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Study Trips and Black Licorice

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Recommended Citation

Hay, Amber, "Study Trips and Black Licorice" (2013). *2012-13 Postcards*. Article. Submission 26.
https://digitalcommons.linfield.edu/intl_postcards_1213/26

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Study Trips and Black Licorice 03/20/2013



Me and Our Host at the Evju Bygdetun

Hei! It is hard to believe that my time here is already half gone. So far, I have absolutely loved Norway; I don't want to leave. The first couple weeks of March were fairly warm, around forty degrees Fahrenheit (4-5 degrees Celsius) and the ice was starting to melt. Then last weekend, it dropped down to below freezing and a fresh 4-6 inches of snow fell. It turned out to be a good thing, as the ice now has fresh, compacted snow over it. The most interesting thing that happened to me since the last time I wrote was actually a field trip. In Norwegian schools, they say "study trip" instead of field trip. Anyway, it was a joint class excursion with 3 of my 4 classes. First, we went up to Lifjell, which is a popular, local mountain and skiing destination. We learned about the environmental planning that goes on to build, zone, and maintain a ski resort and the surrounding areas. We were up there for around a half an hour. Then we got back on the bus and headed down to the Evju Bygdetun farmstead just outside of town. This was such a fun experience. This farmstead exists to preserve the Norwegian agricultural heritage and to educate tourists about Norwegian culture. There were many authentic historical items that we could look at and touch. Our host was amazing. She greeted us by singing a song in Norwegian and proceeded to teach us about the farmstead. She was a very vibrant and loquacious person. We had the opportunity to try homemade bread from a stone oven, with hand-canned jam and brunøst (which is a somewhat sweet brown cheese). Our host

shared different stories with us about the family that used to own the farm and what their lives were like. Overall, this was such a great learning experience. I had an a little mishap that I will probably remember for the rest of my life. I was at the grocery store and was somewhat in a hurry as someone was giving me a ride home. I decided to buy some ice cream for the first time since I arrived. Since I was in a hurry, I mostly looked at the pictures on the ice cream to figure out which one I wanted. I grabbed one that looked like it would be cookies and cream, but I didn't actually read the label. Later on, I pulled it out to try and discovered with the first bite that it was actually black licorice ice cream. It was disgusting to me, since I have never liked black licorice. I was able to find a friend that was willing to take it off my hands (though he didn't particularly like it either). It was a classic study abroad experience that illustrated how different cultures and countries can be from one another. One of the things I've noticed in my time here is the changes in my English skills. Sometimes I almost feel like my English is getting worse. I occasionally have a hard time coming up with the right words or getting words out in the correct order. I think this is because English is a second (or third) language for many of my friends and I'm unconsciously starting to pick up some of their habits and mannerisms. I am actually glad that this is happening because it has made me realize how hard it can be for those students. They are also learning so much more because they are forced to speak in English most of the time and not their native language. It has given me an appreciation of the English language and the fact that I come from an English-speaking country. Nevertheless, I love being able to help other students with their English skills, both in speaking and in writing. I find I have become slightly homesick. I miss being at Linfield for both my friends, but also my classes. Adjusting to the classes here has been a constant challenge. They don't meet often enough and I don't feel like I'm being as challenged, as I would be at Linfield. Some of the subjects I'm taking are outside my area of study and so they are challenging in that respect, but I think I am used to a lot more reading and class interaction. The school culture is so different here--I'm not sure I could stand it for more than a semester or year. However, I am trying to enjoy my free time and make the most of it while I am here. It allows me to have more outside the classroom experiences. Easter break (spring break) is starting this weekend and I am looking forward to it. My grandma and great aunt are going to visit (both for my 21st birthday and for the break) and we're going to travel around Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Germany. Next time I will be able to share my travelling adventures. Until then,
Amber Hay