My Trip to Paris:
Daily Journal Entries - Spring 2011
My First Day

March 20, 2011 Today we arrived in Paris at 6:40am! I was lucky enough to sleep the whole flight, but even with that I was still tired and running on adrenaline. We had a very nice bus tour with our tour guide Terry where we got to see the Arc de Triomphe, Notre Dame, and the Eiffel Tower! My favorite moment of the day was being able to have my picture taken in front of the Eiffel Tower. It felt like a dream come true and even after I had the picture I still couldn’t believe I was actually there. A group of us got to stop at a cafe where we tried French coffee and croissants - both of which were exceptional. After that, we all checked into our hotel and rested up a bit before we headed out for our first Paris dinner. I am usually a very picky eater, but I told myself I would try to expand my palette while I was here and I tried some escargot at dinner! It turned out it wasn’t that bad! I don’t
know if I'll ever order an entire plate of it, but even if I never do it again, I can say I've done it and I know what it tastes like! After dinner we were all very tired and went back to the hotel to rest up for our first day of class on Monday.

March 21, 2011 Today was our first day of class and lectures and we had the pleasure of beginning our day over at the OCDE in Paris. The OCDE was formed after WWII to help rebuild the participants economies. We had three lecturers who explained how the OCDE was formed, what they do, and who participates in it. Many people have a view that it is a “Rich Man’s Club” and that only wealthy nations are able to get in. The OCDE houses thousands of employees throughout the world, but the Paris location is their main headquarters and is set up exceptionally well. Security is tight and we had to go through full-fledged metal detectors just to get in. It was just as if we were at the airport! The place was exceptionally clean and everyone we dealt with was very polite to us. After the OCDE we headed over to campus for our first lecture from a French economics professor, Dr. Sami. Dr. Sami went over with us the basics of global economics, and the effect it has had on the Euro since it’s introduction about a decade ago. In his opinion, the Euro has not been to reach its full potential yet as there are many hurdles to overcome in the labor market and people being able to work in other
countries without prejudice. After class we were given a tour of the campus by some of the students and then a group of us were taken by the students to have a picnic on the lawn of the Eiffel Tower. We had wine and decided to stay until the sunset so that we could see the Eiffel Tower’s light show at night. We probably spent about four hours there and seemed to fly by as we enjoyed talking with the students and learning about their many ways they are not so different than us! Most of them get to study abroad within their program and all that do said they want to spend some time studying in America at an American university. You could tell they really admired our culture and were eager to learn as much as they could from us. After we left the Eiffel Tower everyone from our group went out to a restaurant for dinner on the way home. Keeping up with forcing my tastes out of their comfort zone, I tried some steak tartare, which is raw beef, and it was surprisingly good!

March 22, 2001 The day started super early and we all had to be ready to leave the hotel by 7:45am. Our first class started at 8:30am and was on the advantages of the European Union. The professor went over the history of the European Union, it’s timeline, and where it stands today. It was interesting to hear that the European Union
has no clear guidelines of who can join and who can’t join and just how far their reach extends. There are many countries that seem to have been added to the European Union just to boost their numbers while there are some other countries that want to get in are getting denied. The tone of the lecture seemed very “pro” European Union verus the day before where many of the disadvantages of the European Union’s Euro were discussed. After our lecture we rounded up the troops and all went on a bus headed over to Versailles to visit the Grand Marnier factory. We had a lot of time available before the tour started and were able to walk around a very pretty little town and snap some wonderful photos.
Images from Village

Village Building

Village Street

Village Church

Grand Marnier Plaque

Grand Marnier
Versailles, France

Jen and I at Grand Marnier

Known Village Cougar

Sun and Tree on Village Hill

View From Top of Village Hill

Michael Sellitto

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Grand Marnier Tour

Part I - The Flowchart & Intro
Our tour first started with a flowchart of the process of making Grand Marnier and a short video explaining the history of the company and how it has been kept within a family for generations.

Part II - The Factory Tour
Next we took a tour of the Grand Marnier factory and their process from start to finish. The process starts with thousands upon thousands of oranges being peeled and dried. They are then soaked in vats to release their natural orange flavor. The orange flavor is then mixed with the Cognac to create a distinct, triple-distilled, premium liqueur.
Grand Marnier Tour

Our tour guide explains to our translator the process of producing Grand Marnier!

Tons of orange peels are cut and dried before they are soaked to give Grand Marnier its distinct orange taste.

Grand Marnier smells wonderful when it's done, but terrible during its process! (ask Emily!)
After our tour at Grand Marnier, we were all very tired and slept the entire bus ride back to the hotel. Many people wanted to take it easy and so we all laid low and a few of us decided to just take the metro over to the Eiffel Tower again because it is very pretty at night. We were going to go up it, but the line was way too long, and so we just walked around and snapped some photos before heading to dinner. At dinner I tried a French beer, 1664, which was pretty good, as well as
duck confit - something I would only get in France! It was very tasty, and even though some of my classmates ordered the frog legs, I was not brave enough to try those just yet!

**March 23, 2001** Today marked a day full of interactive lessons and learning on the school campus. We started the day with a fantastic presentation about the problems with the current education system in America and Europe and then launched into an interactive international business lesson via four simultaneous games of Monopoly. Each edition of Monopoly was from a different country and contained different currencies. We were each put on teams and would rotate throughout the different countries periodically. All that could be left for the next team were notes on the table. It was very interesting to see how much was lost in translation and how much the different currencies varied. The point was to demonstrate how complicated international business is. After our first presentation we took a short break for lunch and then went to Dr. Randolph’s presentation. Dr. Randolph’s presentation was very interesting and covered the different levels of employee engagement
in America and abroad. It was simultaneously interesting, and upsetting, to learn how many employees aren’t fully engaged in their jobs and just do what they need to do to get by. The majority of employees have a neutral level of engagement and are complacent when it comes to many activities at work. Following the presentation I was able to meet up with some of the French students who took me out for a coffee and told me all about their apprenticeships and the difference between their Master’s program and our American version. All students do three years of what we consider “undergraduate” and then they can continue for a fourth and fifth year for their “graduate” level work and get a Master’s. They each work about thirty hours a week in their last two years on top of taking classes and hope to get a job working full-time at their employers once they finish their degree. After a couple hours I headed back to the hotel and called it an early night after an exhaustive day of learning and taking in the culture!

March 24, 20011 The return of our tour guide Terry finally came today and we got to visit both Yoplait’s headquarters and the US Embassy! Yoplait was an extremely insightful visit as I had little knowledge of how much Yoplait has had to overcome in the last decade just to stay in business. Yoplait was bleeding money less than ten years ago and today they are churning a significant profit and competing on an international level. According to our first presenter, Mr. Neil Smith, Yoplait is currently the 2nd largest in market share with Danone being the first. Even though they are second, they are roughly a third of the size of Danone. One of the biggest
differences with Yogurt in France is that it is a part of their cultural and the French consume a massive amount of yogurt when compared to Americans. It is unknown how much yogurt is consumed worldwide because lots of countries such as India and China do not have their yogurt consumption measured at this time. India, for example, is the second largest milk producer in the world, which would lead one to believe that there is a strong market there for Yoplait to enter and that many Indians already consume a significant amount of yogurt. Currently, half of Yoplait is about to be sold to General Mills, and if that takes place, I can certainly see General Mills coming up with a marketing strategy to implement Yoplait in some new markets such as India and China. After Yoplait, we all got a nice long break for lunch and to walk around the city. We ate lunch at a gorgeous little cafe called Cafe Hugo, which was right down the street from Victor Hugo’s home. Afterwards, we were able to take a free tour of his home and I was able to snap some wonderful photos of the house and the surrounding area.
Victor Hugo’s Home

A Young Hugo

Outside Cafe Hugo

Room in Hugo’s House

Another Room in Hugo’s House

Victor Hugo’s Bed

Elaborate Chandelier in Hugo’s House

City Street

City Shop

Sculpture of an Older Hugo

Michael Sellitto

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After our lunch we finally arrived at the US Embassy. Simply by chance, on our way in we saw Senator John Kerry outside of the hotel next door! Security was extremely tough, as they should be, and we had three separate check points just to get in! The first was run by the French military outside of the entrance, the second was run by a private security firm with metal detectors and body scanners, and the third was run by US Marines. We had to have an escort with us the entire time we were there, even if we had to go to the bathroom,
and we were not allowed to take any cameras or cell phones inside with us! Our first speaker was Joe White, who works for the international commerce division, and he went over the whole point of the US Embassy, and how the US French Ambassador is President Obama’s sole representative of the US in France. After Mr. White finished his talk we had the pleasure of hearing from Mrs. Elyse Lyons, the Deputy Director for the Maryland Department of Business & Economic Development. Mrs. Lyons told us how her job is to meet and convince international businesses to set up in Maryland. Baltimore has one of the greatest port cities in America and most businesses that ship to Baltimore can get their goods throughout one-third of America within 24 hours after arriving. This makes Baltimore and the state of Maryland very attractive to foreign companies who are looking to set up a location within the United States. After Mrs. Lyons finished she shared her contact information with us and we went through the exit process at the US Embassy. We all then had a free evening to go explore the city and me and some of the group came back to the hotel to take a nap before heading out for the evening. After we rested up a group of us went out around the Latin Quarter and Emily and I went to the man bar!

Emily and I at the man bar.
Today we were able to sleep in for the first time all week and many us took advantage of the chance to rest up for our final company visit. This afternoon we went to Publicis Groupe and had a wonderful presentation by Mr. Robert Fridovich. Mr. Fridovich explained to us how Publicis Groupe had grown over the years and is now the third largest multi-media/advertising firm in the world. Throughout the company’s history, they faced many problems, and multiple times the CEO had to start from scratch. However, with a sincere desire to succeed and dedication the company always rebounded and to date has only had two CEOs!

Following the presentation we were able to head to the roof of Publicis Groupe and experienced, what is arguably, one of the greatest views of Paris. Immediately after Publicis Groupe, some of us walked a block up the street to the Arc de Triumph and braved the hike up the hundreds of stairs to the top for yet another great view of the city. We then did some light shopping and called it a day!
March 26, 2011 Today was our free day and we decided to explore Paris! We started the day at the Sacré-Cœur, which is the highest point in Paris, and has breathtaking views both inside and out. As you can tell by the picture, Professor Randolph was definitely excited to be there! After the Sacré-Cœur we headed over to Notre Dame to check out the inside and see the incredible building. The structure, statues, and artwork inside were all remarkable and the stained glass was certainly a sight to be seen. Following Notre Dame we hopped on
a walking tour of Paris that had just started and learned a lot from our local tour guide. He took us to the The New Bridge and told us all about King Henry the IV. When Henry the IV came to power he was Protestant and was shunned by the people for not being Catholic. He eventually converted to Catholicism to appease the people and had a known reputation for being a party animal. He wanted to make Paris’ first stone bridge and many people laughed at him when he announced what he was going to do. His first attempts failed, but finally, after 40 years, The New Bridge was complete! Henry the IV decided the only way to celebrate such a great achievement was with a once-in-a-lifetime costume party where all of his guests would have complete access to his personal wine collection. Over 300 people were invited and by the end of the party they had not only finished off all of his wine, but most of his champagne as well! Henry decided on the spot that he needed to document the moment and had his portrait artist sketch portraits of each guest. Henry told his guests he would send them their portraits so that they could all remember the party, but upon seeing all of their faces the next day he decided that he did not want any of those images to get lost and decided to have each one
carved into his new bridge to be remembered for all of time. After a while we had to leave the tour to get to the museums we wanted to see that day. First we went to the Musee d’Orsay and saw multiple impressionism paintings that I have known for years growing up in my art text books. The most famous one was most likely Vincent Van Gogh’s self-portrait. After the Musee d’Orsay we headed over to the Louvre and I finally was able to see the Mona Lisa! It was - in a word - breathtaking. After the Mona Lisa, we headed over to the Greek exhibits and then decided to go souvenir shopping for our friends and family in the Louvre’s mall. When we were done shopping we headed back to the hotel to freshen up and get ready for our last evening in Paris. A big group of us went on the river tour of Paris, and even though it was slightly raining, the sights of the city were still spectacular. It was a perfect evening to a perfect trip!
Au Revoir!

Michael Sellitto

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