

Memories of beaches, fireworks still vivid

Butler, Pa., native Brett Schmidt studied abroad at the University of Alicante in Spain recently.

By **KEVIN KNECHT**
MC College Relations

An offer to spend five months in another country for nothing more than a semester's tuition was too good for Marietta College junior **Brett Schmidt** to turn down.

Schmidt, a graduate of Butler (Pa.) Area Senior High School, decided to spend a semester abroad at the University of Alicante, Spain.

"The experience taught me about culture, language, and self discovery," he said. "I was able to come back with another perspective of the world that I couldn't have anywhere else. Going to Spain to study abroad was an adventure that I would recommend to anyone who has ever considered traveling overseas."

Schmidt, who is majoring in early education and minoring in Spanish, enrolled in one class — the basics of Spanish — during his time abroad.

"I didn't think it was hard. It was more of a review for me," Schmidt said of the class. "It was challenging at some points of the semester." While his education remained a top priority, Schmidt admits he was also there for a cultural experience. Along with several other Americans, a few Germans, and one Swiss student in his class, he was determined to find out what Spain was all about.

The main cultural difference he remembers was the mid-day siestas.

"This was a down time in the middle of the day where everyone stops working, and takes a nap or eats a huge lunch. It is just amazing," Schmidt said.

Schmidt is the son of **Allen** and **Ellen**



Photo courtesy of Brett Schmidt

Marietta College junior Brett Schmidt spent a semester at the University of Alicante in Spain.

Schmidt, who recently moved to Stafford Va. He visited Tebarca, a small island off the coast, Barcelona, and the beaches of San Juan. He said both places were "amazing," but his fondest memory was the Festival de Hugueres.

"It was a week-long festival and they had fireworks every night," he said. "I remember going to the beach and watching hundreds of hot air balloons take off from the beach, while fireworks were going off in the background. It was amazing."

The warm weather presented him with plenty of time in the sun at the local beaches. The weather was so nice, he can remember just two days that it rained during the semester. Schmidt said another plus about the country was that the people were very friendly and that everything was laid back.

Schmidt would love to go back to Spain, so he is planning to spend a year there after his graduation in May 2005.