

International Connections

The University of Western Ontario

From Geography Class to an Arctic Adventure!

Find out how a fellow Western international student brought his class skills to the icy field

TIPS for Timmies

A Guide to Ordering Coffee

Don't Be Stressed!

Learn how to handle stress

Volunteers Count!

ISS Volunteers share their experiences


Exchange Opportunities
Upcoming Events
Photo Album
See Inside for More!



SDS' International Student Services
Fall 2008, Volume 11, Issue 1



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Pengfei's Arctic Adventure

By: Pengfei Chen - 3rd year Ph.D. in Geography

This past summer, I went to the Arctic to investigate the 400 year old Silurian rocks and collect fossils from the rocks in Cornwallis and Baillie-Hamilton islands in Nunavut. During the Silurian time period, these Arctic islands had a tropical climate and were covered by warm sea water with many living sea organisms. These organisms are now preserved as fossils in the sedimentary rocks that I am studying.



Most of the time, we stayed in the field, without any other human beings around us. Given that there were no roads or trails to get to our study area, we travelled on ATV's (All Terrain Vehicles). We used the ATV's to carry our equipment and specimens, and to get fresh water from a nearby lake to cook our meals. We brought a small stove to cook our meals, and slept in the tent every night. By the way, as you know, there is no night in the summer in Arctic. We can still see the Sun in the sky at 10:00 p.m. Fortunately, I have an eye-cover to block the sun-light when I sleep in the tent.

Before I went to the Arctic, I thought it would be a barren landscape covered in ice and snow, with little vegetation and few animals. When I arrived, I discovered that most of the snow on the land had melted, while the ocean was still covered by thick ice. The ice is so thick, that one day I actually walked on the ice. There were some plants growing in the ground, such as the purple saxifrage, where you can also see lots of lemmings. The lemmings were so friendly that we even had one stay in our tent for 5 days!



My favourite memory from my trip to the Arctic was filming the jaegers – arctic seabirds that nest on tundra islands. While we were investigating the rocks on the islands, we reached a 50 meter high cliff where there were millions of jaegers nesting in the cliff. They were singing, and flying around to get food and material for their nests. I thought it was like a Jaeger's Carnival!

The steep of the cliff where they nested was very steep, almost 90 degrees so it would be hard for animals to climb up and prey on the jaegers. As well, the cliff faces southward, which likely keeps the jaegers warm. I think that's why the jaegers were so abundant in the cliff.

FIVE MINUTES A DAY TO KEEP THE STRESS AWAY

By: Kristine Lajoie,
M.Ed. Counselling Intern.
2007-2008



By: Jennifer Reyla

Being a student at university is an incredible challenge. Students often experience muscle tension from being hunched over a computer or book, disrupted sleep patterns around deadlines, and low energy levels from inadequate food and exercise. The effects of stress can include headaches and indigestion; moodiness and confusion; and increased negative thoughts and hyper-vigilance. The following techniques will help students to manage stress on both a physical and psychological level:

Affirmations

What we say has a huge impact on our thoughts, our emotions and our bodies. Since negative thoughts can cause stress, it is important to replace these unhealthy thoughts with positive ones. Focus on your feelings as you read the following:



By: Jennifer Reyla

- ✓ I am healthy and happy.
- ✓ My mind is calm.
- ✓ I have a lot of energy.
- ✓ My thoughts are under my control.

These are just some affirmations that can fill you with positive feelings. You can make up your own and repeat it to yourself whenever you need it.

Stretching

Stretching is a great way to ease physical tension. Techniques such as chair stretching can be a welcomed activity during a study break. There are many examples online to explore. However, with a little imagination you can move in your own ways that make you feel good. Stretching gets the blood flowing and can help you feel refreshed and ready for work.

(Continued on page 8)

An Introduction to my Culture... PROFILE

NAME: ANNA VICTORIA TIONGSON URBI
1ST YEAR MA IN SOCIOCULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY
ORIGIN: METRO MANILA, PHILIPPINES
LANGUAGES: FILIPINO (NATIVE LANGUAGE) AND ENGLISH

By: Brittany Seki, 4th year Honours English

What is your favourite cultural tradition?

Christmas is so much more fun in the Philippines and we take celebrations to the heart. Christmas countdown starts in September and gets more and more exciting when we come closer to Christmas. There is the "misa de gallo" which is a mass held at dawn and there is a strong Catholic and Filipino belief that if you are able to complete nine masses starting from December 16, your prayer will be granted.

Food and parties are overflowing during this season, coupled with very lively and colorful Christmas decorations in almost every Filipino home. This is also the time to reunite and enjoy the company of family and friends and exchange gifts however simple or extravagant they are.

How are the Philippines and Canada similar?

I think Canadians are very willing to help out people who are obviously having a hard time. The compassionate nature of people is what I think is similar between the two cultures.

How does the Philippines differ from Canada?

Well, I've been seeing a lot of squirrels running around in our neighborhood. I haven't seen or smelled a skunk yet and I'm not really looking forward to that. I noticed how relatively disciplined Canadian drivers are which kind of tells me I shouldn't drive here knowing how



crazy my driving skills are. And of course, what better way to differentiate my country from Canada than the mention of snow!

What makes you proud to be Filipino?

Because we are spread out in all parts of the world and doing all sorts of things, I'm very proud with the fact that Filipinos are all survivors in our own right. We brave new environments and make our dreams happen despite all the obstructions and hurdles that come along the way.

Filipinos are also a happy group of people. I know there is a study that ranked us as one of the happiest people in the world. It is not unusual to find Filipinos grouped together, telling stories, joking and laughing. We are able to look beyond troubles and laugh about it.

Explain your experience at Western and in Canada so far:

When I came to Canada, I experienced the joys and pains of being independent. While being accorded the liberty to do what you want, you also have to worry what to eat, when to do the laundry on top of your TA work, coursework and research work. It's been a busy, busy life for me but I appreciate the opportunity to study in Western and I'm just trying to make the best out of this opportunity. I've visited Toronto a couple of times and I loved it there! The cosmopolitan-ness of it is what attracts me most to the city.

Volunteer Experiences At International Student Services (ISS)

ReSpectful, Enjoyable & Fruitful

By: Helen Xu, 2nd year BMOS

Do you want to know more about our lovely ISS volunteers and what they do? Let's get a closer look at them, to reveal the great experiences of volunteering!

Jay Ren, Activity Coordinator

Jay, an international student from China, came to Canada two years ago. Over the past two years, he has personally benefited a lot from the various services provided by International Student Services and Student Development Services. With a grateful heart to contribute back and the intention to capture the opportunity of meeting and working with people from different countries, Jay decided to apply for one of the positions of Activity Coordinator with International Student Services.

BMOS, Year 3

During Orientation Week, his role was to assist international students by providing useful information and fostering a friendly environment. Throughout the academic year, Jay, along with his fellow Activity Coordinators, is responsible for organizing and coordinating events to make international students feel more comfortable with their school life here.

When asked to choose three words to describe his volunteering experience, Jay chose "Responsibility", "Confidence" and "Respect". He needs to be both responsible and confident when organizing events for about 150 students. Also, "being respectful is the pre-requisite for an enjoyable and interesting cross-cultural conversation".

Through his volunteering experience, Jay has overcome his nerves and has become more comfortable with talking to a large group of people. He remarks that "If you force yourself to go out of your comfort zone and make enough effort, you'll find that things that scared you before are not that difficult".



Ivey HBA, Year 3

Irene Lynnphou, Peer Guide

Irene still remembers how difficult it was for her to adapt to a new environment when she first came to Canada from China eight years ago. She wanted to use her past experience to help international students have a smooth transition to a great university life at Western. That is one of the reasons why she decided to apply to be a Peer Guide and why she chose to return again this year.

As a Peer Guide, she acts as a mentor and a friend to international students. She encourages them to be more involved in various social and academic activities, and assists them to gain a broad knowledge of the Canadian culture and meet new friends. Irene highly regards this program because "...it's a very unique program, since we are specifically dedicated to help international students".

When asked to give three key words to describe this volunteer experience, Irene's answer was "Enlightening", "Enjoyable" and "Exceptional". She feels that ISS has "created a very family-oriented environment for every single volunteer, student, and staff that works there. I love the people that I volunteer with, and the staff is very supportive."



Engineering, Year 4

Rami Abu-Ayyash, English Conversation Leader

Although he is a Canadian citizen now, it took Rami some time to fully adjust to Canadian culture and customs when he first came from Jordan in Grade 9. "That's why I feel sympathetic with international students" says Rami, expressing his desire to help them.

Together with the intention to get involved and contribute back to Western, Rami decided to volunteer and return for several terms as an English Conversation Leader. "My role is to break down language and culture barriers for international students by being tolerant, friendly, and showing attentions and care," says Rami. He usually spends about three hours a week to prepare ice-breaker games and interactive activities for the eight students who attend his weekly 1.5-hour workshop. Some popular activities of the workshop are word games, debating, and 5-minute presentations.

Rami considers this volunteer experience to be "Rewarding", "Fruitful" and "Successful". When he sees students become more active and comfortable with public speaking, he feels like getting a reward for himself. He also gains a lot of skills such as interpersonal and communication skills from this volunteer experience. Rami regards this program to be successful since he sees improvement in both the students and himself.

Continued on page 8



Volunteer with Join the ISS Team!

Are you interested in volunteering with SDS' International Student Services for the 2009-2010 Academic Year?
Volunteer Recruitment will start in **January 2009**.

For more information, visit:

<http://www.sds.uwo.ca/int/services/index.html?volunteer>

Two More Ways to Reduce Stress



By: Jennifer Reyla

Diaphragmatic Breathing:

Learning to breathe from the stomach is a powerful way to decrease stress. Put one hand on your stomach and one on your chest. Which hand moves while you breathe in and out? Try to breathe so that only the hand on your stomach moves. Practice diaphragmatic breathing next time you feel stressed and you will notice a calming effect!

IMAGERY:

Imagery allows you to use your imagination to create or recreate a relaxing place or scene. Begin by getting into a comfortable position and focus on breathing diaphragmatically for a few minutes. Next, envision yourself in the midst of a relaxing environment. Perhaps you are floating in a pool on a sunny day. While imagining your relaxing scene, try to use all of your senses. What does the place you are picturing smell like? Can you hear anything? What does it feel like?



By: Jennifer Reyla

Volunteers Continued...

WORDS OF WISDOM:

Irene--- "Volunteering is a great way to meet new people, contribute back to the community, and gain valuable experiences. I would advice international students to do some research on the volunteer position before actually applying for it to ensure that it is something they are truly interested with."

Jay--- "I think if you force yourself to go out of your comfort zone and make enough effort, you will find that things you dared not to do before are not that difficult."

Rami--- "Be open to feedback and constructive criticism. Be tolerant and flexible to different cultures and differences. Most importantly, HAVE FUN!"

For more information about volunteer opportunities with SDS' International Student Services, please visit www.sds.uwo.ca/int and click on "Volunteer Opportunities".



Study in a Castle

while receiving Western Credits!

The International Study Centre in England allows Western students who have completed at least one year of university to take courses at their campus in England. You may attend the ISC for one or more of four Upper-Year terms to take Queen's University accredited courses:

- Fall Term (September to December)
- Winter Term (January to April)
- Spring Term (May to mid-June)
- Summer Term (mid-June to mid-July)

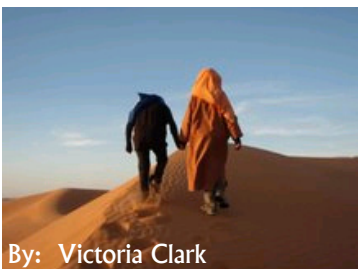
<http://www.queensu.ca/isc>

For more information, please contact the International Exchange Program by e-mail at exchange@uwo.ca.



Photo from <http://www.queensu.ca>

Travel & Adventure Photo Competition



By: Victoria Clark

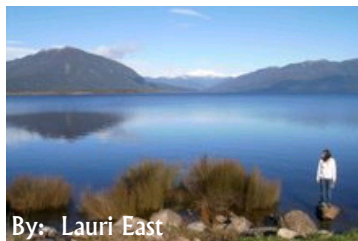
As the participants of the International Exchange Program (IEP) at Western made their way around the world, they managed to capture incredible images of the world as they saw it. The IEP wanted to give these students a chance to share their photos and experiences with the Western community, and therefore held the 1st Annual Travel & Adventure Photo Competition at Western.



By: Alaaeddin Hammoudeh

The contest was held Sunday, November 9th at the Spoke Lounge, and featured a slideshow presentation of the entries and a vote for the top three photographs. We are happy to announce our winners:

1. Victoria Clark
2. Alaaeddin Hammoudeh
3. Tied: Lauri East and Erica Pearson



By: Lauri East



By: Erica Pearson

Thank you to all those who submitted photos and voted! We look forward to seeing you next year!

How to Order Coffee at "Timmies" (Tim Hortons)

By: Elizabeth Woolford, 4th year Geography

You are standing in line at Tim Hortons and the person in front of you asks for a "small, double double please." What are they ordering you ask? Here's your answer! Try using these terms the next time you're in need of a "JOLT" – some caffeine to get you through your day.

★ "DOUBLE DOUBLE" – this refers to a coffee with two creams and two sugars. It was added to the Canadian Oxford Dictionary in 2004 since it is so popular with Canadian coffee drinkers.

★ "REGULAR" – this refers to a coffee with one cream and one sugar.

★ "TRIPLE TRIPLE" – for those that like their coffee sweet with three creams and three sugars.



By: Jennifer Reyla



By: Jennifer Reyla

So now you're asking, what if I don't want cream and sugar in my coffee? You can always ask for milk or low calorie sweetener instead of cream or sugar. Or if you prefer your coffee with nothing added, order a "Black Coffee".

* Please note that these terms refer to ordering at Tim Hortons only.

International Experiences and Opportunities at Western

<http://international.uwo.ca/>



To Do:

Register for the
English Conversation
Program

Registration begins:

Wednesday, January 7, 2009

Student Development Services
UCC Room 210

<http://www.sds.uwo.ca/int>

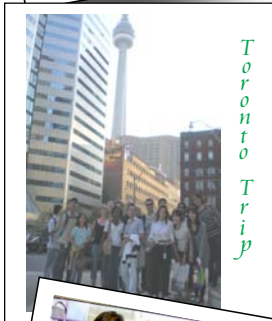
PhotoAlbum



London Double Decker Bus Tour



Welcome Reception



Toronto Trip



Niagara Falls Trip



October Spousal Event



Thanksgiving Dinner

Student Development Services
International Student Services

International Community Support at Western

for Spouses, Partners and Families of International Students

Join us!

Monthly Tea and Information Sessions

Date: The last Friday of every month
Time: 2:00 p.m.- 3:30 p.m.
Location: International Student Centre, Room 200, UCC

Refreshments will be provided. Families are welcome!

<http://www.sds.uwo.ca/int/services/index.html?spouse>



Ethnic Dinner Outing



Winter Celebration

Upcoming ISS Winter 2009 Events

January

- Jan. 6 Drop-In Reception for New International Students
- Jan. 7 English Conversation Program Registration Begins
Coffee and Conversation
- Jan. 8 Succeeding in Graduate School
- Jan. 10 Welcome Potluck Dinner
- Jan. 13 Meet Your Peer Guide Event
- Jan. 18 Welcome Dinner for New International Graduate Students
- Jan. 29 Reading Strategies for Undergraduate International Students
- Jan. 30 U.S Visa Information Session
Canadian Immigration Seminar
Tea & Information Session for Spouses & Partners
of International Students
- Jan. 31 Western Mustangs Hockey Game



February

- Feb. 3 International Students & Job Searching
- Feb. 5 Writing Skills for International Students
- Feb. 6 Snow Tubing
- Feb. 10 Working in Canada Presentation
- Feb. 11 Ethnic Dinner Outing
- Feb. 27 Tea & Information Session for Spouses & Partners
of International Students
- Feb. 28 First Nations Event



March

- Mar. 3 Resume & Cover Letter Writing for International Students
- Mar. TBA Income Tax Information Session (date to be announced)
- Mar. 10 International Students & Job Searching
- Mar. 11 Working in Canada Presentation
- Mar. 12 Pizza & Movie Night
- Mar. 16-April 3 Income Tax Clinic for International Students
- Mar. 21 Sugarbush Outing
- Mar. 27 End of the Year Event
Tea & Information Session for Spouses & Partners
of International Students



April

- April 24 Tea & Information Session for Spouses & Partners
of International Student

Visit the ISS website for the most updated information at
www.sds.uwo.ca/Int