

Focusing on Telluride

By Tedi Massey
Young Voices writer

Lebanon students take part in famed Colorado film festival



Logan Burt
A view from the gondola connecting Telluride with Mountain Village; it's a 12-minute ride between the two.

Gondolas travel to the next community over, and it takes an hour just to drive for groceries.

This is Telluride, a little town in Colorado with a population of about 1,800 people. But do not let its size fool you, Telluride is a huge hit every year for its film festival.

This year was the 35th anniversary for the Telluride Film Festival, which ran Aug. 28 through Sept. 1. As part of the City Lights Project (the high school group), our contingent from Lebanon watched 11 films in six days — some of which were making their global premiers.

Everyone who wanted to get in to the movies had to have a pass. Different colors gave meaning to why you were there. For example, I had an orange pass because I am a student. Blue passes meant you were either a director or someone else involved in the making of a film.

After each movie, we would discuss it. Varying from likes and dislikes, to asking why a certain camera movement was put into a scene. Our chaperones made us think deeply about each movie.

The first day we were there we had to introduce ourselves and split up into groups of the unknown. At dinner we sat at tables with all the different groups of people. Afterward we watched a movie the world had never seen before.

That night we were put into rooms mixed with the other high school students. We had spent about eight hours to get to Telluride yet were not tired enough to go to sleep on time. The next day was the only time we got to sleep in — the rest of the days were filled with fun, late bed times and rising early the coming mornings.

We got to speak with many people in discussions. One in particular will stick in my mind forever: film critic Peter Sellers.

"When you look at a piece of paper, you see a cloud," said Sellers.

A piece of paper comes from a tree, and he explained the long process at which it was traced back to a cloud. Everything we touch goes in infinite ways.

Sellers had the most beautiful perspective on life. He talked about different ways of looking and seeing the world. For instance, the "evil eye" and the "eye of love." The evil eye is not "actually seeing the whole" and the eye of love is "what is actually connecting us." His words were so powerful, it made one girl tear up. A boy just got up and hugged him, and the rest of us were in complete awe.

The entire trip was an adventure to all of us, including the chaperones. Each person grew closer to the next. We had set group activities, yet it did not stop us from doing some things on our own. We had late night parties to dye hair and played Hacky Sack every chance we got. Two chaperones joined in to "hack" and one joined to get his hair dyed.

At the end of it all we had one wish: for the festival to just keep going. We exchanged numbers and know this is one experience we will never forget. We learned how to interact in discussion groups, meet and talk with new people, and how to be pushed to the limits and still keep on going.

The little town of Telluride, Colo. Whenever I see a piece of paper, I will forever think of a cloud.

Tedi Massey is a senior at Lebanon High School.