

Kenneth Rudolph Award Blogs and News

Steele in England for Summer on Rudolph Fund

Posted on [July 25, 2011](#) by [Howard Hewitt](#)



Reggie Steele '12 – Imagine going to class from 9 a.m.

to 5 p.m. every day, where your performance skills are tested and elevated each day. Imagine singing intensely for 4 consecutive hours, leaving rehearsal and going directly to learn choreography for 2 songs that you have learned the same strenuous morning. Imagine acting out a musical that you have never seen with limited time and resources. Imagine a “Southern Gentlemen” learning to sing with a British accent for many songs. Thanks to the Kenneth Rudolph Scholarship and a supporting family, this imagination has become a reality.

I am currently in the Performing Arts Program at the University of Sunderland, where I am learning intense vocal performance, drama, musical theatre, and dance training from the best academic tutors in England. The reason I chose the University of Sunderland’s Performing Arts Program is to discover if I had what it takes to become a Broadway Performer. Thus far, I am learning more about my talents and ability to hold an audience attention.

On the very first day, my colleagues and I learned and performed a song during orientation. This experience was a bit shocking because at “The Bash”, we rehearse for an entire semester before we have our end of the year concert. But if you know me well, you would know that I live to perform and I was excited to begin this challenge.

During my first week of performance, my dance academic tutor shared with me a harsh and brutal reality of Broadway. This reality is that a body cut takes place and if an audition-er do not fit the costume, he or she does not audition. My eyes opened and gazed for a very, very long time. As I asked her more questions about this reality, she then told me that two-thirds of the cast of the musical "Lion King" showing in London are Asian. It was shocking to her at first when she was told, but she later stated this is the real world, and the world of Broadway does not have time to make new costumes that cost nearly \$500 each. As I continue to face this reality, my vocal teacher told me that there are many roles that fit my body type, and I shouldn't give up the faith. The other thing that he told me was to be the best, and someone will take a chance on me.

So, what am I going to do now? I have chosen to be the best! In order to be the best, I believe that I



must continue to have outstanding vocals, improve my acting skills and dance technique, and loose just a few pounds. The steps that I will take my senior year to improve all of these skills are to continue my voice lessons with the best vocal instructor at Wabash, audition and perform in at least 1 play at Wabash and at least 1 musical at the Vanity Theater, continue dance at Dance by Deborah, and to stay focus and optimistic.

One quality that all of my academic tutors agreed that I have is "star potential." I have a quality to keep people interested, and I have the talent that makes people want to invest in. They confirmed this quality after my interview with 107 Spark FM which could be heard with this link: <http://sparksunderland.com/>.

I cannot express how important it is to study abroad, and how it could really assist in career opportunities. This short program has been a stepping stone in my career path. It has shown me what I can do in musical theater, and has given direction to ensure that I make the proper steps to success. I would like to thank once again the family of Kenneth Rudolph and my loving family for your financial and caring support through this journey. When I return there will be a presentation with footage of my performances, and live songs, so watch for an email. Although this program

has given me the harsh realities, I am grateful. I know what it takes and what I need to do to make my dreams a reality!

Kocian '11 Enjoying French Way of Life

Posted on [July 7, 2010](#) by [Howard Hewitt](#)

Clifford Kocian '11 – There is a certain serenity or peacefulness that comes from living in small-town America. It is comforting to know your neighbors, the composition of the town; to have the stability that arises from the static nature of the place. No movement in or out, but rather just simply being. It is this type of atmosphere that is viewed as truly American, and has been idealized on television and in movies for decades. However, one might be surprised at how well the small town of Arles, in Southern France, meshes with the notion of small-town America. True, there are no SUVs, no similar houses with similarly manicured yards, and no perfect family structure (mom, dad, two children- one girl and one boy, two dogs, one cat, and a goldfish), but then again a small-town feel is just that: a feel. While Arles may not have the physical manifestations of small-town America, it still has that small-town feel to it. It is a place where everyone knows everyone, where buildings and streets haven't been changed for hundreds of years, and where security is nestled in the static way of life.

On the first day of being here we were told that life in Southern France was slow, and to get used to it. Throughout two days of orientation (all in French, of course), this may have been the best piece of advice that we were given. All similarities to America aside, this slow pace of life is perhaps the most striking difference to living in the States. People really do take their time and enjoy it. It, quite frankly, is a comforting way to live. There is no such thing as getting something to go here. In fact, it's completely normal to get a coffee and sit at the café for an hour or two after finishing. In a way it's odd for people to dine and dash. If you get a meal, expect to follow it up with a round of



dessert, followed by a round of coffee- each one happening in its own time. This is the type of place where going to work at 9 might be considered early, and working late considered overkill. Here, time is treasured because people are treasured. It's simply not as important to consume the day running around on a tight schedule if it can be put off until tomorrow and good company can be had instead.

The other day I was running, and as I was ruminating on my time here, the way of life, the people, I looked around to see that on one side of me was the Rhone river, and on the other side a sunflower field (in full bloom), and saw across the river the city, with its small streets and ancient ways, I couldn't help but think to myself that Arles is an atypically typical French city. It is French in the purest sense of the word. People really do eat baguettes and cheese (all the time), and drink wine (all the time). Life is slow and simple.

But this typical French city is atypical in how it meets American stereotypes. The city is vibrant. The culture is vibrant. The people are wonderfully nice and accommodating, even to us students who apparently have 'American accents'. However, instead of being looked down upon, the people of the city want to talk to us more. Why? They really enjoy the sound of our American accents. Us, who are strangers to this world, to this way of life, are being embraced even though we upset the static balance- the security blanket. These people are open, honest, and

engaging. And they are interested. They are interested in us and in America. A lot of people my age will speak English to me so that they can practice (I speak French back to them). They want to know if university really is like American Pie.

Southern France is serene, almost out of a fairy tale. I've been here just over a week and it feels like a month. I have a month left and I am already sad to leave. But rather than think, I will do like the French have taught me and live. Time to go have some bread, cheese, and wine by the river.

In photo: Kocian, at far left, with a group of fellow students.

Johnson '11 Fitting In with Greek Culture

Posted on June 21, 2010 by [Howard Hewitt](#)

Joe Johnson '11 – Well, I am on my fourth week in Athens and I find it pretty astounding how the time in a foreign country has adapted me to its everyday lifestyle. For example, I went downtown to a store in Syntagma Square. Syntagma Square to Athens is like a miniature version of Times Square to New York City. I went into a store called “Public” which is very similar to our Best Buy, however, Public didn’t only sell electronics; they also sold name brand clothes (in the same store), which blew my mind. Anyways, I was in conquest for an Ethernet cord for my computer and when the attendant asked me what I was looking for I replied, “A two meter Ethernet cord.” It wasn’t until my roommate pointed it out to me that I used the term “meter” instead of feet. Not only was I using meters to describe lengths but liters to describe volume. The funny thing is, I don’t recall asking for the cord in meters and I can’t remember ordering beverages in liters, my brain just automatically switched over.



Another proud moment in my adaptation to Greek life was when a group of tourists approached me and asked me for directions to Monastiraki (the main shopping plaza of Athens). I assume they thought I was a Greek citizen, or at least they were hoping I was due to my Mediterranean complexion. I was happy to give them proper directions how to get there and I even remembered which road to use. The group of about 15 was very appreciative and thanked me for the directions. I could tell they were from America because of their English and one of the younger kids in the group was wearing a Denver Broncos jersey. As they walked away, I paused, looked back at the group, looked forward, and then nodded to myself for a job well done. I felt like a true citizen! I promise the story was much funnier at the moment but I did indeed feel a sense of belonging to the city, and in only three short weeks!



Like I stated in my last blog, time has been going by extremely fast. Last week, my class visited the sites of Piraeus (Port City), Eleusis, Eleutherai, the Agora in Athens, and the infamous Corinth. My favorite of the five sites was Corinth because of the archeological history and the surrounding area was breathtaking. I have never seen so many hills, valleys, and beautiful bodies of water all tied together in one fascinating landscape. This past weekend I went to Nafplion and Epidaurus with a group of my friends from class. In Nafplion, I visited with Adam Miller '12. Adam and I work together at Career Services and became good

friends over the past two semesters. Adam is working in a wine shop in Nafplion for seven weeks out of the summer and from what he has been telling me, his experience of Greece is pretty comparable to mine. It was great seeing another Wabash Man in such a distant, and distinct place.

After Nafplion, my group went to Epidaurus which holds the world's largest and most preserved ancient theater! The theater was built in the 4th century BC and holds just under 15,000 people. What makes this theater so unique is its acoustics. Rather by accident or perfectly applied acoustic properties, you could hear someone light a match at the middle of the stage from the very last row! No other theater is this precise and perfect. My group had half of the people on stage and the other half scattered all along the last row (roughly 150 feet away). The people on the stage whispered messages to each of us and with no problem, we could understand them. When it was my time to go on stage, I decided I would sing "Billie Jean" by Michael Jackson. I sounded pretty pathetic, but still got a great applause.

This trip has been extremely special to me. I would like to take some time and thank all the people at Wabash and at home who made this possible. First, I'd like to thank the Rudolph Family. Without the Rudolph Family's generous donation to Wabash giving students the opportunity to study abroad, I would never be studying here in Greece. It is because of them that I am experiencing the trip of a lifetime! Also I would like to thank Wabash College and the people that helped me out with the process. I'd like to thank Betsy Knott for recommending and informing me about the Ken Rudolph Fund. Also, I'd like to thank Mr. Clapp for helping me with the organization and making sure I got accepted to the program. Next, I'd like to thank Dr. Mikek for helping me with travel arrangements and writing me a letter of recommendation. Finally, I'd like to thank Dean Phillips for advising me as well as his letter of recommendation. On top of my Wabash family, I'd like to thank my personal family for their support and encouragement in making this trip possible. I cannot thank both of my families enough.

Concannon '11 Absorbing Turkey's History

Posted on June 15, 2010 by [Howard Hewitt](#)

Patrick Concannon '11 – Well since my last blog I have been to Turkey and back. While I was in Turkey our class went to see Ephesus which is one of the many places Paul preached and is considered his base of operations. It was great to see what people lived like during the first century. We were able to see Roman baths and sewer system. As well as Roman housing where the wealthy would have lived. These houses over looked the sea and just like in today's world it was all about location.

Some of you may be thinking that modern day Ephesus does not have an ocean front and you are correct. The ocean has receded about a half mile in the last 1500 years. That was the main reason why Ephesus was abandoned and why we can see it for what it looked like over 2000 years ago. After we left Turkey we went straight to Kalampaka which is where the famous monasteries of Meteora are located. It was astounding to see how monks in the 11th century built monasteries on top of mountains so they would not be bothered. The sights were beautiful and breathe taking. Not to mention a tough climb on a hot day, but as I said it was worth it to see these amazing buildings that seem to float on the mountain tops.



After a rough day of climbing around the mountains of Meteora we left to Thessaloniki where Paul wrote his letter to the Thessalonians. We are planning on spending about three days here and then heading back to Athens. So far this has been an eye opening experience. Our professor knows both Greek and Hebrew so we are learning what the ancient bible said and not what scholars interpreted. The difference is not huge but with so many different bibles out there today its nice to see what was really said.

Johnson '11 Skepticism Gone, Greece is Living History

Posted on June 10, 2010 by [Howard Hewitt](#)

Joe Johnson '11 – As a first time international traveler, I would be lying if I said I wasn't a little skeptical, nervous, or at times afraid of what to expect about living in another country (especially if that country's economy is struggling and its citizens are protesting). However, in only two short weeks in Greece, I have familiarized myself with the city and expanded my explorations from Greece's northern border, all the way to the beautiful island of Santorini (roughly 600 miles). I have always heard it, but now found out firsthand that traveling is indeed addictive.



I am currently enrolled in a program called A College Year in Athens and the class that I am taking is called *Ancient Athens: Discovering a Greek Polis*. Every day of class is "field trip" but a field trip unlike any other I have ever been on. The very first day of school, my 21 classmates from all over the United States and I climbed the 1,000 foot Lykabettos Mountain. It was surreal! You could see all of Athens and then some. From here we could point out the Acropolis, other important temples and their respected ruins, and the Mediterranean Sea.

Besides climbing Mount Lykabettos, we visited the Temple of Poseidon at Sounion (voted one of the most beautiful places in the world). My class also visited the Temple of Hephaisteion which is Greece's most preserved temple dating back from 420 B.C. Alongside the Temple of Hephaisteion, we visited the Ancient City of Delphi, Eastern Attica, Kerameikos, the National Museum, Eleusis, and of course, the Acropolis. The Acropolis holds four famous temples to the Greek Gods Nike and Athena (Where Athens derives its name from). The Acropolis's most famous temple is the Parthenon.



My study abroad experience is unique to me for a couple of reasons. First, I am learning about the ancient city in which I am living in. For example, my apartment is right next to the Old Olympic Marble stadium. Being that close to history allows me to visualize the Olympic Games that once filled the city with cheers and excitement so many years ago. Where my apartment is today, once stood a gate where athletes from all over Europe passed through before competition. Also, I can walk outside and look up in sky to find the Acropolis towering a couple hundred feet above me. This very same view rivals the view of an Athenian over 2,000 years ago! We talk about American history being old (dating to 1776) but

I am analyzing some artifacts that are dated 1776 B.C.! Besides learning about the city I am living in, I am also of Greek heritage so this class fills my interest of Greek culture and history.

Overall, I have struggled to put into words what this experience has done for me. I wake up every day excited for the next journey to begin. I also know that every other student here feels the same way as I do. We have done more as a class in two weeks than many citizens of Greece have done in their lifetime.

My class started May 24 and is currently already half way over. I feel like I am a veteran citizen of Athens (except for speaking Greek) but at the same time I feel like I arrived here yesterday. This trip has changed my outlook on life and has given me the motivation to come back in the near future. My hope is that one day I can extend my recent month residency in Greece to something a bit more permanent.

Concannon '11 Begins Summer Experience in Greece

Posted on June 1, 2010 by [Howard Hewitt](#)

Patrick Concannon '11 – Greece is amazing. I have only been here a week and I am loving it. The people are nice and kind to all of the students. The news made it seem like an unsafe place but it is probably safer than most American cities, well as long as you don't get in the way of traffic. The food is amazing and I think I was Greek in another life because I eat just like them. They like to dip their food in all sorts of delicious dishes, they love to mix and match for the perfect combination of flavor. They also like to eat with their hands and take food very seriously just as I do.

Besides the food I am having a great time seeing the local sites of Athens. Just the other day I got to see the place where democracy was born which, needless to say, was amazing. The Agora or market place is where it happened and is still there for us to see today. It is not used however, because it is a archeological site but we were able to walk through it and experience and stand on the area where democracy was born. To be able to experience history in the place where it happened is a priceless experience I will not soon forget and I cannot wait to see more and experience everything this class has to offer. After one week I already know my way around modern day Athens and I cannot wait to learn my way around ancient Athens.



This week we are going to Turkey to start our journey through the steps of the apostle Paul. This is what I have been waiting for and I am very excited to see the places where Paul went and learn more about him. Again I would like to say this is a priceless experience and I cannot thank the Wabash, my parents, and Rudolph family enough for making this possible.

Dresden Leaves Impression on Vick '10

Posted on August 3, 2009 by [Howard Hewitt](#)

Michael Vick '10 – For my final trip during my time here, I decided to pay a visit to Dresden, a city that most Americans know from Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five*. From that novel, most people know that it underwent heavy firebombing in 1945; 1500 tons of bombs were dropped in the city over the course of two days. Adding the fact that Dresden was an East German city, I was expecting something comparable to the eastern parts of Berlin.

Needless to say, my expectations were far off. Berlin is unique in that much attention was given to it after reunification. Even though some tenements and remnants of East Germany remain there, the "Wessies"—and their ideals—concentrated in West Berlin quickly diffused into the eastern parts. Dresden, by comparison, lies deep in eastern Germany, far from any border with the former West.

Following WWII and Soviet occupation, the East German government decided against rebuilding every historical building. Even today, almost 20 years after reunification, there are still areas in the city center that are little more than fenced-off holes in the ground.



While this was an interesting break from what I'd seen in other cities, I found the plaques describing the rebuilt buildings even more intriguing. For example, the description at the entrance of the Baroque Fairground and Zwinger detailing the history of the area describes the Anglo-American destruction of the city, followed immediately by the Soviet liberation of the city from the Nazi tyrants.

After reading about and discussing the ways in which people from either side of the Wall had their respective Cold-War-ideologies ingrained into their thought processes, it's fascinating to see how even historically "neutral" buildings could be decorated with state propaganda. I especially wonder if I only noticed the wording in that description because I'm a Westerner, or if Germans from the former East Germany still notice such propaganda while in the West.

Another difference that I noticed in Dresden is that the most lively part of the city was not the Altstadt, as in other places I've visited, but in the so-called Neustadt. While the baroque architecture and museums are in the older part of town, the newer area is the place to go shopping, meet friends, get a bite to eat, or go to clubs. While walking through the Neustadt to my hostel, I couldn't shake the feeling that



I was walking through an American city, even though far more English-speakers could be found in Berlin.

It now seems serendipitous that the last city I visited before I'll return home was so vastly different from the others I've seen during my time here: I feel that I was starting to think I had seen enough of Germany to "sum it up." Dresden reminded me, however, that it really is impossible to generalize a culture very distinctly, and that I could spend the rest of my life studying this country and never stop learning new things about the German people.

In photos: Upper right, View from the Zwinger looking towards the entrance to the fairgrounds; at left, the Zwinger now houses a sculpture museum; lower right, The Hofkirche and Schloss on the Elbe.

Ingram '10 Treasured Last Days in France

Posted on July 28, 2009 by [Howard Hewitt](#)

Alex Ingram '10 – (Written July 23) – With one day left in France, it's painfully clear that I don't have enough time to finish everything on my to do list. However, I'm sure I will be more than content on my return home, maybe even excited to return to normalcy and begin the fall semester.

I feel saturated with a whole collection of information from my trip. I've taken in a wealth of information ranging from French cuisine to French culture, etymology and the French economy, and much more. This experience has opened my eyes and allowed me to view a grander picture than I was able to see solely within the United States.



I'm certainly going to miss Nice once I'm back in the states, or at least some of it's characteristic qualities. To be honest, the cuisine will be the greatest loss, but certainly not the only one. Leaving my great (and eclectic) group of friends and classmates, the metropolitan life, the mediterranean, and the mystery of a completely foreign culture to return to a sense of normalcy will be rough. But, of course, it will be nice to have the conveniences of home, and some regional American food, waiting on my return.

More importantly, though, I feel that this trip, which I expected to feel like a psuedo-vacation, was one of the most rigorous mental exercises I've experienced. When you're forced to grind your gears just to communicate the most basic of concept, or to pick up on the conversations carrying on in, say, Spanish or Italian, you can't ever turn off your mind or zone out until it's time to sleep. It's even become fairly difficult for me to communicate as well as I'd like in this blog because such a relatively small portion of my day is spent speaking or listening to English.



The week has been amazing though, and relaxing, of course, even as much as I complain about how hard I'm working to just communicate or comprehend anything. I've found a secluded beach under a rocky coast about 100 feet tall that is perfect for snorkeling with school's of fish completely unafraid (or unaware) that I'm even around. The snorkel set, which I bought about two blocks from my house, was probably some of the best spent money this whole trip. I can say with a good degree of confidence that my last afternoon will most likely be spent snorkeling on the coast.

For my last night here, we've planned to go back to the family-style all-you-can-eat mussels restaurant at the port, which I'm beyond excited for. The rest of the evening will most likely be spent wandering aimlessly around the town for gelato and espresso and, admittedly, some touristy shops for me to buy the rest of my souvenirs. We are also tentatively planning on taking a trip to the observatory in the alps that is just outside of the Nice city limit, which should of course provde some outstanding pictures for my last night in south of France.

All in all, I don't know that I'll ever have the chance to do something like this again, and I'm so grateful for the opportunity. In one month, I was able to celebrate (for lack of any better term) Bastille Day, watch the Tour de France from arm's length, go to the Casino at Monte Carlo, ride in a Lotus FX, travel to Italy and all over the south of France, eat some of the best food I've had in my life, and even expand my already-holistic view of general wellness and nutrition, all because I have been completely immersed in this place for the past month.

And I'm just as thankful for every nuanced experience of the trip as well; the small conversations, the street food, the new friends, everything. It's unfortunate that the trip is over, but I can at least return home having gained so much.

Vick '10 Pays a Visit to Nuremberg

Posted on July 24, 2009 by [Howard Hewitt](#)

Michael Vick '10 - With the beautiful weather of the past few days, it only made sense to take a day off from class and spend the day exploring another city. Having heard other students talk about how nice it was, I decided to visit Nürnberg (or Nuremberg, for those in the U.S.). I was a bit hesitant at first; my knowledge about the city was limited to the facts that it was the site of Nazi rallies before WWII and the Nuremberg trials afterward.

However, my fears were dispelled the moment I stepped out of the main train station and was greeted by a large tower remaining from the old city wall directly across the street. The Koenigstorturm also stands at one end of the Handwerkhof, where goldsmiths, glass-blowers, and other craftsmen and -women produce hand-made products right before your eyes. Although there's a sculptor in Goettingen who frequently works on the corner outside of his shop, watching him work pales in comparison to walking down a narrow street and seeing a whole slew of wares being produced in almost every shop.



What I found most interesting about the Handwerkhof, though, is that it stands in the heart of the city, yet it feels as if nothing exists beyond the wall of shops. One has to listen closely to hear the screeches of trains arriving at the station or hum from automobiles outside the square. The square itself is enclosed by a portion of the old city wall, which now serves as the boundary between the more modern city on the outside and the Altstadt on the inside.



Nürnberg also made me realize something that's been in the back of my mind since I got here. While many towns and cities in the U.S. still have pedestrian zones with small shops — remnants from the town's past and reminders of its cultural heritage — these areas rarely thrive as they do here.

In my hometown, many a newspaper article present plans for revitalizing downtown; here, the “downtown” areas seem to be the most vibrant, prosperous parts of any city. They teem with life, yet they are also ripe with the relics that give the city purpose and historical value. On any given day in Nürnberg, one can go to the plaza in front of the 700-year-old Frauenkirche (Church of Our Lady) to buy fresh fruits and vegetables, or one could enjoy a nice meal directly outside the gates of the 900-year-old Kaiserburg (an Imperial fortress built early in the history of the Holy Roman Empire) at the northern edge of the Altstadt.

Perhaps I don't see it because I'm an outsider looking in, but the conflict between development and preservation that is all-too-common at home does not seem so frequent here. Luckily, all I have to do to find out if my perception is accurate or not is go to a restaurant or cafe, sit down next to someone, and ask!

In photos: Upper right, The walkways were almost deserted as the Handwerkhof was preparing to close. The sign to the left marks the glass workshop, while the sign to the right marks the shop of a leather-worker. At lower left, The Frauenkirche stands at one edge of the City Market, where vendors set up their stalls and tents to sell their products.

Ingram '10 Has Learned Much About the French

Posted on July 20, 2009 by [Howard Hewitt](#)

Alex Ingram '10 – A touch of homesickness is setting in as my last week comes closer. The French Riviera has been an amazing place to spend my summer, undoubtedly full of cultural experiences, but I feel more and more alien every day. My French is certainly improving even more, which has opened up even more of an experience by allowing me to communicate much more than I was able to at the beginning of my trip. I can't think of a single day when I, or the group I'm usually with, hasn't been approached by a random French native for something or other.



This week has provided great political insight into the workings of the EU and the French political system as well. Everything from passports to license plates to health care seem to be universalized through the EU to make a system that seems to work fluently. One of our fellow students is suffering from a malady, and he was able to go to the local hospital and use his EU health card, from my understanding, to receive a checkup with minimal red tape and fees. I have seen plenty of other salient examples of connection of the EU member countries, but all in all, it has been great to see first hand how the system works.



The French government itself is very different as well. There is certainly a socialist undercurrent running through most everything. For example, the French government has instituted what is essentially a mandatory four-week period in which businesses must reduce prices of merchandise by a certain percentage, which needless to say is not a free-market oriented practice. The French government also dictates hours of business for many non-state owned businesses as well. It's very awkward to comprehend the logic, but the people here don't seem to have any negative attitude toward the practice.

Another interesting thing is, forgive the sweeping generalization, the French seem to place much less of an emphasis on work than people in the states. It is common practice to take two-hour lunch breaks and work much less than 8 hours a day even for salaried positions here. Further, because of the Catholic prevalence in southern France, Sundays are marked by barren streets and only a few scattered open places of business.

Of course, I've continued to indulge on the local French cuisine and delicacies. My new favorite dish is socca, a simple recipe of water, olive oil, and chickpea flower, with varying seasonings. Essentially, it's a savory crepe, and it's amazing. I've also been lucky enough to find a centuries-old chocolate shop just blocks from my residence that makes the most



amazing treats I've ever had. Even the simple tempered dark chocolate hits the spot in the morning.

The highlight of the week in culinary adventures, however, was finding a restaurant on the port that served rose wine (the prevalent variety in southern France) and mussels (quite a few variations) in an all-you-can eat family style setting. A group of around fifteen of us students went and it had the feel of a Spanish wedding in the restaurant.

My travels have taken me around the south of France and eastern Italy as well. Although I have only taken day trips, the petite villages in the area are amazing sights for a midwesterner like myself. I've walked the seaside mountain-cutting path that Nietzsche walked for inspiration and muse, I've returned to Monaco to revel in the amazingly posh life and culture, and traveled to St. Tropez to see what celebrities live like in the summer time. Italy, surprisingly, had a very distinct feel even in the border cities. The regional foods were different, and the culture seemed even more relaxed. Needless to say, the views everywhere have been amazing.

I have one week left in the south of France, and am excited to return to my comfort zone and begin my senior year, but of course sad to leave this beautiful place.

Thanks again to the Rudolph family for this amazing opportunity.

Ingram '10 Learning French, Enjoying Travel

Posted on July 10, 2009 by [Howard Hewitt](#)

Alex Ingram '10 – My first week has been absolutely amazing in the Cote d'Azur. I don't know where to begin, so I'll just dive in I guess. My French class is intensive and difficult, but extremely helpful. Each day, all of the four hours are spent conversing in French and French only, which has been most helpful in forcing me think in the language, and memorize quite a bit as well. I have only been studying French for this past week, but I already feel more than capable of making my way around and keeping small conversations.

Most of my outside practice comes at the Nice Gold's Gym. The price tag was quite expensive, 105 € for the month, but it helps keep me in a bit of a routine. The owner and his wife are multi-lingual (to date I don't know exactly how many languages they speak, but it is quite a few), and are very helpful. What humors me though, is how much less an emphasis the French place on exercise in a gym setting, which of course explains the high fees to join a gym. When I ask my teachers and neighbors, they say the same thing: the French walk, and never run. Apparently they don't go to the gym either. Weighing in at a light 185 pounds, I'm the largest person in the gym, sans one man who is undoubtedly on steroids. Today, I actually broke an Olympic bar doing hang cleans, which has never happened to me or anyone I know before, and made me quite the popular person in the gym as you could imagine.



Moving along though, I've met an eclectic group of foreigners in my studies and travels so far. My closest friend here is in the private security sector, similar to companies such as Blackwater, but he works out of England. He is learning French to allow him access to French speaking African nations in his work. He has worked extensively in both Iraq and Afghanistan, and the insight into the private workings, as well as the American forces jobs, has been eye opening to say the least. Certainly a different perspective than I've heard yet, and much more informed than any Tom, Dick, or Harry on the American television.

We've traveled around quite a bit together in our first week, via his car. So far, we've been to Antibes, Cannes, Monte Carlo (Monaco), and quite a few more small towns on the French Riviera. The coastline here is beautiful, and can't be done justice in pictures, much less my poor point-and-shoot pictures. The local food also continues to grow on me. Nicoise specialties, such as the Nicoise salad, Moules, and the local gnocchi are all amazing.



Friday was certainly something I'd chalk up to the life experience category: my English friend and I cleaned up and drove his restored Lotus FX to the Casino at Monte Carlo. The town itself is amazing, as is the rest of Monaco, which is its own principality within the

French Riviera. When we arrived, we drove through the city on the Formula 1 course, and eventually pulled up to the circle in front of the casino and were valeted into the parking spaces in front of the casino, along with vintage Rolls Royce's and a Mercialago. I've never felt more alien in my life, although it was certainly welcomed. The casino is amazing, and so was the 6€ Perrier I was drinking. All in all, the evening certainly hurt my wallet, but was well worth it. Thankfully, I lost much more money to my drink bill than to the casino itself.

The highlight of the week, however, was standing on the curb, no fence, no barrier, as the tour de Lance (or France, if you wish) came through Nice. I went out three hours early, and to my surprise, was the only one on the curb on the chateau point, probably the most beautiful view of the city, the coastline, and the mediterranean. While waiting the three hours or so, hundreds of sponsored cars came through the course throwing out all kinds of free goodies, which made the whole day quite an event for me. Then finally, the riders came through, and I was literally arms length from Lance Armstrong and the rest of the riders as they cornered the curb I was standing on. I could've fallen off the curb and literally wrecked half of the riders. It was simply unbelievable, an experience I'll never forget.



Vick '10 Finds Berlin Overwhelming

Posted on July 6, 2009 by [Howard Hewitt](#)



Michael Vick '10 – At this moment, I feel as if I could write a dissertation based solely on last weekend's experiences in Berlin. Many were morose and awe-inspiring: walking over the former location of SS headquarters, where the “Final Solution to the Jewish Problem” was designed and political dissidents were tortured; standing before the graveyard holding the remains of 2,500 Soviet soldiers who died taking Berlin and finally destroying the Nazi Wehrmacht; gazing upon a picture of the faces of East German protestors who were killed by Soviet tank rounds shortly after the picture was taken — all of these sent a cold chill through me.

The city is full of history, and knowing some of that history only made the things I felt as I walked around it even more powerful.

The most potent experiences I had in Berlin are associated with the “Field of Stelae,” a plaza of rectangular column-gravestones that serves as a memorial for the murdered Jews of Europe. The square is not flat, but forms a bowl shape so that the “graves” tower over anyone standing in the center. From the street, those walking deeper into the memorial seem to be consumed by the dark stones. The layout of the columns into narrow rows and columns means that even if you are able to hear someone nearby, you still won't see them until you both round a corner and bump into each other; if you stand in the middle and look up the sloping ground towards the exit, you catch a only momentary glimpse of people walking down the perpendicular columns before they disappear. At the lowest point, the sense of despair and isolation envelopes you, and it feels like that graves are about to smash together and entomb.



The experience didn't end when I walked back onto the street, either; while sitting outside a small pizza- and döner-shop across from the memorial, my head was filled with thoughts that I can't even begin to convey yet.

Other experiences, however, were more jubilant.



When the sunlight broke through the clouds and caused a cross of light to form on the silver sphere of the TV tower—a symbol of East German achievement constructed after the much smaller golden cross atop the Berlin cathedral was removed—I couldn't help but laugh. I met a German couple on Friday afternoon, and we ended up having dinner and talking about life in East Berlin. It was interesting hearing the perspective of “everyday” East Berliners who experienced first-hand the drawbacks and advantages of reunification.

Of course, it only made sense to visit the DDR Museum following this conversation, where I got an even-more detailed glimpse into life of the life of the average East German. Although some aspects of the museum were humorous and light-hearted — one could sit in a Trabi, the standard car available to East Germans, or one could rock out to music from popular East German bands — the exhibits detailing the history of the Wall and standard practices of the Stasi recalled the more sinister facets of life in the East.

The museum helped flesh out some of the pros and cons that we discussed in German class last semester, yet it, like many things here, leaves me with the task of assembling the details into a coherent lesson that I can use later in life.



Rudolph Fund: Ingram '10 Arrives in France

Posted on July 2, 2009 by [Howard Hewitt](#)

Alex Ingram '11 - The past three days have been hectic to say the least. Sufficeth to say, dealing with an overbooked flight and currency/payment issues is not how I planned spending my first day in France. Regardless, the three days have been amazing as well. On my flight over, I was seated beside a French and Morocco dual-citizen who surprisingly wanted to talk about metaphysics the whole flight. My limited time spent studying philosophy at Wabash left me unable to understand the breadth of knowledge she had gained pleasure reading on the subject, but it was informative nonetheless.



Once I arrived in Nice though, my trip has gone rather smoothly, with a few exceptions. I arrived in the late afternoon, which is early morning back home, but I felt compelled to explore after taking the taxi through the town center. My first day was spent exploring solo, of course. The first thing that caught my eye was an enormous statue nestled into a peak on the coast, that I later learned is a memorial for the "sons of Nice" killed in the world wars.

I continued to wander around, admiring the architecture in general and dodging in and out of old stone pathways that caught my eye. The city has a beautiful mix of modern architecture and medieval restoration that gives it a good sense of character. I'm sure it will keep unfolding the more I explore, and within the next two weeks we have a few scheduled trips with the school as well.

That said, I think I've finally gotten as settled in as I believe I will here in Nice, France. I'm living in a student residence for local and international students, and taking classes during the day at the Alliance Francaise de Nice. As I said before, the town is quite charming; it's situated on the southeastern corner of France on the mediterranean, and it is very close to the Italian border. The residence is located right on the port, and is a few blocks from the beach and in the center of vieux-Nice, or historic Nice.

With my first day as the exception, I haven't been trekking around as much as I would like. Dealing with the hassle of blown power converters and a malfunctioning computer have left me with other priorities, not to mention attempting to break through the language barrier and keep up on my class work. However, I can say that the residents have been more than welcoming and extremely helpful up until now.

However, most people I've met to date speak English very well, which is of course a blessing for a complete beginner. It also opens a window for me to learn more about France and French culture without having a functioning knowledge of the language. Talking to fellow students and teachers about the real workings of the EU has been informative, as well as conversations with those students from Bellorussia and East Asia. It also makes for



an interesting collage of languages spoken within the classroom, which can become hectic when there is any confusion in the lesson.

Of course, I'd be doing a disservice to you all if I didn't say it: the food has been amazing, even the cheap eats. Eating seafood pizza and drinking great (and affordable) wine on the cote D'azur is something I won't soon forget. Also, I'm planning on going to Monte Carlo and Monaco this weekend with my neighbor from the U.K., as he brought his car down for the trip. His car also happens to be a Lotus, which should make for an experience in itself for a midwesterner like me.

Hopefully I'll know enough survival French to make my way around without any English by this weekend (although I find it amazing how quickly you pick up things when you're left with no other options).

In photos: Top left, the memorial Alex wrote about. Lower right, the street on which he lives.

Exploring is Big Learning Experience

Posted on June 25, 2009 by [Howard Hewitt](#)

Michael Vick '10 - The past week and a half has been similar to the first one in many ways. I have spent countless hours sharing stories with the other students: I listened to students on my floor discuss the pros, cons, and even methods of the preservation of famous artwork and buildings, spent an evening talking with three other Americans and a Norwegian student in a bustling Turkish restaurant, and I tried to explain the Greek fraternity system to an actual Greek.



I also spent a lot of time alone exploring Goettingen and its museums. While walking around the city atop the Wall, or hill-rampart erected to defend Goettingen in the early Middle Ages, I sat beneath the boughs of a tree planted before the founding of the United States. Although the trunk is splitting under the weight of its branches, it has nevertheless stood through the trials of time, weather, and war, and it will likely remain for my grandchildren to relax under if they visit this city.



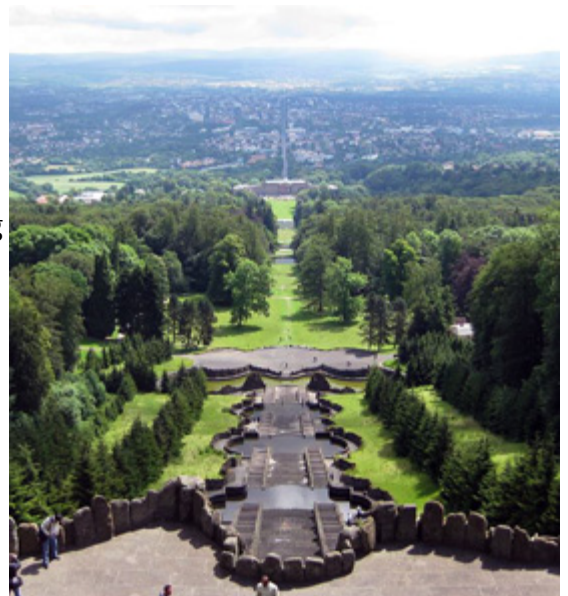
The sense of insignificance I felt while sitting there was only magnified by the hum of activity as more than 200,000 people packed into the inner city to participate in the Mission: Olympic sports festival. Yet I wouldn't describe this as a bad feeling; it helped me to continue putting these experiences into perspective, and I almost felt carefree as I sat there.

Even though rain kept me inside throughout most of the following week, I was able to go for walks up the mountains to the east of the city. Paths snake through the forested hills: some follow the ridges and valleys made by streams coming down the mountains, some meander through the forest with

no apparent destination, and still others take one to monuments and man-made sights scattered across the mountain.

The Bismarckturm (Bismarck Tower), despite requiring three attempts to find, provides an excellent view of the entire valley in which Goettingen lies, while the Eulenturm overlooks a small, ivy-covered clearing near the base of the mountain. Plenty remains for me to explore in the following weeks, though. I have only visited one of the eight large churches in the city, and I have not even ventured into the old Rathaus or to Georg-August University north of the city center.

Although it was nice to explore my surroundings, the real adventure in the past week, and the break from the first week, has been exploring the nearby city of Kassel-Bad-



Wilhelmshoehe. On Saturday I ran into two other students on the street outside the train station, and we went together to the Orangerie. This building, formerly a summer palace and now the home of a natural sciences museum, lies in a beautiful English garden along the Fulda River.

But even more impressive was Bergpark Wilhelmshoehe, which I visited on Sunday. Words can hardly describe the plethora of sights there — it is the largest hillside park in Europe and took about 150 years to complete all of the buildings and gardens. Had my camera battery not died, I would've spent much longer than a mere four hours exploring the shrines, mock-ruins, and artwork scattered over the estate.

Whether wandering through the museum in palace Wilhelmshoehe, hiking up to the statue Herkules atop the mountain, or touring the “ruins” of the Roman Aquädukt and castle Loewenburg, there is an interesting mix of history and beauty nestled on the forested mountainside.



(As a fun little side note: the aqueduct and castle were purposely built to appear as ruins, as this made the refined nature of the palace even more impressive to visitors.) Although the statue lies only about four kilometers away from the train station, the park covers a mountainside that slopes up away from the city, and so it takes quite a while to climb. However, the view from the top — Wilhelmshoehe lying at the base of the mountain with Kassel stretching out behind it, and Loewenburg peeking from the trees to the southeast — is simply

awesome. However, I'm switching gears from the baroque and Enlightenment eras as I prepare to travel to Berlin this Friday, where I'll visit a number of museums detailing German history and life in the 20th century.

Bis später!

In Photos: Top Right, a view from the tower. At left, Michael Vick at Kassel. Next, "The view from the base of Herkules is amazing; it provides the best view of Kassel and the park, and it certainly provides a sense of accomplishment when you see just how far you've traveled to reach that point," Michael writes. Bottom left: "Loewenburg (Lion's Castle) was constructed as a Medieval-style castle ruin, though it still possessed a chapel, kitchen, living quarters, and a garden behind it. Though it's primary purpose was to impress visitors at Wilhelmshoehe, it could also function as a retreat point in the case of attack."

Arrival in Goettingen, Germany

Posted on June 15, 2009 by [Howard Hewitt](#)

Michael Vick '10 – Looking back at past Rudolph bloggers for guidance has left me with one question: how, amid the jet lag, culture shock, and sheer amazement of actually being in a foreign country, were those men able to write so clearly about their experiences? For me, the experiences of the past few days are still overwhelming. This marks my fifth attempt at writing this blog entry; each time before, I've become completely lost in my thoughts.

From the uncertainty I felt when I stepped out of the airport and onto the busy sidewalk of Frankfurt, to the joy of hearing the German language all around me and learning the history of Goettingen, the past few days have been left me with a head full of thoughts and hardly any time to consider them.

Now that I think back to conversations with Wabash students who spent time studying abroad, I realize that I can't remember a single one talking about how interesting his classes were. Although I can't complain about the classroom instruction here, I am finding, as others no doubt did, that the experiences that have been most amazing thus far have come outside of class. Whether through conversations with other students, some of whom I must speak with in German since we share no other common language, or while hearing about the city while being showed around by the student workers,

I have encountered cultures and individuals that I never even thought about at home. For example, on the first day of class, I got to know a Libyan doctor who is improving her language skills at the Goethe Institute so that she can work in Germany; a Japanese student, who has been preparing for a test that will allow him to study at a German university, has struck up a conversation with almost every time we've seen each other.



Yesterday, during a break in the middle of class, the students shared stories of life in their homelands, their experiences here and elsewhere in Europe, and their hopes for the future. Perhaps the atmosphere here encourages not only conversation to improve one's ability to speak German, but the sharing of life stories, too.

Although I miss home, I hope that the next seven weeks don't pass too fast. I've walked around Goettingen a little bit each day, but tomorrow will be devoted to visiting the history museum and churches in the city, and if time permits, exploring the monuments scattered through the pedestrian zones and city gardens. This is assuming that I can get around the city, as tomorrow marks the beginning of Mission Olympic, where residents will try to prove that Goettingen is the most



sports-oriented city in Germany by participating in a myriad of athletic events ranging from bicycle races to bed jumping.

The Institute offers a day trip to Eisenach, the home city of Bach and place where Martin Luther translated the New Testament into German; my class will also travel to Goslar, a city whose buildings survived World War II intact and that offers a glimpse of authentic medieval German life. I also plan to visit Paris and Normandy, Berlin, Weimar, and Braunschweig before I have to return home. But for now, it's time to take another walk around the city and try to digest the experiences of the past few days.

Auf Wiedersehen!

*In photos: **Top right**, This is a glimpse of the front of the "old house" of the Goethe Institute, so named because it occupies the former residence of a textile magnate who sold the estate to the city after the depression in the early 1930s. Most students attend classes in the rooms opening into the Great Hall on the first and second floors, and some students live in the remaining rooms on the second and third floors and in the lower levels of the tower.*

***Lower Left:** Behind the Althaus lies a garden, volleyball court, and shaded pavilions where students can grill out and relax after class.*

My Final Reflections

Posted on August 29, 2008 by [admin](#)

Grant Gussman '09- Today is Friday, August 29th 2008. Classes have begun in what will be my final semester as an undergraduate student here at Wabash College. In the midst of working 2 jobs, helping out with freshmen orientation, and gearing up for the semester, I realized I had overlooked writing any sort of final entry for this blog, something I knew I had to rectify. Then again, I think right now is the perfect time to reflect on my trip.

As I immerse myself with readings, short essays, syllabi, dropping and adding classes, meeting new professors, and meeting all the new freshmen, it's easy to forget that just one month ago, I was in another country. I was on another *CONTINENT*, actually. It seems so long ago now, since I've been devoting my time to all things Wabash, but for 2 months this summer, I was living, taking classes, speaking, and even *dreaming* in another language, amongst people with a very different outlook on life. My only regret is that, since I've been back, everyone's been asking, "How was Spain?" And although I would love to explain all the relationships I had (with people from all over the world) and the culture and what it's like to interact as a foreigner, etc., the people who ask are usually looking for a small-talk conversation. I can't blame them... for me to give any sort of pseudo-accurate description of my trip would take 2 more months of talking. But hopefully this blog can do some justice to explaining what this trip meant to me. I know I'll be going back in the future to re-read my entries, but that's easy because I lived through all of this. But I also pray someone else can read what I've written here and relate to something that happened to me... traveling to an unknown city alone, staying in a hostel, eating incredibly strange food... anything! Because even though I didn't enjoy everything I experienced, I'm glad I had this chance.

As this will be my final post, let me say this one final time: Thank you, Rudolph family. I can't possibly explain in a few hundred words here what your generosity has ultimately given me. Living abroad, even for a short time, has changed me in some small way. It's made me more introspective and more tolerant of others' ideas and cultures. It's given me a fresh perspective on education, and especially on Wabash. And it's made me much more aware of the rest of the world.

Even though I never had the chance to know your son, Ken, I want you to know that in the wake of the tragedy that led to his passing, you have helped 3 Wabash men so far fulfill a dream and gain a new outlook on life. I can't say how much I appreciate what you've done for me, and I know I'm speaking for Brent and Ryan, too. So in closing, thank you again, and I pray you'll continue offering this amazing scholarship so that future generations of Wabash Men might have the same opportunities I have had.

Grant Forrester Gussman

I saw London, I saw France, I even saw Germany!

Posted on August 15, 2008 by [grahamb](#)

Brent Graham '09 – Well I had a great time in Spain even with the snafu at the end of the trip. I can honestly say that I could live in Spain if it was necessary, or even if it wasn't. Granada reminds me a lot of my hometown of Fort Wayne, IN. While it is the second largest city in the state, it retains kind of a small town feel for me. I think I will miss Irma and Neno, my host family, most of all. They helped me when I pronounced things wrong, taught me words and even a few local sayings. I gave Irma a small going away present, a Vera Bradley bag, that she said was beautiful and was perfect for her upcoming vacation to the beach. In return she presented me with a made for TV movie in Spanish and a CD of Opera in Spanish. They will be good additions to my DVD and CD libraries.

As you know I left for Paris by train on Thursday night. The train is something that all people should experience and preferably from first class. I took tourist class since I am a poor college student and it wasn't bad except for I was on the top bunk and sat up into the ceiling three times. I know you'd think I learn after the first try but I can't help that I have strange sleeping habits. The other problem was with who I was in a cabin with. It was me and two high school kids from Romania that were very fidgety and couldn't keep their hands to themselves. I almost want to use my mothers favorite line and tell them to fold their hands and put them in their laps (mom is a kindergarten teacher).

After I arrived in Paris I went to the train station and checked my luggage in a locker. The sign said that it was 5€ for 10 hours and 8€ for 24 hours. I found out when I picked up my bags that that meant per bag. Paris is not a cheap city. They even charge you to use the public bathrooms in the train station. I however managed to see the city for 8€, not including the checked luggage fee. After I put my bags up I got on the metro and went to see the Eiffel Tower. It was just like Guernica much better in person. Right near the tower there is a military building that struck my eye because it had a cavalry building and looked a lot more like the town halls in Spain than a military building. The tower was also near a third building. It caught my eye because the roof is gold and beautifully sculpted and it is also surrounded by some beautiful gardens. The building was the Charles de Gaulle history museum.





Next I went to see the Arc de Triomphe. It was not something that I had to see but it was interesting. It was also kind of a pain because you had to walk under the street to get to the center of the roundabout where the arc is and to get down and then back up the police had to search you. I'm still not sure what for. If I didn't know any better I would have said it was built by the Romans. I learned it was based off of an arch built by the Romans but I didn't realize the similarity until I was standing right under it.



My final stop before going back to the train station was church. I went to watch noon mass at Notre Dame (and no I don't mean that school in South Bend, Indiana). It was amazing. Had I been half an hour earlier I could have heard the international service but instead I heard the French service. I didn't understand it but it was still a good experience. At first I thought that the church was small but once I left to walk around it I saw how big it really is. Though I didn't have a lot of time to see Paris I think that I saw a lot. For 8€ I saw some of the most important spots in Paris in 4 hours. After that I boarded a train to Germany to meet up with another Wabash student who is one of my fraternity brothers that is currently studying abroad, Ian scales.



Surf's up in Munich (I saw London, I saw France, I even saw Germany Continued)

Posted on August 15, 2008 by [grahamb](#)

Brent Graham '09 – I left Germany today wishing that I had a week to spend there. The trip was amazing and a look into my roots as well as an exploration of another culture. I arrived after a long train ride at 9:30 at night and was excited to see Ian but thoroughly worn out. That feeling of fatigue was quick to pass however when I saw him. There is something about traveling that makes you tired and something about meeting friends from home in Europe that gives you a lot of energy. Ian was also with a friend of his that was once a foreign exchange student who lived with Ian's family. To start we decided to lock our things up in a locker at the train station for the night. We then went to our hostel. In two words the hostel was a hippie commune. The hostel itself was in actuality a tent in the middle of the Botanical Garden and had about 100 beds in it. Next to that tent was another tent for people that were sleeping on the ground with just a pad and then there were fields where people with their own tents could camp. I loved every minute of it.



Later that night we went to an old industrial park that has been converted into a club area that resembles the boardwalk at Disney. There were many themes for the bars including an

extraterrestrial bar, a communist bar complete with a statue of Lennon and an American bar with rock playing constantly. We however went to a bar in the back section that played a mix of house techno and rock. This was a great club and the walls were covered with video screens. The best part though was the beer that actually tasted like beer instead of water like the majority of what you are served in the states.

The next morning we went on a tour of the city. First we saw the Glockenspiel, the clock and green area on the tall tower in the picture below, and then we ate lunch at the Hofbräuhaus. Originally when we were done with that we were going to go up and hike in the Alps but we decided that with the weather threatening rain we might as well just stay in the city. We climbed the tower of a church that I believe was the church of saint peter in English. From the bell tower you could see the entirety of Munich for only 2€. It was actually about 1 o'clock when we reached the top and we could see the bells ringing as we walked by. The worst part about the bell was not the noise, which was loud, but the fact that the ringing bells moved the tower with them as they rang. Being a little skittish with heights I was not enjoying that part of the visit. Finally the bells stopped and I was able to enjoy the view.



Next I went to the English Garden and to see the Isar or Ice creek in German, as it was translated for me. There as the river dumps into the stream that has been carved through the park, there are small rapids. On these rapids people from Munich actually surf! I have pictures but if you have the time check it out on You Tube, just type in surf Munich. I'm pretty sure that in the video I watched it was the same guy I saw. It is of course suggested that the surfers not do this because of the risk but they do it anyway. Ian's friend told me that a person died a few years back. I as a lifeguard of 6 years was on high alert and at one point thought I would have to jump in because it looked like one guy smashed his face on the side of the canal, which is made of concrete. After watching this for a while we sat in the garden which is a spot frequented by nude sunbathers, apparently mostly older men. Thankfully it was a cold day and we were spared the emotional scarring from such an experience. We did however sit in the Biergarten for the rest of the day and enjoy good food and beer as well as some brass band music from a pagoda in the park. When we left Ian's friend went home and Ian and I went back to our tent. He left the next day and I toured the old Olympic park. It was green and beautiful. I also did some laundry since I was down to my last pair of clean clothes. I'm going to tour London tomorrow and then I have to begin to face the unsettling fact that I and

bound for the US on Wednesday. I will enjoy being home but I will miss Europe and will look forward to my next trip.





Thanks as always for reading and I will post tomorrow about my time in London.

Wabash Explores Madrid

Posted on August 10, 2008 by [grahamb](#)

Brent Graham '09 – On the 1st of August Grant and I both traveled to Madrid to explore the capital of the country we have both come to love. I arrived by bus at approximately 3 and Grant arrived about 40minutes later. We were supposed to meet but in the excitement of traveling we forgot to set a place and time to meet. While we were both in the station together we did not see each other and after some time I went to find a hostel and a computer to E-mail Grant. Grant at the same time went to store his luggage in a locker at the airport. Luckily Grant found internet at the airport and we decided to meet at the bus station. From there we went back to the hostel I had booked for the night which was right off of plaza mayor which I though was beautiful and Grant said was nothing compared to the plaza in Salamanca, and based on his pictures I have to agree.

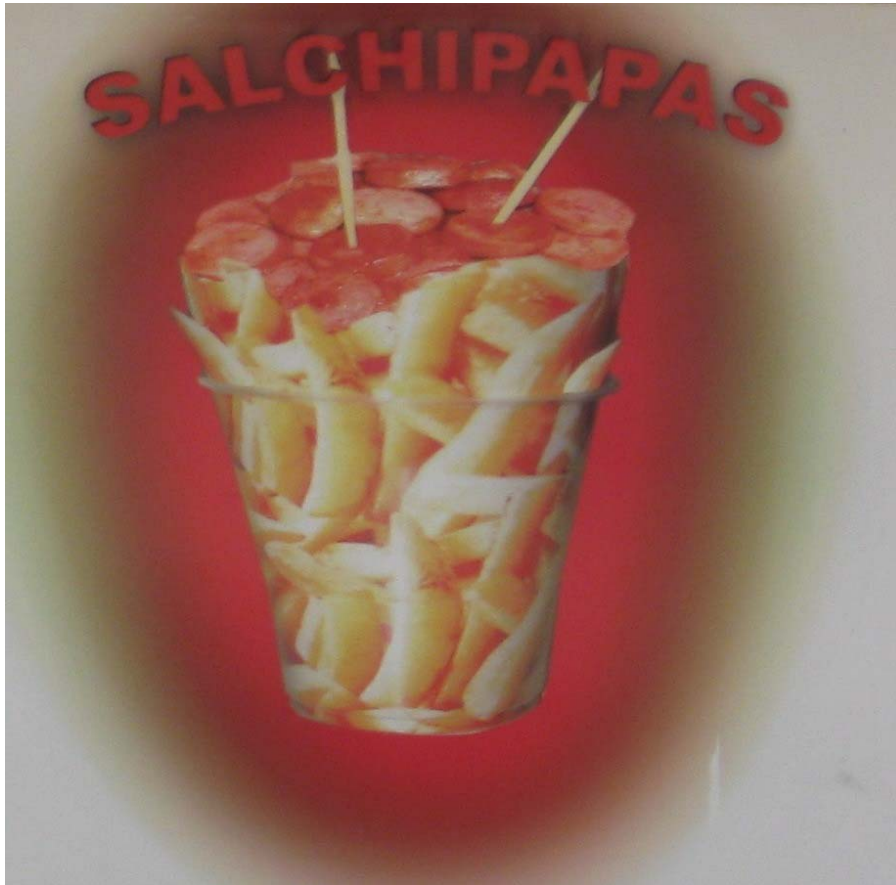


After settling in, we decided to take a walk and get something to drink or to eat. We ended up having tapas and drinks for dinner while we discussed our experiences and just enjoyed the company of a friend in a foreign country. I had been without any of my friends from Granada for almost 4 days and he had not had many close friends in Salamanca the last semester because all

his friends had left after the first month. Among some of the things that we discovered was that long pants and shoes were a common staple among the older generations in both cities but much more of a common dress in Salamanca than in Granada. We also noted that the old men always put their hands behind their backs when they walk unless they had a cane. One other interesting discussion we had was about tapas. In Granada when you buy a drink the drink comes with free tapas. It is not always a lot, sometimes a piece of bread with ham on it, but other times they are big enough to make a meal out of. There was one bar where a beer was 1.85€ and with it you could get a full slice of pizza. It was no NY style slice but it was big. They also had hamburgers, tortilla, empanadas, french-fries and of course ham.

On Saturday, we switched to a cheaper hostel and then went across town to the Prado to see Guernica, a famous painting by Picasso, because I really wanted to see it. Grant was a good sport and went with even though he isn't a huge art fan. I had unfortunately been misinformed as to the location of the painting which was actually at another museum just 10 minutes from our hostel. We decided to go in anyway because we got a 50% discount for being foreign students. The Prado while beautiful was not as much fun as I had expected. The museum is mostly Renaissance art with some Greek sculpture thrown in. After the first floor we began to see the same subject by different artists over and over again. Don't get me wrong, they were beautiful, but it got repetitive. After about two hours we left.

That evening we also upgraded our duo of Wallys in Madrid to a trio with the addition of an alumnus, Chris Haskell. He has been traveling Europe for the last few weeks and decided to meet us for our stay. After taking him to the hostel, we went to explore the neighborhood where our hostel was. It was not the best part of town, but it was safe, and we came across a street fair. There we discovered a food that puts fair food in the US to shame, salchipapas. For those that understand Spanish you probably have an idea of what this is already but for those who don't, I will break it down. Salchichas are sausages or hot dogs depending on the store and the context. Papas Fritas are French-fries. Put the two together and you get salchipapas. They are served in what resembles a 32oz cup and to eat them you use skewers. The fries go in first and then a layer of sliced and fried hotdogs goes on top. Then you can add ketchup and/or mayonnaise. I opted not to ruin the flavor. While it is good it is not something that you would eat every day, like all fair food.



Sunday we hung out with some people we met from the hostel until Grant had to leave. We said goodbye and then he left for the airport. We watched movies at the hostel and drank beer and sangria with a group of people there until bed around 1am. I went to bed early because the next day Chris and I were leaving for Barcelona, or so we thought...

(to cut down on space and loading problems the rest of this post follows in Stranded)

Going Out with a Bang

Posted on July 29, 2008 by [admin](#)

Grant Gussman '09 – The realization is setting in. I'm going to be in the United States again one week from today, maybe never to return. I have 6 days left in Spain, and it seems impossible that I've been here 9 weeks. I remember seeing a movie once where a boy found a dog and brought it home, and his parents told him they would only keep it until they could find its owners and not to get attached. But of course the boy got attached to the dog, and the rest of the plot writes itself. That's how I feel about Spain. I knew I would only be here for a limited time, but part of me feels like I actually live here, as if this has been somehow more than a visit.

In the midst of these thoughts, I am happy to say that I will be finishing my stay in España on a high note. Brent Graham (my co-blogger) and I will be meeting in Salamanca this Thursday, staying a night here, and then touring Madrid together this weekend. I suppose we'll have to flip a coin to see who gets to blog about the trip... Or maybe we'll co-write something? At any rate, I'm really looking forward to seeing the capital, and it'll be more fun with a travelling partner.

But until this weekend comes, I thought it might be better to use a few pictures to show everyone who reads this exactly what I'm going to miss...



In the summer, it nearly never rains, and it's rarely overcast. Every single day is blue-skied, sunny, and warm. Everywhere you walk around here, it's nothing but castle-like buildings.



Salamanca is ancient, and its Roman heritage is evident in countless examples of architecture. This is the wall that borders the southern part of the city, a defense mechanism from centuries ago. Below it is the crest of Salamanca, made out of flowers.



When I need to use a computer in Crawfordsville, I bury myself in the dungeon we call the armory. This picture was taken from window of the internet cafe I frequent, overlooking the Plaza Mayor. Even after 2 months in Spain, it's hard not to think the Plaza looks amazing when the lights come on every night and the entire square fills with people.

Hopefully these pictures have helped show exactly what I mean when I say I'll miss this place. This has been an amazing experience. I know it's almost time to give Spain back to its owners, but I'm going to spend every minute of this last week enjoying what time I have left. I love America, but there's something special about living in another country for this long, and I don't intend to waste any of my remaining time.

Hasta luego.

Another World

Posted on July 29, 2008 by [grahamb](#)

Brent Graham '09 – I apologize for not writing sooner but I have been taking finals for the last two days. I received a 9 in my first class which is an exemplary mark. I was also traveling this past weekend on one of the most perspective altering trips of my life. Every year hundreds of American students come to Spain and few ever see what I had the privilege to see this past weekend. The strait of Gibraltar that separates the southern coast of Spain and the north cost of Africa are only separated by a distance of 8 miles. How can such a short distance keep so many people from seeing something that they may never have the opportunity to see again?

The trip lasted three days. I left Granada on Friday morning on a bus to meet with the travel group in Malaga. After meeting with the group we traveled to Algeciras which is a port on the southern coast of Spain near the strait of Gibraltar. From there we took a ferry across to Ceuta which only lasted about 40 minutes. I think if it had gone any longer I would have gotten sick which is amusing to me as a swimmer. Ceuta is Spanish territory on the north coast of Africa. Right now the government is constructing a border fence to cut down on illegal immigration and this is causing a lot of problems. For some reason it sounds like a very familiar situation.

When we arrived at the border we were told to turn off any cameras and that if we took pictures they would be confiscated and we could be detained or not allowed entrance into the country. The entire area looked to me like the demilitarized zone between the Koreas. We had our passports stamped and then a man in a military uniform came on to check our identities and make sure that our passports were stamped. We then left for Tetuan and the comfort of our hotel.

Upon arrival we had to write down our travel information as well as the number that had been stamped into our passports. I think it was so that they government could keep track of where we went but I am not sure. After check-in we ate dinner and went to bed because the next morning we were off to the historic medina or market of Tetuan.

The market looked like it was from the 15th century with the exception that there were people dressed in modern clothes. The smell was horrible in some of the places and there were dead things hanging that could not be identified as any meat I have ever eaten. The other interesting thing about the medina and the entire country I came to find out was that there were a million cats running around but no dogs. Dogs in Islamic culture are dirty. Should a dog enter the house, you can no longer pray in the house and prayer is a large part of the Islamic culture. After the medina we went to eat and were then taken to a carpet consortium to view the Moroccan handicraft of carpet weaving. It seemed like a setup to me and I didn't buy anything but a few people were suckered into buying something. Later that day we went to the market in Tangiers and had a chance to haggle for some of the things we might have wanted to buy. I made several purchases buying gifts for family and friends at a ridiculously discounted price and then bought an ottoman for myself. In Granada I would have paid 20€ for the one I chose but in Morocco I paid only 9€. I love haggling. We then went home for dinner and then shortly after bed. The next morning we traveled to a little village in the mountains called Chef-Chawan in the Rif Mountains.

It was beautiful and it was the only place during the trip you could drink the water as it flowed right down from mountain springs to the town. This small village was the central hub for all of the small mountain villages in the region and had a huge market. Again after a short tour and a stop at a second carpet store we got to look around. We got a great deal on a shirt for a friend who couldn't come on the trip with us and I made another purchase for a friend. The city itself is

entirely Islamic and the community reflects this fact. Rarely if ever did you see women on the streets without a man or their son. It was like being in the past to see how they lived. After a quick lunch we got on the bus for the long trip back to Granada.

The trip was enlightening and helped me to see the Islamic culture that I have been learning about for the last four weeks in my class. It is so different from society in Spain and even more different than what I am used to seeing at home. It was a good look into how things work in other parts of the world and especially in rural areas. If there is anyone that is going to be in Spain and has a free weekend, I suggest this trip and if not the exact same one another like it. There are many different companies that take trips to Morocco and it truly is a once in a lifetime experience and one that has given me a new world perspective.

Two pictures of the meat market. Live chickens in one and does anyone know what that meat hanging to the left side is on the other?





One of the mosques in the city of Tetuan. This is the side for men and the other side is for women.



This is a national road to the different mountain towns in Morroco. Anybody want to go for a ride.



Washing in the river. There was one lady yelling at us for taking picture. Guess she didn't want us seeing her underwear.



This is one of the weavers at work. It was fun to watch but trust me not worth 70€.



Well that's all for today. I leave for Madrid in a few days and will probably even see Grant. Thank you again for reading.

A Day in Spain

Posted on July 21, 2008 by [grahamb](#)

Brent Graham '09 – There are a lot of similarities between the US and Spain but there are also many differences. One such difference is daily schedule. While in the US I was accustomed to a schedule of waking up at 9am for work and going to bed around midnight. Here that schedule would be nothing short of impossible to keep.

The typical day in Spain will begin around 8am. After getting ready and eating or buying a breakfast consisting of toast and coffee, digestive cookies with milk and juice, or, if it is a special occasion, churros and chocolate or coffee, the typical Spaniard will head off to work around 9. Some students and working adults will forgo the early breakfast and take a break at 11 to have breakfast at a restaurant.

The main meal of the day, la comida, is typically eaten at the beginning of the siesta which begins around 2 in the afternoon. La comida consists of two plates, bread, water and fruit for dessert. The first plate or “primero plato” usually consists of a starter such as a salad of some sort or a glass of gazpacho. In my homestay I will normally have a bowl of soup or gazpacho. On occasion I will eat salad. The “segundo plato” is the main course. Some of the typical dishes include paella, tortilla de patatas or fish and vegetables. I have had each and each is delicious. I have also had meatballs in an acorn sauce over rice, pork tenderloin with spaghetti and, my personal favorite, chicken with rice and lentils. The main thing to remember when eating in Spain is that the backbone of the Mediterranean diet is olive oil. In my house we go through 2L of olive oil every 8-10 days, and there are only 3 of us. I must also say that the food never tastes or feels greasy like some food cooked with or in oil at home.

After a quick nap I have to go to class at 4 but siesta typically last till 5 in Granada. At this time it is also common for the people here to have merienda. It is a light meal consisting of a bocadillo, sandwich, or small pastry and coffee. It is traditional to eat this meal at a café with friends. I have class during this time so am not able to do this but on the weekends sometimes I will go for shawarma with my friends. For those that do not know shawarma a shaved chicken sandwich on pita bread or rolled up in lafa with assorted vegetables and two sauces, one that is a yogurt base and another that is spicy. I prefer to eat mine with cheese but without is good too.

La cena, or dinner, is not eaten until late. I normally eat at 10 but typically no one eats before nine and is done by eleven. This meal is generally lighter than the afternoon meal and in my house consists of one dish with bread and water.

After dinner many people will go out for tapas. Tapas are small amounts of food served with drinks at bars and are served with soft drinks as well as with alcohol. Originally tapas were a piece of bread that was placed over the mouth of your cup to prevent flies from falling into your drink. Another theory is that a king decided he didn't want people getting too drunk and passed a law that required food to be served with alcohol to prevent people from getting too drunk. Either way, in Granada tapas are a nightly occurrence for college students and their friends. I have gone out most nights staying in only when really tired or finishing homework. Another interesting fact about tapas is that here in Granada they are free. This is a tradition common only in Andalucia to my knowledge. In Madrid for instance you have to ask for a tapa and pay for it.

If the tapas bar are not your style you can opt on Thursday and Friday nights to go to the botellón which is the way to meet friends and drink for cheap. The botellón is held in a park and is basically

a BYOB party with a lot of people. It is a great way to meet the natives and practice Spanish. Recently however a law was passes prohibiting a botellón anywhere but in one park on the south side of the city. After the tapas bars close or the botellón winds down around 2 or 3 in the morning the discotecas or dance clubs open. These clubs in some cases are open until 8am or later.

I have enjoyed every aspect of the Spanish schedule so far. My favorite part of the week is the botellón on Thursdays and Fridays. I have met many friendly and funny Grenadinos there. Well it is 11:30 and I am meeting my friends in half an hour to get tapas. Thank you to all who are still reading, and I will write again soon. (Sorry there aren't any pictures)

A Historical Gem

Posted on July 16, 2008 by [grahamb](#)

Brent Graham '09 - I apologize for the delay in getting this posted. I had midterms this week and had to study and finish a paper. Sunday, however, I visited the crown jewel of Granada, its claim to fame. When a Grenadino introduces himself, it is sure to come up when you tell them you've never heard of Granada. Last but not least it is a lasting reminder of the Arab and Islamic heritage that many Spaniards, especially from the south, would not see otherwise. I am talking of course about the Alhambra. We also visited the Generalife which is not pronounced like it looks (pronounced: Hen-er-al Leaf-A or with IPA [xe ne 'ral 'li fe])



The Generalife is the white building above and the reddish brick building that takes up the rest of the photo is the Alhambra

The history of the Alhambra is linked with the geographical place where it is located: Granada. On a rocky hill that is difficult to access, on the banks of the River Darro, protected by mountains and surrounded by woods, among the oldest quarters in the city, the Alhambra rises up with reddish tones in its ramparts that prevent the outside world from seeing the delicate beauty they enclose. The red color of the clay in the walls is also the origin of its name. In Arabic it is Al-Hamrā' or literally "the red".

Originally designed as a military area by the third Ziri king, the Alhambra became the residence of royalty and of the court of Granada in the middle of the thirteenth century, after the establishment of the Nasrid kingdom and the construction of the first palace, by the founder king Mohammed ibn Yusuf ben Nasr, better known as Alhamar.

Throughout the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the fortress became a citadel with high ramparts and defensive towers. There are three main areas: the military area, or Alcazaba, the barracks of the royal guard, the palaces including the famous Nasrid Palaces and the remains of the houses of noblemen and plebeians who lived there, and the medina or the administrative zone of the palace which is now in ruin. The Charles V Palace (which was built after the city was taken by the Catholic Monarchs in 1492) is also in the medina. In reality the Alhambra is a small city within what was the city of Granada. Within the walls there were also homes for 2-3000 residents. When the Catholic Monarchs took over it was converted into palatial gardens.

The complex of monuments also has an independent palace opposite the Alhambra, surrounded by orchards and gardens, which was where the Granadine kings relaxed: the Generalife.

The only bad thing about the trip was that one of the most famous courts in the Alhambra was under construction, The Court of the Lions. The court gets its name because there is a giant fountain in the middle with lions holding up the basin at the bottom. This is a strange feature because normally Islamic art is void of any depictions of living things other than vegetation. The

fountain however is in the private part of the residence so would not have been seen by many. One of my professors tells us that the lions are actually there thanks in part to a man named Samuel Ibn Nagrela, a Jew who was a minister to the Taifas Kings of Granada. The lions had been removed temporarily for study and preservation. While disappointed I still enjoyed the trip snapping around 200 photos of the amazing beauty of this historical gem. Though I can not post them all here I have included a few of my favorites that show the beauty and detail in the decoration of the Alhambra.



This is a photo of the soldiers barracks in the Alcazab. In the lower left corner there were once baths.



The tile in the center is the slogan of one of the Nazariid Kings and translated it means “Only God is the victor”. There is tile work like all over the Alhambra in squares as well as in these geometric patterns.



One of the pools in the Nazarid Palaces. Beautiful.



This ceiling is made of Cedar which when it was built was expensive to use because it had to be imported. This is the ceiling in the throne room which is supposed to represent the sky over the Islamic kingdoms.



This is a part of the Court of the Lions. The stone trough that goes toward the right is connected to the fountain with the currently missing lions. The detail on the buildings around the fountain is intricate and beautiful though.



This is one of the gardens in the palace and example of the natural beauty that can be found.



This is one of the fountains in the Generalife. It was once more of a garden for food than for pleasure but the christian family that lived there after the fall of the islamic kings changed it to look more like the gardens of France and Italy in the early 1900's.



A beautiful covered walkway in the Generalife.

That is all for now. Thanks to all who have read and have written me about the blog. Until I write again...

Foreign Sports and a Foreign Fourth

Posted on July 9, 2008 by [admin](#)

Grant Gussman 09 - Wow, what a couple of weeks it has been. A couple of highlights keep jumping up in my mind, and I feel I should share them on the blog.

Although I'm sure most of you have heard by now, Spain was victorious in the EuroCup competition. I can't even begin to explain the scene I witnessed in the wake up such a monumental victory. As I wrote in a previous blog, as soon as I arrived in Spain, the EuroCup was about to start. Not being a soccer fan myself, I asked quite a few people about Spain's chances, and I almost always got the same response: A reluctance to admit the truth, on account of national pride, but ultimately the cop-out that, "There are some really good teams in Europe". And to be fair, these preliminary assessments made sense. It's only been two years since Italy was the World Cup champion, and soccer is more of a national pasttime to each European country than all of our professional sports combined. Besides, Spain hadn't won a the EuroCup since 1964 and hadn't made it past the quarterfinals since a runner-up finish in 1984.

Enter Fernando Torres.

The blonde-haired young soccer player hardly even looks Spanish, but right now, there is no one more popular in this country. After besting an excellent field of competitors to reach the final, Spain suited up against an excellent German team led by Michael Ballack, one of the best soccer players in the world. Despite the overwhelming odds, Spain used some stunning defense and a miracle goal by Torres to become European Champions, 1-0.



(Above: A small taste of the patriotic soccer fever that gripped Spain during Euro2008)

The next day, every single TV channel replayed the Torres goal, over and over again. I've probably seen it 150 times by now. But the next day was about more than the recaps of the match. The whole country seemed a little different. Everyone was a little nicer, as if they were still completely in shock. Magazines and newspapers littered the streets, all with the same headline:



"It's not a dream. It's reality. WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS!"

I can't believe how fortunate the timing of this trip was. And the good luck didn't stop there.

Shortly after my arrival, Rafael Nadal (predictably) won the French Open easily, in straight sets over Roger Federer, the world's #1 player. But with Wimbledon looming, most people here were saying the same thing we Americans usually say... "The French Open belongs to Nadal, but Federer owns Wimbledon". Yeah? Well so much for conventional sports wisdom this summer. As many of you probably saw, Nadal defeated Federer in the Wimbledon final last Sunday, in an epic 5-set match. Although the excitement here couldn't quite match the EuroCup final, people were definitely paying attention. And when Rafa won the final set, the country started the celebration all over again.

I guess what I'm saying is that I think I'm good luck for Spain.

One other recent happening worth mentioning is that, for the first time in my life, I wasn't home with my family on the 4th of July. You'd probably think that they don't celebrate the 4th of July, since it's an American independence celebration, but they do. Well, to be more specific, a lot of places here cater heavily to American tourists, so there were American flags on several bars, restaurants, stores, etc. I really missed home at one point when (and I'm not making this up) I saw an enormous American flag draped over the entrance to an Irish bar, in Spain, and the workers were out front handing out American flags that said "Made in China". Talk about a multicultural experience.

That's all I have for now, but I'll try to get another entry up soon. As always, thanks to everyone who is reading!

Paseos y la Playa

Posted on July 5, 2008 by [grahamb](#)

Brent Graham '09 – I have not posted in five days but for me the time has flown by. I have been very busy and though the schedule and the surface culture were a little difficult to get used to, now that I am living with a host family I feel like I'm just another person living on the streets of Granada. Though I still have some communication problems with tense, vocabulary and dialectic words and phrases, I am faring much better than on my first night in the city.

I have seen a lot of the city on foot and, after three days of walking, my feet are really sore. The students tell me it will get better by the end of the week. We have taken three 'paseos' trips or outings, and are scheduled to take a fourth tomorrow. The first of these "tours" was to familiarize us with some of the most important locations for us in the city. We were shown how to find the Arcadia office, the different points of departure for our other paseos, the bus station for trips we might want to take on our own and where to buy anything we could want or need while we are here. It was a great trip and helped me to see more of the beauty this city has to offer. I have included some pictures below.

* Interesting side note for you bargain shoppers out there. The end of July and the month of August are an interesting time to shop in Granada. All of the stores are trying to clear their inventory for the new materials that will arrive in September and so that the stores can remodel or redecorate to sell the new product better. This means 'REBEJAS PARA EL MUNDO' or discounts for everyone (here todo el mundo usually means everyone or spaniards, interesting I thought it meant the whole world?). I needed to buy a pair of sandals and found that most stores normally sell them for 40-80€. During this time of the year though, I found them for 12€. Though that is 19\$ at home it is a really good deal for Granada.

The second paseo was to the Albaicín. This is the neighborhood where I shot the photo of the Alhambra a few weeks back. It is a historically Arab community and the location of a lot of the historically significant sites in Granada. There you can see a 'carmen' or summer home, the home of the secretary of the catholic kings which is now the archeological museum, the gardens of the archives and the sis tern that helped Granada avoid being affected by the different diseases that plagued Europe in the middle ages. It is an amazing place but if you want to go do not go between 2 and 5. These are the hours of the siesta and the only people walking the streets are the tourists. The beauty is in the old world feel, but because the streets in the Albaicín are so narrow, tourists are frequently mugged there. Again this is only during siesta so go in the morning (around 9 or 10). It is cooler and it makes the trip much more enjoyable. I have also included some pictures of the Albaicín below.

The final paseo I took with some students from my group. We traveled by bus to Salobreño which is a small town on the edge of the Mediterranean. It literally covers a hill giving the impression that the buildings in the middle of town are taller than those on the edge of town. The ocean was beautiful and there were a lot of low clouds which gave the effect of fog but it was still a bright and sunny day. The water was also crystal clear and you had no problem seeing 15 feet. If we go again we are going to try and get a pair of goggles to hunt for rocks. The beach is not a sand beach but is made of pebbles and there are some amazing rocks to be found buried or resting on the ocean floor. On the way back to catch the bus we stopped at the municipal park which doubled as a park and a small zoo. It was a fun excursion but also the biggest culture shock of the trip so far. The beach is not a nude beach. There were however many naked children running around. Also there

were a high number of topless women sunbathing, swimming and walking along the beach. Again, I have included pictures, but only of the beach and my group.



This is a fountain near the Puente Blanco

and is called the pomegranate fountain. In Spanish, Fuente de Granada. Yes, Granada means pomegranate.



This is the Casa de Castril I mentioned above. This is the first house of its kind built in Granada by a Christian. It causes a raucous because of the intricate detail on the outside of the house.



This is the
Garden of
one of
Carmen
de
Victoria. I
t is a

carmen owned by the college. The garden in a carmen is both for pleasure and for food.



This is the sis tern. It was built by an islamic king as part of his desire to improve the city and the quality of life for its people.

This is a beautiful view of the Mediterranean and its surrounding landscape.

I'm sure that I will have more to write about soon with all that we have planed for the next couple of days. Escribiré pronto. Hasta la vista.

The Perfect Beginning

Posted on June 30, 2008 by [grahamb](#)

Brent Graham '09 – Anyone who has ever flown internationally knows what I have learned. The plane ride can be terrible. I have flown coach my whole life and never cared about the space issues, but after 8 hours of discomfort, I am ready to swear off coach all together. The other problem I faced was the delays. Thankfully in London the underground was working in my favor and got me from Gatwick to Stansted in just 3 hours so I didn't miss my connection, but it took me 1.5 hours to get my boarding pass from Ryanair leaving me just 30 minutes to get to the plane.

(On a side note: Ryanair is a discount airline that offers service to cities all over Europe. The flight from London to Granada, equivalent from flying from Maine to Florida cost me a little less than \$100. I will seriously reconsider flying them again though because the seats were small and uncomfortable for a person of my size and there are other such airlines that I have heard are a little roomier. All in all for the price the trip was a good one, except for the 2 year old kicking the back of my seat.)

When I arrived in Granada, I caught a bus into town for 3€ and though worried about not knowing which stop to get off at found it with relative ease. The next task was to find the hostel. That was not as easy as I had thought. I, like most of you reading, are used to street signs that are large green and have the street name in large white letters. That is not the case here. The street signs are squares no larger than a paper napkin place two to three stories up the sides of buildings. I wondered around to see if I could find the hostel using the map I had and when that failed I asked for directions. After an hour of searching I finally found the hostel in a small alley, off a small walkway, of a street that looked like a sidewalk. All three were made of stone. After check-in, a big glass of water and a hot shower, I went straight to sleep.

The next morning I woke up to sunlight, birds, a free breakfast and a beautiful city. It is hard to see at night but from the rooftop terrace it was like a scene from a movie. I immediately fell in love with it. After dropping off my bags at the hotel that I will be in for the next few days before I move in with my host family, I went to explore the city I walked over to the Alhambra but could only see part of it. I climbed the hill across from the Alhambra and took some amazing pictures. I walked for two hours just wandering. I found some beautiful gardens, a city park and a school. The garden were beautiful and all were in view of the Alhambra. The park was a little lonely looking and was very small. The school had very little by the look of it but they did have a 'fútbol' pitch. On my way back it was about 2pm, the hottest part of the day so I stopped at a 'heladeria' or ice cream shop. They had flavors that were crazy including egg. They also had the most delicious looking fruit flavored ice cream. I had the mandarin today and will try them all by the end of the trip. I bought a paper and spent the remainder of the afternoon reading the various articles about the Eurocup final between Spain and 'Alemania'. I learned all I could have ever wanted to know about the game as well as the players from both teams. I also learned that this is the first time in 44 years Spain has been to a final match.

After roaming for the day and reading up on the match, I met with my group in the lobby of the hotel at 8pm. From there we went to dinner at the student center and watched the finals of the 'Eurocopa'. We ate local foods that the director, Christina, cooked or bought. They included ham which tasted like beef jerky, manchego a Spanish cheese and various 'frutos salados' salty snacks. We also had Fanta and Coke to during. One interesting thing to mention here is that the Fanta we have in the US is nothing like what I drank here. It actually has about 10% juice in it and is a lot less sweet. It is much better in my opinion. The match was a close one and very fast moving. It

seemed to go a lot faster than when I watch it a home. It might be because I was watching with other people. As soon as the game was over the streets filled with people blowing horns, banging drums, screaming, running, honking and setting off fireworks. It was a huge party. Many of the locals went swimming in the fountain at the end of The Gran Via. I declined the invitation because a sign near the pool said recycled water, not potable and I had seen about 10 pigeons bathing in it earlier that day. The fiesta lasted longer than I did and I went to bed around 12:30 to the sounds of the party in the streets.



The view from the tarrace. What a beautiful city!



This is the Alhambra. The University is going to take us there soon. I'll have more pictures and information once we go.



This is the best ice cream place on the planet. I can't wait to go back.



The party in the streets. It was crazy. In Madrid they had to call the police.

That is all for now. We will be touring the city for the next few days so I will have more pictures for you soon. Hope everyone is enjoying the weather at home. Today it was 104F. !Hasta Pronto!

Grant Gussman '09 - Well, tonight's going to be crazy. If you've been following these entries, you probably remember that the EuroCup (international soccer tournament) has been going on all month. Well, when I arrived in Spain, everyone was talking about it. Not being a soccer fan myself...especially in another continent... I asked around about Spain's chances. And EVERYONE told me Spain had zero chance to win. Most people I talked to told me Spain probably wouldn't even win a match in the preliminary rounds. Well... Spain went undefeated in those prelims. Only one other nation (Holland) matched that feat. After winning their group, Spain advanced, as one of the 8 best teams, to the single-elimination part of the tournament. In the first round, they had to play Italy. Italy, I learned, had been the defending world champions after winning the World Cup in 2006. Spain won. Then we had a rematch against Russia, who we played in the prelims. Spain won again. Now España is a perfect 5-0 in the tournament, and is one of only two teams still alive. So TONIGHT is the EuroCup final between Spain and Germany, and it's already hard to walk through the streets without tripping over someone. There are people getting seats outside of bars and restaurants, and everywhere you look is a Spanish flag. I'm going to take some pictures tonight and try to have them up soon.

Until then, picture the most jam-packed, sold-out, insane sporting event you've ever seen. Now multiply it times 10, and paint it red and gold (national colors).

Speaking of pictures, I FINALLY have some to put up! I took myself on a sightseeing tour today, and here are some of the highlights:



This is the general hospital near the center of town. The backlight makes it difficult to see, but it's an amazing place.



Here's a shot of the Río Tormes, the river that runs all along the southern edge of the city.



This is a shot of the Santa Basilica Cathedral. There's an old cathedral attached to a newer one, and this is the newer part. You can tour the Ieronimus, as it's called.



A shot from high atop one of the church towers, overlooking the city.



From an enormous patio/landing in the middle of the cathedral, looking up at the highest towers. We actually studied the architecture here in my Spanish Culture class.

That's all for now, but for anyone reading this who is my friend on Facebook, I uploaded all the pictures I took today into 2 new albums.

¡Hasta luego!

Preparing to go

Posted on June 26, 2008 by [grahamb](#)

Brent Graham '09 – I have counted down the days and weeks until my first trip out of the United States. As I post this entry the count stands at 50 hrs and 30 minutes, accounting for time difference, until my arrival in Granada. As always I have underestimated the amount of time it would take me to get ready for the trip and tie up my loose ends here.

I spent all of yesterday shopping for the last minute items that I had forgotten such as a battery charger, a power converter, a belt to wear my passport in and a new camera to document this trip. I even had to search my room for socks to take. I have never been a fan of wearing shoes and as such had no idea if I had enough socks to get me through the trip or where they were in my room. Those of you who have been reading Grant's blog know that shoes are a must since naked feet are culturally rude. I also had to get long pants (shorts are for tourists). I now begin the long and arduous task of packing and I hope I don't forget anything. I have cut down to the bare essentials but probably still have more than I need.



My route takes me from Cleveland to Newark. From there I board a transatlantic flight to London. Once in London I must travel from Gatwick Airport to Stansted Airport. I believe that the fastest and cheapest way to do so will be the trains and the underground. Though I do not have a map of how to get from one to the other I have a set of written directions and have no problem asking for help if I need it. Once arriving at Stansted I will board flight to Granada. The whole trip will take approximately 23 hours to complete. The thought of traveling alone in Europe is a little daunting but a challenge I am ready to face. I look forward to writing you from Spain.



Unrelated Thoughts

Posted on June 24, 2008 by [admin](#)

Grant Gussman '09 – Howdy everyone. Back with more about life in the glorious kingdom of Spain. To be honest, I have a lot I want to talk about, so I apologize in advance for the random nature of this blog. I expect it to be a series of unrelated ideas, but they're all things I find interesting.

It's been a particularly busy week. I'm in two separate month-long programs this summer, one in June and one in July. I just finished the June program, passing all my classes with flying colors. Now on the bigger and better things next month. I'm moving up in difficulty in my grammar class, which I'm a little apprehensive about. But then again, I'm eager to learn as much Spanish as possible while I'm here, so I'll make the best of it.

A few fun facts about Spain, while they're on my mind:

-This is a little difficult to explain, but they don't have states like we do in the US. Instead, they have 'Autonomous Communities'. There are 17 of them, including the Canary Islands, and each really has its own distinct culture. There are even 4 recognized national languages here. Within each AC, there are provinces. So for example, I live in Salamanca (city), which is the capital of Salamanca Province, which is part of the Autonomous Community of 'Castilla y León', which is in the kingdom of España. It took me a while to get my head around all of that.

-The king's name is Juan Carlos (which I think is funny, because that's the student senate president's name at Wabash, haha). His wife-the queen-is Sofia, and their son the prince is Felipe.

-They have a parliament and a president, who currently is a man named Zapatero.

-Much like us, they have 2 primary political parties and various third parties that win significantly fewer elections. Their conservative party (El Partido Popular) is currently in control of parliament. The liberal party (Socialistas) is also very popular though.

-One thing I find strange over here is the amount of talk about revolution. In the US, you really don't hear many people talk about revolution against the government, or if you do, it's not usually taken very seriously. Every day here, I see graffiti, flyers, stickers, etc. that say "Unite against the government" or "Communism for All" or "Youth uprising. Join Us". Weird.

Here's something else I think is funny. About 75% of the cars here are Mercedes-Benz, Porsche, Audi, or BMW. So you'd think they were all really good cars, right? Well apparently those car companies only send their nice models to the US, because over here I see horrible junker cars with the Porsche logo and giant, filthy delivery trucks are usually Mercedes-Benzes. Crazy!

-Over here, they don't take work NEARLY as seriously as we do in the States. I don't mean they are lazy or that they don't try hard at their jobs, but they view careers much differently. It's common for Spanish people to say, "We don't live to work. We work to live." And they DO. Spaniards take 'living' very, very seriously. People frequently go out to restaurants and bars, go shopping, and/or travel. In fact, a lot of people get the entire month of August off of work. I'm not kidding! My culture professor told us that a lot of professions essentially get a summer vacation every year. Lots of people travel or just relax, I guess. I plan on bringing this custom back to the US.

-On a related note, work shifts are different here. It's common that people get a few hours off in the middle of the day-Siesta time! Usually, people work 9am-1pm, then get 3 hours off, and work again from 4pm-6pm. So it's a 6-hour work day on siesta time. Again, I'm bringing this back when I come home.

-They don't have Wal-Mart or K-Mart here. Everything is sold in little mom-and-pop shops, and most shops sell only one or 2 things. On my way to class every morning, I pass the shoe store, the fish market, the pharmacy, the ham store, the cheese store, etc... but there are no shopping centers or department stores. I rather like it this way... everything is much more personal, and people are very eager to help the customers. The only frustrating part is that it's often difficult to find a specific item. For example, I decided yesterday I needed a backpack, and I had to go to 6 stores before I could find one.

Well like I said, a pretty random and disjointed blog. But taken as a whole, I think it does a good job of summing up my life here right now.

Until next time,

¡Adios!

Life and Stuff

Posted on June 19, 2008 by [admin](#)

Grant Gussman '09 - I've been a little irresponsible with the updates lately, but I have some extra time between classes today, and I thought I'd let everyone know how I'm doing. Life is great here, for the most part. I've been here almost 3 weeks now, and it's starting to feel like I actually live in Spain. The first few days especially, I just felt like a visitor in a hotel. I'm really getting to know the city now.

I should have a camera pretty soon. But in the meantime, I have some good news. One of my friends from high school just happens to be working in Madrid. She visited me last weekend and took some pictures, so now I can finally share some with you guys.



This is some really big church we saw. I'm not sure what it's called, but it was really impressive in that churchy sort of way.



Here's me with some old man. He didn't talk much, but he also didn't seem to mind it when I put my arm around him and posed for a picture. Apparently he had been sitting there so long that he turned to stone. Like petrified wood.... except oldified man.

Confession: I do miss a lot of American things. I ate at Burger King the other day just to feel American again, and it didn't even work. My meal came with a choice of Coke, beer, or wine. How European. I miss American sports. I really want to go to Wrigley when the Cubs and White Sox play next week, but that's obviously not going to happen.

On a positive note, I'm starting to like soccer a little. It's pretty much all they watch in this country. España hasn't lost a EuroCup game yet, either! They're 3-0 after beating Russia, Sweden, and Greece. I don't know if that really means anything, but their last 2 wins came at the VERY end of their games. I was at a sports bar for both matches, and the entire crowd was dressed in red and yellow (national colors)... draped in Spanish flags, wearing 'España' t-shirts, etc. And when Spain scored their game-winning goal last night, the entire place went INSANE. Everyone was jumping and hugging and crying and spilling beer and talking really fast in a language I barely understand. It's really an awesome experience to see such patriotism in another country. These people sure do love their fútbol.

Well that's all for now. Hopefully I'll have more pictures soon....

Week 1 at a Glance

Posted on June 9, 2008 by [admin](#)

Grant Gussman '09 – Well, I've survived the first week, and having finally adjusted to the time difference, I feel I can write a coherent blog.

It's actually a remarkably exciting time to be in Spain, especially in the world of sports. Since I've been here, Pau Gasol (a Spaniard) has played in the NBA finals AND Rafael Nadal won his 4th straight French Open. It was pretty crazy here for both events. The Spanish are proud of their countrymen. On top of that, something called the Eurocupa (EuroCup) is this summer. I don't know much about it, but I bet soccer fans know what I'm talking about. It's a major international fútbol competition that takes place every 4 years. It's staggered against the World Cup so that one occurs every 2 years. España has a team, but the people here have told me that they won't win. Apparently these European countries know how to play some soccer. They better, considering I can't even walk through the streets without having to kick a soccer ball back to some kids. Actually, it's probably more accurate to say that I *try* to kick it back to them... usually it ends up on a roof somewhere or I trip over it. Like I said, I'm not a big soccer fan... At any rate soccer is waaay more popular here than in the US. (On a related note, there are no outdoor basketball courts here like in the US... just outdoor soccer fields on concrete. ¡Es loco!

I plan on having some pictures up here as soon as I can, but my camera broke LITERALLY the first day I got here. I have no idea what's wrong with it, but it won't turn on. When I push the power button, it makes this really annoying clicking sound. I'm going to look into getting a disposable one until I can get mine fixed. Until then, my rambling descriptions of the scenery will have to do, which is a shame because it's absolutely beautiful here.

I've been through 1 week of classes now. They're pretty easy. I have 30-45 minutes of homework most nights, tops, so that's a relief from Wabash. It'll probably get harder though. My Spanish Language class is moving SO quickly. We've already covered like 7 verb tenses, including one that I had never used before. At this rate, I could probably learn an extra language in the 2 months I'm here.

As strange as this sounds, one of my biggest challenges here is finding ways to fill my time. I get out of class at 1:15, after which I eat lunch. But from 2pm until dinner (usually 9:30), I don't have much to do. I usually try to knock out my homework early so I can have time for myself, but today I found myself wishing I had MORE homework. I can't believe I just said that. So I went for a 3 hour walk around the city. It was good to get a feel for where certain landmarks are relative to the streets I know... I'm a lot more comfortable walking by myself now. I think I could find my way home from almost any part of Salamanca.

One last thing that is important enough to report on... All this week, there's a festival in town. In the Plaza Mayor (See the image I stole from Google below), there's a huge concert stage set up for free concerts every night. Most of the bands are unknown (at least to me), but this Wednesday at 11:30, Rufus Wainwright is playing a free concert! If you're unfamiliar with him, you might recognize his cover of Leonard Cohen's 'Hallelujah' that was in Shrek. I think it was a scene where Shrek was walking around being lonely or something. So that's pretty cool.



Hey while I'm at it, here are some other pictures I stole from Google.



Above is actually right next to where I have my first class. If you were to turn directly around from where this photo was taken, that'd be where I have Lengua Española. This is el Edificio de las Conchas (The Shell Building). Those dark spots all over it that you can't quite make out are all stone sculptures of shells, and they completely cover the building.

Below, I'm fairly certain, is this absolutely ENORMOUS church right next to the building where I have my other class (Cultura Española). It's completely covered in intricate stonework.



Well that's all the blogging I can handle for one day. Using other people's pictures to document your own trip is tiresome work. I'll write again soon. ¡Hasta luego!

Cultural Comparisons

Posted on June 4, 2008 by [admin](#)

Grant Gussman '09 – I know it's probably too soon to write another entry, but I keep noticing all these differences between Spanish culture and American culture, and I think if I wait, I won't notice them anymore. So, while they're fresh in my mind:

-Spanish people eat lunch at 2 or 3 in the afternoon and dinner at 9 or 10.

-If you go out at night, you don't leave your house until 11:30 or midnight.

-(My host mother told me this one...) People my age and slightly older pretty much all go out on Saturday night. It's the BIG party night each week. It's common to leave your house around midnight and not sleep. Apparently lots of parents expect that their kids will sleep a lot on Sunday. Isn't that wild? It's like culturally-sanctioned irresponsible behavior.

-It's taboo to show your feet to people. You always cover them with something, even indoors. It's culturally appropriate to wear slippers whenever you're inside and shoes whenever you're outside.

-Soft drinks here are WAAAAAY better! They're made with real sugar, not that high fructose corn syrup stuff we have in America. You can really taste the difference too.

-Cans of soda/pop are 330mL. If I remember right, a 12-oz can of Coke is 355mL, so the cans are all a tiny bit smaller here.

-Anyone wearing shorts around here is laughed at. Fortunately, I learned this before my trip and only brought long pants, but the Spanish people I've met laugh about tourists, and you can always spot them because they're wearing shorts.

-Everyone here speaks really Spanish very differently from the Mexican Spanish I learned in school. The letter 'S' is always pronounced as a 'th'. So instead of 'Gracias', it's 'Grathiath'. The whole country has a lisp!

I guess that's all for now, but I'll write more of these differences in here as I notice them.

¡España!

Posted on June 3, 2008 by [admin](#)

Grant Gussman '09 – Well, I've arrived in Spain. What a great place. This first entry will have to be short, because I have another class in a few minutes. But I wanted to get a post up and say that I'm alive and well in Europe. This place is absolutely amazing. All the buildings are made of stone...everything looks like a castle. I'm studying in buildings that are centuries old. My host family lives about 1.5 miles from the school, and I have to walk every day, twice a day. I don't mind—it's great exercise, and the weather is awesome. The only hard part about being here is the time difference. As I write this, it's about 6am in Crawfordsville, but it's noon here. It's worst in the mornings. My host mother wakes me up at 8am, and I keep trying to tell her that this country's time is wrong and it's really only 2am, but no one believes me (including the sun). So I go to bed at about 8pm C'ville time and wake up at 2am. Soon my body will adjust to the time here...or at least I hope so.

On a more positive note, I found an awesome little coffee shop right next to the building where I have my first class. I think I'll make it a habit to get some coffee after class each day. And next door to the cafe is an Internet cafe, which is where I am now. Now I can get caffeinated AND check email after class. ¡Es fantastico!

The only other thing that is difficult about living here is using Euros. The conversion rate is awful. Most prices are the same as in America, until I remember that 2 Euros is really 3 dollars (a little more actually). But I'm adjusting quite well.

That's all for now. I will write again soon.