

Why I Love Mount Olive

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I'm finally back in the office after two weeks on the road. I traveled from South-West Virginia to Baltimore, Maryland last week for a National College Conference. I definitely enjoyed myself, I got to see different places and people; actually it surprised me how different it is going from North Carolina to Virginia and then Maryland. Each state definitely has a unique feel.

In Baltimore, I had some downtime and explored the city's cultural district, where they had the first monument built for George Washington and the Inner Harbor where the submarine that fired the last shots of World War 2 still sits. After my evening fair in Baltimore, I bought some takeout food from the food court and ate down by the water, feeling pretty lucky that I got to call this work.

What surprised me the most however, was how much I actually missed Mount Olive while I was away. By the end of the first week, I was getting tired of relying on the GPS, moving from hotel to hotel and eating out for every meal. I thought to myself, "Man, I can't wait to get back to Mount Olive." I guess there is just something about our small town that grows on you; the familiar surroundings and faces, knowing exactly where everything is and the fact that life is only as hectic as you want to make it.

That was definitely something I wanted to tell students and parents that I got to talk to these past two weeks; it's really about where you feel comfortable learning and growing.

I mentioned last week, about the success of the jar of Mount Olive pickles (Kosher Dills to be exact, one girl asked me "does this mean you're keeping it Kosher?"), but I took it to another level this week. I was asked by someone to tell me the story with the pickles, so being put on the spot, I improvised a story that I ended up using a few times.

It was somewhere along the lines of a man traveling the desolate American landscape many years ago in search of a quality education, when he stumbled upon Mount Olive and some man-eating pickles that had taken over Eastern North Carolina. He fought valiantly and captured them into this jar (I would then gesture to the jar in my hand), and now the world is safe.

It seemed to interest some students, as they brought their friends over to hear the story too. After I told the story I definitely followed up with some serious talk about college, so I hope it wasn't unethical.

Anyway, enough rambling from me. Have a great week.