

# Around the World

## A&M Students consider options in traveling abroad

For many students College Station seems like a teeming, urban metropolis full of culture and entertainment. For others, however, the "exotic" feel of the town begins to wane and the urge to roam takes over. For these Aggies who cannot stand to eat their Ramen noodles in College Station — or even in the United States — for one more day, two options exist: study abroad or "backpack."

Students leaving home for the first year of college can bring a wide range of feelings: homesickness, anxiety, bewilderment and oftentimes, the sheer relief of getting out of the house and into the world.

Leana Divine, a junior international studies and history major, works in the Texas A&M Study Abroad Programs Office and studied abroad in Normandy, France and Puebla, Mexico, last summer.

Divine said making the choice between studying abroad and backpacking (traveling with few possessions through several destinations), depends on what the individual student wants out of his or her adventure.

She said the best way for students to choose between backpacking and studying abroad is to determine if their motive for traveling is purely recreation or education.

Divine said her desire to study abroad was caused by her intense interest in two narrow educational fields. She said she felt she could acquire more knowledge in those fields by studying abroad than she could by staying in College Station or traveling on her own. She went to Normandy to study the history of World War II and Puebla to study the Spanish language and culture.

"I learned more this summer than I learned the rest of my life put together," Divine said.

Divine said living with a family in Mexico helped her learn Spanish faster than she could have by attending hour-long classes three times a week, however stimulating those classes might be. She said by visiting France, she learned about World War II in a setting that made the material more tangible and real.

"If you wanted to go to Normandy to learn about World War II, but just wanted to backpack it, then you would learn something, but it wouldn't be nearly as much," Divine said.

She said that an additional benefit to studying abroad is the course credit available to the motivated student.

"I was able to get 12 hours of college credit in a summer in the most amazing setting ever," Divine said. "It's just vacation versus study — study abroad is a good way to do both at the same time, because people in summer school can't just go to Europe. You'd miss too much class. It's not like people in College Station can just go hang out in

New York for the weekend," Divine said.

While Divine spent a good deal of time in class, she also found time to explore Mexico and Europe on her own.

"The great thing about Europe is that you get the weekends off to travel wherever you want. You study Monday through Thursday, and then after class and on the weekends, you're free to see the sights and talk to people. You're learning every second of the day," Divine said.

While Divine's experiences in Mexico and France fulfilled her desire to learn while she traveled, not all students want to be tied to a class schedule when they explore the globe.

Lauren Gore, a senior biomedical science major, and four of her close friends plan to backpack through Europe this summer as an epilogue to their college experience.

"Most of us have never been [to Europe]. We've always told ourselves that this is what we're going to do when we graduate, so we're going," Gore said.

Unlike Divine, who had specific interests that she wanted to study outside of the country, Gore said her interest is more general.

All together, Gore and her friends hope to see the sights in Dijon, Lyon, and many other cities.

"We had a group meeting, and everyone had a say on where they most wanted to go," she said. "And then we talked to other people who have been backpacking before to find the best places to go. And then we just threw Prague in there ourselves."

Suzanne Tate, a senior journalism major, knows what can happen when the wrong choice is made between studying abroad and backpacking. She went on the Marketing Department Study Abroad Program in Europe for four weeks last summer.

Tate said that the problem she had was a lack of interest in the material that the group studied in Europe.

"I have absolutely no interest in marketing.

We would do things like go walk through the Audi distribution plant, and it just wasn't anything that I was really interested in," Tate said.

Looking back on her experience, Tate said she would rather backpack Europe than study there.

"Really, the credit didn't make any difference to me. I just wanted to go, and that was a good way," she said. "But in retrospect, I think we'll have a lot more fun going on our own, because everything was so planned. Like when we went to London, for example, we only had

one free night there. I think the most we ever stayed in one place was two or three days, and at least two of those days would already be planned, so we didn't really get to go to many other places on our own."

The lesson to be learned here is that when deciding between studying abroad and backpacking, one's motives for traveling should be taken into account before anything is paid for. Determining how to pay for all this traveling is the next step.

The Study Abroad Programs Office at

See STUDY ABROAD on Page 5.



Story and graphics by Emily Harrell

## OPAS Jr. presents unique style of Inflatable Theater

BY JUSTIN GARRETT  
The Battalion

With a concoction of wit, humor, and inventive props, the Fred Garbo Inflatable Theater Co. has redefined theatrical entertainment by combining the graceful ballet and choreography of Daelma Santos with Fred Garbo's mystifying feats and will bring its talents to Rudder Auditorium Saturday.

The show's trademark is its original use of uniquely designed inflatable props and costumes. The show opens with a 10-foot, air-filled cylinder

slyly taking the stage, then it implodes, signaling the start to a strikingly new form of entertainment. In little time the audience is led into a carnivalesque state of mind as they bounce, catch and throw the props that have been cast upon them.

"The people here had a fantastic time. We had giant balls bouncing around the auditorium. It's something we don't see a lot of around here," said Corey O'Keefe, an associate of the Imperial Theater in New Brunswick.

Janice Chaikelson, director of marketing for the New Victory Theater in New York City, said that although their target audience is usually chil-

dren and families, the performance was not limited to them.

"As an adult, you just sort of walk in and turn off your brain and become mesmerized by these shapes, colors and what they're doing. I thought it was a lot of fun," Chaikelson said.

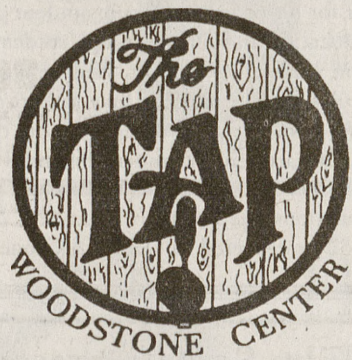
Garbo, the show's creator, was the original Barkley the Dog on PBS's "Sesame Street." Since then, he has performed as chief juggler in the Broadway musical "Barnum" and was a member of the Obie Award-winning "Foolsfire." Garbo recently performed on "The Late Show with David Letterman."

Garbo's co-performer Santos brings balance and grace to the show. Born in Sao Paulo, Brazil, she trained at the Royal Academy of Dance in London and Michigan University. In her native country Santos danced with Studio de Danca and performed ballet with the Opera Paulista II dance company.

Santos' artistry is a well-balanced counterpart to the humorous work of Garbo.

The Fred Garbo Inflatable Theater Co. will bring its unique performance to Rudder Auditorium Saturday at 7 p.m. All tickets cost \$6.50 and are available at the MSC Box Office.

**What: Fred Garbo Inflatable Theater Co.**  
**When: Saturday 7 p.m.**  
**Where: Rudder Auditorium**



**TONIGHT LADIES' NIGHT**  
Live Music w/ Sloppy Joe  
all ladies in FREE all night!

\$1 pints all night long  
\$1 bar drinks til 11 p.m.

**FRIDAY NIGHT 80's House Party**

696-5570  
for details

Party Safe and Designate a Driver

Roses for your Valentine...

**VALENTINE'S DAY SPECIAL**  
1 dozen long stem vase ready roses  
**\$49.99**



Rose prices starting at \$4.99

We have lots of valentine gift ideas!

- Plants
- Stuffed animals by Gund
- Trapp candles

**Botanica**

Located in a kiosk at Post Oak Mall (near Beall's)

693-1570

Weekdays 10-9 Sunday 12-6

We Deliver!

DINE OUT WITH YOUR VALENTINE  
**Epicures Cafe**

Your choice of:

- New York Strip  
roasted w/ fresh tarragon & shallots or
- Breast of Chicken Provolone  
w/ sun dried tomatoes & kalamata roasted pepper sauce or
- Poached Atlantic Salmon  
w/ shrimp, tomatoes, capers & lemon  
served w/ angel hair pasta or
- Grilled Pork Tenderloin  
with chipotle demi-glaze & grilled tortillas.

All meals come with vegetables, salad and a delicious dessert!

**Valentine's Menu**

**\$38.50** per couple

Call Now!  
Ask about our  
Sweetheart Package  
carry-out meal!



Epicures Cafe  
2319 Texas Ave., S

College Station

695-0985