



KIMBERLY ZAMMIT PHOTO

HARD AT WORK: Students spent most of their time studying in Greece and Italy but found some time to party.

During the month of July, a group of 33 Greater Toronto Area high school students travelled to Europe to study history in Greece and Italy and literature in Scotland and Ireland. The program is accredited by the Peel Board through the Centre for Education and Training and is run by Global Journeys of Mississauga — one of several companies offering such scholastic travel programs. The groups were led by several co-ordinators and teachers. We have been keeping tabs on the students' progress. As their adventure nears an end, co-ordinator Kimberly Zammit reports on her group in Greece and Italy.

Europe excites Ontario students

BY KIMBERLY ZAMMIT
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

THE ETERNAL CITY appears to be a city of eternal good times. It's a place where young people who come here with the intention of studying ancient culture and history are constantly being challenged by the excitement of today's distractions — like a nightlife that keeps tempting students to leave their books and party.

Our group of Ontario students is no exception. For the entire month of July, the high school students, ranging in age between 16 and 19, have been put to the test by a club scene that rocks to a sophisticated European beat.

So, with our trip winding down, I decided to ask them what were the biggest challenges they faced during this wonderful travel and study excursion and what lessons they will be returning home with?

"The biggest challenge has been balancing school work and going out to party," Evan Valeriotte told me. "I dealt with it by setting priorities and sticking to them. For me the course takes precedence most of the time. For others partying is the priority."

But it wasn't just the party scene that distracted our students. According to Seth Wayne: "It was hard to stay in at night to do an assignment when you know there's the Colosseum and the Roman Forum and all sorts of interesting things just a few subway stops away."

This trip has also helped broaden our students' knowledge of the customs and traditions of the countries we have explored. Some of those customs have excited our young travellers.

"The habit of eating late is one thing I like," said Kendall Triolo. "I think that I will start eating later once I get home."

"One Italian habit I admire is their driving skills," added Andrew Huang. "I took a taxi to get to the hotel and the driver drove in and out of traffic, passing people on one-lane streets. It was fun to be there."

Zack Fishman was so impressed with the food over here, he told me: "When I return home to Toronto I will eat a lot more Italian and Greek cuisine."

This trip also introduced the students to the experience of sharing a room with, in most cases, a total stranger — something that will better prepare them for university living.

"There are advantages and disadvantages to living alone and with a roommate,"

observed Seth Wayne. "Like who owns the bathroom."

"I enjoy living with a roommate because I always had someone to talk to and joke around with," said Laura Fullerton. "When living together for a month, you really get to know that person well and it's nice to have someone you can trust and talk to."

One of the biggest concerns prior to the trip — mostly from parents — was security. In the wake of Sept. 11, everyone is allowed to feel a bit apprehensive. However, it rarely entered our students' minds.

"Overall I did feel safe," said Shannon Wilson. "I did worry about getting my belongings stolen on the subways, though."

So now that our students are world travellers, I couldn't help but ask what advice they might offer other young people who want to make a similar study trip in the future?

"I'd tell them to come prepared to work — it's not a party every night," said Shrochi. "Of course there are amazing weekends and some awesome weekday nights, but you need to manage your time in order to experience that fun."

Fullerton cautions: "When visiting Greece and Rome be sure to bring your own peanut butter (they don't have any here)!"