This handbook has been composed for the convenience of students who will be participating in the University of Akron’s *Summer Program in the Alps*. It contains pertinent information gleaned from students and professors who have participated in overseas programs in the past. It should be read carefully by all participants.

Downtown Faverges, Haute Savoie (France)
TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. PURPOSE AND AIM OF THE PROGRAM
II. IMPORTANT DATES
III. FAVERGES: HOW TO GET THERE
IV. MAPS
V. WHAT TO TAKE WITH YOU
VI. BEHAVIOR AMONG THE FRENCH
VII. MISCELLANEOUS CONSIDERATIONS
VIII. CONVERSION FORMULAS
IX. PACKING CHECKLIST
X. INDEX
1. PURPOSE AND AIMS OF THE PROGRAM

We will be working and studying in a small French town situated in an ancient glacial valley at the foot of the Alps. There have been settlements and towns in this area for many thousands of years: the hamlet of Viuz, a quarter-mile North of Faverges, bears a name derived from the old Gallo-Roman name *Vicus* (habitation or village). Faverges itself has Roman ruins dating from the 1st century B.C. to the 3rd century A.D..

The castle which dominates the town from the Crêt de Chambellon dates back to Medieval times, and overlooks what was in centuries past an important commercial crossroads which connected France, Italy and Switzerland. Other nearby towns also have small castles, some of which still belong to the original families which constructed them.

The town of Faverges is an ordinary French working town; three major industries, Bourgeois (kitchen appliances) S.T. Dupont (fine jewelry), Stäubli (robotics) employ some three thousand people. Faverges has a population of over seven thousand, which makes it a fair-sized town for France. Many of the factory workers live in rural villages within ten miles of
Faverges and commute to work every day. Students will have the opportunity to visit small farming villages, small towns, and large cities (Annecy is only half an hour away by bus; Geneva, just over an hour away) and thus get an accurate overall view of modern and traditional lifestyles in France and Europe.

Those participants who wish to study French during the Program are in the perfect environment to do so: the daily language classes are supplemented by a totally French environment. All students live with French families. All forms of entertainment are in French: newspapers, magazines, radio, television and films are all in French. In an environment closely akin to "total immersion" programs used by U.S. government agencies, the acquisition of the target language is greatly facilitated and accelerated.

Living with a French family is one of the most rewarding and beneficial aspects of the Program. This experience allows students to have an intimate look at the daily life of the citizens of another nation and culture.
II. IMPORTANT DATES

1. Application deadlines: University of Akron students are asked to file their applications by December 1. This early date is imposed by administrative necessities: it is imperative to finalize course offerings early in the Spring term. The Program in Faverges is open to any student in good standing of any university; for applicants outside the University of Akron community, the final application deadline is April 15. Courses have prerequisites; admission to the Program may be denied on the grounds that a student is not academically qualified to take a certain class. It is the student's responsibility to contact the appropriate department to determine whether courses taken in another school satisfy the University of Akron's prerequisites. The number of participants is limited by the availability of host families in Faverges; students may be placed on a waiting list should the program be “full.”

2. Dates of the Program: The Program lasts about six weeks. It generally runs from mid-May to the late June. These dates have been selected to allow students two free months for summer jobs or travel.

III. FAVERGES: HOW TO GET THERE

1. The Director will suggest transportation for lowest possible travel costs. Students are free to make their own travel arrangements. Baggage allowance: two check-in bags not to exceed a total of 106 inches, no single bag larger than 62 inches (this measurement is obtained by adding length + width + thickness), and one carry-on bag that can fit under an airline seat.

2. Faverges is located just South of the Lac d'Annecy. Annecy, at the northern tip of the lake, is 31 miles from Geneva, 120 miles from Lyon, 345 miles from Paris, and 16 miles from Faverges. (See maps on page 8)
3. **Getting to Faverges from Geneva Airport:** Take the shuttle train from the Airport to the *Gare Cornavin* (train station). Walk two blocks to the *Gare Routière* (intercity bus station), and take a bus to Annecy (these run four or five times a day). You must purchase a *Billet de baggage* for each article of baggage that is to be carried in the bus. For this, you will need some Swiss currency. In Annecy, take the bus to Faverges. It runs hourly until evening.

4. **Directions to Faverges from Paris:** Take the Air France shuttle bus to Invalides *Métro* station. Take the *Métro* to the *Gare de Lyon* train station. Take the train to Annecy. The *TGV* trains can make the trip in just over three hours. Just outside the Annecy train station is the Crolard bus station, from which you can take the bus to Faverges.

5. **Easy Directions:**
Fly to the destination recommended by the group director on the date specified for group departure; a chartered bus will be waiting for the group in the destination city and will take the students to Faverges directly. One such bus is chartered every year on the group arrival date and on the last day of the Program.
IV. MAPS

DISTANCES

New York - Paris
3600 miles
(7 hours by jet)

New York - Geneva
4000 miles
(8 hours by plane)

DISTANCES

Paris - Annecy
345 miles
(4 hrs by train)

Geneva - Annecy
31 miles
(1½ hrs by bus)

Annecy - Faverges
16 miles
(45 minutes by bus)
V. WHAT TO BRING WITH YOU

1. The first requirement is a valid passport. It is necessary for you to apply for a passport at least eight weeks before departure. U.S. citizens are no longer required to obtain visas for travel to France, so that the passport is the only necessary document. Information on applying for a passport can be had at

   http://travel.state.gov/passport_services.html .

2. It is recommended that you bring with you any prescription drugs you may need. Keep them in their pharmacy-labeled bottles! Customs inspectors do not look favorably on pharmaceuticals in film cans. If you are blind without your glasses or contact lenses, bring an extra pair; European opticians are used to a patient clientele. If you wear contact lenses and need cleaning solutions for them, be sure to bring along a supply sufficient for the duration of your stay in Europe. On the other hand, shampoo, toothpaste, paper tissues and other common toiletry articles are available in any grocery store. It is unnecessary to fill your suitcase with bottles of shampoo, boxes of Kleenex or cans of Lysol!

3. How much clothing should you bring? It is a good rule of thumb to pack a suitcase that you would be willing and able to carry single-handed for three blocks after a sleepless night. Europeans wear fewer different outfits than Americans, but generally dress more neatly.

   It is a good idea to bring one set of "nice clothes" that you could wear to an official reception or church. At such functions, dresses are almost de rigueur for women, as are ties and jackets for men. Otherwise, bring along a pair of ordinary pants, some shirts
and jeans. In May and June, nights are cold in the mountains. Bring some clothes that can be "layered." Since it may rain, bring a raincoat or poncho. Since you will do a lot of walking, bring comfortable shoes for city wear and hiking boots to traipse through the Alpine scenery. A folding umbrella takes very little room in a suitcase and can be quite useful. Don't forget to bring a bathing suit and a towel. Lake Annecy is cold but invigorating!

4. Electrical appliances: European countries supply electric power at 220 volts/50 cycles. American appliances are designed for 110 volts/60 cycles. What this means is that any normal American appliance you plug into the wall socket (using an adapter) will flash, melt, burn and shock or kill you unless you use a transformer also. Small electrical transformers however tend to burn out. It is cheaper and far more convenient to buy a dual-voltage travel dryer, which may be bought in the U.S. for about ten dollars. Computer power bricks and digital camera chargers tend to take all voltages; if they are marked with the indication 100-240V, 50/60Hz, they will work anywhere in the world, provided you get a plug adapter, as in the image below. These are found easily in hardware stores and supermarkets everywhere in Europe.
5. Books: American textbooks cannot be found in Europe; you must buy the American books you will need for classes prior to your departure. You may find it convenient to bring along a French reference grammar and a bilingual dictionary. For example, the Bantam French-English paperback dictionary is inexpensive and fairly comprehensive. Annecy and Faverges have a number of bookstores where you may find French materials, tourist guides and maps. The *Michelin Green Guide* of the Alpine region (La Savoie and Le Dauphiné) are especially well written and informative.

6. Since you will be staying with a French family, you may wish to take a "typically American" gift with you to give to these people. Especially appreciated are t-shirts emblazoned with something typically Ohio or American. Also good are illustrated photo books on the city or region from which you come, Native American items, Ohio maple syrup or wines, and t-shirts or sweatshirts with American college crests. Be careful to choose gifts that are actually made in the USA! Though any gift is appreciated, it is a sad comment on our country to bring an item labeled "made in China"!

**Bring pictures of your family and home, friends, school and place of work;** these are always good for starting conversations. Remember when selecting gifts that most French people do not speak or read English, or at least pretend not to.
7. **Eurailpass**: if you wish to do extensive traveling after the Program, you may wish to buy a railpass. These must be purchased in the U.S. and are unavailable in Europe. These passes are quite costly and will not save you money unless you are to travel many thousands of miles within Western Europe. Before purchasing a Eurailpass, you should price the actual cost of tickets for intended train travel vs. the cost of a pass. The Eurailpass is not honored in Great Britain or in former Eastern bloc countries.

The Carte 12-25 offers the possibility of half-price train travel within France. It must be used during off-peak hours and is not good for travel on weekends. It costs about $60 and can be used only by people under 26 years of age. If you wish to travel in France after the end of the Program, the Carte 12-25 may be a good buy for you.

8. **Work permit**: if you wish to work in France after the Program, you must obtain a work permit from a French Consulate before departure. Be advised, however, that there are essentially no summer work opportunities for students in Europe. For additional information, consult the French Consulate nearest your home. For Ohio residents, this is the Chicago consulate:

Consulat de France  
205 North Michigan Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60601 tel: 312 327-5201
VI. BEHAVIOR AMONG THE FRENCH

When Benjamin Franklin went to Paris in the 1770's as America's first ambassador to France, his American manner was found to be both odd and endearing.

When the G.I.'s liberated France in 1944, they too were considered odd and endearing; the fact that there were hundreds of thousands of them tended to strain the "endearing" element of the description. Americans are no longer considered quite so endearing; it is important to remember that every student of the Program is, in a way, an unofficial ambassador of the U.S. and of the University. This responsibility cannot be taken lightly. While you are in France, you ought to make every effort to conform to the ways of the French.

The most important of these is the French notion of property. Do not walk or lie on lawns, except in designated areas such as the Pâquier in Annecy; do not deface public or private property; do not litter. This last point is especially important: no one in France drops gum wrappers in the street.

Your host family may be over-protective; they feel responsible for the people entrusted to their care. Please be indulgent and realize that they have the best of intentions. Make it a point to spend evenings with your family. Engage in conversation: in France, this is not a lost art. Be punctual: evening meals are served late enough (7 or 8:00 p.m.) to give you plenty of time to get home. If you are going out, don't forget to tell your host family.
Two cardinal rules for peaceful coexistence with your family:

1) Do not use the telephone for long-distance calling without permission; it is polite to offer to pay for local calls; **Never** make long-distance calls from the house unless you are using a calling card; you can also arrange with your long-distance phone carrier in the US to set up a cheap overseas calling plan for family to call you.

2) Do not abuse shower privileges. Energy conservation makes hot water expensive. Shower at night and no more than once a day if possible.

Your French family may invite you to spend the weekend with them. It is polite to do so at least once during the Program. You may see strange food on your dinner plate. Here again, common sense and diplomacy should prevail: make an effort at least to taste everything; it is good table manners in France to finish everything that is on your plate. Finally, you must remember that while you're a guest, you do not have complete and free run of the house. Do not feel free to go to the refrigerator unless you have been specifically told that you should. You should ask permission to store food in the refrigerator if you feel so inclined. Your host family's house is not your house: while they have no word for "privacy", the French nonetheless have a highly-developed sense of it. Do not bring friends home to chat; that's what cafés are for. French homes are generally far
less spacious than American ones, and the French tend to be very territorial.

All of these "Don'ts" should not discourage you. The French are in fact a very warm, patient, and hospitable people. If you make an honest effort at speaking French and at appreciating their ways, they will open their hearts to you.

**VII. MISCELLANEOUS CONSIDERATIONS**

1. **Health Insurance**: You must make your own arrangements for health insurance coverage. Contact the representative of your insurance company to discuss health, accident, and medical coverage while overseas. The Program requires you to obtain an International Student ID card (contact the Office of International Programs) because this card, which costs $22, gives you excellent health and repatriation benefits.

On the other hand, for small ills, you will find that French medicine is very good: in June 2000, the UN rated the French health system No. 1 in the world (whereas the US health system placed 18th). Should you have any health problems during your stay, know that there are several good doctors in Faverges; there are hospitals in Annecy and Albertville, and the American Hospital has branches in Geneva and Paris.

2a. **Drugs**: DON'T! You'll be crossing the Swiss and French borders. Penalties are strict in both of these countries. Marijuana is considered a hard drug; border authorities have no tolerance for drugs. American officials cannot get you out of European prisons.

2b. **Alcohol**: Most young people and teen-agers in France drink alcohol to some degree (legal age is 18). Moderate
social drinking is part of tradition. While "getting wasted" may be the height of sophistication in American frat houses parties, such behavior is definitely frowned upon and considered unacceptable behavior in France.

3. **Hitch-hiking**: Maybe. Many students are successful hitch-hiking (auto-stop) between Faverges and Annecy. While this is, at first glance, a fairly reliable means of travel in Europe, the fact that the use of seatbelts has been mandatory for years suggests that the automobile is not the safest mode of transport. Use your judgment, and if you *must* hitch-hike, never do so alone.

4. **Traveling to Annecy**: The cost of bus fares (about $12 Faverges-Annecy R/T) is an important reason for the popularity of hitch-hiking. If buses offer the advantage of operating on a tight schedule, they do not run in the evening or at night. The distance between Annecy and Faverges can be walked (briskly) in 4-5 hours; a very level bicycle path along the lake makes a bicycle ride to Annecy a pleasant project for a nice day.

5. **Shopping money**: You will need some money for recreation. There are many cafés, pâtisseries, restaurants, and shops of all kinds in Faverges and Annecy. Money gets spent all too quickly. Movies cost $8, pastries cost a dollar apiece, as do soft drinks served in a café. You’ll want to buy magazines, newspapers and books as
well as souvenirs. Don't forget to include $20 in your budget for post cards and postage. Traveler's checks are easily redeemed for Francs in banks in Faverges or Annecy. Currency rates have fluctuated enormously in the past couple of years: in 2001, a dollar could buy €1.15; by late 2006 a dollar could buy only €0.78 . . . .

6. Communications with the U.S.: Keep in mind that there is a six-hour time difference, and that your loving parents may be a trifle irritated hearing from you at 4:00 a.m. (10 a.m. in France). Do not use the phone for long-distance calls unless you have an international calling card. Post cards and aerograms are relatively economical; be sure to budget for post cards for relatives and friends. (post card + air mail postage = $1.35 approx.) On the other hand, more and more host families have internet access, and the Faverges Médiathèque kindly provides our students with the possibility of checking their e-mail at no cost.

7. Cameras and film: By all means, bring the best camera that you can buy or borrow! The pictures you take will be the most durable souvenirs of your European experience. Get your camera in the U.S.. Nearly all students now bring digital cameras; to back up your photographs and empty your memory cards, you should bring a number of blank CDs or DVDs so that those of us with computers can make backups
for you. Blanks are much cheaper in the US than in France, so be sure to bring some with you. You could plan to share a spool of 25 discs with two or three other students.

At the end of the Program, all students will receive a DVD of Prof. Jeantet’s photos to supplement their own collection of images.

8. **Side trips**: Be sure to take advantage of the Program’s trips. Many of the places we’ll see are breathtakingly beautiful, and we will make every effort to schedule trips on the clearest days. You should make good use of free time to hike in the mountains around Faverges with your friends.

9. **Conduct in the classroom building**: The town of Faverges lets us use classroom facilities in the “Club du 3ᵉ Age” which is reserved for our use in the mornings. It is in the center of town, across the street from an excellent pâtisserie.

10. **Class attendance**: Because the Program lasts only six weeks and courses are so concentrated, students cannot miss more than one class during the six weeks without valid medical excuse. Our schedule may also be
modified on the spur of the moment to take advantage of weather for sight-seeing trips.

11. **Laundry**: Be reasonable! Do not bury your French family in mountains of dirty laundry. If you wear a shirt for two hours, do not consider it necessarily ready for the wash. While there are dry cleaners (*lavage à sec*) in Faverges, they are quite expensive, require days of waiting, and do a mediocre job. And to think that "French cleaners" have such a good reputation in the United States!

12. **Complaints**: If you have any complaints about your family (bread and water for supper, rice every night, no meat, etc.) inform the Program Director without delay. It is important that you live in a comfortable atmosphere during your stay.

13. **Illustrated reports of the group’s activities** are posted on the web twice weekly during the Program. Reports of the every trip since 1997 can be consulted on our website. Family and friends can monitor your trip through the web pages that can be found through the Department of Modern Languages’ website at [http://www.uakron.edu/modlang](http://www.uakron.edu/modlang)

A printout of the web reports makes a good souvenir and constitutes an excellent and complete record of the numerous activities of the group during the six weeks of study and travel.

Some of the host families are now connected to the Internet and will provide internet mail service for Program participants.

14 **Contacting the student in France**: The names, addresses and phone numbers of host families are provided to the students in the month prior to departure. Detailed telephone instructions are provided also for the benefit of family and friends in the U.S. who may wish to call the student in France. The “time conversion” table on page 22 shows the importance of synchronizing communications since there is a six-hour time difference between Ohio and France.
15. **After the Program**: Because your families will either be leaving for their own summer vacation or receiving guests, it is imperative that you leave your families at the end of the Program. It may be possible for you individually to arrange for an extended stay with other families or in an inexpensive hotel in the area.

Many students choose to remain in Europe an extra week or two after the Program; one of the reasons it is important for participants to attend the preparatory meetings in the months before departure is that this allows you to meet other participants and perhaps to plan for travel together after the Program.

*Any suggestions you may have concerning inclusion of additional information in future editions of this handbook are welcome!*

Robert F. Jeantet
Program Director
VIII. USEFUL FORMULAS

TEMPERATURE CONVERSION

Farenheit to Celsius:  \[ (F^\circ - 32) \times \frac{5}{9} = C^\circ \]
( Quick & dirty conversion: take \( F^\circ \), subtract 30, divide by 2 to get \( C^\circ \) )

Celsius to Farenheit:  \[ C^\circ \times \frac{9}{5} + 32 = F^\circ \]
( Quick conversion: double Celsius and add 30 )

DISTANCE CONVERSION

Kilometers to miles: divide Km. by 1.6
. . . or multiply by 3/5
. . . or take the number of kilometers, divide by 2 and add 1/10 of the original number
  Example: 400 km
  Divide by 2 = 200
  Add 1/10 = +40
  End result, 240 miles

Miles to kilometers: multiply miles by 1.6
. . . or multiply by 5/3

WEIGHTS & MEASURES

1 kilo = 2.2 pounds
28 grams = 1 ounce
1 liter = a bit more than a quart
1 meter = 39 inches
30 centimeters = 1 foot
2.54 centimeters = 1 inch

French clothing sizes are often marked in centimeters divided by 2
example: a size 36 (US) would be size 45 (French)
TIME CONVERSION

France is six time zones ahead of the Eastern seaboard of the US.
The difference makes telephone conversation difficult to coordinate:

8 am in the US is 2 pm in France, same day.
8 pm in the US is 2 am in France, next morning.

8 am in France is 2 am in the US, same day
noon in France is 6 am in the US, same day
4 pm in France is 10 am in the US, same day
8 pm in France is 2 pm in the US, same day
midnight in France is 6 pm in the US.

CURRENCY CONVERSION

At the time of the writing of this manual,
1 (one) US Dollar traded for 78 Euro cents.
Conversely, 1 Euro was worth about $1.27
IX. PACKING CHECKLIST

**REQUIRED**
- valid passport
- airplane tickets
- personal toiletry articles
- small pocket flashlight
- nice pants or skirt, jacket
- hiking clothes
- class books (Students may want to bring a grammar also)
- travelers' checks (for your personal expenses)
- comfortable walking shoes
- personal prescription medicines

**RECOMMENDED**
- longsleeve flannel shirt
- sweatshirt, sweater
- sunglasses
- sunscreen (can be bought in France)
- lightweight rainproof jacket (nylon shell)
- hiking boots
- spare contact lenses or glasses
- camera with fresh battery and plenty of film
- $50 converted to French francs before departure
- cheap folding umbrella or poncho
- travel alarm clock (to get up in the morning!)
- credit card for emergency use (VISA is best)
- bathing suit, towel
- one week's supply of underwear, socks, shirts **(AT MOST!)** *
- two or three pair of jeans, pants **(NO MORE THAN THIS!)** *
- two or three sweaters, sweatshirts **(NO MORE THAN THIS!)** *
- allergy medicine (if you are susceptible to hay fever)

* Believe this! Students always report after the trip that they brought along far too many clothes!
OPTIONAL
_ for photographers: U.V. or polarizing filters for best results
_ moneybelt for documents and money while traveling
_ dual-voltage "travel" hair dryer

STRONGLY DISCOURAGED
- appliances of any kind, unless absolutely necessary
- valuable jewelry or watches
- cash in excess of $50
- curling irons, hair dryers, or other electrical appliances which are not specifically "dual-voltage"

EXPRESSLY FORBIDDEN
- firearms and knives (except folding pocket knives, in luggage)
- illegal substances
X. INDEX
(Subjects listed by Section, paragraph)

Admission to Program - II, 1
After the Program - VII, 15
Alcohol - VII, 2b
Baggage Allowance, see Luggage
Behavior Among the French - VI; VII, 9
Books - V, 5
Cameras - VII, 7
Cassette Recorders - VII, 8
Checklist - IX
Class attendance - VII, 10
Clothing - V, 3
Commuting - VII, 4
Complaints - VII, 12
Dates of Program - II, 2
Drugs, illegal - VII, 2
Drugs, prescription - V, 2
Electrical Appliances - V, 4
Eurailpass - V, 7
Exchange Rates - VII, 5
Families - V, 6
Field Trips - VII, 9
Film - VII, 7
Health Insurance - VII, 1
Hitch-hiking - VII, 3
Laundry - VII, 11
Luggage - III, 3
Mail - VII, 6
Maps - IV
Packing - IX
Passport - V, 1
Rain Gear - V, 3
Shopping Money - VII, 5
Showers - VI
Side Trips - VII, 9
Telephone - VI; VII, 6
Textbooks - V, 5
Time difference - VII, 6
Traveler's Checks - VII, 5
Visas - V, 1
Work Permits - V, 8
Youth Pass - see Carte 12-25 - V, 7