

SPRING VIEWS

Spring International at Arapahoe Community College Oct. 12, 2009

Colorado Autumn Inspires Student Writers



Students and teachers took a trip to Rocky Mountain National Park September 30.

IT'S A BEAUTIFUL DAY

It's a beautiful day, the sun is shining in the sky
I am sitting in the soft grass
On the edge of a stream.
It sings your name to my ears.
It's a beautiful day, the sun is shining in the sky
A warm wind comes from the South
Dancing the reeds
It is hunting the clouds, to brush my face
It murmurs your name to my ears.
It's a beautiful day, the sun is shining in the sky
The soft plumes of a weeping willow
The one which is wise and has no age
Is trembling and
It sighs your name to my ears.
It's a beautiful day, the sun is shining in the sky
In one dream you may appear
My look gets lost in the jade of your eyes
In the softness of your curves
In the wildness of your hair, you call me
The sun sleeps when night comes and I open my eyes
Out of the open window, the stars laugh at me
The sparks of light, what burst of laughter
My eyes form pearls of tears, I drown in my dream
I go to the window and I jump

By Gaetan de Halleux

My First Class and My First Trip to the U.S....by Adell Ankoa, Libya

Before I came to the U.S.A., I didn't have any idea about this country or its people. I was uncomfortable because I had never traveled out of my country to another country whose people speak a different language. In addition to that, the American media didn't give me a clear picture. Furthermore, my English was bad and I knew only a few words but not enough to make people understand me. As a consequence, I said to myself, "I need to go and live this experience and even overcome my fear of learning a new language. Consequently, I decided to go to the U.S.A. and prepared myself for that.

My trip was long. It started from Tripoli's airport to Heathrow and then to Denver. While the airplane was preparing to fly to Heathrow, I met someone and told him, "I'm going to the U.S.A. to complete my studies; however, I'm uncomfortable." He told me, "You are lucky to study there." We talked during the flight and then said goodbye to each other. I stayed for twenty-four hours in London and left the next day.

This trip was longer. Indeed, I couldn't find any person who spoke Arabic on this flight and just heard English. I had been flying for sixteen hours before arriving at the Denver airport in the evening. I saw Colorado from above, and it was very beautiful due to the stars. I thought the stars had fallen to earth and covered it during the sunset. When I arrived here, my friend was waiting for me and took me to his home.

On the second day, I went with him to Spring International. I took the Michigan test, and it was like a dream because it was very difficult to understand. In addition to the test, the teachers interviewed each student to find out how much English they understood and spoke. I still remember the first meeting with teacher Andy, who asked me many questions.

Hence, I started my studies in the Basic level. It was a good beginning, and I had fun. All the teachers were good, specifically the teacher who taught me writing lessons. This teacher is Jessie. She was very kind and used many ways to convey information to us. Also, I didn't know how to write more than five sentences in English. So she pushed us to write about many topics that were interesting. She helped us to improve our writing and didn't make us feel like failures even when we wrote badly. She always said, "You are good. Just try and you will do it." Also, she still helps us in other subjects such as grammar and reading even if she doesn't teach them to us. Thank you so much to her.

Anyone can realize his or her goal if he or she has determination. Who believes that? Many students come to Spring without language, just some words or sentences and some only know the alphabet. They can through one year or less learn English and complete their studies. It is a miracle when you can learn a new language in a couple of months. My first thank you, and my last, is to Allah because we can't do anything without his help. Than, thanks to parents, friends and teachers who help the students and do everything to educate them.

Cultural Adjustment: Problems and Solutions

by Hakem Dakel, Libya

What do you know about American culture? My friend asked me this question before I came to the U.S. I answered that I knew a little bit. He told me that I will face many problems if I do not learn about it. American culture is completely different from Libyan culture, so these differences have made some problems. The three problems in cultural adjustment that I have experienced since I came here are the time for dinner and sleep, having pets in the house, and food.

The first problem in cultural adjustment that I faced here is the time for sleeping and eating dinner. Americans eat dinner about six o'clock before the sun sets. The first time I saw my host family eating dinner, I thought that they did not eat lunch at work, so they were eating it now. However, they told me to come eat dinner with them. I could not believe that and replied that it was not time for dinner because in my culture we eat between 9 and 10 p.m. They said that this was the time for Americans to eat dinner. Also they go to bed at 9 p.m. except on weekends, but in my culture we go to bed after midnight even though we have to wake up at 6 a.m. the next morning. This problem had a big impact on me because I wanted to talk with my host family to improve my language, and I like to kill time with people.

Another problem of cultural adjustment was having pets in the house. Most American people have pets, especially dogs. In contrast, in Libyan culture and religion we may have dogs but only outside the house. My host family has a dog that likes to lick everyone, but I do not like it. My host family told me that the dog does not bite people. I said, "I know, but in our religion, if the dogs lick you, you have to wash seven times and the last time with sand because its lick has dangerous viruses. In addition, dogs prevent angels from entering a house. The final important reason for not having dogs inside is that we cannot pray in a house that has dogs.

My other problem with cultural adjustment was food. American food is different from our food, so we have trouble eating this food because it includes pork, beef, and chicken. Libyans usually can eat beef and chicken if the meat is slaughtered by Christian or Jewish people. Nonetheless, the problem is that, according to Islamic law, the meat must be slaughtered correctly. For this reason, I found a problem in buying Islamic meat and many other kinds of Arab foods to cook myself, so I have spent a lot of time eating canned food.

Although these problems of cultural adjustment are difficult, there are solutions that I have discovered after living here for several months. First, I have to eat lunch early, at 12 noon, if I want to eat dinner with my host family, or I have to cook dinner by myself later. Also, I realize that I don't have to take a nap when I come home from school, so I can talk with the family and then sleep early at 11 p.m. After one month, I adapted to this system. The solution to having dogs live with me is a little more complicated. When I was living with this host family, I avoided the dog, so it would not lick me, and I went to the mosque to pray instead of praying in the house, or I told my family to take the dog out of the house. When I transferred to another host family, I was looking for a family that does not have a dog. The solution for the last problem, food, is buying Islamic meat or meat that is slaughtered by a Christian or Jewish person. Also, I learned to cook and I sometimes eat American food if it does not have pork in it or if the meat is kosher.

Having pets in the house, the times for sleep and dinner, and food are three problems that I faced in cultural adjustment to the U.S., but I could find a solution for each problem, and I was able to adapt to this culture. If you want to go to any country that has a different culture from your own, you should learn about the culture if you do not want to be in the situation I found myself in.

My First Fast...by Nana Araki, Japan

When I came to Spring International, I made many Arab friends. That's how I learned about Ramadan. During Ramadan, Muslims do not eat, drink, or even smoke from sunrise to sunset. From my classmates, I learned many things about Ramadan and how Muslims feel about it. Now I know about fasting. There are several reasons to fast. After trying this fast, I formed an opinion about my own eating habits.

One day, one of my classmates said to me, "You should try to fast." I know that my friend is Muslim, so he has to fast one month each year. However, I did not have a reason to fast. So, before I made my decision, I asked my friend what benefits I could get from fasting. My friend said, "Because of fasting, you can know how people feel in hunger-stricken areas." I found this reason interesting as I want to help people who really need help. So I found the reason I was looking for. In addition, I wanted to cleanse my body, and I believed that fasting could help me do so. Finally, I decided to fast for one week. The first day, I was very hungry, but I did not want to give up, and also I remembered my friend's words about fasting. So I never ate or drank anything from sunrise to sunset.

After I finished fasting, I really understood my friend's explanation, and I realized how poor people feel. They want to eat, but they cannot eat. That is the most important reason. Sometimes they cannot eat because of other forces, such as war. I can eat every meal. In my opinion, they are living in the same place and same time on this earth. Some people can eat, but some other people cannot. That is unfair. Japan is a rich country. Japanese farmers produce more food every day. Actually, rich countries all produce more than they need. We have plenty of food and we should not waste it.

Finally, I think I succeeded in my fasting because I got many things from my experience. If I have a chance, I will try to fast again. And I will try to tell my friends in my country about my valuable experience. We have to think about our eating habits and try not to waste food.

The Rich and Poor of the World...by Abdulaziz Al-Yaqoub, Saudi Arabia

There are two kinds of people in the world that everybody looks at: the rich people and the poor people. These two kinds of people have existed since the beginning of the world. They must do something for each other. The first kind of people is the rich people. They make a lot of money, and they know and work with each other. They like to save their money to be richer, but they forget what they have to do. They forget that there are poor people that need some money to live a good life. Many times the rich don't give the poor a chance to work and make money. Many poor people think that rich people must pay the big part of their taxes.

On the other hand, there are a lot of people who think it's not fair to make the rich pay all this money, because they have worked hard to get this money for themselves and their families. They are free to do whatever they want with their money. Also they have helped a lot of people to have the same thing. They should do whatever they want and everywhere.

It's not fair to focus on just two kinds of people, the rich and the poor, because we forget the middle class. They are on the same planet. They have to do the same things that the rich and poor people do. In conclusion, all people are the same because they are human beings who eat, drink, and breathe. They live on the same planet, so they should help each other in every way.

Haikus for Good Health...by Magdalena Jovanovska-Ribic, Macedonia

Even though strange words are attacking
And letters are flying freely around us
Our lips are still sealed

Life so beautiful is
Till tomorrow, till tomorrow
I'll step over it.

Only if it would be realistic
She could stand, and
The sun would rise again.

Perfection! Get the job done!
You can even add the numbers
Do I have the right answer?

The land has to be discovered
Because it's magically red, white and blue
Thus extra steps are involved.

***Writing a Research Paper Is an Interesting, Exciting Process* by Tatiana Titova, Russia**

Writing a research paper is an interesting process for me. Of course, it takes a lot of time, effort and discipline to get the job done, but I find myself really excited at doing this job.

First of all, I chose a topic that is fascinating, U.S.-Russian relations. It is a very important reason why the research paper is more interesting to me. I have never focused on this information before. I like to watch, hear, and read news. I have known and have understood this problem and general goals, but I have never thought and concentrated on this question. I have never fallen deeply into this problem. That is why, when looking at the schedule of topics, I found this subject and when it was approved by my teacher, I became absorbed in that work with interest and attention.

The second step was to gather sources. I used many kinds of sources, such as books, magazines, newspaper articles, and Internet articles. I also used the Online Dictionary to write some definitions. I borrowed books from the college library. The staff in the college library has been very friendly and helpful. The college library is well-organized, but the books I borrowed from the library were published in 2003 and 2004. Actually, these books had a lot of useful, interesting, necessary and important information with deep analyses and conclusions, strong arguments and opinions that I used and paraphrased in my research paper.

On the other hand, I found some good sources in the research library. For this purpose, I used computers in the Spring computer laboratory. The research library was also very helpful for views that were connected to my topic.

Next, I used the Internet at home. I found several articles from magazines, newspapers, and Websites. This information about the latest news events was very interesting, rich, helpful and contained different opinions, ideas and arguments.

The process of writing a research paper is hard and demands much time. However, this job helps to improve students' skills in writing and the originality of the thoughts expressed. It increases students' ability in reading, paraphrasing, summarizing, organization, in-text citation, signal phrases, and works cited. From doing research papers, students receive a lot of information and knowledge. The teacher helps students very much with attention, patience, interest, and professionalism. I have not completed my full final paper yet. I am continuing to work through sources with an outline, thesis statement, text, conclusion, Works Cited page, source sheets, etc. Finally, after long and hard work when I see results of my work, I will really have feelings of happiness and satisfaction.

Change and Development in Libya...by Khadiga Abbas

There are a lot of things that need to change in my country. Change helps to develop a country. In my opinion, the most important thing that needs to change is the system of education.

First of all, the way of teaching needs to be improved in some things that teachers use to teach students. When I came here, I found a lot of things in the system of education that were different. For example, teachers here are very friendly with students. Also, the books are very simple. I think these things make students more comfortable in school, so they like school a lot. Another thing, the classes are very crowded in my country. They have a lot of students; this doesn't help students to understand and learn. Also the classes don't have charts, projectors, computers, etc. which help students to learn and help the teacher to explain everything.

In addition most students don't study hard, especially the boys. They don't care about their schoolwork. For example, when I was a teacher in my country, students didn't like to do homework and didn't like to come to school. "these things bothered me a lot.

To sum up, education in every country is the key to open everything. I hope I can change the system of education in my country. This may improve many things.

From a New Student

Just Seven Weeks Ago I Arrived in the U.S.A

by Mohammed Al-Fawzan, Saudi Arabia

Let me tell about my experience of study in the U.S.A. I arrived in the U.S.A. about seven weeks ago. Now I am living with a host family. They help me to practice speaking English and to learn more about American culture, and I feel like I am with my real family.

I study in Spring International Language Center in Littleton. The staff is also very kind, and they help me to get a drivers' license and university admission. Also the school provides many activities like ski trips, picnics, and shopping. I like my school because I can learn and enjoy. I am very happy to study in this school.

Blind Motivational Speaker Talks to Students



Buna Dahal, a former international student from Nepal, spoke to students Wednesday, Oct. 6. She encouraged students to take advantage of their educational opportunities in the United States. Blind since birth, Buna received a scholarship to come to the U.S. Since then she has completed a Bachelor's degree in journalism and will receive her Master's in Leadership from Regis College in January. She was formerly the educational specialist at the Colorado Center for the Blind, where she found jobs for 80 per cent of those needing employment. Buna has traveled to Turkey to give seminars on training the blind and has appeared on national television. She also enjoys mountain climbing and sky-diving.