

Salamanca Journal

A Preface: This is the first of my weekly emails about my experience in Salamanca, Spain this summer. My official title is Rotary International Cultural Ambassadorial Scholar. In Spain, this becomes *Embajadora de Buena Voluntad* (Ambassador of Good Will). I'm taking four hours of classes daily at the University of Salamanca – *Cursos Internacionales* (International Courses), as well as traveling to Rotary Clubs around the country to visit and give speeches. Let the adventures begin!

I'm also attaching this journal as an attachment. The attachment will have the complete journal, from start to finish; the emails themselves will have the contents of each week separately.

Wednesday, May 31 –

I arrived in Salamanca, and fell in love. For a city of 180,000, it is great for pedestrians. I absolutely love to wander around a city, not bothering with a map, and just enjoying what I find. I walked for three hours! Salamanca is a mix of Plateresque churches and an 800-year-old University interspersed with fun shops and street cafes spread around the city. The Plaza Mayor (Main Square) deserves its reputation as one of the most beautiful in Spain. My host, Noelia, is 25; the other students living in the *piso* (apartment) are Jan, a German in his late twenties who wants to teach Spanish and English, and Lavinia, a sweet Swiss girl in her early twenties. This evening, Lavinia and I hung out with her friends from Italy, Switzerland, and Brazil. In this international community, everybody speaks Spanish, and my verbal skills have already improved.

Thursday, June 1 –

I befriended two other students sitting next to me during the placement exam – Ari, 19, from Houston, and Maria, 30, from Greece – and afterward we explored the city together, including the historic University of Salamanca. Ari's parents are Argentinean Jews – besides for my brother, he's the only red-headed Jew I've ever seen! Maria is a clothing designer in Salonica. The library was the most beautiful I've ever seen – lots of old wood, books, globes, and bookshelves labeled in with the categories in Latin. Too bad the whole room is off-limits, except for a small, glass-covered space right inside the entrance. For me, a library isn't complete without the smell of old books.

In the evening, I found out that I had placed in the highest levels for all of my classes. I walked around the city with Maria, Andre (26, Thailand) and Toshi (30, Japan). We had *tapas* in the Plaza Mayor – we shared *chocolate con churros* (a crisp pastry that you dip in rich hot chocolate – highly addictive!) and I ordered *croquetas* (cheese croquettes). I went home for dinner, and then headed out to a Rotary meeting for the Salamanca club. Although I arrived unannounced, since the phone number I had was wrong, they greeted me enthusiastically, and I felt instantly welcome. The meeting lasted from nine until almost midnight, including a formal meal with steak, wine, dessert wine, coffee, cigars – it was quite an affair, compared to the shorter and more casual Rotary meetings I'd attended in Connecticut.

Fortunately, also visiting were three men from Avila who wanted to start a Rotary club there, so the meeting became a lesson on how Rotary clubs function in Spain – a great primer for me. I was impressed by how they emphasized “gestión” (effort) and not “dinero” (money). I

really like the title for “Cultural Ambassadorial Scholar” in Spanish – Embajadora de Buena Voluntad, literally, “Ambassador of Good Will.”

Friday, June 2 –

My first day of classes, and my three teachers are fabulous! Pilar teaches Advanced Spanish Language (9-11 AM). I like how she teaches by example, at times giving us the grammatical rules and at others guiding us to discover them ourselves. She skillfully answers all questions, no matter how far a field of what we’re doing. It is definitely a challenging and fast-paced class. Marta teaches Communication Practice (11-12) with spirit and good-humor. Today, we worked on pronouncing common exclamations, liking “¡Anda ya!” (Get out of here!), and “¡Buah!” (General response to an outlandish statement). Spanish is very lyrical, and we practiced adding inflection and emphasis. Libertad teaches Spanish Culture (12-1), and I appreciated how we began with the basics – cultural symbols for each of the seventeen autonomous communities and two provinces of Spain. All three teachers are good-humored, energetic, and encourage thoughtful questions.

In the afternoon, I wandered all around the city. I’ve discovered that the best way to learn a city is to take a different route every time I walk between home and school. To get to other places, I plan a general route, then try to get a little lost, occasionally asking for directions. I love to suddenly stumble on new stores, parks, and neighborhoods. This works well in Salamanca, which is relatively small and very walk-able. The central city is circular, with one side on the river, and the diameter is about a 25-minute walk. I live in the suburbs right on the edge of the city.

In the evening, Maria and I walked around the city in search of a good *tapas* bar, and ultimately ended up in Plaza Mayor, where a two-week music and arts festival was just beginning. We found a table on the edge of the packed Plaza Mayor and I ordered mushrooms. Inexplicably, they came prepared with ham. I’m learning that ham is to the Spaniards what rice is to the Chinese and cheese is to Italians – it’s just an implied ingredient in most dishes. We talked about the Jewish population in Greece. The show was a pyrotechnic feat, and the plaza packed, but we decided to find a quieter place for drinks. Luckily, we met Ari on the street and he joined us for the rest of the evening, even walking me home at the end.

Saturday, June 3 –

Finally, a lazy morning! I mulled around, took a walk for an hour around the neighborhood, and then lazed around some more. At 4, I met Ari and Maria, and we walked the length of the city, from Plaza de España in the North across the Tormes River in the South. After our two-hour walk, we enjoyed gourmet ice cream on Plaza Mayor.

Sunday, June 4 –

A day trip to Avila with Ari and Maria. We caught the 8:30 train to Avila. The *Murallas* (city walls), constructed in the 11th Century, provided great views of the Cathedral and surrounding countryside. The streets were packed with people in their finest, because every church (and thus every citizen of Avila) was celebrating the First Communion. We quietly observed a couple of services. We were ready to head back by 1, but the train station was closed until 5, so we passed the time sipping coffee in a café and playing cards in the park.

Monday, June 5, 2006 –

This morning, Francisco Javier Cuenca, the Secretary of the Salamanca Rotary club and president of a Banco Santander, spent an hour trying to set up a bank account so that I could access my scholarship money and avoid the ATM fees. I love how Rotary is truly an international community – wherever I go, Rotarians are so welcoming and helpful. I spent the morning in class and the afternoon in the apartment, escaping the first of what will be only (I hope!) a three-day heat wave. I also helped Vashti and Jackie, two new girls from Texas who moved in today to the apartment, to orient to the city and Spain.

I went to the meeting of the Salamanca-Plaza Mayor Rotary club, and had a fabulous time. I was surprised to see women Rotarians, and learned that women have always been members of Rotary since the first clubs in Spain, although some clubs remain all or mostly male. I really liked the dynamic of this club – very welcoming, and more casual in dress and demeanor. They also politely corrected some of my manners – for example, a handshake is too formal; a kiss on each cheek is more appropriate for an intimate gathering.

The conversation over dinner was pragmatic, including a debate on where to hold a benefit for the Red Cross, The meal was a great appetizer of fried shrimp, the main course a delicious fish. I was invited to come on two excursions in the coming month – a trip to Toro, a town with famous wineries, and to a country orchard to pick cherries. They also passed out the 2006-2007 Rotary Handbook, a great guide to Rotary in Spain. After the meeting, a couple of the women Rotarians even invited me to join them for drinks at Camelot, the popular club in Salamanca! It was late, so I promised to join them another time.

Tuesday, June 6, 2006

I've learned so much from my classes already! For example, I never knew that the preterit imperfect (for those who've studied Spanish, the "-aba"/"-ia" endings, connoting a habitual action in the past tense, such as "he always took walks in the park when he was young"), can also be used to connote an indirect question in present tense, or a less formal conditional present tense.

An example of the indirect question: "¿Cómo te llamas?" means "What is your name?" However, "¿Cómo te llambas?" (literally, "What was your name?") is what you ask when you've already been introduced to somebody but forgotten their name. It means, more or less, "What's your name again?" or "What did you say your name was?" To say "¿Cómo te llamas?" a second time is strange – a mistake I've already made many times, but won't any more!

An example of the conditional use "Si hubiera algún cambio de última hora, te llamaba." This means "If there were to be a last-minute change, I would call you." The conditional form we learned in school was "te llamaría," which conveys a much more formal tone. "Te llamaba," is more informal. Another option is "Si hay algún cambio de última hora, te llamaré" ("if there is a last minute change, I will call you.") This present/future tense combination suggests that a last-minute change is likely, whereas the "llamaba" form suggests it is doubtful. I love adding nuance to my speech!

My Communication Practice class has been immensely helpful. I realized that I've been intimidated by Spaniards because their speech is naturally emphatic. I always interpreted it as impatience with my less-than-perfect speech! I also learned that Spaniards have no patience for polite phrases, like "Pass the salt, please." Instead, it's better to say "¡Dáme la sal!" ("Give me the salt!") or even "¡la sal!" ("the salt!") However, you need to say it in a polite tone, with a lilt at the end as if asking a question, which implies a polite request, not a command.

My Spanish Culture course is lots of fun. We discussed our expectations for Spain, and how they have changed during our time here. The chance to reflect on Spain was interesting. A couple of my reflections on Spanish society: The handicapped are very visible and well-respected here. This weekend, there was a huge fair in the park near my apartment, with many organizations giving information and selling crafts to raise money. It was an excellent opportunity for me to speak with representatives about volunteering this summer. I was especially excited to see that there is a group for children with language delay, and gave my phone number to the coordinator in case volunteer opportunities arise.

Other things I love about Spain: stores actually open mid-morning, close for a siesta, and remain closed on weekends. I see many multi-generational families spending time together. At night, the streets are filled with people, enjoying *tapas* and wine. It's called "*la marcha*," literally "the march," and I love the festive atmosphere.

Less ideal is the problem of "*botellón*," or groups of young people drinking in the streets on their way to clubs, so as to pay less for alcohol. It causes lots of street noise and garbage strewn around, and about a year ago it was prohibited, or rather punished with a hefty fine. It's the equivalent of American "pre-gaming," but in the streets. Also, the food is very heavy on meat, especially pork, and bread. However, there seems to be a complete aisle in any supermarket dedicated to more types of yogurt than I've ever seen, which makes me very happy!

My first week here has been a wonderful whirlwind of activity. This Friday through Tuesday, I'm taking a trip to Santiago de Compostela, seven hours to the northeast, with Ari and Maria. I feel like I've been here forever, and there are nine more weeks to go!

Salamanca Journal - Chapter 2

Hello! For those of you who didn't receive the first "installment," this is my ongoing journal of my ten-week experience in Salamanca, Spain as a Rotary International Cultural Ambassadorial Scholar. I know that the punctuation from the first email came through incorrectly; the attachment, which is cumulative, should be unchanged. I'm also attaching a few photos of Salamanca, Avila, and Santiago de Compostela. I'd love to receive an email from you – Spain is great, but I miss my family and friends at home, too!

Also, I'll be going to Rome from June 28 to July 4. I'm hoping to give a speech to a Rotary Club there. If anybody knows of any great, inexpensive hostels, or perhaps has an eccentric Italian uncle with an uninhabited mansion, let me know!

Wednesday, June 7, 2006 –

This morning, I had my first "tutéame" experience. To explain, Spanish has two forms of the word "you" – the informal "tú" and the formal "usted." Today, the President of the Salamanca-Plaza Mayor Club asked me to call him by "tú," not "usted," which indicates a more intimate, less formal relationship. I love how small changes in language convey so much about social interactions.

Today, I joined a gym near my apartment. All the machines are ancient, and I have to guess at weights (kilograms, not pounds) and speeds (km/hr, not mph). The décor is extremely strange (1980s posters of female bodybuilders in bathing suits and high top sneakers), but the location is great.

This evening, I went out for *tapas* with Maria (Greece), Barbara (Canada), Toshi (Japan) and Felicity (Great Britain). Let me explain *la marcha* (“the march,” or collective evening stroll) in Salamanca. The sun doesn’t set until around 10:30, and by 7, the streets start to fill with people, meeting friends at cafés or *tapas* bars. The food is cheap; \$3 will buy you a glass of beer and a few *tapas*. Depending on your style, you can stay at one bar or move around. This goes on until midnight, at which point people head out to clubs. With the World Cup beginning, the bars are especially full.

Thursday, June 8, 2006 –

In my Communication Practice class, we discussed the problem of immigration. My friend Beth is in Senegal this summer, working as a foreign correspondent for the New York Times. Her current topic is immigration to and repatriation from Spain. I learned that the PP (*Partido Popular*, the opposition party) blames illegal immigrants for a crime wave in the Northeast, which is really due to the growing Romanian Mafia.

We also talked about racism, including the difficulties that Chinese (called “chinaca,” a derogatory term) have in acclimating to Spanish society. I also learned that despite the last year’s legalization of gay marriage, Spaniards are generally uncomfortable with homosexuality. I’m not surprised; it’s a religious country. However, I was surprised that bisexuality is not recognized, and that gay men are more accepted than lesbians. In my experience, Americans perceive lesbianism and bisexuality as less threatening than male homosexuality; it is exploited in the media as an exciting taboo. Granted, I’ve lived in liberal environments, and Salamanca is one of the most conservative cities in Spain.

In my Spanish Culture class, we compared stereotypes of different countries. Our class is mostly Americans, as well as a few Canadians, as well as one person each from Brazil, Haiti, the Philippines, Korea, and Venezuela. The stereotypes were generally negative, except for Canada and the Philippines. The ones about America were quite harsh – overweight, self-centered, and uninterested in foreign affairs. I can see how we earn that reputation. American students here, especially girls, tend to hang out in tight packs and speak English. I’ve avoided that, probably because I’m not here as part of an organized university program. My international friends assure me that I’m the exception to this unfortunate rule, but it underscores the importance of my jobs as an Ambassador of Good Will. Stereotypes, even those that are obviously hyperbole, are deeply entrenched in every culture.

Friday, June 10, 2006 –

The six-hour bus ride to Santiago de Compostela was exhausting but beautiful. At first, around Zamora, it was mostly arid fields, with occasional walled-in country cemeteries or a few cows. As we traveled further northwest into Galicia, it got steadily steeper and greener, much like my home in New York. As we neared Santiago de Compostela, there were gorgeous views of white walled houses with red tile roofs scattered throughout lush green hillsides.

We reached our hostel, which Jose Cordon, the President of Salamanca-Plaza Mayor Rotary, had helped us find. We headed out to the old city, found a fabulous seafood restaurant, El Cayado Asado, and feasted! Santiago de Compostela is not only the destination of the Camino de Santiago, the famous pilgrimage route; it’s also one of the most famous seafood cities in Spain. Ari, Maria and I shared a bottle of local wine, fried calamari, a house salad, *pulpo a la feria* (peppered octopus, the local specialty – incredible!) and a large pan of *paella del mar* (a traditional Spanish dish of mixed seafood in rice). It was all incredibly fresh and delicious. After,

we walked along the cobblestone streets to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela, which was breathtaking at night. On the far end of the main square, *Praza de Obradoiro*, which faces the splendid façade, *Portico de la Gloria*, there was a musical group of around twelve men, playing instruments and singing *tunas compostelanas* (traditional music of Santiago). A large crowd watched and sung along. As we walked back, I noticed that every restaurant had huge displays of octopus and other seafood, including *percebes*, barnacles which are collected by divers in dangerous waters and sell for 100€ per kilogram.

Saturday, June 10, 2006 –

After a late morning start, we headed to the *Ciudad Vieja* (Old City). First stop was the Museum of Eugenio Granell, a famous Surrealist Artist of Galicia. I loved his photos of exorcisms and devil worship among an African tribe. While the topic was gruesome, the photographs had great contrast and texture. And my European History class from sophomore year helped me put Surrealism in context.

The next and main stop was the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela, full of worshippers, pilgrims, and tourists. While the ceilings were whitewashed, the central altar was pure, ornate gold. There was a passage through the main altar, which we walked through to see the gold work. Below the altar was the crypt, supposedly with Santiago's remains.

As we walked some more, we found a bakery with two delicious regional specialties – *Torta de Compostela* (a flourless almond torte) and Chocolate-covered almonds. We took a long siesta, and then headed out to the Museum of Pilgrims. It was fabulous. The presentation was effective, with a mix of statues, paintings, books and photographs from throughout the centuries. The focus, of course, was on *Santiago Apóstol* (Saint James), the patron saint of Spain and the reason why pilgrims come to Santiago. It also put the concept of pilgrimage in a global context; in the first room, a world map was filled with markers of pilgrimage cities from many religions.

Like any good museum, it helped me reflect on my own experience. There was a temporary exhibit on a Tibetan pilgrimage. The photographs of the desert landscape made me think about the six weeks I spent in Israel in the summer of 2000. After a week in Prague, we traveled by bus to Israel, metaphorically reenacting the Exodus of Holocaust refugees. Seeing the coast of Haifa from afar was my first experience as a pilgrim; somehow, I felt that I was returning home, but to a new place. After this dramatic arrival, we traveled to the desert for a week of hiking. Although we traveled from the desert to Jerusalem by bus, my first view of Jerusalem was undoubtedly more powerful after a week of walking through the desert.

I also reflected on the value of a pilgrimage – the symbolic meanings of the *hostels* along the way, the difficulty of the physical journey, the importance of the destination. I'm drawn to the idea of a physical journey as a metaphor for one's religious journey toward God, or whatever each pilgrim is seeking.

The museum also gave me a new respect for the medieval art. I have always been skeptical toward medieval religious art. Did the artists really want to make all of those icons, or were they doing it to get paid by the church? However, now I realize that they reflect a more religious time, and that they leave an enduring legacy. What will the artistic legacy of our century be? Mass advertisements? Video games? To improve cultural understanding – a goal of the Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship – it's important to understand one's cultural origins, common and unique.

At night, we enjoyed a meal at the restaurant below our hostel, cheering on Argentina as they beat the Ivory Coast in the World Cup.

Sunday, June 11, 2006 –

We took a day trip to La Coruña, an important port city of 226,000 on the Northwest tip of Spain. The one-hour bus ride from Santiago reminded me of home – lush hills and trees lining the road. Except for the white-walled, red-tiled houses, I could easily have been driving through Westchester. We went directly to the Fine Arts Museum. My favorite part was the ink printings, or *Caprichos*, by Goya. As I learned in my “Art in the Prado” class last summer, the *Caprichos* were Goya’s way of criticizing certain aspects of Spanish society, such as the cruelty of rich to poor, the ignorance of doctors and lawyers, and the limited freedom of women. For example, he would show a doctor, with a donkey’s head, by the bed of a dying patient, accompanied by a terse, cynical caption. He loved to depict a country wedding between a beautiful woman and a hideous rich man, with the evil matchmakers or greedy fathers in the background. He made ink carvings because he believed that art should be for the masses, not just the wealthy – a truly revolutionary idea. I was struck by one *capricho*, which showed an execution; it reminded me of the faceless murderers of the *Tres de Mayo*, Goya’s seminal painting in the Prado Museum. Goya’s final paintings were done on the walls of his house, and depicted witches gatherings and cannibalism. I could see how the focus of the *Caprichos* reappeared in his later works, and also in the Surrealist museum’s collection of photographs of devil worship and exorcism.

We stopped for a coffee on the *Plaza Maria Pita*, the historic town square, just as a performance was beginning on the far side of the plaza. The Royal Orchestra of Galicia was doing a performance for children about Mozart. It began with a procession of musicians, in costume, around a portion of the city, playing the marriage procession piece from the Marriage of Figaro, one of my dad’s favorite pieces. By the time they returned, many children and their parents were waiting for the performance. There was a small orchestra of around ten costumed musicians, in front of a small stage on which actors and puppets described the life and inspiration of Mozart, incorporating pieces like Papageno’s song from the Magic Flute. It was so well done, and wonderfully serendipitous that we stopped for a coffee just as they were beginning their performance.

Before heading out, we stopped at a nearby restaurant to try their specialty, *tequeños*, a twisty, cheese-filled Venezuelan pastry. Then we walked along the harbor, and on our way back discovered the house and museum of Emilia Pardo Bazán, one of my favorite authors. It was closed on Sundays, so we doubled back to the harbor and took a tram along the entire sea coast, passing the *Torre de Hercules* (Tour of Hercules), a second-century Roman lighthouse. At the end, we hopped off and chanced upon a great seafood place, with a fabulous big-screen TV to watch the Holland-Serbia World Cup game. We enjoyed a seafood salad, seafood croquettes, *tortilla española de mariscos* (a seafood version of the signature Spanish potato and onion omelet), and *pulpo a la feria* (a Galician specialty – octopus on potatoes, with olive oil and paprika).

After walking to the station, riding back to Santiago de Compostela and resting a bit, we headed across the street to watch the Portugal-Angola World Cup game. It’s so great to be in Spain, an undeniably soccer-crazed country, for the World Cup.

Monday, June 12, 2006 –

Today was an uneventful, relaxing day. We walked to the Museo do Pobo Galego (Museum of the Galician People), but the guidebook had wrong information, and it was closed. We stopped at Café Metate for their famous *chocolate con churros*. We returned to the incredible

cathedral, which definitely deserved a second visit. The front staircase is so ornate, and the façade looms so large in the sky.

We passed the rest of the day quietly – we stopped at an internet café, then I rehearsed my speech for tonight’s Rotary Club meeting. We played some cards, and then watched the Australian-Japan game. Japan scored in the first ten minutes, and then Australia scored three times in the last seven minutes! The US-Czech Republic game was less exciting. I’m looking forward to returning to Salamanca – excursions like these are fun, but exhausting and expensive!

My speech for the Santiago de Compostela Rotary Club went well. There were four Rotarians from Santiago, and two visiting Rotarians from Wiltshire, England. Therefore, I gave my speech in both English and Spanish, and also did quite a bit of translation for the visiting Rotarians! I spoke about my experience with bilingual speech-therapy, focusing on my research. I think this is an effective theme; it’s a topic I’m enthusiastic about, and it also connects my interest in Spanish with a pragmatic need in the US.

After the meeting, Ari, Maria and I headed out to a local bar, then returned home and played cards late into the night. This might sound strange, but sharing a fun evening with friends made me realize, for the first time, that college really is over, and that my friends will be spread out across the country and world. I believe that people are the most important thing we have, so much more than any castle or painting we could visit.

Tuesday, June 13, 2006 –

A full day of travel back to Salamanca, followed by a trip to the gym and a phone call from Mom. Thank goodness for the occasional uneventful day!

Wednesday, June 14, 2006 –

Today it actually rained briefly – a rare occurrence in Spain. I finally was able to withdraw money and pay rent, which was a relief. Francisco Javier Cuenca, the Secretary of the Salamanca Rotary club and president of a Banco Santander, has been extremely helpful in helping me set up an account there, so that I can withdraw money, avoiding an otherwise hefty fee. After the gym, I met Maria for an evening stroll. At night, there was a fierce thunderstorm, a rare and marvelous occurrence in Spain. And, of course, all of Spain was celebrating after the 4-0 victory in their World Cup debut.

Chapter 3

The third installment – sorry it’s been so long in coming. I’ve just been doing so many wonderful things – read on! The next chapter will be about my week in Rome!!!

Thursday, June 15, 2006 –

Maria and I went out in the evening, to our favorite bar for drinks and *tapas* and a soccer game. Nothing nicer than an evening out with a good friend, especially now that I know the names of the *tapas* that I like!

Friday, June 15, 2006 –

In my Communication Practice class, a student presentation sparked a discussion of intelligent design and evolution in American classrooms. Many of the non-Americans were surprised that it’s such a contentious issue in America. In many places, including Spain and the

Philippines, it's a non-issue; evolution is taught in science class, and intelligent design is taught in religion class. I'm learning to see the United States from a foreign perspective. We're so proud of our country's origins as a place for religious refugees, yet we are a deeply religious people.

I walked with Maria to the train station this afternoon, where she bought her tickets for her weekend excursion to Madrid. On the way back, we stopped at the university bookstore, and found a good selection of English language books. I'm reading Unamuno right now, and as much as I love his style, I need the occasional dose of English literature. Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* should be just the solution. The bookstore owner complimented me on my Spanish.

As I was walking home, I decided to stop in a local park and read. However, before I could get my book out, the old man I was sitting next to started to talk to me. We ended up talking for a half hour, about Salamanca and other Spanish cities. As I got up to leave, he and his wife invited me to have dinner at their house this Monday night, and watch the Spain-Tunisia World Cup game with them. I was so honored! I often feel like there is a gap between the citizens of Salamanca and the students who come to study here, and it's so nice to cross that gap so unexpectedly.

Saturday, June 17, 2006 –

This morning, Basha (21, Canada) and I played the tourists in Salamanca. First we stopped at the *Casa de las Conchas*, (House of the Shells) one of the famous buildings. Protruding from the walls are four hundred stone shells, the crest of its wealthy 15th century occupants. It now houses the public library and exhibitions. Around the second floor of the courtyard was a great series of *Arte Postal* (Postal Art) by Jean Louis Laurain. He basically designed stamps which imitate a famous painter or painting in a humorous way – for example, a copy of the Mona Lisa with sunglasses, and the caption “Incognito.” They were very well done, and Basha translated the French captions for me.

Next, we went to the *Museo de Salamanca*. None of the art was particularly memorable, but I appreciated its small scale and focus on artists from Salamanca. I liked some of the 15th Century stone carvings with the shields of *Castilla y Leon* (literally, Castle and Lion) celebrating the union of Ferdinand and Isabella.

In the gallery off the *Patio de Escuelas Menores* was a strange exhibit by Luis Sáez, “*Meditaciones: El cuerpo como enigma*” (Meditations: The Body as Enigma.) While the subject of rearranged body parts was not thrilling, I liked how he varied the density of his lines to create shadows and depth. In another room off the *Patio de Escuelas*, we saw the *Cielo de Salamanca* (Salamanca Sky), a 15th-Century painting of the Zodiac on a domed ceiling. It was offbeat, cool, and easily understood after the abstract Sáez exhibit.

We decided to skip the tour of the Pontifical University, and head to *Valor*, the famous *Chocolateria*, to enjoy their renowned *Chocolate con Churros*. Delicious! On my way back, I passed a large crowd that had gathered outside the *Casa de las Conchas*, watching a costumed group of ten dancers. I had no idea what the occasion was, but it was fun to see their traditional dance. I also found, finally, a *Lonely Planet* guide to Rome, written in English.

In the afternoon, it poured! We've been having ferocious thunderstorms all week. A couple of days ago, there were hailstorms in Seville, in the South of Spain, with hail the size of tennis balls. The TV footage was amazing, showing hail the size of tennis balls, and cars and roofs destroyed.

Sunday, June 18, 2006 –

I joined the Salamanca Plaza Mayor Rotary Club on an excursion to Toro, a town an hour to the Northwest. On the bus ride there, we passed through a small town with many people on horseback and the rest of the town watching. They were preparing for an *encierro*, or rounding up of the bulls.

Once in Toro, we visited the Colegiata, the most famous of Toro's many medieval churches. Built from 1160 to 1240, it has a beautiful West Portal. The detail I liked the most was the outermost arch, on which were painted saints and sinners waiting to enter heaven or hell. It reminded me of the mischievous depictions of sinners in the paintings by Bosch in the Prado Museum.

After a few more small medieval churches, we stopped in the town's best wine cellar. Toro is famous in Spain for its wine, and this was quite an experience. The most memorable part of the wine tasting was a crispy little food called *Jeta* – thankfully, I didn't learn until after I ate it that it was fried pig's face. I can see why so few Jews live in Spain (besides for the Expulsion, of course). Is there any part of a pig that Spaniards don't eat?

Continuing onto lunch at *La Viuda Rica* (The Rich Widow) – honestly, I don't remember what we ate, although I do remember that the Rotarians tricked me into thinking I'd eaten donkey. The wine, of course, was unforgettable.

Monday, June 19, 2006 –

In Spanish Culture, we discussed the different dialects of Spanish spoken in regions of Spain and in Latin America. For example, in Andalusia, the Southern region of Spain, they do not pronounce the final “s,” so “los españoles” (the Spaniards) comes out as “lo español.” Venezuelans pronounce the final “s” as an “h” – “loh españoléh.” We have a Venezuelan student in our class, and hardly anybody besides the Spanish teacher can understand her! It was exciting to learn some aspects of each Latin-American Spanish, and I realize that just how complicated bilingual speech-therapy is. Without understanding the nuances of each dialect, a bilingual speech-therapist might attribute this aspiration (changing a final “s” to “h”) as a speech impediment.

On a lighter note, I discovered that “Friends” is shown each afternoon, albeit dubbed in Spanish. It's the perfect way for me to relax and improve my Spanish slang, since I know all the jokes for memory. In the late afternoon, after what I thought was an effective trip to the gym, Maria convinced me to join her for chocolate con *churros* at the Valor Chokolateria. Yum! It's good that I spend most of the day walking around the city!

In the evening, I went to the apartment of Pantaleon and Mere Hernandez to watch the Spain-Tunisia World Cup match. They were perfectly charming, and it was a nerve-racking game. Tunisia scored in the seventh minute, and the Spain scored twice near the end, on minutes 72 and 75. Finally, in the 90th minute, Spain scored yet again off a penalty shot. The streets were deserted – everybody was watching the game – and every time Spain scored, you could hear cheers and loud noises all over the city.

Tuesday, June 20, 2006 –

In Communication Practice, we discussed Zapatero and the current negotiations with ETA, the separatist terrorist group from the País Vasco in the North. Under Franco's dictatorship (1936-1974), the language and culture of the autonomous communities was repressed. (A note: Spain is made up of 19 Autonomous Communities (such as Andalucía and Galicia) and 2 Provinces (Ceuta and Melilla, both in Africa). Whereas ETA originated to defend the País Vasco

against Franco's repression, it has devolved into an indiscriminate terrorist group. In the past forty years, ETA has caused 800 deaths.

The País Vasco and Cataluña are two of the most prosperous Autonomous Communities, and both are pushing for more independence in order to conserve their share of economic power. ETA wants an *estado libre asociado* (a free associated state), which means they want all of the benefits and none of the burdens of the state. A few days ago, a referendum in Catalonia produced a majority vote for a motion for greater autonomy. However, only 49% of Catalan citizens voted.

Our classroom discussion made me think of the American Civil War. National boundaries are often imposed and an inseparable union is unrealistic. Countries should encourage regional cultural autonomy; clearly, Franco's repression is responsible for the origins of ETA, if not its indiscriminate violence. At the same time, Catalonia's motion for greater autonomy strikes me as inherently selfish; behind their call for "cultural autonomy" is a reluctance to share their economic wealth with less prosperous regions of Spain.

Wednesday, June 21, 2006 –

Excursion to Zamora! José Luis, a member of the Salamanca Plaza Mayor Rotary Club, had a small business matter to take care of in Zamora, and invited me to join him and see Zamora. We got there, went for *aperitifs* (pre-lunch *tapas*), and while he took care of his business, I wandered around the city with his fabulously expensive and complicated camera, taking photos as best I could.

He joined me soon thereafter and we walked to a restaurant for lunch. It was one of the best meals of my life! We shared a few plates of appetizers – *pulpo a la feira* (octopus with paprika and olive oil), *mollejas a la zamorana* (pig gizzards in a red pepper sauce) and *foie-gras* (no need for translation here). For our main dish, we shared *solomillo de avestruz* (ostrich tenderloin) and *solomillo de buey* (fillet of ox). For dessert, we shared *cocinillo de cielo* (an egg- and cream-based tart) and *leche frito* (fried milk). I can't believe that I ate octopus, pig, duck, ostrich, and ox in the same meal – whew! All of this was accompanied by a very famous Spanish wine, Mataromera.

After this feast, I could barely get up, but we managed to see a few of Zamora's wonderful medieval churches. Although the Cathedral was under construction, we visited the Cathedral's Museum, then the Church of San Isidoro and the Church of the Magdalena. Both were relatively small, single-nave churches, very cool inside and peaceful. It was great to have José Luis as a guide, since he could explain all of the architectural elements to me.

We stopped for refreshments at a Hotel Parador, Spain's premier hotel chain. We briefly visited the *Museo Etnográfico* (Ethnographic Museum). My favorite parts were the extremely colorful bonnets, worn by children to distract witches and prevent the wearer from harm.

We headed to Toro, Zamora's closest neighboring city, to pick up a sweater which I had left there on Sunday. We listened to Clara Montes, a famous Andalusian singer with a clear voice. After stopping in a café, we headed back to Salamanca. We ended up eating a late dinner at a well-known seafood restaurant, which prepares all the Galician specialties I had seen in Santiago. We shared plates of *Chipirones rellenos* (stuffed cuttlefish), *zamburiñas* (a small mollusk) and my favorite, *pulpo a la feira*.

Thursday, June 22, 2006 –

In my Communications Practice class, we discussed recent developments in naturalization of immigrants to the US. It was so interesting to get the opinions of non-US citizens, as well as the insights of two girls who live near Texas and understand the problem firsthand. Sometimes I get so frustrated at all the problems of the US – the death penalty, the war on terrorism, illegal immigration, etc – especially because there's so little I can do as an Ambassadorial Scholar to improve the United States' image. However, it's a good opportunity to understand how the world sees the United States.

Saturday, June 24, 2006 –

Tonight was the longest night of the year, *La Noche Blanca* (White Night). In celebration there was a nighttime festival, and in every plaza, street, and historic building, there were concerts (blues, classical, rock, and choral), dances (tango, flamenco, and capoeira), tours of historic buildings, museum exhibitions, theater, movies, and even a fashion show! The earliest events began at 8:30, with most starting around 11:30 and the latest by 2 A.M. The streets were filled with thousands of people, watching the festivities and having a late meal.

Although the spectacular Argentina-Mexico World Cup match didn't end until 11:30, the festivities were going strong by midnight, when myself and two of my apartment-mates, Vashti and Jackie, arrived in the Plaza Mayor. We watched a salsa band, then walked to the Plaza de Anaya, where a Tango group was playing in front of the Cathedral. When the tango finished, we walked to the Casa de Las Conchas to see the fashion show, then back to the Plaza de Anaya for the 1 PM Flamenco performance. It was flashy and drew a huge crowd.

Sunday, June 25, 2006 –

Excursion with Jose Luis to the *Sierras de Francia*, the mountainous region south of Salamanca. As we drove through the countryside, which got increasingly green and mountainous, we had to wait as a shepherd and hundreds of sheep crossed the road. We drove first to the *Peña de Francia*, where a famous Dominican monastery is perched 1723 meters above sea level. Serendipitously, we chose the day of the *Romería de la Virgen de la Peña de Francia*. The term *Romería* applies to an annual procession of devotees, on foot and horseback, following a statue of the virgin and child. In our case, there was a long line of cars waiting to follow the *Romería* up the mountain, but the costumed crowd and beautiful mass that followed in the monastery was more than worth the inconvenience.

Our next stop was San Martín del Castañar, a picturesque little town off the tourist track. Without any poetic exaggeration, I felt transported back five hundred years. Even the people dressed in simple, old-fashioned clothing, the men in old hats and trousers, sitting near the watering trough in the small central square. There was an elegant cemetery next to the remnants of a medieval tower. Nearby was one of the oldest *plaza de toros* (bullring) in Spain. The only part of the *pueblocito* (little village) I didn't like was the *tapa* I took a nibble of – *morro*. It translates as fried pig's cheek, but to me it was just one big blob of fat. To compensate, we bought a box of cherries. They deserve their fame as Spain's best cherries – they were organically grown and delicious.

From San Martín del Castañar we drove to Mogarraz, a small village to the east of La Alberca, for a gourmet lunch. We shared the local specialties: *bolletins edulis* (a delicious local mushroom), *patatas meneás* (spicy potato purée), *cabrito lechal asada en el acto con leña de roble* (baby goat roasted in oakwood) and *cabrito lechal guisado con salsa de verduras* (baby goat stewed in vegetable sauce). For desert, we shared *queso semicurado de oveja con*

mermelada de fresa (semi-cured sheep cheese with strawberry marmalade) and *flan de queso* (cheese crème caramel).

We stopped at a cute little pub in Miranda del Castañar, to the east, before driving back to Salamanca. What a wonderful excursion! It has completely changed my image of the region around Salamanca, from one of general flatness to one of lush green mountains and tiny *pueblos*.

Monday, June 26, 2006 –

This evening, I played violin at a ceremony given by the Rotary Salamanca Plaza Mayor Club in honor of Red Cross volunteers. It was a beautiful ceremony, held in the Salamanca *Casino*, which used to be a palace, and at the end I played a few pieces on my violin – the beginning of Saint-Saëns' *Havanaise*, Manuel de Falla's *Nana* (Lullaby), and Isaac Albeniz's *Tango*. The Rotarians were kind in their praise, and I was glad to contribute to an evening that honored so many volunteers.

Tuesday, June 27, 2006 –

Having finished my last exam, I came home to relax and pack for Rome. I'm leaving Salamanca tomorrow afternoon at 2 PM, and my flight from Madrid arrives at 10 PM. I'll be staying three nights with a Rotary family a half hour outside of Rome, and the next three nights with another Rotary family in the center of Rome. I've already made my reservations for the Borghese gallery and bought my bus ticket to Madrid. I'm incredibly excited, as this will be my first time in Italy, and I have five full days to explore. I'll arrive back in Salamanca the evening of Wednesday, July 4. Yippee!!

Chapter 4 – Rome

Wednesday, June 28, 2004 –

This was an exhausting day of travel to Rome. Although my flight was a half hour delayed, I had no checked luggage, and jumped onto the train to Rome seconds before it departed, and just made the train from Termini to where Paul Smeulders picked me up. Paul and Maya Smeulders live in Frascati, one of the many beautiful towns in the Alban Hills south of Rome, collectively known as *Castelli Romani*. I was so touched by their hospitality – my own room, toiletries and slippers laid out, and such a genuine care for my comfort.

Also, as I was dealing with the delays and racing through the airports, I realized, “Hey, I'm an adult! When did this happen?” I'm proud that I can be such a world traveler, and navigate by myself. I always think that life is so much more interesting than we can anticipate, and even though I'm sad that my childhood is ending (I think of college as the end of childhood, I suppose) it's fun to surprise myself with my own independence and ability to meet new challenges.

Thursday, June 29, 2006 –

My first day in Rome, and what a day! With Simona, daughter-in-law of Paul and Maya Smeulders, I traveled by train to Termini Station. We first saw the *Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore*, one of Rome's four patriarchal basilicas. It was full of tourists, and fabulously ornate. I much preferred the smaller *Chiesa (church) di Santa Prassede* nearby, with few tourists and beautiful geometric mosaics. We made our way through the Plaza Barberini, and then reached the Trevi Fountain, along with hordes of tourists. I threw in a coin for good luck – my guidebook

says that an average of 1500 euros (a little under \$2000) is thrown in each day! It was the most amazing fountain I've ever seen, with the Tritons and sea horses emerging naturally out of the rocks. We stopped for lunch in a small pizzeria, where I enjoyed a seafood risotto that was strangely reminiscent of *paella*.

Our next stop was the Pantheon, which was closed for the Feasts of Saints Peter and Paul. Today was the feast day of the two patron saints of Rome, but there were few festivities. The only sign of the celebration was the statue of St. Peter in St. Peter's Cathedral, which was dressed in papal robes! We passed through Piazza Navona, full of hawkers and tourists, and then crossed the Tiber river by *Ponte Sant' Angelo*, and turned left toward *Piazza San Pietro* (St. Peter's Plaza). It was an immense public space, with two semicircular colonnades, each four columns deep.

By that time the sun was fierce, and we escaped into St. Peter's Basilica. The physical size of the space is overpowering. I was especially moved by Bernini's towering bronze *baldachin* (high altar) and central window with the dove, and Michelangelo's *Pietà* (sculpture of Mary carrying Jesus after the crucifixion). I felt overwhelmed and moved – I mean those words fully, not in the clichéd way they're usually used. I felt waves of awe and sadness, and was often on the verge of tears. I'm not sure exactly what moved me – the size, the art, the history – or why I kept feeling like I was about to cry. I couldn't even describe to Simone how I felt, beyond for general exclamations. I don't recall ever being awed in this way by a physical space. At the *Alhambra* (Arab palaces in Granada, Spain), I felt a deep artistic appreciation, and at the *Kotel* (Western Wall in Jerusalem) I felt a deep, constant peace, but I've never felt waves of imminent tears like I did in St. Peter's Cathedral.

After this long day, we headed home to Frascati. I enjoyed sipping a drink made with Tuscan almonds and talking with Maya and Paul, who have lived in Holland, England, Germany, France, and now Italy. It was interesting to compare my experience with Rotary clubs in the US and Spain with their experience as Rotarians in England and Italy. In particular, we discussed how some clubs become more like social clubs, to the exclusion of community service, and the problem of attracting younger members and women.

We ate a fine dinner on their porch - prawns, herring, veal, and eggplant. We also drank red and white wines from a friend's vineyard – Frascati is famous for its wines. Topped off with delicious mix of gelati - strawberry, apricot, cinnamon and walnut – I couldn't have asked for a nicer way to end my first full day in Rome.

Friday, June 30, 2006 –

It was completely worth the unbearably long and unavoidable two-hour line in the impossibly sticky heat to see the Vatican Museums and the Sistine Chapel. I won't even begin to describe what I saw – paintings, sculptures, tapestries and frescos of the highest artistic quality. If you're interested, pick up a guidebook. (I recommend the *Lonely Planet* series.) Instead, I'll describe my reactions to the whole experience.

The incredible art from all centuries really changed my impression of human progress and antiquity. I think, coming from America, I have a bias against ancient civilizations. Perhaps this is because my academic knowledge in ancient history is sorely lacking, or perhaps I always assumed that if humans are constantly progressing, than previous generations must have been dramatically more primitive. Instead, I realize that each civilization has its own advances and deficiencies. Along with the recognition of their artistic greatness follows the understanding that

the ancient Romans were people, too, not just emperors, popes, artists and pilgrims. Any civilization that created such works of art is one that deserves the term *modern*.

At first, eyeing the many artistic accomplishments of ancient, medieval and Renaissance times, I felt that our era is surely lacking. Why don't we have our Michelangelos and Berninis? Then again, I think that the legacy of the twentieth century will be science, and even after seeing the Sistine Chapel, I'd rather have scientific developments that save lives than the most beautiful art in the world – I'm a pragmatist, through and through.

Towards the end, as I started to get fatigued from the sensory overload, I wondered how this artistic legacy reflects on the Catholic Church. Why did the church pour so much of its wealth into ornate buildings? The simple answer is that the Papacy is intimately connected with the crown and centuries of politics. The splendor reminded me of my reaction to the palaces of Versailles, which I saw last summer in France – basically, “Okay, now I understand what caused the French Revolution.” There was just such a concentration of wealth at Versailles, which made me understand the economic disparities of French society preceding the French Revolution. Versailles was the palace of the kings, but the Vatican Museums, and ornate churches in general, are supposed to be places of worship. Why spend so much money on fine art, when it could be spent on charitable purposes? Why do churches need to be so ornate, if the focus of prayer is on God? Artistic splendor can invoke religious awe and a sense of humility, but it can also distract the worshipper. I much prefer the harmonious simplicity of Temple Beth El, my home synagogue, which was built by Louis Kahn. I think the focus should be on the people and the prayers, not on the building. Then again, Judaism has much less of an emphasis on human sin and humility, and it lacks the hierarchy of the Catholic Church, so perhaps the space reflects the religion.

I have to include a more negative reflection, or perhaps a rant, on tourists. Of course, I'm a tourist too, but it frustrates me that people spend all of their times behind cameras and pushing their way through museums. The Sistine chapel was filled with people taking covert (and not-so-covert) photos, despite the prohibitions given in many languages in the approach corridor. I think people don't understand the history and the artistic heritage of the Vatican Museum, or of many of Rome's churches and ruins in general. Therefore, the only way for them to feel ownership is to take photos. It's a way to appropriate part of the experience. In general, I'm more amused than bothered by tourists who spend their time videotaping their entire vacation. (A man near me on the interminable line was actually videotaping the line. Who in the world would want to relive that experience??) And I had to stop myself from laughing as I heard a teenage girl remark, in a hall of marvelous tapestries, “Oh, it's just rugs...they're smelly.” I think people have forgotten how to appreciate different types of art – tapestries and mosaics, for example – or even how to think for themselves, and give themselves time in front of a painting to reflect on what it means to them.

On a more positive note, the Sistine Chapel was one of the most beautiful spaces I've ever seen. It was smaller than I'd imagined, and the ceiling farther away, but to see the Genesis and Last Judgment Frescoes was incredible. The room was packed to the rafters, but it was worth straining my neck to study the nine scenes of Creation in the Genesis fresco. I also loved knowing that this was the room where they elect the new Pope!

Saturday, July 1, 2006 –

The Borghese Museum is now one of my favorites, along with the Frick Museum in New York. There was even a special exhibit on Raphael's early work, as if the museum weren't full of

Raphael already! I was particularly fond of his sketches of the Virgin Mary – I’m always amazed that a few “smudges” of pencil can evoke so much human emotion. My favorites were two of Bernini’s sculptures inspired by Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. In *The Rape of Persephone*, you could see Pluto’s hand digging into Persephone’s thigh, and it was so real that I expected the marble thighs to flush red under the pressure. In *Apollo and Daphne*, Daphne is turning into a tree, with bark encircling her torso, roots growing from her toes and trees sprouting from her roots. They were two of the most spectacular sculptures I’ve ever seen.

After that artistic summit, I wandered over to the Spanish Steps, which were extremely disappointing after my romantic notions – instead of Gregory Peck or Audrey Hepburn, there were just more hordes of tourists. I then hunted down San Crispino, which is said to serve the best gelato in Rome, or even the world. The delicious cinnamon-ginger and raspberry flavors were refreshing, although they melted by the time I reached the Trevi Fountain. From there, it was a short walk to the Pantheon, which was open this time, and I got a good look at the largest uninforced concrete ceiling in the world. By then I was parched and exhausted, so I found my way back to Frascati and enjoyed a pleasant evening with the Smeulders.

Sunday, July 2, 2006 –

The Smeulders invited a few Rotarians over for brunch, including Luigi and Angela Coia-Veraldi, who brought me to their home to stay with them. We passed this scorching day at their friends’ private pool, in Cecchina. The pool was up on a hill, surrounded by vineyards, fruit groves and chicken huts. If the sky had been clearer, we would have been able to see the sea. It was wonderful to pass the day swimming and reading Jane Austen’s *Northanger Abbey*. (I just finished *Mansfield Park*; if my writing becomes effusive, blame Austen.) When I got restless, I took a walk to the fruit groves and ate fresh berries, apricots and prunes. It was a blissful way to pass the day, followed by a wonderful supper of fresh cheeses, meats, and homemade chocolate mousse.

Monday, July 3, 2006 –

My last day of touring, and what a whirlwind it was! I began at the Colosseum, which was still relatively free of crowds and not yet unbearably hot. Although I’m usually more excited by painting than ruins, it was fabulous. I loved how the many levels of the stage were visible, and how I could touch the same stones that the Romans had touched.

Next, I walked through the Palatine, where many emperors had built their palaces. I met a couple from Vancouver with a terrible guidebook, and became their impromptu guide. As in the Colosseum, it was fun to see the foundations of the buildings exposed in the ruins, the many layers of columns and arches supporting each other. I wonder if any of our twentieth century buildings will be as durable as Roman architecture.

It was quite hot as I finished the Palatine, so I took a quick walk through the Roman Forums. They were less impressive than the Palatine, although the two columns, *Arco di Settimio Severo* (Arch of Septimus Severus) and *Arco de Tito* (Arch of Titus) were magnificent. The latter was built to celebrate Titus’ victories against Jews in Jerusalem. I kept that in mind later, after climbing to the Piazza del Campidoglio and descending to the Jewish Ghetto. I took a guided tour of the Jewish Ghetto, which was enlightening and depressing, as tours of Jewish Ghettos inevitably are. On the one hand, I appreciate tales of Jewish solidarity and persistence despite the relentless cruelty of the Vatican. However, realizing that in every city, every country, and every

era, Jews have lived in ghettos, apart and abused, makes me realize how unique my Jewish experience has been. To me, it underscores the importance of the state of Israel.

I stopped for lunch at *La Carbonara*, on the Campo de' Fiori, and treated myself to a true Italian meal – a delicious pasta and salmon dish, with some white wine. Sated and mildly cooled, I headed out back into the relentless heat and caught a bus to St. Peter's Basilica. The little I had learned of Roman history and art in the last week helped me enjoy it more, although the best part was watching others pray in the *Cappella dei Santissimo Sacramento*. Regardless of the object of our spiritual quests, humans really need a central place of worship, be it a breathtaking basilica or an ancient stone wall.

I enjoyed another dinner with the Coia's, who have been the most gracious hosts. We even watched *Friends* in Italian, and I think that with another few weeks in Italy, I would be able to understand and speak with proficiency. The next scholarship search is on! Actually, Luigi Coia was an Ambassadorial Scholar, and then took part in the Group Study Exchange, which is for young professionals. I've made a mental note to apply after graduate school.

Tuesday, July 4, 2006 –

Luigi Coia drove me to the nearby *Via Appia Antica* (Appian Way), built between the fourth and second centuries BC. It was the road that took Rome's armies all the way to Brindisi in the south, and is lined with the catacombs, or burial grounds of Christians. Although we didn't see the catacombs, it was fabulous to walk along the path, and see so many burial monuments and markers. Luigi also told me about the *Aquedutto Claudio* (Claudian Aqueducts), which runs alongside and over the roads in the southern part of Rome, and which brought water to the city during the Roman Empire. It was incredible to learn about the aqueducts. I had never understood their complexity – for example, they are built on a slight gradient, and every few hundred kilometers were workers who monitored the water quality. Despite their brilliance, they didn't know about the dangers of transporting water through lead pipes!

Although my flight was three hours late (for which I was compensated with a muffin and water, thank you very much), I made it back to Salamanca by 1 AM. I was so glad to be back in a country where they speak Spanish! This is definitely a good sign of my comfort with the language.

If I may be permitted to wax nostalgic about a week's experience, here are a couple of conclusions:

The Sistine Chapel is nice, and ruins are impressive, but the best part about the trip was meeting the Smeulders and the Coias, and being treated with such care and generosity. I am so impressed by the strength of the Rotary community, which is truly International.

Rome is not only unbearably hot in July; it is full of mosquitoes and tourists. If you are allergic to either, come in the fall or the spring. But please come at least once in your life, because it will change your perspective on history and human progress, as it has changed mine. Or come to taste the pasta, gelato, coffee, wine...yum!

Chapter 5

Wednesday, July 5, 2006 –

Today was my first day of summer session classes. Each morning I have two hours of Spanish Language, followed by an hour of English-Spanish Translation and an hour of History

of Spanish Art. I really like my professors, and feel especially lucky that the same great professor happens to teach both my Translation and Art History classes.

Unfortunately, I discovered a rash on my legs, which the doctor said was caused by all that walking in hot, humid Rome. I know there's nothing thrilling about this, but I was proud that I could handle a mini-emergency in a foreign country, and even use some of the medical terminology I learned in my communication practice class.

Thursday, July 6, 2006 –

Today I went on a tour of two convents in Salamanca: San Esteban and Las Dueñas. The tour was organized, free of charge, by *Cursos Internacionales*, the program in which I'm studying. The tour guide was one of the best I've ever had; I *finally* understand the difference between Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque architecture. As in England, first sons inherited their father's land, while other sons went into the army or the church. One room of the *Convento de San Esteban* (Convent of St. Steven) had portraits of some of these rich younger sons. Many were so poorly done it was comical, and they reminded me of the portraits of Masters and Deans adorning the Yale dining halls.

On my way home, I stopped by the Tourist Office of Salamanca and picked up all the July and August pamphlets. Salamanca, like Yale, is a culture-junkie's paradise. I've already filled my calendar with events, including a performance by Bela Fleck, a flamenco performance of *Carmen*, a movie series of recent Spanish cinema (8 movies for \$20!), street theater, jazz performances, exhibitions of Goya, Velazquez, and modern art...the list goes on and on! Of course, we'll judge from my future journal entries if I've actually done all of these wonderful things, but even a fraction of them will make for an excellent summer.

Friday, July 7, 2006 –

In my Spanish Language class, we learned a funny phrase: *diálogo de besugo*; literally, "dialogue of red bream." The *besugo* is an expensive fish, and the phrase refers to a nonsensical conversation, along the lines of "What time is it?" "No, I have to catch the bus." I love learning phrases unique to a language. I'm really enjoying my English-Spanish translation class. We're learning to move away from literal, word-to-word translation and toward capturing the essence of the language: the mood, sense of humor, level of formality, etc. And even my Art History class is surprisingly instructive; it's not quite "Art in the Prado," the course I took in Madrid last summer, but the professor is an excellent teacher. We translated a story about Lepe, a town in Huelva, in the region of Andalucía (Southern Spain). Just like the town of Chelm to the Jews, or "rednecks" in America, or Irish pretty much anywhere, Spanish jokes or funny stories that make fun of stupid people are always set in Lepe. In reality, Lepe is a very wealthy town, but they do get the brunt of the jokes.

In the evening, I went out with a few girls from my Spanish Language class: Lucia (25, Athens), Federica (24, Uruguay) and Grace (21, Miami). Lucia is finishing law school, Federica just graduated from UVA and will start investment banking in Vienna this fall, and Grace is entering her senior year of college, studying comparative literature. All three are sweet and fun, and I'm very glad I suggested we all go out.

I know I've already mentioned *la marcha*, literally, "the march," which refers to the nightlife in Salamanca, but it's so fabulous that I have to describe it further. To begin, the schedule in Spain is based on the weather. At an altitude of 800 meters above sea level, it is pleasantly cool until 10 AM, gets hotter until the peak around 3 PM, and cools by 8 PM.

Spaniards really do take a *siesta* – businesses and schools close between 1:30 and 4ish, and everybody goes home, or to a café, for lunch. Of course, it's only the foreigners who take a two-hour nap and call it a *siesta*; Spaniards take a twenty-minute nap, maximum. As the afternoon heat subsides, the streets start to fill by 8, which is about the earliest that Spaniards will eat dinner. It's not strange to see families, with toddlers and babies, eating dinner or drinking coffee at midnight. Since dinner is eaten so late, the nightlife is consequently later as well. It's not strange to go to the first club at 1 AM, and party until 8 AM. I haven't experienced that yet, but with the many fun, free clubs and great weather all night, it doesn't surprise me.

So, last night, we met in the *Plaza Mayor* at 9:30 and walked to a little café near the University that I like. We started with drinks (wine or beer) and a couple plates of *tapas* each. Some typical *tapas* (small portions of food, always accompanied by wine or beer) are *croquetas* (cheese or ham croquettes), *ensaladilla de mar* (seafood salad), and many, many types of ham. We passed an hour talking, and then walked to the *Plaza Mayor* (Main Plaza), where we watched a group of folk musicians, and also a group of people dancing with castanettes. We wandered over to the *Patio Chico* ("Small Patio"), where we had some coffee and chatted away another hour. By 1, we walked around the area with the clubs, and danced until 3 in a couple of clubs. It was an absolute blast, and I'm so glad to have such wonderful new friends.

Saturday, July 8, 2006 –

Ever the morning bird, my body woke me up promptly at 8, but I managed to doze another hour. After breakfast, I got on my gym clothes, studied a map of Salamanca, and walked all around the northern part of the city; part exercise, part sight-seeing. I stopped by the library, and browsed through their great collection. I sat and read the beginning of T. S. Eliot's "The Family Reunion," which has the greatest line: "You none of you understand how old you are / And death will come to you as a mild surprise." I'm so glad to be rediscovering English literature. Since my *Cursos Internacionales* card doesn't work as a library card, and I wasn't in the mood to get passport photos and apply for a library card, I went to a nearby bookstore and bought *Emma*. (Yes, I'm consuming Jane Austen right now and getting quite alarmed that she only wrote six novels).

I also stopped by *Valor*, the famous chocolate shop, and tried their famous bonbon, *pétalo de rosa*, which actually tasted like rose petals. After doubling back to the library to use their internet, I stopped by an exhibition by the *Casa Lis* (Art Deco Museum), called "Cabaret: Paris-Berlin, the Thirties." There were many little statuettes of cabaret dancers from the thirties, made mostly of ivory and bronze. The posters, photos, captions and multimedia put the art, and Art Deco in general, into the context of the Great Depression and the rise of Nazism. There were also fashion drawings on the wall and a collection of antique perfume bottles.

In the afternoon, I met Grace at the movie theater to see "Bienvenido a Casa," a wonderful Spanish dramatic comedy which I highly recommend. At night, I watched the riveting Germany-Portugal "runner-up" World Cup Game, which the Germans won spectacularly.

Sunday, July 9, 2006 –

I went on an excursion with the Salamanca Plaza Mayor Rotary Club. We picked cherries on a farm in the *Sierra de la Peña de Francia*, the green, mountainous region to the south of Salamanca. There was an abundant crop, and we easily picked fifty pounds among the fifteen of us. The trees were so full, you could grab fistfuls of cherries with ease. After, we went to a nearby outdoor area with a stone stove and shaded benches, and two of the Rotarians cooked a

delicious paella. One of the highlights was when a Rotarian took me for a ride on his motorcycle! It was a wonderful day, finished off with the World Cup championship.

Monday, July 10, 2006 –

This afternoon, I went on an organized tour of the University of Salamanca, founded in 1218. And I thought Yale was old! In the evening, I gave a presentation to the Salamanca Plaza Mayor Rotary Club. I was so proud of how much my Spanish had improved. I hardly had to use the written speech, and I even used the *vosotros* (familiar plural “you”) form with ease.

Tuesday, July 11, 2006 –

Today’s tour was of the Cathedrals in Salamanca. By name, there are two, the *Vieja* (Old) and the *Nueva* (New), but they form one Cathedral. Serendipitously, we had studied cathedrals in my Art History Class this morning. It’s important to remember that cathedrals take two or three centuries to build, so even if it starts in the Romanesque style (short, thick walls, few windows, semi-circular arches), it will likely have elements of the Gothic period (tall, thin walls, large windows, pointed arches).

Afterwards, I stopped by the fascinating Masonic Lodge-Spanish Civil War Museum. I read a few of the newspaper articles from July 19, 1936, the day of the uprising that would start the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). The newspaper article, which began each section with the time of the event – 8:30 AM, 5:25 PM, 6 PM, 6:20 PM – reminded me of the reaction to September 11. I was struck by this sentence: “*el mejor concurso que se le puede prestar es garantizar la normalidad de la vida cotidiana.*” (roughly, “the best support that one can give is to guarantee the normality of daily life.”) The newspaper article was full of reassurances – the government authorities had apprehended a plane, and detained several suspects – and exuded confidence. They had no idea that their country was beginning a bloody three-year war, which would be followed by almost four decades of dictatorship. It completely transported me to September 11, and my confusion that day and the weeks that followed. It also contained, in rather large letters, the announcement, “*Este número está visado por la censura.*” (“This issue is endorsed by the censors.”) Very reassuring! The article was written effectively, and had I been reading it when it came out, I’m sure I would have believed the best. In the end, I realize that all words are subjective, and a critical reading of every source is the best protection against political corruption. The world is so much more tenuous than I thought, and it’s every person’s responsibility to guard against being seduced by words and promises.

Wednesday, July 12, 2006 –

I am so saddened by the terrorist attacks in Bombay, which killed 160 yesterday and injured hundreds more. I was impressed by how *El Pais* (“The Country,” one of Spain’s main daily newspapers) connected it to the bombings in New York, Madrid, and London. The coverage, filled with the urgings of dignitaries for people to remain calm, reminded me of the clippings I read yesterday about the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War.

My frustration with words, and their emptiness, was further aggravated by an article on the proposed changes to Guantánamo. I can’t believe that Tony Snow, the White House spokesman, would say that all of the prisoners have been treated in a humanitarian manner, yet they want to do things better. What does that mean? It’s frustrating enough to read these articles in the United States, when one can have the solace of disconnecting oneself from the Republican Party. But abroad, everything the US does, regardless of the party, is felt as a reflection on all

Americans, and it is so frustrating to see how quickly the US is losing its international credibility. In a recent study by the Pew Center, only 23% of Spaniards polled had a favorable perception of the ES, compared with 41% in 2005. Of the European countries polled, Spain is the most critical toward the US. However, they are not alone in their negative opinion; except for Germany, all of the European countries polled are more afraid of Washington than of Tehran!

This unfavorable attitude toward America is deeply unsettling. Thankfully, I've never felt any hostility directed toward me as an American, but it's impossible to read the newspaper or discuss politics without feeling that American international policies are vexing at best and dangerous at worst.

Thursday, July 13, 2006 –

I realize that these entries are becoming morose and fatalistic, but I'm so upset by the news of fighting between Israel and Lebanon. Along with the Bombay attacks, it's really frightening to see everything going on. I think that we're too accustomed, in general, to view events such as those in India and Israel with pessimism or skepticism, rather than real emotion. I learned about the Lebanon attacks from the New York Times website, during a break from my two-hour grammar class. As I walked back into class, my professor commented that I looked tired. I explained that I was deeply distressed about Israel. She asked me if I had family there, and I replied that I didn't, but that my brother had lived there for a year, and that I felt deeply connected to it. Of course, we can't let emotion be our only response to the mass media, or else we'd all be going around crying, but it's important to let ourselves be sad, or scared, or angry, and really feel how tragic these events are.

On a more positive note, I gave my formal presentation to the Salamanca Rotary Club. They welcomed me and enjoyed my presentation on the research I had done in high school with Spanish-speaking infants and toddlers. They asked many intelligent questions about the American Hispanic population. I was happily surprised to learn that a majority of the Ambassadorial Scholars they have hosted are pursuing careers in special education. I'm glad that Rotary is investing its money in educators like me!

Friday, July 14, 2006 –

I'm determined to be a bit more optimistic, and perhaps a bit more removed from mass media for a couple of days, to get my spirits back up! I had a wonderful Translation class, where we discussed the subtleties of translating the passive voice ("She was given a gift") to Spanish, which doesn't really use the passive voice. The emphasis is really on understanding the message in English, and translating it into a voice that feels authentically Spanish, instead of transcribing word for word, which produces nonsense. In the evening, I went out for tapas with a couple of girls from my class, and a few of their roommates. I was in a good mood, having just reached the resolution of Jane Austen's *Emma*.

Saturday, July 15, 2006 –

I got up early and took a walk around the historic city center, while there was still shade and a tiny bit of coolness in the air. Then I went to the public library, read a bit more of T. S. Eliot's "The Family Reunion," and used the internet. I strongly recommend the feature article from the *New York Times* Sunday Magazine on immigration. There's also an editorial by Kenji Yoshino on gay marriage, either in the Magazine or in the Week in Review, which is fabulous.

After the library, I stopped by a great bookstore and bought *Gulliver's Travels* and *Great*

Expectations. It's so fun to read voraciously – I'm glad I haven't lost my love for literature. As a Spanish major, I somewhat neglected English literature, and since I speak hardly any English here, reading is a wonderful break. I'm also enjoying playing violin, and am learning lots of Spanish music from the Fritz Kreisler collection. I was nervous that I would get frustrated without a violin teacher, but I've learned so many tools to teach myself that it's still quite a pleasure.

On the way home, I stopped by an exhibit of portraits from the Prado, which included paintings by Velázquez, El Greco, Mengs, and Goya. I love Goya, because his portraits show not only physical appearance but personality as well. His *Carlos III, Hunting* reveals a goofy, unintelligent king while his portrait of *Carlos IV* exudes benevolence and soft-manners. Maybe that's only my reading of it, but all of the faces he painted have true character.

In the afternoon, I went to the local movie theater to see *Volver*, Almodovar's latest film. Of all the Almodovar films I've seen, this was one of my favorites.

Sunday, July 16, 2006 –

I took a long walk around the city this morning, covering the main perimeter to the north and west. I got back by 10:30, and stayed indoors most of the day, reading *Great Expectations*. At 6 I met Sherry, who studied in Salamanca on the 3-month Cultural Ambassadorial Scholarship in 1995. We were going to meet for coffee, but the weather, which reached around 105 F, demanded ice cream instead! We compared our experiences and traded travel stories. She's currently teaching Spanish at a high school and a college in Auburn, and comes back to Spain almost every summer, for a mix of work and fun. I truly hope I'll be able to do the same.

Chapter 6

My Spanish adventures continue. I've loved your responses to my journals, and always love to hear from you. As always, the whole journal and some photos are attached. This time I've focused on photos of Salamanca, because it's such a beautiful city. Also, a correction: the University of Salamanca was founded in 1218, not 1812. I have many astute readers!

Monday, July 17, 2006 –

As temperatures climbed above 100 F, I stayed in front of my fan all afternoon, reading *Great Expectations*. In the evening, I ventured out to my aerobics class, which was extremely tough. Thank goodness for the occasional lazy summer day amidst all my adventures!

Tuesday, July 18, 2006 –

In the afternoon, thanks to a cloudy sky and light rain, the temperature was decent enough to venture out. I went to the *Casa Lis* Museum of Art Nouveau and Art Deco. Art Nouveau occurred at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th, as a response to an unprecedented period of industrialization and prosperity, also known as the *Belle Époque*. Particularly important in architecture and decoration, it broke with the prevailing academic rules and offered art for the people that depicted daily life. Art Deco occurred between the two World Wars, and emphasized geometric forms, the line, color combinations and the use of new materials. Both movements left the canvas behind and turned to other forms, including toys, dolls, fans, ashtrays, perfume bottles, statuettes, jewelry, vases, lamps, and furniture.

I really like Art Deco and Art Nouveau, in the same way that I like the Impressionist art of roughly the same period. I just look at it and instinctively enjoy, the way one can look at Monet's *Waterlilies* and not think, but just feel at peace. Some of it is quite delicate – porcelain statuettes of cabaret dancers, intricate fans, tiny perfume bottles – and some is quite gregarious, especially the miniature caricatures of famous *bourgeoisie*, in the form of toothpick holders or ashtrays. Both movements put art on functional items, like fans, ashtrays, and perfume bottles – but it's clearly secondary to the artistry. I loved a collection of whiskey bottles adorned with Charles Dickens characters. Since I'm voraciously reading *Great Expectations*, with all the colorful characters, it was a fun surprise to see how similar the artists' conceptions were to mine. They reminded me of Goya's *Caprichos* (Caprices), a series of etchings which depict common people behaving badly, as well as his *pintura negra* (black paintings), which are delightfully morbid and Expressionist.

Besides for the pure aesthetic pleasure, the art really made me think about the historical context. I was amazed that Art Nouveau and Art Deco could be so similar, given that they were separated by the devastating First World War. How could art remain so optimistic and playful after such a tragedy? I guess that optimism comes in two forms – the true, unfettered optimism of the *Belle Époque*, when modernity seemed bright and open to all, and the persistent, forced cheerfulness of the Twenties and Thirties, when the newly-destitute escaped their troubles in Cabarets. Perhaps this is why governments urge citizens to resume normality after a tragedy – people just can't live in mourning.

Watching the evening news, I was so dismayed by the heavy bombing in Lebanon. I often wish that the desires of the majority would prevail, because I can't believe that a true majority of any citizens support bombing another country, no matter how deep their hatreds. It's an unrealistic ideal, I know, but if only we could carry out the collective wishes of the regular citizens, who lack political power and have everything to lose.

I also realize that my sympathy for Israel has been cultivated from a young age, through religion and through various trips. Why is my first reaction to the bombings a worry about the repercussions for Israel, and not an instinctive pain for the civilian victims? Although I feel saddened by all violence, news of violence in Israel seems to hit me the hardest. How do we teach international empathy? Is it a feasible goal? I'm going around in circles, I know, but these questions are so intriguing and frustrating at the same time.

Wednesday, July 19, 2006 –

Today's weather was a relief – refreshing winds and a mere 88° F! It felt like spring! In the afternoon, I went on a tour of palaces. The tour guide used the exterior architecture to structure her narrative about the city's history. Salamanca's colorful past is full of dueling princes, amorous bishops, vengeful mothers, haughty monks, imperious duchesses and warring nobles. The city is beautiful, thanks to the plentiful *pedra de villamayor*, a stone plentiful in nearby quarries. It absorbs water and can be sculpted as easily as soap when it is wet. As a result, Salamanca has many Baroque masterpieces. (Baroque architecture is extremely ornate, full of flourishes that fill every possible space). Over time, the stone oxidizes to a beautiful gold, which is especially radiant in the late afternoon, as the sun's declining rays add a gentle pink glow. The stone is used in buildings old and new, to the effect that even large retail stores and new apartment buildings blend harmoniously among the churches and plazas.

I'm amazed by how the old and the new live easily together – for example, one of the most popular clubs, *Camelot*, is housed inside the Convent of the Ursulas; the nuns rent out

space in the convent itself! On our tour today, we passed through the area of town with many of the popular clubs and bars, and they were surrounded by palatial houses, including Unamuno's former residence, and Romanesque churches. By day, you could easily forget that this is the center of Salamanca's nightlife.

Thursday, July 20, 2006 –

Today's Art History midterm went well. It's so much fun to take a test without pressure. At Yale, even though I truly studied for the love of learning, and because I loved the challenge and the knowledge, the pressure of a GPA was always there. Here, it feels like everything I learn is "extra" knowledge that will help me both professionally, as bilingual speech-therapist, and personally, as an art aficionado.

Unfortunately, the breezes of yesterday vanished under the scorching sun, so I stayed indoors, near my fan and *Great Expectations*. In the evening, I went to my aerobics class, which is very difficult but a lot of fun.

Friday, July 21, 2006 –

This evening I went out to tapas with Grace and Lucia, two of my good friends. Afterwards, I went to a concert that I'd been looking forward to for weeks – Bela Fleck and the Flecktones. It took place in the courtyard of the *Colegio Fonseca*, which has one of the most beautiful courtyards in Spain. During the summer, a series of concerts, theater, and dance performances are held there. It was the best jazz I've ever heard – at one point, one of the jazz quartet played two saxophones at once! They were so immensely talented and clearly enjoying themselves, that everybody in the audience enjoyed their music as well.

Saturday, July 22, 2006 –

I went on a trip of Madrid museums with *Cursos Internacionales*. This summer there is a joint exhibit on Picasso at the Prado Museum and the Museum Reina Sofía, and it's undoubtedly one of the best exhibits I've ever seen. I've been lucky to see quite a bit of Picasso's art in New York, Madrid, Barcelona, and Paris. I've come to appreciate how his style evolved deliberately toward the consciously "infantile." I did not know that he was director of the Prado Museum during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), and that he was so influenced by the Prado's paintings. The exhibit in the Prado places Picasso's paintings next to the paintings of the Prado which inspired him, including Velazquez's *Las meninas*, Goya's *La maja desnuda*, and El Greco's *El Caballero con la mano en el pecho*. Last summer, as a final paper for my "Art in the Prado" class, I compared Velazquez's *Las meninas* with Picasso's thirty odd paintings inspired by this masterpiece. Although I had seen most of them in my trip to Barcelona later that summer, it was fabulous to see 5 of Picasso's *Las meninas* and Velazquez's painting at the same time. It was so exciting to compare them, back and forth – "Oh, there's Velazquez! There's the mirror! There's the Infanta Maria! There's the dog!" – and to realize how masterfully Picasso had captured all the elements of character, space, lighting, and color. When I'm very excited, I tend to wiggle my toes, and boy were they moving the whole time!

I briefly visited some old favorites in the Prado, including Goya's *La familia de Carlos IV* and Velazquez's *La fragua de Vulcan*, before meeting the group to go to the Reina Sofía. The focus of the joint exhibit is Picasso's masterpiece, *Guernica*, which was returned to the Reina Sofía 25 years ago. *Guernica* is a powerful reaction to the horrors of war – particularly, the bombing of a Basque town, Gernika, in 1937, by German airplanes who were fighting for

Franco. Picasso was an outspoken Republican (the losing side), and on his death he decreed that *Guernica*, already a recognized artistic masterpiece, should not return to Spain until political freedom was re-established. (Before then, it was in the Museum of Modern Art in New York.) Three other masterpieces depicting the horrors of war completed the focus of the exhibit – Goya's *El 3 de mayo: Los fusilamientos* (1814), Manet's *The Execution of Maximilian* (1868-9) and Picasso's *Massacre in Korea* (1951). There was also a Picasso I never knew about: *The Charnel House* (1945), on loan from the Museum of Modern Art in New York, which depicts the horror of the concentration camps of WWII. Despite the chilling subjects, it was an incredible opportunity to see how artists of different generations protested the cruelty of war and the victimization of innocent civilians.

Given my growing uneasiness over the mounting civilian casualties in Lebanon, Israel's actions, and the international protests, this art made me reflect on the war – as much as I hate to think that it's a war, and not a quick reaction to Hezbollah - and on the plight of civilians during war. As a background, relations between Spain and Israel have actually improved greatly in the past twenty years. There is little overt anti-Semitism, and Spain recognizes the economic power of Israel and distrusts Hamas. To learn more, Google "Madrid Conference 1991," "Barcelona Process," and "Quartet Position and Hamas." At the same time, the television and newspapers here are filled with images of Lebanese refugees. As modern warfare evolves beyond recognition, what does it mean to be a civilian?

The idea of Total War – civilians targeted alongside soldiers – applies, perhaps, even to the American Civil War, and definitely to the World Wars. Has it now become ordinary to target civilians, rather than soldiers? In Spain, this is what has happened with ETA – originally they targeted policemen, then policemen, and now mostly regular civilians. The rise of terrorism – New York, Madrid, London, and Bombay – shows that innocent civilians are now the targets. Besides for being inherently scary from a civilian's point of view, it also reveals the depth of hatred, which is so easily generalized to entire countries or religions. Then again, this is not new – think of the Crusades and the Holocaust, among so many examples. Women and children have always been victimized by invading armies, even when soldiers were the official targets. Picasso's *Massacre in Korea* captured this injustice – the naked women and children clustered before the firing squad were pathetic and terrified. Even if we glorify past wars – which we surely do, in the general glorifying lens of History – we have to remember that they were terrible and full of suffering, and that humans, past, present, and future, are capable of hating and killing perfect strangers.

Sunday, July 23, 2006 –

On this scorching day, I stayed inside, nursing a cold and working my way toward the end of *Great Expectations*. In the afternoon, I met Lucia at the movie theater to see *Princesas*, a film about prostitutes, which was chilling but artistically impressive. What is it about art that seeks beauty in terrible things? I really liked one of the motifs: we exist not because we think about others, but because others think about us. I love Salamanca, and the community I've found here, but I could never live for a long time so far away from my family and friends.

Monday, July 24, 2006 –

I finally finished *Great Expectations* – I loved the characterizations and dialogue, but the plot got wearying toward the end. In the evening, I met Lucia for a walk around the city. She reminds me a lot of Maria, my dear friend from the first three weeks, who is also from Greece.

After a long walk, we went for tapas at *Meson Cervantes*, a bar with cozy Castilian décor, a great view of the Plaza Mayor, and very few tourists. I had my favorite tapas – octopus and croquettes – and enjoyed talking with her about everything from law to literature to less academic gossip. Afterward, we sat in the Plaza de Anaya by the Cathedral and talked some more, before heading home.

Tuesday, July 25, 2006 –

Today was a national holiday for St. James, patron saint of Spain and of Santiago de Compostela in particular. I took advantage of a free morning to take a long walk. Thanks to Salamanca's altitude, the mornings are wonderfully brisk, and if you stay in the shade it's still tolerable by 11 AM. I stopped by the *Casa de Unamuno*, the house where Unamuno lived as the rector of the University of Salamanca. I loved seeing his old photos, books, drafts, and furniture. I copied this wonderful quote: "Como yo fundamentalmente no soy más que palabra, el no hablar es morir y francamente, a morir no estoy dispuesta." (My translation: "As I'm fundamentally no more than a word, to not speak would be death and frankly, I'm not ready to die.") In the afternoon, I read part of Unamuno's short story *Dos Madres*, which reminded me of Lorca's *Yerma*, one of my favorite plays.

In the afternoon, I went to the movies with Lucia to see "Camarón," a biopic drama about a famous flamenco singer, José Monge Cruz "Camarón de la Isla." It was spectacular – the actor captured all the peculiarities of flamenco, just as Jamie Foxx captured Ray Charles so well in "Ray." Likewise, the actor won a Goya (the Spanish equivalent of the Oscars) for Best Actor this year. On the way home, I saw a little girl walking with her grandparents, and shading her eyes from the fierce late-afternoon sun. The grandpa saw this and walked in front of her to protect her. This made my day!

Wednesday, July 26, 2006 –

This afternoon, I revisited the Masonic Lodge-Spanish Civil War Museum. Luckily, I ran into Lucia on my way there and convinced her to join me. The museum is small enough to look at every detail without despairing of ever finishing. I was amazed by the variety of forms of propaganda by both Nationalists and Republicans. Besides for newspapers and posters, there were board games and educational materials.

I was fascinated and disturbed by a series of spelling cards. For example, on top would be a picture of a soldier, then a phrase like "support our troops," and then the letters below, "s-p-r-t-u-o." A pamphlet on the ten principles of Nationalism said something like, "Silence is a citizen's duty." Wow! In general, both sides freely abused words like "liberty," "nationhood," and "duty," employing them in ways so contradictory to their true meaning.

It was a wake-up call to see this propaganda. Spaniards of the 1930s were not stupid, yet this pervasive propaganda surely influenced them. I wonder if American society has similar propaganda today? To be sure, American textbooks are often inaccurate ("Columbus discovered America") or unbiased ("evolution is just a theory"), but this is a long way from using propaganda to teach spelling. However, catchphrases like "terrorism," "weapons of mass destruction," and "axis of evil" are used so often, and even the most astute Americans are surely affected by them. I remember in the nervous months after 9-11, when Americans were encouraged to report any suspicious activity by their neighbors – instead of "silence," informing was "a citizen's duty." The language and presentation of American propaganda might be more subtle, but it's equally pernicious.

The relationship between art and war seems to be an unexpected theme of my summer. I loved the series of war posters. For a term paper on the depiction of women in French WWI posters, I had a blast studying the originals in the Yale Manuscripts and Archives. The subject is disturbing, but the posters are fascinating and informative. They combine elements of art (lettering, message, colors), politics (justifying war to soldiers and civilians; depictions of self and enemy), psychology (appealing to fear; inspiring patriotic sentiment), and sociology (class differences; roles of men, women and children). If I were ever to get a Ph.D. in History, I would do my thesis on war posters!

Thursday, July 27, 2006 –

This evening, the Aida Gómez Spanish Dance Company presented a flamenco performance of Bizet's *Carmen* in the *Colegio Fonseca* courtyard. Aida Gómez herself played the title role with dazzling sensuality. Bizet's famous orchestral themes were interspersed with flamenco songs. It was transfixing! The stereotypes of Spanish culture – Don Juans, Carmens, *toreros* (bullfighters), flamenco – are sometimes exhaustingly macho, but tonight they were entrancing.

Friday, July 28, 2006 –

This afternoon I went to see “El Método” at the movie theater. It depicted eight people contending for an executive position at a large company. They were set in a room, and given a series of tasks that gradually eliminated all but one. It was intriguing, but I was glad to step into the sunlight after and return to my simple, carefree life!

Saturday, July 29, 2006 –

This weekend I caught a ride with my professor Pacho to Leon, a beautiful city two hours north of Salamanca. In the 11th and 12th centuries, it was the center of Christian Spain; today, it is an important city on the Way of Saint James, the pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela.

After finding a great hostel, eating lunch, and taking a siesta, I decided to explore the many impressive sites in roughly chronological order. I began with the Romanesque Basilica of San Isidoro, which was constructed during the 11th Century. Romanesque architecture, from the 11th to 13th centuries, is characterized by thick defensive walls, few windows, and semicircular arches. The tour began in the treasury, which was filled with treasures such as the *Cáliz de Doña Urraca*, a beautiful 11th Century gold chalice inlaid with precious stones. We continued onto the library, which had a massive Mozarabic bible from 960. (“Mozarabic” refers to art and architecture of Christians living under Arab rule between 711 and 1492, although the style continued to have influence even after the Christian Reconquest.) There are few places I like more than old libraries filled with old books!

We headed down to the Royal Pantheon, one of the earliest and best-preserved examples of Romanesque architecture in the region. The 12th Century columns, walls, and ceilings were covered with frescoes depicting biblical scenes, plants and animals, and even a calendar of seasonal tasks. They have been cleaned, not renovated, yet the colors are still strong almost a millennium later. I learned that in the Romanesque style, Saint Matthew was depicted as a man, Saint Luke as a bull, Saint Mark as a lion, and Saint John as an eagle. During the early 1800s the Royal Pantheon was used as a stable for Napoleon's troops, so experts are not sure of the exact location of the corpses of the 23 kings, queens and princes who were buried there. The guide was so friendly and informative that I did the whole visit twice!

My next stop was the Cathedral of Leon, which is deservedly the most famous Gothic cathedral in Spain. Gothic architecture, from the 13th and 14th centuries, is characterized by height (pinnacles and flying buttresses), large stained-glass windows, and pointed arches. The Leon Cathedral is filled with magnificent stained-glass windows, with a total area of 12,917 square feet. The famous *Rosetón*, or rose-shaped stained-glass window in the main façade, reminded me of Notre Dame. I happened to enter just as a bride was proceeding down the aisle, so my visit was accompanied by a choir and chamber music!

In the evening, I went out for tapas. The first bar served fabulous prawns, and I chatted with a nice couple of medieval historians from Great Britain. The next place I chose happened to specialize in *croquetas*, my favorite type of tapas. When the waitress told me the three types of tapas, I didn't understand what *morcilla* meant. The nice couple next to me explained that it was fried pigs blood, a regional specialty. Over a plate of delicious croquettes, my favorite being *morcilla*, I spent the next hour talking with Belisario and Yolanda, a wonderful couple in their mid-fifties. Belisario is a doctor in Leon and his wife Yolanda has learned all about Leon's monuments and history. Belisario paid for our food, and his wife offered to show me around the nearby *Judería*, the old Jewish Ghetto. From there we continued to the ancient city walls, and then doubled back through an old section of Leon. Next to the Romanesque church of Saint Mary was a quaint medieval house, whose second story extended by stilts over the street where merchants used to trade.

Yolanda suggested that we try the real *morcilla*, since I had enjoyed the *morcilla* croquettes so much. This was the last Spanish specialty that I had thought I should try, but I had been avoiding it because, well, it's *fried pig's blood!* We went to *La Bicha*, which is famous in Leon for its *morcilla*. It was crowded, but the *morcilla*, prepared with onions and resembling a strong chili, was definitely worth the wait! Yolanda warned me that this *morcilla* was especially strong, but it didn't bother me a bit. Who would have thought that the little girl who used to insist on plain pasta without a smidge of parsley would be enjoying fried pigs blood in a Spanish bar!

After that feast, they walked me back to my hotel so I could grab my camera. Leon is spectacular by night, and I took tons of photos of the illuminated monuments. We walked all around the city, and Yolanda told me all about the history of the city – my very own private night-time tour! I finally returned to my hotel room at 1 AM, after promising to meet them the next day for lunch. What an unexpected friendship!

Sunday, July 30, 2006 –

In the morning, I revisited the cathedral, and then went across the street to the *Museo Sierra-Pambley*, which Yolanda had highly recommended. In 1848, a young bourgeois built and furnished the home for a marriage that never happened. Heartbroken, Don Segundo Sierra-Pambley refused to live there. Forty years later, Sierra-Pambley and his liberal bourgeois friends, including the innovative educator Don Manuel Bartolomé Cossio, founded a school next door for the children of farmer and laborers. The museum, which includes the preserved home and an exposition on the innovative educational methods developed by Cossio, opened just a month ago.

The tour began on the second floor, which was the home built by Sierra-Pambley in anticipation of his wedding. It was full of interesting daily tools, including the very latest in personal grooming tools, hand guns, and other gadgets of the mid-1800s. My favorite part was a kit which recommended daily doses of a metallic chloride, which I remembered from my pre-med days as very potent and definitely not meant for ingestion! The kit also lauded the health

benefits of tobacco, whose dangers millions of people still ignore today, so maybe we haven't advanced that much in 150 years.

I continued on to the *Palacio de los Guzmanes*, formerly a wealthy family's home and today the seat of the regional government. I loved the stained glass which depicted traditional costumes and the regions of *Castilla y Leon*. I crossed the street to the *Casa de los Botines*, another former private home designed and built by the famous Catalán architect Antonio Gaudí. The lower level now serves as a gallery, and I enjoyed the exhibition of Jesús Molina (1903-1968), whose impressionist paintings skillfully depicted soldiers of the Spanish Civil War.

After checking out of the hostel, I hiked across town to meet Yolanda and Belisario at the *Antiguo Convento de San Marcos* (Former Monastery of Saint Mark), which is now the most famous of the *paradors*, a national chain of deluxe hotels. The façade is considered a Renaissance masterpiece, and the interior was the epitome of old-world splendor. Renaissance architecture, from the 16th century, is characterized by semicircular and triple arches, lintels (rectangular frame above doors and windows), and elegant proportions. From the library there was even a window through which I could peer into the adjacent church!

We took a short walk to the Roman Bridge, and then met their son at the MUSAC, the Museum of Contemporary Art. It was literally the most painfully horrible art I have ever seen – one of the pieces was a pedestrian tunnel lined with large light bulbs, which nearly fried me as I walked through! Ugh!

I joined the family for lunch at their apartment. We talked for two hours, comparing the cultures of Spain and America, which was fascinating. I told them all about Rotary International and the Ambassadorial Scholarships, for which their son now intends to apply. They complimented me over and over on my fluency in Spanish. While we were waiting for Pacho to pick me up, we promised to keep in touch. Really, this friendship made me realize how much I've learned this summer – how to meet and really connect with new people in foreign cultures, not to mention my improved language skills which make this possible. I was so proud when Yolanda said I was truly an Ambassador of Good Will – I've earned my title!

Monday, July 30, 2006 –

I needed a day to wind down after my weekend adventures, so I spent the afternoon reading "Gulliver's Travels" and went to the gym in the evening.

Tuesday, August 1, 2006 –

This is the beauty of being a Rotary scholar – the current *subdelegado* of Salamanca (basically the mayor), Jesús Málaga, is also a Rotarian *and* the chair of the renowned department of speech-language pathology at the Pontifical University of Salamanca. José Cordón, the past president of the Salamanca Plaza Mayor Rotary club, was kind enough to arrange a meeting, and I was able to describe my research and my professional goals. He helped me arrange a meeting for that afternoon with a colleague, who answered my questions about returning to Salamanca during or after my graduate study.

In the evening, I finally summoned up the courage to play my violin on the streets of Salamanca. My friend Grace kept me company. I played for an hour, then we went out for fancy ice cream at the famous Café Novelty on the Plaza Mayor, and then I played for another hour. In total I earned 34 euros, or about 45 dollars in change, and had a great time.

Wednesday, August 2, 2006 –

Today I finally caught up on my journal, after all the excitement of the past few days, and continued on with “Gulliver’s Travels.” In the evening, Lucia joined me for a repeat performance of last-night’s violin adventures. Two women actually took a picture as they were dropping money in my case, so I guess I’m now a tourist attraction! In an hour I earned around \$15, which was enough to pay for a great night of tapas for two.

We headed over to *Calle Van Dyke*, a street which has tons of great non-touristy bars. (By the way, a “bar” in Spain means a place to have a drink and a few tapas, with the ambience more of an American café than a bar.) We began with a bar that specialized in delicious *costillas* (ribs). Then we headed next door, where we enjoyed the specialties of *jeta* (fried pig’s cheek or snout) and *chorizo al vino* (sausage cooked in wine). Our third stop was famous for its *moruno* (pork kebab). It was perfect – a few drinks and small portions of fabulous meat, and the cost for all three was not more than \$15 for the two of us. We stopped by my apartment to drop off the violin, and then chatted for another hour in a small café nearby. Its nights like these that I will remember forever.