

# A foreign new year celebration

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The cheap beer and liquor numbed our senses and blocked out the heavy snow that was hammering down upon our eager heads as we waited for our buses behind the Student Center in Zagreb, Croatia. We Croatian University students (and those of us shamelessly and quite frankly, illegally posing as them) were too excited to be bothered by the excessive precipitation: a four-day trip to Cracow, Poland, awaited our adventurous souls, for a whopping \$140 United States Dollars thanks to the Croatian students' organization who organized the trip.

The surprisingly clean buses were boarded full of spirits, both human and liquid, and the 12-hour-turned-24-hour bus ride was quite enjoyable despite the hour-on-end stops in the never-ceasing continental blizzard. Drinks were consumed, polemics began, and never-ending, incoherent political monologues spewed by certain travelers much to the chagrin of some fellow travelers...

Our bus, which played the same terrible folk music CD the entire trip up (and back), crossed Austria, Slovenia, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, and finally, the Polish frontier (hour 22) on our way to Cracow.

We arrived late on Dec. 30, at the Hostel Studencki Zaczek; you cannot miss it when in Cracow. It is green and right next to the National Art

Gallery). The going rate is \$5 - \$15 USD a night, depending on room size and or group size (it's cheaper if you go as a larger group).

We unloaded our bags and waited in line for the 3 showers and 2 toilets that the 3rd floor had to offer (one of the downfalls of a hostel, but for poor folks like myself, I take what I can get). Our first stop was towards the center of the city, where I had the best Turkish Kebabs outside of the Middle East, and we headed to a trendy club for some beer and house music.

Our group of about forty Croats disintegrated into the more numerous Poles, who were quite friendly. One problem we encountered was that, other than small-time beer and food purchases at various gas stops, no one from our group exchanged much currency, and all of the exchanges were closed.

Make sure to exchange your currency before you go party, because the service became drastically bad for us without the correct, Polish currency (even I, the Ugly American,

got the stare of shame with our ever-powerful and superior USD in hand). After a few rounds, our flock began to scatter back towards the hostel for some much needed R & R: a day-trip to Auschwitz awaited us.

Cracow has much to see within and outside of the city limits, and there are many day-trips to choose from. The most known, and frankly important, was for us a trip to Auschwitz. It is about an hour and some change away with snow-covered roads, and upon entering the camp, the vibe gets bad.

Even in the dead of winter, death and inhumanity permeates through the camp. After passing the infamous "Arbeit Macht Frei" (Work Sets You Free) sign that hangs over the entrance in Auschwitz I (which is dwarfed by the death chambers that make up Auschwitz II), the tour-guide lead us in the various housing units-turned exhibits where you see the unquestionable evidence of how inhumane humanity can become.

In certain parts, you are not allowed to take pictures, which I think is a shame; everyone should

New Year's celebrations (in Europe, it is all in-advance ticket purchases and or private parties) in a pretty happening nightclub, whose name escapes me for various reasons, though I do remember having ginger chicken, beer, and ginger-snaps; the price was a bit steep, but bearable.

After about 4 a.m., we headed back to our hostel, which happened to be right next door to the Rotondo, a well-known spot where most of the other students, and those posing as students, were partying it up. Warning: Europeans listen to Techno, quite a bit actually, which is fine for Eurotrash like me (I can trace my roots there, thank you), but if you do not like it, try to fish around on the Internet beforehand, otherwise your head may explode from base-beats of Euro-nightlife.

On Jan. 1, while everyone else was sleeping off their hangover, my cousin Ana and I headed towards the center of the city to take pictures of the square, which, at any time of day or night, is full of life

and

movement. We stopped in to a restaurant, which served excellent Polish cuisine. I had the plum-chicken, and my cousin had the roast-beef and potato pancakes. I noticed a burly Pole staring at me, the odd-man-out; burly Pole entered with a group of about 10 or so friends, and they were all wearing KS Cracovia scarves, the colors for their team. As he approached, I got my feet into position and prepped the buckle of my then-removed belt, but he asked inquisitively with a smile, "Amerrrika?" I answered yes, and the language of beer began.

After taking some photos with our extremely intoxicated new friends, my cousin and I walked to the center of the Old Town, and we linked up with my sister and my other cousin;

it was already too dark for pictures (for my loser disposables, that is); damn Polish soccer hooligans....

We visited the cathedrals, Cracow literally has dozens, and simply absorbed all of the beauty that they had to offer. The first was the Church of the Virgin Mary, a Gothic basilica which was stunning in both its detailed art and architecture. Next, we went to a live classical



Photo by MARKO PRIMORAC/The Capital Times

**Little more than an hour away from Cracow's city limits lies Auschwitz.**

were literally miles upon miles, or for the Poles, kilometers upon kilometers, of mines. We were 200 meters underground, and there were chapels and life-sized sculptures and fascinating stalactite and stalagmite formations.

There are always good travel deals out there. I would definitely recommend Cracow, Poland, which was one of the nicest European cities I have visited to date. You can always find a way to travel on the cheap. If you can, do it; or you can go into massive credit card debt like I have. Either way, get off your rotting hide and leave your natural surroundings, even if for just a little while.

**Links and contacts:**

[http://www.auschwitz-tours.com/auschwitz\\_tour.html](http://www.auschwitz-tours.com/auschwitz_tour.html)

Address: al. 3 Maja 5.

Phone: /+4812/ 6221102 (operator), /+4812/ 6331914 (reservations).

Fax: /+4812/ 6328735.

Email: [zaczek@bratniak.krakow.pl](mailto:zaczek@bratniak.krakow.pl)  
[http://www.cracow-life.com/guide/Further\\_Afield/Wieliczka.php](http://www.cracow-life.com/guide/Further_Afield/Wieliczka.php)



Photo courtesy of Drunken Pole

**Marko and Ana New Year's Day with their new friend Yelena.**

see the nail marks inside the gas-chamber, to make sure people never forget what happened: the nail marks on the concrete walls is something anyone will remember.

The tour was depressing, but it was a once in a lifetime opportunity and, if you visit Cracow or Poland, a must see. The going price is about 130 Polish Zloty per person.

We purchased tickets for one of the



Photo courtesy of ANA MATKOVIC

**A student holds up his scarf with pride while gathered at the Cultural Emissaries.**

## "Muhammad" cartoon debate

Vucic's Media Management class discusses the controversy

By **HEATHER COLEMAN**  
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Muhammad cartoon hullabaloo started after editorial cartoons portraying the Islamic prophet Muhammad were first published in the Danish daily newspaper, The Jutland Post, on Sept. 30, 2005.

They were published in an article titled "The Face of Muhammad" and consisted of 12 cartoons, some depicting Muhammad. An article on self-censorship and freedom of speech accompanied the cartoons. In response, Danish Muslim organizations protested, some in violence.

The whole thing began on Sept. 17 when another Danish newspaper called Politiken ran an article under the headline "Profound fear of criticism of Islam". The article discussed the difficulty encountered by the Danish writer Kåre Bluitgen in finding artists to illustrate his children's book about Muhammad.

Bluitgen reported that no one was willing to work with him for fear of violent attacks from Muslims. The cultural editor of The Jutland Post then decided to contact about 40 cartoonists and ask them to sketch the prophet as they saw him. He received 12 cartoons from different cartoonists and published the cartoons to draw more attention to the difficulty encountered by Bluitgen.

As the controversy has developed, some or all of the cartoons have been reprinted in newspapers in over 50 countries. The cartoons have caused disorder around the world, specifically in Islamic countries, where those against the printing say that the cartoons are blasphemous.

Senior John Engel who has seen the cartoons said, "They are an

insult, irreverent, ill-mannered, and shameful."

Supporters of the cartoons say their publication is exercising their right of free speech.

"I strongly believe that the cartoons should be printed because the cartoon is the story," said Senior Holly Weichman. "Freedom of speech does not always mean 'playing nice' because eventually someone is going to be offended."

Muslims consider any pictures of the prophet Muhammad blasphemy, yet alone, the pictures that were printed, which were drawn in disrespectful ways. One picture portrays Muhammad with a bomb as his turban. Another picture shows him ready for battle with a short knife in one hand and a black bar across his eyes. He appears to be smiling and has two women beside him in black clothes with only their eyes showing.

Rabyia Ahmed, junior communications, said, "Printing a cartoon of just the holy prophet is one thing, but with a bomb as his turban is another, even though they are both considered disrespectful."

Once the news of the cartoons reached America, editors had a choice of whether their newspaper was just going to describe the cartoons or print them. Several editors across the world have either been fired, arrested, or their newspapers shutdown for printing the cartoons. America, along with the United Kingdom, almost collectively took a stance against reprinting the Muhammad cartoons.

The only newspaper in America, so far, known for printing them is The Philadelphia Inquirer on Feb. 4. Inquirer editors explained the reason they published the cartoons as part of a rich offering of coverage on the whole issue.

On Tuesday, Feb. 14, Professor Bob Vucic's Media Management class turned this very subject into a class role-playing assignment. Seven of the students were editors and the rest of the class were reporters.

Each editor played as if they were an editor of a major newspaper in America and then had decide whether they would print any of these cartoons in their newspaper. They then gave their reasons why they choose what to do.

Three out of the seven said they would print them because it was their freedom of speech and the people had a right to see them.

One editor said, "It's news. It's affecting our world. It's our job to report it."

The four that said that they wouldn't said they had no need to print them since they were readily available on the Internet.

Jomall Scott, junior, said, "I believe that religion respect should come before the first amendment."

Even after an hour of debating, students still had passionate beliefs of what should or should not be done.

"Print them - if violation of someone's beliefs is necessary to get across a political point, so be it," said Senior Kara Chapak. "Cruel but powerful, that's the whole point of a political cartoon."

Another student said words can explain just as well as seeing it, someone would be just as upset if a cartoon was printed about the Holocaust or 9/11.

Senior Danielle said, "It all comes down to your morals and ethics."

To see all twelve cartoons or find out more about the developing controversy visit Wikipedia Encyclopedia online and look up the topic "Jyllands-Posten Muhammad cartoons controversy."

## BUENAVENTURA: Beyond the classroom

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she said.

Unlike most high school students, there were several subjects that Buenaventura was interested in. "Anything that had to do with social science, education, economics, history, philosophy and women studies was of interest to me." And now as a professor at Penn State Harrisburg, she teaches courses like social and cultural theory in education and curriculum foundations, both of which she has a great amount of interest in.

Aside from teaching,

Buenaventura is on several hiring committees for faculty and staff, which has been keeping her busy lately, she said. She is also a member of the Pennsylvania American Council and Education Network. This is a network of women in higher education who help promote leadership where they encourage and learn how to apply leadership roles. Previously, Buenaventura was on the board of the Arthritis Foundation. She believes in the foundation strongly because so many people suffer from it, she said.

It was apparent that Buenaventura is a very family oriented person. She said that she enjoys spending time with them. "I enjoy watching movies and going out to dinner with my family." She has a husband and two daughters, one of whom is a junior at Penn State Harrisburg and is majoring in psychology. Her other daughter is in high school and it won't be long until she, too, will be thinking about college, said Buenaventura.

Baking and knitting are a few other activities that this education professor enjoys doing. "I enjoy knitting things like shawls and scarves," said Buenaventura. "Really nice ones," she added,

and gives them to people. But Buenaventura also has an interest in something that not many people may be aware of. It's wine. "I like to watch it on TV and I like learning about it too," she said. "The different places it's made and the process it takes to make it is interesting to me," she said. So, not surprisingly, her favorite drink is indeed wine. "I love to drink it," said Buenaventura. And as far as food is concerned, she'll eat anything as long as it's not alive. "I like to be adventurous when I eat," she said.

When asked who her favorite musical artists were, she didn't hesitate to answer U2, Bruce Springsteen and Tracy Chapman. "It's good music," said Buenaventura. She said that she would also like to do more international traveling and more writing and publishing someday. She has already vacationed in Ireland and Scotland and said that she would love to spend more time there.

Buenaventura considers herself to be very fortunate to be where she is today. "It's the best teacher education profession I can have because I get to prepare the next generation of teachers," she said. "And they need to be well prepared and professional because they have a big responsibility to teach children, who are our future," said Buenaventura.

Her theory on classroom education is simple but important. "Diversity is very, very, very important," she said. "It's so important to learn to respect and understand the differences and similarities among us. If people are culturally or linguistically different," she said, "we all have to learn how to understand them in order to avoid conflict."

## PARKING

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An older issue regarding parking many students have forgotten about was a tax imposed by Middletown for parking. It is called the Middletown Area School Patron Parking Tax. The Middletown area has imposed a 10 percent tax on our parking permits.

Since a parking pass, and the ensuing ticket for a lack of a pass, costs enough to feed an average, poor college student for two weeks there are always complaints about what students get for the amount of money they pay.

The biggest complaint comes in the form of snow removal. It is not uncommon for students to have to walk to their 8 a.m. classes with snow and ice still covering the sidewalks. The snow on the sidewalks isn't cleared until after 11 a.m., a time at which most students are already in school.

Another winter related issue that students have is a safety concern. The parking lot behind Olmsted building has a road that runs alongside a steep hill, which leads directly to the building.

When snow covers the parking lot and students need to drive along this road there is a possibility for drivers to lose control and slide down the steep embankment. With no guardrail in place there is no protection for drivers that lose control due to icy conditions.

If students do not pay for their tickets by the end of the semester a hold can be placed on their student records. This means that no transcripts are released to the student, they cannot re-enroll, and they will not receive their diploma.

All tickets can be appealed by filling out the proper form found in the Vehicle Registration Office, provided the appeal is done within 10 days of the actual violation.