

KWF News Tours: Crash Course on the World

JOURNEY TO ISLAM

—By Cynthia Barnett '05

The anti-globalization protest on Istanbul's Taksim Square was peaceful and small, with perhaps 25 demonstrators. Knight-Wallace Fellows watching from their hotel windows on the weekend they arrived in Turkey did not find it newsworthy. Until, that is, a couple hundred helmeted police officers clambered out of vans—shields up, tear gas out—to arrest the protestors.

It was an apropos introduction for a dozen journalists here to study the complexities and contradictions of Turkey, a country racing toward modernity but hobbled by an authoritarian past.

The weeklong February trip represented the first transatlantic,



Bora Bayraktar '05 presents his book about the Middle East conflict to Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül.

and the first Islamic, steps in the KWF's march against insularity in American newsrooms. "Most of the U.S. Fellows on the trip had never been in a Muslim country," said Director Charles R. Eisendrath. "They'll return to their newsrooms having been at the crossroads of the Eastern and Western worlds, in a country undergoing fundamental

changes. Turkey's turn to vastly increased individual and economic freedom will profoundly affect the whole region."

Turkey forms a literal land bridge between Europe and the Middle East. It sees itself a part of the former, and is working mightily to join the European Union. Over the past five years, the EU bid has led to impressive on-paper reforms in everything from Turkey's political structure to its penal code. But as the Fellows learned, a country carrying 3,000 years of history and the heritage of three empires cannot change with the stroke of a pen.

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RARE STEAKS AND WILD POLITICS

—By Bill Duryea '05

In balmy mid-December, we arrived in Buenos Aires to find its shops and restaurants bustling with customers. Thanks to two consecutive years of robust economic growth, the bitter memories of the president's forced resignation and financial catastrophe seemed to be receding quickly.

Even longtime observers had reason to feel excited about the turnaround. As Charles R. Eisendrath told Ricardo Kirschbaum, editor-in-chief of *Clarín*, Argentina's leading daily newspaper:

"I deeply appreciate the sophisticated introduction to Argentina that you and *Clarín* have given dozens of Knight-Wallace Fellows over the last six years. I have known and loved this place since working here in the 1970s. In all that time I have wanted to feel optimistic. Now, for the first time, I do."

But Argentina is a country steeped in paradox and ambiguity, as interviews (and countless demitasses of coffee) with some of the nation's leading

politicians, businessmen and human-rights activists showed. With unemployment at 13 percent, defaulted loans totaling \$100-billion, and a lingering debate over human-rights violations, Argentina is a country struggling to repay its debts, both financial and moral.

The point of KWF's trips, unique among journalism fellowships, is simple, says Eisendrath: to "radicalize" U.S. reporters—most of whom have had little direct experience with other cultures and many have not traveled outside their own country—"about the importance of the world."

This year's trip, the sixth Eisendrath has led, was distinguished by the presence of Jill Abramson, managing



A mother of a "disappeared one" explains the horror of Argentina's Dirty War.

Erin Reed

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From the Head Fellow

—By Charles R. Eisendrath '75

EDUCATION WITH ORDINARY AIRLINE TICKETS AND TWO EXTRAORDINARY EDITORS

Ricardo Kirschbaum of *Clarín* (Buenos Aires) and Ferhat Boratav of *CNN Türk* (Istanbul) are leading the exploration of an interesting proposition: Why should an American journalism fellowships program that already offers unlimited opportunity for study at a great university feel bound to extend the experience far beyond the classroom? Or for that matter, the country? It's a fair question, often asked when people learn about the KWF travel schedule.

There are several answers. One has to do with the kind of people journalists are. There's a joke about the impossibility of "herding cats," a frequent explanation for why newsrooms are so notoriously difficult to move in any coordinated direction. Cats cannot be taught, although they learn all kinds of things on their own, for purposes not easily explained. We also tend to do nothing until, for whatever reason, it is absolutely necessary (call it a deadline), and then we pretend that the whole thing was our idea in the first place. Does that sound familiar?

That's why ordinary pedagogy just doesn't work on journalists, including Knight-Wallace Fellows. The lesson plan for the program's travel is large—to attack the profound insularity of American journalism. Yet KWF is small, made up each year of a dozen or so Americans. The inertia is pervasive—lectures and weighty conferences have failed to demonstrate to American journalists that the world is important in any sense requiring change on their part.

It has become fashionable to point to a recent uptick in the amount of foreign news in U. S. media. That is utter nonsense. The increase merely registers our state of

seemingly permanent war. Where Americans are fighting isn't foreign news in the sense of understanding how other societies function; it's merely about how you blow them up, or vice versa. Of genuine foreign news, there is next to nothing. Hopeless? I don't think so. Over a decade, allowing for multiple Fellows from the same organizations, KWF will



Eisendrath (left) and Boratav, CNN Türk, talk Turkey.

bring in some of the most active, influential players from 100 newsrooms. Radicalizing them about why they should care about foreign news is a decent start. That's what we hope we're doing.

In the articles of this special travel issue, I think you will note a certain excitement and surprise about the discovery of important stories in unreported places that simply go missing.

KWF '05 is rather typical in one way. A few members, like Maria Fleet of *CNN*, have spent much of their working lives abroad while others, such as Stephanie Reitz of *The Hartford Courant*, didn't even have a passport. Watching each other react to the world is an important part of the KWF travel experience. It tells them what it takes to inform an audience.

Argentina and Turkey are not places for which most newsrooms have an "expert" meaning, as we all know, somebody who once went there, read a book or has a friend, the qualifications changing with the degree of needy immediacy by the editor in charge

that day. I like to think that the excitement about little-known places rubs off. I like to hope that excitement sometimes translates into running a wire story from somewhere not perceived as "important" just because it is fascinating.

Increased competition is usually cited as the main reason newspaper readership has been stagnant for a generation and network television viewership has declined. I disagree. Competition matters, of course, but the main problem is that news from traditional sources isn't interesting enough. The overall potential audience, after all, has grown dramatically, and migrated to where the interest is.

So much for theory. In Buenos Aires, Monte Reel '00 is fact. Five years ago, he arrived in Ann Arbor as a 28-year-old general assignment reporter for the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* wanting to pursue Arabic studies and narrative writing. He did. He traveled to Buenos Aires with us, and a couple of years later joined *The Washington Post*. When its foreign editor went looking for somebody for the Buenos Aires bureau, Monte had already been there. In fact, he had interviewed the Argentine president with KWF and talked to the mothers of "the disappeared ones" from the Dirty War. He took up the Argentina assignment in December and told his story over the dinner KWF throws for foreign media in Buenos Aires.

I love Monte Reel's experience not because of the *Post's* decision to assign him somewhere the program had taken him but because it illustrates what I tell every Fellowship candidate during the interview at Wallace House: "Dreams come true and our job is to give you everything you need to make it happen."

Fellow Travelers

—By Jason Tanz '05

I'm not quite sure when I came to the realization that Charles Eisendrath was trying to kill me. It could have occurred to me when I heard my spine crackle during the group trip to a Turkish bath, as the sausage-fingered "masseur" (I use the term loosely) tilted my head forward until my chin touched the top of my Adam's apple. Or perhaps my moment of clarity came as I wrote the following words in my Argentina journal: "The steak buffet we had for lunch was great, but the immense steak dinner we had four hours later was even better."

Most likely, though, there was no single epiphany, just the accumulation of sleep-deprived nights and action-packed days that skirted the fine line between aggressive scheduling and sheer sadomasochism. Even for a group of Knight-Wallace Fellows that has seen its share of adventure—and members of this year's class have dodged bullets in Iraq, covered Yasser Arafat's funeral, and touched down in Antarctica—traveling internationally with Eisendrath and company presents a unique set of challenges.

What sets the Knight-Wallace trips

apart? Let me put it this way: If you've taken an overnight flight that dumps you in the Buenos Aires airport bleary and discombobulated; and if you then arrive at your hotel with just enough time to change clothes in the lobby and zip off to visit the German ambassador; and if, while staggering around the backyard of the embassy, admiring the bougainvilleas and concentrating on retaining consciousness, you're handed a glass of champagne that sends your brain spinning in its casing and whirling out of the top of your skull; and if, at that very moment, a woman approaches you and says "Hi, I'm Jill Abramson, managing editor of *The New York Times*. I'm looking forward to traveling with you," and looks at you as you try futilely to come up with some incisive and witty comment ... if all of these things happen to you, chances are good that you're traveling with the Knight-Wallace Fellows.

That was just the first day of our first trip, and the pace never slowed. We'd wake up each morning with just enough time to choke down a quick hotel breakfast before piling into our bus for back-to-back-to-back-to-back seminars with some of the most important and interesting figures our host cities had to offer. (Fortunately, many of them served coffee.) We've spoken with Turkey's popular foreign minister about

his rumored forthcoming bid for prime minister; the mayor of Buenos Aires about how to maintain his people's faith in government despite a history of repression and violence; a former Turkish ambassador about the likelihood of his country's accession to the European Union; and a member of Argentina's Supreme Court. It's the kind of pace that might not impress *paterfamilias* Mike Wallace, but for those of us without an extensive background in international reporting, it provided valuable trial-by-fire experience. Even those rare moments of designated "down time" were filled with activity: riding horseback across the *pampas* for a few hours, say, or navigating a rowdy soccer game at Istanbul's Fenerbahce stadium.

Still, as the cliché goes, that which does not kill us yadda yadda yadda, and there is nothing like a shared odyssey to strengthen the bonds that link a band of already close Fellows (and spouses). Spending 18 hours a day with the same two dozen people did not send us screaming from one another as you or, more accurately, I might expect. If anything, we returned from these trips with a greater appreciation of one another's quirks and personalities, our incisive questions and inquisitive minds. And did

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—Milt Priggee '01

A Veteran and a Neophyte Compare Notes

FROM STEPHANIE REITZ, A TRANSPORTATION WRITER WHOSE WORLD TRAVELS HAVE JUST BEGUN

Until coming to Ann Arbor, I never had a passport. The blank pages in my new one last fall defined me well: an American whose knowledge of the world came from books, documentaries and maps.

My lack of international experience had always been a source of regret. Now, as my Knight-Wallace Fellowship races to conclusion, I can look back at the past several months and say without exaggeration that the program literally gave me the world.

Discovering a country can only truly occur when you've strolled among its people along

a thoroughfare like Avenida 9 de Julio in Buenos Aires.

Reading about Turkish *raki* can never compare with the moment when its fire burns your throat and brings tears to your eyes while a proud restaurateur waits for your reaction. Likewise, reading about Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's life pales in comparison to standing silently at his

tomb, as big as U-M's Central Campus. Single-handedly he invented a new society.

The international trips gave us the gift of face-to-face discussions with some of the world's most intriguing political leaders, created lifelong memories of galloping on horses across the Argentine *pampas* and lounging in the Turkish baths. The trips also strengthened our already powerful friendships.

Those of us who'd never traveled internationally gained the courage to explore new places and a commitment to getting them reported in the news.

It is because of this Fellowship that I even dream of such things.

—Stephanie Reitz '05 is a reporter for The Hartford Courant.



Bergh Reack

Between gigs in Buenos Aires—comparing notes in the back of the van.

FROM MARIA FLEET, A CNN PRODUCER WHO HAS COVERED WARS ON THREE CONTINENTS

Our trip to Argentina was the type of weeklong briefing a journalist always needs before beginning work in a new place, but rarely gets. Argentina does not offer itself easily to understanding, beginning with the inscrutable ideology of Peronism, which permeates the political fabric of the country. Our hosts from *Clarín* patiently unraveled Argentina's peculiar mix of politics and uncertain economics for us.

I was most moved by our meeting with the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo. I covered a similar cadre of unlikely activists in El Salvador in the early '80s, and the impression those mothers made on me was one of the most enduring of my career. Argentina still grapples with the

after-effects of the so-called Dirty War of the '70s—its own war on terrorism—and provides a cautionary prism through which to view the United States' global fight against terrorism.

Many of my colleagues had not worked outside the United States, and some had never traveled overseas. Watching those colleagues process things foreign showed me something of what my audience needs, too. No matter how deep one's experience, seeing things with a fresh eye is the key to successful foreign correspondence.

I was introduced to Turkey after the first Gulf War, when the Iraqi Kurds fled into southeastern Turkey to escape a slaughter by Saddam Hussein. Thus, I explored the Kurdish part of the country first, so even when I became enchanted by Istanbul, I was always aware of the country's shortcomings in the area of human rights and press freedom. The

last time I worked in Turkey was in 1997. At that time, Turkish journalists risked being put in jail for covering certain subjects—Kurdish separatism, Atatürk's legacy, and the enshrinement of secularity in the constitution. Most of those once-taboo topics are broadcast and written about with much more freedom now.

The Fellows had a lively session with Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül in Ankara. In 1997, Gül had been the spokesman for the ousted Islamist Welfare Party, which exhibited some rather radical politics. Now he represents an administration which aims to bring Turkey, a Muslim country, into the European Union. Turkey, which initially lured me with its apparent contradictions, continues to surprise me. The lesson on this trip was: don't stop paying attention!

—Maria Fleet '05 is a senior producer for CNN (Atlanta).

FOOTBALL, TANGO, MALBEC AND THE KWF GRINGOS

—By Carlos Prieto '02

As an Argentine sports reporter who, like the rest of the country, is mad for football, I think the best way to describe how the Knight-Wallace Fellows approached my country is to tell you about how they dealt with the real thing.

I say this to distinguish football from whatever kind of sport I saw at the University of Michigan's stadium.

One day during the Fellows' visit in December, dinner had been underway for almost two hours when Fellow Matthias Schepp arrived at the elegant restaurant in Recoleta with a big smile on his face. For a brief time he had been "home" watching the real thing—the final game of the South American Cup—at Boca Juniors' stadium. Next to the importance of that event, being rudely late for the gathering was nothing.

Although about half of Schepp's colleagues had already left Buenos Aires, he and others stayed on to absorb more of the essence of our country. He is German, so for him the attraction to football was nothing new. That was not the case for most of the group (as part of the program, Fellows have visited Argentina annually since 2000). However, one way or another, all of them have to deal with the national passion for a kind of "football" played with feet and no helmets—not the decaf activity that soccer moms take their kids to in the United States.

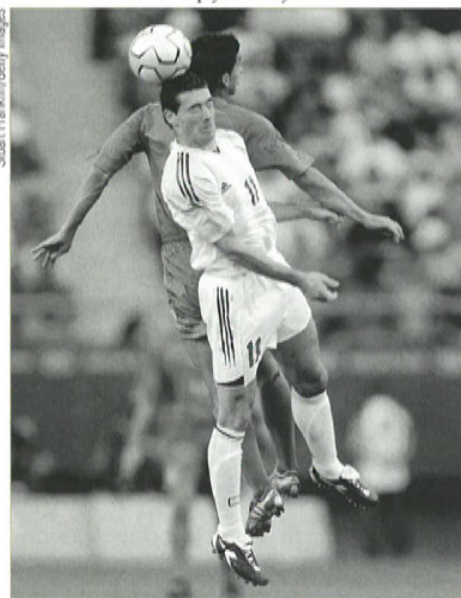
The way each group connects with real football varies from year to year. In December 2001, under the supervision of the local Fellow—me—17 people witnessed a game played by the imminent league champion, Racing Club. What did they make of that event, so central to our hearts? The Fellows—my "fellow Fellows!"—were most enthusiastic about learning the lyrics of Racing Club fight songs, which are filled with filthy language of great descriptive power.

Charles Eisendrath doesn't much care for American football and has a lot of ideas

about our kind. They are completely wrong. He didn't even go to the game in my Fellowship year and has been trying to discourage full engagement of the Fellows with real football ever since. He seems to make an exception, however, when sport mingles with politics, which he understands very well. I suppose that is why the '05 group met with Mauricio Macri, president of Boca Juniors, the current champion, and a contender for mayor of Buenos Aires in 2003. It turned out that he agreed with Eisendrath about American football. "Everyone runs and only one player thinks," he said, while the director nodded approvingly, "and sometimes the one who is supposed to be thinking is just receiving orders by the radio."

The only spectator sport the director favors for the Fellows' trip is of all things, polo! Not exactly a mainstream option, but I have to admit that the aristocratic atmosphere that surrounds a polo game is worth sampling by a bunch of curious outsiders. But this has its limits. Ten minutes or so after the game starts, half of the group, including Eisendrath, left their seats to take long walks. They had something to eat, something to drink. Some didn't return until the end of the afternoon. The field is big, the ball is small, and horses have all those legs! It's almost impossible to know which team is winning except by watching the scoreboard. The equivalent of a half-time "show" is a little

Heads up for real football!



Stuart Franklin/Getty Images

army band playing out of tune and a *gaucho* who makes his horse lie down on its back at mid-field, well beyond the vision of anyone without binoculars.

For sure, not all Fellows are interested in local sports but almost without exception, "tango" is one of the key words they have in mind when they arrive in Buenos Aires. Dozens of good shows, specialized music stores and places where visitors can take dancing lessons give them the opportunity to feel tango's shimmering glamour. But what often confounds their expectations is everyday *porteños'* relationship with tango. Some Fellows can't hide their disappointment when they receive a majority of No's to the question, "Do you dance tango?"

There is another field, however, where disappointment is completely unusual: food and wine. Argentine beef always meets expectations, and the wines of Mendoza exceed them. The first time that Fellows have a juicy *bife de chorizo* on the table in front of them with a glass of Malbec, their expressions usually resemble that reserved for a fine work of art. It must be said that in this field, unlike spectator sports, the program shows impeccable good judgment. If eating and drinking are important to understanding culture, which is certainly true in Argentina, a great deal of understanding is achieved.

The mastery of a foreign culture is never without difficulties, however. With Argentine cuisine, this begins with our *achuras*, the family of sauces and other strange "beef arrangements" of which we are justifiably proud. After seeing them on tables for a few days, sooner or later, before trying them, one of the Fellows asks, "What is this?" We then explain—and before the end of the explanation the probability is high that this particular Fellow will decide to become a vegetarian. In December, one of the '05 Fellows asked during the visit at the *estancia* what a *morcilla* (blood sausage) was. "The waiter said that, if explained, *morcillas* would probably remain untouched on the table," remembers Fellow Sergio Danishevsky '05.

When conversations come to politics, we local Fellows know that a very difficult

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question will arise: “What exactly is Peronismo?” or “Why did you have three Peronist candidates running against each other for president?” Fellows never think that the answers are clear. This demonstrates that their mission to Argentina is a great success and that they have grasped the essence of Peronismo, which is that none of us agrees about the exact legacy of Peron’s leadership.

No man steps twice into the same river, and no Fellowship group steps twice into the same Argentina. In February 2000, the ’00

Fellows were received by the newly elected president, Fernando de la Rúa, at Casa Rosada. Just two years later, in December ’01, the ’02 Fellows participated in the riots that ushered him out of office. As the vans threaded their way to the airport through mobs and tear gas, the president, who had exchanged pleasantries with their predecessors in the presidential Pink House, was quitting.

Ricardo Kirschbaum, the editor of *Clarín*, summed up these experiences at a lunch in the newspaper’s boardroom. “We always give the Knight-Wallace Fellows a

surprise,” he said. “One year it’s a chat with the president. Another year it’s the coup against him. This year is no different...”

He looked around the room as Fellows were squirming, thinking maybe that another coup had begun while they were contemplating the meal before them. “This year the surprise is... normalcy!”

But who knows what river ’06 Fellows will find?

—Carlos Prieto ’02 is a reporter for *Clarín*.

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editor of *The New York Times*, who saw an opportunity to immerse herself quickly in a country she had never visited.

“I wanted to join the Fellows because I have been so impressed by the program and was interested in connecting with mid-career journalists, many of them from outside my New York-Washington orbit,” Abramson said. “A trip to a part of the world that seems undercover, even by the *Times*, was also part of the allure, as well as seeing the U.S. from a different perspective.

“Our meetings with political and cultural figures were extremely eye-opening and my visit with one of the Fellows to a Pentecostal church, where I was ordered to close my eyes, was even more eye-opening.

“After spending five days with younger journalists and getting their take on the *Times*, I returned with as many insights about my paper as I did with impressions of Argentina.”

Our introduction to Argentina could not have been more civilized: a full-dress, white-glove lunch with the German Ambassador Rolf Schumacher, arranged by one of our own, Matthias Schepp ’05 of *Der Stern* magazine.

As waiters served salmon and Riesling, Schumacher and his guest, Angelos Pagkratis, the European Union’s ambassador

Cynthia Barnett



Jason Tanz ’05 and guest Fellow Jill Abramson, *New York Times*, ride the pampas.

to Argentina, were asked about the perception of U.S. foreign policy. Eisendrath offered and the diplomats accepted “Wallace House rules,” meaning their comments were off the record. But they left no doubt that U.S. emphasis on unilateral action and market-driven approaches to development issues were seen as out of touch with Europe and South America.

Their comments were amplified at an informal briefing arranged by Abramson, with Larry Rohter and Juan Forero, who cover South America for the *Times*.

There’s no understanding Argentina without meeting its wealthy landowners, or at least watching them. When the *estancieros* venture out for a sporting match, they don’t mix with the boisterous, banner-waving masses at a soccer stadium. They head for the Campo Argentino de

Polo. “Pay attention to the people,” Eisendrath told the Fellows gathered inside the stadium for the championship match.

In a way that seemed almost perverse, the crowd on the “rich side” of the stadium resembled the ponies on the field. They were sleek, impeccably groomed—and beautifully trained for a world that many other Argentines either don’t know about, don’t talk about, or both.

That was the point. But at the same time that the polo crowd seemed detached, there was no avoiding that the countryside furnished Argentina with the central, unifying folklore of the *gaucho*. The following morning, we were on horses, ourselves, galloping (okay, some of us not galloping) across the *pampas*, that fantastically fertile land that stretches for 1,000 miles in nearly every direction from Buenos Aires.

Eisendrath’s theory is that you can’t understand Argentina if you don’t ride horseback there. Maybe. But it is demonstrable fact that you can’t visit the “Los Dos Hermanos” *estancia* in Zarate, a two-hour drive north of the capital, without eating prodigious amounts of *asado*, marveling at *gaucho* horsemanship and snoozing in a hammock.

Our visit, however, departed from tradition in one important way. We

brought American journalism with us. In the shade provided by a tree a few yards from the corral, Abramson talked about the legal imbroglio of Judith Miller, the *Times* reporter who was subpoenaed to reveal a source in a story she never wrote, and the unprecedented attacks on the paper.

Abramson said she wonders whether the time has come to respond directly to the many attacks on the credibility of the *Times*. Three “blogs” are dedicated to critiquing the *Times*’ coverage, and *Fox News* commentator Bill O’Reilly criticized the paper 64 times in one month, she said. But the *Times*’ policy has always been to ignore such attacks.

The state religion of Argentina, it has been said, is “football.” We went to one of its cathedrals, the south Buenos Aires stadium of the champion Boca Juniors.

“Seventy percent of the country is involved in soccer in some way,” said Mauricio Macri, president of the team, near-miss candidate for mayor and likely rival of president Nestor Kirchner in the next elections. His standing in the world of soccer gives him name recognition and an instant political base.

Not surprisingly, Macri said he could do a better job running the country. Argentina needs to promote its tourism industry, bolster the rule of law by giving more power to the judiciary and improving the tax code, which Macri says is unfair and the primary reason that 50 percent of people don’t pay what they owe.

We also talked with a former vice president of the same club, the distinguished banker Carlos Heller of Banco Credicoop. He doesn’t agree with Macri about much, and worries that an ugly economic reality hides behind the polished surface of Buenos Aires.

“You might think if you stayed only in Buenos Aires with its restaurants and shops



Buenos Aires Mayor Anibal Ibarra (center, rear) hosts KWF '05.

that everything was just fine,” Heller said. “But you can drive 30 minutes in any direction and see stunning poverty. It’s two different countries.”

Experts debate economics, but there is no disputing the moral authority of the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo. “As mothers you created a new kind of political force without precedent in its effectiveness,” Eisendrath said by way of introducing our group.

Nearly 30 years ago, the first 14 mothers marched on the Plaza de Mayo to protest the disappearance of their children under the dictatorship. Members of the military have been tried, convicted and ultimately been given a presidential pardon. Now there is an effort to try them again. Throughout the legal saga the mothers have continued to march.

“If someone went missing people always said there must be some reason for it,” said Taty Almeida, whose son Alejandro was 20 when he was detained in 1975. “Thirty thousand went missing. Of course there is a reason they went missing. They undertook a political-social mission and that is why they went missing.”

The *madres* spoke in front of a wall papered with photos of their vanished children. It was heartbreaking, tear-making—but only part of the story.

Another part was heard when we visited the first woman to serve on the Supreme Court, Justice Elena Highton. She is part of an effort to assert the rule of law through a more independent judiciary, and one of the first questions

involves re-prosecution of *militares* accused of crimes during the Dirty War.

“Many people accept that it was a war, the only way to treat subversion,” she said. She defended the failure of the judiciary to act during that time, but now will be among those who decide how far the past may be re-opened to meet the

charges of the *madres* and others.

We visited a military man for another perspective. “Twenty-five years have gone by since these things happened,” said retired Army Maj. Gen. Daniel Reimundes. “It is not reasonable to keep an institution and its men under suspicion.”

One of the last stops was with Elisa Carrió, a chain-smoking firebrand of the opposition. She doesn’t believe time has changed the essential corruptness of the government, despite the rosy economic figures.

“There’s a difference between seeing the light and being dazzled,” she said. “Public institutions are booty for those who are in office... There has never been less freedom of the press than there is now. The press keeps everything under wraps and reports only what the government wants. I’m resigned to the fact that society doesn’t want to see.”

After a mere week on the ground, we were in no position to know whose argument trumped whose. But we knew that we weren’t the same people who had stepped off the plane from Miami.

“The Argentina trip opened my eyes,” said Christine Tanaka ’05, managing editor of XETV, the *Fox* affiliate in San Diego. “It underscored for me the importance of telling stories that reflect our connections to the rest of the world. We’ve got to find ways to make that happen.”

—Bill Duryea ’05 is a general assignment reporter for the St. Petersburg Times.

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These are the threads the class of '05 followed through the fabric of Turkey during an intense week of seminars, historic and archeological tours, interviews with newsmakers, and cultural and religious immersion from the Eurasian border of Istanbul to the capital city of Ankara.

Along the way, the Fellows also were treated to a memorable scrub in the ancient Cemberlitas Turkish Bath, and meals in some of the finest restaurants in Istanbul. Many fell in love with *Sumac* juice, lamb-stuffed pumpkin, and a sweet dessert called *Tayuk Gogsu*, introduced by Romans and made, mysteriously, out of chicken breast.

The trip was funded and organized by *CNN Türk*, a six-year-old, 24-hour news channel growing along with Turkey's democracy. Editor-in-chief Ferhat Boratav, a big-hearted intellectual with vast patience for questions informed and otherwise, was the perfect host. More than one Fellow wished aloud for an editor just like him.

On the day of the demonstration, the *Lexington Herald-Leader's* Frank Lockwood asked Boratav: "Why would a country so proud of its recent free-speech reforms go so overboard to crack down on speech?" During the next six days, hundreds more questions would follow: How could a place known for religious tolerance ban women from wearing headscarves? Why work so hard to join a European Union that is cool to your entry?

Over the week, the answers would be revealed in an itinerary that unfolded like a symphony—building in complexity each day toward a finale that brought all the strains together. Conductor Boratav somehow delegated duties as head of a large news organization to remain with the group for several hours each day.

For an introduction to Istanbul, one of Turkey's best-known



Bora Bayraktar, Matthias Schepp and Bill Duryea at the Blue Mosque.

travel writers led Fellows through the city's bumpy brick streets on a tour of architectural and historical treasures. Along the way, he wove stories of this capital to three empires—Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman—and its rich religious history. Inside the towering dome of Hagia Sophia, dedicated by Emperor Justinian in AD 537, glittering mosaics of Christ harkened a city that was a centerpiece to Christianity. Outside, four striking minarets, added a thousand years later, pierced a skyline that today is decidedly Muslim.

From a lecture on political Islam to a ceremonial evening of worship, music and dancing with the Muslim minority Alevis, the Fellows explored the many meanings of Islam in Turkey. Almost all Turks are Muslim. But in the spirit of the modern Republic's founding by Mustafa Kemal in 1923, many are also vehemently secular. The Fellows spent an afternoon learning about Kemal on a trip to his huge, hilltop mausoleum in Ankara. Today, followers of the man who famously banned the fez fear that legalizing headscarves would be a sign of "creeping Islamism."

Fellows watch a performance of the Whirling Dervishes.



Kemal is known as Atatürk, or "Father of Turks." His countenance is everywhere: On the brand-new currency; looming over the Istanbul Stock Exchange and in the office of each government official the Fellows visited; even on cheesy key chains and T-shirts in tourist shops.

Fellows compared this cult of personality to that of the Perons in Argentina. The similarities between the two countries didn't stop there. Both, for instance, endured devastating economic crises at the turn of the 21st century. Both were safe havens for Jews escaping the horror of Europe during World War II.

That history, along with Istanbul's grand synagogues and churches, from Greek Orthodox to Armenian, stood in contrast to reports of intolerance the Fellows had read before the trip. Likewise absent was the rampant anti-Americanism about which they'd been warned. *The Wall Street Journal* had just run a column about "anti-American madness" in Turkey, calling the country "The Sick Man of Europe—Again," a derogatory epithet attributed to Tsar Nicholas I with regard to the Ottoman Empire in mid-19th century.

In a session on Turkey in the global context, Yalim Eralp, a former Turkish ambassador, traced the column to U.S. Undersecretary of Defense Doug Feith, with whom the *Journal's* writer had been traveling. Eralp's assessment was seconded by Turkey-based reporters at the KWF-sponsored foreign correspondents' dinner at a trendy restaurant overlooking the Bosphorous, a river that separates the urban soul of European Istanbul from a country mostly in Asia. It was one of several revelations about America that took 5,000 miles' remove to see: how Pentagon officials could conjure anti-

Americanism in an effort to shape public opinion.

Interviews with high-ranking government officials in Ankara and lectures by the nation's top scholars at Istanbul's universities and libraries painted a much more nuanced picture. To be sure, relations between Turkey and the United States remained strained over the war in Iraq. That was quite clear in a session with the General Staff of the Turkish Army, the first granted in the current administration. The session was off the record, but it is permissible to say that there is considerable concern that U.S. policy in Iraq might bring a theocracy to power there.

That is of special importance to a fiercely secular army that remains one of Turkey's most powerful and trusted institutions. And that, we learned, carries major strategic importance. Turkey's are the largest armed forces in Europe and the second-largest in NATO. The Chief of the General Staff took obvious pride in the military's tradition of keeping Turkey out of the hands of political Islamists and helping to steer the state toward democracy.

Across Ankara at the European Union Delegation headquarters, EU Ambassador Hansjörg Kretschmar had a more cautious view, expressed under the same off-record rules for specific comment. While the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) had exerted greater control over the military since assuming power in fall 2002, EU officials clearly thought the generals still carried more clout than customary in EU member countries.

While Turkey-EU stories in the international press centered on major AKP reforms leading toward accession—abolishment of the death penalty, for example—Fellows learned about the thousands of “small” issues crucial to everyday Turks. The EU accession rules for Turkey—150,000 pages worth at last count—cover everything from which crops farmers can grow to the number of

seats acceptable on the country's popular minibuses. The process will stretch another decade and require sacrifice, we learned, from literally everyone in Turkey.

Why bother? The issues Fellows heard about all week—Turkey's West-leaning ways, its importance as the energy corridor to Europe, its expanding buyer's market—all were relevant, to be sure. But more than anything, the somewhat reluctant engagement came down to what the top people call “the neighborhood.” It is not an easy place to live. Bordering Iraq, Syria and Iran to the south, Turkey is geographically vulnerable to any conflict in the Middle East. Europe, meanwhile, sees that



Sampling Turkish coffee, the real deal.

embracing a Muslim country would help soften hard lines between the Arab and Western worlds.

Meetings with representatives of minority Kurdish and Armenian communities and human rights and women's organizations confirmed that whether or not Turkey ends up in the EU, the courtship has been positive. All were heartened by the pace of change in civil, penal and labor codes. AKP reforms include a new “zero-tolerance” policy against torture; beefed up child-labor protections; the lifting of long-standing restrictions on Kurdish cultural identity; and equal rights for women.

Still, new press freedoms had not kept the government from hauling journalists to court. And as the Fellows learned that first weekend, “disproportionate force against

demonstrators,” to quote EU's latest report on Turkey, was still common.

On the last day of the trip, at a posh uptown lunch spot with a 360-degree, rooftop view of Istanbul, shanties were visible alongside western hotel chains; older women in headscarves walked the sidewalks with young women in miniskirts. Hirant Dink, the publisher of an Armenian newspaper who will soon be on trial for criticizing the Turkish government, was nonetheless proud of how far the country had come. “Forgive me but you cannot drop democracy through bombs in Iraq,” he said. “You can only do it through living. And this is what we are doing in Turkey.”

Over a midnight champagne toast just hours before the Fellows' plane was to leave Istanbul, CNN's Boratav apologized for the arduous schedule they'd endured. He may not have realized that several Fellows had heaped even more “living” into the week—sometimes on their study topics, sometimes not. Some woke before dawn to attend morning prayers at nearby mosques. Others stayed up all night to hang out with hip-

hoppers, clubbers and other elements of Turkey's large, exuberant youth culture.

Some extended the trip to learn more. Bill Duryea of the *St. Petersburg Times* headed to southeastern Turkey, where he met with displaced Kurdish villagers, “struggling with the brutal legacy of 15 years of guerilla war and all hoping to survive until the economy improves when Turkey joins the EU in 10 years—if it joins.”

Duryea, who'd spent his Fellowship studying democracy and political Islamism, said that whether the two are compatible remains to be seen. “But when I was in Turkey,” he said, “I knew I was in the right place asking the right questions.”

—Cynthia Barnett '05 is a reporter for Florida Trend Magazine.

2004–2005 Knight-Wallace Fellows



Philip Daniels

Cynthia Barnett, reporter, *Florida Trend*. History of the United States' water supply.

Bora Bayraktar, correspondent, *CNN Türk* (Istanbul). The Israeli-Palestinian conflict after Arafat.

Alden Bourne, producer, "60 Minutes," *CBS News*. Lobbyists and the legislative process.

Sergio Danishewsky, sports editor, *Clarín* (Buenos Aires). Jewish diaspora in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Bill Duryea, general assignment reporter, *St. Petersburg Times*. How the public and the media shape democracy.

Scott Elliott, education reporter, *Dayton Daily News*. The business and economics of charter schools.

Faye Flam, staff science writer, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. Brain physiology and personal identity.

Maria Fleet, senior producer, *CNN* (Atlanta). The impact of war on journalistic ethics in America.

Alfred Hermida, technology editor, *BBC* (London). Blogging as a phenomenon in China.

Mi-Seok Koh, assistant editor of arts and entertainment, *The Dong-A ILBO* (Seoul). Sunday editions of American newspapers and their prospect for the future.

Frank Lockwood, faith and values reporter, *Lexington Herald Leader*. The Pentecostal movement in the United States.

Alicia McCarthy, senior broadcast journalist, *BBC* (London). The impact of terrorism on media, politics and people.

Otesa Middleton Miles, reporter, Dow Jones Newswires. Mental illness.

Melissa Preddy, personal finance editor, *Detroit News*. Financial anthropology.

Stephanie Reitz, reporter, *The Hartford Courant*. The social implications of elderly drivers.

Matthias Schepp, Asia bureau chief, *Der Stern* (Germany). The perception of the decay of Communism in the western media.

Christine Tanaka, managing editor, *XETV* (Fox affiliate, San Diego). Indian gaming.

Jason Tanz, senior editor, *Fortune Small Business* (New York). Artificial intelligence.

Our Great Geniuses



Dan Gillmor '87 has left his position as columnist for the *San Jose Mercury News* to start his own grassroots journalism venture, Grassroots Media Inc. On his weblog (<http://dangillmor.typepad.com>),

he writes that he is working to “encourage and enable more citizen-based media.” Gillmor’s weblog is devoted to discussing the issues facing grassroots journalism as it grows into an important force in society.

Scott Elliott '05 and his colleague Mark Fisher of the *Dayton Daily News* were awarded first place for education reporting in the National Headliner Awards competition for a series they wrote in 2004 called “Flunking the Test.” The three-day series also won the *Daily News’* Enterprise Story of the Year Award for 2004. The series examined the growth of testing under No Child Left Behind and exposed standardized tests as poor tools for judging the academic knowledge and ability of young children.



Michelle Genece '02, a freelance producer based in New York, has been awarded an R&D grant from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting for a documentary examining Middle East news coverage from

American and Arab perspectives. “In the Eye of the Beholder” will follow two news teams—one from an Arab news channel, the other from a U.S. news organization—as they cover the same event. The film will illuminate how different international audiences hear and see very different accounts of world events.



Scott Huler '03, who last year published *Defining the Wind: The Beaufort Scale, and How a 19th-Century Admiral Turned Science into Poetry*, is at work on a new book. “I’m working on a project called ‘No Man’s Lands,’ which in some ways

isn’t dissimilar from the book about the Beaufort Scale that I wrote on the Fellowship,” Huler writes. “Again it has at its center an old text, and I follow wherever that text leads to get to its power and meaning. Where I spent 20

years having people ask ‘The WHAT scale?’ with the last book, now I’m telling people I’m pursuing the *Odyssey* of Homer, and most of them have heard of that.”

The Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy at U-M has offered **Micheline Maynard '00**, a Detroit-based reporter with *The New York Times*, a visiting lecturer’s position for 2005–2006. She will be teaching a seminar on the airline industry and its role in American society.

Wes Pippert '76, director of the University of Missouri School of Journalism’s Washington Program, conducted two workshops in Serbia last summer under the sponsorship of the U.S. State Department. The workshops were held in Belgrade and Palic for about 20 Serbian journalists. Pippert also was one of a dozen Missouri faculty members who spent two weeks in Russia as part of Missouri’s Global Scholars program.



Kemp Powers '03, a freelance writer based in Los Angeles, has received a Bill Cosby Screenwriting Fellowship at the University of Southern California. “It’s a four-month-long, part-time program that enables us

to continue working while we participate in the Fellowship,” Powers says. “The screenplay I submitted for the Fellowship was the one I wrote while taking Terry Lawson’s screenwriting class at Michigan. Just another great example of how the Knight-Wallace Fellowship continues to reap huge dividends.”



Bill Rose '97 has been named managing editor of *The Palm Beach Post*. “Considering the load I’ve inherited, the obituary cannot be far behind,” he quips. “It’s a great county in which to run a newspaper,” Rose says.

“It’s the place where the 2000 election first broke down, where nine of the September 11 terrorists lived and trained, and where the first domestic anthrax attack took place. At times it seems all the weirdness that once seemed to slide down the peninsula toward Miami-Dade has now slid back up to Palm Beach County. And that makes for great copy. All of this keeps us running pretty much all the time.”



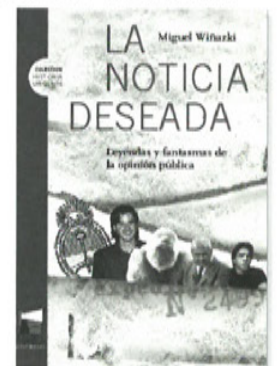
Yvonne Simons '03 has accepted a job as the assistant news director for KVVU-TV, a Fox affiliate, in Las Vegas. Simons, who previously was the midday anchor for *Ohio News Network*, will run the day-to-day operations

of the newsroom and coach reporters and anchors.

Jason Tanz '05, a senior editor with *Fortune Small Business*, has signed a book deal while still in Ann Arbor on the Fellowship. The book is tentatively titled *Lose Yourself: A Shadow History of Hip-Hop in White America*. “Whether we recognize it or not, hip-hop has changed the way we think about race in this country—for better and for worse—and my book will explain what, why, and how it happened,” says Tanz. The book was sold to Bloomsbury at auction in February.

Andrew Whitehead '04, editor with the BBC’s “The World Today,” has headed to India for 18 months. He took over as the head of the BBC’s charitable wing, the BBC World Service Trust, which focuses on using the media to promote development. In India, Whitehead reports, the Trust makes two weekly TV programs in Hindi—one a detective program and the other a youth program—with strong HIV awareness and prevention messages built in. The programs are broadcast on Indian state-run TV. “The detective program,” Whitehead says, “has an audience in the nine figures—yes, more than a hundred million viewers.”

Miguel Wiñazki '03, editor-in-chief of *Clarín’s* “Viva” Magazine, has published his ninth book, *La Noticia Deseada*, translated as “Wanted News.” Wiñazki started the project while he was a Fellow in Ann Arbor. He says, “It’s about the power of public opinion, and how public opinion constructs its own version of the facts. The media must fight against this trend.”



Send your doings to
Birgit Rieck at brieck@umich.edu

—Tanz, continued from page 3

I mention the Turkish bath? They don't wear suits in there, you know.

Furthermore, the opportunity to explore all of these issues with local journalists provided a much-needed dash of perspective to the official party line. On our first day in Buenos Aires, a guide took us for a tour of Recoleta cemetery, a sprawling necropolis where so many of Argentina's aristocrats are buried that their caskets are piled atop one another. Even as our guide was pointing out the remarkable detailing of the mausoleums, and explaining the dramatic histories of their inhabitants, our Argentine Fellow—Sergio Danishevsky, sports editor at Buenos Aires' *Clarín* and possessed of a streak of bracing anarchism—pulled me to the side to give me a less official take: "I hate all of these people, I'm glad that they're dead, and I'm also glad that they're stacked on top of one another so they can't claw their way back to the surface if they come back to life." Bora Bayraktar of *CNN Türk* shared his similarly candid views of the various diplomats, economists, and—most urgently—soccer fans from teams other than his favorite that we had occasion to meet.

Travel has been one of the distinctive features of the Knight-Wallace Fellows since the group took its first trip to Toronto in 1990. In subsequent years, the touring was extended to include driving-distance destinations such as Chicago, Detroit and,

of course, the Eisendrath manse in northern Michigan. But it wasn't until 2000 that intercontinental travel became a staple, with the first trip to Buenos Aires. This year, Istanbul was added to the itinerary.

It's a great perk for present and future Fellows, but something of a sore spot for those alumni who missed out on the boondoggle. Ford Fessenden '90, a reporter with *The New York Times*, says in an email that he thinks that restitution is in order: "I think any Fellows from those dark years should be offered a second Fellowship."

He's not the only one. "As a business columnist, I can appreciate that I've been shortchanged," writes *Wall Street Journal's* Holman Jenkins '92. "Charles owes me one foreign trip, plus interest (compounded since 1992)."

But it would be impolite for me to poke too much fun at my forebears' grumbling. I'm sure I'll feel the same way in five years, when I hear that Charles has added another group trip to the planet Neptune. I can hear the authoritative German clip of the program's inestimable Birgit Rieck right now: "Okay, Fellows, unbuckle and get out of the pressurized evacuation pod. We've got a meeting with the Department of Intergalactic Development in 20 minutes."

—Jason Tanz '05 is a senior editor with Fortune Small Business.

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