Because most of the time I am in them	4 Those little cards The adverts on the top Railings of the carriage They do not affect my buying Habits. Is not true	6 Were I a tree And it was winter I would feel (I feel sure) Naked
2 Red sticker No Smoking	5 Patchwork of iron bridge supports; Flat, rusty, something Make the river And the boats on the river Viewed through them poetic	7 East Putney must From the sky Look a mess What with the cacophony That is roof tiles Thoroughfares Thin spiky aerials
3 How like a cough Hack (bang) Hack (bang) The Underground is Overground		

Yemi Onafuwa is an Art/Art History major who studied in Scotland. He rode the tube in January 1995.

BackWynd

I am sitting in the Canadian Muffin Company shop, the one on BackWynd. A November Saturday in Aberdeen. It is wet and grey outside. The shoppers are many, the buildings huge. I trace the path of rivulets as they cascade down the grainy exterior of St. Nicholas Kirk.

The banana nut muffin was created for deliberate chewing, I'm sure. So I chew deliberately, as I mull with furrowed brow. My latté is getting cold, but the moment is too perfect to rush. The Simon and Garfunkle Songbook sounds muffled through the murmur of voices in the café.

"Every day is an endless dream of cigarettes in Aberdeen..." My mind drifts, and I stop myself from stopping it. Each picture eases itself into my mind and stays until it is gently nudged out by the next. Hiking in the Cairngorms. Me, the sky, the terrain, the heather, the sheep, the little loch in the hills. The air breathes differently up here. The air breathes sweeter.

Walking down St. Machar drive to Seaton Park. The green, the grey. St. Machar's Cathedral and the five hundred year old gravestones. I wander. I contemplate transience. The silent weaving of the Don through the park. Old men casting lines. I wander. I contemplate eternity.

High tide at the beach. The North Sea at three a.m. in winter. All three of us are freezing to death, so we get back into the car. Olivier plays the harmonica; Jonathan strums on a twelve string; I drum on the dashboard. We suck the marrow out of life till five, then we return to Johnston Hall.

Midday on campus. I am lost in thought or something like it. At the very last minute, I leap out onto the curb as the yellow double decker careens down High Street with the barest semblance of control. I breathe a sigh of something, and go into Old Toon Café to buy a buttery scone.

The pitch is soggy as shepherds pie. Mud flying everywhere, we play 20-a-side. I think of the word raucous, then I search in vain for something stronger. Mark lobs me a great pass. There are ten yards between me and the goal. I manage one touch before Cameron brings me down. I bleed. I live.

We play Trivial Pursuit till late and laugh about the seventh planet. Then we drink excellent tea in Ed's room. We talk about everything in particular; we think about nothing in general. Kat gives me an ichthys pin.

St. Nicholas Kirk is still wet but no longer streaming. My latté is cold, but I gulp the rest of it anyway. I pay too much money to the gap-toothed attendant. Groggy with the emotion of having visited the past, I step outside and join the maddening crowd.

Yemi Onafuwa likes muffins. He wants to be a physician.

Study Abroad at “K” College

Letter to a friend, professor at Oxford University, Great Britain

Dear John,

Imagine a hill as green as a British garden and shadowed by hundred-year-old trees with a huge chapel standing at its top and many red-bricked buildings with white-framed windows set all around.

If you arrive at Kalamazoo College on a weekend, as I did, its campus seems very peaceful and quiet (the only signs of life being squirrels and some birds). It's more like an old English scene; we, European people, have so many stereotypes about America, haven't we, that it makes one wonder whether or not it is a dream. I'm sure you'd not be astonished at seeing British students from Oxford University dressed in black gowns, and walking on the paths while talking about Latin or ancient Greek translations!

However, when you open your blinds at seven a.m. on Monday morning here, you know immediately that your “dream” is over; you are in America, for sure. Some students in T-shirts and shorts are now walking to the dining hall to get breakfast; some of them wear a cap “screwed” on their heads. (I wonder if they don't sleep with it because they keep it on in the classrooms!) Yes, they wear caps, but they go barefoot! Can you imagine that in your class or mine, John? But don't forget — we are in America, the country of freedom and free expression!

During the day, everyone is very busy on campus; students and professors are running from one class to another one, from a meeting to a job, to the natatorium (this is the swimming pool, of course, but didn't I tell you there was an old-fashioned atmosphere here?), to the athletic center, or to the Fine Arts building.

After five p.m. the campus seems peaceful, and you think that's the best moment to enjoy reading a book sitting on the lawn, but what a foolish idea. That's the most dangerous thing to do here at K College — you could be scalped. No, this is not another dream; there are no Indian tribes here; this is not a campus out of the old Westerns; but students are continually throwing these plastic plates. They do it with extraordinary strength but with a lack of precision. Do you know what I am talking about? They are playing Frisbee, and they call this sport “Frisbee golf!” Golf?! What would an English gentleman say about that? Isn't it shocking?

But remember, didn't I tell you there was a magical atmosphere on this campus? It comes back every night: when darkness settles down, hundreds of fireflies fly up from the lawn and dance, lighting the hill which is dominated by the illuminated bell tower of the chapel. . . and I'm still awake. This is neither a dream nor a fairy-tale. I'm really at Kalamazoo College in Michigan, and I enjoy it very much!

Love,
Odile

Odile Raffner is a guest professor from the University of Strasbourg.



“La Maison des Tanneurs” in La Petite France, Strasbourg

by Elizabeth Pachota

Adventures in Norway

Dear Lynn,

February 26, 1995

Now I know you've heard some crazy stories from me since I've been gone, but before I continue with another one, I just want to remind you that, no, I am not making this up. So, here goes. OK, the last time I wrote, Jen and I had just missed our boat to Ireland so we headed up to Scandinavia. Well, since we were up in this neck of the woods, we decided that we'd swing by Norway and do a little bobsledding. Off we go on another night train to Oslo from where we were going to head north to Lillehammer. Pretty neat, eh? Yes! I was going to walk the paths that Dave Letterman's mom had walked a year ago in the '94 Olympics. A dream come true, and I couldn't believe I had made it so far! We're in the Oslo train station looking at our Let's Go and checking out the directions on how to get there.

We ask this guy if the little city north of Lillehammer was on the same train line, and can you believe our luck? He said the train went directly by the place where the Olympic bobsled is! We could just stay on the train for a little longer to save money and save time that we would have had to spend on the bus to get there. Awesome! But he said we had to let the conductor know. No problem, we find our train, get unbundled, and sit down to wait for the ticket controller. Pretty soon she comes along and looks at our tickets, and we tell her where we want to go.

The look on her face should have told me something, but I was too busy thinking about the awesome top 10 list that I was going to think of to send to Dave. Anyway, she explained to us (in perfect English) that the train went "through" the city, that's right, but it didn't "stop" there because it was out of season. But she said that sometimes they make special stops, but she would have to call into the main station and ask for permission. What a nice lady, I thought, and figured it'd be no problem. Jen and I sat back and enjoyed the beautiful Norwegian countryside. It was so pretty — snow everywhere! The train zigzagged through tunnels and along the cliffs overlooking the icy lakes below and took us up into the mountains. Eventually the controller came back and told us that our permission had been granted, but we would have to do it quickly and quietly. OK, so it's a mystery. I can deal with that!

Well, let me just make our little train ride quick and say that when that train stopped I suddenly understood why it was not a scheduled stop! When the controller opened that door to a little wooden platform that looked like one of those old deserted deer blinds from home, my heart ripped apart, kind of like how it feels when your tongue is stuck to metal, and you have to yank it off! I looked at Jen and saw the death look on her face and knew that if we stepped off the train I'd face my death against the cold, the wild animals, or her! But what could we do? The entire train was waiting on us, Jen was panicking, and I still wanted to reach the bobsled that had awaited me for so long. So, we did what any normal person would do, we stepped off into the knee deep snow and watched that wonderful train zigzag out of sight.

Once that train disappeared the reality soon began to set in. We were surrounded by mountains, snow, and wilderness. There was a fence on each side of the tracks, and on the other side of one we thought we saw a town. However, there was a huge field between us and the town, and Jen thought the field looked like a river or a lake, so we were pretty much stuck. There were no people around, no phones (like we'd know who to call!), no bus stops, and what really made me mad was there was no bobsled either! At this point Jen was reaching her level of patience, which like usual isn't very high, so she was getting ready to kill me. Before she did though, we walked up and down those tracks hoping we'd see some sign or person, but no luck.

Then Jen decides that the only thing that we can do is to start WALKING back to Lillehammer — a good 10 - 20 minute train ride away through tunnels and along cliffs, and yes, she wants us to walk along these tracks. Uh huh, yeah anyway! So after we argued a little, OK -- a lot, we decided that we would try to flag down a car or something or walk over to the little city. So, we again trudge on down along the tracks, stopping only long enough to jump into a snow bank in order to get out of the way of a train! Eventually, we get to a low part of the fence where we thought we could climb it. First, I had to convince Jen that it wasn't electric. She glared at me as she fell to her waist in snow when she went through a ditch to get to the fence, but we finally made it over.

On the other side, there was a little road where, every now and then, we would see a car drive by. So when we saw a tractor coming down the road, we ran over and prayed the driver spoke English. Jen and I get to him, and first he says that he doesn't speak English; so I try French. However, I think that scared him, so he decided that maybe he did know a little English. Luckily it was enough to get directions to the bobsled! When he told us the directions, I was a little afraid that he didn't really understand or maybe that he was mistaken. Anyway, that nice Norwegian led us to the bobsled — down the road, over a bridge (which went over our favorite train tracks), up the mountain, down another road, and finally we came upon the bobsled run! What an awesome ride! It was like a roller coaster on ice!

After we went down (yes, all this trouble for one ride), we had to get back down to the city to catch the bus for Lillehammer where we needed to take the train back to Oslo and then on to Copenhagen. Jen took care of this problem

by flirting with the guys who ran the bobsled, and they gave us a ride down to the city. From there, we found our bus with plenty of time before the train left.

Thus, it was really stupid that when we saw a train sitting by our platform we just jumped on without looking at the destination point. We were even more surprised when it started moving about four minutes too early *and* in the opposite direction. Yes, we had just conquered the Norwegian mountains only to screw up in the midst of civilization by getting on the wrong train. And in Norway, you have to make reservations. Of course, we didn't have any for this train and were still wet and cold from being outside all day, marching through snow banks and climbing fences. At this point, we sought the controller, and this is when we fell in love with the people of Norway. Not only did the controllers not yell at us, but they were really understanding and even called ahead to a train going back to Oslo that ran along the same line and asked the controller of that train to wait for us so we could switch trains! Can you believe it? So all of a sudden the train comes to a stop, and they escort us off the train and into the hands of the nicest controller we met while in Europe (aside from the one that split a bottle of wine with Jen in France).

They then found us seats in the very crowded train and whisked us back to Oslo. Unfortunately it was too late to catch our train. Once in Oslo, we learned the station closes during the night, which meant there'd be no sleeping in there and that we had to find somewhere to go. We grabbed a train schedule and started to calculate, and guess what we found! We found a train that was going back to where we came from (Lillehammer), which would meet up with another train heading back to our present destination (Oslo) at around three a.m. There was no time to lose because it was leaving in roughly ten minutes. Off we flew, again without reservations, to the next train. Still wet, cold, and hungry, we jumped on and found the dining car, where we spent the next three hours on the way to Ringeby, Norway. In the car, we eyed the menu and debated about charging a \$5 grilled cheese sandwich in order to be allowed to sit in an actual seat. Jen got some free coffee toward the end of the night and was in heaven; and as we were approaching Ringeby, the controllers turned off the lights so we could see a herd of moose! Finally, we arrived at another little boon dock town in the middle of the night while snow was just beginning to fall.

There, we waited for the train that would take us back from where we had just come — past the moose, past Hundefossen, past Lillehammer, past the lit up Olympic ski jump, and back to Oslo.

OK, it's now the next day, and we actually made reservations this time, got our bags out of the lockers, found something to eat, and made it on the right train. However, when we finally thought we were done with this little adventure, we saw there were two women sitting in our seats! Great! When is this nightmare going to end, I thought. Once again we consulted a controller. She went to talk to them for us and found that they were sitting in our seats to be nearer to their friends but graciously offered us their seats. Fine with us — just as long as we have seats. And those seats were so nice when we sat in them! All I could think about was being able to sleep all the way to Denmark, where we would stay in a real house!

I was just beginning to settle in and reflect on the hell we had just been through while debating whether or not that bobsled was worth it all (it really was!) and thinking about home and how nice it would be to have clean socks, when I spotted a violin which really made me think of home. Then I saw another one! In fact, they were everywhere in the entire car! Well, it turns out Jen and I landed in the last two seats in the middle of a car reserved for a Norwegian folk music group that was on its way to a concert in Sweden! The best part was that we were serenaded for an hour and a half with the most beautiful fiddles I have ever seen. I knew that it was fate when they started playing and thought that Jen's and my trip turned out to be worth every bit of frost bite that we acquired in the Norwegian mountains. So would I do anything different? NO WAY! One less mistake or one less crazy decision would have screwed up our entire trip! I'll write again in the next country, and please don't tell mom. Thanks.

Love, Amy

Amy Clement is a French major who spent six months in Clermont-Ferrand, France. She wrote this letter to her sister while making the great trek from one end of Europe to another.

Aberdeen, Scotland

January 24, 1995

Running back from the store tonight, I felt the cold most severely in my toes. I was clutching my groceries to my chest, fearful that they would drop, but the cold kept me jogging. The wind is fierce here, but it is propelling. My hair was flying wildly around my head. I felt like the ball in a pin ball machine, zig-zagging down the path to my dorm. The sun set tonight in its grand fashion over Hector Boece. The sky is just so massive, almost endless, and when the sun sets, it floods this expansion with pink and purple. Fast as I had run, by the time I flung myself into the flat, my face was stinging from the warmth of the dorm compared to the frigid winter air. I found my flatmates in the kitchen. They were gossiping about their hometowns and the less intelligent members of their classes. They never stop talking, but when I enter the room they all turn and ask in unison,

“All right Kate?”

I mumble a few complaints about the cold, but mostly laugh at their silliness; they have the ovens set on 500 with the doors open and the rings on high for warmth. Even more telling is the fact that everyone still has their coats and scarves on, and I see that my complaints haven't fallen on unsympathetic ears. To combat the cold we go down to the pub, and, sitting around a few pints, tell all the stories we know. I tell of how in the Isle of Sky the inhabitants have so little to do that they have a contest to see who can run the quickest from the pub to the top of the smallest foothill of the Cullin mountains and back again. I tell them that last year's winner succeeded in 55 minutes. This bit of information is received with gales of laughter from our table and the tables around us, who have perked up their ears to listen to the American relate her tale about their country. A man from the next table joins in with a tale more absurd in its subject than mine. Before long we are all chatting late into the night, and the pints are gone. My flatmate looks at me with a wildness in her eye that I soon came to recognize and asks,

“Want to go see the ghosts at Donottor Castle?”

Protests are ignored by the bravery inspired by numerous pints. Piling into our neighbor's car, we bolster our spirits by singing rugby songs at the top of our lungs. Before long we arrive at Donottor, a castle spectacular by day, but extremely spooky by night. The castle, or fort, is a huge ruin with a few buildings left partially standing. Located directly on the edge of a cliff that overlooks the North Sea, Donottor Castle is truly majestic. I got the shivers the very moment that we pulled into the parking lot. In the darkness the castle wasn't visible, but I could just feel that it was there. We got out and, clutching each others arms, walked with bold steps toward the ravine leading down to the entrance. We were scared, but it was the kind of sublime terror that keeps your feet moving, even when your pounding heart implores that they stop. Our journey down the



River in Braemor, Scotland
by Erin O'Bryant

path of the ravine and up the other side seemed endless. A few sheep baaed at us and eased our superstitious fears into laughter.

The main gate was locked, but we were invincible. We drew straws to see who would have to go first and then went to the side entrance of the gate. Not daring to let go of each other, we began wandering through the rooms and buildings of the castle. I could feel the history seeping down the walls to me. Legends that I couldn't remember learning filled my head. I thought of the 250 dissenting prisoners locked and left to die in the very building we were walking through. Fear had left me, and the power of history made me bold. I shined my flashlight in the nook where the crown jewels of Scotland had been hidden during the Jacobite era. The stunning realization, that I suppose only comes in the middle of the night, that the kings and queens and members of their court lived here in the very rooms that I was standing in took my breath away. That these people had been alive, filled with passions, joys, and sorrows, became true to me then, as I stood shivering in the very chambers where they must have slept.

Claustrophobia and terror struck us suddenly, and we sprinted out to the main pitch only to cry with laughter at our superstitious fear. I knew then what it meant to be Scottish and lamented the fact that American history was so short. As a true American mutt, however, I took some comfort knowing that a sixteenth of this history was mine as well. We spotted a lookout tower and scrambled up the winding stairs to watch the sun rise over the North Sea. The last to reach the top of the stairs, I was encouraged by a friendly array of voices calling,

"All right Kate?"

My friends and I sat for hours in the tower, discussing life plans and dreams that we all hoped to fulfill. For the most part, we all wanted the same thing: happiness. Ignoring the cold as best we could, we laughed until mid-morning, when the first of the tourists arrived. One friend suggested that they might think that we were ghosts, but I felt positive that we were all very much alive.

Kate Richmond, who studied in Aberdeen, Scotland, was inspired to write this by the primary source of education, especially in the area of History.



Ecuadorian Waterfall

by Rob Cavagnol

February '95 - Night Train through Switzerland

And when they say that
the moon shone like day. . .
Well, I've seen it.
I've seen fields of silver
and forests of black velvet.
I've seen mountains
cut against a deep azure sky
sprinkled with crystals.
I've seen mist
descending on the valleys,
clouds cloaking the mountains,
and snow
glow on the hills.
And there are lakes that
glisten like dark mirrors
reflecting the image into irreality.

- Suzanne Brucker

Suzanne Brucker, an Economics and Business major, studied in Clermont-Ferrand, France, and spent many nights on trains while traveling.

After Dusk in Quito, Ecuador

The dusk settles over Parque Carolina, the central park of Quito, before I quite realize that it's happening. I sit in this park every day; I have a favorite stone bench near one of the walkways, and I've talked to those rose vendors here, I have met sundry joggers and fellow loiterers here, I've written letters to send to my family in the States and my friends on foreign study here, I've read my mail eagerly, excitedly, here. It's right across from the post office, conveniently enough, and so many sunny Saturday afternoons I have scrawled detailed epistles, taken my envelopes and my address notebook out of my trusty black backpack which goes everywhere I do, addressed the envelope, sealed it up, and trudged into the post office where the workers smile at me knowingly—they expect my arrival, they have stopped exclaiming over the weight of the letters to France, to China, to Africa, to the States. I would always stay and watch the letters get stamped and thrown into the baskets so I could be assured that they were on their way overseas to my loved ones.

Today I am in the park after classes with my friend from school and we are so absorbed in our conversation that we do not realize that it's growing dark. My backpack is at my side, and many times I have clutched it close to me on buses or felt it bouncing against my back as I traverse the city and I think that it's my lifeline—everything I need, really truly need, is in that backpack—my journal, already full of entries about the first few months of my foreign study experience, my camera, loaded with film, my Walkman with mixed tapes of my favorite music that I made myself just before I left, anticipating six months without my stereo. Darkness on weekdays is the signal to return to our homes, after a long day at the university, the bus ride back into the center of the city, our ritual chats at Donut Café, the little restaurant where we (the exchange students at the university and sometimes our Ecuadorian friends) eat donuts and drink coffee and talk and have study sessions. I have established a routine over my few months in Quito—I know that to get home I have to walk a block from Donut Café to my bus stop, board the bus that has the sign with the name of my neighborhood on the front, Pinar Alto, ride for fifteen to twenty minutes until the bus reaches the end of the route. I climb off then, and walk another fifteen minutes to my house, and I marvel at the fact that I was once intimidated by this procedure, that I even got horribly lost the first time I tried to do it.

It is twilight in the park and we are talking and I see a young man and a little boy walk past us, and in retrospect I realize that they eyed us strangely, but at the time I was so used to being stared at as a young American woman in overalls with a huge black pack strapped to her back that I thought nothing of it. I sensed no danger; had it been the first month I probably would have, but I had begun to think of the city as my realm, I was confident, prepared, ready for anything, or so I believed. We talk for another few minutes and we are discussing returning home, how we will eat dinner and do our homework and talk to our host families and maybe go out later as we don't have classes until late the following day. The pair return, the young man and the little boy, and they approach us, the man bends down and says something to my friend and I assume they are begging for money, as he does, we are both getting ready to dig into our pockets for spare change—we always give when asked. I hear my friend breathe in sharply, see his posture grow stiff, I follow his gaze and reach a knife, which the man was holding at his side. It is a big knife and it is gleaming in the light, and the disbelief courses through my brain, "no this is not happening to us now," and I try to picture my future, my existence after this one minute in which I see the knife, and nothing comes to my mind. There is only the moment, and I am afraid.

Language matters little in a situation such as this; although my Spanish-speaking skills had improved vastly over the time I had spent in Ecuador, I had no need for many words. I said what I would have said in English in such a predicament—"Por favor." (Please). I hear my voice now, in that dark corner of the park, saying "Please," and there are no alternatives, there are no choices, but to sit and say "Please," and hope that we will not be hurt. The man is ignoring my pleas and speaking in a low and urgent voice—he is instructing the little boy to go through my backpack. I reach for it, pull it away from him, and explain, "This is mine. I have books, my diary. Nothing for you. I have nothing for you, I'm sorry," I am so adamant, I do not want to lose the few precious possessions I have here in this strange country.

I hold my backpack firmly in my lap away from the grasping hands, away from the hand with the knife, and I try to see the faces of these two people. A young man and a little boy—I have seen enough of Quito to know why they are here. There is a tall pine tree in front of the bank just across the road in front of the park, and at Christmas time this tree is decorated for the holiday season with gold dollar signs and blinking lights, and beneath this tree the street children shiver in the chill of the night, huddle together, and beg for money so that they may eat. This little boy is probably one of those children, this young man was

probably one of those children, and when this little boy grows older he will live, most likely, what he has learned, and that is that when he is hungry he can beg people for money or he can hold a knife at their sides and rob them, and the latter will be more likely to reap the best results. I do not know why I was born myself, able to come to this country with money in my pocket and a passport to leave and the security, the privilege, of being able to walk past that tree and give what to me is spare change and to them is the difference between starvation and a piece of bread, and later I can record this in my journal and write a letter about it to my friends and deplore the state of the world after an enormous three-course meal in my host family's home in the safety of the wealthy neighborhood in which they live on the outskirts of the city.

I try to look in the eyes of this little boy, this young man, but their faces are in the shadows and I see the outlines of their features, and I say to these forms, "Please," and the knife gleams in the light and I think, "in an hour will I be writing a letter to France about what just happened?" and I repeat, "Please," and the man says to me, "We have to do this. We are poor," and I know that if I think about it, I could have said, "I know, I understand, I am sorry," but instead I just repeated "Please," because the knife was there and that knife made it impossible for me to say anything else.

The young man hesitates, the little boy is confused, looking to him for instruction, and I sense this moment of uncertainty and I realize that for the past minutes adrenaline has been pumping through my body waiting for my opportunity to take advantage of it, and I stand up, slowly, I struggle to my feet, and the man stands across from me and he is just about my height, and I can see his face better now, strong-featured, with deep-set eyes, his dark hair falls over his forehead, the little boy is so young, he can't be more than five years old. I have a five-year-old host nephew at home, and right now he is probably riding his big-wheel through the kitchen and evading the grasping hand of our maid, who is trying to make dinner. The young man stands there and I realize he won't hurt us, he is more sorry than anything else, and I say to my friend, in English, my voice urgent, but quiet and low, "let's go, let's move, let's go," and he stands up and we run to the street, and I am not surprised that there is silence in our wake, they are not following us, but I don't feel safe until we reach the brilliantly lit street, and suddenly I am shaking all over and my friend tells me "it could have been a lot worse," and as I walk to the bus I think, "it could have been worse," and that's what I tell myself, the whole ride home, I repeat the words in English, in my head, "it could have been much worse," and "you were lucky."

I look at the other Ecuadorians on the bus as I struggle to stop shaking, to calm my nerves, to cease the racing of my mind, and I realize then that some of them are familiar to me, I had seen the man other days—two men in business suits with briefcases coming home from the office, and I realize I can mark the spot where they would get off, and one man meets my eyes and smiles at me and I think, "he knows me, as



A 'burro' waits outside a shop in the small resort town of Baños, Ecuador

by Sarah McKenna

well," and I smile back tentatively and hold my bag firmly in my lap and think, "I'm safe now," and I think about getting home and how my host family will have dinner waiting for me and my mother will ask me how my day was, and I begin to formulate the words in my mind—how will I tell her what had happened? "Alguien trato a robarme," (someone tried to rob me), I murmur to myself on that bus, and the woman next to me glances at me curiously and I see that she is my age, maybe a few years younger, and she has a beautiful little baby in her arms. "Que lindo," (how cute), I say, "Cuantos meses tiene?" (how old is he?) and the woman smiles and says, "He is seven months old—he is my son" and I say surprised, "your son?" and I look down at the wedding ring on her finger and think "you're so young," but I tell her that she has a beautiful baby, and she asks me why I am here in Ecuador and I tell her what I tell everyone, that I go to the Universidad de San Francisco de Quito, and that I am on the way back to my host family's house in Pinar Alto, and she raises her eyebrows and asks, "Tiene mucha plata, no?" (you have much money, don't you?) and I respond, "I'm very lucky," because that's the closest to the truth that I can get.

The woman gets off at her stop, and she waves to me, her baby sleeping, his head pillowed on her face, and I wave back and the attempted robbery seems very far away, but when I get off at the end of the line and start up the dark highway to my neighborhood, panic begins to course through me. Every man I see shuffling along the road seems a potential assailant, I begin to believe perhaps the two from the park are following me, they know where I live, or maybe they have friends who do and are right this very minute planning to attack, now that I am vulnerable once more. I realize I am being paranoid, irrational, but I can't hold my thoughts in check and I break into a run, run all the way down the highway, turn onto my side street, run past the walls that surround the beautiful enormous homes of my neighborhood, the graffiti scrawled on one wall reads "you will never see heaven," and I remember being shocked when I first translated the message—now it seems doubly cruel and I wonder to whom the person who wrote the message was referring. To the privileged upper class Ecuadorians who live in these homes? To the population at large? To foolish, ignorant, lucky exchange students like me?

Since I have been in Ecuador religion is almost ever-present in my life, in my thoughts, the concepts of God and good and heaven seem to have been incorporated into my being, because my host family is so religious—church and prayer and faith are an integral part of their existence. The house was full of religious icons when I first arrived and now that Thanksgiving is past and Christmas time is nearing my grandmother has set up a shrine in the corner of the living room with a sculpture of Mary holding the baby Jesus in the center. At night she lights candles all around it and kneels down before it and prays. I have always retreated self-consciously to my bedroom at these times, turning on my lamp and opening my journal or leafing through my homework, to turning on my Walkman, obliterating her holiness with these practicalities—her faith makes me shy because I've never had it myself and I haven't known if she'd be willing to let me share it.

But now all I want is to reach the safety of my house, and I turn onto my side street and I slow my running to a brisk walk but I am still breathing heavily, my face is hot, and I put my key into my gate and it clanks open as I turn it—I open all the different locks on the door and I remember the first few times I tried to do this it took me about a half hour—there were so many and I sometimes forgot which way to turn. Now I know the drill and I'm in the house after a few seconds and I can see down the hallway to my host family, my grandmother and my father and my mother and my sister and her little one and a half year old son, Panchito, all sitting around the table drinking tea and eating bread and my mother cranes her neck immediately at the sound of my footsteps, calling worriedly, "mija?" (my daughter).

"Sí," I respond, and clomp into the kitchen; the room is uncomfortably illuminated with cheerful warm light and Panchito shouts out, "Hola!" Panchito has just learned to say the word and has been so thrilled with his newfound ability to communicate that he can never settle for just one "Hola" and one pleasant reply—the exchange has to be made several times, which could grow quite tiresome. "Hola, Panchito," I tell him. "Hola," he hollers again. "Hola," I sigh. My mother interrupts asking why I am so late and I tell her quite inarticulately, not sure where to start, "Estuve en el Parque Carolina y alguien trato a robarme!" (I was in the park and someone tried to rob me), and my mother gasps and begins shaking her hand wildly in the air in front of her which I have learned is the Ecuadorian gesture with which to respond to bad tidings, and my host father sets down his bread and says, "Quién, mija?" (who, my daughter), and my grandmother leaps up to engulf me in an enormous hug murmuring, "mija bonita, mija preciosa," (my beautiful precious daughter), and Panchito yells yet again, "Hola," and I tell my host father, "un hombre con una cuchara grande trato a robarme" (A man with a big spoon tried to rob me), making this language slip of silverware confusion due to being overcome by excitement. My family looks at me in stricken bewilderment. My grandmother loosens the embrace and peers at me. "Una cuchara, mija?" she asks. "Sí!" I exclaim

forcefully. "Una cuchara GRANDE!!" (Yes, a big spoon), and I fling out my hands to demonstrate just how big the spoon was.

My host father bursts out laughing, at which my host mother slaps him on the arm in reproach, while my grandmother tears over to the stove and pulls an enormous dripping spoon out of the pot of soup sitting on the burner and holds it aloft, at arm's length, for all to see, "Una cuchara, mija?" she asks, "Estás segura? Este es una cuchara," (A spoon, my daughter? Are you sure? *This* is a spoon), and I double over laughing at my mistake and Panchito laughs too and shouts "Hola," and my host father picks the knife out of the butter and says, "Un cuchillo?" and I correct myself and say, "Sí, el hombre tiene un *cuchillo* grande," and my father waves the knife in the air saying, "this is a knife," as my host mother continues to wring her hand and tell me never to be in the park alone again, especially after dark, it isn't safe, "nunca, mija, nunca," (never, my daughter, never), she emphasizes, and my grandmother stands next to me stroking my hair repeating, "Gracias a Dios, mija," (thanks to God), and I realize that these people love me and I love them, that after three brief months there is love here, and suddenly I think, "I never want to leave, this is my house, my family, I love them."

Later that night as I am sitting in my bed, in the room with the view of the entire city of Quito, writing in my journal by the light of the gleaming bedside lamp, my grandmother knocks on the door. She is in her bathrobe and slippers, ready for bed, her face washed clean of make-up, and I have never seen her without make-up on and she looks younger rather than older. The city lights blink at me outside my window, and I hear a plane from the airport gathering speed on the runway, ready for take-off. In three more months I will be on a plane, returning to the States, I will go home first to my family in Mount Pleasant, then to my family at K College, and what will I tell them? How will I describe all this? I know even then that I will not be able to do it justice through words, through images on film, and I am suddenly so frightened, because what I am going through now is entirely mine, no one else can ever know, will ever know.

My grandmother smiles at me shyly but certainly, as though she were about to share a secret, and she beckons me to the doorway, saying "Ven, mija, sí," (Come, daughter), and I climb out of bed and slide my feet into my slippers because Ecuadorians don't go barefoot in their homes, and I follow her out of my bedroom, down the hall, up the stairs and to the living room where the shrine is. She lights the candles around it as I stand behind her, and she smiles peacefully and clucks to herself and kneels down and motions for me to do the same. The house is dark except for the flickering of the candle light, and silent except for my grandmother's voice, and she is holding her rosary beads and thanking God that I was brought back to the family safe, and she is telling Him how dear I am to her, and she doesn't ask me to say anything. She only seems to want me to share this experience with her, and so I am quiet and I listen, and when she is done she turns to me and takes my face in her hands and kisses me on the forehead, and she picks up my hands and squeezes them and she says, "I love you very much, my daughter," and I tell her, "I love you, too," and we blow out the candles together and bid each other good-night.



These are school children from Zampiza, Ecuador, the village where Nicole worked. Whenever they saw her pass by, they ran up to greet her.

Nicole Quackenbush is an English major with a Women's Studies concentration, who studied in Quito, Ecuador for six months.

The More We Know...

Why did I bring that old copy of the *Atlas* with me, anyway?
Or did they send it to me after I arrived...
I can't remember anymore.

In fact, I can't remember many things anymore.

Did I actually get lost in Aix?
(Yes, I know I did, the first day I spent there —
I remember that I didn't know how to say, "I got lost today.")
"Why, it's so simple," I tell the new arrivals a trifle condescendingly.
"You simply keep walking and eventually you get to something you recognize."

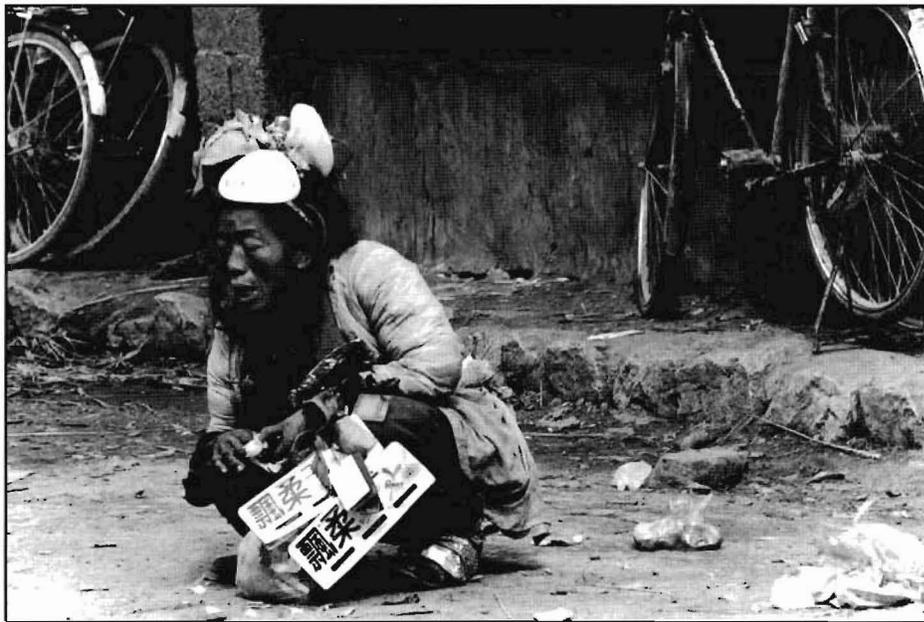
What I find surprising is
that I can't remember not understanding French life.
What was it that I found so confusing, again?
How to greet people on the street, I think that was it.
And the cafés — I never knew where to sit or pay.

I marvel that six months could have passed.

Reading that old *Atlas*, I think it will soon be me
who's back at K,
recounting stories, showing pictures, writing articles.
Will what I write be wiser, more profound than what you wrote?
Will it be less so?

Will it be more of the same?

- Irene Backus



**Homeless woman in
Xian, China**

by Jessica Fritz

Irene Backus wrote this piece just prior to her departure for the fabled "travel time" during a fit of apprehension over the fact that she'd be doing it alone. (She said it turned out to be the most strengthening experience of her life.)

Passing time in cafés

I never expected to go to France and be completely fascinated with one aspect of the culture that is completely American: jeans.

I don't know when I first became preoccupied with blue jeans, and I don't know how it came to be, but I do know that one day I realized I was spending an inordinate amount of time looking to see how a person's jeans fit them.

Nothing drew my attention more than a certain mark of jeans that is a recognized symbol of American-ness the world over: Levis. Levis are the preferred jean of the French and of Europeans in general. No matter where in Europe one might be, a person's social status can be indicated by the jeans they're wearing, and a good indication of the upper and middle classes is a pair of button-fly 501 blue jeans.

The French wear jeans more than Americans do, especially teenagers, and everyone's favorite jeans are called "Leh-veese," a pronunciation to which it can be difficult to habituate oneself. They are found in Levis retail outlet stores and in shops that advertise their presence with a large red logo and are sold at prices two and three times their cost in the United States. I was shocked early on when told by a friend that they cost eighty to one-hundred dollars and up, though it was possible to get a pair for sixty. Even though the cost of living is higher in France than in the United States, this represents a tidy sum to the French, who put money aside in order to buy one pair, which they then wear repeatedly. I've heard quite a few justifications for spending such an amount on a pair of jeans, but my favorite was that of a friend who told me "they're highly resistant," while tugging on her pant leg to show their durability.

It's true that Levis do wear well and that several different styles do exist so that nearly everyone can find a cut that fits them well, but I don't think that these two reasons fully explain the obsession for this brand. Another explanation could be that Europeans in general and the French in particular are more concerned with their appearance than Americans, and Levis are valued for their comfort and classy stylishness. Another could be the general obsession with American popular culture, which manifests itself in French television, cinema, music, and especially fashion.

It's odd to think that the blue jean actually has French origins. Denim was first woven in Nîmes, France about A.D. 300, and the fabric was called *serge de Nîmes*. Levi Strauss imported the fabric from France in order to produce his first blue denim jeans in the late 1800s.

If the preferred jean of the French is Levis, the preferred activity is sitting in sidewalk cafés watching people stroll by. I became adept at this activity quite quickly, and it is quite possibly via this exercise that I became fascinated with what people were wearing on the lower half of their bodies. A seat is chosen, the waiter is summoned, and a drink is ordered, which gives one the right to an unlimited period of time in the café. Regardless if one is alone or accompanied, at least some time is spent observing the passers-by. Having remarked that Levis were the jean of choice and the choosy, I put this observation to test. I judged the overall look of every jeans-wearing person that passed in front of me.

As people passed me, my gaze dropped swiftly to their derrières to see what kind of jean they were wearing. If I saw the trademark stitching, my gaze immediately swiveled to look for the red tag on the left side of the right rear pocket, so as to be assured this was indeed a genuine pair of Levis, as cheap imitations and fakes do exist. If I was satisfied, the person merited another look and a mental remark. If not, I quickly dropped my eyes.

My obsession with blue jeans traveled with me, and while touring cities I noticed that I was still noticing what jeans people were wearing. It also became a quest of mine to find the cities' Levis retail outlet store. Whether in Paris or Rome or Amsterdam or Prague, I couldn't manage to shake my need to stare at the locals' rear ends. I found that the best-dressed and the best-looking in Europe's capitals covered their lower body with Levis. Even in Warsaw, a city trying to rebuild itself after years of grey Communist domination by embracing Western values, the best dressed showed off the Levis they had purchased in the outlet store, at prices rivaling those in Western Europe that put them far out of reach of the majority of the population.

Having come back to the United States, I'm slowly in the process of shaking my enthrallment with blue jeans. Being on a campus where the preferred dress is shorts, a t-shirt, and sandals helps, and so does the fact that we Americans don't place nearly as much emphasis on the brand name of our jeans or on what kind of stitching is on the back pocket. If anything, Gap jeans are the current favorite.

Joe Brennan was inspired to comment on international fashion trends while spending nine months in Aix-en-Provence, France.

SISTERHOOD IS POWERFUL

October 10, 1994 Wundanyi, Kenya.

Today we were paired off with our homestay families in Wundanyi, where our director worked in the Peace Corps in the mid-1960s. My family is headed by Lissy Nyambu, a wonderfully strong woman and loving mother who is pretty much on her own here in Wundanyi—her husband works as a police officer in Kiambu and rarely comes home. She lives in a small house with her three beautiful children John (twelve), Judy (ten), and Mzera Nicholas (five), whom everyone calls “Nico.” They are very sweet and loving, and, despite our language differences, we have become very fast friends.

When I first arrived at the homestead, we sat around under a tree in the yard while I met some members of the extended family who live near the Nyambus. The children were very inquisitive and watchful of me — they kept laughing at any expression I would make and would ask the women questions about me in Kidawida, the ethnic language of the Taita people. I gave them an “Alice in Wonderland” coloring book and some crayons, which has quickly become a favorite activity for us to do together. We also made a chart of familiar words in English, Kiswahili, and Kidawida — the kids really liked figuring out different words for cat, dog, tree, etc., and they enjoyed being able to teach the *mzungu* a thing or two about their language! Another one of their favorite things is to braid my straight brown hair, which feels good except they are not very careful about how hard they pull on it!

Immediately I became aware of how busy and industrious the women always are. The grandmother sat on the ground, her long legs stretched straight out in front of her, while she was weaving a basket, and then she picked through a pile of maize, sorting out stones. Priscilla, a cousin, sat in the yard and knitted a sweater for the baby while Lissy went into the kitchen to fix some *chai* (tea), and Catherine sat on a stool and talked to me while breast feeding her baby, Nyambu.

Catherine, Lissy’s sister-in-law, lives on the compound with Lissy, her mother, and the five children. Catherine is thirty-one years old and has two sons named Simpson, who is twelve, and Nyambu, who is only two months old and just about the cutest baby I’ve ever seen! She told me that she has never been married and considers herself very lucky that her family still takes care of her, as many women who become pregnant with “illegitimate children” are often exiled from their homes and from the community. She became pregnant with Simpson when she was in Form two of secondary school (tenth grade) and had to drop out because girls were not allowed to continue their education after having children. We talked about the differences between America and Kenya, and she told me she wanted to move to America to make a better life for her and her sons. I told her it was best to stay here and explained how hard it can be for a single woman with children, especially if she has not finished high school, to make it in America. She then told me that she now makes 25 shillings per day (60 cents), which adds up to 750 shillings per month (less than \$20) from her job as a custodian in a hotel. After paying her rent (\$6 per month), school fees for Simpson, and buying things like groceries and clothing, she has very little money left for savings. This means that if she or one of the kids gets sick, Catherine will have no way to pay for doctor’s fees. Thank goodness she has such a supportive family to fall back upon when in need...I can’t even imagine how she can manage to work at the hotel when she has two children to care for and so much work to do at home!

Tonight Lissy taught me how to make *chapatis* in the kitchen, which is a small wooden house with a tin roof where she cooks over a handmade mud-brick stove. We sat together on wooden stools and rolled out many thin, round *chapatis* while she told me stories about her high school days and how she was the fastest runner in her school. While we were eating dinner, Lissy asked me if I am “saved.” I admitted I’m not, which I think was disappointing news for her. She relayed the story to me about how she decided to accept Jesus Christ as her savior after she was very sick and recovered soon after a group of people prayed for her — that was in 1986. Lissy is so strong in her faith — she and the children sang a few hymns for me (the only English words Nico knows are those of “Lord, Bless My Soul”), and then we prayed to God for guidance and thanksgiving. She thanked God for her newest daughter, which I found very touching. Then she took me into my room and gave me a big hug and kiss before I went to bed — just like Mom does!

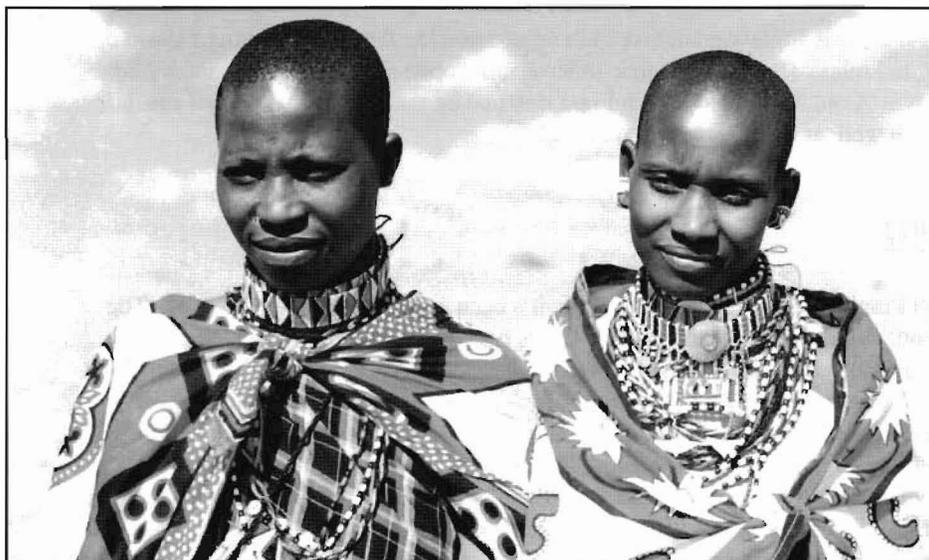
October 12. My heart is so full. After spending only three days in Wundanyi with the wonderful Nyambu family, I feel as if we were destined for one another. I have such deep respect for Lissy...she is so unwavering in her faith and boundless in energy. On top of taking care of three children and her in-laws, cooking all day long, working on the *shamba*, fetching water and firewood, and other innumerable tasks, she told me that she also built her three small houses herself! And she does all of these things in such a light-hearted, easygoing way — without ever stopping for rest...I admire that stamina/energy so much, and I wish I could be so selfless and industrious and spiritual about everything I do. How amazing.

Lissy has really gotten me thinking about my own spirituality. Tonight she read me a Biblical passage (John

15:1-8) in Kiswahili and then translated it into English... it was about accepting Christ as our sustenance, like he's the tree and we're the branches. I think she wanted me to say I would be saved and accept Jesus Christ as my personal savior — which I'm much too cynical/dubious for at this stage in the game — but it really got me thinking about prayer and appreciation and establishing some sort of communion/meditation with whatever powers may Be...God, Buddha, Allah, the Tao, nature, energy, light... And the community of faith here is so strong. Everyone Lissy introduces me to is her brother or sister "in Christ," and they all are quick to ask me if I have been "saved." I really think that the people who struggle the hardest have the strongest faith, as if getting by despite such discouraging circumstances is only possible because their faith in God gives them such strength and happiness.

I will always be grateful for my sisterhood with Lissy, Catherine, Judy, and all the sisters and mothers and cousins and aunts and grandmothers whom I have met here in Wundanyi. I have come into these women's homes and they have accepted me with such warmth and grace despite the world of differences between us. I admire their stamina and courage so much...their resourcefulness, their spirits, their sense of humor, their playfulness, and their love for their children and each other. It has been such a wonderful experience to witness their daily struggles and obstacles, not only because I admire them so much, but because I realize how lucky and privileged I have been to enjoy the luxuries of education and autonomy and travel and relative wealth which have been denied to so many women throughout the world. I feel very blessed.

Cat Cutcher, a Sociology/Anthropology major with a concentration in Women's Studies, wrote this during a homestay with a family in Wundanyi, Kenya.



Cat met these two Maasai women while hiking to a remote Maasai village in the hills near Narok, Kenya. The women were traveling on foot from a nearby village to attend a circumcision ceremony for young girls, a significant ritual for the transition into womanhood.

In Exchange for America

I stood knee deep, testing the water
when I heard the sizzle of the breadfruit
roasting in the pit.

From the ocean I could taste the guava
he lined the shore with. I could feel my teeth
sinking white into yellow, biting into the stomach
of the fruit, the pink womb of the fruit
that hid its seeds like a protective mother.

From the ocean I could see the shell he found.
I watched him bend his wrist back to pull
out the live conch and throw it to the birds.

The saltwater choked my throat so I couldn't
scream to the brown skinned man and his naked
chest
and his outstretched arms with the breadfruit
steaming.

He burnt his palms for me saying that he wanted
nothing
in return but my smile.

Amy Hicks did a six-week Career Development in Jamaica in the winter of her junior year.

Germany, Spring 1994

Monday, March 21, 1994

...here we go -- off to Europe for almost three months. I have been going crazy the last few days, trying to get ready to leave for the biggest adventure of my life. My flight was scheduled to leave at 2:30 p.m. today, but when we got to the airport we found it was delayed (no big surprise). It turns out the plane was broken, and we had to wait for them to fix it or get another or something. They started talking about sending the people flying to Boston (to catch a connection to Germany) on a flight to Amsterdam where we would pick up a connection to Frankfurt. This sounded fine except I'm the group leader and have all the train tickets for the train from Frankfurt to Munster and the flight through Amsterdam wouldn't get to Frankfurt until six hours after the Boston one. I called Dr. Brockington, and he tried to figure out a new plan in case that happens. Fortunately, my plane finally took off around five, so I was relieved and thought the emotional ups and downs to be over. Much to my surprise, I arrived in Boston and had about two seconds to catch the flight to Germany. They opened all these back tunnels and had airport attendants directing us where to run (literally)! I got on the plane out of breath and in a complete panic to find that only half of our foreign study group was on the plane. Everyone who had boarded told me they didn't know what was up, so I went and asked a flight attendant. She told me we were only waiting for the Minneapolis flight and she knew nothing of the flight arriving from Detroit — within minutes we were off. Again, I was slightly panicked, but realized quickly there was nothing I could do about it, so I decided to sit back and relax. (Besides, it's nice to have some open seats for extra space.) Unfortunately they're showing the movie "Cool Runnings" which I just watched on the way to Boston and saw a few months ago at the dollar show. Oh well, at least it was a good flick!

Tuesday, March 22, 1994

I'm on the train to Munster from Frankfurt airport right now. Boy, it's been an interesting day (or two). The seven of them (that had missed our flight) were already waiting for us because their flight from Detroit to Boston was delayed three hours so they were sent on a direct flight. They had been waiting for two hours, and it was a huge relief to come out of customs, get a huge hug from Chad, and exchange the beginning of many humorous traveling stories. We're finally on this train and things are going pretty smoothly. However, I counted wrong and had the conductor sign for twelve seats and he came back and yelled at me that we had thirteen. I apologized, and I have no idea if he was OK with it or what; he just scribbled on the tickets again, and that was the last I saw of him. When we first got on, Chad, Sherwood, and I got into our first section on the train after an impossible journey through car nineteen. Dave headed down the narrow aisle first, leaving a bag behind. I tried to struggle along behind him, and Chad had to pick up the rest of the luggage with EVERYONE laughing at us! So we got in, and I helped everyone get their baggage stored and all that. Now we're almost to Munster, and I'm nowhere near as tired as I thought I would be. We'll see after I get to my host family's house and have to speak German the whole time!

Wednesday, March 23, 1994

Today we learned our way around the city with our class and Frau Kreutzer. I met up with my family after class got out, and we went to the market to eat lunch. I had fried fish (breaded) and while we were eating, a stranger came over and told all of us (in German) that it is a stupid act when someone eats the tail of a fish. My family all looked and laughed, and then they told me it is a very stupid thing to do. I didn't think much of it, and I just laughed along with them. Then, I realized the silliest thing ever: I was the one who had eaten the tail of my fish and the stranger was saying that I was being stupid and my family had been laughing at me! I was so incredibly embarrassed when I came to this realization that they all laughed even harder, but I did, too. Heck, I figure if you can't laugh at yourself then life's not worth living!

Summary

It's been over a year now since I returned from Europe and I can honestly say that it was the best time of my life. I'm not sure if I'll ever have a time again where I have no attachments, responsibilities, and only have to worry about myself. I traveled to so many places and saw so many sights that at times I think it was a dream. I also made many good friends in Germany, both from there and in my group from "K." I will spend the rest of my life reliving many of those memories and hope to return to Europe at least once, if not many more times. I will also recommend studying abroad to any and every college student I ever meet because it is the growing experience of a lifetime. Many times I just sit around and think of some of the crazy things I did in Europe and recall all the good times I had. It's fun to look back and laugh and cry, and try to remember when life was so easy that I could decide on Wednesdays what country I would leave to visit Thursday.

It's insane to think that on a continent as big as Europe, I actually ran into friends from the U.S. that were in other "K" foreign study groups or just friends that I had visiting over there. One of my fondest memories is walking down a street in Prague, in the Czech Republic, and seeing a man a block away from me throw down a bag and start running full speed toward Chad, Dave, and me. When he got closer I realized it was a friend of mine who I didn't even know was in Europe. I let out a shriek so loud that Chad and Dave claim people within miles heard, and I jumped into my friend's arms. It's funny that no matter where you go it really does turn out to be such a small world!

Melissa Stucki is an English/Psychology double major. She studied in Münster, Germany in the Spring of 1994.

Berlin at Dusk

At dusk in Berlin,
every rooftop statue is a soldier;
every birdhouse, a hidden camera;
every child, a spy;
every apartment, a prison.

The crane in every floodlit construction site
is a watchtower,
and at any moment,
the workers will be shot.

Every person on the street has
a tragic history
of separation,
of distrust,
of accusations,
of grief.
Patient survival,
...or insane desperation.

At dusk in Berlin,
every observation
is a lie.



German glassblower at a Christmas market in Frankfurt, Germany

by Amy Clement

Emily Springfield spent her Study Abroad in Bonn. She wrote this piece at night while sitting across from a construction site during a group trip to Berlin.

Portugal

days pass by in a constant wave
like the Atlantic on October eighth
and so we swim and try to jump
when we could get pulled under

and so we swim and try to feel the warmth
of Atlantic waves on October eighth
together we laugh through the cold
until we arrive on the shore

though the sun at times takes long to warm
patiently with sand everywhere
we sit
together, yet alone

for the present at least
in a country distant - from hearts
living the same life
while holding onto individuality

yet trying to display the truth
without lying

Jen Kapp spent six months studying in Madrid, Spain.

we smile
and wonder

if all that's made is made
to remain
and so we laugh through the cold
for we know

this place is only temporary
though the moments will last forever
even when arriving on the shore
patiently with sand everywhere

we sit
the days continue and pass by
like a constant wave
alone yet together

- Jen Kapp

Jamaican Celebration

The women scrub laundry in a bucket
and carry that same bucket, heavy
with wet clothes, back on their heads. Miles
they walk ignoring flies and heat and pounding migraines.

The girls climb trees, grabbing for guava
and June plums. They shake their brown braids
when a boy offers them ripe bananas in bunches, the fruit
extending from his hand like dozens of yellow fingers. He wants
to touch their breasts, and all he offers is bananas.

The women hide their miscarriages in rows beneath
the almond trees and when their husbands aren't looking
the women cry and scream, pressing their tired lips together in
celebration.

- Amy Hicks



Reflections of Venetian Beauty

by Melanie J. Dunlap

Amy Hicks wrote this after opening a women's counseling center at the Happy Grove High School in Jamaica.

A gentle ache
for familiar senses
presses against my throat.
But a burning thirst
for LIFE and adventure
has brought me more than I'd hoped.

Swiftly I fly through my dreams to date,
Smiling at the private irony of my fate.

To explain:

Searching for a rationalization
to explain my pre-flight immobilization,
I found another destination
offering me
an opportunity
to reset my orientation.

Planning and scrambling,
waiting for clearance,
I struggled to focus
on this unknown experience.

Kimberly Schulz is a senior who went on the European Academic Term for Study Abroad.



Reena, during her three-week independent project at Yachay-Huasi School in Agato, Ecuador, learned about the struggles indigenous peoples face today. The school is an effort to preserve, as much as possible, the indigenous culture and traditions of these Quechua children while still providing the education necessary to survive in the 21st century.

Reena Nandihalli, a Health Science major with a concentration in Environmental Studies, participated in the Environmental Studies program in Ecuador.

With a new source of strength
I abandoned control,
braced to encounter
a less-defined goal.

So I left the "what-ifs"
unchecked at the terminal
and stuffed the rest of my junk
into my journal.

Now that I'm back,
and I've had time to process,
what would I say
to all the fresh prospects?

Honey, it ain't like the brochure tells ya!

- Kimberly Schulz

Los Indigenas

They have struggled against unimaginable odds,
Chased from their homelands,
ridiculed for their beliefs and traditions,
criticized, ostracized for worshipping nature as God.

They were conquered and trampled upon,
"civilized" by Catholic missionaries,
forced to weave 14 hours a day in sweat shops.

Even now they face discrimination
and hatred
wherever they go.

Their culture dies with success and wealth,
However unintentionally.

Still they are a remarkable people,
proud and strong.
My heart breaks when I look at
these beautiful faces,
so sweet and full of hope.

And I think of all the hardships
they will face
in the modernized world.

Is there no end to cruelty? *- Reena Nandihalli*

Carré

We met in your kitchen,
we drank red wine and watched the sun fade, we peeled
potatoes and chopped
leeks and discussed the contents of the soup
while Gabriel sang and the fire burned
in the next room.

While stirring the figs and cognac,
I soaked up bits of provençal advice
and your life wisdom.

Together
we cut through our common *carrés*,
yours intricately concocted, and mine a jumble
with few logical connections
and fewer words to explain
the journey
that had brought me to your kitchen.

I asked for recipes, asked you to
write down for me what you put
in those boiling pots,
and your answer was always the same:
there are few recipes
that can be trusted;
you just have to practice.
And so we practiced;
cutting, mixing, stirring,
always conscious of our *carrés*,
and yet unaware of their quiet melting
until the dark, still morning
when we stood, drinking coffee,
knee-deep in the pool we had left
there in your kitchen,
eyes wet, knowing that
leaving behind and
moving forward
are ingredients of the *carré*,
necessarily, yet painfully
added.

Toujours les même thèmes dans la vie.

- Jen Miller

Jen Miller is a political science major. She studied in Aix-en-Provence, France for six months.

