A letter from the editor

After a truly life-changing summer in Copenhagen, Denmark, I found myself a victim of the infamous travel bug. I returned to the lovely, but ever so familiar Chapel Hill this fall and realized that I wanted nothing more than to get on the next plane to somewhere, to anywhere. And as we all know, Chapel Hill is just about as good as it gets. Yet I had an unquenchable thirst and newfound passion for exploring the world.

I reached out to Carolina Passport in an effort to connect with other student travelers, as I knew this was an amazing outlet to share stories and experiences abroad. In a fortunate sequence of events I found myself as managing editor and have had the opportunity to review the following accounts of amazing adventures.

I hope you each enjoy this issue of Carolina Passport as much as we enjoyed creating it. I cannot wait to spend the next six semesters getting a glimpse into every corner of the earth through all of your words, my courageous, adventurous, fellow victims of the wonderful illness that is the travel bug.

Anna Weddington
Managing Editor
La Vida Habana

BY ELLEN CURRIN

The following are excerpts of memoirs that I wrote each month while studying abroad in Cuba. Individually, they provide a glimpse into a different aspect of life in Cuba. Holistically, they tell the story of my growth and experience while on the island.

February 2013: Historia de Los Estados Unidos

In case you have ever wondered what U.S. history looks like from a Cuban perspective, here are a few priceless quotes (translated word-for-word) that I pulled from my textbook, Estados Unidos de Raiz, by Nestor Garcia Iturbe, during an afternoon of studying:

“In 1522, Lucas Vázquez visited the coast of the Carolinas, looking for gold, but all he did was massacre the local Indians.”

“The author of the document was Thomas Jefferson, and the principle theme it established was that ‘All men are created equal...', a principle that in these days is not even respected in the United States.”

“It was very interesting that in those moments the U.S. reclaimed a robust sum of money for the damage caused by the Spanish blockade; which is an important precursor to the damages caused to Cuba by the U.S.’s blockade.”

Well...I guess you can’t accuse the Cubans for not being honest, even if it is a little blunt. Right?

**And here is my disclaimer:** Despite what these quotes might make you think, my class at the university is NOT full of anti-Yankee propaganda. The class is well-balanced, and my professor is fair and factual. The textbook obviously shows some bias, but the history it teaches is not too far off from what I learned in 11th grade. In fact, the sassy attitude that occasionally leaks through the pages reminds me a bit of my high school history teacher.

March 2013: A Weekend in Cuba: Priceless

It would not be hard to drop a lot of cash on resorts and luxuries (rum and cigars, mostly...) here in Cuba. But thanks to help from the government, things in Cuba are almost free if you know where to look for them. Education, food, housing, transportation and entertainment are just a few to name. Below is mi cuenta for the weekend, and you can decide for yourself how I am doing with my budget.

**Beach:** Saturday was a beautiful day, and since I only live 25 kilometers from some of Havana’s low-grade beach resorts, I hit the playa! The air-conditioned tourist bus we took to Playa Santa Maria cost us $2.50 CUC, but the taxi that brought us to the bus terminal in Central Havana only cost 10 pesos ($0.40), which was the standard fare for any location within the city. The beach was free, the crystal water was free, the live son music was free and the impromptu salsa lesson I received from a random Cuban man was also free. The sunscreen, however, might cost me.

**Yoga:** I found a Sunday morning yoga class just around the corner from my residency. It is a miracle I actually found it, because I almost turned around after walking in the doors and finding myself in a Holocaust museum. It turns out that the class is held in a synagoge, and the front of the synagoge is used to display Jewish history. It was a weird way to start a yoga class, but after two hours of stretching and sweating, I felt pretty good, regardless. We even ended the class with a bit of chanting. An entire month of yoga only costs 10 pesos.

**Afro-Cuban Street Festival:** Live music really is on every corner in Havana. I walked through a barrio in Havana Central with a heavy African influence, where an all-out dance party was happening in the...
street. Despite the children pestering me for pesos, I managed to keep this part of my day entirely gratis.

April 2013:
Freedom and Ice Cream

Ice cream – along with rice, eggs and ham – is a staple in the Cuban diet. It is rare to see someone walking down the sidewalk without a cone (or two) in hand. And there is not a more popular place for ice cream than Coppelia, which, despite being conveniently located along my route from El Costillar to the university, I only visited for the first time last night. The heladeria occupies an entire city park, yet there are rarely empty tables, and depending on the time of day, the line can wrap all the way down the sidewalk to the street. There are never more than two or three flavor choices that rotate every few days, but an entire platter of ice cream costs only 5 pesos (about 20 cents). At such a price, Cubans can afford to try out any and every flavor they want.

I visited Coppelia, coincidentally, just a few hours after sharing in a great discussion with a friend about freedom. I say “coincidentally” because Francisco used ice cream to illustrate his perspective. He posed a question to me, which I now pose to you:
Where is there more liberty? In a society where there are endless amounts of ice cream flavors to choose from, but only 20 percent of the people can afford to try them? Or in a society where there are never more than two flavors, but at a price where every single citizen can eat as much as they want?

At the time, I thought the question was only hypothetical, but after visiting Coppelia, I am beginning to understand him a bit more.

May 2013:
Cogs in Cuba

If you give me a world map, I can point out everywhere that holds a piece of me, places where I can return and feel like I am home. I don’t think Cuba will ever be one of those places. It has been a place of growth, challenge, learning and experimenting, but it is not home. Honestly, I am okay with that because sometimes it hurts to be scattered around the globe. Perhaps I dropped a seed somewhere along the way, and when I look back I will find that the island soil has nurtured it up into something important without me realizing. But I don’t think so. Only time will tell, I guess.

Ellen Currin is a senior geography major from Raleigh. She received the Morehead-Cain Scholarship to travel to Cuba.

In Cuba, live music is as common (and as necessary) as air. This bass waits in the sand for its owner to come back from a break.

PHOTOS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

1 // Mark Russell; Galapagos Islands. 2 // Eden Sipperly; Ganji Temple, Thailand. 3 // Ishrat Zarin Alam; Amritsar, India. 4 // Morgan Burke; London, England. 5 // Mark Russell; Galapagos Islands.
The early morning sunrise over the Himalayas in Nagrakot, Nepal, behind colorful prayer flags.

BY CASEY CROW

“Write about your experience,” you say, “in a thousand words or less,” and I just laugh a little because eight months, nine countries, five continents and seven host families do not fit so well in a thousand words or less. I suppose I could tell you about waking up each morning in Patan Durbar Square in Kathmandu, Nepal, risking my life and the next you are in a restaurant in an ancient five-story house in Nepal, making momos and stuffing them into a pocket in your shirt, and the next you are in a courtroom as a Mapuche man was convicted under an unjust terrorism law, his head held high too, willing to sacrifice everything for his people. I would have to tell you about that sad afternoon in May when I climbed into a taxi in Santiago with 21 students waving goodbye outside our youth hostel, and how I accepted the hug of a complete stranger in the seat next to me, leaving tear stains on her sweater. I could describe that sinking feeling of getting off the plane in Colorado, with all those treasured stamps in my passport, a mess of trilingual vocab and a wallet full of confused currencies, knowing this was going to be the most incredible season of my entire life. Truth is, love lives in between words, between lesson plans, between moments. It is in between the inside jokes and photo albums, the ticket stubs and worn out jeans, and the realizations that snuck up on me unexpectedly—realizations of transformation and growth that occurred while I was grappling with things I couldn’t change—except, as it turns out, myself.

I could tell you all of that, but 1,000 words would only scratch the surface.

Casey Crow is a senior political science and global studies major from Pagosa Springs, Colo. She received the McLendon Scholarship and the School for International Training Scholarship to travel to Chile, Jordan and Nepal.
I believe there is something inherently spiritual about every trip I have ever taken to Asia. The experience of tackling the unknown and stepping into a completely alien environment is cleansing. My time spent in Shanghai this past summer affirmed this belief and challenged my impressions on what it means to travel.

Having studied Chinese language and culture for two years, I entered China with an arrogant attitude about how much I knew about the people I would meet and the lifestyle I would be experiencing. However, the best adventures happen when everything you know is flipped on its head. Asia does this better than any other place in the world. I assumed my basic understanding of the language, politics and history would automatically help me sync with the culture of Shanghai while I spent two months teaching English and traveling the country. I wasn’t nearly prepared for the vibrant mix of modern and historical traditions that swept me off my feet and into an entirely new world.

Shanghai is simultaneously old and rapidly modernizing. It’s neither completely Chinese, nor completely overrun by foreign influence. There’s an odd tension within the city between the desire for more tradition and the international pressure to become more modern. From the cobblestone streets in the French Concession district to the fish and bird markets of the Old City, my image of Shanghai was constantly challenged. In the morning, I could stroll through a variety of Western shops on East Nanjing Road, and by the afternoon, I could be experimenting with new types of tea in the one-hundred-year-old Huxinting Teahouse. There was always another antiques market to haggle in, a new street to explore and a strange delicacy to taste.

For me, the beauty of Shanghai is that it is so hard to define. From locals to expats, everyone in Shanghai offers a new perspective on what it means to live in the city. One year ago, this lack of an identity would have driven me crazy. I have spent the majority of my life depending on textbook definitions and concrete, black-and-white answers. The media offers me a vision of China as an economic giant; my professors teach me that China has a homogenous culture. My impression is rather that Shanghai is a mosaic of the different countries and influences that have been woven into the fabric of the city for over a hundred years.

My experience in Shanghai has taught me to question what I think I know about people and cultures around the world. As a traveler, my image of a place is limited to my personal experiences. I undoubtedly only saw a fraction of what Shanghai has to offer, but my travels through the city have brought me a step closer to seeing the real China. As I turn my focus back to my studies here at UNC, my lasting impressions of the city will be of the streets filled with red lanterns, the neon lights of Pudong and the Pearl Tower and all of the many colors that make up one of the most vibrant cities in the world.

Tiffany Cox is a junior from Winston-Salem. She is studying global studies and public policy and traveled to China.
The Amazing, Irreplaceable and Surprisingly Affordable Experience

By Nolan Cain

Michael Penny met his wife, Caroline, in 2002 when he studied abroad at UNC, far away from his home university in Lancaster, England. Now he works for UNC, and Penny tries his best to encourage UNC students to have a similar life-changing experience in the country of their choice.

“I’m worried about students, in general, (being able to study) abroad,” says Penny, assistant director of international and professional programs for the School of Journalism and Mass Communication. “There are so many options. There is something for everyone.”

There are a lot of options. UNC offers more than 300 programs in more than 70 countries. One can study youth culture, literacy and media in Nicaragua or travel to Moscow for an intensive Russian language and culture program. Whether a student speaks four languages fluently or can’t quite figure out what bonjour means, there is a program for him or her, and the secret that everybody within UNC’s study abroad offices wants you to know: It is affordable.

For some out-of-state students at UNC, it can even save them money. Katrina Hauprich, a junior linguistics and public policy major, says she actually spent less money paying for her program in Seville, Spain, than she would have spent had she stayed at UNC. Hauprich, who is from Burtonsville, Maryland, says she spends roughly $14,000 a semester on tuition at UNC, but only spent $9,500 for her time in Spain.

Hauprich used these saving to go on quite the adventure. She heard the bells of Big Ben toll, ascended the slope of the Eiffel Tower and walked the hallowed grounds of the Roman Coliseum.

“It was amazing,” Hauprich says, almost dumbfounded that there is a question about whether she enjoyed herself. “I would absolutely do it again!”

How is it so affordable?
The study abroad offices in UNC’s schools are home to variety of directors and advisors who all have one thing in common: they all studied abroad themselves. They understand the opportunity better than anybody and want nothing more than for every student to be able to spend a semester or summer in another country during their time in college.

“We’re not in this to make money,” says Emily Martin. She is the Northern Europe and Oceania programs director in the Study Abroad Office in the College of Arts and Sciences and studied abroad in Marseille, France, when she was a student at N.C. State University. “We’re here to send students abroad.”

The director of Continental Europe programs, Lynn Neddo, agrees with Martin. They both want as many students as possible to travel, and they do everything they can to help. Neddo explains that there are different ways for students to study abroad, and each option comes with a different price tag. There are faculty-led programs, which are run by UNC and involve a UNC faculty member accompanying a group of students abroad. The price tag for these is set by directors like Martin and Neddo, and they say they do everything they can to keep the costs as low as they can.

“We try to make those programs as cost-friendly to the students as possible,” Neddo explains. “We want passionately for our students to go abroad.”

Other study abroad programs include exchanges and direct enrollment, which involve students attending a university abroad. The exchange option is cost-effective for in-state students, because they simply pay UNC tuition and are enrolled in the university abroad. Direct enrollment in a university abroad can be cost-effective for out-of-state students, because they pay the foreign school’s tuition, which in some cases is less than out-of-state tuition at UNC.

There are also third-party provider programs that are managed by other schools or organizations. These programs are sometimes slightly more expensive, and UNC has no say in the price, but sometime discounts or scholarships are available for the programs.

Another important note is the availability of scholarships and financial aid for students who want to travel abroad. Most financial aid and packages transfer for any student who decides to go abroad, and nearly every scholarship does as well. Neddo emphasizes the availability of even more scholarships for those going abroad. The UNC Global website has dozens of listings of scholarships for students who want to travel, and the Study Abroad Office offers many scholarships for participants.

An Experience Worth the Risk?
Many students are afraid to leave the friendly confines of home to study abroad. They worry they will miss important classes or that friends will move on. Students fear that they won’t be able to find new friends abroad or that they will become homesick. While some of these fears are justified, many are misguided.

Julia Woods, a senior sociology and communications major from Summit, New Jersey, says she was worried at first when she went to Florence, Italy.

“I only knew one person in the program, and I got pinkeye the first week,” Woods says laughing. She recounts a story about landing in Florence and trying to communicate with a police officer who spoke no English or Spanish, Woods’ second language, and could not help her find her house. While her trip may have started with a few bumps, Woods quickly settled in and made friends. “Some of those people are still my best friends.”

Woods should know a thing or two about lifelong friends made coming study abroad. Her parents met in Barcelona back in 1978 when they were studying abroad. While Woods may not have found a significant other, she did go on quite the adventure.

“I loved Paris. I loved Prague. I loved Strasbourg,” Woods says in response to a question about her favorite city. She goes on and on about the different places she visited. “I went snowshoeing in Slovenia, and we watched a dog race, and I have never been so cold,” Woods says, laughing about the many adventures on which she went.

Woods and Hauprich agree that study abroad is an amazing experience. They both say that not a single person on their programs had a bad time. It is telling that very few students have a negative study abroad experience. In fact, many of them come back and dedicate their time and energy to encouraging others to go abroad. Woods and Hauprich say they inspired their friends to go abroad. For them and other students, it represents one of the affordable, life-changing experiences that are only available during college.

Perhaps, Woods says it best. “It’s worth it. It’s a risk worth taking.”
Confessions of a LOUD American

The sun rose peacefully over the city skyline every morning.

BY KRISTEN CHUNG

I’ll admit it. I’m a loud American. I did not realize my loud tendencies until studying abroad this summer. I traveled to Singapore with 24 other UNC students as a part of the Carolina Southeast Asia Summer Program (SEAS). Whenever the group was out in public, I keenly felt eyes turn toward us as we passed. For some reason, the feeling was especially bad on the subway. Initially, I reasoned that the stares were because we were Americans. It was because we were loud, noisy Americans. In retrospect, Singaporeans were generally quiet on the train and in public. Most of them played games or watched movies on their phones or just sat in peaceful solemnity. Even the Singaporean children were quiet and well behaved on the train. At times, the MRT was packed with people standing shoulder to shoulder and still maintained an impressive degree of order and peacefulness. For a city of over 5 million, Singapore was surprisingly quiet and calm. Even the ambulances, lacking sirens, were surprisingly quiet and well behaved on the train. After alighting the train and walking out to the streets, I spent the early weekend morning exploring Bugis Junction, a mall and outdoor shopping area downtown. I got there before 10 a.m. and watched the outdoor market slowly come to life. Vendors laid out their wares, some of them steaming dresses and shirts in order to get rid of every wrinkle. The food stalls began preparing food with sweet and savory smells enough to tempt my taste buds. With less energy directed to talking, I found that I could really immerse myself in the sights, sounds and smells of Singapore.

I really enjoyed taking the time to really observe and explore the city. Afterward, I quietly slipped onto the subway with a new appreciation of the country and what it meant to be a loud American.

Kristen Chung is a sophomore from Cary. She is studying business and journalism and traveled to Singapore.

Singapore’s Chinatown is clean and colorful.

After realizing the error of my ways, I resolved to make a conscious effort to listen and observe. I tried to take in everything we saw, heard and ate. As a traveler to a foreign country, I found it hard not to be intrigued by everything, whether it be the food, the weather or the scenery. Typically, my fascination with experiencing another country was accompanied by a vocalization of my excitement. We were loud.

I am embarrassed to admit that I initially helped to perpetuate the loud American stereotype. Of course, I had never intended to be rude or offend anyone. I spent the months leading up to the trip reading guidebooks and searching the Internet on the culture of Singapore. I was warned about the fines for littering and dressing for the hot, humid weather but never about the dangers of being a noisy visitor.

After realizing the error of my ways, I resolved to make a conscious effort to listen and observe. I liken this experience to taking a class. Generally, if you avoid talking during lecture, you’ll learn a lot more. It’s the same with experiencing another country. I made a point to listen, pay more attention to surroundings and take note of all the intricacies of the city around me.

One day, I took an early train by myself out to the center of the city. I sat on the shiny metallic benches of the subway and simply observed what I saw without being noisy or loud. While quietly sitting on the train, I noticed a certain precision in the methodical beauty of people filing on and off.

I watched as young people gave up their seats for the elderly. I watched as apartment buildings rose into view as they passed by the window.

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I travel down memory lane, remembering all of the amazing people I had the pleasure of befriending and the life-changing events I experienced over a two-month period in the Pearl of Africa. So what did I learn? What do I have to share with those who are curious about my recent journey to Busia, Uganda?

It was an adventure for sure! Not your typical animal safari or mountain hike kind of adventure, but an adventure that was bold, exciting and sometimes risky in its own way. The locals in Busia referred to me as “Lost” because I always seemed to disappear for hours at a time. I enjoyed going on mini adventures in the community, meeting new people and immersing myself in a new culture. “You’ve been lost,” people would say to me, stunned at how busy I was all the time.

However, I was not only called the “Lost Girl” within the community, but I also became the “Lost Girl.” The name suited me.

I was always on my feet, literally on my feet, sometimes even barefoot, covering one inch of ground at a time. I loved feeling the earth beneath me and seeing dirt cover every crevice of my feet. I can still remember what it feels like: the warm, rough ground beneath me, as supportive and grounded as the people it sustains.

Every time I would roam throughout Busia, all of my senses were involved throughout the journey. Picture this scene: women carrying woven baskets on their heads filled with bananas, cassava or maize; children singing in Luganda as they skipped rope or played hopscotch; herds of goats and cows dominating the roads occasionally with their owners; and a chain of small businesses or wooden stands supplying air time (credit for making long-distance calls), food and drinks, clothing and many other items. It was truly a wonder to behold!

My thoughts race with faces, names and colors in my mind, seeing zeal in the faces of the young and wisdom in those of the elders. There were times when I would close my eyes briefly while riding alongside a boda boda driver on his bicycle, listening to all of the sounds throughout town before reaching my destination: a child’s laughter, pans sizzling with hot oil frying chapatti, men shouting in Luganda, Reggae rhythms blasting from the many shops I zipped by, cars revving their engines, the many horns of motorbikes beeping, the bleating goats and many other sounds that attracted my attention.

I remember taking excursions to Nangwe Market, a large marketplace in Nangwe Village, watching young children dance and shake in front of me, beckoning me to join in their little circle of fun. So of course I would shimmy and shake to the rhythmic beats blasting from a nearby shop, sharing giggles with the kids at my silly dance moves.

Time spent in Uganda taught me that a simple act of kindness goes a long way and that people always try to find a way to connect with others. I experienced the warmest of hugs from people I had just met, with an extra squeeze as if to say, “I am here for you.” Many people in the community generously offered me a bite to eat, a drink to quench my thirst, a nearby seat to rest from my long walk into town and a smile that was not only welcoming, but also an invitation to a lifelong friendship.

I always picture myself returning back to the vibrant and bustling community I was so accustomed to partaking in everyday, sharing stories and laughs with my new friends in town. My journey to Uganda was one that can never be forgotten or taken for granted. Whenever I begin to miss my second home, I close my eyes, see the faces that are etched in my mind, and hear their voices greeting me, saying “Mukwano gwange! Oli otya?” “My friend! How are you?”

Jessica Douglas is a May 2014 graduate from Cary. She studied biology and traveled to Uganda.
Cherry blossoms encircle Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park, a unicyclist performs nearby.

As long as this life lasts, this life,
...Give me back myself, memorial with a haunting poem:
left, so I walked around outside to
An incredible juxtaposition – the black
sakura, I could hear crows calling out.

Amidst all of the beautiful white
water; the river carrying
drifted down into the
leaves as chirping birds interrupted my

My tears fell gently on the dried
leaves as chirping birds interrupted my solitude. I dried my eyes, wondering again how everything before me could exist. Cherry trees with full sakura, families having picnics in the shade, the laughter of a couple sitting on a bench – all a mirage in a desert of desolation.

I rejoined the illusion, strolling along the riverside beneath the sakura. A daughter stood under a tree, being coached by her mother to smile. Snow-white cherry blossoms drifted down into the water; the river carrying the petals downstream.

With its audio tour guides
replenished, the museum welcomed me. My audio guide, a pleasant female companion, explained certain pieces’ significance, filling in gaps that the signpost left.

Mr. Yoshito Matsushige took the
only existing photographs of the atomic blast. A victim himself, he could only muster energy to take 24 shots, of which seven came out correctly.

Mr. Yoshito Matsushige took the
only ground-zero photographic
evidence. Burned bodies, lit by the unyielding August sunlight. I looked away, as if the picture had preserved some of the atomic fire.

Climbing the stairs, more information on nuclear weapons and destruction coated the walls.

Pictures of decaying brick walls from a bombed-out Hiroshima filled the windows, replacing the plaster walls. A quick right-hand turn, and I see two girls with their skin melting off their bodies, clothes burned to tatters and a sickening orange light casted from the depths of hell on their bodies.

"Help me...I'm so thirsty, can I have some..."

I have lived a thousand lives in the museum. I felt exhausted.

I descended the steps and walked towards the cenotaph, a saddle-shaped memorial to honor the dead. A small moat surrounded the flowers marking the cenotaph. A pair of elderly gentlemen studied the memorial as well, and I projected on them the image of Hiroshima survivors remembering their lost friends and family.

The Atomic Bomb Memorial is a grass-covered mound, with a stupefying view of Hiroshima survivors remembering their lost friends and family.

The Atomic Bomb Memorial is a grass-covered mound, with a stupefying view of Hiroshima survivors remembering their last words calling out for water.

"Help me...I'm so thirsty, can I have some..."

I crossed the river to get closer, every step taking me further into the past. Blown away bricks littered the area, a tall fence kept trespassers at bay. The building, arguably one of the most well-designed buildings in Hiroshima from before World War II, seemed even more stunning in light of the devastation.

Each new angle of the building provided a new perspective. Trees obscured some parts, and the lighting revealed other parts.

Moving around the perimeter, I came across a memorial slab. Flowers graced the concrete in front, as well as open water bottles.

I froze. The water, I realized, was left as a tribute to those that had died never getting the substance they desperately cried out for.

"Help me...I'm so thirsty, can I have some..."

I gasped; the tears followed.

Austin Root is a senior economics and political science major from Morganville, N.J. He studied in Taiwan.

JAPAN
Population: 127.1 million
Capital: Tokyo
Language: Japanese
In the spring of 2014 when I was trying to find a study abroad program, I had one requirement: the program had to fit into my limited time slot. As a pre-med student, I thought that I had to strenuously plan not only my classes, but also every part of my college journey.

Having viewed going to Greece as another thing to cross off the list, I was not at all prepared for actually living in Athens and studying the Mediterranean diet, which involved a lot of community-based learning.

Everyday in Athens I found new bakeries, diners and amazing street foods that were critical in helping me become a vegetarian, which was something that I was trying to accomplish since the spring. Within a few days, I noticed that Athens doesn’t actually have a bedtime, and the coffee shops that I read in during the daytime actually have a bedtime in the late 20s. Anna had just finished law school, and the other two, Nikos and George, were already lawyers. When I was introducing myself, I remember having such a hard time explaining to them that, even though I lived in America, I didn’t quite consider myself American, because I was actually born in Nepal. They were so fascinated by that idea, and I had to explain to them in many ways as to why I never identified myself as a part of America. Over the course of the night, I ended up learning so much about myself. When I first came to Athens, I felt very different from Anna, Nikos and George, especially in relation to certain cultural issues like religion. However, when discussing international politics, Nikos said, “Why should we even consider someone’s race, religion or gender when it comes down to human rights? I believe that people are people everywhere.” I was so shocked to hear someone so precisely verbalize my beliefs. I had to ask him if he was a humanist – someone who believed in the importance of human goodness rather than supernatural forces – and he nodded yes, and so did Anna and George. This was the first time in my life that I happened to find myself around other people who not only understood my line of reasoning but also agreed with it.

The last week of my study abroad program was set in Koroni, the Mediterranean food capital of the world. In all honesty, I had no desire to leave Athens, but of course I had to go. In Koroni, my class of 23, our amazing teacher, and Nadia, our temporary Greek mother, stayed in a small bed and breakfast owned by a lovely Greek family. As expected, Koroni was far less touristic than Greece, so it allowed for me to learn more about the rural Greek way of life, and, as a matter of fact, my most memorable experience from studying abroad was actually in a small town named Glyfada north of Koroni.

My class was visiting Glyfada to study more about how food, including olive oil, a staple of the Mediterranean diet, used to be produced. To everyone’s surprise, this lovely Greek town decided to throw us a village feast, where they taught us the history behind their food and how it was still made. As the sun set, festivities broke out including local wine, delicious home cooked foods and traditional music and dancers. The locals joined in to dance and pulled each of us into the line of dancers. While moving to the beat of the music, the locals tried their best to teach us the proper footsteps and movement as more and more delicious local wine was served.

I never imagined that I would obtain a greater sense of self by going to Greece, nor did I think that I would learn the value of a community by traveling halfway across the world. Therefore, I’m even more grateful for the memories that I have and the friends that I made. My action-packed month in Greece was far more meaningful then checking another item off the bucket list. As I have learned sometimes the best things in life happen when they are not planned out.
I walk along the street of Tirgu-Mures, Romania, and think of the Romanian word for nurse, *asistenta*, literally meaning “assistant.” I learned this on my first day volunteering at the emergency department in the city (along with a few other necessary phrases like “only English,” “thank you” and “bathroom”) and felt myself becoming affronted with the idea of being called an “assistant.” I don’t think any proud nursing student at UNC would boast about being a doctor’s assistant. I ponder this odd title as I amble along the uneven pavement of the sidewalk towards the hospital.

The city breathes around me. Never have I witnessed such a conglomeration of the historic and the contemporary coexisting. Wrought iron fences surround villas with milky stained glass windows covered in ivy, cracked open to let in the breeze and let out the beats of the Romanian music station within. Content patrons munch on Hungarian chimney cakes (a delicious fried pastry that is a hollow roll covered in cinnamon, coconut or nuts) outside of pastry stores on each street corner in the shade of crumbling hotel buildings. Discordant bells toll on the hour from numerous Eastern Orthodox Church towers, the church facades resplendent with Romanian flags fluttering from the bell tower windows. The scene of the flag protectively swaying in the breeze over the church and graveyard captures the pride of the Romanian people—knowing one’s culture has been rooted in religion, history and family lineage since the inception of the city.

I have traveled to the Transylvanian region of Romania in Eastern Europe, the region right in the center of the country. The area is rich with Carpathian mountain scenery, rolling farmlands, Hungarians and Romanians living in harmony and Dracula legends to lure in blood-thirsty tourists. I myself had to appreciate the birthplace of Dracula in the town of Sighisoara and the castle that inspired Bram Stoker’s novel Dracula called Bran Castle near Brasov. The hospital where I spend two months of my summer volunteering is in the busy little city of Tirgu-Mures, complete with one mall, two movie theaters, thousands of bakeries and fresh produce stands, no
I volunteered my time here each shift. The entrance to the emergency department around the backside of the hospital.

Romania is part of the European Union, nearby European countries. Although Romania due to the appealing wages in terms of wages and quality of life, Romania still has much to catch up and return to the life of a nursing student. I have learned so many new skills and gained so many new friends, nurses and fellow volunteers, that I believe it may be difficult to return to the life of a nursing student back in HIPAA-protected North Carolina. The friendly patients have laughed along with me each time when I try to explain in halting Romanian or Hungarian that I only speak English. The nurses have welcomed me into every new opportunity I can get my hands on: starting IV lines, giving medications, touring the emergency helicopter, CPR and getting yelled at by doctors.

I stroll along the sidewalk with more grass than pavement and avoid cars that are hurriedly driving onto the sidewalk to park. I think of the more grass than pavement and avoid cars that are hurriedly driving onto the sidewalk to park. I think of the two months in the emergency department, I have learned so many new skills and gained so many new friends, nurses and fellow volunteers, that I believe it may be difficult to return to the life of a nursing student back in HIPAA-protected North Carolina. The friendly patients have laughed along with me each time when I try to explain in halting Romanian or Hungarian that I only speak English. The nurses have welcomed me into every new opportunity I can get my hands on: starting IV lines, giving medications, touring the emergency helicopter, CPR and getting yelled at by doctors.

I walk along my usual route toward the hospital for a 12-hour shift of volunteering. The course of the two months in the emergency department, I have learned so many new skills and gained so many new friends, nurses and fellow volunteers, that I believe it may be difficult to return to the life of a nursing student back in HIPAA-protected North Carolina. The friendly patients have laughed along with me each time when I try to explain in halting Romanian or Hungarian that I only speak English. The nurses have welcomed me into every new opportunity I can get my hands on: starting IV lines, giving medications, touring the emergency helicopter, CPR and getting yelled at by doctors.

I immediately started sightseeing. I tried to explain in halting Romanian or Hungarian that I only speak English. The nurses have welcomed me into every new opportunity I can get my hands on: starting IV lines, giving medications, touring the emergency helicopter, CPR and getting yelled at by doctors.

The first time I climbed Signal Hill, I was not preparing to see anything awe-inspiring. In fact, I didn’t even stop at the top, for I was on the way up Lion’s Head, and Signal Hill meant nothing to me, simply a means to a
sounding spectacular end. Less than a week later, however, I found myself on the peak again. As it turned out, the twenty-minute walk from my front door to Signal Hill’s peak was much more realistically repeatable in a busy schedule than any of the other longer hikes. This time, I felt an air of familiarity from the peak, having already been there once, and it came with a strange sense of comfort. I followed my usual routine, taking in the panoramic views and attempting to memorize it all. The short hike back down, however, felt far from usual. This time, the image in my head was a little less blurry, a little less vague and a little less forgettable.

Less than three days later, I was itching to be on top of Signal Hill once more; I longed to refresh that ever-fading image in my mind. So again I climbed, and found the same spot as I had three days prior – on a cement rooftop with the towering Lion’s Head mountain to my left, the white, sandy beach below me and the sun setting red over the Atlantic Ocean. I began to make the short trek up Signal Hill two or three times a week, constantly refreshing my mental image of the scene. All three clichéd ideas of beauty sat in front of my eyes several times a week, yet I began to realize that these landmarks were not the things drawing me up there every week; rather, it was the small pizza parlor with the green awning I longed to see once more, or the specific way the rocks fell along the coastline. The large mountains and setting sun remained gorgeous, but I was entranced by the details. For once, I could ignore the grandiose displays of natural wonder and focus on the minutiae that became increasingly seared into my memory. Signal Hill allowed me to realize an unforgettable thing about beauty; I had long understood beauty as an awe-inspiring first encounter, a sensory overload that leaves you struggling to take it all in at once. With Signal Hill, however, the beauty was in the familiarity, the beauty was in the details, the beauty was in finding something I loved and latching onto it with all my heart.

Thinking back, I doubt there is anybody on planet Earth that watched the sunset on Signal Hill as many times as I did over my four months in Cape Town, and for that I am beyond thankful. A hill, not a mountain or a wonder of the world, but a small slope defined my Cape Town experience. Everyday views of beaches, mountains and sunsets allowed me to discern a beauty much deeper than that. I discovered that this twenty-minute walk was not a means to an end, but a journey in and of itself, and its beautiful view, details and all, remains locked in my mind today, stubbornly refusing to fade.

Griffin Lerner is a senior history major from Silver Spring, Md. He received the Dunlevie Honors Undergraduate Research Award and the David Anthony Kusa Undergraduate Research Award and studied in South Africa.
Leaving the Island

BY BRADLEY ALLF

Past male sea lions pacing the length of their respective beach stretches—eight barks, snort, turn, eight barks, snort, turn; past the buoys dozing in moonlight ripples; past the noises of Puerto Baquerizo Moreno: the sleep sounds of open-windowed casitas, the van driving around blaring the Spanish Hail Mary over and over, and the discotheque alternating between salsa and American hip hop; past the last crusty fishing boat dreamily rocking, tugging at its tether; past a lone marine iguana eyeing me as it slithers back to its volcano rocks from a midnight algae snack; past even the breakers roiling the ocean at the edge of the bay to dark water where I can see the island for what it is—shrouded in mist, an accumulation of dreams washed up and floating in salt, submerging when the mapmakers sailed by.

Bradley Allf is a senior from Gastonia, N.C. He is studying biology with minors in creative writing and environmental science and studies. He studied in Ecuador.

Top: A marine iguana looks out to sea. When disturbed, these lizards spray salt from their nostrils. Early explorers killed hundreds of them because they mistakenly believed the spray was poisonous.
Bottom left: A whitetip reef shark swims through divers’ bubbles near an offshore island called Kicker Rock. Illegal shark finning has been a problem in Galápagos in the past.
Bottom right: A sign marks the boundary of a recreational beach area on Santa Cruz Island.

ECUADOR
Population: 15.7 million
Capital: Quito
Language: Spanish

PHOTOS FROM AROUND THE WORLD
1 // Katie King; Poas Volcano, Costa Rica. 2 // Eden Sipperly; Cambodia. 3 // Morgan Burke; London, England.
4 // Constance Chia; Paris, France.
A STROLL IN SPOLETO

BY FRANCES CAYTON

A white dress pinned to a clothesline gimmers in the early morning light, drying by the gentle pulse of the wind rather than by the metal confines of a dryer. A slug marches along the side of the stucco walls. But no one is bothered. After all, this is the slug’s home more than it is my own. I am merely a passerby, living here, in a rural Italian convent, for a month before returning across the Atlantic.

It is because of the impermanence of my time here that I memorize every detail of my walk to breakfast. I gaze above the convent wall and see the peaks of the Apennine Mountains, realizing that these mountains have watched Saint Francis en route to Assisi and Dante en route to Roma. These mountains are more cultured than I can ever hope to be, yet I can accept inferiority in this moment because who am I but just another traveler? I do not need to even speak in my American accent to be identified as a foreigner. After all, I am always on the go, walking at a pace far above the routine Italian amble as I make my way to a WiFi café or the nearest gelateria. Though I stumble my way through my English-Italian dictionary (and also stumble my way up the many hills), I find that my foreign-ness isn’t a bad thing. In fact, it is welcomed with open arms.

This is Spoleto.

A medieval hillside town located in the middle of Italy’s Umbria region, Spoleto is two hours south of Firenze and two hours north of Roma. Though a mere 40,000 residents, the town is proud of its history, as the home of the Lombard Duchy in the middle ages, and of its future, as the home of il Festival dei Due Monde (the Festival of the Two Worlds), an arts festival held in conjunction with a counterpart held in Charleston, South Carolina. The town is small, but rich in heritage and vibrant in culture. I am here to work on my photography, to capture the story of Spoleto with my Nikon D3100. I find that while my camera urges me to operate in bursts of 1/120ths of a second, in Spoleto this will not suffice. Those snapshots and moments, while maybe lasting fractions of a second, must be excerpted from longer conversations and interactions. Ercielio, the local fruit vendor, lends a smile after we purchase black cherries and plums. And Pietro, a local teenager, poses in the afternoon sunlight after walking us through town. Seeking photos at a fourth century church at the local cemetery, I first meander through the rows of elaborate tombs before finally entering the building and taking a moment to meditate. Only then do I pull out my camera. Each of these moments force me out of my comfort zone with photography, teaching me to immerse myself in the story and setting of my photo before pressing the trigger. Grasping that I have the power to mold and shape other’s perception of reality through how I frame and focus my photos, I realize that I can only hope to capture Spoleto on film if I first give Spoleto the time to imprint itself on me.

So I move slowly. I enjoy each sun-dried dress, slow-moving slug, radio mass, and morning nun-bun. I take these experiences and I wrap them up in my memories with care, knowing that I must force myself to return to this leisurely mindset when I am later bogged down with schoolwork and activities in the fall. Because while I may be working my way across campus from one event to the next, walking at a breakneck speed, my Spoleto counterparts, half a world away, are unhurriedly strolling across town, reminding me to save a moment to stop and take it all in.

Frances Cayton is a freshman public policy major from Raleigh. She studied in Italy.

I can accept inferiority in this moment because who am I but just another traveler?
There, people walk slower, probably because the heat won't allow the near-sprint pace we're accustomed to here, and I found myself waking up at 7 a.m. on my 27-hour journey back to the other side of the globe and that the world really can be quite small when you make an effort to keep in touch with those who are important to you. Maybe most importantly, I found that wherever I ended up during my semester abroad in Perth, the furthest city in the world from my hometown, people were all still people, and we're all a bit more similar than I had originally thought.

Emily Hackeling is a senior from Wilmington. She is a journalism major and a medical anthropology and religious studies minor. She studied in Australia.
CAROLINA answered and was introduced to Don and his friend Paul. I naively pushed the button to buzz them in and was greeted by two exasperated travelers. Apparently, they had arrived in the city the night before and hadn’t been able to get in contact with my host. Luckily for them, I wasn’t too afraid, and what seemed like an hour walking around the same square in Montpellier, we found our host’s apartment. We weren’t sure what to expect of him, but we were pleasantly surprised when he invited us to hang out with his friends. They were all enthusiastic to meet Americans and even attempted to speak English with us. Considering that we had been having difficulty meeting the students at our school, it was nice to meet people who were so open to new visitors. In the end, we had a great night playing games and running around town, and it became one of the first of many memorable trips thanks to couchsurfing.

BY DANIELLE ROGERS

The last thing I wanted to do was sit inside a stranger’s apartment. However, given the rainy weather, there didn’t seem to be another option. Let’s just say I was feeling rather unenthused about being in the exciting, “sunny” city of Barcelona that my host mom had raved about. Earlier, I had spent several hours being in the exciting, “sunny” city of Barcelona that my host mom had raved about. Earlier, I had spent several hours being in the exciting, “sunny” city of Barcelona that my host mom had raved about. Earlier, I had spent several hours being in the exciting, “sunny” city of Barcelona that my host mom had raved about. Earlier, I had spent several hours being in the exciting, “sunny” city of Barcelona that my host mom had raved about. Earlier, I had spent several hours being in the exciting, “sunny” city of Barcelona that my host mom had raved about. Earlier, I had spent several hours being in the exciting, “sunny” city of Barcelona that my host mom had raved about. Earlier, I had spent several hours being in the exciting, “sunny” city of Barcelona that my host mom had raved about.

I was captivated by this view through an arched doorway in a small village. I enjoyed being able to escape the urban city of Lyon and go on trips through the countryside. I took this photo on my way to class as I walked by the Rhône, the bigger of the two rivers in the city. One of my favorite things to do was walk along the river, where many people jogged, skateboarded and ate and drank on boat restaurants. Nevertheless, I admit was literally lost in translation. Consequently, we found ourselves waiting in some gas station to escape the chilly weather, attempting to make conversation in French with the other passengers. Our driver laughed when we told him that this was our first Covoiturage trip. Apparently, he had driven many passengers and never had this problem – just our luck! An hour later, we were back on the road, yet this time the wheels of our car weren’t moving at all; the mechanic had hitched our car onto the back of his towing truck, and I guess he thought it was perfectly safe to leave us in the car. Despite our seemingly unfortunate and hazardous situation, I couldn’t help but laugh about it. I’ll admit I thought it was actually kind of fun. Finally, after a taxi ride and what seemed like an hour walking around the same square in Montpellier, we found our host’s apartment. We weren’t sure what to expect of him, but we were pleasantly surprised when he invited us to hang out with his friends. They were all enthusiastic to meet Americans and even attempted to speak English with us. Considering that we had been having difficulty meeting the students at our school, it was nice to meet people who were so open to new visitors. In the end, we had a great night playing games and running around town, and it became one of the first of many memorable trips thanks to couchsurfing.

In retrospect, many of my most memorable experiences I had were a result of couchsurfing and Covoiturage. I met some of the most generous, welcoming and genuinely good people thanks to a little bit of trust and courage. However, I’m not telling these stories to convince everyone to couchsurf, though I would highly recommend it to all travelers. If anything, these experiences remind me that many people will exit my life just as soon as they enter, and I may never run into them again. While this idea may seem upsetting, I think it gives good reason for to be a little nostalgic every once in a while. Though I may never see Paul, Don or my friends in Montpellier, looking back on my experiences will continue to bring a smile to my face. In fact, I often find myself feeling nostalgic about my adventures with all of my other great hosts and friends I met while traveling.

As a recent graduate of UNC, my newfound status as an alumna is a perfect reminder of how quickly time flies. Older family members all told me that their college years were the best but went by so quickly, proving that time must actually “fly.” This was especially true when I studied abroad. Now that I’m back in Chapel Hill, the only way I can go back to Lyon (well, of course, without hopping on a plane) is by embracing a little nostalgia. I think everyone should look back on past experiences every once in a while, whether abroad or even at UNC. Our experiences shape who we are; why forget them? Well, see you later, Lyon. I’ll keep on traveling back to Europe, in my mind.

Danielle Rogers is a senior from Chapel Hill. She is a psychology major and French minor. She studied in France.

A Note on Nostalgia

I was captivated by this view through an arched doorway in a small village. I enjoyed being able to escape the urban city of Lyon and go on trips through the countryside.
Here are just some of the scholarships available at Carolina. Visit global.unc.edu for more information.

**Scholarships**

*Think you can’t afford an international experience? Think again.*

**Program:** Burch Fellows Program  
**Description:** For students with self-designed off-campus experiences pursuing a passionate interest.  
**Requirements:** Full-time undergraduates who have completed at least 1 but not more than 6 semesters at UNC. Must have 2 semesters at UNC after the Burch experience.  
**Deadline:** Up to $5,000  
**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. Must be a U.S. citizen.  
**Stipend:** $5,000  
**Deadline:** February 16  
**More Info:** oiss.unc.edu/programs/class38/

**Program:** Frances L. Phillips Travel Scholarship  
**Description:** For students with individual, self-designed/directed international travel experiences of 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 $5,000  
**Deadline:** Early March  
**More Info:** cgi.unc.edu/awards/cv-star

**Program:** CGI International Internship Awards  
**Description:** For students who wish to implement a summer internationally focused internship.  
**Requirements:** Full-time undergraduate students returning to UNC. Graduate students pursuing a master’s degree.  
**Stipend:** $1,500 - $4,000  
**Deadline:** TBD (check website)  
**More Info:** cgi.unc.edu/awards/internship

**Program:** Carolina Undergraduate Health Fellowships  
**Description:** For undergraduates to create a self-designed health-related project anywhere in the world.  
**Requirements:** Full-time returning undergraduate students. Projects must have a health-related focus. Preference for students with financial need.  
**Stipend:** $1,000 - $3,000  
**Deadline:** TBD (check website)  
**More Info:** cgi.unc.edu/awards/cuhf

**Program:** Office of Global Health Funding Opportunities  
**Description:** For undergraduates to pursue international/global health internships.  
**Requirements:** Varies  
**Deadline:** Varies  
**More Info:** sph.unc.edu/globalhealth/ggf-internships-and-funding/

See global.unc.edu for more information.
TRAVELING HEELS

The Study Abroad Office in the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill provides opportunities for students to travel all across the world. The map shows the diverse travel experiences of students. This does not include international programs offered by other units.

For Year Long 2014, Fall 2014, Spring 2014, Summer 2014, SH Year 2014

1,249 Students • 53 Countries

BY THE NUMBERS

UNC students travel all across the globe. The numbers on the map reflect participation in the Year Long 2014, Fall 2014, Spring 2014, Summer 2014, and SH Year 2014 Study Abroad programs.

- Over 100 students
- 30-100 students
- 10-29 students
- Fewer than 10 students

SOURCE: Mark Nielsen, Information Systems Director, Study Abroad Office
The afternoon sunlight illuminates the Buddhist Gangaramaya Temple in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Photo by Alison Domonoske.