



Student Delegation Blogs: Innoko River School

About Us

We are the students at the Innoko River High School, living in the last village on the Innoko River in the western Interior of Alaska.

Jamie Hamilton

Interests: Hunting, fishing and working on engines.

Hobbies: Basketball, snowboarding, snowmachining, and dirtbiking.

Favorite Native food: Willow grouse.

Reaction to being told we were going to SOUTH AFRICA:

At first I was speechless, and to this day I can not believe we were chosen to go.

Jamie

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Jack John

Interests: In getting my high school diploma for the US Marines

Hobbies: Basketball hacky sack

Favorite Native food: Fried bread, Indian ice cream

Reaction to being told we were going to SOUTH AFRICA: Shocked, Amazed.

Everett Semone

Interests: I am interested in anything.

Hobbies: Basketball and money.

Favorite Native food: fry bread, fish ice cream, and dry fish.

Reaction to being told we were going to SOUTH AFRICA: I was shocked because it was too far away from home.

Our GLOBE Research

We have been a GLOBE school since 1998. Different classes of students have set up different study sites over the years but in 2005 our local research on our environment took on a different twist when lightning struck behind our village and burned a 15-acre area of land dangerously close to local homes.

The Alaska State Forestry Department hired the Shageluk Emergency Fire Fighting crew and the EFF crew from Nikolai to assist in putting out the fire. The fire lasted just two weeks but has provided us with long-term data on regrowth in a Boreal forest that has made us think about climate change and how it effects our cultural traditions and survival as the Deg Hitan people!

Saturday, July 26, 2008

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July 12: Rudy's Reflections

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The trip to Cape Town started, for me with a premonition that something may go wrong. I've never been one to step away from premonitions and wonder about it later, so I agreed to go. I looked at the long flight schedule and didn't know if I could handle that part because the further you go you're also reminded that you have to come back on the same route so it's twice as long.

I didn't think that the kids were well enough prepared for their presentations but they didn't seem to worry about it so I let it go. In Anchorage we had a "relatives gathering", a meal before leaving at 1:00 a.m. for Salt Lake City. It was good to look around to fellow Shageluk members and view their support. I had a bunch of paperbacks for reading materials and thought I'd pass the time reading or listening to music, a side note; never fly with anybody that puts you on red-eye flights, they should be banned. When we took off from Anchorage, the flight was full as were all flights coming and going, an amazing part to me. There may have been a few empty seats but for the most part, they were full. I didn't sleep that night because the width of the seats are too small to accommodate me, every time I'd move I'd push against somebody in the next seat.

We got into Salt Lake in the early morning hours and almost had a separation of our party because some kids were going on the plane and one kid was trying to buy a stupid can of pop so we were caught between going on the plane or missing it. We did make the plane but I think it was a problem with the kid's perception that no matter where you go in the world, you're still on their time and things happen only when they say it will happen, a false misconception. They have to realize that things happen regardless of their input.

We flew over the Midwest. I tried to see where some of the flooded areas were, but it was hard to see such things at 30,000 feet, broken overcast skies. We flew over the Chicago area, north of direct route, I think to bypass some of the built-up areas in their airspace, coming into JFK to the north and going over the coast and coming back in and landing in that direction. We landed and then had to hold on the tarmac because our gate wasn't open and the plane that was supposed to leave from our gate was still there. They told us 15-minutes or so and that we should be able to proceed. This was cutting into our departure time, which was set for 1 hr. 20 minutes. We finally went toward the gate but had to be towed the last couple hundred yards because of the close proximity to other jets in the area at the gate. When we got off we checked the flight data screen and found out we just had to go two gates over to the flight to Dakar and on to Cape Town, which was already in the boarding stage.

After we boarded the 767 we went out over the Atlantic Ocean and then turned down southeast towards Africa. As we were climbing out of New York, thoughts of

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the flight that crashed over Long Island crossed my mind but I think they're offers of a free first class meal (on international flights you get everything free, meals, headphones, movies, everything) over the United States meals cost \$14.00 and they are not as good as international meals.

The day quickly turned into night in about three hours and after 8-hours we were going to land in Dakar. I did not know how they were going to handle immigration. I was kind of looking forward to getting off the plane and walking around but after a rather rough landing we were told that we couldn't get off the plane for refueling and refurbishing of the aircraft. Their security people came through the plane and searched the plane and looked for any items in the seat or under the seats. If you had any carry-on items they had you identify it or they'd take it off the plane. Meanwhile, the people leaving the plane were bussed to the terminal and the people going on to South Africa were bussed out to our plane, they changed crews. I noticed that a Steward that opened his bag and had about 20-water bottles in there with a few other items like yogurt but mainly water. They fumigated the plane, mainly the aisles because I thought I heard them say that South Africa is very restrictive on the bugs that come into their country, so they did that on their requirement. So after about 2-hours on the ground we had clearance to leave and fly on to South Africa. It was interesting that their in-flight little airplane TV. screen showed where we were. It was interesting to note that we flew over Sierra Leon, which is in the midst of a civil war. I was hoping we were over 20-thousand feet at that time, too high for shoulder-fired SAM's.

After another wonderful first-class meal and two more in-flight movies (4 total from JFK), we landed in Cape Town at 3-something in the afternoon. We passed through their Immigration and Customs without and problems and were greeted by a Native South African from GLOBE. We did have time to change our money into Rand. R100 equals about \$12.50. So if you had a couple of hundred dollars in American money, when you got Rand you couldn't even close your wallet.

We then went on a mini-van from the airport to the University of Cape Town. I looked around on the way in because you're going through parts of Shanty Town on the way in. I didn't notice anything too out of line with anything I perceived to be Shanty Town, not what I'd see later. I tried to re-orient myself north/south/east/west but I couldn't. Only that I knew we were driving west. It also was humorous to see the driver sitting on the right side and driving on the left side of the road. The first thing I noticed was most of the cars were all smaller and fuel-efficient versions and a lot of foreign-make cars that I didn't recognize.

They dropped us off in the Lower Campus and we had to get in line because there were other groups ahead of us. They were just finishing up dinner where we were and after we got our keys and went to our rooms, they told us they would come to us when it was time to serve supper. But after waiting for a while, Joy went out and found out that supper was over. More people came in than they expected so they had to order out for us, it was our first taste of South African pizza; basic



meat and cheese on dough and weird kinds of pop in liter bottles that we didn't recognize. The room we were in was the college's t.v. room. There was about 30-40 rambunctious people watching Soccer, we later found them out to be the Netherlands people. We went back to our room, took a shower and got ready to bed down for the night. Nights come really fast down there, starting about 6:00 p.m. and dark about 7:00 p.m. The rooms were damp. We were going to register the next day and spend a couple of hours piddling around Cape Town but that ended our second day en-route.

We got up and registered, it was humorous to see the kids thinking that we got all these knick-knacks and back packs for free, not understanding that they would give presentations to pay for it. With that, we called a cab and got the weirdest cab driver available. We proceeded to cross Cape Town to the tune of about \$120.00. With all the round-about and little side streets, my internal directions were all scrambled by the time we got back to the place a couple hours later. We did get some shopping in but not at the main shopping districts. We did get the feel of the place, the lay of the land so to speak. That's when I noticed or got an eerie feeling that something wasn't quite right. Everywhere you looked you'd see signs on houses that said "armed response, warning" and barbed wire around buildings. I assume there are sentiments still left over after Apartheid. I know when we talked to several of our cab drivers they said things have improved but there are still times that reflect intolerance. I'm sure that anyone coming to America would still see the poverty of different races or on Reservations and see that racism still occurs in America, too. It was really a lesson for our students to learn about in Civil Rights around the world. Overall, South Africans are wonderful, gracious people always asking us if we liked their country and if we'd be back!

We did make the evening meal at the University. They have two different menus you could choose from. I tried to choose the ones I never saw before just to try it out hoping for more of an African-style meal. I was always pleasantly surprised! The cooks and the people checking us in were very kind and generous people. We looked at a schedule and had to be at the opening ceremonies the next morning pretty early so we all decided to get a good night's rest.

An interesting thing happened to all of us, other than the days and nights being mixed up, even if you watched what you ate and drank, you had to get up about 3 x a night to do the "number one".

So we got up early in the morning and went to have breakfast. The kids were really hard to wake up because I think they're still on Shageluk time and not trying to force them selves to change over for the week we were there. After showering I noticed that the towel wasn't dry from the night before which would be a recurring problem.

Here is something I wasn't used to at all, I guess coming from where I come from, people don't do these things. I noticed in the breakfast lineup that kids were



bucking line, adults were bucking the line and another recurring problem, and after you got your food there was a lot of pushing and shoving to get certain things done in the cafeteria, like toasting your bread or getting hot tea water or whatever. Some adults from different countries were just as much a culprit as the kids. I guess that's just the way things are in different parts of the world.

After breakfast we jumped on the buses to the upper campus and went to Jameson Historic Hall for the initial ceremonies. If I recall correctly there were 51 countries represented. The biggest contingent was from South Africa, leading in and the United States and the Netherlands. We then had a bunch of different speakers with opening remarks. We were told the schedule of how things were going to happen. There were other logistic related things they told us about to help keep us all safe on the trip.

In the afternoon there were the Breakout sessions with student presentations on projects concerning global warming and different aspects, streams and things like that. That evening started the Cultural presentations. I watched both presentations, Break out and the Cultural, to get a handle on how I thought our students might do. I also told them to watch the different presentations and use that as a challenge to gauge how they would do or do better.

The next day started with more of the same and our kids were on that afternoon with their project and the cultural one was scheduled for that night. The cultural presentations I noticed an alarming trend that really disturbed me as a Native American, I guess, because my concept of "culture" is different from theirs. The more I watched the more I was alarmed by it, no matter the country it more or less included music and a bio of the country that you could just pick up anywhere. I learned something about how other countries perceive "cultural traditions" as our Athabaskan traditions are actually tied into the spirituality of our lives, our traditions are about who we are in relation to the rest of the world, both physical and spiritual. Our traditions are a reflection of the environment in which we live. Other countries cultural presentation were different from ours, as I see it. I felt badly about that, the spiritual. But I also saw something during the Netherlands presentation; they formed a long line of people dancing around. I wasn't really watching them, I was watching 9-Black African gentlemen forming their own line about 6 rows in front of me to the left and they were going out to the middle of the aisle but it was blocked off and in perfect harmony, they started to back up in-step to the music and these are people who didn't know each other or practice. One of the things I always admired about Black people, perfect harmony. I noticed that people from the Netherlands booed when the first United States group presented the first cultural presentation. The kids representing the Netherlands don't know the cost of American lives giving them the freedom to boo us. Small world. We learned something about people's perception of the United States, it seems.

Our kid's cultural presentation went well also. With some of the other countries we found ourselves standing up at attention as they played their national anthem,



which is great but that's not a cultural presentation, in my perception. There were some groups that were left out and didn't finish so they were going to do theirs Thursday night. We also had to start the preparation for the field trips, each name tag you were given also included a picture of a plant or animal, that was your group on the field trips.

All the groups were split up so you might not even see your own students. For an icebreaker for our group we wrote down name, where we were from, what we liked and all kinds of things, what we want to do when we get big and all kinds of stuff, and we formed a little circle. We had to pass our paper to the person on our right and collect the person to our left paper and we read that person's bio. I never wanted to take things serious, so I had wild answers on mine like what I want to be when I get big was to be a Man and all kinds of ridiculous answers. That poor girl from Cameroon questioned my answers and I looked at her without smiling and I said, "Yeah, that's what I want to be when I get big, Try not to laugh as you read it." I read mine from a 12-year old boy from South Africa. I read his and then the girl read mine and everyone was glancing at me to see if I was running on all cylinders. After she finished reading mine she bent her head over and put the paper over her head and just started laughing and laughing, which caused uproar, and people were demanding to know what she was laughing about and what some of the answers were. I accused her of making fun of me which created a bigger uproar, after finally getting it straightened out we finished with that round and then we had to do another one where we drew a picture of the person and you had to draw in that picture what that person liked eat, what they liked to smell and what kind of music like to listen to. They wanted me to team with someone else but that poor girls wanted to pay me back and so we started. I am very comfortable with different people so this was just kind of a mundane task for me. I counted 14-of us, and I'm already trying to get an idea of how to keep our little group together because I'm responsible for somebody else's kids. The three smaller kids were 8-12 and I think that's where the problem would be so I tried to memorize their faces so I could keep an eye on them the next two days.

At more presentations and cultural events was during the lunch break today I met a gentleman from Bahrain that seemed to latch on to me and had many discussions on the same issues. My only problem was in a room with loud noises in the background, my hearing is so bad that I couldn't really focus on his voice and I had trouble trying to understand him. Before I came I was asked to do a 5-minute presentation on my own personal observation on Global warming or any changed I climate that I observed in my lifetime. I initially had trouble with the length of the speech since I have never spoken for 5-minutes or less but it turned out to be the least of my worries as the brochure came out they listed me as a "tribal elder" which I'm not nor ever will be but during my observation of the student group I tried to get a feel for where they are so I could talk to them not at them but I never developed that so that bothered me so that even up to Thursday I never really developed the speech in my mind because the students were all over the place and I didn't know If I could get the to concentrate on what I was going to

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say.

Anyway, more on that later.

We had to be on the bus the next morning 8:00 am. Sharp with our group and different buses will go to different places so our group ended up on bus number 6 and they told us to remember where we sit on the bus because we have to sit there all the time and remember who is sitting by us so if they are not there we have to tell the bus person in charge and we will not leave until we find that person. The person sitting by me was a little boy from Argentina. The three boys in my group were one seat behind me on the other side of the bus; I made sure I knew where they were.

Our first stop was to a park where they mainly grew flowers and trees and different kinds of stuff that were endangered or already wiped out. It was interesting that that far away from home they would send me to a really tranquil place where you could pause and recharge your batteries. I took a bunch of different pictures there only, later they us "don't touch the plants" or "don't let them touch you" because some of them were poisonous. People were stopping and sniffing them and everything. When we were going back I seen a sign that said, Skeleton Gorge and maybe half-mile to the base of the mountain. I thought I'd check that out, I had 25-minutes to check that out and I took off, walk and ran to the steep, steep gorge where the trail was only afoot wide. I turned back and went back to the bus and ended up in the wrong parking lot. I was at the upper parking lot and the buses were on the lower parking lot. I talked my way back into the park without having to pay extra Rand and ran down and was the last person on the bus and we started to, we were just going to go and my little seat-mate didn't tell them I was missing.

We then went to visit penguins and en-route I noticed that I was right beside a South African Naval base. And seeing these 4 old black military guys walking in step, I had to smile because it reminded me of how the British marched and went by and open market to visit the penguins and we were going so fast we didn't have a chance to stop. We went to visit the penguins and to this day I can't figure out what we got out of that, I guess just a place to send us and take up time. WE didn't see anything in the water or near the water, kind of anti climatic. We then boarded the bus again and went back to Cape Point. In my mind and in my sense of direction I honestly believed we were heading west but if you look at the map we were heading south, which again is a thing that, to this day I, didn't know now to straighten out. I guess that's the problem with living upside down, you don't know which direction the roads to Cape Point were on two very steep hills on the side and I guess, fortunately, it don't snow there because they don't have any guard rails to speak of and if it snowed there you'd see them lose vehicles because the roads are so narrow.

We got off at the car park spot and had lunch. They told us to eat on the bus

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because of the baboons, and then halfway through the lunch they told us it was safe, we could go off the bus but most of us were almost done eating. We were already eating and did not want to go off the bus and finishing eating so we just finished eating on the bus. I assumed the guy with the gun would have shot the baboons if we were attacked. We did a little shopping in the shop there and were going to go up to the lighthouse. Then we went off down the hill.

On the way up to the lighthouse, beautiful clear day, I developed severe vertigo that I couldn't shake, I think because the steps were angled off to the slope side to drain rainwater and weren't really level and they went off the cliff and so I just focused on putting one foot in front of the other and climbed up to view their weather station first. That's my first inkling of the GLOBE people giving us a rundown on what was going on. These were all people with PhD's and they told us about measuring the Co2 levels in the air with very, very expensive instruments, wind speeds. Presentations were given by the South Africa weather people in a room filled with instruments and all kinds of tanks of different kinds of gases and all kinds of stuff. A bunch of us were standing in the back and this French guy and a Black Alumni were standing there and they were trying to get me to see all the tanks that I was standing amongst. And he pointed to them and me and behind me and I looked back and looked at all the different kind of tanks. I smiled at him and lifted up my left arm and pretended like I was pushing a bunch of buttons and was going to throw it amongst the tanks like the Predator, to blow everything up. The two guys started laughing uproariously, the presenter turned and glared at them. Then we went up to the lighthouse.

My vertigo was so bad I couldn't look off the thing and the PhD person gave a presentation on global currents and the weather they cause. I was trying to cool off my keeping my back against the concrete lighthouse. Then we came down and halfway down we stopped for a water break and a cable car came by and everyone was really looking at it, In a really loud voice I said, "How come we can't go first class?" everybody started laughing and it made us all feel better as we went down the hill that we were all in the same league together.

We then went down to the surf at sea level to do more studies. They showed them how to draw a picture of the rock on the Cape. He said something that really interested me, which I heard again during this trip. He said, as you're drawing look at what you're drawing and draw it; after you draw for awhile glance down and look right back at it again because if you watching your drawing you will be drawing from memory instead of looking at it, live. He said that was a technique that professional drawers use. That's the first time someone ever questioned my memory.

Then we went to another group and studied different things under microscopes and went down to the tidal pools to look at different species. I asked one of the presenters if he thinks I could get away with putting my foot in the ocean. He



didn't think it was a good idea because the kids would follow suit. So I waited until everybody was leaving the tidal pool, sat on a rock and jerked my shoe and sock off and ran and stuck it in the water. The water is about as cold as Shageluk Lake in the summertime. It was also really interesting that after the soothing garden that you go down to the surf and watch the power of the earth. Both would recharge your batteries in different ways. Those two places were the most peaceful places for me in South Africa.

We then went up and boarded the bus to go back to the dorms but just as we were leaving the park our companion bus broke down and we had to make room for as much of the other buses passengers as we could carry. There were also two vans with us with alumni and other support people that could carry more so with everybody we managed to get everybody on board and go back. Four of us were sitting on a three-passenger seat. By the time we got back it was dark but everyone got in ok. We saw one ostrich that we didn't shoot and that's about it.

Wednesday night the GLOBE Alumni put on a dance for the students that the chaperons or teachers were not invited to so Joy and I and a bunch of other chaperones immediately took off for V and A Waterfront. V and A are Victoria and Albert Waterfront. We shopped around and went looking for a restaurant but came upon a store called "Woolworths" that was like our Carrs and Safeway. We were looking at their cuts of meats and different kinds of foods; they cut the meat right in front of you. There are cuts of meat there that I realize are much "plainer" than cuts in America. Americans have become so used to "prime" and "choice" cuts of meat. Seeing that all parts of the animal is used like what we saw in South Africa, is really good, good to see many selections and cuts of meat. Some Americans wouldn't eat many of the cuts of meat we saw, which is sad. Too many Americans are fussy about what they eat. After asking where to eat we ate in Willoughby's. There was an older guy and women there really looking at us and it didn't dawn on me until half of the meal was over that this is a racist country and there was no blacks eating there even though it was in a café style, in the main walkway of the mall. But needless to say, it was a decent meal. Joy raised the stakes by kissing me in front of these people and they stopped looking (guess they don't approve of the "mixed marriage").

We jumped in a cab after we were done with our shopping and went back to the dorm. The security guard at V and A Waterfront as to where we could pick up cabs said, "OH, only drive with my brother, best cab driver around" so he called him for us and we went back with this guy. The kids were really disappointed that they couldn't go with us because the whole dance a couple hours long was just a whole bunch of people standing around and nobody dancing. I told them they missed a golden opportunity to dance with girls from 101 countries. 20-years from now, I told them, they see the Prime Minister of Cameroon and they could have said, "Oh, I danced with her" but they didn't get the implication.

Thursday, this is the day we had chicken liver and eggs and onions for breakfast.



The Blacks have their own recipes we ate a lot of different foods, different teas, so far all them people we met and it would go like this the whole trip, were very friendly, easy to talk to. For me it was just like talking to another Native Alaskan. We Started off on this day's field trip by going to Tyberg Nature Center and the PhD people got rid of us again and told us to go explore the park and we started to climb the hill. Fog rolled in and we couldn't see anything so we started back down and after while the students came down and we went to Edith Wetlands and on the way we saw first-hand the Shanty Town, driving right by it and it's about three or four miles like, I guess, but really, really Shanty Town, no completed buildings, just cardboard, bits of lumber, tin, whatever to build a house, a little shack. Clothes hanging outdoors. Got a picture of a guy walking on the highway carrying a bunch of sticks on his head, I guess, to burn.

They got rid of us again at the Wetlands showing the students different things so a bunch of us just kind of got in the way and wander around. While waiting at the bus stop I got in a long discussion with two of our girl tour guides who are from an organization called "Tribal Meetings" that helped coordinate this whole thing. I found out they don't get paid for this, and, get this: their pay was the experience of working with the groups, coordinating this whole thing. These are college age girls who are just like any kids that age, easy to talk to and want to know all about Alaska and different things. Then we went to Cape Peninsula University of Technology for lunch and their little presentation on what they do to try to teach their people, mostly Blacks look like, technology, to try to get the up to speed in the workplace. Right after lunch they had an open market that they brought for us where they can buy different things for souvenirs and stuff. After that we went back to the dorms and we got to finish up on the cultural presentations that night, more dancing and generic encyclopedia type descriptions of their country. Some countries would pass out candies and different things, and give you a sample. During this time our kids were getting more and more friends from different places to talk to. Later on I still really didn't know what I wanted to say but I had to formulate some sort of a plan and it was a combination of a speech and a PowerPoint, the PowerPoint being used because they don't know Alaska or how we live. But I still wasn't sure if that was the right speech.

The next morning when the students got together with us I noticed that there was a different feeling or vibes in the air and found out that some of the students had already left. But it was too late at that point to change my speech or change what I was going to say. During this whole time we would get to Leslie Hall early and try to get the boys to talk to somebody from home (call home) and being from a foreign country it was notoriously hard to use their phone system. Their electricity was 220, same as the rest of Africa and Europe but their plug-in was HUGE and different from everyone else, so that was also a problem. After lunch at Leslie Hall we went back and were ready for the closing speeches and pats on the back and whatnot. I was trying to sit with the "commoners" when the lady that was helping run the show (Dr. Sheila Yule) asked me to sit up front with all the dignitaries. I never liked to sit in front in anything because if you pick your nose or pass gas



everybody knows but I sat up there anyway. I was introduced by Dr. Elena Sparrow; even as I started talking I couldn't focus the group's attention on any one thing. They were all over the place. I had to focus very, very hard to just give them a couple messages. I didn't really analyze how I did and after it was over they gave me a little gift, it's actually a hollowed out and dried ocean reed that you blow in and it makes a certain sound. Mine was the only one that was curved back, not straight so that when you blow in it you blow in your ear. I think they knowingly gave me that one. I had to hand carry that thing all the way home.

After everything was over we went back to the dorm and then that night was kind of a dress up night to go out to eat in a place they called "Moyo" which is probably 30-miles or so from our dorm, it took a long time to go there. They had a big outdoor tent about 100-feet long or so, 50-feet wide where they barbecued and cooked a whole bunch of different foods, fish, deer, and all different kinds of meats, salads and stuff. At one of the preliminary presentations they brought in a cheetah and you could, if you're really quiet, go up and pet it. With those kinds of animals I think it would sense something soon as I would touch, it would turn around because one predator knows another. After one more night of pushing and shoving I got a whole platterload of different kinds of meats and fish, I don't know what I was eating but I ate it. I took a picture or two of my plate. There was so much people shoving and pushing that I never really had a chance to ask what I was getting. I'm sorry if I'm insulting to anyone about the pushing and shoving, I guess I'm just not used to that.

During the dinner a rhythm group of maybe 4 women and 4 men or so all on drums would play for us. I noticed that during the first song that the real rhythm section was a woman on one big drum and I listened and I heard two different sounds coming out of her beat. And I moved my chair where I could watch, not thinking that possible. After watching her I saw her do different drum beats in either hand getting a different sounding beat out of either hand at different speeds. So I figured that was my pay for the speech I gave, a fitting payment. They were done and left the stage and in the mean time another band came out, kind of a blues band, jazz and everybody finished eating and I tried out some grapes and different kinds of other stuff, ice cream and that rhythm band came back again so I got to watch them. This time they invited different people to come up and dance but the woman stayed off the stage to drum. Joy got a video of the woman drumming. The buses were going to pick us up at 9:00 and we couldn't find where we came in but finally managed to go out. I got cornered by my buddy from Bahrain and Joy talked to somebody and found the Southern Cross but I couldn't focus on what I was doing, just the overload of too much people demanding my attention. Anyway, I saw it and that was good enough. One of the things I wanted to see down there was the different stars even though I couldn't understand them.

Next evening we saw the moon and it even appeared weird because of our position in the world, I guess, the top half of the moon was gone and just the bottom half was there, I'd never seen that. We went back to the dorms and we

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were going to get up and eat breakfast and do a little more shopping and running around before we left at around 3:00 or so. That ended the official visit to South Africa.

During this time we met a group of Black people from Detroit that was going to go on the same plane as us, those girls from Virginia were going to stay a few more days and everybody's favorite, the group from around Ohio. I think there was another group from around Montana, a few other groups also but we turned our keys in and put all our gear in another room under lock and key and went shopping at Vand A Shopping district again for a couple hours and came back and checked our luggage out of the locked room. First time we had a chance to watch TV. for a little bit, they were having a talk show in Afrikaans and the guy was responding in English and captions on the bottom as to what they said.

We got to the airport early, checked in and were sitting around and a bunch of boys and girls came to visit our kids and I noticed right away they were different in terms of maturity. I found out from the boys they were from Beirut Lebanon and those were the kids that had to suspend school a couple of times a year for a couple of weeks because the war was one street over. They were more reserved bunch of kids than say the Netherlands. Our flight did not have a gate and they kept saying "delayed", finally about half an hour after our flight departure, they called us all down to a certain gate number and told us that the pilot got food poisoning and since they couldn't find another pilot, the flight was canceled. We would get our luggage back and go to a hotel room and leave the next day. We would come out to the airport at 5:00 a.m. and start all over again. I did not know the process to go back into the country after we already had our exit visas already stamped. We were caught between countries! We waited around and we finally had to go back and reenter the country and get another stamp, we got our luggage and we didn't even really get a voucher to stay at the hotel but we got to go anyway, and check in.

We got a wake up call for 4:00 a.m. and people were already leaving at 3:00 a.m. To go back to the airport, we charged out the last ones at 4:00, got to the airport, and were near the last of the line, about 60 feet long the line. It started to move and then slow down and stopped. Their computers broke down. That 60-foot took us about 8-hours to go that far without sitting down. They were just closing the flight as we were at the gate checking on. We had to get another stamp because we were leaving the country again and got on the plane and took off towards Dakar at around 1:00 local time p.m. We landed in Dakar about 6:00 local time gaining two hours, it was still light when we landed and it didn't dawn on me until we were going to take off how narrow the runway was, it's the width of one of our gravel runways and there's grass growing in-between the cracks on the cement. We went through the same rigamarole as we did before tearing up the seats and this and that. Another thing that Joy noticed was that the houses were close to the runway, almost at the edge of the runway, and she didn't notice any windows on the houses. In some magazines you see some pictures on some of the faces of the

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current dictators there, and that's what I noticed when we were landing.

We then took off about dark, 7 or 8 p.m. for JFK. Uneventful flight, two movies first, class meals first class treatment. I left South Africa after spending millions and millions of Rand with only 10 rants of paper money left and two 5 rand coins and a bunch of smaller coins. Probably only about \$5 in my pocket. Coming into JFK, first time in my life first time I seen a thunderstorm from above it, an amazing site. We landed at JFK a little after midnight and since ours was an oddball flight Delta terminal didn't not have any immigration or customs people so they had to bring us to somebody else's terminal and bus us back to delta after we went through customs and Immigrations. You first go through immigration, and somebody looks at your passport, makes sure you're a citizen of the US AND THEN you go through customs. You can bring into this country up to \$800 tax-free.

After going through Customs we went back over to Delta and went in line again until that time until when they opened and we were at the gate from about 3:30-4:30 they were trying to straighten out our travel that was messed up by the computer crash. They were trying to put us on different flights to Anchorage and we refused to allow them to do that because we were flying with a bunch of kids and we all needed to be on the same flight.

They managed to get us on the same flight to Seattle but were still unsure of the Seattle to Anchorage. They told us that it was so messed up that every gate, New York, Seattle; we'd have to get a boarding pass at the gate. We were in line so long that they changed ticket agents and opened up officially at 4:30 a.m. and we checked our bags in and went to the gate for the 8:00 a.m. departure. I had the distinct displeasure of sitting buy two tour guides with a group of immature "elders" that needed to talk with them every 5 minutes. When we left South Africa I tried to put myself back on Shageluk time since I would have to do it anyway and when we left New York it was night in Shageluk so I tried to sleep but apparently these east coast people were on their own time and had to talk about Alaska every 5-minutes because it was still a great mystery. Joy talked to the stewardesses so I could get some rest and also with help, to try to get from Seattle to Anchorage. Delta had a cart waiting for us in Seattle since we had to go two terminals over in about an hour. We made the flight ok with their help and started winging our way north.

After landing in Anchorage and checking in to the hotel, we all fell asleep for a couple hours and went out to eat. Then dropped Jack at Shirley's apartment in Anchorage, one down, two to go! We had a choice of being on Standby at the 8:00 a.m. flight or leaving at the 1:00 p.m. flight. We chose to leave at 1:00 p.m. the next day for home. Frontier was familiar ground so we didn't worry too much about late flights or them messing up our travel. We got home about 4:20 p.m., one day late but still got home.

In retrospect, we traveled half way around the world and gave three presentations

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for a total of about an hour and got to meet a whole bunch of new people, try out different foods and see an African country, all in 11-days. If you ever have the desire to travel to a foreign country, go to Cape Town, ZA. The Native people there will make your trip worthwhile.

There were a couple things that bothered me on this trip. The most disturbing one was after about two days there I figured out what it was. A lot of the buildings were surrounded by barbed wire or razor wire and most of the buildings had a little sign that said, "Armed Response". Apartheid was right underneath the surface. Fortunately it didn't affect the Black South African's attitudes. The food is different. Don't eat in upscale restaurants; they have the same food as here. Have Tribal Meetings arrange your stay as they did, us. It was also disheartening to find out that the college age girls taking care of us did not get paid. They were using this as experience but that didn't change their attitude towards us, they were kind and friendly. One of the better places to shop is their open market. I guess there are different ways to get there. I think Delta also as a flight straight to Atlanta but I don't know for sure. They say that around Christmas time, their summer would be the best time to visit. Tons of beaches to go swimming on.

In closing, would I do it again? No, probably not, unless I could fly First Class for the room to stretch out but we were under obligations to attend their meeting and adhere to their schedule but it would be a place where you would want to explore on your own instead of with a tour group with the local people's relaxed attitude. It would be a place to relax and explore at your own leisure.

Whirlwind Blogging and Communication Hardships!

We're back in the UNITED STATES and in Alaska right now, July 12. We returned July 2, one day later. To make a long story short it was VERY difficult to connect to the Internet so we have timely blogs up until Tuesday, June 24. Wed and Thurs we had field trips all day and were unable to connect but the boys still blogged in their journals standing in the breakfast line, on the bus and in the airport sitting on their bags. We were also unable to connect at the Cape Town, New York and Seattle Airports so I just decided to upload the kids' blogs when we returned. We have 1500 pictures and some video so stay tuned for those. For now we present, the updated blogs!

Jack





Dipping for white fish in the Innoko River

Joy: Wednesday Field Day #1

Today we had to get the kids up early so we could take the bus to the field trip sites. They would be on separate busses based on the plant or animal group they were put in.

The bus ride was beautiful with the sunrise over Cape Towne as we climbed our way up the road of Table Mountain on our way to the Cape.

An ambulance with a complete paramedic crew follow behind each tour group (2 busses). Did I mention there are over 400 people at this conference with about 97 countries in attendance? Anyway, the ride up the mountain was beautiful. When we got to the Cape, we drove by some zebras, borilla (I'm not spelling that right but will look it up later, it's like a deer with pointy antlers) and some black ostriches that were scattered about. They tell us we're going to see some baboons today.

Our first stop at the Cape Pointe was the light house, Global Atmospheric Weather Station and going down to the beach. Jamie and Everett are not in my group (they split us all up so kids can meet people from all over). Jamie and Everett are in my same large tour group so I get to pester them now and then with lots of picture taking.

The climb to the lighthouse was long and steep but comfortable and we found several baboon poops on the way. It is amazing how many species of short shrubs live on those rocky, rocky slopes. Many were flowering as well, but because it's winter, many other varieties have no leaves. The tour guide said that because of the climate, wind and water crres of the ocean that there are several ecosystems at the Pointe ranging from tropical to desert. We are 200 kms here from where the Indian and Atlantic Ocean meet.

We learned that the warm currents of the Indian Ocean mixing with the cold currents of the Atlantic makes some interesting climate patterns. I took a lot of

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pictures of lizards and birds roosting at the lighthouse. Oh, we were also told that they no longer used that lighthouse because it was too high and when the fog rolled in, the ships could see the light but not see the rocks under the fog so they ended up having more shipwrecks **WITH** the lighthouse. They made another lighthouse elsewhere.

The GAWS station is a major monitoring station that is tied in with several stations around the globe and shares atmospheric and oceanic information with other nations. The guide also talked about the carbon cycle, etc.

When we were done with this tour we were told to go in the bus for lunch because the baboons will come out and grab our lunch bags. Sadly, we sweated in the hot bus with our lunches and waited for baboons to come and **NONE CAME**. We were all disappointed!

Everett, Jamie and Jack's story will be different than mine (and hopefully with more detail about the things they've seen!)

After lunch we walked a billion steps down the side of the cliff to the surf. We saw a seal in the surf. It was beautiful! The pounding waves of the surf with the salty warm air of the open ocean and the brightness of the sun was exquisite. The kids got to do water testing using GLOBE protocols in the Atlantic Ocean at the beachside. We were told not to pick up any shells but to save them for other groups. It amazed me how **HIGH** up on the cliff we were finding shells and white sand. It made me wonder how fierce the waves get.

Penguin Park: Our next stop

Although the park utilized a natural African Penguin rookery, it was disturbing to see boardwalks running to and fro, here and there crossing over the nesting area. Tourists were hanging off the railings taking pictures (including me!) Supposedly it doesn't disturb the nesting but it just looked weird. They were located along the rocky beaches of the Cape. The penguins had fuzzy gray babies and many were still in their nests. Every now and then we saw a discarded egg as with any bird, sometimes the eggs don't hatch and are rolled away from the nest. I have to say it was fun to see them wander around, fat round tummies jutting out. Our tour there didn't last long and we went back to the busses. Many local market vendors lined the street we walked on as we went to the Penguin Park. We saw a dancing quartet of African dancers. There were lots of carvings, African beadwork and other cloth items and woven baskets.

That was a very interesting day with lots of heat and exercise. After getting back to the dorms the boys were whisked away in the shuttle to Jameson Hall for a **DANCE** planned by the GLOBE Alumni. I don't know what happened at the dance, **THEY HAVE TO WRITE ABOUT IT** because adults weren't allowed!

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JOY: Tuesday's Presentations**JOY: Tuesday's Presentations**

This morning the boys woke up and were excited about their presentations. We had one practice Monday evening in our room just to refresh our memories on the science presentation (I had added one extra page of Jamie's home pictures that were added to the cultural presentation). In the morning, we got the boys up early for breakfast. African cafeteria breakfasts are different somewhat than we have in the USA. For instance, what we call "cream of wheat" they call "Mealie Meal". In my opinion this is the BEST I ever ate, just better than cream of wheat. I see on the menu for the next couple of days there is another hot cereal called "Malta Bella" which I'm told is porridge. They have served "flapjacks" (pancakes) and don't serve it with syrup, they use honey. Plenty of scrambled eggs and they are the real deal, not egg mix, real eggs. Also, in USA in most places white eggs are used and the brown-shelled eggs are used in dry egg mixes. (I never was sure why on that. No difference in taste between a brown-shelled and a white-shelled egg). That's all they used here. We had boiled brown eggs one day that were very good. For cold cereal they serve the same cereals that we have and they keep a tray of warmed milk ready for you to ladle on your bowl. Rudy likes tea in the morning and the brand they have here is "5-Roses Rooibos". He says it's a reddish colored tea. Different than black tea.

Plenary Session: 8:30-11:30

These sessions occur after breakfast and are basically speeches or lectures on things like ecosystem health, climate change and the latest terms that we keep hearing about: "Sustainability." Sustainability is the ability to keep something going, basically like bringing an endangered species back from the possibility of extinction. For example, bringing back Bald Eagles from extinction and off the endangered species list. Sustainability also pertains to just keeping something going, protecting and conserving it and keeping it the same. As an example, national forests Sustainability and keeping it in a natural state, keeping it from being developed and exploited for commercial use. During the Plenary sessions they talked a lot about that.

Before our Science presentation we had an open window where we could practice our presentation. We found a spare room to practice in.

After lunch was our time to shine. Our presentations were at 1:30 pm in an amphitheatre type of lecture room normally found in any college campuses anywhere. The boys did GREAT. When we got started someone from the audience yelled, "GO JACK!" The place was packed. Jamie said he noticed this was the most people he'd seen at any of the sessions yet. We were so proud of the boys. Lots of GLOBE dignitaries were there SPECIFICALLY to see the boy's project. They received lots of compliments after their project.

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Other projects from other countries have been about air and water quality, watersheds, and subsistence fish (like we have but Native to other countries like Safi from Bahrain) that are suffering loss and endangered. There have been some interesting projects from Finland on birch trees and from Lebanon on the “hot field” effect. All very interesting. During the afternoons we attended more of the cultural sessions that shared their presentations.

Evening came along and we waited to give our cultural presentation. Norway was ahead of ours, which I got a personal kick out of. They gave kind of a text booky presentation of the history of their country (my genetic birthplace), which basically anybody could read in an encyclopedia. The word “cultural traditions” after living in Shageluk means more than that to me, more than an encyclopedia definition. The Norwegians wore some traditional clothing and did some traditional dancing which was fun to see. My favorite was watching them do the polka, which is the music I grew up hearing at home, not that that’s important.

It is disturbing that so many European countries use textbook descriptions as their cultural presentations. Funny, I don’t even know MOST of my own cultural traditions, although I identify strongly with Trolls.

Tuesday was a full day and we all enjoyed meeting other people and seeing how they lived.

