



Post Fellowship Reporting - Project Summary

Report Title: Rockin' in the south of France **Name:** Bonnie Cooper
Other Team Members:
Program: Greater Houston Area Program
Trip Dates: 11/30/-0001 - 11/30/-0001 **Location Visited:** St. Victor la Coste, France
Post Fellowship Reporting Template: PFR Template 0

Project Summary: The stunning colors and rich culture of Provencal France was a beautiful place to enjoy the experience of a lifetime. La Sabranenque is a project focused on restoring the pathways, walls, and ramparts of a Medieval castle in the tiny village of St. Victor la Coste, France. My original goal was to bring back first-hand experience of an archeological dig to my classroom. As it turns out, that was a tiny part of what I eventually brought back to my classroom. That being said, my days were filled with digging, moving stones and rocks, re-paving and repairing thousand year old pathways, and building stone walls using nearly forgotten dry stone building techniques. Along the way I saw sites both spectacular and charming and met some truly amazing people. Gegneoux, the founder of La Sabranenque and its master stone worker, became my hero for his 40-year dedication to and passion for his life's legacy – the preservation of stone working techniques, his village, and the castle itself. What I find has been most meaningful and beneficial to my students is when I speak of the people I met at La Sabranenque and the fact that, without exception, they all knew more about my country than I did about their country as well as the world at large. However, the most important thing to most of my students is that, for a while at least, I was an immigrant in a foreign country and I did not speak the language. I went to France with a set of expectations that did not really come to pass and what I returned with is so much more.

Career Impact: * Learned (hands-on) ancient stone working techniques and how people of the past had to work to build some of the stone structures that still stand today.

* Participated in a project that preserves the past into the future: the stone walls I helped to build will still be there in another 500 years.

* Gained a new appreciation for a slower pace of life and the idea that sometimes one simply needs to talk and listen to others in a meaningful way.

* For the first time I feel that I understand what it really means to be an American and I learned to try to see my country and culture through other eyes.

Classroom/Community Impact:* I can speak with authority and from experience to my students regarding the scientific cultural context of archeological research.

* I am an example to my students that one should never give up on dreams and that, like dreams, life can be a little unexpected but the unexpected things can be the most rewarding.

* A new found sense of what it truly means to be an American has translated into more passion for my subject area and how I want my students to learn.

* I can be an asset to other teachers in my building and my district by sharing lesson plans, photos, video, and personal experiences with them.

Open Response: * Continuing to share insights with my students and colleagues.

* Developing lesson plans to use with World Geography classes.

* Ongoing current events lessons to keep my students better informed.

* E-Pals project for the spring semester in my World Geography class to help give the students a more global perspective.

Quote: I went to La Sabranenque with one set of expectations and left with new insights into what it means to have a global state of mind.

Photos:



Repairing and re-paving a section of a thousand-year-old path.



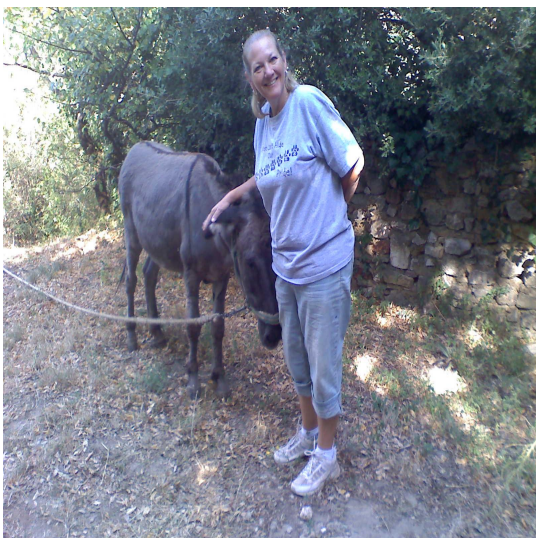
Gathering stones from the quarry to be used on the wall repair.



A section of the wall in progress: Look - no mortar!



A close-up of the paving being replaced; again, no mortar.



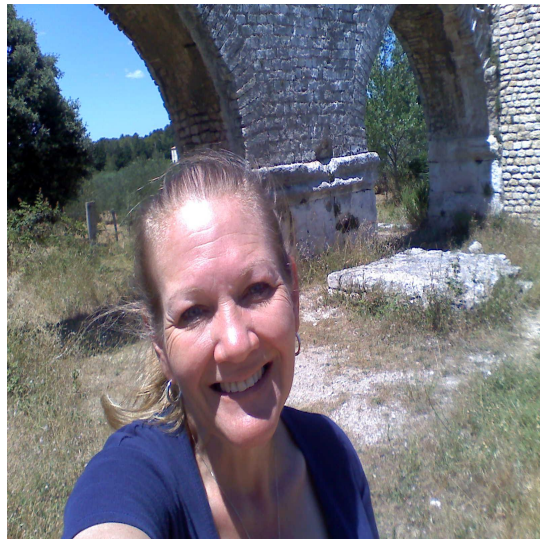
New 'friend' at La Sabranenque.



La Sabranenque's founder shows a volunteer how to place the stones.



On the ramparts of Castellás, our daily view from 'work'.



Visiting a nearby Roman aqueduct; check out that stone work!