Well now that the technical difficulties are solved here was our day on Tuesday July 21st. We started at the Dolmabahce Palace which was built between the years 1843-1856 under the order of the Empire’s 31st sultan, Sultan Abdulmecid. As we walked up the red and white flower bordered entrance we came to these huge white gates. The first picture is of the sultan’s seal. Yes, like in Alladin. The second picture is inside the palace gates looking back at the walkway to the palace.

We had to put plastic booties over our shoes to protect the carpets. We waited on the large marble front stair case for our group’s turn the tour. It was finally our time. As I walked into the doors I was overwhelmed by memories of grandma’s house. The stuffy heat and smells of furniture with dust sent me to a familiar time of running into my grandmother’s house as a kid. As we walk there was an abundance of crystal floor chandeliers and the second largest ceiling chandelier in the magnificent Muayede Hall. I noticed every door knob was porcelain white with pink around the the edges and delicate flowers in the center of the knob. They made me think of my girls.

Next we visited the Blue Mosque. This place of worship is not named the Blue Mosque for its’ lead covered domes, but for the blue tiles inside the mosque. We all gather around for an explanation of the Islamic religious practices. The Blue Mosque is one of the only mosques worldwide with six minuettes.
Another historic museum locate right across the street from the Blue Mosque is the Hagia Sofia Museum. It was the largest cathedral in the world for nearly a thousand years, until the completion of the Seville Cathedral in 1520. The current building was originally constructed as a church between 532 and 537 A.D. on the orders of the Byzantine Emperor Justinian. This now museum was the largest Catholic church in the world for 1000 years. It was a catholic church that was captured by Muslims in 1432, but instead of tearing it down it was converted into a mosque by plastering over the Christian. After WW I the religious structure became a museum to celebrate both faiths and the Christian were revealed in places.

Our first day was filled with breath taking views, goose bumps, many, many water bottles and time spent bonding with each other. We are doing great (feet are a little sore) and adjusting to our 8 hour time difference as many of you have received calls at crazy hours of the day or night. We are grateful for this opportunity and feel your love as we see things we many truly never find the words to describe, the things we are experiencing. Sending my love to my girls and husband back home. Mom is taking it in with open eyes and an open heart. Mom haggled with ‘em at the Bazaar but did not let them get the best of her. Talk to you soon.

Amy Clifton

July 21, 2009 by Johnny Dopp

Today we left Istanbul to go to Cappadocia. Upon arrival at Cappadocia we checked into our hotel to begin our journey through the Deferent Valley. Driving and walking through this landscape was wonderful. The whole area we are in is covered with volcanic rock and the rock has been eroded into weird and wonderful structures called “fairy chimneys”. Early monks, Christians, and locals have made their homes, chapels, and churches inside of these monolithic structures. To do this they would carve out the inside of the fairy chimney. The most famous group of fairy chimneys is called “The Goreme Open Air Museum”. When traveling through the areas where the fairy chimneys are located it seems like I am walking through a Martian landscape. Many of the chimneys are very large. I would say that the biggest ones are 50-60 feet tall and some of the smaller ones about
10-20 feet tall. Some of the chimneys had very old Christian paintings. I really enjoyed walking in and out of these ancient structures. Once we finished our tour of The Goreme Open Air Museum we traveled to a winery. Several of the students tried the wine and said that it was very dry. I did not taste any wine and we did not stay very long. After this we traveled to a rug factory. I enjoyed this part of the trip. Here they make very nice rugs. The Turkish have a double knotting system with makes the rug more durable than other rugs made in other countries. To start our tour of the factory we first saw a presentation of how the rugs are made. The room we were led to had six ladies and they were all making rugs. It looked like a very tedious and long process. I now have a greater appreciation for hand woven rugs! Once the presentation was over we were led to another demonstration of how they extract the silk from the cocoons of silk worms. This was an excellent process to see. It is amazing that the silk we use in clothing products come from worms that make the silk. The final presentation and display was the best. The man who was giving the presentations showed us the differences between rugs woven with wool on wool, silk on wool, and silk on silk. When rugs are woven with silk there can be more knots placed in a square centimeter than a rug woven with wool. This means that a rug made with more knots per square centimeter can have more detail. A nice rug is going to be very tightly woven and made of silk. After the presentation was over many students bought rugs. I did not buy one but really wanted to! At the end of the day we returned to our hotel to eat some supper and to get a good nights rest. Tomorrow we visit Kaymakli Underground City, Uchisar Natural Rock Castle, and Selime Village.

**So what?**

Today I leaned that rug making is a very tedious process and that the process of weathering and erosion can form some very interesting structures. So far I have enjoyed this part of the trip the best. Seeing how the fairly chimneys were carved out to make homes and churches showed me how resilient and creative man can be and seeing how much time and effort it takes to make a hand woven rug makes me appreciate the women who make hand woven rugs a hundred times fold.

**Now what?**

I now can use the pictures and videos I have taken to share with others to help them see what wonderful country Turkey can be to visit.

**July 21, 2009 by Matt Davis**

We then got on a plane that took us to Cappadocia (The second ‘c’ is a ‘k’ sound). The climate and look of Cappadocia is very similar to parts of New Mexico. Well, the good parts. It is very dry and hilly with beautiful rock formations. The Devrent Valley and Monk Valley has beautiful “fairy chimneys” that have been created by a unique layering of ash, lava rock, obsidian, and various different types. As a result of erosion and the differing densities of the rock, these amazing rock formations have been created.

Another aspect of the climate is that along with little rainfall, it has significant day to night temperature change. All of this creates a ideal climate for growing grapes…And yes they make wine. The judges are still out on whether Turkey wine is any good, but the guide and the man at the winery, that we visited, assured us it was.

We, then, visited Goreme Open-Air Museum. Where there are churches and monasteries carved into the rock walls. During 1000-1200 A.D. the Eastern Orthodox Church became against any icons (No paintings, images, or anything that might be considered an idol). The monks then left and created the cave churches and monasteries, so they could be free to do as they like. They painted different frescoes and created intricately carved rock entrances into their churches.
We then went to a rug factory. It was very interesting to see how the rugs were made. It was a show to see the gentlemen try and sell us rugs/carpets…Except some of us spent too much. I don’t want to talk about it.

I hope our families are doing wonderful. Except for a few calluses on our feet we are great. See you all soon.

Our first stop was the underground city. These cities were built to act as short term refuges in times of danger. When we went into the cave, we first came to a stable. It’s amazing to think of people bringing their animals under the ground and making them a place to live and function. We also saw storage places, kitchens, living rooms and churches. It is hard to even imagine living in a place where there is no sunlight and being so closed off from the outside world. It was amazing to go down and meditate on how these people lived. It was so small! We all had to duck and some of the bigger guys were even wedged into some of the spots. Very challenging but so worth it. Next, we stopped on the side of the road to see some more stone houses. While we were there, we decided to take a group picture. While everyone was lined up and ready for the picture, poor Larry walked in front of a camel and it attacked! He grabbed Larry’s hand with his lips and spit all over his shirt! After that the camel kept a very close eye on Larry until we left. After lunch, we traveled to the Ihlara Valley. It is a canyon that was formed by the cracking and collapsing which occurred as basalt and andesite lava from Mt. Hasandag cooled. It also had a river running through the middle of it. It was spectacular to see all this dry terrain and then all of a sudden there is this beautiful oasis in the middle of it all. On the sides of the walls were holes-perfectly shaped squares in the middle of these stone walls. These holes were made for the Monks which the guide calls Hermits (maybe 😊). They would go there for seclusion and it was a defense area for people during times of invasions. I just wonder how they got up there. The holes were literally in the middle of a wall. When we got back to the hotel, Dr. Henderson had a special treat for us. He had met some nice men who are in the hotel and carpet business. The interesting thing about these men is that they still live in one of the rock houses that has been in their family for 300 years. They offered to cook us supper and then show us their rugs. It was so awesome to be able to go into one of the rock houses and actually see how it would be set up with someone living in there. It was really nice. They had installed wood floors, the walls were still natural rock, but they had put carpets up for decorations. The carpets they showed us were so beautiful. The one that was the most special to me was a carpet that the men had designed themselves. They had taken many carpets from different regions that were up to 100 years old and then patched them together to make the most unique work of art. I loved what one of the gentlemen said. He said that at the time that most of these rugs were made, that these regions all fought against each other, but now they can be put together to make something beautiful.

The Nile…after being here we can all imagine how the ancient Egyptians would consider it a god. After we passed over its waters to the west side saved for the city of the dead, the desert began. Gamal, our Egyptologist guide spoke of the Valley of the Kings, called Thebes by the Greeks. The sandstone and rock outcroppings were excellent hiding places for the resting place for the Pharaohs. We wondered how many other tombs might be hidden under our feet, just as King Tut's tomb was hidden from the Pharaoh who built just above his small tunnel. We visited the tombs of Pharaohs I, IV, and IX. The reliefs in the tombs have suffered over time from robbers and graffiti, some of it from the Coptic church. Even so the colors of blue, silver, oranges and reds brightened the dark corridors. The ancient hieroglyphics and cartouches ran perpendicular to the floor revealing portions of the books of the dead and stories of the journey to the afterlife. The carvings are much deeper and more dimensional than the photographs we have seen.

We could have have walked over the Valley of the Kings to reach the Valley of the Queens, but it was too hot to tackle in the summer heat. We toured two tombs in this area. Queen Hot Chicken Soup, I mean - Hatchupsut's tomb is closed because the humidity from too many sweaty bodies is destroying the artwork. It is supposed to be the most exquisite tomb, even more beautifully painted than some of those in the Valley of the Kings. She was beloved by Ramses II and his most beautiful wives. (He only had 34.) We were able to see two exceptional tombs. The reliefs in the tomb of Amon-Her-Khopsef were destroyed when the local people used them as stables, but the upper parts of the wall surprised us all with their detail and beauty. This tomb also had a mummified fetus in the corner. It is thought that the baby was the brother of the man buried in the tomb. The artwork on the walls of this valley show scenes from daily life and help Egyptologists know even more about
Another Day on our Go-Global Trip to Egypt/Greece/Turkey

This morning we said goodbye to Cappadocia, I think we all fell in love with the area. After breakfast we all headed onto the bus for a 3 or so hour ride to Konya. The area we drove through is known as the bread basket of Turkey because they grow so much wheat and another grain, bulgur. They are harvesting wheat right now and we got to see some of the process as we drove past the fields. The process here is done much more by hand than at home. The soil here is also very different, it looks grey like rock. We passed many beautiful fields of sunflowers.

On the way to Konya we stopped at an old caravanserai. It was a place built in the 12th century as a place for people traveling by caravan to stop along the way. There was usually one every 25 km, because that was about the distance you could travel in one day by caravan. Traders could stay there for three days for free because the sultan wanted to encourage trade. There were also guards placed around the caravanserai to make it safe from bandits. Inside there would be barbers, people to shine shoes, and take care of the camels and other animals. It was made of white stone and elaborately decorated. There were all sorts of patterns and verses from the Koran carved into the front. The inside is a big open space with smaller rooms along the side and in the back was a big area with a roof for a rainy day  good place for the camels. Along one wall they had many tools lined up, a wooden rake, a cradle, bowls etc to imagine their daily life. The most important thing that happened at a caravanserai was the exchange of news and messages. The Word of Jesus and Muhammad alike traveled through places like this.

We traveled on to Konya and got checked into the hotel. As soon as you arrive in Konya you can feel a difference from any of the other places we have been in Turkey. It feels much more conservative and traditional. It is a town that is deeply religious. Most all of the women are wearing scarves over their hair and it is the first time I have really noticed large groups of men on the way to a mosque when I heard the call to pray. Today is Friday so it is the day that the men go to the mosque at noon for prayer. Less people speak English it seems. We got checked into the hotel and went to a lunch outside. Watching the people walk around was nice.

Loaded back onto the bus and headed to the Mevlana Museum. Mevlana created a sector of the church called the whirling dervishes. They were a group who believed that doing this special whirling dance could get you closer to God while you were still on Earth. They wore special costumes and each piece represented something different. They would put their right hands up to the sky and the left one down to the ground. The right arm is going up to God and the left is going out to give their heart to the people. It was a philosophy that it didn't matter where you came from or what your religion we are all one family. The museum was very crowded, definitely one of the most crowded places we have been. The first room is the study room. Students would come in there to study the Koran. The second room was the tomb room. There are 65 tombs in all at the museum. The tomb of Mevlana, his son, and his father are in the tomb room. Mevlana's tomb was elaborately decorated with gold and verses from the Koran. Next we entered the whirling room. This is where they did the dance. In here are cases filled with the poetry and philosophy books Mevlana wrote along with his clothes. There was a screened in gallery at the top where the women could watch. Next was the mosque, there were many beautiful copies of the Koran and prayer rugs that have been given to the monastery as gifts.

When this was a working place to worship and learn men would come to the teacher who would give them a test. This was a serious place of devotion; the men would serve and learn for 1001 days, so they could only take men who were very serious about it. If the men passed the test then they turned their shoes toward the building and this meant they could stay, if the men failed the test then they turned the shoes toward the door and they had to go on. The students lived for 1001 days with very little food, sleep, talking etc. They would have different jobs at the monastery and spend lots of time in the meditation rooms.
My favorite part of this museum was the newly married couple who came to take pictures with their family. The guide said that they probably just got married and came there because it is believed to be a very healing place. They would be coming to pray together and receive blessings for their new marriage. The bride looked very beautiful in her white dress and red scarf.

We will be leaving here very early tomorrow morning, so I am signing off and getting some sleep.

Another Day on our Go-Global Trip to Egypt/Greece/Turkey

Assalaamu Alaykum!

Hello to all and we miss you! We are all safe and having a wonderful time. Today we started our day a little late, 4:00 AM to be exact! We caught a 6:15 AM flight to Istanbul. We arrived safely in Istanbul to catch yet another flight to Izmir. Once we reached Izmir we boarded a bus that took us to house that is believed to be where The Virgin Mary lived after the death of Jesus. The house is now a shrine to Mary. People can pray, worship, and even participate in communion. This was a very peaceful and beautiful place. As we left there was a wall that you could leave a prayer or wish on and it is guaranteed to come true.

Leaving the home of Mary we stopped at what is believed to be the tomb of St. Luke.

We left the tomb of Luke to go to the Sultan Restaurant. This was a combination of a hot and cold buffet of Turkish foods. I think the peaches and water were the best part, "Maybe."

By this time it was necessary for some of us to do some shopping. There were ladies having withdrawal from not shopping in the last 12 hours. We decided to do something a little different and go to a Ceramic Shop. We
were able to watch the process from start to finish at each station for hand made ceramics.

Finally, we ended up at the ancient Greco Roman City of Ephesus at 3:00 PM the "coolest" part of the day. This two hour tour was one of the most magnificent of the trip so far. We all felt a little surreal that were actually walking the same steps as the ancient Romans. It was remarkable to see this piece of history.

We left to make our way to the hotel. We are staying the night in a hotel on the Aegean Sea in Kusadasi. We were welcomed with a cold drink and a warm smile. As fast as some could change they were near the water. There was a grand dinner buffet with a little bit of everything to choose from.

To our surprise there was a wedding reception for the evening. From our balconies we not only got to see the beautiful crescent moon shine on the ocean, but also watch this different culture celebrates a marriage. With the expected differences we also found several commonalities in our culture and theirs.

Now, although your sun is rising as our sun is setting we are thinking of each of you. Husbands, wives, significant others, children, grandchildren, parents and friends, good night and God bless. Until tomorrow...

Well now that the technical difficulties are solved here was our day on Tuesday July 21st. We started at the Dolmabahce Palace which was built between the years 1843-1856 under the order of the Empire’s 31st sultan, Sultan Abdulmecid. As we walked up the red and white flower bordered entrance we came to these huge white gates. The first picture is of the sultan’s seal. Yes, like in Alladin. The second picture is inside the palace gates looking back at the walkway to the palace.

We had to put plastic booties over our shoes to protect the carpets. We waited on the large marble front stair case for our group’s turn the tour. It was finally our time. As I walked into the doors I was overwhelmed by memories of grandma’s house. The stuffy heat and smells of furniture with dust sent me to a familiar time of running into my grandmother’s house as a kid. As we walk there was an abundance of crystal floor chandeliers and the second largest ceiling chandelier in the magnificent Muayede Hall. I noticed every door knob was porcelain white with pink around the the edges and delicate flowers in the center of the knob. They made me think of my girls.
Next we visited the Blue Mosque. This place of worship is not named the Blue Mosque for its’ lead covered domes, but for the blue tiles inside the mosque. We all gather around for an explanation of the Islamic religious practices. The Blue Mosque is one of the only mosques worldwide with six minnettes.

Another historic museum locate right across the street from the Blue Mosque is the Hagia Sofia Museum. It was the largest cathedral in the world for nearly a thousand years, until the completion of the Seville Cathedral in 1520. The current building was originally constructed as a church between 532 and 537 A.D. on the orders of the Byzantine Emperor Justinian. This now museum was the largest Catholic church in the world for 1000 years. It was a catholic church that was captured by Muslims in 1432, but instead of tearing it down it was converted into a mosque by plastering over the Christian. After WW I the religious structure became a museum to celebrate both faiths and the Christian were revealed in places.
Our first day was filled with breath taking views, goose bumps, many, many water bottles and time spent bonding with each other. We are doing great (feet are a little sore) and adjusting to our 8 hour time difference as many of you have received calls at crazy hours of the day or night. We are grateful for this opportunity and feel your love as we see things we many truly never find the words to describe, the things we are experiencing. Sending my love to my girls and husband back home. Mom is taking it in with open eyes and an open heart. Mom haggled with ’em at the Bazaar but did not let them get the best of her. Talk to you soon.

Amy Clifton

July 24, 2009

Hatshepsut's temple was an impressive sight on the barren horizon. Her building campaign was impressive, and highlighted later in the day when we saw the obelisk she had constructed for the Temple of Ra at Karnak. Called The King Herself by a recent article in National Geographic, she ruled Egypt for 21 years even when her son became old enough to rule. Finally fed up with his mother's usurpation of his rule, he killed her and tried to destroy any evidence of her rule. We could clearly see her face chiseled from the reliefs and broken from the statues.

We discovered that many of the names of the kings we are familiar with are not the true Egyptian names. The Greeks simplified them so that they would be easier to pronounce. The Colossi of Memnon, however, was completely changed. The Greeks found the two 60 foot statues guarding the Valley of the Kings and thought they looked similar to Agamemnon, one of their heroes! Poor Amenhotep III, the statues are still known by this name today.

The last portion of the day was spent at Karnak. The structure is the largest structure ever built in the world to honor a god. Pharaohs from all time periods wanted to add something to the temple or to the great temple complex to honor Ra. We thought the line of sphinxes were impressive. Then we saw the 10 columns at the
entrance and thought they were impressive. Then we walked further and redefined impressive. Over a 130 columns perfectly spaced and reaching into the sky, creating it's own complex of shade.

**Adventures from Team Athena!**

Team Athena began their 8 hr adventure with a hike up to Lykavittos Hill. This is the highest point in Athens. The view was absolutely spectacular! We took a tram to the top that was in a tunnel that was going basically straight up and we will admit scary. Atop the hill is a brilliant white washed church, dedicated to St. George and the prophet Elijah. After taking in the views Team Athena trekked down the zig zag path to the academic area. This area consists of the National Library and several University buildings. This is where we saw a large statue of the goddess Athena and got the idea for our team name. Later one team member even bought a statue of our mascot. We visited several Byzantine churches in the Plaka area next. One was particularly interesting because the people from Athens were going in and out of church and praying. It was obvious at this point that Team Athena needed refueling so we headed into the flea market and shopping area to look for a place to eat and get off our feet. We were recharged and suddenly in the mood to shop, so we all picked up a few more things we just had to have. We looked up and were at the Tour of the Winds. We almost didn’t see it because we expected some huge tower and to be honest compared to the other places we have seen it really wasn’t big at all. Across the street was the Temple of Olympian Zeus and Hadrian’s Arch. We were so excited to use our tickets from yesterday to be able to get in. This is the point where we really realized just how far we had trekked. We looked up and the little church we had visited this morning looked a million miles away on that little hill. A stop for one more bottle of water got us ready for our last stop, the Acropolis Museum. The museum only opened in June of this year and is full of remnants and information from the entire Acropolis area. Our feet had had enough, so we jumped in a cab for the return to the hotel, rather than walking. It was a great day.
Team Athena really got to see many different parts of the city and laughed lots along the way.

**Team Agoraphobic Adventure**

The day started out just as the seven preceding it…a set time to meet in the lobby and head out for a day of increasing our cultural knowledge. With one seat short on the shuttle, hotel staff summoned a taxi and we were off for a self guided walking tour of the city. As the taxi dropped our team off in the center of Athens the real fun began, sketchy maps and starting from a different origination point made for some interesting interpretations, but all worked itself out and we received some interesting directions along the way.

We made our way to the Museum of Folk Art, but got so distracted by all the ruins at ground level outside that we never made our way into the museum. An ironic aside, we noted on one of the plaques that where once a tetraconch church stood and was destroyed in the 6th century…and in the 7th replaced by two churches, later in that very same spot stood the Megali Pangia in the 12th century and could possibly be one of the first Catholic churches. Now for the irony, it was burned down in 1885 to begin the first archeological excavations. With intermittent Greek Orthodox churches added and a great lunch we continued on to Ancient Agora where we visited the Stoa of Attalos that now houses a museum to house the finds from the Agora site. Upon finishing our tour we discussed what we remembered most. The remains of a young girl in burial pose and a wine cooler were among two of those mentioned pointing out the ingenuity and lasting remnants from this ancient time. With one more taxi ride we finally made it to the new Acropolis Museum to view many items excavated from the original site. Feeling adventurous after an ice cream and a bit of rest we trekked all the way back to the hotel…very long walk.

**Adventures from Team Temple**

These folks took a hydrofoil speed boat to the island of Aegina where they proceeded to rent a mini with sunroof to tour the island….twice lost they made their way to the beaches and Byzantine Monastery along with the Temple of Aphaia.
After a good night’s rest on the edge of the Aegean Sea in Kusadasi, Turkey, we awoke early in the morning to head to the beautiful island of Samos, Greece. After eating breakfast we loaded our luggage (which was lined up longer than the bus) and transferred to the port where we boarded a ferry to cross the Aegean Sea. During our journey at sea, the group caught up on their thoughts and experiences of Turkey and reflected with one another on the many adventures and discoveries that were experienced. The waters were silky, soft, and a beautiful blue making for a very pleasant and peaceful boat ride. About half way through our ferry ride, a member of the crew of the ship changed the flags atop the boat, taking down the red Turkish flag with the crescent moon and star symbols and putting up the Greek flag with white and blue stripes which carried a resemblance of the U.S. flag. The Greek motto is “Freedom or Death”.

Upon arrival in the port of Samos, Greece, the group went through customs and boarded a bus to the Proteas Bay Hotel. The transfer to the hotel was approximately 25 minutes. The Proteas Bay Hotel is located 2.9 kilometers from the Port of Pythagorion. Pathagoras is the birth place of the mathematician and philosopher Pythagoras (Hence the Pythagorean Theory our students in the United States study today). The views on the drive to the hotel were spectacular, engaging the entire group with excitement and anticipated expectations of where we were going to stay. The hotel met those expectations with beautiful views of the Aegean Sea, a beach surrounded by rock cliffs, and unbelievable air conditioning!!! Upon arrival, we were greeted by a wonderful English man, who was originally from London and gave us rides in the golf cart down the steep mountain side to our rooms overlooking the Aegean Sea. He was also the shuttle bus driver, and a great resource for navigating the area.

Having spent the last week adventuring across Turkey, the arrival in Greece introduced us to a completely new culture. It was really nice to be able to wear shorts !!! Although we experienced some hot temperatures in Turkey, the climate along the coast of Samos is very humid with temperatures reaching close to 100 degrees. Sweating was a guaranteed thing if you were not in the air conditioned environment of the room. The public atmosphere here is completely different as we no longer hear the Muslim calls to prayer five times a day as

Adventures from Team Acropolis

They started their morning at the acropolis museum, returned to hotel for journaling of experiences and to practice their Greek swimming.

Adventures from Team Henderson

Team Henderson planned out an exciting day of monastery and Greek Orthodox churches with a personal tour guide who reserved a spot on the small pier for them to enjoy lunch seaside. Ending their day with a wonderful view of Lykavittos Hill.

Adventures of Team Spaulding

Toured Ancient Agora and visited Agora shopping market making many stops in sidewalk café’s to do a little people watching to learn about cultural dynamics.

Looking forward to the next phase of our adventure and third continent tomorrow. Love to our family and friends and just remember we are on the downhill side of two weeks. See you soon.

July 27, 2009 by Steven Singleton and Joe Mendez

After a good night’s rest on the edge of the Aegean Sea in Kusadasi, Turkey, we awoke early in the morning to head to the beautiful island of Samos, Greece. After eating breakfast we loaded our luggage (which was lined up longer than the bus) and transferred to the port where we boarded a ferry to cross the Aegean Sea. During our journey at sea, the group caught up on their thoughts and experiences of Turkey and reflected with one another on the many adventures and discoveries that were experienced. The waters were silky, soft, and a beautiful blue making for a very pleasant and peaceful boat ride. About half way through our ferry ride, a member of the crew of the ship changed the flags atop the boat, taking down the red Turkish flag with the crescent moon and star symbols and putting up the Greek flag with white and blue stripes which carried a resemblance of the U.S. flag. The Greek motto is “Freedom or Death”.

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Greece is 98% Greek Orthodoxy and only 1.3% Muslim. Some of the new experiences we witnessed are very similar to what you would experience in a coastal city in America. But there are some you wouldn’t normally see, such as the Mercedes Benz Taxi that can almost fly. Several of us got to experience the gauntlet of a cab ride by a man that should be on the NASCAR circuit. We thought about trying to sponsor him, but it was too late, he was already flying off in his car. The Food and Drug Administration in America would “flip out” if American restaurants operated in the same style as they do in the Greece, or at least Samos. As we walked around the port, we saw that there were octopus drying on a line with flies and wasps all over them. The octopus was located right next to the Zero Two Nine restaurant, which was going to be cooking them for dinner later. This was also a favorite restaurant of Dr. Henderson (good luck if you ate the octopus Dr. Henderson).

There are many different languages spoken on the Island of Samos with the primary language of course being Greek. Samos has become a vacation destination for many people from all over the world creating the diversity in languages you hear in the major areas around the ancient city of Pythagoras. The language barrier wasn’t a big issue as many of the people speak English good enough to communicate effectively.

**THE DAY’S ITNERARY**

Today was a day to catch up on the many thoughts and perceptions we gained in Turkey. We had today to reflect and catch up on work. Though rest was on the agenda for some, many of the group members spent time at the hotel beach soaking in the beauty of the Greek Island by laying out, swimming in the turquoise colored water, snorkeling, hiking, visiting the local ancient city of Pythagoras, eating meals on the boardwalk with a view of the sea, or just enjoying the beauty of the mountains of the island.

As today was Joe and Steve’s day to post the status of the “Great Adventure”, they went out in search of an experience. Joe and Steve left the hotel via free shuttle bus, and went down to the town Pythagoras. Upon arrival they ate lunch with several people from the group before setting out to find an adventure.

Though nobody was willing to take them out to sea, they persevered in finding a hiking adventure that the bus driver had told them would be a “four bottle of water walk” and wasn’t easy to do. They of course didn’t have any water with them. Awe the challenge. Joe and Steve set out on a 3 kilometer walk back to the hotel. But this wasn’t an ordinary, walk. No, they had to traverse the rocks, cliffs, and ridiculously harsh sticker bushes back to the hotel.
On the journey they encountered many beautiful sights. At one particular sight they stopped to wade out to a big rock in the ocean just to take pictures.

While at the big rock Joe attempted to remove a sea Urchin from a rock using a big stick. He was unsuccessful. After leaving the “big rock” they continued along the coast past a marina and around a rocky bend that left them with the challenge of climbing a cliff to continue.

Upon climbing the cliff, they realized that the trail they were trying to follow was littered with thorn bushes that made for some pretty nasty red legs (still happy to be in shorts though). After continuing along the upper cliff for a while, they encountered the end of the upper cliff from which they had to climb down and back up. After climbing down, they found a cave just above the water line of the Aegean Sea.

After quickly checking out the cave, they went back up to the top of the cliff. 50 meters later, they crested a hill where they could see the Proteas Bay Hotel Beech.
They were excited, until they realized there was only one way to the hotel. Back down the rocky cliffs, through the water for a bit, and along the rocky coast.

They were greeted by several of the group members upon returning from the hour long excursion.

We would like to thank everybody that made this trip possible, and tell all of the families back home that we all miss you and are getting to experience great things. Joe and Steve wanted to share their personal experience of the day’s events with everyone as today was a day of relaxing and personal agenda.

**From Steven:** To my wife Carrie, happy birthday, I love you and miss and will see you soon, and to my family and friends I wish you could have been here to experience what I have. In the words of many famous athletes (fitting since we are in the country famous for Olympics) I love you MOM!!!

**From Joe:** To my wife and two boys, I love you and miss you. I have lots and lots to share. Today was a wonderful experience walking the cost line and interacting with the locals and tourist.

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**Another Day on our Go-Global Trip to Egypt/Greece/Turkey**

This morning we sat on the terrace at the hotel restaurant and ate a buffet breakfast and enjoyed our last view of the Aegean Sea from the beautiful island of Samos. We’re wondering if the hotel worker from London ever sleeps since he was on the job bright and early this morning to move our entire luggage to the bus.
This was our 7th flight of the trip. It was a big surprise to some of the group that our individual total luggage weight had to be 44 pounds or less. I guess all of that souvenir buying has caught up with us. The flight to Athens was only 30 minutes, so we only got a cookie and a drink instead of a whole meal as on previous domestic flights. Everything was great on the flight until the decent…my motion sickness almost got the best of me.

We picked up our luggage, boarded our Mercedes Benz bus and left for the hotel. We’re in a Marriott in Athens for the next two nights. The group was greeted with a delicious fruity drink (mango and maybe another kind of juice mixed in). To our absolute delight, we found washcloths and air conditioning that actually cools the rooms! (Note to future travelers—pack washcloths!)

It was lunchtime, so most of the group went to the restaurant next door, Palmie Bistro, for some traditional Greek food which was wonderful. The waitress had a handheld computer and when we told her what we wanted, she would enter the order into the computer. We had a little while before our next meeting time, so some of us caught a quick power nap. At 2:45 we met in the hotel lobby and anxiously awaited our departure for the city bus tour and the Acropolis.

We saw some amazing things from the bus and were able to stop a couple of times along the way for good pictures. One of the stops was the Olympic Stadium where the first Olympics were held in 1896. It holds 70,000 people and is now used for concerts.

Another stop was Constitution Square where the tomb of the Unknown Soldier is and the changing of the guard takes place every 30 minutes. From the bus, we could see the Temple of Zeus and the Parthenon. Along the way, the tour guide said that the population of Athens is 4 million people which is 1/3 of the total population of Greece. The traffic is a big problem in Athens with more than 2 million vehicles circulating. In fact, odd and even numbered license plates have to take turns being on the road. This doesn’t solve the problem because families just buy two or more cars so they can drive every day. Supposedly the traffic isn’t near as bad right now while we are here because most of the Greek population is on holiday.

Our group then went to the highest point in the city, the Acropolis. Before starting up, we tried to buy water but only found sparkling water. This was not a favorite for some. It is quite a hike up, and we stopped along the way to listen to the tour guide as she explained what we were seeing. The view from the Acropolis of the city of Athens and other ancient ruins was astounding. We were surrounded by history in every direction. The city seemed to sparkle.
After leaving the Acropolis, the bus dropped a few of us down in the shopping/restaurant area. After a short walk and a little more souvenir buying, Maximus from Taverna Plaka Restaurant enticed us with a meal offer we could not resist-- a 15% discount, free beverages & dessert. We enjoyed our Greek meal and conversation and left Maximus and the other waiters with a “efcharisto” which means thank you in Greek. We took a short 5 minute walk and waited for the hotel shuttle to bring us back to the hotel.

We ended our night by joining our other group members up at the roof top hot tub & pool with a INCREDIBLE view of the Parthenon.

Quotes of the day:

“There is NO crying at the Acropolis.” – a mom sternly told her son

“Don’t worry, I show you.” – from our new Greek friend Maximus

July 28, 2009 by Michelle Sanders

We spent the last morning in Athens. A few members of the group made one last trip to center city to visit the Acropolis Museum. This museum is three floors and is architecturally designed so you can see through the floors to the lower levels. The layout of the museum is a replica of what you would have seen at the Parthenon. The first floor has an incredible display of pottery. A stone was also on display that women would place coins in to bless their marriages. The second floor displayed various statues including Greek soldiers, Greek Gods and Goddesses, and Greek children. The third floor was the replica of the top stones of the Parthenon. At one point on the end of the third floor, you could sit and view the display. To the outside you could see the actual Parthenon. This created a double vision effect. The history and artifacts were absolutely amazing!

We had time for a wonderful buffet breakfast before heading to the airport. On the 40 minute bus ride we enjoyed the last glimpses of Acropolis, the Tower of Zeus, and the stadium of the first Olympics.

We moved through the Athens airport quite easily. Once at our gate, most of us enjoyed a good ol’ Snickers bar. We’re not quite sure what we’re in for with Egyptian cuisine.

We boarded our plane in anticipation of our newest adventure…Egypt. Before we departed, a prayer was said to Allah over the speaker. The prayer was in Arabic. We said our own prayers as well. The two hour flight went smoothly. As we taxied to the gate, we took in our new surroundings…SAND, EVERYWHERE!! Welcome to the desert! We had arrived safely to another city, another country, another continent. Wow!!

Egypt has been quite concerned about the Swine Flu so upon arrival we passed through several thermal cameras. Any fevers would have warranted a two day quarantine. Fortunately, our group is happy and healthy. No one needed to be quarantined. We obtained our visas, exchanged money, and headed for our gate. With a three hour layover, we spent some time strolling through the airport. We also used the time to become familiar
with our newest form of currency, the Egyptian Pound (LE). A bottle of water cost 7 LE. That is equivalent to about $1.25.

Shortly we cleared security and boarded a bus that took us out to our plane. We flew on Egypt Air Express. This is comparable to American Eagle. One short hour in the air and we landed in Luxor. Gemel, our new guide, escorted us to our hotel.

![Image of the Winter Palace](image1)

Actually, it wasn’t really a hotel but a palace. King Fahruk used to stay here in this palace. The Winter Palace as it is called has a huge garden and beautiful walkway in the back. The carpets and paintings are exquisite! Agatha Christy stayed here while writing one of her books. Paul McCartney and other famous people have also enjoyed the Winter Palace. Luckily, we are traveling during the off season and rooms were available. Most tourists do not travel in July and August because the heat is miserable. We must find a quick bite to eat and head to bed. We have a short night as we will leave early in the morning trying to beat the heat.

A quick note to my family: I am so thankful to have you to come home to. I have traveled a lot this summer and your love and support helps me more than you know. I have learned and experienced so many things. Thank you! I will see you soon. All my love!!

**July 31, 2009 by Deborah Johnson**

We Survived the 1st Class Sleeper Train and Lived to Tell About It

Last night there was anxiety in the air (especially for those of us who have memories of the trains in India) as we anticipated exactly what our experience would be on the train from Luxor to Cairo. Dr. Spaulding had a brilliant idea—we lined up with our luggage and our roommates in order to expedite the boarding process with the first of the line taking the last berth and then filling the train car from the back to the front. When the train arrived, we grabbed our massive amounts of luggage and our recently acquired McDonald’s feast and tried out the plan. It worked amazingly and we were in our spots in no time at all. We had cozy little nooks to sleep in and we were able to actually close the doors and have privacy for the night. The attendant had a great sense of humor, and he helped us convert our seats to beds and lower the top bunks. After familiarizing ourselves with the location of the bathroom and figuring out the important details like how the light switches work, I checked the hallway, and all the weary travelers were inside and quiet very soon after the train left the station. This morning, the attendant knocked on our doors one hour before the train was to arrive in Cairo. We tried our best to freshen up for the morning’s activities since showers were not in our immediate future.
Gammel, our guide, met us at the bus and gave us some great information on the way to the pyramids. Cairo is one of the largest cities in the world with a population of over 21 million people. We saw many unfinished houses and buildings along the way, and the reason for this is that the owners do not have to pay taxes until the construction of the property is completed. The outside of the structures always look unfinished while the insides are usually complete. The only finished buildings are those built by the government which of course pays no taxes anyway. There are three types of schools in Cairo. For a family that does not have money to pay for private education, the government schools are the only option. A normal classroom size is 70-80 students per class, and Gammel said the teachers are not very good, the students don’t learn anything, and the only way they pass the exams is for the teachers to give them the answers. Medical care works the same way in that those without money must rely on government-supplied health care and those who go into the hospital usually leave worse off. The middle class is disappearing in Cairo—the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. A large percentage of the population relies on tourism for their income.

As we drove closer to the pyramids, we learned that there were four different types of workers who built these huge structures. The first group lived at the quarry and cut the stones. The second group took the blocks from the quarry to Giza—they were the transporters. Since the quarry was 20 km from the site, large boats were used to move the huge stones along the Nile. It took 200 workers to push one block, and they moved 3 stones per day. More than 2,300,000 blocks were used for one pyramid. Each block weighed about 2 ½ tons, making the weight of one pyramid approximately 6 million tons. The third group of workers would actually put the stones in place. The goal of the fourth group was perfection and accuracy of the final shape. The big pyramid is 146 meters (450 feet) high, the second is 137 meters high, and the third is much smaller. It took 24 years to build the big pyramid. All three structures are from the same dynasty: the big pyramid belongs to Khufu, the father, the medium-sized pyramid (with the Sphinx) belongs to Kafhre, the son, and the smaller pyramid is Menkaura’s, the grandson’s.

Egyptians believed that when a pharaoh died, he became king of the dead and so he was mumified and provided with a massive tomb that included everything he would need in the afterlife. Sometimes the tomb took the shape of a pyramid, built with the pointed structure to resemble sunbeams because this helped the deceased ruler to reach heaven. Although many people believe the pyramids were built with slave labor, the builders of the pyramids were not slaves but were paid workers who were well taken care of. There is evidence that some of the laborers who worked with the heavy stones were women.

The middle-sized pyramid, built by Khafr, is often mistaken for the Great Pyramid because it is built at a higher elevation and the surroundings are vaster. One of the protrusions of this pyramid is the limestone Sphinx which is a likeness of the pharaoh as a human-headed lion wearing the traditional headdress of the
As Gamel talked, we began to see the pyramids through the trees and buildings of the city. I heard some express the surprise I was also feeling because we thought the pyramids were way outside the hustle and bustle of everyday life, but that isn’t the case. Since we were among the first visitors of the day, we watched the camels and their owners making their way up to the site. At this point, I was still tossing around the idea of actually riding one of these cute creatures. We were assigned a security guard, and then we got off of the bus to take each other’s pictures beside the big pyramid. There are actually steps where we were able to climb up a little way onto the pyramid, and many of the group did this. Then we boarded the bus again to drive to the spot where we could pay about $10 (plus tip) to ride a camel. They were so cute all hanging around waiting on us. Some were lying down with their legs all tucked up underneath and some were standing.

I walked down with the brave riders, still contemplating my decision and was so impressed with the lack of hesitation of some of our group. I saw Steve sit on his camel when suddenly that cute little camel slung his rear up in the air and a split second later the front legs were up. Steve had quick reflexes and stayed on his camel, but all I could think was that I was so glad his mother didn’t have to see that! My decision was made and I became the videographer/photographer instead of the camel jockey. I may regret this one day, but I guess I’ll just have to return to Egypt if I do. Sandra said riding a camel is like riding a horse… but not.
After all the camel riders returned safely, we took a group picture with the three pyramids in the background. The bus then took us around to the Sphinx where we took more pictures and learned about mummification. All Egyptians had to be mummified, and the quality of the process depended on how much money a person had. For the pharaohs, the process lasted for 70 days and was the highest quality. The next lower class was the royals, and they were preserved over a 40-day period. Finally, for the poor class, the family would bargain with someone who knew how to go through the mummification process, but this would last for only about 3 days. Because of the different types of mummification and the different qualities of preservation, today there are no remains of the poor class, very few of the royals, and the mummies that remain today are those that were put through the most extensive mummification process.

At this point, we not only smelled from not showering, but there was the added layer of camel. I guess that is why they decided to take us to the Golden Eagle Perfume Palace where we were shown a demonstration of how Egyptian scents are made. The glass perfume decanters were beautiful, and we had the option to purchase these and/or perfumes. Then we went to a papyrus store and learned how this paper is made, and some of the group purchased paintings.

For lunch, we went to the Hard Rock Café for some American food (and shopping). The waiters even did the YMCA for us, which was pretty funny.
Finally, it was time to check into the hotel and shower! After a nap, a few of us wandered across the street to a 7-story high shopping mall and had a burger at McDonald’s. The shopping looked promising, so we decided we might just return tomorrow…

What a wonderful journey this has been—the experiences of the last two weeks have been nothing short of amazing. A big thank you goes to Dr. Spaulding and Dr. Henderson for all the hard work that went into planning this magnificent learning experience and for keeping us all safe. I have learned an incredible amount in the past two weeks. It has been priceless.

To my family: I miss you and I’m looking forward to seeing you soon…both the two-legged and the four-legged. Make sure there aren’t any dirty dishes in the sink.

**Final Note from Dr. Spaulding**

I have the privilege of submitting the final journal entry for the 2009 Turkey, Greece, and Egypt trip. I want to express much appreciation, on behalf of Dr. Henderson and myself, to all those who made this trip possible:

Our university administration, President, Dr. J. Patrick O'Brien and Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. James Hallmark, have made these experiential, academic travel experiences possible. Their support is foundational to all that we do. Without them, these experiences would not occur. WTAMU provides students opportunities that are exceptionally unique and academically beyond comparison with anything we know of in the national or international university world. We are proud to be a part of such a progressive and academically stimulating university. If you, or someone you know, is looking for graduate level courses or experiences, please don't hesitate to contact me. I would love to share with you the many possibilities available to you.

Thanks also to each family member, friend, and colleague that has supported our travelers on this journey. I feel like I know each of you... as you have traveled with us... never far from our thoughts... or from the conversations of your traveler.

And, thank you to each of our Go Global travelers. This has been the most ambitious educational trip we have offered – all in 15 days. We have encountered 3 different continents, 3 countries, 9 cities, 8 different hotels, 3 currencies, 3 languages (other than English), 16 airline segments, over 20 bus segments, one ferry, one overnight train, a few cab rides, and a camel. We have experienced extreme heat (120 degrees in Luxor), heavy walking (everywhere), climbing (Fairy Chimneys of Cappadocia), swimming (Aegean Sea at Samos) and, in a few cases, crawling (the Kaymakli Underground City). We have engaged some of the world’s most famous sites: The Blue Mosque, St. Sophia, Grand Bazaar; the ancient city of Ephesus; the Parthenon; the Pyramids and Sphinx; and the Egyptian Museum. And, through it all, this group has stayed positive, academically eager, encouraging... and, flexible. We have not missed one scheduled event nor lost any items (or travelers)... or, dealt with major health issues. The dynamics of the group have created strong friendships and professional networking. It has been a pleasure to prepare and travel with each of you.

As I write this, the group is preparing for our 2:00 am departure from our Egyptian hotel, The Ramses Hilton. We are scheduled to leave Cairo at 5:25 AM and arrive Frankfurt at 8:45 AM. We leave Frankfurt at 10:40 AM and arrive Dallas at 2:30 PM. Our flight to Amarillo leaves Dallas at 5:20 PM and lands in Amarillo at 6:30 PM. If the schedule is impacted by delays, I will email with the details. If not, we will meet you at 6:30 PM in Amarillo on Sunday --- extremely tired but profoundly impacted by the world we have experienced.

Looking forward to seeing you all,

Dr. Angela Spaulding