

EVERY YEAR, COLLIN COLLEGE GIVES YOU an opportunity to travel the world vicariously. The *Passport to the World* lecture series features professors and staff members who share their worldwide travel experiences through free lectures that are open to the public.

“My husband Curtis and I have made travel a priority in our lives,” said Rebecca Harris, a graduate of Plano Senior High School and now a professor of Speech Communication at Collin College. Last spring, she gave a presentation about her travels in New Zealand, and this fall, she will talk about Yellowstone National Park.

Travel the world at Collin College

BY SHARON HUDGINS

LAND OF LORD OF THE RINGS

During their trip “down under” in the Southern Hemisphere, the couple spent 12 days in New Zealand, visiting Queenstown on the South Island, which had spectacular views of snow-capped mountains overlooking the bay; and Kaikoura, on the other side of the island, a popular place for watching wildlife, including seals, whales, dolphins and seabirds.

The Harrises then went to Wellington, the country’s cosmopolitan capital, located on the southern side of New Zealand’s North Island. The city is also known as the country’s cultural capital because of its many museums and arts venues.

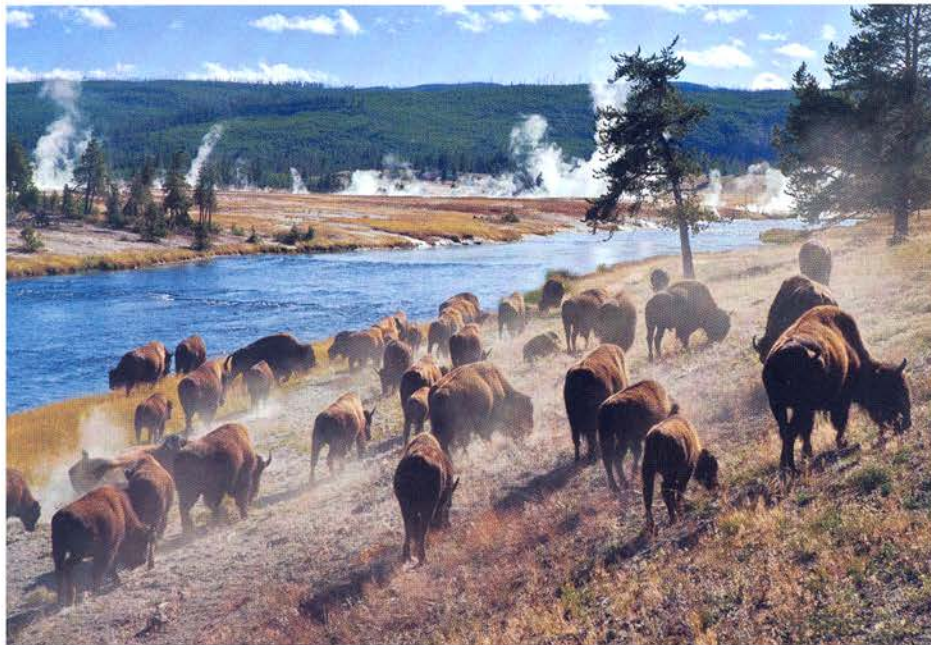
“One of the most interesting afternoons I’ve ever spent was on a ‘glow-worm tour’ to the caves of Waitomo, lying down on the floor and looking at glowing larva on the ceilings,” Harris recounted. “After that, we spent several days in Auckland, New Zealand’s largest city, sunning on the beach and also taking ferries out to the smaller islands including Waiheke, the ‘Island of Wine.’ The landscape is so beautiful. No wonder *Lord of the Rings* was filmed in New Zealand.”

AT HOME IN YELLOWSTONE


While New Zealand was a once-in-a-lifetime adventure for the Harrises, Yellowstone National Park, located mainly in Wyoming, is a place they’ve returned to dozens of times. When Curtis was growing up, he spent summers there with his family. After he and Rebecca were married, the couple continued to visit, even spending two New Year’s Eves snowmobiling in the park.

“At Yellowstone, I feel more at home than anywhere I’ve ever lived in my life,” said Rebecca. “The landscape is so diverse—hot springs next to freezing lakes, hidden waterfalls, mudpots and geysers. And I’ve seen almost every kind of major animal that lives there.”

“I love the park,” she added, “because it reminds us that we are all part of something bigger than ourselves, something magical, something permanent, yet fragile at the same time. It needs us to protect it, as much as we need it to keep us connected to each other and to nature.”



Rebecca’s *Passport to the World* lecture, “Yellowstone National Park: Much More than Bison and Bears and Bubbling Hot Springs” will take place on Thursday, October 20, 1–2:15 p.m. at Collin College’s Preston Ridge Campus Conference Center. The presentation will include the history of Yellowstone, how it became a national park, the effects of the big fire in 1989 and a travelogue around the park with descriptions of the animals that live in each area.

For more information and other events in the lecture series, visit collin.edu/academics/passport. 

Travel writer Sharon Hudgins and her husband, Tom Hudgins, an Economics professor at Collin College, have also presented several “Passport to the World” lectures at the college.