

Summer helps to pursue passions

BY ZOE MARTIN
Assistant Features Editor

Three months can be a lot of time to play video games and eat ice cream or just the right amount of time to change your life.

Juniors Jon Graber and Josh Huber and sophomore Faith Maslonka chose the latter option during this Summer Break.

Graber traveled to Morocco to study Arabic. He said he traveled to Egypt with a Truman faculty-led program last Winter Break and that the trip fueled his interest in living in the area as more than a tourist. He said the language program in Morocco demanded a total immersion in the culture.

"One assignment was we had to go to the market by ourselves and buy some fruit and bring it back to class to show that we were able to use our language skills to buy fruit as an average Moroccan," Graber said.

Graber said it was easy navigating the nation with some knowledge of Arabic and that the stable political situation also eased his travel anxieties.

"It's a very tolerant society, especially compared to Egypt," Graber said. "In Morocco you didn't always see cops armed with a gun and you even saw some female police officers."

Graber roomed with a Moroccan student and was free to explore the town, he said.

"Just being able to talk with people, listen to their viewpoints on things, even just really mundane things, being able to see how they act, how they carry themselves — it's really nice," Graber said.

Graber said he noticed one major difference between US and Moroccan cultures.

"They don't really stand in lines," he said. "Americans will always queue wherever, at the post office, the grocery store. [Moroccans] just have whatever it is they want and push forward."

"Politics can be scary"

Far from the Morocco, Maslonka spent her sum-

mer in Kirksville working on State Representative Rebecca McClanahan's reelection campaign.

Maslonka said she was looking for a beneficial summer experience and that a professor suggested the campaign.

"I really wanted to get involved, but I didn't want to waste my time," Maslonka said.

Maslonka said she became passionate about McClanahan as a politician and as a person.

"This woman goes non-stop, and that's really encouraging and inspiring," Maslonka said. "It makes you try harder, and when a person makes you try harder without telling you you have to, that means they're doing something right."

As an intern, Maslonka said she was responsible for canvassing, phone banks and landscaping, or evaluating what she called the campaign's "plan of influence."

"It involved going to a lot of events and being a face for Rebecca," she said. "Everything from really nice dinners to working at the fair with a T-shirt on my back that said 'Rebecca McClanahan.'"

Maslonka was one of several student interns, and she said other students filled major positions such as finance director and campaign manager as well.

"There's tons of opportunities for students to get involved," she said. "What better than a whole bunch of eager young people getting involved in anything?"

Maslonka said one cause she now supports is getting students to vote locally. She said students are greatly affected by Kirksville laws such as the smoking ban.

"They're making a law locally that you can't smoke in certain areas," she said. "Well, a student has no right to complain if they're not voting here."

Overall, Maslonka said the work, and especially her relationship with McClanahan, gave her a new understanding of government.

"She's really shed a lot of light on some aspects of politics in a positive way," Maslonka said. "Be-



Photo submitted

Junior Jon Graber (far right) rides a camel at sunrise in the Sahara Desert in Morocco.

cause politics can be scary."

"Know what it means to need"

Like Maslonka, Huber spent his summer fulfilling a passion.

Huber traveled to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia with Christian Missionary Fellowship.

Before leaving, Huber said he read books about the AIDS epidemic and underwent a week-long orientation. He also had to have several vaccinations, including a rabies shot.

"They cost \$600 for a series of three shots," Huber said. "I almost wanted to get bit by a stray dog so I could put that to use."

Huber said his purpose in Ethiopia was simple.

"The basic thing was we wanted to love the people, share God's love with them," he said. "That area was really affected by disease like leprosy, HIV, AIDS."

Huber said he lived with an American missionary and spent time with a group of young men she knew.

"[The missionary] met them because they kept kicking their soccer ball over her wall, and then she

ended up sponsoring their soccer team," Huber said. "Now they're really involved in the church and really strong in their faith."

As well as spending time with this group, Huber said he went to homes to spread his faith and do what he could to help.

"You don't just say, 'Hey, this is Jesus,'" he said. "You minister to all parts of the person — mentally, physically and spiritually."

Huber said he prayed with one woman who lived in a house made of tarps with nine other people and that when he left, the difference in her life was evident.

"She was reaching out to her friends to tell them about this new hope she had, this new life she had," he said.

Huber said the trip put many things about American culture into perspective.

"We don't really know what it means to need anything," he said. "We don't know what it means to think, 'I need food or I'm going to die.' You realize how ridiculously selfish you are in most aspects of your life."



Health

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with Arthur Freeland, MD

Talk

Northeast Regional Medical Center

With the start of a new school year, parents and students need to be aware of the symptoms and dangers of meningococcal disease, or meningitis.

A fast-progressing, rare and sometimes fatal disease, meningitis can strike anyone, but adolescents and young adults are at increased risk. It can result in devastating complications, such as hearing loss, brain damage, limb amputation and often death. Meningitis frequently is misdiagnosed because it resembles the flu. Symptoms include

sudden high fever, headaches, stiff neck, nausea, vomiting, exhaustion and occasionally a rash.

Meningitis is spread by coughing, sneezing, exchanging saliva by kissing or even sharing a drink with someone carrying the infection. Lifestyle factors linked to this disease include irregular sleep patterns, active or passive smoking and living in crowded situations, such as dormitories.

The same rules of hygiene that help to avoid catching colds also can help prevent the spread of meningi-

tis: Don't share utensils or drinking glasses, avoid intimate contact with anyone diagnosed with the disease or showing symptoms and wash hands often with soap and water or an alcohol-based antibacterial gel.

Early treatment is essential to reduce the risk of death, but full recovery isn't guaranteed. Once meningitis is suspected or diagnosed, high doses of antibiotics are used to treat patients. Antibiotics also can be administered to those in close contact with a person diagnosed with meningitis to prevent

them from contracting the disease.

The best way to protect against meningitis is to get vaccinated. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends routine vaccination for adolescents ages 11 to 18. A good time to get vaccinated is during your child's checkup at age 11 or 12. The vaccine is safe, but minor reactions include headache, fatigue, slight discomfort or pain and redness at the injection site. Immunization is not recommended for individuals with compromised immune systems or a

history of Guillain-Barre syndrome, a condition in which the body's immune system attacks part of the peripheral nervous system. The vaccine is covered by most health insurance providers, or you can contact your local public health department to see if you qualify to receive a free vaccine through programs such as Vaccines for Children.

For more information about meningitis vaccines, consult your primary care provider or call Dr. Freeland at 665-2844.

Students at higher risk of contracting meningitis

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