

Greetings and Happy Belated Thanksgiving from Comrat!

In the spirit of Thanksgiving, I wanted to send a brief(ish) update to you and share some of the experiences I'm thankful for this year since returning to Moldova! Since arriving in Comrat, I've gotten into a solid groove with my students. The Faculty English club has really taken off and grown to include a few working professionals from the community, and we're now meeting twice a week. In Book Club, we recently finished *The Time Machine* by HG Wells! Being the first novel written about time travel (and the source for the term *time machine*), it definitely led to some interesting discussions. We're now beginning *The Guest List* by Lucy Foley. I was able to pick up a few more copies of it while I was in Sofia for the Media Literacy Conference and am sure that it will be an exciting read. I have also launched a short-story writing competition for the month of November and am looking forward to reading the students' entries at the end of the month.

Together, we celebrated Halloween a few weeks ago! In the weeks leading up to Halloween, we watched a series of Halloween related movies, but on the actual day of Halloween, we discussed the history of the holiday, how it's celebrated now, played hot potato (but with a miniature pumpkin!), and Halloween-themed jeopardy (with candy as prizes). However, the highlight of the event was definitely the mummy wrapping competition! Here are some pictures from the event:

I also had the opportunity to visit Ungheni for the first time and collaborate with my friend and fellow Fulbrighter Kiara Kolaczyk at the Ungheni AC where we delivered a joint-presentation on the regions of the US, including a discussion. A few weeks later, Kiara came to Comrat and delivered a presentation to my students for international education week, and we led the class in an exciting game of *Are You Smarter than a Fifth Grader?*

In addition to my activities at the university, I have also gotten involved teaching English classes to children in the local community, through the Urban Center, a local NGO focused on youth development. I follow their curriculum and create additional resources and activities for the teachers there to use. I also lead monthly teacher development workshops!

Beyond university activities, I had the pleasure of showing some of my fellow Fulbrighters around my host city! We, along with a local friend of mine, went to Vinuri de Comrat where we had a historical tour of the winery, a wine tasting, and the next day, I gave them the Comrat Tour.

Moldova Fulbright ETAs were also invited to attend the conference on Media Literacy hosted by the Bulgaria Fulbright Commission in Sofia. It was a 21-hour bus ride to get there and two 8-hour overnight bus rides to get back, but it was definitely worth it! I really enjoyed the opportunity to meet Fulbrighters from the other Balkan countries and listen to such a diverse panel of speakers. Also, on the way back I had a stop-over in Bucharest for fifteen hours and was able to visit some of my friends from last spring including the FCJ Sisters!

The Moldova Fulbrighters and myself also had the opportunity to attend the Marine Ball earlier this month, which we all enjoyed immensely!

And most recently, of course, was Thanksgiving. Although I do prefer celebrating Thanksgiving with family, this past Thanksgiving was definitely an enjoyable one! On the day before Thanksgiving, I had the kids at the Urban Center make hand turkeys, and I also held a Thanksgiving celebration with the students at the university and asked everyone to bring food. I made a presentation on Thanksgiving, planned to show them the Charlie Brown special, and made a Thanksgiving-themed jeopardy game. I myself made mashed potatoes and buckeyes (the chocolate covered peanut ball dessert from Ohio), but as I was cooking, another blackout began. (Due to Russia's attacks on critical infrastructure in Ukraine, Moldova periodically experiences power outages. Although Moldova now relies on Romania for the majority of its electricity, some of the grid is still linked with Ukraine.) So, we ended up celebrating Thanksgiving in the dark, using our phones' flashlights to illuminate parts of the classroom. I was able to hotspot my tablet for a second to launch the jeopardy game and then just had to move around the classroom so that the students could see my screen.



For the actual day of Thanksgiving, two of the research Fulbrighters, Bob and Brieanne hosted the whole Fulbright cohort at their apartment in Chisinau. Bob and Brieanne were able to get a turkey from Romania, and another friend was able to find green beans -- two Thanksgiving staples that I was happy to have. For my part, I got to Chisinau earlier in the day to once again make mashed potatoes along with a chocolate mousse while my friend made Spanish tortilla. My roommates from Comrat and some other friends were also able to join the festivities, and we all got to share our American holiday with even more people!





The next day, Bob invited the Fulbright ETAs to attend a conference on pedagogical linguistics at his university. We did not realize that the majority of the presentations would be in Romanian, though, which made for a confusing experience, but it was interesting all the same. Later that night, a group of us gathered to watch the US-England match at a local football pub.





On Saturday, I got to celebrate Thanksgiving for a third time! Ambassador and Mrs. Logsdan invited us Fulbrighters and a few of the embassy employees to their house for dinner, which was a lovely event. Something I've learned this year: every American ambassador has an art exhibit in their home! They choose the theme for themselves, and then the State Department reaches out to American artists whose work corresponds with that theme, and it is then displayed in their residence for three years. The Logsdans chose Pennsylvania, their home state. In September, they still didn't have all of the pieces hung, so it was enjoyable going around and getting to see the completed collection. (Two of the pieces can be seen in picture number two along with the presentation of the turkey! The first photo is of dessert: apple pie, pumpkin pie with whipped cream, and Mrs. Logsdan's homemade cookies)





Now, it's back to Comrat where I am busily working on my graduate school applications and wrapping up my semester's worth of classes and clubs before exam season (and then the Christmas season!!) begins. The past two and a half months have certainly given me a lot to be thankful for! Wherever you may be, may the temperature be high and your gas bills low. I hope you had a Happy Thanksgiving!

Warm regards,

Lucinda

More fun photos provided by Lucinda!



















