

CAMPUS LIFE

Students Miss Their Pets

By Jessica Brown
Senior Staff Writer

Many students agree that one of the hardest parts about being away from home is separation from their pets.

Whether a family or personal pet, many students have left behind a beloved furry or scaly friend to attend NC Wesleyan. Some live only an hour or two away, so visiting is easy. For others, like international students Bikash Thapa and Sainabou Jallow, visiting is more difficult.

When asked about her pets, Jallow revealed that she has a cat named Kafka. Due to her living situation at the time, the Gambia native left Kafka with her uncle and she missed out on a majority of Kafka's kittenhood.

After moving off campus, Jallow brought Kafka to live with her. When she had to leave for a week during spring break, Jallow made her brother check on Kafka every day and send picture updates. "My friends like to make fun of me a little bit, but I think they get it," she said. "It's hard to not get attached to something that depends on you for everything." When she's not feeling well, Jallow said she sometimes will isolate herself in her room, and Kafka is her only interaction for those days.

Jallow also mentioned her dog named Biscuit, who stayed behind in Ethiopia when she first transferred to NCWC. "When I went home during Christmas break, my mom told me he had run away months ago," Jallow said. "She hadn't wanted to tell me while I was at school because she knew I'd be devastated." Her mother was right: Jallow didn't leave her room for days after receiving the news of Biscuit's demise.

Though a native of Gambia, Jallow has lived in Ethiopia, on the other side of the African continent, because her mother worked there. Biscuit was a rescue dog which her mother acquired to cheer up her daughter during a long illness. At the time, Jallow spent most of her time in her room, watching television. Biscuit put Jallow in a better mood and helped her get out of the house.

Jallow has always loved animals. "My mom suffered through me bringing all kinds of things home: kittens, deer, puppies," she said. "I even rescued mice from my dad's mouse traps. He would go crazy, thinking the traps weren't working. He ended up buying like a dozen different traps, when what really happened was that I would get up in the middle of the night and free the mice in the garden." Jallow continued to say that her mom let her keep the animals that "followed" her home for a little while before finding them a new family.

Like Jallow, Thapa left a dog back home in Nepal. Thapa related that his father acquired Tommy from an army camp. He had been injured, receiving a bullet wound, and Thapa's father was able to take Tommy while he healed from his injury.

Thapa and his family grew attached to the dog. When it came time to return Tommy to the army, Thapa's father went to an officer about letting the family keep the pet. The army agreed.

Thapa said it was very hard to leave Tommy back in Nepal. They had grown up together. Thapa would walk every evening, and Tommy would be with him. When he played football (soccer) with his friends, Tommy would go with him. The two would also chase monkeys and birds and other animals in the fields around their home. "It was hard. I still love him," Thapa said.

To ease his sadness, Thapa said that he will sometimes video-chat with his family and see Tommy in the background. Tommy is getting older, however, and doesn't leave the room much, unless he goes for a walk with Thapa's father.

Sidney McCall calls Florida home, and her pets are there. Being so many hours away, she can only visit once in a while. McCall has a dog, a greyhound named Pippy, and three hermit crabs named Jewel, Zeus, and Donatello. She's had Pippy since middle school and her hermit crabs

for four years. She misses them very much. Just like cats and dogs, hermit crabs have their own personalities, McCall noted.

"Jewel is itty bitty and is very calm when being held," she said. "She's quite talkative at night and moves around a lot." McCall went on to say that Zeus is confrontational and likes big shells, but they're too heavy for him. Donatello likes climbing the vines and rocks in his habitat. When McCall lets him out, he moves around quickly and climbs the furniture.

Stephanie Garrett has two cats, Howl and Gigi, though she admits that Howl is more her cat while Gigi is her mom's. Garrett had already been attending Wesleyan for a year before she found Howl at her grandmother's house. He was about nine months old, very skinny, and super skittish. They had an instant connection and he went right to Garrett.

Though Garrett and Howl bonded quickly, it took Howl quite a while to get used to Garrett's mom and sister, and he eventually became comfortable with Garrett's best friend. Garrett and her mom adopted Gigi when she was eight weeks old. Gigi is now eight months old and Howl is about a year and a half. Garrett says that being with her cats is a big stress reliever. "Howl is really good at telling when I'm upset," she said. "He curls up next to me and purrs, and loves being picked up." Living two hours away, Garrett gets to visit every other weekend.

Four more students interviewed live closer to home, only an hour or two away, but due to being busy with schoolwork or not being able to drive, they still can't visit home



The author's dog, Finn.

Photo courtesy of J. Brown

much. Ivan Cockman has two dogs and five cats. Joshua Campbell has an English bulldog named Zoey and two cats, Puff and Fatty. Jeremiah Handlon owns an eight-year-old black Lab mix named Beauty. He's had her since she was a puppy.

Victoria Simmons lives two hours away and gets to visit home once every two weeks. She has two dogs named Lacie and Piper. Simmons has had Lacie, a yellow Lab, for four years and Sadie, a salt-and-pepper miniature Schnauzer, for eight years. When Simmons visits home, she plays with her dogs outside, takes them on walks, and cuddles with them in her bed.

All the students agree that it's hard to leave their pets each time they have to return to school and seeing them is one of the best parts about going home for break. "It's always hard to leave her, especially when we have breaks and it's time to go back to school," Handlon said, in regards to his dog, Beauty. "My heart breaks every time."

Wesleyan Profile: Bikash Thapa

(Editor's Note: This is the second time Bikash Thapa has been interviewed by The Decree. The first interview appeared on page 1 of the October 2014 issue.)

Bikash Thapa, a senior science major from Nepal, is about to graduate. In a recent interview, he reflected on his time at Wesleyan and the ways his impressions of life in America have changed over the past three-plus years.

Q. What are some presumptions Americans have about you and your culture?

A. I used to think that Americans (in general) didn't like Asians that much. My parents had told me to be very careful in a new land. But coming here and getting involved in various college activities taught me that Americans are not biased. My background isn't that important to them. They loved me and cared about me like I was one of theirs. But there still has been some stereotyping I've experienced along the way: Asians are smart and good at mathematics, Asian countries are poor and deprived of good food and health facilities. Many believe Asians to be too religious.

Q. Did you encounter many NCWC students who could find Nepal on a map?

A. Haha. I'd have to say no. Some friends did know about the Hindu culture, but not all knew about my country. But once I explained to them that it's between India and China, they would nod in agreement. The first time I said I was from Nepal, my friends looked at me like "Where in the world is that?"

Q. What does the average NCWC student seem to know about your country?

A. Most know about the Himalayas and the tallest mountain of the world, Mt. Everest. Some know about Gautama Buddha, the Hindu culture and that we believe in more than one God (Polytheistic society).

Q. What do you like most about NCWC?

A. NCWC provides a great environment for a student to start building a career: Excellent faculty and staff, great companionship among students, love and friendship among internationals, and a nice community in Rocky Mount. I appreciate the way the student body comes together to solve issues at the college. Regardless of their backgrounds students respect each other's identities. Internationals get treated with care here. I feel like a family member, which made me love the culture more.

Q. What about American culture most appeals to you?

A. Greetings! It's easy to say hello and start a friendship with a stranger. This fascinated me the most. The first day I was here, there were college staff members who were very outspoken and cordial to me. Then, in the

first week of class, I met many students who became my close friends in a very short period of time (Katie Tyson to name one of them; she's still my friend). So, I think the way Americans talk and share their love and affection is one of the most appealing aspects of the culture

Q. What other aspects of American culture have impressed you?

A. Let's begin with food. I was surprised by the type of extra-large food portions (the Big Mac, etc.) and fast food in general. Most Americans are always in a rush and so much fast food is available; it's crazy but reliable and efficient. Back home, our daily staples include rice and a meat curry, with vegetables and pickles on the side. So, food is surprising and amazing here.

The road trips: Very large states. One state is the size of Nepal or larger. So, there are a lot of exciting places to visit here.

Sports: There is a variety of sports; American football is the best sport I have ever encountered after soccer. Baseball, ice hockey, tennis and softball are other sports that I like now.

Independence: After 17 or 18 years, most Americans no longer live at home with their families. They do their own shopping, laundry, cooking, and pursue careers or studies on their own. This is interesting and different because, back in my country, we live together with our parents, even if we're old enough to live by ourselves. That's our culture. So, the culture here is different, but it's intriguing and lively.

Q. How have your impressions of America and Americans changed in the past three-plus years?

A. I came to America with new hopes and dreams. It wasn't just a gradual change in my life, but was a drastic step. The first day I was here, I thought that it would be hard to blend into the culture because everything was different. From the way Americans talk, to the type of food they eat and the type of clothes they wear, to the way they manage their schedules, everything was different. Today, when I look back and think about how I was three-and-a-half years ago, I feel bad for not trying to socialize more in my early days here with the amazing people. It was a fun three-and-a-half years of my life at NCWC. I'll cherish each and every moment, both bitter and sweet. I learnt a lot from my friends, professors, and the surrounding community. Due to the treatment I received here, I feel motivated to excel in my upcoming endeavors. Thank you, NCWC, for the grand, beautiful memories.

Many Spring Breakers Went Home, or Remained in Area

By Toni Tutt
Decree Staff Writer

While March is famous for Madness and flowers, spring break is the highlight of the month for NC Wesleyan students.

After rough months of piled-on work, there is that one week when relief is ever so sweet. During this week, it's traditional to go to Florida, Mexico or some other remote destination. But since many students are on limited budgets, their vacation options are slim to none. Although some take trips with friends, many traveled to visit family and catch up on lost sleep.

Other students remained in the area, due to athletics and other commitments.

Savannah Flanagan studied and attended "Fiddler on the Roof" rehearsals. While she was saddened at not being able to see her friends, she contented herself with memories of past trips to Myrtle Beach.

Anna Dick mentioned going to see her family, sleeping and spending time with friends back in Virginia.

Compared to Mexico and Florida, Virginia isn't a top destination pick, but

Sierra Yount traveled there with friends and saw her family as well. While in the state, she toured lighthouses, which she called "amazing."

Rex Sauls stayed closer to home, going to Boone, North Carolina, but said the fun was limited by family obligations and other responsibilities.

Many athletes remained in the area. The softball team made a road trip to Virginia and then hosted two teams later in the break. The Bishops baseball squad participated in the Ripkin Spring Training tournament in Myrtle Beach and then followed that by sweeping three games at Covenant College in a conference series.

Mary Reynolds was among a group of Wesleyan students who bussed to Atlanta on a trip sponsored by Students Activities. There for three days, Reynolds visited an aquarium, ate at Waffle House, played at Six Flags, tasted every Coca Cola product, took pictures with a polar bear, slept and came back home. "Most days we had to stop at multiple places to eat," she said of the group. "Nobody could agree on one type of food."

Some Students Resort To 'Shopping Therapy'

Reported by Diamond Fogg
Decree Staff Writer

Due to the location of the Wesleyan campus, students will report occasional boredom and sometimes lament the lack of fun weekend activities.

But many will travel off campus, to the surrounding area and even Raleigh to indulge in one of their favorite pastimes: Shopping.

"To me, shopping is very therapeutic and it seems to relieve stress," said Victoria Ingram. "This is what is called retail therapy. Shopping is my passion. It's what a drug is to a junkie."

Imani Scarborough considers shopping a hobby and, like Ingram, she uses it as "therapy." "When I go shopping, it sometimes lets off stress," she said.

Fellow student Raelin Davis expressed enthusiasm about her shopping excursions.

"Shopping means everything to me," she said, highlighting the joy she feels in spending money. "I love being able to wear the latest trends."

She shares the view that shopping can be therapeutic. "It's like a massage. I like being able to go to a store when you're stressed and to just shop till you drop. I could spend hours in a store shopping. I love shopping and will forever love it."

At the present time she likes the ability to spend her own money on clothes and other items. "It just feels good to say you bought something nice with your own money." But she added, "I hope my husband's pockets are full and he's ready to swipe that card when we go shopping together!"

With their hectic, unpredictable schedules, some students expressed a preference for on-line shopping, noting

the many conveniences: The "store" is open 24 hours, there is no need to catch a bus or find a parking spot at a busy mall, and it's not necessary to wait in line at the cash register. Often it's possible to find deeper discounts on-line as well.

Despite the conveniences of on-line shopping, some still favor the in-store experience, especially when shopping for clothes. There's always the fear of coming across "fake goods" or poor quality material or even a shipment error.

Taylor Black likes to shop in person, because "you get to try on clothes. If it's a store that doesn't have fitting rooms, you can still view the item and place it against you."

She added that online clothes shoppers run into risks. "You have to trust the size and measurements" at online stores," she said. "At times I've received items with completely different measurements than they described" on the site.

Alexis Collins views every shopping trip as an opportunity to spend time with loved ones, her mother in particular. "Shopping is a time for my mom and me to hang out, to catch up on each other's lives," she said. "Even though we live together, there is just something about bonding over a purse that we can share, or finding the perfect dress for a date. Shopping is when my mom and I are ourselves."

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In an early-season interview, Lowery said she knows the team is capable of winning the conference title, but didn't want to focus on the championship yet. "We have to play like we did last year, continue the momentum and work as a team," she said, adding that there is a strong team chemistry, just like last year. "A championship is a good accomplishment, but we shouldn't focus on it. We should just go game by game."

Off the field, Lowery is working toward becoming a large-animal veterinarian. "I'm a dog person," said Lowery, who owns a dog named Auggie. "I've always loved animals and had pets."

She is majoring in biology and minor-ing in psychology. After graduation she plans to go to North Carolina State University for graduate school. Aside from veterinary work, Lowery is interested in coaching. "I've always wanted to coach or give pitching lessons," she said.

On New Year's Day, 2015, Lowery and her high school boyfriend, Bryan Burke, got engaged. Burke attends Rowan County Community College and the two are waiting until after her graduation to get married.

By early April, the Bishops were 13-9 in a balanced conference. After a slow start, the team won 10 of 14 down the stretch. Lowery was 9-8 with one save and a team-leading 2.57 ERA.

Despite her fine statistics Lowery is reluctant to take credit for the team's success. "I owe everything to the fielders behind me," she said.

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