

Summer of '89 Aggie students, professors enjoy studies far from home

By James A. Johnson

Of The Battalion Staff

As must happen with all good things, summer vacation has come to an end. While thousands of Texas A&M students and faculty members used their summer months either for vacationing or for continuing their college activities, 40 Aggies combined the best of two worlds by studying overseas as part of the Texas A&M Study Abroad program. Students eager to combine sunshine with literary enrichment packed their passports and maroon bags to spend nearly six weeks in Italy under the leadership of two A&M professors: Dr. Craig Kallendorf, associate professor of English, and Ober Helman, professor of modern and classical language.

Kallendorf, who has traveled to the country eight of the past 10 years, said there were several reasons for making the trip. "Our primary goal was to learn as much as we possibly could about European culture, its language and lifestyle," Kallendorf said. A part of the Texas A&M summer curriculum, the class lasted from May 25 through July 5. The adventure was for students of any major with a desire and adequate financial resources to study beyond the realms of Aggieland.

The summer experience exposed students to cultural diversity while allowing them to gain college credit in world literature. After a 20-hour plane flight, the anxious Aggies arrived in Italy to find the unique landscaping and ancient architecture they had only read about before the long-awaited arrival. Laura Monroe, an accounting major from Houston, said that comparing Italy's culture to that of the United States is like comparing night to day. "Everything was set up so different than what we're accustomed to," Monroe recalled. "Most buildings and structures were at least 500

years old. It was a nice change in environment."

Devoting equal time to studying and touring, the class spent the session in the Italian cities of Venice, Naples and Castiglion Fiorentino (a small city of 11,000 people located on a train line between Rome and Florence).

Two attractions which Kallendorf said the students found especially intriguing were the Leaning Tower of Pisa and Vatican City.

"It (the tower) is so dramatic," Kallendorf said. "It appears to lean more when it's seen in person."

After leisure time ended and it was time to resume studying, students had little difficulty finding rare literary works to read. The students enhanced their appreciation of such books by visiting places that had some relation to the literary works.

"We made it a point to visit sites that were part of an author's or poet's life, because it means more when students can actually see such historical settings," Kallendorf said while sorting through the various fliers and souvenirs he saved from the outing. "We chose books to read that were associated with where we were visiting."

The group spent three days in Rome where they viewed historic sites, including the Vatican library. The group also had the opportunity to see original copies of books which could not be found anywhere else.

When the students were ready for a change of pace, they took breaks from academic endeavors and discovered that Italians also find the beach to be an inviting vacation site.

Monroe spoke enthusiastically about Italy's beaches. "I couldn't get over how beautiful the water was," she said. "It was so blue. I've been to Galveston, but it's just not quite the same."

Costs for the entire expedition totaled nearly \$3,000 per student. Because the course was part of the Aggie curriculum, students were relieved to find that tuition was the same as for regular A&M classes.

One cultural difference noticed by the A&M students pertained to Italian shopping habits. In Italy, most businesses are open from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 4 p.m. until 8 p.m.

Department stores are scarce since the cities rely on specialty stores. Most stores specialized in selling one product or one group of products. Because individual shops sold numerous kinds of specific products, townspeople had a wide variety of brands to choose from. For example, cheese stores offered mozzarella, cheddar, provolone, Swiss and even American cheeses.

Jodi Miller, a political science major from Huntsville, said food served at the restaurants the group visited was particularly good.

"I can't remember any major complaints about any of the food we had," Miller said. "Their ice cream was even better than ours."

Monroe echoed Miller's sentiments. "We must have had pasta two or three times every day," Monroe said. "But we never got tired of it."

Kallendorf said they were fortunate they took the trip when they did because they learned that almost every business closes its doors for summer vacation in late July and does not reopen until after August.

"It's quite possible you could starve there in August," he said.

While in Italy, the students lived in a former boarding school. Kallendorf said the only complaint raised by students concerned the absence of locks on the doors, which lead to some petty theft. But because there is such little violent crime in Italy, most of the students realized they were safe, he said.

Kallendorf characterized Italians as mild-mannered people who do not have the stereotypical hot tempers many people attribute to them. Kallendorf said he was touched by the concern Italians expressed about the unity of society beyond their own country.

He cited the recent example of how appalled many Italians were at

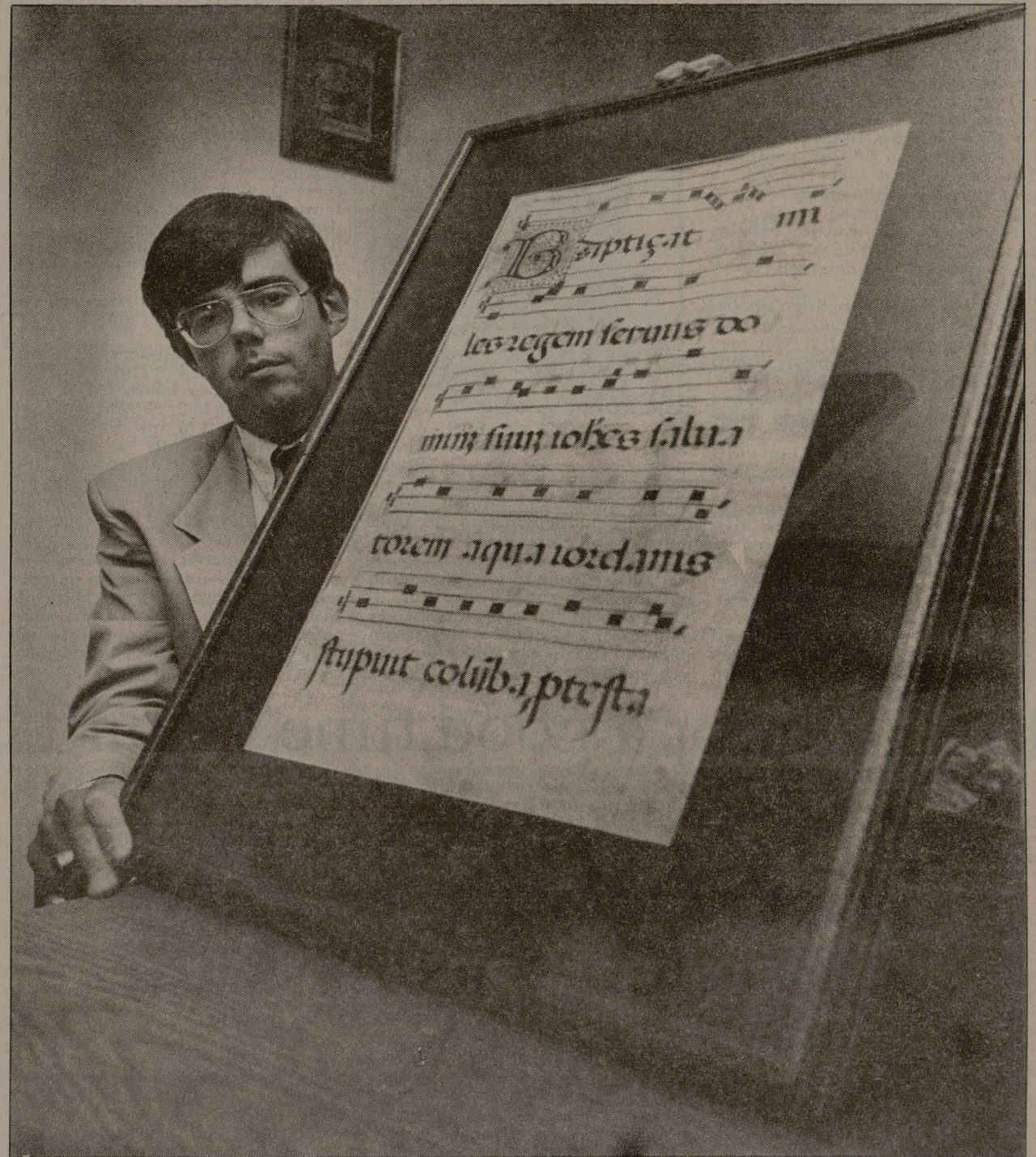


Photo by Scott D. Weaver

Dr. Craig Kallendorf, associate professor of English at A&M, holds a page from an authentic 15th century Italian choir book. Under the Texas A&M Study Abroad program, Kallendorf accompanied A&M students to Italy this summer.

the ongoing incidents in China. To join in solidarity for China, some Italians went so far as to rename one of the town squares in Castiglion Fiorentino after Tiananmen Square.

Miller also said that he found many Italians to be relaxed and easy-going.

"They are much more laid back than what I expected," Miller said. "Their businesses are less concerned with competition than here."

Cheryl Drummond, a business administration major from Plano, was amused by the deep interest many Italians expressed about Americans

and our culture. Monroe said she has fond memories of the experience.

"It's the best time I've ever had," she said. "We had some problems, but none that could possibly have spoiled the trip."

Kenya trip proves valuable for student

By Don Kopf

Of The Battalion Staff

Tired of the same old summer with good of mom and dad? Sick of spending your summers working at the local grocery store?

So was Lori Jo Learned before she took a summer class/vacation to Kenya with the Texas A&M Study Abroad program.

Learned, along with other A&M students, did and saw all sorts of exciting things, ranging from climbing Mount Kenya to watching ostriches strut in a mating dance. Before going to Africa, Learned had to receive a number of vaccination shots to protect her against everything from typhoid to yellow fever. She also was required to take a one hour class to prepare her for the African cultures she would encounter.

Learned said that when she arrived in Nairobi, giraffes were running around right outside the airport fences. As the group traveled by bus through the countryside, many people were amazed to see animals in the wild, she said.

At first, passengers scrambled about the bus, attempting to photograph the animals. By the end of the trip, however, the group was not surprised when an occasional elephant or zebra — free to wander across the fenceless savanna — was spotted on the road.

"We got charged by a rhino on the road," she said, adding that the bus also was charged by an elephant during another phase of the trip.

The group spent much of its time traveling,

but camped for one week on the savanna to study wildlife.

"We were woken up one morning by lions roaring at 6:30," she said.

Elephants, giraffes and tigers were not the only animals the group encountered on its travels. Every day when group members left their camp, they had to tie their tents shut in order to keep baboons from getting into them and damaging their gear.

"They would sit on the edge of camp and wait for us to leave," Learned said.

The group's meals often consisted of goat meat, peas and carrots, and every morning they

See Kenya/Page 16

'Kolache Capital' will host 5th annual pastry festival on Saturday

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If you're one of the more than 40,000 Aggies not quite ready to end your summer vacation or devote every moment to studying, then this Saturday's Kolache Festival in downtown Caldwell could be the place for you.

After four successful years, the

daylong festival has become an annual crowd-pleasing event, celebrating the Czechoslovakian heritage of Caldwell and the city's ethnic prominence.

After a 1985 kolache bake-off, Caldwell city officials decided to name an annual festival after the

See Kolache/Page 16



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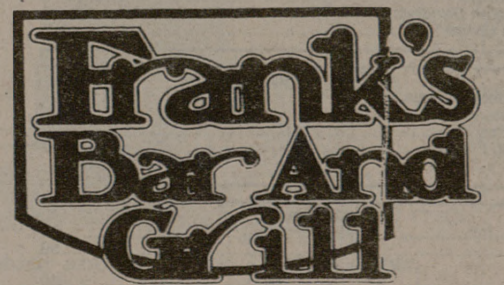
Thursday: Don Pope & Greg Phelps

Friday: The Mady Kaye Trio

Saturday: The Mady Kaye Trio

9:30-12:30

Happy Hour 11 a.m.-7 p.m.



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