

Restoring a piece of France

■ An insight into a student's summer full of plumbing, biking, wining and dining on the Mediterranean

By Inge Scheve
for the Emerald

Another school year is about to start, meaning it's time to take account of this summer's merits.

The phenomenon known as summer break, for my part, had little to do with kicking back and relaxing.

I spent most of this summer in Laroque des Alberes, a medieval village located in southern France, helping my slightly unorthodox dad (we'll get back to that) restore my parents' 400-year-old house. The house is tiny, with only one room on each of the three floors, and it was in need of a makeover.

At 43, my dad, who holds an MBA, gave up his business management career. He had one of those well-known midlife crises, which for him meant sailing the seas for a year in a 32-foot boat, only to settle down in Laroque — without a boat — after a huge storm during his return to Europe.

He is now a cabinet maker with the foggy idea that he is going to turn the house into a rustic, French-style luxury den. Just looking at the place and connecting it to that description should lead anyone to question the sanity of this person. But never mind.

One stormy night Dad woke up and decided to turn the third-floor walk-in closet into a bathroom.

He stocked the basement with a sink, a flat-packed shower cabinet, a bidet, tiles, silicone and other bathroom accessories, only to discover he could use some help getting this together; mainly, someone

to carry all of this equipment from the basement to the third floor. Enter me.

While the hauling proved labor-intensive, it required no brainwork. Then came the plumbing. Most plumbers are trained to be just that: plumbers.

After days of sweating and swearing over pipes, tightening, and applying silicone and the like in temperatures hotter than 100 degrees C, we agreed that plumbing was one career we both could do without.

However, France was not all about work. There was both food and play, in that order. Food such as snails (escargot) and wine, mussels and french fries and wine,

“ We discovered some where between the main course and the cheese platter that a family tradition is the cheese game. ”

wild boar and wine.

Food in France is not merely something to consume. It is culture, science and a hot discussion topic as well. I have never seen a nation so obsessed with talking about, preparing and savoring its meals.

One Sunday, we were invited to a friend's house for a traditional family lunch. It started at noon with champagne and snacks on the terrace, followed by five or six sit-down courses inside, and ended about 6 p.m.

We discovered somewhere between the main course of alouette (forest sparrows) and the cheese platter that a family tradition is the cheese game.

At the table, each family member was asked to name a cheese to add to a list that would be compared with other families' lists at a

later time to see which family could come up with the most cheeses. We were talking types, so Tillamook, for example, was not an option, while cheddar would be an acceptable entry, save the fact that the protectionist French only consider French cheeses legal additions. The particular family I dined with had a list of over 200 French cheeses — no wonder each meal took awhile.

As for play, I preferred something more physical, so we joined a local tour group for a whole day of mountain biking. We biked from the French border over to Spain and back to France.

The trip started at 9 a.m. when we headed out in a 4x4 truck to scale a mountain. We were left at the 3,900-foot peak behind the village. We then descended the seven miles to sea level in Spain. After several sweaty hours on dusty gravel roads — and in my case a few dives over the handlebars — and into the blackberry bushes — it was time to enter France again. What comes down must go back up.

In a scant two miles of biking, we ascended almost 2,000 feet. Our reward was the final descent from the border high point through French vineyards and rural farms to the beach in the French town of Banyuls, six miles later.

When we left France — two wooden ceilings, a bookcase, and an almost-finished bathroom later — the manager of the local dump knew me well enough to remind me that Aug. 15 and 16 he would close the dump because of family festivities.

The baker asked when we would return — hard work makes anyone hungry, and I bet she'll be missing our business! Not to mention that we will miss her croissants and breads.

And the bar two doors down has one less customer to come daily and fill 1 1/2-liter bottles with the local wine on tap.

Advertisement Correction

The Student Health Center ad in the 9/18/00 edition of the Oregon Daily Emerald contained an error. Free HIV testing to university students is no longer available. For more information or questions regarding HIV testing please contact the Student Health Center at 346-2770 or visit their web site: <http://healthcenter.uoregon.edu>

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Summer senate ends without ado

■ Wrapping up their term reviewing work study budget considerations, senators allocate special request funds

By Emily Gust
Oregon Daily Emerald

The last meeting of the ASUO summer Student Senate went just as summer seems to go: quickly.

In a meeting that lasted just longer than half an hour, the 10-member summer senate blasted through four special requests Wednesday, granting three and placing the fourth on

hold until the full senate begins meeting next week.

Women's Center Office Coordinator Lori Brown submitted a request asking that \$900 — the pay for one of the center's student employees — be transferred from the leadership account, which contains the stipend money for student employees, to the group's work study account.

Generally, when students are eligible for work study, their salaries are budgeted into the work study account.

In this case, however, the student was hired during spring term,

which was too late to budget formally.

"When money goes into work study, the federal government essentially provides matching funds [to the student]," Sen. Peter Watts said.

But by moving the money from one area to another, Watts said the group would have to pay a three-percent kickback to the government for the work study position. That's money that the Women's Center would have to take from other parts of its budget.

He urged the senate to think carefully about the decision. The Women's Center's request is the first of its nature for the new school year, and any decision made will set a precedent for the rest of the year, Watts said.

Claiming that the senate can expect between 50 and 100 such requests throughout the course of the year, Watts explained the consequences of transferring money into the work study fund that had not been allotted during the normal budget-setting process.

He said a person doing the same amount of work and receiving the same stipend as other positions could potentially earn four times as much money when figuring in the government's addition.

Brown suggested decreasing the students' stipend enough so that the kickback had no effect; with that, the issue became more complicated and the senators deter-

mined this was a decision best left for the full senate the following Wednesday.

"I don't think summer senators should decide this because it is a precedent," Sen. Jennifer Greenough said.

On the other side of the coin, the University forensics team, which has not come forward with a special request in the last five years, was granted \$1,558 from the surplus for a speech and debate tournament at the University of Alaska.

The tournament pulls together the top 10 teams in the nation, and this year the University's is among them. The money will go toward registration, travel and lodging for the team.

Additionally, the Oregon Future Lawyers Association garnered \$70 from the surplus for refreshments at two events, including Thursday's visit by Peter DeMuniz, a candidate for the Oregon State Supreme Court.

The ASUO Designated Driver Shuttle was able to split up the \$16,000 it received from its ballot measure in the election last year into specific segments of its program, including \$10,000 for maintenance.

This was the last meeting of the summer senate, which handles only special requests for money.

The first order of business for the full senate will be to nominate and elect both a president and vice president for the 2000-01 year.

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