

MOSAIC

SPRING 2015



Dear readers,

This is the Spring 2015 issue of MOSAIC. In the upcoming pages, you will read about the politics of Egyptian soccer, French media seen through the perspective of a French professor at Grinnell, the misconceptions about Somali culture, and the “artificial ghettoization” of the Roma district in Prague, Czech Republic, among other stories about the global adventures of Grinnell students, professors, and staff through off-campus study, internships, services, and teaching home and abroad. These stories are as much about the experiences as about the individuals – their identities, their passions, their doubts, and their dreams.

This issue comes out at a special time for us all – the start of spring, the beginning of something new. In this joyful spirit, I invite you to join me to explore different cultures and get to know each other more through stories.

To the IPOP Class of 2015,

I want to dedicate this issue of MOSAIC to you – my first friends on campus, and my second family away from home. In the last four years, we have shared so many memories, from the first and last Food Bazaar and Cultural Evening, to our journeys around the globe. In a few months, we will embark on our own adventures, building our new homes in Africa, America, Asia, Europe, or even Antarctica. That’s why I decided to end this special issue of MOSAIC with Iulia’s reflection on the notion of the transitory home – the home that follows you wherever your heart goes. Grinnell has become such a home to me, to you, to all of us.

Chi Nguyen '15
MOSAIC Editor

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Opinions expressed in MOSAIC do not necessarily represent the opinions of the editor, SPARC, or OISA. Stories and photos are presented by volunteer writers, and expressed in an atmosphere of intellectual inquiry, critical thinking, and safe space.

Thanks for Reading!

* Photo credits go to Frank Zhu '15, Yohei Takatsuka '15 and Aaron Juarez '16. You guys are truly wonderful!

Grinnell is home to 220+ students from around the world!

On the Cover



The group gathered in JRC 101, to revisit some lessons from IPOP, so we took advantage of the 'photo op' as well!

PHOTO: JUSTIN HAYWORTH

Happy 5th Anniversary to Grinnell's Gallery of Flags!



On October 27, 2009, Grinnellians celebrated with chocolate and mock champagne! After raising a toast to our new Gallery of International Flags, we gathered in JRC 101 for a panel discussion titled "Flagging National Identity," with Dr. David Cook-Martin, Dr. Sarah Purcell, Dr. Gemma Sala, and Karen Edwards.

Grinnell students come from around the world, and the combination of their diverse backgrounds creates a unique environment on our campus. The flags are hung to honor the citizenship of Grinnell's student body, including national entities that are recognized by the UN and/or the International Olympics Committee. The Gallery is updated each August, as students graduate and the new class arrives. Since no flag can fully represent a person's sense of home, we also invite all who visit the Gallery to make an effort get to know Grinnell's students individually - and to take the time to learn about who they are, and where they come from!

New Clocks Link to Grinnell Corp Sites

This past summer, colleagues collaborated to bring yet another visual representation of Grinnell's internationalization efforts to the fore. The addition of three new clocks to the east wall of the Market Grill offers patrons an introduction to the Grinnell Corp sites - Grinnell and New Orleans, Namibia, Thailand, and China. A sign posted near the clocks will be updated annually to introduce current Grinnell Corp fellows.

The Gallery of Flags and the Clock project are collaborative efforts of a Global Grinnell! Parters include: Center for Careers, Life & Service; Communication; Facilities Management; International Studies; International Student Affairs; and Student Activities.

The Politics of Egyptian soccer

Farida El Habashy '15
Cairo, Egypt



Soccer match audience

By African standards, Egypt boasts an impressive soccer history. Dubbed by many as the Kings of Africa, the Egyptian national team has won the African Cup 7 times, more than any other nation on the continent. Egypt's passion for the game is admirable. A match between Ahly and Zamalek - the biggest club rivalry in Egypt - leaves the streets as deserted as I would imagine Spain to be on the evening of a Clásico match. When the burgeoning Egyptian talent Mohamed Salah signed for top European club team Chelsea, thousands of Egyptian fans flooded Chelsea's Facebook page with comments, prompting the club to launch its first official Arabic page. Egyptian kids will often turn anything (from a pair of socks to a water bottle) into a makeshift ball just to play the beautiful game. Given soccer's status as Egypt's favorite national pastime, it is no surprise that the political regimes have long used the sport as a tool to manipulate the masses, maintain the status quo, and detract attention from more pertinent economic and social issues.

Prior to the 2011 revolution that overthrew the regime, former President Hosni Mubarak and his cronies made no secret of financing and supporting the national team. Before soccer matches, state TV channels were ordered to air patriotic songs and anthems, thereby forming a potent connection between soccer and the country's national identity. Mubarak attended most of Egypt's significant soccer tournaments, establishing himself as a "man of the people" through his support of the Egyptian pastime. The ministry of sports, a governmental institution responsible for sports funding amongst other things, has constantly neglected less popular sports where Egypt has produced world class players such as squash. They have chosen instead to reward soccer players with excessively lavish gifts in return for superior performance in regional and international

tournaments. Egypt's regional soccer success as a result of this funding and support kept soccer fans oblivious to government control within the sports arena, causing them to turn a blind eye to Egypt's growing social issues.

However, in 2011, fan complacency with the political status quo broke. The growing dissatisfaction with Mubarak's regime caused a shift in the whole country's political landscape. This change was also reflected amongst sports fans. Whereas fans were once quieted by the prospects of their teams' success, they now played a key role in the mobilization and toppling of the regime. In a rare moment, the Ultras, groups of extreme fans from Egypt's two biggest rival teams, came together to protect civilians from police violence during the protests. In the following years, the Ultras were also instrumental in reversing the interim government's decision to resume with the Egyptian Premier League following the Port Said massacre, where fan violence and security negligence during a match led to the death of 74 fans.



The mural commemorating the Port Said massacre

Egypt's new regime seems to be cognizant of soccer's potent role in political mobilization, and it is currently taking steps to curb political influences from the sports arena. Earlier this year, for instance, Egyptian soccer authorities outlawed the Ultras, deeming them a terrorist organization whose aim is to stir chaos. In another instance, an Egyptian football player was suspended for an entire season and put up for sale to another club team for celebrating a goal with a hand gesture in support of the Muslim Brotherhood.

The Egyptian revolution showcased soccer's potential to promote social change and resistance against the oppressive regimes. However, this trend is unlikely to be sustained due to the current regime's goal to eliminate all forms of political dissent.

My startup, my story

Yaoyang Chen '16
Nanjing, China

"What are you doing in China?"

"Starting a small business."

"That's cool. What area are you in?"

"Education for kids."

"Why are you taking a gap year, instead of waiting until after graduation?"

"Opportunities are fleeting. If I don't buy this ticket now, I may miss the train. It's now or never!"

This conversation is a common one for me these days. Although I am a Chinese student in the Class of 2016 at Grinnell, I am currently on a year-long leave of absence to start my own business in China. Many may be interested in this adventure, but only those who have tried to start a business firsthand know how difficult entrepreneurship can be at the very beginning.

It is complicated to talk about the motivations and initial challenges of my entrepreneurship, but most of all, I just wanted to start with a simple idea. My team and I started a small non-profit organization

to teach oral English and other fun courses in elementary schools. We are striving to help Chinese kids learn through fun activities instead of adding more pressure to their already heavy course load. We are using our education experiences in both China and America to improve the way of English teaching, and we have made a lot of progress. Our students are learning English through dramas, stories and movies instead of just memorizing vocabulary. We hope the English education can help them to broaden their horizons and become teenagers with Chinese souls and a global vision.

However, we always hope to do more. We also hope to pay more attention to migrant children in schools, most of whom moved from the countryside to the city because of their parents' jobs. They are eager to explore the splendor of the metropolis, but on the other hand, they may suffer from loneliness, depression, inferiority complexes, or other emotional responses to stress. Sometimes, we talk with them individually and show them around the city. After getting to know them more, we are happy to see that contrary to our initial impressions, the migrant students have much strength of character and optimism within themselves. After doing this project for six months, we were deeply moved when some nine-year-old kids hugged us and expressed their love and appreciation to our team. At that moment, I knew that I was doing the right thing, and that it is worth fighting for.



Yaoyang (second row, second from the right) and the students on a study trip to the countryside

Still, we have had hard times. There were only two people in the original team and each of us needed to play multiple roles in the company – teacher, receptionist, accountant, marketing promoter. Honestly, market promotion is challenging, but creating a new system of teaching English is even more difficult. We spent days and nights in the office working on it and hoping to make it better.

Although my startup is not easy, luckily, I have some Grinnellian friends in Nanjing to support me whenever I need help – Fengyuan Li '16, Meg Rudy '14, Lauren Teixeira '14 and Sarah Hou '17. They helped me organize the first Halloween party for the kids. During their stay in Nanjing, we talked and shared our own experiences; we met and tried delicious food; we communicated and appreciated the difference between our cultures.

I will return to Grinnell in fall 2015 and hope to finish my studies. During the next two years, I probably will take more education courses to broaden my horizons. And of course, it is very necessary for me to learn practical strategies in business management from Economics classes. I am expecting to meet new friends and cherish every opportunity to communicate with other Grinnellians who are interested in entrepreneurship.

My partner from Ohio State University will continue our venture and help it grow bigger. We hope the company that we founded can lead a new educational philosophy in China. There are numerous possibilities in the future of China, and our generation should find the answer. I am still young and have a long journey to explore, but my team and I have a big dream.



Zhi Zhang, Yaoyang's friend from Ohio State University, helping kids prepare an English drama performance.

Chicago

*Doji Lee '16
Saipan*



“...Come and show me another city with lifted head singing so proud to be alive and coarse and strong and cunning.”

- Excerpt from "Chicago," by Carl Sandburg

This semester, at least half of my friends left Grinnell to study abroad, including myself. Some have gone to Rome, others to Korea. Some even traveled to South

Caicos (where is that?!). However, I decided not to go too far. I went to Chicago and I lived in Pilsen.

I'm not sure how familiar you are with this neighborhood, but I sure wasn't. Assuming that you know as little as I did, here's some information: Pilsen lies in the Lower West Side of Chicago, about a 25-30 minute train ride from Downtown. Filled with Latino food, culture, and people, it is now predominantly a Hispanic/Mexican community (although prior to

that, it was an Irish neighborhood). To be honest, Pilsen isn't the richest or safest part of town. At least a decade ago, gangs and drug dealers hovered on street corners. Crime rates sky-rocketed. Even now, sidewalks and alleys aren't always very clean, and buildings are not the most tall or updated.

I didn't really like Pilsen at first. Among all the other possible neighborhoods in Chicago, this wasn't the most ideal place for me. I wanted a more urban setting – something more sophisticated, secured, and stylish. Pilsen's worn-out architecture, graffiti-filled walls, and notoriety for crimes and gangs neither appealed to me nor came across as modern. I did not feel safe because Pilsen was not the environment I was used to. I felt uncomfortable, and I could not call it home.

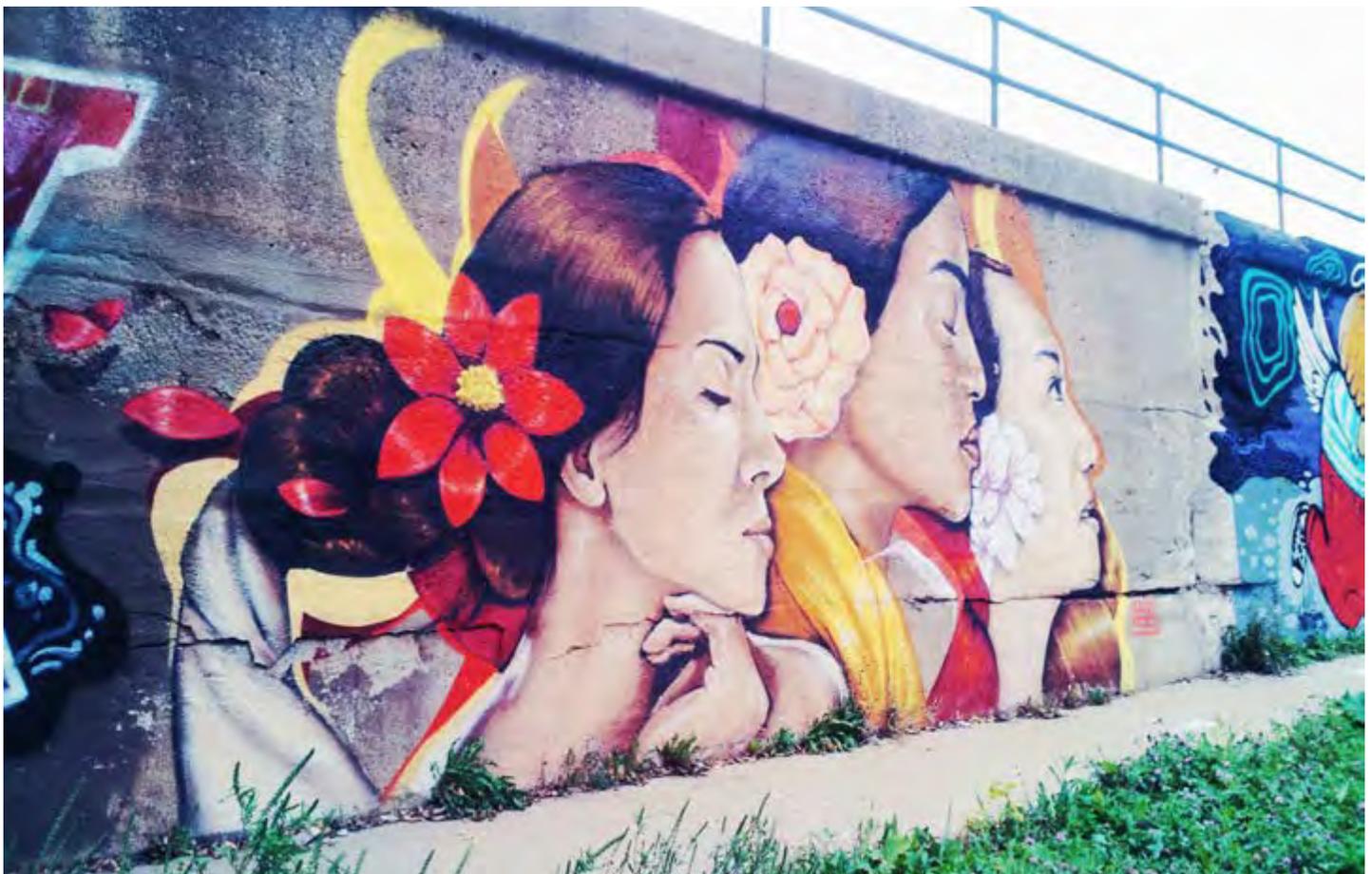
To break my walls of prejudice, I had to spend a lot of time in Pilsen. Thanks to my daily travels and agendas, I got to explore the area firsthand. From trips to Family Dollar to walks to the Damen & 18th bus stop, Pilsen naturally became the inevitable setting of my routine. Every day, I revisited the area and refreshed, little by little, my original impressions of the community.

It turned out that Pilsen wasn't as empty as I thought it to be. You could hear music nearby each block coming from stores or from groups having a car-wash. Street vendors were everywhere. They sold clothes, accessories, and Mexican food. At one point,

while mindlessly walking around during my free time, I even unintentionally ended up in a block party, surrounded by Mexican flags, food, music, and local people.

There always seemed to be something going on. Even during moments without music, my eyes were constantly kept busy. Colorful murals of people, patterns, and forms filled the walls of buildings. Pilsen felt like a vibrant art "exhibition", always full of energy and excitement. Some of the public paintings were political, strongly asserting equality and advocating for the acceptance of undocumented workers and residents; they had phrases like, "We are a nation of immigrants," and "No human being is illegal." Pilsen's unique identity, its festive vibe, and most of all its humanness set the neighborhood apart from anywhere else.

Three months may not be enough time for me to be completely adjusted to or comfortable with Pilsen. I did, however, become much more open to the community, its culture, and its characteristics than before. I overcame my fears and assumptions about Pilsen and, with time, I started to welcome all the positive aspects of this lovely neighborhood. And of course, I was happy to have come here and tried some authentic quesadillas! I hope I gained enough knowledge and understanding of Pilsen throughout my time in Chicago, enough to bring them back home and to Grinnell.



The Hidden Beauty of Somalia

*Deqa Aden '18
Hargeisa, Somalia*

Many Americans have seen *Captain Phillips*, the pirate movie that hit the movie theaters in 2013, and its depiction of Somalia as a hopeless country. Even Google seems to agree with that portrayal, since when you search for Somalia, every image portrays either starved children, droughts, or endless wars. Last year, *Forbes* magazine named Somalia as the #1 failed state in terms of economic and political aspects. All of these sources represent the world's common perspectives on Somalia, but they are merely a glimpse of the whole truth.

My first day at an American boarding school gave me a sense of people's opinions toward my home country. Whenever I introduced myself as a Somali student, people's reactions varied as these words

came out from their mouths: "Ooh, pirates, war, starvation, and SO COOL!" They listed pretty much all the stereotypes about Somalia that one can find on the internet. Because the Somalia that I grew up with is so different than the "Google Somalia," I believe that sharing my story and my perspective will enrich people's knowledge of my country, and show them the beauty of my culture.

The first commonly held misconception is that Somalia is one country. There are in fact two autonomous states within Somalia, Puntland and Somaliland, and each has its own flag, government, military, culture, and dialect. Islam, the dominant religion, and the Somali language might be the only two things they share, but that is the case for many Middle Eastern and Asian countries. I am from Somaliland, which is located in the north of Somalia. It declared its independence in 1991, after the collapse of the central government. It was already independent from Southern Somalia until they decided to unite all Somali speaking nations in 1960. Therefore, the Somalia that Google, news channels, and *Forbes* are referring to is not actually my home country. That being said, there are neither pirates nor wars. And I've never seen a pirate before, as a lot of my American friends wondered.

The other big misconception is that Somalia is a hopeless country where children learn how to hold a gun in pre-school. In reality, my culture has a beauty that people do not write about in magazines. In my hometown, I was taught how to construct poetry before spelling my own name. All Somali nations are referred to as "The Land of Poetry." There was no need for writing until the Somali alphabet was adopted in 1972. People preserve the culture orally by constructing poems about their daily lives, weddings, relationships, and festivals. When clans clash and disputes occur, the clan leaders send poets from each side to represent their complaints through poems. Furthermore, tribal dances and folk songs play a vital role in preserving the roots of the culture and relations among clans.

Somalia might be a semi-desert land, but it contributes a unique beauty to the world. There are archaeological sightseeing places that attract tourists and scientists. Laas Geel is one of the oldest cave paintings, which is 5,000 to 11,000 years old. Further, Somalia has the longest coastline in Africa, in which fishing is considered to be one of the biggest contributors to the economy. The livestock industry accounts for 30% of the economy as well, in which camels, sheep and goats get exported to Saudi Arabia and Gulf states. It's also a major world supplier of frankincense and myrrh.

Wildlife is something that people pay little attention to. Rarely, people keep animals as pets, and dogs and cats run freely in cities. In rural areas, one



***A photo of Deqa in traditional clothes,
taken by her roommate Helena Kleiner '18***



Population: 10,428,043
Area: 246,200 sq miles
Language: Somali and Arabic
Location: on the tip of the Horn of Africa, bordering Djibouti, Kenya, Gulf of Aden, Indian Ocean and Ethiopia
Capital: Mogadishu
Government Type: Federal Parliamentary Republic



SOMALIA



might encounter hyenas, deer, gazelle, and monkeys. According to Fact Zoo, Somalia is home to a large number of birds, over 700 species, and it boasts over 170 species of mammals. Its shores are also home to a variety of marine life. There are private zoos in Hargeisa, the capital of Somaliland, that house lions, leopards, antelopes, and other wild animals.

Food is the one thing that I crave the most about home. Somali dishes vary from region to region because each town celebrates their dominant agricultural products through food. In my hometown, people spend hours and hours cooking lunch. Bariis Surbiyaan is the most popular Somali lunch dish. It contains roasted goat meat mixed with rice and Somali spices, *hayl* and *xawaash*. Dinner is the light meal: some eat sandwiches, beans, or the leftovers from lunch. *Laxoox* is the typical dish that every Somali household would prepare for breakfast. It's a thin layered pancake that is made up of flour, sugar, *xawaash*, and eggs. There are other popular dishes that are adapted

from Ethiopia, Turkey, India, Italy and Middle Eastern countries.

Somalia has its own unique culture, landscape, and wildlife that complete the beautiful painting of planet Earth. It's unfortunate that the world has only seen the media's perspective on Somalia. The content of this article does not fully portray every aspect of Somalia and its culture. There is so much I am still learning about my culture, and so much that I simply don't know how to translate into words. Somalia is the place where I belong, where I call home, and of which I feel so proud. They always say that there is another side to every story. This is the other side of Somalia that I am so glad to share with my Grinnellians, and with the rest of the world as well.



Hargeisa, the capital city of Somaliland, Somalia

Seeing The World Through *Le Monde*

David Harrison

Professor of French and Director of the Center of International Studies

Let me begin with a story: on September 11, 2001, I was attending a conference in Cambridge, England. My flight back to the United States was on September 14, and as I was waiting in line at Heathrow Airport with a number of very anxious Americans, I could hear someone say: "I can't wait to get back to the United States so that I can listen to our news reporters talking about this situation." The statement bothered me. Sure, I can understand that British reporters might not understand the cultural nuances of the New Jersey towns which lost residents in the Twin Towers. But it struck me as absurd to think that the British media, simply because they were not American, could not understand the significance of what had occurred in the United States. In fact, the reverse might be true: perhaps the British reporters could understand something about the events of September 11, 2001 that might not be understood by American reporters. Perhaps hearing a non-U.S. reporter talk about a U.S. event could actually be educational for people who only listen to American media.

Fast forward to today. Earlier this fall, I purchased an electronic subscription to *Le Monde*, a prominent newspaper in France, edited in Paris. "Le Monde" means "The World" in French, and the title represents the newspaper's ambitions: it aims to present news of the entire world, not just the news of France. Of course, some might see the title as a sign of French arrogance: the world begins, and ends, in Paris. But I'm not too concerned with this possibility, because my purpose in reading *Le Monde* is precisely to get a different view of the world than the one that I get from reading *The New York Times*. It is fine with



me that *Le Monde* puts a "French spin" on things, because that's exactly what I'm seeking in order to complement the "American spin" that I receive from other media.

I used to read the on-line version of *Le Monde* only irregularly, to keep up with current events in France. Now I have an electronic account and receive the paper every day. I can choose to read the paper either in the format that it is used for the print edition—with advertisements placed exactly in the same spaces that they occupy on the newsprint—or I can read it in a special format designed for the computer. I choose the print edition format, because I want to see *Le Monde* in the same way that I would look at it if I were to purchase the newspaper at a Parisian kiosk. I read it over breakfast, in the same way that I read the print edition of *The New York Times* over breakfast.

Seeing the United States through *Le Monde*

Does *Le Monde* offer me a different perspective on the United States than the one that I normally receive from U.S. media? Absolutely. But if you think that the French perspective on the United States is entirely critical, point-

ing out all of the problems that we have, you're wrong. Reading *Le Monde*, I've discovered that the U.S. economy is the envy of Europe right now, particularly France. France never really fully recovered from the worldwide slump of 2008-2009, and in fact the country now seems to be in its third recession (third!) over the past five years. France would love to have the economic growth rate that the U.S. currently has, and many French economists have advocated that Europe should stimulate its economy the way that Obama stimulated the U.S. economy when he came to office. Yes, Obama is seen by France as having performed an economic miracle in the United States.

Now compare this French perspective to the way that the U.S. economy was portrayed in the recent midterm elections. Judging from the campaign rhetoric used in the Congressional elections, you'd think that Obama had totally wrecked the U.S. economy. Even the Democrats seemed reluctant to defend Obama's work, as if there were universal agreement that things have become worse. But if you read a French newspaper, you'll see that the U.S. economy gets a lot of good

reviews, and Obama gets a lot of credit. Hmm.....did we just elect a new Congress based on faulty assumptions?

Seeing France through Le Monde

Of course, one of the greatest pleasures of reading *Le Monde* is that it helps me understand France. Not just French politics—e.g. the problems of President François Hollande, who just can't seem to do anything right — but also French intellectual life. *The New York Times* is a pretty highbrow

publication, and its discussion of art, theatre, and books is excellent. But, with all due respect to *The Times*, *Le Monde* is a more intellectual newspaper. The book review section of *Le Monde* includes specialized academic volumes that would never get reviewed in *The Times* — books about philosophy, psychoanalysis, specific events of history, or obscure literary writers. Indeed, the advertisement on the front page of *Le Monde* — a prestigious ad space that, in the *The New York Times*, is normally occupied by a high-end jewelry

company such as Harry Winston — is often occupied by an ad for a new book. I realize that ad space costs a lot more in *The Times* than it does in *Le Monde*, and that the readership for *The Times* is much greater than it is for *Le Monde*. But the fact remains that French citizens, on average, read more books per year than do U.S. citizens. So by looking at *Le Monde*, I get a very good understanding of both the literary and academic publishing worlds in France.

Seeing The World through Le Monde

True to its title, *Le Monde* provides extensive international coverage. It has bureaus throughout Europe, but it also has reporters in Asia, Africa, the Americas, and Oceania. The reporting on Africa in U.S. media — if such reporting occurs at all — is usually restricted to crises, such as the outbreak of Ebola. *Le Monde* has certainly been covering the Ebola situation, but it has also covered the legislative elections in Botswana, the post-Mugabe transition in Zimbabwe, and the medical problems of the Algerian president, among other stories. Certainly France's interest in Africa stems from its long colonial presence on the continent, and this aspect undoubtedly inflects the reporting in *Le Monde*. And France's view of other parts of the world reflects French concerns — like food. It was through *Le Monde* that I learned about the controversy surrounding Season Four of the reality show *Master Chef India* (yes, *Master Chef* exists in India, and it has already had three seasons). The producers of the show have decided to make Season Four entirely vegetarian, but this has led to debate about whether the all-vegetarian format favors certain religious traditions and communities over others. Perhaps only France and India—two nations that have some of the most famous cuisine in the world — would be interested in the format of *Master Chef*!



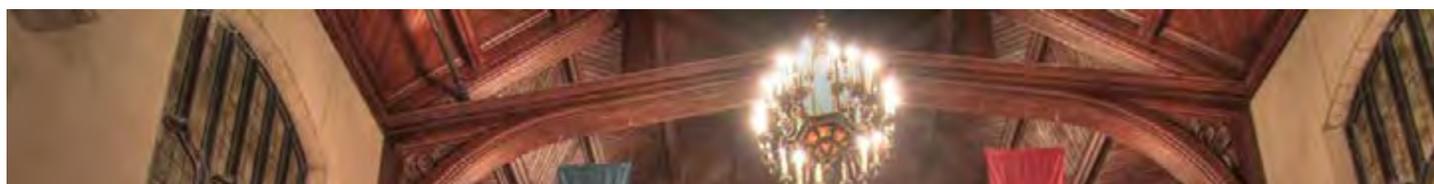
Le Monde's front page on January 9th, 2015, following the terrorist attack at the headquarters of the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo in Paris

I wish I had command of many languages, so that I could read news media located throughout the world. But I already feel that I've gained tremendously from subscribing to a French newspaper, and I would recommend that everyone read stories written by journalists who live and work outside one's home country. By looking at the world through a foreign journalist's eyes, one sees events that are otherwise invisible, and one quickly recognizes one's own cultural and political assumptions.



David Harrison teaches French in the French & Arabic Department and is serving this year as the Director of the Center for International Studies. His scholarly expertise is in the literature and culture of 17th- and 18th-century France. He is delighted to be team-teaching a course on "France and England" this semester with Professor Tim Arner of the English Department.

* Editor's note: This article was written before the recent events in France with *Charlie Hedbo*.



DIWALI

Diwali or Deepawali, meaning "a row of lights," is a Hindu festival that commemorates the triumph of good over evil and of light over darkness. In South Asia, it is an occasion for the entire family to get together, burn firecrackers, light 'diyas,' have great food and celebrate. Diwali at Grinnell is more or less disjunct from its religious meaning and provides an occasion for students from different parts, inside and outside of South Asia, to celebrate the families we have created for ourselves in the College community.

Varun Nayar '15



PHOTO: AARON JARUEZ '16

A Life in a Year

Michaela Gelnarova '18
Ostrava, Czech Republic

The best way to learn how to swim is to be thrown into the water. Or at least that's what my parents always told me. Well, what is the best way to get to know different cultures then? Dive into them head-first! So, I did. Twice.

Maybe someone has told you "Become an exchange student!" Meaning, step out of your comfort zone, leave your family and friends, and experience a year in your life at the other end of the world. Some people might be too scared, but some like me might scream "Count me in!" while performing a happy dance.

There are a number of agencies and programs that give you the experience of being an exchange student; however, Rotary adds something on top of that, making it the best experience possible.



Christmas tree hunting with my host family

first year classes. In my case, I got my first choice (the U.S.A.). I dreamed about the sandy beaches of California, pictured myself running every morning in Central Park...and then I received my placement information. I was condemned to spend a year somewhere in Wyoming, or Northern Colorado. That was the first time that, despite being atheist, I prayed – hoping for a place where the cow to human ratio was in favor of the latter. I must have done something right. Ultimately I ended up in one of the friendliest, most active, and the best beer making towns of the U.S.A.: Fort Collins, CO.

Thirdly, although the primary goal of the exchange is to immerse in the host country's culture, you get to be part of a group of international adventurers just like you. All Rotary exchange students in your area get together throughout the year for several meetings, and trips. Our exchange group got to go on a ski trip to the beautiful Grand Tetons area, and enjoyed a two-week road trip around the west coast.

My exchange year taught me more than any teacher could have taught me. I became independent, more responsible, and I made friendships that will last for a lifetime. I fell in love with traveling, volunteering, and being an exchange student so much that I decided to spend the following summer on a short exchange in Brazil. Looking back, jumping into this adventure was one of the best decisions I have ever made.

When I returned to the Czech Republic, I had to repeat my junior year of high school, yet I don't regret that decision for a single second. After all, it was not a year in your life, but a life in a year: the best year.



At Universal Studios on a month-long bus trip with international students from all over the world

Firstly, it is literally an exchange, meaning while you are having a blast in a different country, your parents will get to host a similar adventurer like you; eye for an eye, exchange student for exchange student. Plus you don't get just one host family, but three. I got to stay with a conservative family as well as a more liberal one. I had younger siblings, teenage siblings, and siblings who already had their own children. Each of my families had different routines, beliefs, and activities that allowed me to gain three distinct views on American culture.

Secondly, although you are given a sheet to indicate your preferences for countries, the matching system works on a random algorithm, just like Grinnell's



My name is Uzma, and I am a Muslim

*Uzma (Zeem) Daraman'15
Bangkok, Thailand*

My name is Uzma, and I am a Muslim.

I was born and raised in Thailand, a predominantly Buddhist country. For the first 17 years of my life, I was in Bangkok, so I grew up as part of a minority group in my own country.

Growing up, I did not really understand how being a Muslim made me different from other people. I went to a private Muslim school, and had Muslim friends. I was almost completely segregated from other Thais until I decided to go to a public high school. There I had my first chance to interact with non-Muslim Thais. But I also realized how I lived differently and dressed differently. It was hard for me to accept how ignorant people are of Islam, but I took that as a challenge. One time my Thai high school friend asked me why Muslims don't eat pork. I told her that we consider it an unclean meat. She then argued that pigs in the meat industry are raised in clean farms. Can Muslims eat pork then? I did not really know what to say or how to explain to her then, but I tried to laugh my way out of the conversation. It was hard to be in a position where you think you belong, but people see you as being different. I quickly adapted myself by making lots of friends, trying not to talk too much about my religion, and just having fun.

In 2009, I came to America for the first time as an exchange student in Wisconsin. I stayed with an American host family, and went to an American high school. That was when my perception of myself as a Muslim changed. I knew I was different from other Thais, but I never thought that my identity as a Muslim would be considered as a threat to anyone.

My experience in America as a Muslim was totally different. After 9/11, many Americans developed



a really negative image of Muslims. Some call it "Islamophobia." Some Americans think that all Muslims are evil, and that we all support Saddam Hussein, Osama Bin Laden, and the events that took place on 9/11.

One day, I was serving at a local food shelter. I was there with other exchange students as part of a community service project. We asked the customers to guess where we came from. When it was my turn, the hall went silent. Then a man shouted, "Iraq!"

I was disappointed and also a little angry. I didn't understand. I don't even look Middle Eastern. I am Southeast Asian. But then I slowly

realized that it was simply because I was wearing my hijab. While I thought of it as my right, my choice, and my way to show my devotion, some Americans saw it as an oppression. And due to the media's limited portrayal of Muslims, they thought all Muslims were from the Middle East. In fact, Muslims live all over the world.

In 2011, I came back to America for college. This time I came more prepared, more understanding. I had learned that some people might judge me according to the stereotypes they see in the media. My job is to prove them wrong and to let them see that I am just another girl trying to get a good education and make life meaningful. I adapted to the college culture without losing my Muslim identity. I partied sober, I joined clubs, I sang. I found that as I understand my identity more, I enjoy learning about other people more and I also found beauty in diverse cultures.

In a way, I feel like I was born to be an anthropologist. As a minority, anywhere I go, I adapt myself to fit in while trying to maintain my identity. I constantly observe other people, trying to figure out

how they do things and why they do it. It was when I started traveling that I first realized how beautiful the world is, how different we are as humans, and how ignorant we are of each other.

As I grow up, I learn to stand tall and take pride in my identity. I am not a terrorist or an extremist. I am just a proud Muslim. As an anthropology student, I am proud of what I do. I believe that the less ignorant we are about other cultures, the more peaceful

the world becomes. The more we know about people and culture, the better we can plan for a better future. I want to learn more about other cultures and share my stories, my struggle as observers and participants in different cultures. I want to use my knowledge and skills to make the world a better place – a more accepting space where diverse cultures are truly seen as equal.

Uzma's YouTube Channel

During my third year here at Grinnell, I started a YouTube channel called Dekthaiklaibaan (It means "little Thai kid away from home" in Thai). I make videos about my experience studying abroad, share study tips, blog about my trips in Europe, and teach basic English. My goal is to inspire young Thai students to try hard to follow their dreams, become better students, and to realize that improving their English skills can bring great opportunities into their lives.



dekthaiklaibaan

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Visit Thailand!

1. Thailand's name in the Thai language is Prathet Thai, which means "Land of the Free." It is the only country in Southeast Asia that was never colonized by a European nation.
2. Buddhism is Thailand's largest religion with approximately 94.6% of the population practicing the religion. Muslims make up 4.6%, Christians 0.7%, and "other" 0.1%.
3. The longest place name in the world is the full name of Bangkok, the capital city of Thailand: Krungthepmahanakhon Amonrattanakosin Mahintharayuthaya Mahadilokphop Noppharatratchathani-burirom Udomratchaniwetmahasathan Amonphimanawa-tansathit Sakkathattiyawitsanukamprasit (translated as "City of Angels, Great City of Immortals, Magnificent City of the Nine Gems, Seat of the King, City of Royal Palaces, Home of Gods Incarnate, Erected by Visvakarman at Indra's Behest")
4. One-tenth of all animal species on Earth live in Thailand.
5. The king of Thailand, Bhumibol Adulyadej RAMA IX, was born in the U.S. in 1927 when his father was studying medicine at Harvard.



In the Spotlight: TEDx Grinnell

Interview by Chi Nguyen '15

Q: Hi Meghna. Nice to meet you! Can you tell me a little bit about yourself?

A: Hi. My name is Meghna. I'm a second year from Bangalore, India. I'm planning to pursue an independent major in Global Development Studies and want to focus my studies on agricultural sustainability and food security.

Q: What is TEDx? Is it kind of like the TED Conference?

A: Though it's very similar, TEDx is a local version of the TED Conference and focuses on issues more relevant to the community. TEDx is not a place to get quick lessons on quantum physics or the history of the Roman Empire. TEDx is a place for inspiration and self-discovery, a place to spark curiosity and create a platform for ground-breaking discussion.

Q: What inspired you to found TEDx Grinnell? What do you think will set TEDx Grinnell apart from other events on campus?

A: Believe it or not, my experience with TEDx is best described as a "love at first sight." Back in 2011, I was in the Mallya Aditi International School and one of my friends started TEDx. I watched a lot of TED talks but did not have any ideas about what TEDx was at the time, so I decided to join the organizing committee of the inaugural TEDx event at my high school. I remember that none of us really knew what we were doing, but it all felt important and real. It was all phenomenal!

My passion for TED and TEDx followed me into college. The moment I set foot on campus, I knew immediately that I would want to bring TEDx to Grinnell. Unlike other events on campus, all the TEDx talks are really short but have this "mind-blowing" effect on you! I really like that the purpose of TEDx is not about teaching but about inspiring learning, exposing you to different perspectives and pushing you to think differently. TEDx will be a unique experience to have on campus.

Q: How did it all start?

I wanted to bring TEDx to Grinnell since February of last year. I remember drafting my proposal and wasn't sure what to do, so I brought it to SGA, and they pointed me to the Wilson program. That was where I met Professor Caulkins. He was really fond of the idea and helped me to make this happen. Together with Professor Janet Davis, we applied to get a license from TED, and recruited a team of faculty, staff, students and some alumni to work on the project. Over the summer and during the fall semester of this year, we actively reached out to people on cam-



Meghna Ravishankar '17
Co-organizer of TEDx Grinnell

pus who were interested. TEDx Grinnell now has a team of 14 people, in charge of 3 sub committees: the speaker committee, production and event management, and social media and marketing. As the main organizer, I oversee everything and make sure that we conform to the regulations of TED. I'm also a member of the social media and event management sub-committee.

Q: How did you find speakers for the first TEDx Grinnell? Anything that you want to share about the upcoming conference?

Recruiting speakers is a very arduous process. Over the summer, we sent out emails to get recommendations for guest speakers. We knew immediately that we wanted to bring back some alumni speakers who have gone out of the Grinnell bubble and done amazing things, because we wanted to learn about this tie between the outside world and Grinnell. So, we started asking people for suggestions. Angela Onwuachi-Willig'94, currently a professor at the University of Iowa, helped us tremendously with this initial process. She posted on Everyday Classnote, a Facebook page for Grinnell alum, to ask for recommendations for speakers. We received hundreds of suggestions! We finally narrowed down to 7 amazing speakers, several of whom are Grinnell alumni or professors. I can't really share with you who they are because we are still in the process of releasing them on Facebook as part of our social media campaign. We will cover a wide range of topics, from how children learn to speak to how we can speak out against injustice. You can find out more details by following us on Facebook!



MEET THE TEAM:

From left to right:

Front row:

Jayn Chaney '04, Janet Davis, Lesley Wright, Laurie Polisky '15, Meghna Ravishankar '17, Zaw Bo '17, Brad Graham

Back row:

Jim Powers, Adrienne Squire, Emily Griffith '17, Yiran Xu '17, Angela Winburn, Robert Ludwig

Not pictured:

Angela Onwuachi-Willig '94, Tefiro Serunjogi '15

Q: Did you face any challenges during the entire process?

Because it is my first time in charge of something this big, I faced a lot of challenges. Organizing TEDx in Grinnell is very different from what I did in high school because budgeting is different, and so is outreach. Even though social media is good to get the words out to students, we still struggled with efficient ways to reach out to faculty and community members. Also, time is a big issue. Our team meets weekly but do not have a regular meeting time because everyone is super busy. For me personally, my life at the moment revolves around TEDx. My email inbox is full of TEDx-related emails. It's a big time commitment, but I love doing it so it doesn't feel like work. To be honest, it's more like a study break.

Q: Do you have any interesting stories to share with MOSAIC readers?

It would have to be taking this team picture for MOSAIC! It was a fun moment that reminds me of how much our team has bonded through TEDx. We did not know where to stand to get the best lighting, and also weren't sure what would be the best background. We also debated about who should take the photo, since we did not want to exclude anyone. Eventually, we just grabbed a student in the hallway and asked them to take the photo (see above) for us. So here it is, the first photo of our team, taken in a JRC classroom right after our meeting.

Q: The 88 tickets for TEDx Grinnell will be allocated through lottery. For people who are interested but do not get the tickets, how will they see the event?

Don't worry! We will have a live stream so you all can watch it from your own laptop in your dorm room or living room. We will also record the event and post it online as well.

Q: What's your vision for TEDx in the next 2 years?

I hope to see it continue! I won't be here next year because of study abroad though, so hopefully we can have another TEDx Grinnell in 2017.

Q: What is the best thing you have learned by organizing TEDx Grinnell?

I personally learned a lot about leadership. Before this, I have never led a meeting so I learned a lot on the go. I feel a lot more confident now as a group leader. Organizing TEDx Grinnell has also made me less stubborn. I have become more comfortable asking for help whenever I need it.

Q: Thank you for the interview and wish you all the best with TEDx Grinnell!



Liberal Arts are Good for a Business Career

*Frank Zhu '15
Nanjing, China*

Last summer, I was accepted to the Stanford Summer Institute of General Management (SIGM), a short-term business program in the Graduate School of Business at Stanford. I was able to attend this extremely rigorous and amazing program thanks to a very generous scholarship offered by Grinnell.

Although a liberal arts education tends to carry stereotypes of being “holistic but not practical,” I think Grinnell students, along with those from other liberal arts institutes, are making an effort to change this mis-perception. Liberal arts graduates are slowly earning their status in the “practical” worlds of business, medicine, and law. One such way to accomplish that is to combine their liberal arts degree with a business one. The trend is visible: a huge proportion of the participants at SIGM had a liberal arts background.



Frank (second from the right) and other case study team members at Stanford

In fact, if you think about it, it makes a lot of sense why the liberal arts is good for business. In order to excel in the business world, you need more than the technical knowledge of accounting and finance: a good business leader needs to know how to communicate ideas clearly, view problems from different perspectives, and take risks to stay ahead of the competitors. Liberal arts students thrive in such an environment because they can think critically, present ideas persuasively, and use knowledge from fields such as psychology and sociology to solve business problems. Prone to challenging themselves with unfamiliar courses, liberal arts students are also not afraid to take risks and try new approaches that will result in innovation. They will be the ones who push

business beyond its present boundaries. Thanks to technology, business is changing faster than ever, and the competition for market shares is growing fiercer. Companies need liberal arts students more than ever to stay ahead of the game.



Study break

Harvard and Stanford both have a very “liberal arts” approach to teaching business: case study methods. During the SIGM program, case studies were the core of our curriculum. We discussed and tackled how a Japanese food delivery company is able to deliver food on time to thousands of customers across Tokyo every single day, how Marriott overcame its managerial problems and earned its status today, and how the pharmaceutical company that produces Cialis set up its plan to compete with the all too famous Viagra. These cases have taught me that business reform requires the ability to combine different disciplines and think holistically. My Grinnell education has prepared me to do all that. As a liberal arts student majoring in Psychology, I feel equipped to join one of the most prestigious business institutions in the world, and also to embark on my own business journey in the future.

Another important skill that I gained from my Grinnell education is teamwork. Grinnell classes have taught me to discuss ideas and cooperate in group projects. These skills are critical to succeed at a business school like Stanford. For our final project in SIGM, my group had to analyze Lenovo, the biggest PC producer in the world – and also one of the least profitable. My team worked together to gather data and propose ideas for change. For the first time, I realized that only teamwork will lead to success. No one, no matter how smart he or she is, can ever solve all the puzzles alone. Business projects like this are too complicated, and teamwork will help aggregate the talents of all team members to deliver the best solution.

My summer business training at Stanford has allowed me to appreciate the liberal arts education I have at Grinnell. The SIGM experience is truly a life-changing experience. The partnership between Stanford and Grinnell will continue in the future, so reach out to the Grinnell College Center for Careers, Life, and Service and experience it yourself!

Synchronized Swimming - More Than a Sport

Teodora (Tea) Cakarmis '17
Belgrade, Serbia

A few weeks back, as I was getting ready to go onto the swimming pool deck of Grinnell's natatorium, I saw a little girl, five years old at most, trying to open the locker room door. She was so tiny that she had to put her right foot against the wall to prop the heavy door open. She succeeded and ran on to practice smiling. For some reason this image stuck in my mind – without using her entire body weight as leverage, this little girl could not have even opened the door, yet she was now ready to swim. As pretentious as it may sound, she reminded me of myself at that age.

I was five when I began swimming. At that time, along with ballet, it was my greatest passion. When I turned nine, it became obvious that my schoolwork would not allow me to do both, so I found something that combined both of my loves – synchronized swimming. I fell much in love with swimming to music, and the glittery swimwear helped as well. However, not until thirteen did this passion grow into something bigger – a dream, a commitment, and a responsibility. In 2007, at age thirteen I was selected as a member of the Serbian National Synchronized Swimming Team. I was both scared and nervous, but most importantly I felt honored. The next five years I spent on the team, before coming to Grinnell, have been the most meaningful of my life.

My teammates became my sisters as we shared countless hours of training, frustrations at being away from home, and our deep sense of pride. Sure, we never got big marketing deals, none of us ever became the face of Nike, or even of Speedo, for that matter; we never signed thousands of autographs for fans – heck, none of us ever had fans. But we were still proud. We performed routines requiring physical abilities equal to those of any other profes-



sional athletes – endurance, core strength, and flexibility. But we executed our routines gracefully, in sync, and while smiling even underwater. Although we were all too aware of the fact that our sport enjoyed little recognition in our country, we knew the value of what we were doing. We traveled together from Jerusalem to Geneva, we made countless friends and memories, and we spread our love for a unique sport that unifies ballet, gymnastics, swimming, and acting.

As my high school years came to an end, it became more and more obvious to me that I was unwilling to choose between sports and academics. I knew that pursuing both was my only option. Today, fifteen years after I opened my first heavy locker room door, I feel like I am doing it again by forming the Grinnell Synchro Team. This new group will provide a safe community for artistic expression and development of athletic abilities. It is a club that is growing and accepting all new members with any level of experience.

For me, the Grinnell Synchro Club offers an opportunity to represent the sport I love and my home country. The creation of this club has reinforced my sense of identity, in that it reminds me who I am – someone who uses all my strength to move the heavy door, and walk in with a smile on my face.



Junior World's Team

Encounters with the Nacirema

*Jaime Chambers
Office of International Student Affairs*

From the moment the Peace Corps jeep dropped me on the rural Malawian plateau that would become my home, my entire village imposed two wildly contradictory yet somehow coexisting roles on me: one as “hapless, naïve weakling who knows nothing,” and the other as “encyclopedic expert on everything in the universe.”

Although I did my best to field questions about algebra, airplanes, and Barack Obama, there is actually quite a lot I do not understand about the universe – not the least of which is the world of a Malawian. So the former role came most naturally to me, that of “poor dim soul who will surely starve without our help.” My friends, neighbors, and surrogate mothers were quick to point out all the everyday tasks they deemed beyond my limited capabilities, which included moving scalding hot pots with my bare hands, opening Coke bottles with my teeth, and carrying a full tree’s worth of firewood on my head.

Though I tried to prove them wrong, they were right. Five-year-old children were more capable than me.

The whole experience offered a kind of second infancy. Much of my time was spent floundering, stumbling, and babbling through an unfamiliar world like a baby, yet with all the self-awareness of an adult. To make up for what I lacked in other basic competencies, I threw myself into the local language, Chitumbuka (and even became pretty decent at it). But that made merely a dent in the long list of common knowledge I did not grasp or understand. At the beginning of rainy season, for example, when dome-like man-made structures appeared all over the forest, my Malawian friends nearly fell over laughing at my guess that they must be for taking naps or storing compost. Obviously these contraptions were for catching flying ants. Obviously.

Malawi was full of ordinary mysteries for me, hidden in plain sight and interpreted completely askew



Jaime (second row, third from the left) taught English Literature and Life Skills at Mtangatanga Community Day Secondary School, a rural, understaffed, under supplied school in rural northern Malawi. She is pictured here with some of her students on a field trip to a local timber company.

through my eyes. And of course, I knew, every culture is layered with its own commonplace secrets, its own equivalents of a flying ant catcher. I thought often of “Body Ritual Among the Nacirema,” that famous 1956 article that has become a staple of every Intro to Anthropology class.* It details the bizarre, masochistic, body-related habits of a strange people, with the twist that the “Nacirema” are in fact Americans, the torture devices are toothbrushes, and every culture has its share of oddities and mysteries from the perspective of an uninformed viewer.

This fact was never more real for me than on one day in particular – the day that a package arrived at a local church, sent all the way from a strange land called “Ohio.” The box was filled with toys, trinkets, and good intentions, expected to bring some small joy to children imagined to have very little. But in reality, it ushered in nothing but chaos and confusion. Entire families held up the contents in bewilderment. They puzzled over the purpose of these yo-yos, frisbees, and bottles of mouthwash. A few of the younger children tried to eat the play-dough, a common mistake even in the United States. No one in the entire village had a clue what the items were for – no one, that is, except for me.

Soon I was entertaining dozens of visitors. People came in droves to show me their artifacts, hoping I might explain a) how they were useful and b) whether they were edible. First they skirted around the issue with the elaborate greeting ritual – a string of how-are-yous, how-did-you-wakes, and how-is-home that approached the topic politely from the side, following the Malawian custom of courtesy by way of circuitousness. After ten minutes or so of shooting the breeze, then and only then would conversation turn to the reason they were here: the question, “What does this thing do?”

* Horace Miner, “Body Ritual Among the Nacirema,” *American Anthropologist* 58 (1956), 503-507.

WELCOME Jaime!

Jaime Chambers joined the International Student Affairs staff this past summer. Her work as International Student Advisor focuses on supporting international students’ successful transition and engagement both in and out of the classroom. This includes creating opportunities for programming and outreach on campus and in the local community, supporting co-curricular engagement through the International Student Organization (ISO), building relationships with students, serving on the Academic Success Team, and collaborating with staff and faculty partners to enhance this “international student friendly” campus. Her previous experiences include advising international students on academic and cultural issues, teaching in Malawi and Tanzania, and supporting refugees in their transition to the U.S. You can often spot her around town with Chalo, her very, very lucky African village dog who is now an American citizen.

Chance, one of my boldest students, memorably pulled me aside during class to ask about her gift. “Madam, can you identify this one?” She had drawn a rough sketch of the item in question, which she described in faltering English. “It is a long instrument, with *ujeni* [whatsit], different colors, and I don’t know, it is what, Madam?”

I had no idea what she was talking about. After several wrong guesses, I encouraged her to bring it the next day. When she pulled a deck of watercolors out of her bag the following morning, I laughed – it had been unrecognizable from her description. The artifacts of Nacireman culture are totally inscrutable through the eyes of the outsider, even when they are reflected back upon a Nacireman.

As I demonstrated the basic idea of watercolors on a piece of paper, a crowd gathered. “Ohhh, we thought it was for this,” one girl said, sweeping the paintbrush over her eyelids to mimic eye shadow. A boy asked for clarification: “So, Madam, it is not for eating?” I assured him it was not. And with her typical sense of finality and confidence, Chance rose her voice above them all and declared, “It is for *ujeni* – it is for the beauty.”

Often, Malawi made me feel like the most bizarre Nacireman artifact of all. I was certainly an oddity – a strange creature who could type very fast, but couldn’t even start a fire. Life in this little village presented me with daily lessons in improvisation, patience, and humility, filled with frequent pop quizzes on sharing long silences, catching wayward chickens, and holding other peoples’ babies on public transportation. And over time, these daily tests evolved into one of its greatest gifts: the chance to try on someone else’s lens, and to see, on occasion, my own world reflected through it.



Braised Chicken Drumsticks with Eggs

First-Prize Recipe from ISO Food Bazaar Fall 2014

Ingredients:

12 chicken drumsticks
18 eggs
soy sauce
olive oil
salt
honey (sugar)
cola
black pepper
cumin powder
curry powder
Spanish paprika

Step 1: Marinate chicken drumsticks with all the spices and a little amount of salt for 8 hours (for quick version, 2 hours will be enough)

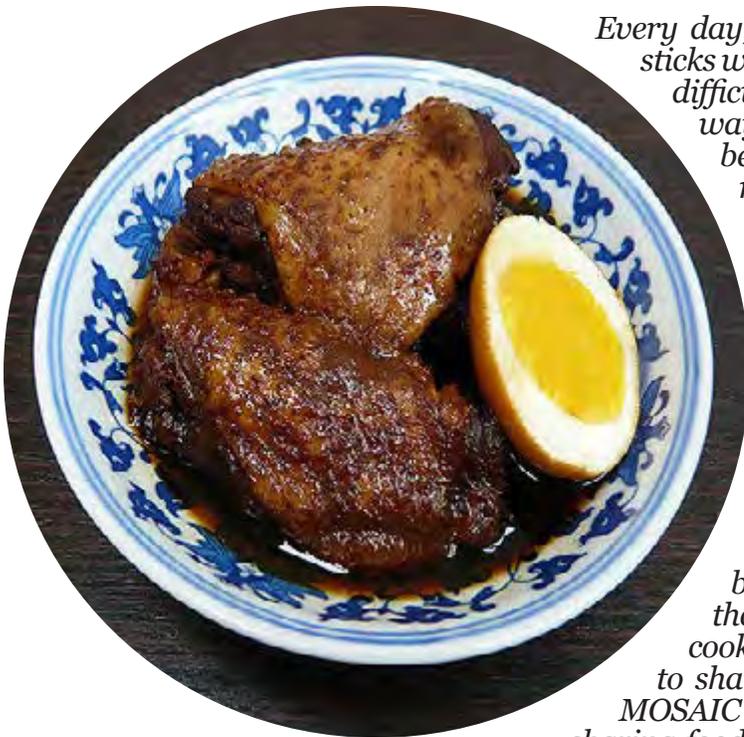
Step 2: Boil the eggs and peel the eggshells

Step 3: Pour some olive oil in the pan and put the chicken drumsticks in and fry them until you smell the spices

Step 4: Pour a tin of cola, soy sauce and water in a pan and cook for about 2 hours

Step 5: Wait until the sauce becomes thicker and add a little honey in and cook another 5 minutes. Enjoy the chicken drumsticks!

About the dish



Every day, millions of people make braised chicken drumsticks with eggs for lunch or dinner in China. It is not a very difficult dish, and people can be really creative about the way they cook it. We chose this dish for Food Bazaar because we wanted to share it with our friends. Grinnellians are too busy to have time to sit down and enjoy nice food. Cooking provides a great reason to get people together.

One interesting thing that happened during Food Bazaar was that due to the soy sauce, our dish looked like it was overcooked. Therefore, people were kind of skeptical about trying it. However, after the Chef announced that we won the First Prize, people rushed over and we ran out after a few minutes. We both really enjoy the whole process of cooking and would like to share our recipe with MOSAIC readers. Through sharing food, we hope to share with you part of our culture as well.



Presented to you by chefs: Fenyi Wu '17 and Ruixin Ouyang '18, both from China

Haiku = Wellness

IPOP Class of 2018

During this fall's International Student Pre-Orientation Program (IPOP), Nirabh Koirala '17 invited new Grinnellians to explore their poetic skills! He introduced them to the art of haiku during the open session about the breadth and depth of 'Wellness.' Break-out sessions also included activities like planting seeds, doing Yoga, and playing frisbee.

Haiku is a form of traditional Japanese poetry that focuses on simplicity, intensity, and richness of expression. Traditional haiku poems consist of 17 syllables, in three phases of 5-7-5 on three separate lines. Haikus written in the English language also have three lines to mirror those in Japanese. A haiku often chooses to describe a brief moment in time, or a series of colorful images.

Although haiku was new to many, the students wrote freely, passionately, and beautifully to depict their excitement about a new life, their initial struggles to adjust, their appreciation of Grinnell's nature and historical downtown area, and their hope for the future.

Here are a few of their poems.

They might take you back to the moment when you first got off the shuttle and set foot on the Grinnell campus!

I

**Gazing from atop
Grinnell, at last here we stand
A new life begins**

P

**Confined in my bed
Waiting for my roommate still
Loneliness, the trend**

O

**The town is waking
The dippers disappear from view
Night melts into dawn**

P

**Clouds gently sailing
A gentle breeze through one's hair
A deep breath, exhaled**

**From around the world
Scholars of Grinnell they are
Change-makers they'll be**

WELCOME IPOP CLASS OF 2018 !





Learning about alternative movements as part of the Resistance and Dissent class in Prague, Czech Republic

The Notorious 8th District: Artificial Ghettoization

*Jelena Kaplanovic '16
Belgrade, Serbia*

While studying abroad in Prague, Czech Republic to learn about the Roma (Gypsy*) concentration camps during World War II, I heard there was a "Gypsy ghetto" in Budapest, Hungary. I decided I needed to go see it for myself and hopefully prove that these stigmatic notions about the "ghetto" were wrong. After you read this, I hope you will research for yourself about discrimination against the Roma people in Europe, which includes systematic, institutional, everyday, historic, and current oppression.

There are no "ghettos" in the Western meaning of the word in Central Europe. The infamous "ghetto" is claimed to be the 8th District of Budapest, which

is why I set out exploring its streets, trying to make sense of this pumped-up, dangerous "Gypsy ghetto" label. I ultimately found that these notions are nothing more than discriminatory narratives feeding into the xenophobic politics of the current regime of Hungary. The media perpetuates a stigma around the 8th district, creating a fearful environment that is then used to discriminate further against the poorer neighborhoods, resulting in the artificial creation of "ghettos."

I was strongly advised by everyone I talked to not to go to the 8th District. However, my mind was set, and their strong stereotypes, not based on personal

* Roma or Romani is the preferred term to use in English language. There are debates about if it includes all groups or not, but for now it is the most politically correct term to use.

experience, were only going to make my determination stronger. I entered the area of the 8th and went as far into the “ghetto” as I could. The first people I ran into were a couple who advised me not to go past the next street, as they said it was where Gypsies live. When I asked them if they too were Gypsies, since they lived there, they seemed offended and said they were not – and that they only lived on the side of the street not considered to be a “ghetto.”

I asked a lady on the street to help me out with directions. She was coming back from the gym and had her headphones in, all wrapped up due to the intense wind that was blowing everywhere around us. We started talking, and when I dropped something and cursed in Serbian, she asked me where I was from, probably recognizing the language. She revealed that she was born and raised in Serbia, from a mixed marriage of Serbo-Hungarians. Before I knew it, we were heading to a local pub to continue our conversation. On many occasions in the past, Serbians and Hungarians living in the North of Serbia have been in conflict. This issue is still unresolved, and many stereotypes and stigmas exist and are widespread to today. Yet there I was, sitting in a local pub in the 8th District, with a girl from a town in the North of Serbia with a Hungarian majority.

This new friend, Olga, took me to a community center recently opened by a Jewish organization. On the tour, we found that the first floor was a designated pub and cultural events area. At this time, there was a party with a live music performer from the community. The second floor was mainly for showing movies made about the local community, and there were many locals present during my time there. The third floor contained offices and a conference room for organizations and NGOs. The atmosphere was great and so open and welcoming, nothing threatening about it at all. It seemed to me that someone was trying to create a perception that this was a “ghetto,” without it really being one. When I started talking to people who were in the center at the time, a group started discussing what it is like to live there. They agreed to tell me their ideas and for me to report it back; it seemed that they rarely get asked what it is really like living in the 8th district.

Olga had some fantastic observations. She has lived in this district for the past five years and she has never had any problems. She lives in a building with Roma people, and noted that the people and the atmosphere have been changing a bit in the past two years because this area is increasingly misunderstood and isolated. She also noted that there is a certain reaction that happens because people hear on the news that Roma are attacking Hungarians, and the Roma hear that Hungarians support the skinheads who attack them. In her experience, this has

caused vengeful feelings, creating divides that were not there a few years ago.

Many of the people I met in the Aurora Community Center were more than eager to talk to me about their experience of living in the 8th District. It seemed that they rarely get listened to, which is a shame because they had so many good things to say firsthand. They were so eager to tell their side of the story because it seemed that no one was listening to them at all.

During the communism period, the Roma were brought from the countryside of Hungary to help build the 8th District, and later the socialist government housed them there. During the 1980s, every construction project was canceled and people were left jobless; they lost their privileges and could no longer live in the housing given to them, but many stayed anyway. The State canceled state affordable housing. Right wing parties ran the local government from 1990-94. After communism ended, no one wanted to deal with the changes needed to address social problems. This area housed a small middle class, but mostly was home to the poor. The common phenomenon of poverty persists: you can't leave because your parents didn't leave either, and you stay where your history is. The educational system perpetuates this disadvantage because there are segregated schools for Roma. The media also perpetuates the issue by labeling Roma as “aggressive,” and their place as a “ghetto.” TV channels influence the public perception that there is strong Roma violence in this neighborhood, and locals I talked to felt that most people are afraid to come to the 8th District. This creates a dark economic situation.

The government moved the homeless people of Budapest to the 8th District. Drug problems moved here, too. The local people didn't want all the organizations to be there, and so they expelled the “Clean Needles” project due to distrust in the government. So now there is a problem with the spreading of HIV and other diseases.

During my visit to the 8th District, I learned about so many interesting projects and stories that don't get told very often because they get buried by the sea of negative stereotypes. The creation of “ghettos” results in poor districts that are immobilized by fear and isolation. If we all took time to meet people of these areas, we would learn that they are not too different from other parts of the city. The negative perceptions spur more violence and cause “action and reaction” retributions. I felt just as safe in this neighborhood as I did in any other part of Budapest, or for that matter in any other part of other cities in Central Europe. If we use our brains and skills that apply in any other part of city life, then we will be fine just as much as in any other part of the city.

Exploring College Sports in the U.S.

Bo Wang '16

Bo Wang'16 was awarded the Fishlowitz Fellowship in Spring 2014 to explore college sports in the U.S. Here are some snippets of her travel.

Right: LSU v. Ole Miss was a great game. LSU was the underdog and Ole Miss was unbeaten before this game. For the first three quarters, this status seemed to be faithfully reflected by the scores: Ole Miss 7, LSU 3. I almost left before the fourth quarter. It was an evening game and I was worried about getting a cab in the post-game traffic.



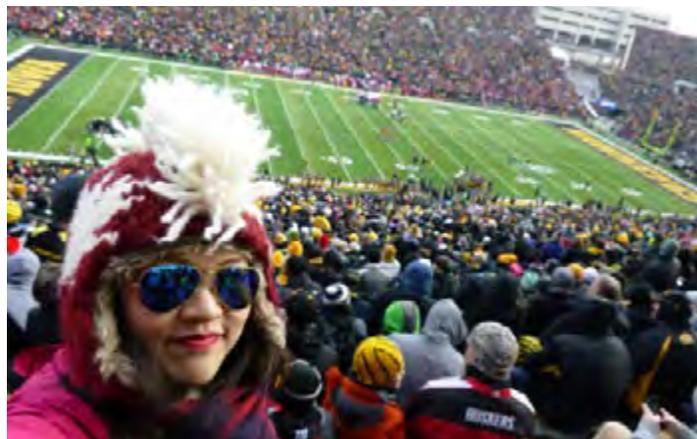
The last quarter, however, turned out to be the best comeback I have ever seen. LSU scored a touchdown and their defense blocked the last pass of Bo Wallace (coincidence), the Ole Miss QB, at 02 seconds to the end of the game. What a game!

Below: This is UCLA's recreational swimming pool. Outdoors. Palm trees. Beach chairs. Sunshine. It was almost completely the opposite to my experience at our pool in Grinnell. Don't get me wrong. I love our pool. But the idea of not having my hair frozen after practices is just nice.



Left: At USC. Marching band. Cheerleaders. Alums. Parents. Tailgaters. It was just a big party and everyone was in such an upbeat mood. I was not sure if I acted too much like a tourist (which I was) by asking the band members for a picture, but they turned out to be super friendly and more than willing to smile at my camera.

Right: During Thanksgiving, I went to two football games, one at University of Iowa and one at Iowa State. This was me at the Kinnick Stadium in Iowa City. If I had to choose one word to describe the game, it would be "cold." I sat on a big chunk of melting ice when I finally made it through the heavily coated crowd and found my seat. I was surprised to find a mostly full stadium on such a cold day. People love the Hawks! As a result, my butt was freezing the entire first quarter. One piece of genuine advice: bring blankets and pads when you go see the Hawks!



My Host Family

Ibuki Ogasawara '17
Takasaki-Shi, Japan

My name is Ibuki Ogasawara, and I am a second year student from Japan. I have been in the host family program for the past three semesters, and the relationship and experiences I have had with the Alger family have been amazing. The Algers take care of me just like I am a part of their family. I have not gone back to Japan since I came to Grinnell, and I would not have been able to stay for this long in the U.S. without this friendship. I could not be more grateful to them, and they make me feel like Grinnell is my second home town.

The Algers live only one block away from the campus, so I can go to their house anytime I want. My host parents, Pam and Jeff, work outside of Grinnell, and they have two children named Tanner and Chloe. I do not remember the first time we met very well, but we started getting along immediately. Later, Chloe told me that her first impression of me was "He is really tall." I have enjoyed being with them for Halloween, birthday parties, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, and the 4th of July. Besides these special events, we also watch movies, ride bikes, sled, and go shopping together. I sometimes go to their house to study for classes because I feel very comfortable studying in their dining room.

During spring break in 2014, I went on a one-week road trip with them. We drove from Grinnell to Montana, and I was stunned by how large the U.S. really is. I knew that this was a big country, but I gained a different understanding of that after driving through the wilderness for more than 20 hours. Our first stop was the Big Sky ski resort in Montana, where my host uncle and aunt have a cottage and work as ski instructors, and where I had the best skiing experience of my life. We also headed to Yellowstone National Park, where I got to see hot springs and wild animals such as bison, moose, and coyotes. It was like a huge zoo, and I was surprised when a bunch of bison were standing on the road and one of them walked next to the car.

During summer break in 2014, we went on another road trip to visit other host uncles and aunts in Colorado and Wyoming. Chloe and I rode horses, Tanner and I went on several bike rides around the Colorado back roads near Fort Collins, and in Wyoming I got to learn how to shoot a rifle and a pistol.

Since my host aunt and uncle told me that I am always welcome, I am visiting them again this coming summer.

One of the most important aspects of the host family program is that students can experience aspects of American culture that they cannot grasp on campus. For example, I have been able to see the real life of an American family, including how they deal with conflicts. I am particularly interested in how my host parents educate their kids. I compare their family rules to those of my family in Japan, and have found some interesting similarities and differences. For example, when the kids show very saucy behavior to their parents, my host mom gets really mad just like my mom in Japan, but my host mom never gives them physical punishments. She usually scolds them or asks them to go back to their room and be quiet.

My relationship with my host family has been an important part of my four-year college life in Grinnell. Each international student has a different relationship with his or her host family, and not everyone has a relationship as close as what I have with my host family. However, the host family program is a wonderful opportunity for international students to get a better understanding of American culture, and to gain a life-long connection with local families in Grinnell.



To my host family:

I am so happy to be a part of your family. Thank you very much, Jeff, Pam, Tanner, Chloe, and other families in town. I look forward to spending more time with you all in the future.

“Do you have an Englishman?”

Adventures in China

Carolyn Jacobson
Department of English

Right after Commencement last summer, Erik Simpson and I, along with our 9-year-old son Peter, flew to Hong Kong and then Nanjing to teach at the University of Nanjing for several weeks. The Grinnell-Nanjing Exchange has been in place for over 25 years, and in addition to sending Grinnell faculty to Nanjing each year, it also brings Nanjing faculty to Iowa, sends two recent Grinnell graduates to Nanjing each year to teach English as part of Grinnell Corps, and provides an annual Grinnell College scholarship to a student graduating from one of four Nanjing high schools.

Our family knows essentially no Chinese, and, it turned out, the small amount of Mandarin we learned before going proved largely useless, since we were unable to pronounce most words effectively enough to be understood. As teachers of English literature, Professor Simpson and I are used to feeling pretty confident about our language skills, so heading to a place where we would have significant trouble communicating—where we would be unable to even read the most basic street signs—was intimidating.

We did what we could to prepare electronically. Professor Simpson carried a laptop equipped with various translation programs, including one that could take a stab at interpreting written signs, provided they were printed in standard character fonts. We also had programs that would translate our speech into both written Chinese and spoken Mandarin. We were cautiously optimistic.



Checking out the wares at Ladies' Market on Tung Choi Street in Hong Kong.

On the afternoon we arrived in Nanjing, student guides showed us our on-campus apartment and the surrounding neighborhood. Then they left us. We set out on our own and racked up a first victory. In a nearby pharmacy, we said “Hello. Do you sell hair dryers?” into our iPad, took the machine to a salesperson, pressed the “translate” button, and got taken straight to the right shelf.

With that need satisfied, we were ready to forage for food, but we quickly found ourselves in trouble. Our courage and resourcefulness slid away as we descended into jet-lagged exhaustion. After walking up and down the street scouting restaurants, we finally ventured into one that looked casual and friendly. Turning again to the iPad, we asked whether they had an English menu. The cashier looked at us with pity and confusion, as if she could not even understand the question. With good reason! We realized later that the iPad had misheard us and said to her, “Excuse me. Do you have an Englishman?” We retreated. We were hungry, tired, defeated utterly. We won't say where we went in our moment of desperation, but for the purposes of this article, let's call it DickMonald's. Afterwards, still in street clothes, we all collapsed onto Peter's bed and slept until morning, when we could give China another shot.

We prepped for our first excursion carefully, mapping the route to a temple using Google Maps. We stepped out of our apartment building, and suddenly Professor Simpson lagged behind, fiddling with the technology that had inexplicably failed. Yes, China had started blocking Google Maps at the exact moment we were setting out.

All the challenges aside, we had a wonderful trip. When we were confused, people helped us out. Their apologies for their English embarrassed us, given our inability to convey almost anything in Chinese. People offered assistance when we were in subway stations, when we were looking at maps on street corners, and when we were trying to order food in restaurants. Our son Peter was fearless about tasks like locating restrooms. He'd wind his way through the tables in restaurants and come back explaining things like, “There's a key you need to ask for at the front counter,” and we would have no idea how he'd gleaned that information. He turned out to be our ticket to many wonderful conversations, since Chinese children often wanted to try out their English with him, which gave us a way to start talking to their parents. We are so grateful to everyone who

hosted us or was kind to us, and we're also grateful to the College for making the trip possible.

Professor Simpson taught a short course on early American film, and I taught one on English-language poetic forms. We each essentially adapted a unit of our Literary Analysis courses for a different audience. My class included upper-level English majors and a few graduate students. A highlight for me was a discussion of moments when poets intentionally choose difficult-to-say combinations of sounds. It led to a number of students reciting Mandarin tongue twisters in response to my offering of a few in English. In China, we were thrilled when any conversation—in the classroom or on the street—ended with mutual smiles or laughter. Happily, such conversations occurred often.

Like many visitors to China, we feel as if we got a ridiculously small sense of the country and its residents. We were fortunate to meet a number of people with Grinnell connections, including a current Grinnell student whose parents invited us to a won-



Grinnellians visiting the Mutianyu section of Great Wall of China, outside of Beijing.

derful lunch, several Grinnell alums who had spent time in Nanjing, and the two Grinnell Corps Nanjing fellows who were finishing up their own time in China. We left with several hundred photos, a desire to return, and the sense of humility that comes from knowing that even the parrots we encountered in China had been able to pronounce “Ni hao” better than we could.

Project Pengyou

Jordan Meyers '15



The Grinnell College Project Pengyou Chapter (GCPPC) is a new student organization that aims to foster U.S.-China relations on and off campus. Our constituents are Grinnellians who want to or have studied abroad in China, but we also welcome Chinese international students and anyone else who is interested in China or U.S.-China relations. The group started last October, after Cody Combs '15, Jordan Meyers '15, and Sophie Wright '17 attended a Project Pengyou Leadership Training Summit at Harvard University. With skills they learned at the Summit, Combs, Meyers, and Wright started the group with Adam Dalton '16 and Xiaoxuan Yang '17. On November 20, 2014, the group hosted Project Pengyou Day, which featured photo presentations by students who have lived in China and a

faculty panel. This semester, the group is participating in the Spring Festival, organizing a community service project, and hosting a lantern lighting festival in May. The GCPPC hopes to compliment the activities offered by the Chinese department and to encourage Grinnellians to study abroad in China. The GCPPC meets bi-monthly on Thursdays from 7-8 p.m. in JRC 226.



AltBreak Group picture in Humboldt Park, Chicago

Exploring Cultures Through AltBreak: A Trip to Learn About The Puerto Rican Community in Humboldt Park, Chicago

*Prakriti Shrestha '16
Kathmandu, Nepal*

“God made us different so that we may know one another” Quran 49:13.

During a discussion with José E. López, the executive director of the Puerto Rican Cultural Center (PRCC) in Humboldt Park, Chicago, he recited this quote to emphasize the importance of diversity and preserving cultural heritage. This quote really resonated with my own beliefs about diversity. My mother taught me that in order to grow, you should meet a new person every day. As a result, learning about different cultures, places, and people has always been important to me. Here at Grinnell, I have had the opportunity to engage in diverse cultural as well as intellectual activities that reinforce this value. One of my favorite ways to do so has been the Grinnell College Alternative Break (AltBreak).

During Fall Break 2014, Trang Nguyen '17 and I led an AltBreak group of 10 students to Humboldt Park, Chicago. Humboldt Park has a large Puerto Rican community, and a section of this neighborhood is known as “Paseo Boricua,” flanked on either end by large Puerto Rican flag sculptures. We worked with the Puerto Rican Cultural Center (PRCC), a non-profit, community-based umbrella institution that serves the social and cultural needs of Chicago’s Puerto Rican community. Susan Sanning, the Director of Service Learning and Civic Engagement at Grinnell, introduced us to this organization through Laura Johnson '92, who has been deeply involved in this community for the past 20 years.

Through Laura, we got an opportunity to work at the Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos Puerto Rican High

School, which is located in the heart of Paseo Boricua. Besides the main goal of preparing students for college, the school empowers students to engage in critical thinking about the Puerto Rican community. Furthermore, the school provides support above and beyond traditional school models. For example, they started the Lolita Lebrón Family Learning Center (FLC) to educate single mothers who had dropped out of school to raise a family.

We also worked with VIDA/SIDA, which is an advocate for Chicago's Latino community that strives to combat homophobia and provide education about HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. Working at this clinic for a few days, I realized that health issues are entangled with cultural issues. VIDA/SIDA bridges the cultural gap and helps solve many health-related problems more efficiently.

My AltBreak group also helped set up the annual Haunted Paseo event during Halloween. Every year, volunteers at the PRCC decorate the Paseo Boricua area according to a specific theme. This year, the theme was "carnival," so we made posters and other decorations in line with this theme. One of the most interesting aspects of helping with the decorations was being able to talk to the students and staff who were also volunteering. Through our conversations with the students and staff, we found that most people in the community are actively involved in community events involving Puerto Rican dance, music, and art.

Besides providing us with volunteer opportunities, this AltBreak group also introduced us to a tight knit community in the U.S. While Puerto Rico remains an American territory and generations of Puerto Ricans living in the U.S. have faced gentrification, they have been very active and successful in preserving



High School Rally

their culture. Their respect and love for their culture is reflected in the beautiful murals depicting Puerto Rican history spread all across Paseo Boricua. The establishment of the National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts and Culture is another wonderful example of their commitment toward the preservation of their culture. During our trip, we were able to understand more about their culture through visiting the museum and attending a signing of a Puerto Rican Children's book author.

As an international student, I can relate to the struggles that members of the Puerto Rican community face in maintaining their identity as while being surrounded by American culture. I personally find it hard to maintain my identity as a Nepali student in the U.S. because there are very few Nepalis in Grinnell, and most other Grinnellians don't celebrate the same holidays and festivals as we do. Having said that, I have found that this difference has given me an opportunity to share little pieces of my culture with my friends from around the world.

For example, during Dashain, the biggest Hindu festival in Nepal, the Nepali students cooked a meal together and shared the meal with a few other friends. As a result, Dashain, celebrated among international friends in an American college, still serves as symbol of home and family and peace for me.

Grinnell has shown me how bonded our community becomes by sharing our cultures with one another. I find the same unity and respect among the Puerto Rican community, and that makes me hopeful that their community will continue to fight for their heritage just like I hope to fight for my own.



College info session with high school students

Teaching & Learning Science Abroad

*Mark Levandoski
Professor of Chemistry*

In the spring of 2014, my family and I lived in Copenhagen, Denmark. I taught a course with the Danish Institute for Study Abroad (DIS), a program very popular with Grinnell students, especially those majoring in the sciences. I also initiated a research collaboration with a laboratory at the University of Copenhagen (KU). The ways I improved through this experience as an advisor, a teacher and a person are innumerable...but let me try to count!

I taught a course called “Neuroscience of Movement” within the new Neuroscience track at DIS. In the manner of the entire DIS curriculum, I made use of the local to enhance learning in the course: For example, the students spent an afternoon working with NAO robots that a Danish Technological University team uses throughout the country in grade-school educational programs. We also had a visit from a KU researcher who focuses on motor control; one of his studies dealt with high-heeled walking – no esoteric topic given Copenhagen’s beautiful cobblestone streets and the Danes’ proclivity for fashion.

With DIS I also had the privilege to travel with the Neuroscience students to sites in Denmark and Germany; travel is a component for all student programs. Among many other scientific and cultural experiences on these trips, we visited a historical “live-in” community for patients with mental illness set in an idyllic small town on a fjord, and we heard lectures in the former laboratory where Alois Alz-



Professor Levandoski and family in Denmark

heimer first made observations on the disease that bears his name. Needless to say, these are not experiences I could have at home.

Meanwhile, my two children attended Bjørn’s International School with kids from around the world as well as Danes, and my wife enjoyed a sabbatical from her yoga studio in Grinnell while still working on her practice – sometimes in Danish! Perhaps I exaggerate to say that Danish baking – a particular strength of their culture – was the center of our home life...but not by much. From the rugbrød, the ubiquitous dark rye not uncommon at any meal, to the kanelnegl or cinnamon roll (both puff pastry and yeast-dough versions), we ate it all, and often. My favorite though had to be the hindbærsmutter, a sort of raspberry Poptart, but many times more delicate and flavorful. While still in Denmark, I tried my hand at baking some of these and continue now to work on my technique. I think the four of us agree that through the time together traveling and experiencing other cultures (so many museums, churches, and castles!), we grew much closer as a family. We have also pledged to keep traveling.

In short, my family and I benefited from our European experience in all the ways Grinnell students do by studying abroad and international students gain in studying at Grinnell. Through my work at DIS, I have more intimate knowledge of the study abroad experience as I advise students, and I think about my teaching differently having worked with Danish academics and other professionals. Perhaps most importantly, I now have an entirely new set of perspectives to employ in striving to make connections with others.



A sunny day in Grabrotovej, Copenhagen

The Underground World of Tashkent

*Otabek Nazarov '18
Tashkent, Uzbekistan*



Otabek at Food Bazaar Fall 2014

Going underground into the metro was a great adventure for me when I was a kid. It was the place for me to escape from the hot and dry summer, into the mysterious world beneath the streets. In the metro, there are no dusty winds, no cars going all around, and no smog. There is just refreshing cold air, with middle class people not sitting in fancy cars, but instead walking next to you. Most importantly,

each station tells a story about the history of Uzbekistan that started thousands of years ago.

One of the oldest metro stations is Amir Temur Station in the center of Tashkent, named after King Tamerlane who lived in the 15th century. His Uzbek name is Temur, which means “iron.” In his lifetime, he conquered more territories than anyone else except for Genghis Khan and Alexander the Great. The metro itself does not have any visual references to Tamerlane, since during Soviet Union times it used to be called Revolution Station. However, a massive statue of Amir Temur stands close to the station entrance. It is a 15-meter-high statue with Tamerlane sitting on a strong and magnificent horse. Temur’s one arm is stretched out towards the sky above Uzbekistan, which is a symbol of his protection and the bright future ahead of my nation. And below the statue, his famous saying “Power in Justice” is engraved in four different languages: Uzbek, Russian, English, and Arabic.



The Alisher Navoi Station in Tashkent

Another Metro station is Alisher Navoi Station. Alisher Navoi was a 15th century poet and writer who proved that Uzbek can be as beautiful as any other language. In the past, people believed that there could not be any literature written in Uzbek, and people in Central

Asia used to read novels in Persian. However, Alisher Navoi proved everyone wrong by writing beautiful poems and stories. Going into Alisher Navoi Station is like entering his fascinating stories. On the walls there are beautiful engraved pictures of Farkhod and Shirin (a young man and woman whose love for each other saved them from the king’s injustices), seven planets (from a collection of fairy-tales written in the poetic form), and Leyli and Majnun (from a love story in which Majnun goes crazy because he cannot be with his love Leyli). The atmosphere of this poetic world is supported by the marvelous Asian ornaments of flowers on the ceilings.



The Cosmonauts Station in Tashkent

The most mysterious station – and my favorite – is the Cosmonauts Station, which was made to commemorate the Soviet Union’s exploration of space. Its walls are made of stained glass that gradate from dark to light blue to recreate the atmosphere of outer space. On the walls are engravings of the first cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin and the first woman cosmonaut Valentina Tereshkova. This station ties Uzbeks to the Soviet Union’s past, which is remembered by my parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents. I have heard a lot of stories about how good it was for Uzbeks to live during those times, but I never got to experience that. And when I go to this station, I get to travel in time and feel the sense of unity between countries that share 100 years of common history. And of course, I can dream that I am floating in space, which I might never experience in my real life.

The modern city of Tashkent does not show all the changes that have happened in the history of Uzbekistan. However, Tashkent’s metro stations can lead anyone through the history of Uzbekistan from one station to another. Sometimes to me it seems like it is a different world. I can relax from the daily worries and travel through time in a metro wagon: ruling the world with Tamerlane, living in the poems of Alisher Navoi, or exploring outer space as a cosmonaut.



The United States Students' Achievers Program (USAP)

*Bazil Mupisiri '18
Manicaland, Zimbabwe*

www.usapglobal.org

The United States Students' Achievers Program (USAP) was launched in 1999, in response to the number of talented students who aspired to pursue higher education at top colleges and universities in the United States, but lacked the financial resources to do so. Initiated by Rebecca Ziegler Mano, Education USA Zimbabwe Country Director, this program helps students navigate the college application and admission process through a variety of workshops and seminars.

The USAP program has helped a lot of students. There are currently more than 200 USAP Zimbabwe students who have made it into the U.S. The success of the program in Zimbabwe led to the establishment of USAP programs in 17 countries on four different continents, including Bangladesh, Brazil, Bulgaria, Colombia, Ecuador, Jamaica, Latvia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mongolia, Nigeria, Serbia, South Africa, Uganda and Zambia.

In Zimbabwe, USAP has a high selectivity of about five percent, and it receives many applications from all over the country. The selection is based on four categories: academic excellence, leadership potential, economic disadvantage, and ethos of giving back. The selection committee tries its best to recruit a variety of students from different cultures, and makes sure that different ethnicities are represented.

When I received the call that signaled the beginning of my "USAP journey," my heart skipped a beat. I remember breaking the news to my mom, who sat dumbstruck on the couch, while I myself was still in disbelief and trying to narrate the cellphone conversation as calmly as I could. Getting an acceptance into a highly selective program like USAP was not only an achievement, it was a gateway to a better life, which my mother has always worked hard for. I knew in my heart that this was the beginning of a new journey and the dawn of a new era.

I remember walking into the auditorium of the U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Section office like it was yesterday. I was excited, nervous, and at the same time curious to know the other USAP fellows who will become my best friends for life. The array of rainbow blazers and uniforms blending into the smiling faces illuminated the room, and the students from different schools all over the country highlighted the

diversity of the USAP Class of 2018. That day introduced me to my second family, the USAP family.

The various seminars on the meaning of a liberal arts education were quite intriguing, and the SAT classes we had unveiled a whole new world to us. Since Zimbabwe is a country that inherited the British non-liberal arts and specialized education, the SAT was a struggle but we eventually overcame it. The admission seminars taught us how to prepare a college application and how to write a Common App essay. The intense workshops on how to successfully write a college application paid off when the admission decisions started rolling in at the end of the year. After completion of the program, successful USAP students graduate and head to different U.S. colleges.

With the help of USAP, I was admitted to Grinnell College and able to fulfill my dream of getting a liberal arts education in the United States. USAP has unveiled a future in my life I had only imagined.



Bazil (first on the left) with USAP founder Rebecca Ziegler Mano and his friend, Wayne

Clean Water for Swaziland

Anesu Gamanya '18
Harare, Zimbabwe

The sun was slowly rising as I made my way up the mountain trail, shovel in hand. My supervisor and I were the first ones to reach the meeting point at Babe Shongwe's homestead, and we made small talk while waiting for the other volunteers. As I scraped the mud off my dew-covered shoes, I tried not to think of the hard tasks ahead.

The other volunteers started showing up, and in about half an hour we all headed farther up the mountain to our work site. Our task on this day was to dig a trench to lay down the water pipes. The men dug the hard ground using picks, and the women used shovels to scoop the dirt out of the trenches. We worked for nearly five hours, occasionally taking water breaks and exchanging working positions.

This was just a typical day at my summer internship at Clean Water for Mdzangwini Project in Mbabane, Swaziland. This project was started by a Swazi student at Macalester College, Welile Zwane, to curb cases of cholera and typhoid that had ridden the community in the preceding years. With the help of local people, we built two reservoirs around natural water springs and piped down running water to nearly fifty homesteads.

Clean Water for Mdzangwini is one of the many social entrepreneurship projects by young Africans. Realizing that many issues facing their communities are not solved because of corrupt governments, these young people are coming up with solutions to tackle these issues while creating job opportunities for community members.

In the Clean Water project, we helped to instigate economic development and make earning an income easier for local residents. For example, Mngqobi, a village resident in Mbabane, was a builder. Sand made bricks for a living. Before, he had to



Mkulu Zulu and Anesu standing next to his tap

carry water in order to make bricks. Because our project brought running water to the village, he could now concentrate on making bricks, and consequently earning more income for his family.

Our project finished around late July. I went around the Mdzangwini community with my supervisor, asking community members how they felt about the project. We talked to Mkulu Zulu, a 70-year-old man. Before the water project, he had not been able to have a garden because he had no running water to irrigate. After, he stood proudly by his tap and spoke of plans to start a vegetable garden, a gleam of excitement in his eyes. Throughout this conversation, I couldn't help but think of how all the manual labor seems a trivial sacrifice for this man's gratitude.

This internship got me interested in the economic changes that are happening in Africa. I felt empowered in knowing that I can do something to give back to my community.



5 facts about Swaziland

1. Swaziland is ruled by an absolute monarchy, King Mswati III.
2. Swaziland is the smallest country in Africa.
3. People drive on the left side of the road.
4. Swaziland is home to the world's oldest mine, the Lion Cavern. It has been in use since 41,000 B.C.E.
5. In Swaziland, a rain shower means monkeys are getting married!

Experiencing Politics in Washington, D.C.: a Chinese Student's Perspective

*Yanling Xu '16
Xiamen, China*

Despite being a political science major, I never had too much confidence in learning about American politics. My identity as a Chinese citizen seemed to make it more complicated than anything else. I knew little about the structure of American government, or even what a real election looked like. With the intention of participating in politics, I spent my fall semester with Grinnell-in-Washington, an off-campus program that features the unique political culture of the nation's capital and the opportunity to engage in various cultural activities. My time in D.C. was fun, challenging, and most importantly, life-changing. I was blessed to be a research intern at EMILY's List, which gave me the opportunity to get out the votes (GOTV) in Des Moines and experience my very first midterm election in the United States.

EMILY's List is a Political Action Committee (PAC) that aims to help elect pro-choice Democratic women to office at all levels of government through several strategic programs. As a research intern, my main responsibility was to conduct political research and prepare candidate background memos that the staff could use to make informed decisions.



I also helped track election results for EMILY's List candidates and retrieved reports as well as news clips on a regular basis. Besides improving my research and writing skills, this internship opened up a completely new perspective on American politics for me.

The first few weeks at EMILY's List felt like the first time that I went to primary school. Every day at work, I was more confused and curious about my work than anyone else in the team because everything was just so new to me. I did not know what the Hobby Lobby ruling was. I could not say much about pro-choice legislation, or about political candidates across the country. There was even one time that I ridiculously believed that the Minority Leader was someone in the ethnic minority in the Senate. These instances all challenged and increased my understanding of American politics on a whole new level. By reading news clips every day at work, I learned about the partisan divide on issues such as abortion rights and minimum wage. As the election drew closer, I personally became invested in races because I knew so much about candidates and opponents through all the different research projects I had done



Yanling (first from the left) and other EMILY's List interns in Waukee, IA

over the course of the semester. I could think of many instances where I felt entirely driven by my curiosity to learn and explore the political culture in the U.S., and this was such a meaningful learn-



Dallas County, Iowa Office

ing experience. For the first time in my life, I started thinking about the possibilities of landing a job in politics, continuing to explore politics in all aspects.

Besides the knowledge that I gained from day-to-day office work, I was able to sit in on meetings and listen to senior members talking about their stories with EMILY's List. Several days before the midterm election, I was very lucky to be sent back to Iowa for GOTV. I would be lying if I said there was not some jumping and shouting when I was told that I'd go back to Iowa. During this four-day trip, I volunteered for Staci Appel's campaign in Waukee, which is located in West Des Moines. Although I loved the opportunity to go back to Iowa, this

trip was intense and rough. Every day from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., I bore the cold weather in Iowa and went out knocking on doors to make sure that all our supporters went to the polls on the Election Day. Thanks to this community outreach task, I got the opportunity to meet with local residents and talk to them about politics. Of course, I encountered some people who slammed the door on my face immediately after I introduced myself, but I remember a very kind middle-aged man who invited me to his house and said, "You shouldn't be standing outside; it is too cold." And that made my day and even my entire trip. Unfortunately, our hard work did not pay off - Appel lost. But I appreciate this experience as a whole for developing me socially and in-

tellectually.

It was tremendously rewarding to spend my fall semester in Washington D.C. As an international student from China, a country that adopts a different political system, I relished the opportunity to know more about the United States and its politics. The experience of working in politics was exciting and educational, and it tied directly to my political science major. Although it was hard for me to say goodbye, I cannot emphasize enough how much this internship meant to me. I came to better appreciate the work that the organization does every day to elect women candidates to office. Best thanks and wishes to EMILY's List for providing me with this great opportunity!

5 facts about China

Kevin Hong '14



1. *There are numerous different dialects in China and most of them are mutually unintelligible.*
2. *Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter are generally inaccessible in China. However there are Chinese versions of these social network and video sharing websites: Renren, Youku, and Weibo.*
3. *The most common name in China is Wei Zhang, roughly shared by 3 million people, compared to the most common name in the U.S., James Smith, which is shared by 38,000 people.*
4. *The communist party in China has 87 million members (6.4% of total population). In comparison, The Democratic Party in the U.S. has 43 million members (13.6%), and the Republican Party has 31 million members (9.8%). However, being a member of the Communist party in China is a sign of social status and party members usually enjoy extensive benefits and privileges.*
5. *In China, politics are very rarely deemed as a science, but rather as an ideology. Unorthodox views and interpretations of politics are usually not tolerated, though there has been a surge in exploring the possibilities for political reform among university professors, lawyers, and journalists in China.*



Being without a home, without being homeless

*Iulia Iordache '15
Prahova, Romania*

I am in the Frankfurt airport, watching the rain drip down the large glass windows on a discrepantly sunny August day. I find myself on my way to Chicago O'Hare in one of the largest European hubs, people watching, listening to accents and trying to figure out nationalities around me. Strangely enough, I feel at home. Crossing the Atlantic the twelfth time already feels natural and, regardless of my direction, I have begun to appreciate the hustle and bustle of the tunnels, the bumpy bus rides within the airports, the similarity in the motions of taking my laptop and my belt out and feeling the cold floors under my feet as I go through security.

The reason I feel at home in this crowded place is because I feel the people around me and I somehow have a lot in common. For a few hours, while we share the same grey couches and fight for the seats next to the electric plugs, we're all without a home. However, the more trips we take, and the more we get lost in the big airports of the world, the more we lose the sense of having a specific national identity.

My first flight out of Romania was on a rather brisk August morning at 6 A.M. My parents and I arrived at the Henri Coanda International Airport in Bucharest; they helped me check in and then we hung out, my mother and I weeping, on some dirty chairs in a quiet area

until it became inevitable for me to go through security. I kept calm while I put my backpack on the conveyer belt and during the regular security checks, but the more I advanced towards the heart of the airport, the less I could withhold my tears. I remember sitting down, and wondering what I had done. Why go to the United States? Why leave everything

ing I would never be able to connect with any of the people there the way I would bond with a Romanian. Yet somehow I grew a sense of belonging, and Grinnell eventually became homier than Romania. My short holidays in Romania soon became frustrating – I couldn't explain what being a Grinnellian meant, or what my life had become, or how it was different than what my former classmates were experiencing. After two weeks in my beloved country, I felt out of place and ready to go. Once back in my adoptive Iowa, it almost didn't feel right. It wasn't what I tried to explain to the people in Romania when I was there, and it wasn't perfect, but neither was Romania.

Two summers ago, I flew to Malaysia for an internship. I got out of the airport to be welcomed by a whiff of hot air, the smell of heated asphalt and noisy cab drivers that seemed to have their steering wheel on the wrong side of the car. Kuala Lumpur was noisy, eclectic, and completely crazy compared to anything I had ever experienced. After the jet lag wore off and I began settling into my office life, I found bits and pieces of Romanian-ness in the Malays, while walking through crowded streets that reminded me of New York. I had no expectations for my sense of belonging to Malaysia, but I felt warmly welcomed – literally and metaphorically – by this country. It was the strangest feeling and it didn't make any sense that



Photo from out of the airplane, taken on a Malaysia airlines flight, coming back to the U.S.

behind? Here I was, trapped in a metal tunnel full of strangers, in a limbo between the country I had dreamed of all throughout high school and the country I had known all of my life.

I arrived in a hot and seemingly immense Iowa. I had McDonald's as my first meal, and was disappointed with Dr. Pepper. I then went through the International Pre-Orientation Program think-

tropical Malaysia made me sing I found home in a hopeless place in a Rihanna tone the more time I spent there.

My Malaysia experience suggests that, for some people, the overseas experience might result in feeling more at home in any new place they reach. It might be easier to adjust, to adapt to a new style of life, given that they have already moved around so much. Finding the familiar in the unfamiliar, learning to search for the pieces you can resonate with and accepting that your way of seeing the world is definitely skewed are lessons we learn when we trot the globe the way we do. But does that really mean that we find home in each and every one of these places?

The more I have taken transatlantic trips, the less satisfaction I have felt when moving from one continent to the other. In time, it has become clear to me that every experience I have adds to my perspective on the world and makes

me feel less connected to a particular home. I don't think any of us have a home anymore, which is why airports feel more like home than anything else does.

By carefully selecting our most prized possessions and carrying them in a bag, we renounce our home. We take bits and pieces of our former identities that we would like to keep – our clothing style, the plush toy from when we were 5, a photo of our parents – and we transfer them to our new lives hoping they will keep on being meaningful. We hold on to the great memories of our previous lives for the moments when the going gets tough in

our new home. We then pretend it used to be better wherever we came from. And then, when we take the journey back, it's not what we remembered; it's not what we want it to be. And we keep repeating these steps until we no longer even know what it is that we are longing for anymore, whether that ideal home we keep remembering even exists.

If you ask me, the truth is that a specific sense of home no longer exists in a physical location. Our sense of home persists in our hearts, the only place where things change along with us and the only place that we can constantly access without taking long flights. Our physical homes will continue to exist and move around, providing us shelter and giving us a sense of belonging for a short while.

But our home becomes the transience itself, the moving around and knowing how to navigate big airport hubs, identifying ourselves with the other people without a home.

“But our home becomes the transience itself, the moving around and knowing how to navigate big airport hubs, identifying ourselves with the other people without a home.”



MOSAIC SPRING 2015

Editor-in-Chief: Chi Nguyen'15

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Off-Campus Study



Bao Quyen Ngoc Tran '16 studied at the Danish Institute for Study Abroad in Fall 2014.



Above left: Bao's Danish friend, Bao, and 2 other DIS friends at a party on J-Day.
Right: At the beach with Queesnter Nartey '16



Matt Grygo '16 also studied in the Danish Institute for Study Abroad Fall 2014. In these photos, he explored the marvelous nature of Greenland.



Off-Campus Study



Gloria Magege '16 is currently studying in the Trinity In Rome program. In this photo, she is visiting the Spanish steps in Rome, Italy.



Jelena Kaplanovic '16 studied abroad in Prague, Czech Republic. In this photo, she captured the celebration of Roma Pride.



Above: Rosie and other Grinnellians at the Roman Baths
Below: Volunteers installing poppies at the Tower of London Remembers, in honor of the 100-year anniversary of the outbreak of World War I.

Rosie Fuqua '16 studied in the Grinnell-in-London program in Fall 2014.







MOSAIC

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A MOSAIC of our Global Grinnell

Mosaic art is created by arranging many small pieces of colored glass, stone, or other materials into a collage. Our publication, MOSAIC, celebrates the beauty of a diverse campus and world with a particular focus on the variety of global adventures, here and abroad, that are experienced by Grinnellians.

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