LETTERS FROM THE EDITORS

We are fortunate to attend a university that promotes such international awareness and sensitivity. At UNC we are not only given hundreds of wonderful opportunities to study abroad, but also have wonderful resources available on campus to broaden our global horizons. After returning from a semester abroad last spring, I have come to realize how our careers here at UNC can be supplemented by international exposure. By studying abroad, joining an organization with global implications, listening to an international speaker at the new FedEx Global Education Center or talking with an exchange student about the cultural differences they have encountered, UNC students have many opportunities to strengthen our global perspectives.

I hope in reading Carolina Passport you will be inspired to take advantage of the international opportunities and resources that are available at UNC. Saint Augustine once said, “the world is a book, and those who do not travel read only a page.” So in that spirit I encourage you to allow yourself to “travel” as you read the following articles and consider how gaining international exposure abroad or on the UNC campus would broaden your global horizons.

Morgan Hargrove is a senior Journalism and Mass Communication major from Black Mountain, N.C. with a minor in Entrepreneurship. She can be contacted at rhargrov@email.unc.edu.

When I set out for my first international experience in London last semester, I didn’t realize I had just made one of the best decisions of my life. I love Chapel Hill, but there is no question that my semester abroad was my favorite and most fulfilling time in college so far. As bizarre as it sounds, I have never felt as comfortable and content as I did once I traveled across an ocean and lived somewhere new. Every morning I woke up excited and thankful for the ability to soak up another rewarding day in the vibrant city that had become home. I returned from London feeling more empowered and less afraid of the unfamiliar, and I know I am not alone. My newfound passion for studying abroad led me to Passport because I truly believe in our magazine’s vision and mission. I hope our magazine helps convey the vast array of options and resources available to you and the indescribable, life-changing experiences that await you. Best of luck!

Cameron is a senior from Winston-Salem, N.C. studying Journalism and Mass Communication. She can be contacted at ncweaver@email.unc.edu.

It’s hard to believe that I almost didn’t turn in my study abroad application. As the application deadline approached for the Spring 2007 semester, I was dragging my feet and telling myself studying abroad just wasn’t the right thing for me at the time. When I returned home six months and four countries later, I couldn’t possibly imagine missing out on the most enlightening experience I have had in college. Living in Italy and traveling around Europe, I found myself in the most intense learning environment I have faced in college. What I learned in my simple day-to-day life taught me more than I have ever learned in a classroom. After such an amazing semester I wasn’t ready for it to end. Getting involved with Passport has given me the opportunity to relive my experience and also learn from others’ globe trotting tales. By reading our magazine, I hope the Carolina community will get a glimpse of the world beyond our little bubble and be inspired to step out of the comfort zone by taking advantage of the array of study abroad opportunities offered at UNC.

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A view of NyHavn, the Copenhagen harbor, on a snowy January morning.

Photo by Shannon Johnston
The sun was high when I woke up in Amsterdam on March 25. The 10 or so other people staying in my room at the Flying Pig hostel were gone and I looked at my watch through bleary eyes.

“It’s almost nine,” said Beth, with whom I had been sharing a room in central London for nearly three months and with whom I was now sharing a bed in this crowded Dutch hostel.

“Daylight Savings Time- We forgot to change our watches,” said Cathy, our third bedfellow and roommate, who completed the hallowed triumvirate of London’s Flat 12. She sat up on the other side of me. “Breakfast is almost over.”

“I must have woken up 50 times last night; it was so weird,” I mused as I rushed to complete the minimum of hygiene rituals in order to make it to breakfast.

“Yeah… you were gritting your teeth last night. Cathy and I kept kicking you to make you stop.”

This hostel wasn’t the first one I’d stayed in with these two, and it wouldn’t be the last. It’s a common practice for many students to use their study abroad program as a springboard for further traveling during their downtime. Indeed, sometimes it seems as if the objective is to spend as little time as possible in your program’s area in favor of country-hopping. From my home-base in London, three-day holidays to Rome, Paris and other big stars on the map were as easily managed as driving home from UNC for a weekend.

The first of these trips was to Rome. My friends from the program and I were eager to throw back the blanket of London’s fog and rain and take a vacation to Europe proper. Upon arriving at our accommodation, The Yellow Hostel, I began to realize how commonplace our “adventure” actually was.

Here I encountered my first glimpse of the flourishing hostel culture: energetic 20-somethings who think nothing of spending a month or several years abroad. The popularity of hostels has grown immensely in my generation, providing fuel for wanderlusters everywhere. Hostels often have a lounge or bar, encouraging travelers to trade experiences, advice and stories. They also offer a certain degree of standardization across many borders, providing us the knowledge of what to expect, or at least supplying us with a person who can speak English. While this can be a welcome relief, I think hostel culture has its drawbacks, too.

Hostels have made the world more accessible to young travelers, but although they are accommodating, they sometimes can hinder truly getting to know a place. They often boast their own tours, pub crawls and other gimmicks that might provide a safe way to see the essential sites of a city but also seem limiting, especially if you’re only traveling with Americans. Often you run into travelers who have stayed in, or plan to stay at, the same hostels in other cities that you did and have done the exact same things you’ve already

“While making global tours affordable and easy, hostels also play a part in making everyone’s experiences similar and standardized.”
done. While making global tours affordable and easy, hostels also play a part in making everyone’s experiences similar and standardized.

Of course, hostels vary from place to place, and these little variances keep you on your toes. Some charge for towels, but some don’t have towels at all. Some rooms only have one key, shared among 10 people; the last one out locks the door and leaves the key at the front desk. However, some give each individual a separate key. You meet people who have stayed at that particular hostel for a week already and have traveled in this manner for months. They’re the savvy, bored-looking kids who knew to bring their own padlock and towel, while I stand clutching all of my belongings nervously, including the shirt I used for drying myself after showering last night.

Hostel life, although cheap and easy, requires a certain inner stamina. Sharing a room with a lot of people can be difficult. Hostel roommates might be drunk, speak many different languages or adhere to varying standards of cleanliness. The potential for awkward situations is extremely high. You learn flexibility and patience in a place like this, not to mention the ability to swallow your pride and forsake modesty out of necessity.

If you need to change your clothes, you probably won’t be able to wait until all 10 people in your room leave you to your privacy. You often get friendly with strangers fairly quickly, considering the space everyone shares. While fast friendships and easy-going attitudes are some of the best aspects of the hostel phenomenon, it is also very taxing to have absolutely no space to yourself. I do not naturally possess the energy and strength it takes to live the hostel lifestyle for a long period of time, but the five three-day trips I took throughout Europe helped relax my need for plans and structure and opened my mind to an improvisational and spontaneous way of living.

On that lovely March morning in Amsterdam, after rushing downstairs to the Flying Pig lounge, Beth, Cathy and I found an empty breakfast table and a lot of content-looking tenants leaving the room. We saw a plate with some abandoned toast on a nearby table, and a fellow traveler urged us to take it. Beth and I swiped the toast and began nibbling.

Minutes later, two girls came to the table where the toast had been. “Where did it go? I swear we left toast here.”

Looking disgruntled, the girls began an obnoxiously exaggerated search for their toast. Beth and I, slipping the toast into our pockets while trying (and failing) to look innocent, went unnoticed. I see this episode as an allegory for the hostel experience itself. Staying in hostels is not always a comfortable experience, but the bread crumbs that stay clinging to the inside of your pocket long after you’ve come home make it worth your while.

Katie Nichert is a senior from Shelby, N.C. majoring in English. She attended the Honors Semester in London Program.
La Mia Vita

The Ponte Vecchio (Old Bridge) overlooks the Arno River. At night, it becomes a melting pot of tourists and natives who gather to watch the sunset, listen to string music, and enjoy the tranquility.
When I stepped off of the plane on May 23, 2007, at the tiny airport in Florence, Italy, disoriented from the eight-hour flight from Charlotte, NC, and the connecting flight from the hectic London-Gatwick Airport, I knew immediately that I was not only in a different country but also a different world.

As my body adjusted to the shock of the 100-degree-plus Mediterranean climate, I inched my way, bags in tow, alongside men with long, dark ponytails, dressed in sharp blazers and carrying briefcases. I was immersed in a sea of olive skin tones, exotic features and beautiful Italian accents.

After navigating my way through customs and collecting my luggage, I found myself waiting for the cab that would convey me to my new home. I had only my morbidly obese suitcase into which I had stuffed my entire wardrobe, the knowledge of about three Italian phrases and a set of expectations that would soon be put to the test.

I sat in quiet and anxious fascination, drinking it all in as the cab made its way through the narrow black cobblestone streets of downtown Florence. Residents whizzed by on mopeds, and women in high-heeled pumps peddled away on banana seat bicycles. The Carabinieri (Italian police) stood guard in front of buildings, armed with rifles and smiles. It was hard to imagine that when I made my way back to the airport in just one short month, those foreign sights would seem as normal as the sun and sky.

In a matter of days, I had nestled into my quaint street-front apartment on Via dell’Oriuolo with my fellow UNC roommates, and I began to feel as though I belonged.

I had struck up a friendship with the amiable doorman, Marco, which- the two of us hindered by the language barrier- consisted of an exchange of smiles, waves and the few phrases I had mastered: “Ciao,” “buongiorno,” “grazie.”

Peering out of my bedroom bay window, which overlooked a tiny but lively fruit stand and a charming little café, I began to feel as if I were looking out on my front yard in suburban Charlotte; I was at home.

I started to understand the stories of my neighbors- one, a young soccer player whose team flag hung proudly outside of his fourth-story apartment window, and the others a family of four whose home-cooked Italian meals I could smell from across the small street separating our buildings.

Before I knew it, I had mastered the once maze-like, 20-minute walk to class at Via Faenza, 43r, the main campus building for the Lorenzo de’ Medici Institute.

Here, for three hours each morning in my Italian film and culture course, I escaped into the worlds of cinematic geniuses, such as Federico Fellini, Roberto Rossellini and Vittorio de Sica. I spent my afternoons in my intensive language class, fueling myself with as much new Italian as possible so that I could better converse with Luca, the owner of a leather store my friends and I passed each day; the baker at the corner pastry shop that we stopped in most mornings; and, of course, Marco.

It was during my daily walks home from class that I truly became one with the city and the culture. I would make my way through the chaotic marketplace with its dazzling array of purses, leather jackets and pajamas; past people sipping red wine on restaurant patios; and past others huddled in front of the gelato stands sprinkled along every block. The sound of bells chiming on the hour from the various neighboring cathedrals infused me with the familiarity of UNC’s Bell Tower.

The illustrious Duomo (Cathedral), whose antiquity, grandeur and elaborate marble detail had left me breathless the first time I laid eyes on it, became my Old Well.

Our nights began with spaghetti dinners prepared in our humble kitchen. Satisfied with our attempts at cooking an authentic Italian meal for ourselves, we would stroll the streets- night virtual cat-walks for Italian night-goers dressed to the nines in their Gucci, Prada and MaxMara attire- to our best friends’ apartment on Via Santa Felicità.

As we made our way over the Ponte Vecchio (the Old Bridge), the beauty of the 9 p.m. sunset dancing its way down into the Arno River always compelled us to stop for a moment. Violinists and assorted musicians strummed their instruments in the background while dozens of others gathered to take it all in.

The walks to class and back home through the market, the spaghetti dinners and the nights on the Ponte Vecchio with my roommates- this had become my routine, my Italian lifestyle.

At the end of those four quick weeks, I hesitantly lugged my suitcase out to the cab, understanding what a different person I was from the woman who had waited for that cab back at the airport in May. Now, my 50-pound bags were not only filled with my American belongings or even my new, prized Italian jewelry and clothing. I had stuffed them with memories of nights in bustling disco-techs; evenings on the Ponte Vecchio; walks past the Duomo; cravings for gelato, fine wine and real brick oven pizza; and enough Italian phrases to survive in Florence for a month.

Torie Robinette is a senior Journalism major in the news-editorial sequence from Charlotte, N.C. She attended the Lorenzo de’ Medici Summer Program in Florence, Italy.
Whoever thought roosters crowed in the morning was wrong. They crow all night; they just get louder at dawn. Each morning for a month, I awoke to those sounds as the town of Cuellaje began to stir and to go out to the fields to start working. With only a few pieces of wood between me and the cold morning air that blew in through the missing window pane, I reluctantly got out from under the blankets that kept me so warm. I went downstairs, outside, and across the patio to shower and brush my teeth as the clouds started to lift. I could tell it was going to be a clear morning very shortly.

After a cup of fresh coffee, a just-picked banana and a fried egg from the henhouse, Cecilia and I put on our black rubber boots and set off down the only road in and out of town. We were headed to the next town over, called La Loma, where Cecilia is the teacher in a small school. Until a year ago, she was the only teacher for children in first through seventh grade. Now she has a young teacher from the nearest city, four hours away by bus, who works with the first and second graders on the other side of a piece of plywood that splits the room in two sections. There are only a few children in each grade, and many of them are siblings.

The trek to school is a memorable one that I have missed almost every day since I left. It starts out on the main road, which is muddy during the rainy season when it rains a few hours each day in the afternoon. In the summer, it will be dry and dusty. We pass several children also on their way to school, some of them walking as much as an hour to get there. Most of them wear the same navy blue skirt or shorts and white polo T-shirt. If it’s a Monday, they probably are still clean, but they will be stained and dirty by the end of the week. For many children, these outfits are among some of the only clothes they have. You always greet every person you pass with “Buenos días” because everyone...
knows everyone else in a small town like this one. Even if you are a foreigner like I am, you greet them as if you have known them all your life.

The road begins to wind around the mountainside, in and out of curves, back and forth. Then you begin to climb. If it’s your first time at 1800 meters elevation (that’s about 6000 feet), you probably will find yourself out of breath very quickly. Give it a week or two and you will adjust. The path is only wide enough for one person, and it’s muddy and slippery and like a staircase in the clay soil, picking its way through a field of sugar cane. The first time I made it to the top, I felt like I was on top of the world. Cuellaje and La Loma are small agricultural towns tucked away in the mountains of Toisán, part of the Andes mountain range that runs through the middle of Ecuador. They are truly breathtaking.

However, not too far from this town is a deposit of copper buried beneath the very mountains I have described. Mining is a huge threat that could displace the people who live there, contaminate the water and result in countless other environmental and social damages. The conflict between the mining company and the inhabitants of the area has heightened in intensity and violence, largely due to government corruption and the economically powerful nature of a large transnational enterprise. However, with very recent legislation, the area hopefully will be protected from further exploitation. One can only hope that places with such intrinsic beauty, such as these, will continue to exist.

It’s more than just a beautiful mountain setting that makes this place so special. I learned about a way of life so different from my own because the people are very much a part of the land. The mountains affect everything, from the storms that regularly cause washed-out roads to the crops that grow on the steep mountainside because there is hardly any flat land to be found. Usually we think of mountains as barriers, tall and impassable. Here, the mountains are freedom. They are sustenance and food. They are family tradition. They are life. They keep going in every direction, around every corner, always changing but always the same in the way that the sky meets the land.

Leah Edwards is a junior Geography major and Environmental Science and Studies minor from Baltimore, Md. She attended the School of International Training in Quito, Ecuador.
I set foot on American soil for the first time as a high school exchange student in 1995. Over the next few years, after coming home to Tbilisi, I traveled back to the U.S. twice. I first visited my host family in Iowa and later spent a year at Mississippi State University as an undergraduate exchange program finalist.

When I won the Edmund S. Muskie graduate fellowship last summer, I was thrilled and excited but not at all anxious. I'd been down that road more than once, so I thought it would be a piece of cake! Little did I know that this time around, it would be a whole new ball game.

“Muskie,” as most people call it, is a very competitive and prestigious academic program that offers residents of the former Soviet countries an opportunity to study for their master’s degrees in the U.S. It is funded by the U.S. Department of State. I guess I got lucky. The International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX), which administers the program, matched my application with one of the best universities in the country, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Most people in the country of Georgia, including myself at the time, only know of the Ivy League colleges, such as Harvard or Yale. There are many universities with excellent programs we haven’t even heard about!

The first semester was quite challenging academically. I discovered that studying at a graduate level was much more demanding coursework, other things added to my anxiety. Homesickness was literally sickening. Culture shock was, at times, severe. Social life was almost nonexistent. Everything seemed downright confusing, whether mundane things, such as ordering food, or more complex things, such as choosing elective courses.

As a proud survivor of that period, I can say that the biggest challenge was...
adjusting my habits and attitudes to the new way of teaching and learning. It was also important to manage time effectively and to have some fun along the way. After a while, things started making sense. Homework became less life-, I mean, time-consuming. Tests appeared to be adequate ways of measuring knowledge instead of intricate torture mechanisms. Professors didn’t sound or look like Martians anymore. I would go for weeks without getting lost on campus or getting to the bus stop one minute too late to catch the last bus home.

We all had to make sacrifices to be where we are now. With time, it becomes bearable to be away from what you love. For me, it’s my two daughters. For Anka, it’s that special someone. For Meri, it’s her family. For Natia, it’s Shardeni Street. For Sulkhan, it’s his mom’s signature khachapuri.

We keep our hopes high, expecting that American diplomas will help us secure interesting and well-paying jobs at home. We strive to achieve a symbiosis between contemporary skills and values gained overseas and innate Georgian merits. There are so many things we can learn from Americans— and vice versa! That is why I believe that academic exchange programs are truly beneficial for both countries, as long as we remain culturally sensitive and don’t try to blindly copy things from each other.

I want to end this article by quoting arguably the most famous Muskie alumnus, Mikheil Saakashvili. On May 10, 2006, he said, “The partnership between the U.S. and Georgia is about more than oil pipelines, more than any kind of economic or military cooperation; it’s about shared values and our shared belief in freedom and in democracy.”

I’d drink to that anytime. Cheers!

Maya Mateshvili is a second-year master’s student in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication. She is an Edmund S. Muskie Fellow from Georgia.
A Siberian Summer

By Bryan Davis

“You’re going to Siberia!” The question was often asked with a combination of surprise and incredulity when my summer 2006 plans came up in conversation. After such a question, I would acknowledge that yes, for most of Russian history, Siberia has been a place for political criminals, forced labor and herding reindeer. However, that admission explained my own fascination with an area of the world rarely examined closely.

Traveling to Siberia has seldom been presented as an “opportunity” for those who go there. Most of its residents had no other option. However, Environmental Studies professor Greg Gangi made it possible for more than a dozen UNC students to study there. I knew I might never again have the opportunity to study biodiversity, biology and anthropology in Western and Eastern Siberia. It is certainly not a place that many people have on their list of places to see, which is one reason why the possibility of going seemed so unique.

The 60-day program began in the city of Novosibirsk and concluded in Irkutsk. Novosibirsk is Siberia’s largest city and industrial center. Irkutsk is the largest city around Lake Baikal, the deepest lake in the world. Our transportation was primarily by bus, secondarily by train, and, for six days, by horseback. In Western Siberia, we traveled as far north as a small village north of Tomsk called Plotnikova and as far south as within miles of the Russian-Kazak border. In the East, we spent our time circling Lake Baikal and camping on its shores. The roads of Siberia are nothing to be admired, so our days on the bus were slow-going, sometimes painfully so. When we set up camp, we bathed either in a Russian sauna (banya) of a nearby village or in the nearest body of water. The introduction to the banya was one of the more shocking cultural experiences. It is much hotter than an American sauna, and in between heating sessions, the bather leaves the sauna to pour cold water over his head. Upon the final heating round, the bathers use birch branches to slap their companion’s arms, legs and torso. When our Russian professor introduced this bathing method to one member of our group, he left the bathing experience disconcerted but clean nonetheless. Our days were taken up by hikes and lectures on local soil conditions, animals, or other biological features, and our nights were spent around campfires.

On the few occasions when we were near a city, we set up camp several miles outside, took baths in the nearby river or lake and got dressed in our tents for a night on the town. Our Russian professors leading the way, we meandered through the streets searching for a club worth visiting (or just one tolerant of foreigners). In Tomsk, one of the first cities we visited, we stayed out dancing to Russian techno until 4 a.m., at which point we were all

Outside of Tomsk, dressed for a night on the town.
exhausted. After dancing, everyone got back on the bus and woke our driver Sasha from his nap. He then dutifully drove us back to our campsite. The irony of such excursions never escaped us. By the end of our time together, we all learned how to answer the question that urban Russian youths occasionally asked: “Where are you staying?” “Palatka,” (tent) we would say, and wait for their surprise.

While Siberian cities boasted fancy clothes, raging techno and expensive food, the countryside was another situation entirely. I have never felt more isolated than I did trudging through Western Siberian bogs. I have never felt as small as I did while standing on top of a mountain in the Altai range, staring off at the distant peaks where the borders of Russia, China, Kazakhstan and Mongolia meet. The geography of our voyage is what stuck with me most clearly. The shocking jaggedness of rocky peaks and desert-like conditions of some mountain valleys are etched into my mind like stone carvings. The most incredible part of those places is the fact that people actually live there. Despite high mountain deserts receiving rain only once or twice a year, people have found a way to provide their own food. Despite the horribly traumatic experiences of Russian native peoples during the rise and fall of the Soviet Union, their will to battle the elements for survival lives on. Life in these places is the furthest thing from easy, and traveling there left me with the deepest respect for the power of humanity to endure.

There were times when we all wished we were home. Days when we were stuck on a bus for more than 10 hours left everyone anxious and claustrophobic. Days when we couldn’t leave our tents because of swarms of bloodsucking insects outside drove some, including myself, to the brink of insanity. There was a significant amount of drama between members of the group but also lots of love. No one was an exception to being extremely petty or abrasive at some point. Everyone felt the awestruck holiness of summiting a peak with the best of friends. The extremities of our social lives often reflected the extremities of our living conditions. Since returning from our trip, I think we all have been forced to calmly recognize the respect we have for one another and the nostalgia we share for such a strange place.

Spending a summer in Siberia has changed the trajectory of my education and has transformed my worldview.”

Bryan Davis is a senior from Asheville majoring in Asian Studies and History. He attended the UNC Field Studies Program in Siberia.
By Alex Snider

It is fairly obvious that traveling and living abroad exposes you to many things not normally seen where you are from. However, traveling goes well beyond that, offering a different perspective on those that you do see every day. In doing so, traveling teaches many things, yet, more often than not, it generates just as many questions as it answers.

To me, that sums up my summer in Morocco. Although I learned much about Islam and the culture and history of this important Arab country, I left with many more questions than answers.

During my two months in Rabat, Morocco, I interned with an NGO called The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI). The office in Morocco supports its emerging democracy using mainly U.S. government grants to train, advise and support political candidates, ministers of parliament, party organizers and youth and women leaders. From the get-go, I started to see the dilemma they face in Morocco.

"Although I learned much about Islam and the culture and history of this important Arab country, I left with many more questions than answers."

Although Morocco is one of the most tolerant Arab countries, and American logos, restaurants and movies are rarely far from view, “America” is still a highly charged subject.

The Catch-22 is that America would like to be perceived as helping Morocco, thus bolstering the image of the U.S. in the Arab world and leading to better relations between the Islamic world and the West. However, the perception of American involvement itself can hinder NDI’s ability to achieve its goals. In fact, two of the large religious parties have officially refused to accept any help from NDI, largely as an opportunity to score political points.

During my two months in Morocco, one of my most striking experiences was seeing my own country through a different lens. At home, I would consider myself patriotic but not in a traditional way. I am highly critical of the actions of my country because I know it can improve, and I believe criticism and dissent are the only mechanisms that can help the U.S. live up to the high ideals upon which it was founded. However, when I step into a context that is very critical of the U.S.- one
that refuses to see anything but the negative actions of President Bush, the War in Iraq and its perceived unconditional support of Israel- a different persona emerges. Instead of focusing on the shortcomings I often magnify at home, I plead with those decrying the values of America to do something I had rarely done myself- to take a step back and see the forest of all the good the U.S. does in the world, not just the few trees of bad.

In many ways, Morocco revealed itself to be a land of interesting and often contradictory relationships. It would take me an amount of space that would bore even the most dedicated reader to chronicle all my experiences with issues such as the king, the veil, women, alcohol, homosexuality and globalization. However, one particular experience changed how I see someone.

In a small mountain town called Chefchaouen, I met a very friendly Moroccan. As he spoke to me in broken French, I found out that he was from a small town not far from Chefchaouen. He was the first of his family to leave for the city and had been working as a fry chef at McDonald’s for five years. While hardly a glamorous job in the U.S., he was visibly glowing as he told me about it. Within the first five minutes of our conversation, he pulled out a photo album and showed me pictures of his colleagues and himself in their uniforms behind the McDonald’s counter. Instead of being a bridge between the U.S. and the world, as a source of jobs and development and as a tangible connection between a rural Moroccan and a student from Washington, D.C.

My experience showed me the complexity of Morocco’s relationship with the West. It helped me understand how I could be a punching bag for a taxi driver’s railings against the U.S. while driving along John F. Kennedy Avenue, passing a Pizza Hut and getting off at Abraham Lincoln Circle. It vividly demonstrated how tempting it is to form judgments about the world around us and far from us without having the whole picture in hand. Above all, it taught me how much I can learn from going overseas and seeing the world- including the part I thought I already knew- from a different perspective. The most important lesson, however, was the reminder of how many difficult questions remained for me to struggle with well after my return to the U.S.

Alex Snider is a senior from Washington, D.C. majoring in Political Science.
My Study Abroad Story

By Lesa Sexton

Last semester I was one of those “study abroaders.” You know, the people who go overseas and have those amazing experiences that, after returning, they manage to work into every conversation. “You asked if I wanted more bread with my meal? Why sure, which incidentally reminds me of my travels in France…”

Aside from completely insignificant and unrelated comments like that, I luckily did bring home one really good story. Allow me to share.

When studying abroad, you try to find the right balance between traveling non-stop and being the academically interested person you claimed to be in your personal statement. This inevitably means you develop fantastic skimming techniques.

One weekend early in the semester, we decided schoolwork wasn’t yet in the “critical” stage, so we planned a three-day getaway to Nice, France. It was Carnaval, a celebration commemorating the start of Lent, which in Nice entails a 10-day celebration ending with their famous grandiose parades. This event is so popular that the city is usually filled to capacity with tourists and visitors, so we were lucky to book a room. We would only catch the tail end of this extravaganza, but we had our fingers crossed that they had saved the best for last.

Each day we were there, there was some sort of parade. The first day, the floats were made entirely out of flowers and were driven slowly down the main street. The floats were so enthralling: exotic flowers, brilliant colors, outrageous costumes. It was hard not to stare open-mouthed in awe.

Not all of the parades occurred in broad daylight; the second night there was a midnight spectacle instead. Not ones to miss anything on the cultural scene, of course we had to check that out. We were curious to see what it would be like, since by then it was nearly pitch black. To keep it as entertaining as the others, the city compensated by including more people in the displays, all of whom had grab bags of goodies to throw to the crowds. These people were responsible for keeping the crowd enthusiastic and for wiping off glazed looks of sleepiness from the faces of typically early risers. I made their job a piece of cake, though, because for an easily overexcited person such as myself, just being there was enough to turn me into a human pogo stick. My friend and I cut our way to the front to have the best view possible. From there, we jumped, screamed, waved—utilized any way to express enthusiasm to the nth degree. With that American blood running through our body, we were a prime target for attention.

Then everything went into slow motion.

A man came running across the street directly toward me, dodging the floats and other parade paraphernalia. He picked me up and acted like he was going to put me on the float. Then, everyone on the float, seeing this for the grand idea that it was, got in on the act. I felt myself being hoisted ever so gently (ok, not so gently, but the thrill has since blocked out the pain) onto
the float. After a millisecond of being stunned into silence, the fist pumping began. All thoughts of my friend were long gone, as were all thoughts of how in the world I would manage to find the hotel without knowing the address myself. I was riding on top of a FLOAT in NICE!

Just take a minute for that to sink in.

Not even all Nicians are lucky enough to have one of those coveted positions above the crowd. And I, an American in France, could now count myself as one of the French elite, despite my horrible accent.

Then, less than 30 seconds later, there was a vision of happiness in the form of my friend climbing up to join me. She would be the proof, the eyewitness testimony to back up this almost unbelievable account of how that night ended.

She would be the proof, the eyewitness testimony to back up this almost unbelievable account of how that night ended.

Here’s the shortened version of the next five minutes: jumping, screaming and waving, except this time ON the float, not watching enviously from below.

For the next two weeks, I was on a high. I had the quintessential study abroad moment, that random crazy story you tell everyone without fully comprehending yourself just what happened.

I felt like I finally understood what the Roman poet Horace meant when he coined the phrase “Carpe diem.” Although the Carolina way is to have everything planned out, it’s often the best things that happen unexpectedly. Too often we find our schedule filled for every hour of the day, without any room to be spontaneous. Studying abroad taught me that life is so much more than that light blue day organizer; it’s what happens when you take time to let life come at you. Being thrust into a completely foreign place, no longer around everything that was comfortable and safe, I changed. I had to. I learned to stop taking things so seriously (to stop being such a Carolina student). I learned that there is something to be said for a little downtime. Life is fun; life is meant to be fun. So what if you aren’t running around hectically all the time. Seriously, when did relaxing and taking time for yourself get to have such a negative meaning? It’s not your cumulative GPA that will have made your time at Carolina worthwhile; it’s what you did during those study breaks fooling around with your friends.

At Harvard there is a statue of its founder seated beside three books, two open and one closed. Every now and again, I have to remind myself to put the book down. I would’ve missed out on so many experiences studying abroad had I stuck with “the plan.” Who knows, if you do the same, maybe you’ll find yourself high atop a parade float...

Lesa Sexton is a senior Communications major and French minor from Raleigh, N.C. She attended the UNC in Montpellier study abroad program.
A Descent into Dana

By Michael Turner

Discovering what is one of Jordan’s most beautiful natural landscapes and successful development projects.

Taking your first step out into the center of the canyon village, you can’t help but wonder for a moment whether you may have fallen off the edge of the mountain and into another world.

The air is cool and the haze is thick, and even if you know that the main road shouldn’t be far behind you, a glimpse back into the swirling mist will leave you with more than just a passing sense of doubt. A dirt path leads back somewhere, yes, but only in mirror image of the way it winds forward in the opposite direction, dissipating all the same into the grayish clouds of the near horizon and framed by ghostly stonework houses crumbling onto the cliffsides. This is Dana.

A small rural village that lies nestled into the eastern end of the gorge that shares its name, this isolated site situated in what is now southwest Jordan has been occupied by humans for millennia. With a quick scan of the surroundings and no prior knowledge, you might think that it has been unoccupied for just as long. Most of the homes are verifiably abandoned, roofs caved in with weeds growing in the entranceways. The reddish-gray stone that accounts for nearly all of the construction hasn’t weathered well; it rests in dusty piles where small fences, livestock pens, and retaining walls appear once to have been.

Nonetheless, some parts of Dana still hold on. Arches and doorways, despite the collapse of the rest of the structure, jut proudly out into the fog. They stand as if eerie sentinels guarding over the village, the remains of the years’ efforts against it, the remnants of some lost civilization from time indeterminate.

The real story isn’t so grand. Most former inhabitants left Dana only a few decades ago, hoping to capitalize on the new economy of a nearby cement factory being built on the top of the plateau. They resettled a couple of miles away in a larger town that could provide access to paved roads and electricity. A few remained, but with most of its population lost to the allure of a modern lifestyle further up the hill, the traditional community of Dana quickly fell into disrepair. The effort required for its upkeep was barely sustainable on the part of its residents. Within only a few years, the mountain village was nearly forgotten, its orchards and gardens overgrown and its breathtaking overlooks left unappreciated.

It was into exactly this void that the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) – a Jordanian “NGO” founded by Queen Noor in 1965 – stepped during the early 1990s. Recognizing the value of the natural landscape surrounding Dana as well as the need to address the social forces that had coaxed away its human population, the organization set out to reconcile the two in a manner that would both protect the environment and be economically sustainable. Incorporated into the recently established Dana Nature Reserve, the village soon began to see utilities implemented, and construction began for the project that would grant its ailing character new life.

As midday approaches, the haze begins to lift, and you can begin to see that the village isn’t so deserted after all. The hum of a truck starting its engine resonates in the distance, and scattered power lines – courtesy of the RSCN – suddenly materialize on the horizon. Tracing them to their points of origin, you realize that not all of the buildings here are crumbling. These, in fact, have recently been reinforced with concrete; freshly planted spring flowers drape from boxes on their rooftops. The dirt path now leads forward determinedly to their doorways, and with a glimpse back, your eyes follow the road back up the mountain, in the direction of the King’s Highway, and from there onward to the rest of Jordan. Dana’s not all so isolated anymore.

Skirting the path as it tramples downward are the surviving cottages, each with its own personality. “WEEL COME” is scrawled in sideways Latin letters on the wooden door of a front entranceway. A man dressed in traditional dishdasha and kuffiyeh sits on a stoop as a young girl strolls by in front of him, parading in a bright orange sweater and light blue pants. The man looks up and smiles. “Welcome to Dana,” he says.
Outside of the village, the mountainside yields to sloping meadows and lush thickets of fruit trees covered in vines. In a country that is largely characterized by sandy deserts, Dana appears unbelievably green. The same springs that attracted settlement here thousands of years ago still flow, and the gradual installation of concrete channels has spread the precious water out effectively enough to feed acres of light agriculture, which itself eventually fades unnoticed back into the wilderness of the gorge.

Even from its edge, clues abound as to the incredible diversity of the reserve’s wildlife. An unbridled horse and its foal graze on a nearby terrace, and to the side of the narrow footpath a box turtle peeks out from its spotted shell. According to the RSCN, the reserve houses more than 1,000 different plant and animal species, including many that are endangered and a few that are unique to this site only. Dana is also dotted with trails, commissioned in recent years by the RSCN, designed to appeal to hikers and naturalists of all levels of age and experience. They have begun to pour into this remote mountain location from all corners of the globe.

It is precisely these people to whom the prominent, renovated stone building to the side of the dirt path caters itself. A cooperative project among residents, the Dana Inn is little more than a courtyard lined with stone-built rooms with four or five bunk beds each. However, it is well-maintained and is staffed by extraordinarily friendly young men from the village. The RSCN has its own guesthouse further up the road, part of a complex that not only houses visitors but also employs local women in the production of high-quality traditional handicrafts, which are then sold on-site to support the continued operation of the reserve.

Villagers are returning to Dana, and its atmosphere is rekindling. At night, young men from the village gather together on the roof of the Dana Inn with their guests—a combined crowd of Israeli hikers and American students—and expertly sway to the percussion of the tablah and the plucking twang of the ‘oud. One man stands up, and another follows. Eco-tourism is slowly moving this struggling mountain village toward economic revitalization, an appreciation of its own value and a recognizable name on the map. And the people of Dana are ready to dance to that.

Michael Turner is a senior International Studies major from Elizabeth City, NC. He received the Michael L. and Matthew L. Boyatt Award for study abroad and attended the School for International Training Program in Amman, Jordan.

“In a country that is largely characterized by sandy deserts, Dana appears unbelievably green.”
When I informed my friends and family that I would travel alone to Sub-Saharan Africa, they were terrified, called me crazy, and begged me not to go. However, I had an instinct that this was not an opportunity to forgo. In the end, it turned out to be one of the most defining experiences of my life.

This summer in Ghana, I worked with a local non-profit called the Association of People for Practice Life Education (APPLE), a group that predominantly works in villages in the Volta Region of Ghana. Here, there are various small fisheries notorious for child trafficking; thousands are reported to be enslaved along the shores of Lake Volta. The children receive no pay or education and have no option of returning home. They work grueling hours under the inhumane conditions of beatings, rape and hunger. Through awareness efforts, the empowerment of families and the negotiation of the freedom of enslaved children, APPLE works to prevent the disturbingly frequent occurrence of child slavery in this region.

My first work with APPLE involved traveling to the shelter where the most recently rescued children were temporarily housed. APPLE travels to local villages,
tracks down parents who have sent their kids off to work, and compiles a list of these children’s names. APPLE then travels to Yeji, the fishing community where most of the children are trafficked, and demands that the listed children be handed over. Then the children are essentially freed and are taken to live in a shelter, where they are treated and reintegrated. They have endured years of abuse. Nearly all have been regularly beaten, some raped. Many were treated for sicknesses, suffering from water-borne illnesses such as bilharzia, worms and skin disease. These children are normally between the ages of five and 16, and some have spent more than half of their young lives working as slaves. Slaves. Take a moment to let the word sink in and to realize its entire meeting. Then consider that this is the year 2007. When I arrived, the children had been at the shelter for two months and were to be returned to their families soon. You could not fathom what these children had been through. They are quick to smile, join in on a game of soccer, or laugh and poke endless fun at me for butchering their language in my horrible attempts to speak a bit of Ewe. Incredibly, somehow, they have retained a child-like spirit.

APPLE, the children and I then traveled to the home villages to reunite the children with their families. For some, the separation had lasted more than five years. The reunion is a precious moment to witness, but it was hard to believe that these parents, now suffocating their long-lost children with kisses, were the same parents responsible for their children’s pain. These parents handed over their children in exchange for money or goods. Some were handed over for free. Essentially, the children were sold and betrayed by their own families.

Stepping into the villages was like stepping back in time: no electricity and no plumbing, with the majority of houses made of hard mud and straw. It was virtually untouched by modern technology and was extremely poverty-stricken. The people are aware that there is a life beyond their village, a life of opportunity, convenience and modernity. The villagers are the first to tell you that they feel left behind. They tell you that they are stuck in the villages and that they are suffering.
Entering into the small huts, the initial judgements of “How could you do that to your own child? How could you sell them?” were put into perspective. No parents wanted this for their children, but the burden of their poverty gave them no choice. For them it was simple: “The masters can feed them, while I cannot.” It is devastating that these parents were driven to such desperate measures.

Traveling to Yeji, where so many children are trafficked and enslaved, was sickening. I could feel its tragedy in my bones and taste the bitter inhumanity in my mouth. The extent to which a child’s life was devalued was shocking.

Leaving Ghana, I was angry. I was flying back to a nation where this isn’t even a concern, lest a priority. After all, isn’t the dark chapter of slavery supposed to be closed and at rest? Somehow I was among it, an eyewitness to the fact that slavery still lives in epidemic proportions, spreading in Ghana and across the world at unprecedented rates. Leaving Ghana, I was determined. I realized just how real this issue is and how urgent it is that something is done to stop it.

If we have the knowledge, then we have a responsibility. Where would we be today if the abolitionists in the U.S. hadn’t spoken up?

With APPLE, I have found an organization I trust, respect, believe in and want to support. The Campus Y group Free the Slaves will hold a fundraising campaign for APPLE this year. If you want to be involved in any way, please contact me at alharper@email.unc.edu.

Angela Harper is a senior from Raleigh, NC. Her majors are International Studies and Sociology.
The grenade hit my house in 1992 and made the first significant mark of war on my life.

I was sitting in the kitchen with my grandmother on that particularly cold October afternoon. The forbidden world outside our window displayed a gray day with a light, monotonous drizzle, like a painting I wished I could jump into. The fear of snipers and shelling kept us within the walls of our red brick house.

My parents weren’t home that day. My mom and dad did the unthinkable each morning and each evening. They arose before dawn and snuck out into the dark to get to the hospital where they worked. The darkness served as a cloak to keep them out of sight. When the sun set in the evening, they crept back home, like raccoons searching for shelter.

Before the reality of the war hit me, I thought hiding in the basement, eating meals out of cans and not bathing for weeks were just parts of life. I remember how frustrated I’d get with my mom when she refused to let me out into the yard to play. The fact that we didn’t have electricity didn’t faze me at all; in the dark, it was more like a game. My sister and I would pour wax from the candles on our hands and peel it off, seeing which one could take more pain. When my mom kissed my dad as though it were their last kiss every time he went out for our weekly supply of water, I thought it was just because they loved each other that much.

As we sat in the kitchen, we heard a squeal, like a sharp and piercing siren. The grenade had been fired. My grandmother grabbed me by the wrist, and we ran toward the basement as my grandfather appeared out of the next room, also frantic with my sister in his arms. Slamming the door behind us and throwing ourselves down the cement stairs, we felt an incredible quake as our house shuddered.

I couldn’t hear my grandfather yelp in pain because of the deafening explosion above. Then there was silence.

By Jasmina Nogo
They call them “war roses,” the red splotches that scatter the pavement of the city in places where grenades exploded less than 15 years ago. Locals of Sarajevo don’t even notice the remnants anymore. They’re too numb to think about the past and too disillusioned to think about the future.

I was seven years old when my family left the beautiful city of Sarajevo in an escape convoy heading to neighboring Croatia. It was 1994 and the former Yugoslavia had already been at war for more than two years. The city I was born in, resting in the palm of the country’s hand, was under heavy artillery siege. From Croatia we fled to the United States as refugees and have been here ever since.

The first time I saw post-war Sarajevo was the summer of 2005. My sister and I were the first in our family to go back. The four weeks we stayed that summer passed in a flurry, and I remember it like a distant dream. The days passed faster than my thoughts. Before I knew it, I was in the United States again.

Two summers later, I was en route to Sarajevo again, this time alone and contracted to a two-month internship. I found a job with an organization whose goal was to reconnect Bosnian war Diaspora with their city and their roots through local volunteer work.

I discovered something this summer that I was completely unaware of as the child who visited Sarajevo two years ago. First-handedly I learned that the people who never left Bosnia felt resentment toward those who did. There’s still a silent war between the haves and the have-nots, the land of opportunities and the land of stagnation, the external and the internal. Because my family escaped and pursued a different life in a different country, we’re seen as traitors and abandoners in the eyes of our own.

I was in a place I thought would feel more like home than the U.S., but everywhere I turned I received cold stares and contentious conversations. Sarajevo might still look like the city I left—ubiquitous mosques dotting the streets, Turkish cobblestone paths, the smell of strong coffee at every corner, and the smoke of meat cooking in the old city, but it carries a different meaning these days. There’s a dark cloud over the city that’s not lifting any time soon.

Aside from the pervasive resentment, there’s also widespread apathy and hopelessness. Bosnians are still of the helpless war mentality that prevents them from doing anything to help themselves. It’s as though they are sitting around, drinking their espresso, smoking their umpteenth cigarette of the day and waiting for improvement to fall from the sky. Change inevitably will have to come from within, yet this is something no one there seems to realize.

The organization I worked for this summer, The Mozaik Foundation, is the only domestic non-profit sustainable development organization in all of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Everything else comes from outside—USAID, World Bank, UNDP and the OSCE all have headquarters in Bosnia and are working to help the country redevelop. What’s going to happen when these companies start to pull out and when the future of Bosnia lies in the hands of one small nonprofit?

While in Sarajevo this summer, I attended a convention organized by the city called World Encounters of B&H Diaspora. It was a week of lectures, discussions and project workshops that focused on the problems in Bosnia and ways to improve the state. More than 60 native Bosnians from all over the world attended the convention. The success of the effort made me realize that maybe the future of Bosnia lies in the hands of its ambitious Diaspora, who actually haven’t abandoned their country.

“...maybe the future of Bosnia lies in the hands of its Diaspora, who actually haven’t abandoned their country.”

Although the “war roses” always will remain on the sidewalks to remind us of what happened in the early ’90s, there will come a day when a Bosnian family will sit down for afternoon coffee and not talk of war.
Sarajevska Raja

As the waves crash at my feet
And the sun pierces through the clouds warming my salty face
I feel nausea in my stomach and uneasiness in my head
The last two months feel like a clouded dream I had many moons ago
I'm far from Sarajevo and even farther from home
I have a knot in my stomach that I'm persistently trying to ignore
My thoughts are nagging and harder to control
Each moment that passes
And each wave that crashes against my feet
There's no letting go and moving forth
Without facing the stark history which cannot be forgotten
Every rock on this beach holds its own story of war
Every tree in the forest whispers a sad song
I sit and I listen, hoping the answer lies in the wind
Hoping it'll caress my face and gently croon in my ear
I think of my Sarajevo and try hard to imagine it
I close my eyes and paint a picture of the magical town
A typical evening in Bascarsija
The smells
The sounds
The familiar songs blasting from the cafes
The people walking up and down the streets
The Sarajevska raja
History continues to write itself
With every new wave that comes
With every new sunset that retreats over the mosques
Sarajevo's roses continue to bloom

August 2007

Jasmina Nego is a junior majoring in International Studies and Journalism and minoring in Creative Writing. She was awarded a ReConnect stipend for a summer internship in her hometown of Sarajevo, Bosnia.
I look out the bus window. The land is flat and stretches on and on to the horizon where there are finally a couple of small mountains looming over this rocky desert landscape. The sky is huge. There are wispy clouds today, which is rare. For the past week, the sky has been nothing but an intensely blue solid expanse. I can see another bus coming toward us heading in the opposite direction. The bus is kicking up a cloud of dust, and I can see the cloud stretching for at least half a mile in its wake. Does it ever rain here?

- Excerpt from field notes: ‘Bus to Alfarcito’ July 19, 2007

My summer field research led me to this dry, rocky region of Northwestern Argentina known as the Puna. In the province of Jujuy, on the cusp of the border with Bolivia, the Puna has been inhabited by the Kolla Indians for generations. Many Argentines actually joke that their country’s territory ends at the limit with Jujuy, as this province is dominated by indigenous tradition and culture and bears little resemblance to the rest of Argentina, which is so heavily infused with European influence.

The Kollas have historically faced a depressed economic situation, and they continue to receive little relief in the form of government assistance. For the Puna communities, there is little option other than to raise llama or goat as a primary source of income. The only alternative is to work in one of the region’s many silver or lead mines. Since the opening of the mines in the late 1980s, however, hundreds of families have been left husbandless and fatherless. Women are unable to earn a living wage themselves, as childrearing and homemaking consume their daily activities (the average number of children per family is six). A recent trend, therefore, has been the migration of the Puna’s young people to the city of Abra Pampa, the region’s commercial center, in search of work and a more progressive lifestyle. Unfortunately, what they typically encounter is a city whose lack of social services and viable economic options only creates a growing sector of urban poverty.

Fed up with the way the Kollas have been marginalized by the Argentine government and desperate to create a more dignified life for her people, one woman decided to make a difference. Rosario Quispe, wife of a miner and mother of seven, together with nine other women, formed La Asociación de las Warmis Sayasunquo (the Association of Perseverant Women). The Warmis began as a healthcare organization in 1995 to bring in doctors from outside the region and provide for the large number of women with uterine cancer. The novelty and success of their grassroots health clinic soon drew the attention of the media as well as that of Stephen Schmidheiny, president of the Avina Foundation based in Switzerland. He traveled to Jujuy to survey the region and assess the needs of the Puna communities. He asked these communities what they wanted and needed the most. “For our people to live a dignified life, have dignified work, and to maintain our own identity and culture, to be slaves to no one,” they responded.

Then and there, Avina decided to fund an experiment in microcredit lending in hopes of expanding the work of the Warmis in order to improve the economic livelihood of the region.

For the Warmis, Avina’s funding was a complete and utter miracle; from what I observed, they certainly have taken full advantage of their good fortune. Following financial and microcredit training from Avina, the Warmis, led by Rosario, opened community banks (what they refer to as fondos comunales or community funds) in numerous indigenous communities throughout the Puna. For many families, taking out a microloan and starting a small business has meant an alternative to working in the mines or migrating to the city. Over the past 10 years, the Warmis association has extended its outreach. Today it offers five different types of microcredit
loans to more than 3,600 individuals in 79 indigenous communities.

Last summer, my brother, a friend and I traveled to Jujuy from Buenos Aires to meet these visionary women and to learn about the inner workings of the their organization. The central office is located in Abra Pampa, and I spent several days there conducting interviews with the founders. Coincidentally, a weeklong protest took place in Abra Pampa during my stay, and I witnessed the urban poverty the Kolkas experience there. The citizens suffer from unaffordable housing with poor living conditions, expensive electricity and gas, and unsafe drinking water. At sun up, the central plaza filled with men, women and children of all ages shouting and protesting with flags, banners and musical instruments; they remained until well past sundown attempting to negotiate with the government officials who had come from the capital of the province. One could not help but to feel the hopelessness of the situation, as the government held firm in continuing to offer only minimal assistance plans that have done little in the past to alleviate financial burdens.

The work that Las Warmis are doing in the Puna communities offers a stark contrast to the conditions in Abra Pampa. Community members throughout the region use microloans from their community funds to pull themselves out of poverty; many no longer have to rely on the government to provide assistance. A typical use of the loans for many individuals has been the establishment of traditional artesian weaving businesses. Indigenous llama wool blankets, shawls, ponchos, and mittens are being produced by the truckload, and the Warmis provide further support to these enterprises by marketing and distributing these products to tourist centers throughout Argentina.

I wanted to witness one of these communities firsthand. Mirta in the Warmis central office told me about a particularly interesting success story in the town of Alfarcito, where a young man runs a trout-raising enterprise. Trout? In the middle of the desert? “You’ve got to be kidding me,” I thought. I then learned that this enterprise is the result of a special type of loan the Warmis offer. Periodically, they hold year-long training sessions in business and accounting for young people who come to Abra Pampa from the Puna communities. Upon completion of the training, students are asked to come up with “non-traditional” business plans for their communities, and the best ideas are rewarded with significant long-term loans. The Warmis realize that the Puna economy could become saturated if everyone participates in the same line of work. Therefore, this “non-traditional” enterprise initiative truly is ingenious, as it serves to foster creative thinking and the establishment of alternative forms of income generation beyond the traditional methods of weaving and raising animals.

After a rickety four-hour bus ride through the Puna, we arrived in San Francisco de Alfarcito at 9 p.m. An entire town comprised of a mere 25 families, Alfarcito has one school, one church, a community center and a handful of houses made of sticks and mud. It is situated in a tiny valley that boasts the only vegetation for miles, providing a limited amount of grazing land for the town’s goats and llamas. Upon arrival, we immediately felt an overwhelming sense of welcome from the entire community. Evidently it is rare for outsiders to visit Alfarcito; yet when they do, the town treats them as the honored guests of the entire community. Only seconds after the bus pulled away, we ran into Luis, an old man on the street, who immediately showed us to a little cabaña where we could stay. Less than an hour later, a young man showed up on our doorstep to offer us dinner and coffee. Earlier, I had expressed to Luis my interest in the trout business, so the next person to arrive at our door was Armando, the owner of the business himself.

Quietly humble, with kind eyes and a peaceful demeanor, Armando was a joy to talk to. Upon hearing his story of how the Warmis completely changed his life, it was all I could do to keep from throwing my arms around him out of empathy and happiness for his success. “I was never fortunate enough to have a father,” he recounted, “but now because of the trout enterprise, I can finally help my mother take care of my five younger siblings, and we have everything we need right here in Alfarcito.”

The next day, we were taken to the trout pools and were shown how Armando runs his business. With the loan, he has hired an engineer who specializes in trout-raising to come from the capital and help with the business. Together with the engineer, Armando and his family built three separate pools in which to raise the trout alongside the larger community reservoir, and they maintain a constant water
flow through the pools 24 hours a day. They raise the trout for at least eight to 10 months and then remove the fish according to the orders they get from restaurants and hotels in the capital. “We clean and filet the trout according to each order,” Armando’s younger brother told us. “With the loan, we were also able to buy refrigerated trucks in order to transport the fish properly.”

Armando’s story is both fascinating and inspiring. He currently has contracts with several restaurants that order his trout on a consistent basis, and he has made enough profit in the first two years of the business to already begin paying back his loan in small installments. He told us how important it is to him that he has experienced such success thus far. “I am determined to succeed because it is possible to make a living here and that Alfarcito is a strong community. Living a dignified life here is possible. I think they really believe that now.”

Shepard Daniel is a senior Morehead Scholar from Charlotte, N.C. majoring in International Studies.

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Singular singulareña
Soy mujercita alfareña
Desde el campo voy llegando
Y en mis espaldas la leña

De arriba vengo, soy de la puna
Cariña y luna, flor de amanecí
En mis alforjas traigo esperanzas
Sueños y penas palomíferas.

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A single solitary lady
I am a little woman from alfarcito
From the countryside I am arriving,
and on my back, I carry the firewood.

From higher up I come, I am from the puna
Little face and moon, amanecí flower
In my saddlebags I bring hopes,
dreams and my quechua hardships.
Here are just some of the scholarships available at Carolina. Visit global.unc.edu for more information.

**PROGRAM:** Burch Fellows Program  
**DESCRIPTION:** For students with self-designed off-campus experiences pursuing a passionate interest.  
**REQUIREMENTS:** Full-time undergrads who have completed at least 1 but not more than 6 semesters. Must have 2 semesters at Carolina following the Fellowship experience.  
**STIPEND:** up to $6,000  
**DEADLINE:** February 16  
**MORE INFO:** www.burchfellows.unc.edu

**PROGRAM:** Class of 1938 Summer Study Abroad Fellowships  
**DESCRIPTION:** For students who need support to pursue independent career or personal projects outside the U.S.  
**REQUIREMENTS:** Sophomores, juniors or seniors planning on 5th year of coursework with financial need. Must be a U.S. citizen.  
**STIPEND:** $3,500  
**DEADLINE:** February 25  
**MORE INFO:** oiss.unc.edu/services_programs/1938/

**PROGRAM:** C.V. Starr International Scholarship  
**DESCRIPTION:** For students who have strong financial need to undertake an independent internationally-oriented experience during the summer.  
**REQUIREMENTS:** Undergrad students must be eligible for Pell Grants; grad students must NOT be U.S. citizens or permanent residents and have demonstrated financial need.  
**STIPEND:** up to $5,000  
**DEADLINE:** March 20  
**MORE INFO:** gi.unc.edu/funding/cv-starr-ugrad.html

**PROGRAM:** Frances L. Phillips Travel Scholarship  
**DESCRIPTION:** For students with individual, self-designed/directed international travel experiences for 2 to 6 months.  
**REQUIREMENTS:** Juniors/Seniors in the College of Arts & Sciences with financial need. Must be a U.S. citizen and have attended high school in N.C.  
**STIPEND:** up to $7,000  
**DEADLINE:** October 15  
**MORE INFO:** www.unc.edu/depts/travel/

**PROGRAM:** Mahtma Ghandhi Fellowship  
**DESCRIPTION:** For students to pursue independent summer projects that benefit South Asians.  
**REQUIREMENTS:** Full-time undergrad or grad students.  
**STIPEND:** up to $3,000

**PROGRAM:** Study Abroad Office Scholarship Opportunities  
**DESCRIPTION:** For students to participate in study abroad programs approved by the College of Arts & Sciences.  
**REQUIREMENTS:** Full-time undergrad students accepted in a study abroad program. Specific requirements vary.  
**STIPEND:** Varies  
**DEADLINE:** Early Feb. for summer/fall programs; late Sept. for spring programs.  
**MORE INFO:** studyabroad.unc.edu

**PROGRAM:** Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowships  
**DESCRIPTION:** For students to carry out research, mentored scholarship or creative performance projects during the summer.  
**REQUIREMENTS:** Full-time undergrad student in good academic standing. Projects must last at least 9 weeks (min. 20 hrs/wk).  
**STIPEND:** $3,000  
**DEADLINE:** March 1  
**MORE INFO:** www.unc.edu/depts/our/summer_research.html

**PROGRAM:** Travel Fellowship Fund  
**DESCRIPTION:** For students pursuing personal enrichment through travel experiences outside the U.S. for 2 to 6 months.  
**REQUIREMENTS:** Full-time upperclassmen in good standing with at least 51 semester hours (min 27 at UNC-CH). Must be a U.S. citizen. Travel itinerary must include at least 4 days in London. Cannot be used for participation in formal study abroad programs.  
**STIPEND:** up to $4,000  
**DEADLINE:** March 30  
**MORE INFO:** studentaffairs.unc.edu/what_we_do/travel.html

**PROGRAM:** UNC Entrepreneurial Public Service Fellowships  
**DESCRIPTION:** For students carrying out summer projects that employ innovative, sustainable approaches to complex social needs.  
**REQUIREMENTS:** Returning full-time undergrad or grad students. Projects must have an UNC faculty advisor and include a community partner.  
**STIPEND:** up to $3,000  
**DEADLINE:** February 1  
**MORE INFO:** www.unc.edu/cps/fellowships/epsfellowships/

**PROGRAM:** Undergraduate international Studies Fellowship  
**DESCRIPTION:** For students from underrepresented groups pursuing international travel or study.  
**REQUIREMENTS:** Full-time second-term freshmen, sophomores and juniors from underrepresented groups.  
**STIPEND:** $2,500  
**DEADLINE:** March 30  
**MORE INFO:** Call the Stone Center at 919-962-9001.

**PROGRAM:** Honors Thesis Research Grants  
**DESCRIPTION:** For students carrying out research for senior honors thesis projects.  
**REQUIREMENTS:** Undergraduate students performing research for senior honors theses.  
**STIPEND:** up to $1,000  
**DEADLINE:** Varies by department.  
**MORE INFO:** www.honors.unc.edu/thesis_grants.html

**PROGRAM:** Phillips Ambassadors Program  
**DESCRIPTION:** For students participating in summer or semester study abroad programs in Asia approved by the College of Arts & Sciences.  
**REQUIREMENTS:** Scholarships are awarded on the basis of academic merit, with consideration for financial need.  
**STIPEND:** up to $5,000  
**DEADLINE:** Early Feb. for summer/fall programs; late Sept. for spring.  
**MORE INFO:** studyabroad.unc.edu/phillips

**PROGRAM:** CGI International Internship Awards  
**DESCRIPTION:** For students who wish to implement summer internationally-focused internships.  
**REQUIREMENTS:** Sophomore, junior or senior students returning to UNC. Graduate students pursuing a master’s degree.  
**STIPEND:** up to $4,000  
**DEADLINE:** March 20  
**MORE INFO:** gi.unc.edu/funding/internship-award-ugrad.html

**PROGRAM:** Carolina Undergraduate Health Fellowships  
**DESCRIPTION:** For undergraduates to create self-designed health-related projects abroad.  
**REQUIREMENTS:** Full-time returning undergrad students. Projects must have a health-related focus.  
**STIPEND:** up to $4,000  
**DEADLINE:** March 20  
**MORE INFO:** gi.unc.edu/funding/health-fellowship.html
UNC students travel all across the globe. The numbers below reflect participation in the Fall '06 and Spring/Summer '07 Study Abroad programs.

**SOURCE:** Mark Nielsen, Assistant Director for Information Systems in the Study Abroad Office

*Includes El Salvador, Nicaragua and Guatemala*

**BY THE NUMBERS**

Map colors correspond to the bar chart below.

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Map colors correspond to the bar chart below.
1,348 STUDENTS 62 COUNTRIES
Gathering in their village of Dar es Salaam, a group of Tanzanian children enjoy their orange sodas.

Photo by Meredith Martindale
ENGLAND
Population: 60,776,238
Capital: London
Language: English