

PERU TRIP

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After an initial meet-and-greet, the group spent a couple of days in Lima getting acclimated, and were taken on a walking tour that included Lima's colonial sites and the National Museum of Archaeology, Anthropology, and History. Ellis said that one thing that made the trip successful was their 36-year-old guide, Ciro Villavicencia Callo, who not only spoke excellent English but was also a history major and very passionate about the history and culture of his country.

"We really benefitted from that guide versus another. He had just a plethora of knowledge. No note cards," she added. "For someone who was not attracted to group tours, there was no disappointment. We couldn't have asked for a better trip."

On Oct. 28 they left Lima to fly to Cuzco and explore the Sacred Valley and Pisac. Cuzco, which had been the capital of the Inca world, sits at 10,909 feet, which presented some challenges of its own.

"You could really tell a difference in the air," Ellis said. "From the altitude you get nausea, shortness of breath, and sometimes the feeling like you just can't get enough air. It only lasts a few seconds, but it can give you a panicky feeling."

Ellis said the Peruvians chew on coca leaves to relieve motion and altitude sickness—which she said doesn't provide a "high"—but hotels in the Sacred Valley also offer oxygen tanks for their guests.

Ellis said the Valle Sacrado, or Sacred Valley, was the core of their trip. She said the valley is considered sacred because of the rich agriculture, which includes crops like corn, potatoes and quinoa.

"There were a bazillion varieties of potatoes," she said. "We ate a lot of potatoes."

Along with the crops, the valley also contained several Incan ruins.

"It's beautiful," she said, "surrounded by super, super tall mountains." Ellis said that, even though the group was at nearly 11,000 feet and wearing t-shirts, they could look up at the taller mountains and see snow.

The first ruin they visited was Pisac.

"That was where we had our first 'wow' moment of the terraces and the size of them," Ellis said. "Actually being next to them and seeing how many rocks had to be moved, just seeing the manpower that went into it, is amazing."

From there, the group rafted up the Urubamba River to Ollantayambo, where they visited more ruins and received the welcome surprise of walking into a small town where a festival was taking place.

"All the people were in their traditional wear, and all the schoolchildren were parading through the town. There was lots of street food," Ellis added.

While they sampled the street food, they didn't eat too much, since their next stop was to join a Peruvian family for a home-hosted



Upper Left: "Team Lauritsen," Pat and Carl Lauritsen of Heppner, at Machu Picchu. Upper Right: At Machu Picchu, "Team Healy": (Back L-R) Jerry Healy, Janelle Ellis, Jon Ellis. (Front L-R): Jean Healy, Jonas Healy, Joseph Healy. -Contributed photos

lunch of cuy, a local delicacy saved for special occasions.

Cuy is guinea pig. "We had some who were a little hesitant," Ellis said. "It tasted a lot like the dark meat on a turkey."

For those who were brave enough, they were also able to see how it was caught and skinned, and then participate in its preparation before the meal.

The next day they took a two-hour train ride to the modern town of Machu Picchu Pueblo and then endured a 20-minute bus ride to the ruins of Machu Picchu.

"And it's switchback," Ellis said. "It's basically walls straight up." The alternative, she said, was to skip the train and the bus and go on a four-day hike through the Andes.

While the group didn't opt for that, they did get in some hiking on their second day exploring Machu Picchu. Most of the group took advantage of the time to hike to the Sun Gate and Inka Bridge. The Lauritsens, who had been attracted to the trip at least partly by their love of hiking, trekked up Wayna Picchu, the "Death Hike." Despite the name, Ellis said they seemed to manage it easily enough.

After Machu Picchu, they returned to Cuzco, where they were able to see the celebration of Dia de los Muertos, of Day of the Dead, which Ellis said was not sad or spooky, but more of a celebration.

Other highlights of the trip were a visit to a women's weaving cooperative and a visit to a local school.



At the weaving cooperative, the women showed them how they clean and dye the wool, and tour members got to try their hand at weaving.

"Some of us were better at spooling wool than others," Ellis confessed.

It was the school visit, where the students performed poems and songs before they got a chance to visit one-on-one, that really struck a chord with the visitors.

"This really stuck in people's hearts not only because it was our last visit but because we got to interact with the kids, and it was really fun," Ellis said.

"Very different classrooms, very small," she added. "No computers. All of the posters on the walls were made by the teachers."

Ellis said that, of the entire trip, one moment that stood out was facing the ruins in Sacsayhuaman, which are constructed of huge stones, some weighing nearly 30 tons.

"The boulders that made the walls were unreal; they were the size of vehicles," she said. "There was no mortar. The grinding of the stones to make them fit with no mortar, no cracks, was unbelievable."

Otherwise, while other members of the tour might have their own opinions, Ellis said would have a difficult time choosing a highlight.

"Machu Picchu is an obvious highlight of the trip, but in general the Inca culture, the Sacred Valley in general..." she said, "the agriculture, the culture, the ruins. The slower-paced life."

~ Letters to the Editor ~

The Heppner Gazette Times will print all letters to the Editor with the following criteria met: letters submitted to the newspaper will need to have the name of the sender along with a legible signature. We are also requesting that you provide your address and a phone number where you can be reached. The address and phone number will only be used for verification and will not be printed in the newspaper. Letters may not be libelous. The GT reserves the right to edit. The GT is not responsible for accuracy of statements made in letters. Any letters expressing thanks will be placed in the classifieds under "Card of Thanks" at a cost of \$10.

Vilsack refuses to address local concerns and needs

To the editor:

As the people of Eastern Oregon continue to speak out on the "Travel Management Plan" (i.e. road closures) and the Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision (the foundation needed to justify road closures), Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack continues to turn a blind eye and deaf ear to our concerns. Many local residents from around the 11 counties of Eastern Oregon, as well as county officials, have spoken out in regards to how these plans will negatively impact our ways of life.

Mr. Vilsack's staff continues to stonewall the public from any real actions and seems to take pleasure in seeing just how far they can push the envelope in regards to limiting our access to the public lands we have depended on for the last 150 years. What will it take for Mr. Vilsack to address this issue, or more like, who will it take? As the people of Eastern Oregon do not have a champion politically connected to grab his ear to address the issues, what action will trigger his attention to address what is obviously becoming a railroading of the local rural residents of our region?

Mr. Secretary, you speak in great pros of your love and economic concerns for rural communities and all that they offer to our country. You speak of your commitment to us, and to your passion to improve our ways of life; when then, sir, do we get to see that commitment come through?

There is a fundamental disconnect between the words you speak and the actions of your staff in the U.S. Forest Service, and that begins at (USFS) Chief Tidwell's level and is carried down through to your supervisors' offices. You speak of supporting and building rural communities, while we see your leadership in the U.S. Forest Service tell us that this isn't about our communities, but about a national need.

When do you step in, Mr. Secretary, and tell your staff to act accordingly, and allow us the access we need to protect our communities? When? You are a representative for the people for the entire state. That includes rural areas. Denying access hinders rural economic growth, tourism dollars "trickle down" that would benefit us all. When will you take action?

Terri Denton, Heppner

Morrow County fair seeks new logo

The Morrow County Fair is looking for a new logo and they want your help.

Entries must say "Morrow County Fair" and must incorporate 4-H and FFA. All entries are due by March 15. Grand prize is \$200.

To find out more or turn in a logo, contact Ann Jones, 541-676-9474, or P.O. Box 464, Heppner, OR 97836.



The Morrow County Fair is looking for a logo to replace this one.



The tour group members all took along gifts that they gave to local people they encountered. The gifts ranged from school supplies to pocket knives to hand-carved spoons. Here, two Peruvian girls are pictured with the Heppner t-shirts they received from Janelle Ellis. -Contributed photo

Sports Schedules

Cardinal Basketball

Boys

12/5/2014, Fri 7:30pm vs. TBD (Ione Basketball Bonanza - Ione School)	Hood River 1/24/2015, Sat 6:30pm vs. Condon / Wheeler
12/6/2014, Sat 5:30pm vs. TBD (Ione Basketball Bonanza - Ione School)	12/27/2015, Tue 7:30pm @ Stanfield
12/12/2014, Fri 4:30pm @ TBD (Heppner Kick-Off Tournament - Heppner)	1/30/2015, Fri 7:30pm @ Sherman
12/13/2014, Sat 2:30pm @ TBD (Heppner Kick-Off Tournament - Heppner)	1/31/2015, Sat 5:30pm @ Condon / Wheeler (Fossil)
12/16/2014, Tue 7:30pm vs. Irrigon	2/6/2015, Fri 7:30pm @ Dufur
12/19/2014, Fri 7:30pm @ Riverside	2/7/2015, Sat 5:30pm vs. Arlington
12/30/2014, Tue 5:30pm @ Joseph	2/10/2015, Tue 7:30pm vs. Horizon Christian, Hood River
1/3/2015, Sat 5:30pm vs. Sherman	2/13/2015, Fri 7:30pm @ South Wasco County
1/9/2015, Fri 7:30pm @ Arlington	2/14/2015, Sat 5:30pm vs. Mitchell / Spray
1/10/2015, Sat 5:30pm vs. Dufur	
1/16/2015, Fri 7:30pm @ Mitchell / Spray (Spray)	
1/17/2015, Sat 5:30pm vs. South Wasco County	
1/23/2015, Fri 7:30pm @ Horizon Christian,	

Girls

12/5/2014, Fri 6pm vs. Enterprise (Ione Basketball Bonanza - Ione School)
12/6/2014, Sat 4pm vs. TBD (Ione Basketball Bonanza - Ione School)
12/12/2014, Fri 3pm @ TBD (Heppner Kick-Off Tournament - Heppner High School)
12/13/2014, Sat 1pm @

TBD (Heppner Kick-Off Tournament - Heppner High School)	12/16/2014, Tue 6pm vs. Irrigon
12/19/2014, Fri 6pm @ Riverside	12/30/2014, Tue 4pm @ Joseph
1/3/2015, Sat 4pm vs. Sherman	1/9/2015, Fri 6pm @ Arlington
1/10/2015, Sat 4pm vs. Dufur	1/16/2015, Fri 6pm @ Mitchell / Spray (Spray)
1/17/2015, Sat 4pm vs. South Wasco County	1/23/2015, Fri 6pm @ Horizon Christian, Hood River
1/24/2015, Sat 5pm vs. Condon / Wheeler	1/27/2015, Tue 6pm @ Stanfield
1/30/2015, Fri 6pm @ Sherman	1/31/2015, Sat 4pm @ Condon / Wheeler (Fossil)
2/6/2015, Fri 6pm @ Dufur	2/7/2015, Sat 4pm vs. Arlington
2/10/2015, Tue 6pm vs. Horizon Christian, Hood River	2/13/2015, Fri 6pm @ South Wasco County
2/14/2015, Sat 4pm vs. Mitchell / Spray	

Mustang Basketball

Boys

12/5/2014, Fri 5pm @ Knappa (Warrior Tip-Off Tournament - Warrenton)	12/6/2014, Sat TBD @ Warrenton (Warrior Tip-Off Tournament - Warrenton)
12/12/2014, Fri TBD vs. Crane (Heppner Kick-Off Tournament - Heppner)	12/13/2014, Sat TBD vs. TBD (Heppner Kick-Off Tournament - Heppner)
12/16/2014, Tue 6:30pm vs. Condon / Wheeler	12/19/2014, Fri 7:30pm vs. Imbler
12/20/2014, Sat 5:30pm @ Grant Union	12/22/2014, Mon 5:30pm vs. South Wasco County
12/29/2014, Mon TBD @ TBD (Central Linn Tournament - Halsey)	12/30/2014, Tue TBD @ TBD (Central Linn Tournament - Halsey)
1/9/2015, Fri 7:30pm @ Pilot Rock	1/16/2015, Fri 7:30pm vs. Irrigon
1/17/2015, Sat 5:30pm @ Stanfield	

1/23/2015, Fri 7:30pm @ Weston-McEwen	1/24/2015, Sat 5:30pm vs. Culver	1/30/2015, Fri 7:30pm vs. Pilot Rock	2/6/2015, Fri 7:30pm @ Irrigon
2/7/2015, Sat 5:30pm vs. Stanfield	2/13/2015, Fri 7:30pm vs. Weston-McEwen	2/14/2015, Sat 5:30pm @ Culver	2/20/2015, Fri District Tournament - Pendleton Convention Center
2/21/2015, Sat District Tournament - PCC			

Imbler 12/20/2014, Sat 4pm @ Grant Union	12/22/2014, Mon 4pm vs. South Wasco County	12/29/2014, Mon TBD @ TBD (Central Linn Tournament - Halsey)	12/30/2014, Tue TBD @ TBD (Central Linn Tournament - Halsey)
1/9/2015, Fri 6pm @ Pilot Rock	1/16/2015, Fri 6pm vs. Irrigon	1/17/2015, Sat 4pm @ Stanfield	1/23/2015, Fri 6pm @ Weston-McEwen
1/24/2015, Sat 4pm vs. Culver	1/30/2015, Fri 6pm vs. Pilot Rock	2/6/2015, Fri 6pm @ Irrigon	2/7/2015, Sat 4pm vs. Stanfield
2/13/2015, Fri 6pm vs. Weston-McEwen	2/14/2015, Sat 2:30pm @ Culver	2/20/2015, Fri District Tournament - Pendleton Convention Center	2/21/2015, Sat District Tournament - PCC

Girls

12/5/2014, Fri 3:30pm @ Knappa (Warrior Tip-Off Tournament - Warrenton)	12/6/2014, Sat TBD @ Warrenton (Warrior Tip-Off Tournament - Warrenton)
12/12/2014, Fri TBD vs. TBD (Heppner Kick-Off Tournament - Heppner)	12/13/2014, Sat TBD vs. TBD (Heppner Kick-Off Tournament - Heppner)
12/16/2014, Tue 5pm vs. Condon / Wheeler	12/19/2014, Fri 6pm vs.

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