

■ One-on-One with Sara Picazo Student from Spain works at Express

By COURTNEY CRISSEY
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LOCK HAVEN — New food, new friends, a new school... even a new language. Sara Picazo is a long way from her home in Spain.

As part of Lock Haven University's exchange program, Picazo left her native land to attend LHU and learn more about the American way of life.

The 21-year-old journalism major has big aspirations of becoming an international reporter, and to help her along the way, The Express has allowed Picazo to visit the newsroom and learn more about the business.

She recently shared her experiences and her Spanish heritage with The Express.

Q: Tell me about yourself.

A: "I am from Albacete, Spain. It's not a very big city. My parents, Juan Luciano and Rosa, are teachers in public schools. I also have two sisters, Rosa Maria, 30, and Cristina, 25. I live with my grandmother, Gumerinda."

Q: When did you come to Lock Haven?

A: "I came at the start of the fall semester. I'm only here for one year and then I will return to my university, Antonio de Nebrija, in Madrid."

Q: What brought you to the United States?

A: "I wanted to become an international reporter and I wanted to improve my English. It's very important to me to improve my English."

Q: Why an International reporter?

A: "I love to travel and visit other cities."

Q: Is this your first time traveling to the U.S.?

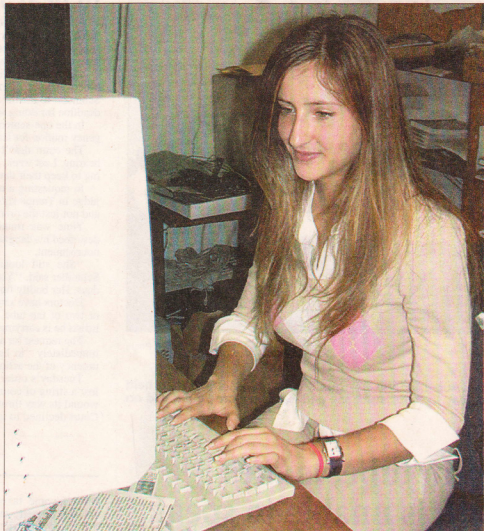
A: "Yes, and I've visited other cities and countries while I've been here. I've traveled to Miami and New York City. On breaks I've gone to Mexico, Guatemala and Toronto."

Q: How has your time been in Lock Haven?

A: "I've met a lot of interesting people. I have an open mind and I'm learning a lot. Now I see life here is very different."

Q: How is life different for you here?

A: "I don't like the cold. The snow is pretty like in pictures I've seen before. I also miss Spanish food. Sometimes I remember the



Expressphoto Lana Muthler

Sara Picazo is learning the newspaper business, working on a computer in The Express newsroom.

taste of Spanish food and I get sad. I can only cook so much Spanish food because I can't find all the ingredients here."

Q: What do you do for fun in Lock Haven?

A: "I love to dance and I go out sometimes. Going out in Spain is different than going out here. The music here is totally different. We don't listen to hip hop like here. Techno music is very popular in Spain."

Q: Are you homesick?

A: "I'm used to being far away from family, so it's really not different. I do speak on the phone with my father once a week."

Q: When I think of Spain I think of bull fighting. What is that like?

A: "I love bull fighting. I think it's an art, a very old art. Some people don't understand it but I've watched it a lot and I like it."

Ready to move on to Italy

By SARA PICAZO

It seems like yesterday, but it has been almost a whole year since I left my native country of Spain to come to the USA and continue my education in journalism.

And it's been a life-altering experience. As soon as the airplane took flight, I

knew that my way of life and my personality would change in the next months. I know now that I'm a different person, a more complete person, and this experience will help me as a journalist.

It was difficult at first as I changed a comfortable past for a future of uncertainty.

But now I can say that it was the best decision I have made in all the 21 years of my life.

It's not easy to travel to another country without knowing people, without knowing the culture, without knowing places to go and without even knowing the language. I didn't even know exactly where I would live.

But still I wanted to come to the USA, for several reasons. First and foremost I wanted to improve my English. To be a journalist it's very important to know English.

And I have always wanted to visit the United States of America. I used to dream of staying in New York City, walking around the streets and watching a musical on Broadway. This dream is now a reality.

On the other hand the cultural impact was hard at first. Customs and habits here are so different from those in Spain. I had heard about some American customs because we

live in a very globalized world where cultures spread quickly. In addition, American customs are known in Europe because they are used as a business. Who hasn't heard about Halloween, for example?

Although American customs are interesting, I miss the Spanish customs and culture, especially bullfights, celebrations for Easter, typical Spanish food, carnival, running of bulls and city parties.

The daily schedule here is so different. It took several weeks to adapt my habits. Spanish people eat lunch at 2-3 in the afternoon and dinner at 9-10 at night. So we have to go to sleep very late!

Also, in Spain people go out to dance at midnight and dance all night until the following day. Here clubs are closed at 2 a.m.! When I arrived in the USA I was under 21, so I couldn't go to the clubs. It was so strange for me because I had been going clubbing since I was 15. It was like traveling into the past. Now that I'm 21, I can go to the bar, but partying here is totally different.

Adapting my mind to American habits was difficult, too. When I took my first shower here I didn't know how to open the tap of the shower because the mechanism is kind of different. I felt so stupid!

Another Spanish custom, kissing people on the face two times when you first meet them, was met by stares. I didn't realize that people don't do that here. So, of course they looked at me in a strange way ... probably thinking: What a crazy girl! That was so embarrassing.

There are a lot of differences between American and Spanish culture. Now that I am here, though, some Spanish customs seem strange. The other day I was thinking that it is so disgusting that Spanish people eat the tongue, ears, nose, brains, tail ... and even the blood of some animals!

I have had really good experiences in America, but unfortunately I have to say there have been some unpleasant ones as well. One example is feeling discrimination because I'm a foreigner. It happened a lot of times when I met people from my class on the street. I said hello to them and they never answered to me. I still don't know if they do that because this is normal in America or because they are impolite.

However, I can say that America is a very nice country with really nice people, even though sometimes I don't really understand them!

In America I have had some very nice moments that I had never experienced in my country. Here in Pennsylvania I have watched one of the most beautiful landscapes that I have ever seen with lost houses on the mountain surrounded by rows and rows of snowed trees and the river running very close. Just beautiful!

In the last year I have done things I had never done before. I'm learning not just English; I'm learning how to be a better person.

I think that there are some things you can never learn if you don't go out of your country. Travel is a great way to learn about life, and if you have the opportunity to have a foreign experience, do that!

It seems like only yesterday that I came to Lock Haven, but the day when I return to Spain is near... and it saddens me. I know that I'm going to miss even the terrible cold weather that I grew to hate. But on the other hand, I'm happy because my skills have risen a great deal.

So, next summer I'm going to Italy to improve my Italian.

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Sara Picazo is a student at Lock Haven University, studying journalism.



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