

Stephen Moore

What should we know about you?

My name is Stephen Moore. At the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC), I studied computer engineering, mathematics and writing. I am pursuing research in a field called ocean energy technologies, which encompasses the systems designed to harvest energy from the mechanical and thermal properties of ocean waves and deep sea currents. I spent a year studying at Swansea University in Wales, where I discovered both this field of research and my desire to teach. It is my goal to work at a university, pushing this renewable energy source forward while instructing students of energy engineering.

Is it difficult to receive a Fulbright scholarship?

How did you get it?

This was a very difficult position to receive and I am extremely grateful that I was granted the opportunity to experience it. I worked in the study abroad office at UMBC, and my boss was also the university's Fulbright advisor. One day, he came by my desk with an application and said to me, "You are going to Poland." As it turned out, he was right. I spent the next year refining my statements and application materials until he deemed them acceptable, then I waited through the several months of uncertainty before discovering whether or not I would receive the interview which would then decide whether or not I would receive the grant.



What are the advantages of the scholarship?

I have yet to find a disadvantage of this scholarship. As one who aims to teach at a university, the opportunity to work as a Fulbright student is invaluable. We gain experience adapting not only to a new job, but to an entirely new culture and language. Additionally, we are granted all the time we need to pursue our own projects. In my case, this time allows me to further my research and prepare for graduate studies after the grant ends. I like to think that the reason we are called Fulbright Students is because while we do teach English as part of our position, we learn so much more from everyone around us throughout the year.

Why did you choose Poland?

Poland's Fulbright position was unique in that it was targeted towards STEM students with a passion for teaching. In addition, I spent several months conducting research on the Baltic Sea's compatibility with certain ocean wave technologies, which I based around Poland's potential profit from such installations. Between what the position offered and how relevant it was to my research, I couldn't

think of any better location to pursue this opportunity.

What do you hope to learn here?

In addition to at least some Polish, I hope to learn mostly about myself, my abilities and my interests. While I have a current plan for a future in academia, I accept that this will probably change as events transpire over the next few months. The Fulbright ETA position provides the perfect opportunity to refine my goals into a concrete vision for the future. But going back to my first statement, I need to learn Polish. Aside from the language being the only medium for meaningful communication around the city, learning this language is one of the greatest challenges I have met and I cannot turn down that challenge.

Can you tell us something about yourself? What do you like doing apart from teaching?

I am very much what one would call a “gamer.” When I come across a new challenge, I cannot help but take it on. Whether that challenge comes through video games, puzzles, archery, fencing, rock climbing or any other obstacle-laden task, I love the sense of adventure and accomplishment one receives while seeing it through to the end. I am currently searching for an archery range somewhere in Poznan for that very reason. I also have my research, which will take up a considerable amount of my time outside of teaching. That said, I am always open to new experiences, so I look forward to any new adventures that present themselves throughout the year.

What did you find the most interesting when you first came to Poland?

With my weak grasp of the Polish language, I was planning to struggle quite a lot when I arrived in Poland. I was expecting what I have experienced before: when one does

not know a country’s native language, locals tend to react with some hostility to that ignorance. Poland is different, however. Whenever communication breaks down due to that language barrier, I have found that people here are almost always more than willing to struggle through the situation to help me understand. It is difficult to put into words, but the most interesting and impressive aspect of life here in Poland is the lack of that hostility which I grew to expect.

What shocked or surprised you the most?

My response to this would be the same as for the previous question; I tend to brace myself for scowls and disregard when I say “Przepraszam, mówię trochę po polsku,” but instead I am faced with a smile and a laugh, followed by a helping hand.

What is your experience of Poland so far?

The first couple of weeks have been a wonderful experience. Aside from my discovery that I am allergic to most of the nature in Poland, settling in has been peaceful and my trips around Poznan and Warsaw have been incredible. I have never been a student of history, but I have been finding myself enthralled by the rich background of the Polish culture. Exploring the city provides a visual tour through its history, as everything from architecture to roadwork changes as you walk through time. I look forward to learning more about the area as the year progresses.

How did you adapt? Have you had any help settling in?

I adapted rather quickly thanks to the help of Margo, the other Fulbright student at PUT. Since she had already endured the obstacles of the first few weeks by the time I arrived, she was able to make my transition significantly easier.

Christmas celebrations

Christmas in Poland is a major annual celebration and the observance of Christmas. It has been developed gradually over centuries, starting back in ancient times,

mixing old pagan customs with the religious ones introduced after the Christianization of Poland by the Catholic Church.

Polish people put hay under the tablecloth on Christmas Eve to remind them of a stable and a manger. When the table is made for Christmas dinner, an extra place is set, should a lone wanderer need a place to eat. One tradition unique to Poland is the sharing of "opłatek", a thin wafer into which a holy picture is pressed.

In Poland, Christmas Eve is a day first of fasting, then of feasting. The Christmas Eve dinner begins at the appearance of the first star. Traditionally there are twelve dishes on the table including carp, herring, pierogi or uszka and borscht or mushroom soup.

It is followed by the exchange of gifts. St. Nicholas does not play a major role on Christmas Day, but is celebrated on his Saint feast day of December 6th. He visits good children in secret and leaves presents for them.

At night Polish people attend the Midnight Mass and the next day, the Christmas Day, is often spent visiting friends.

Christmas in the US is also widely celebrated festive holiday. In the US Santa Claus was born in the 1860's he was named this as he had a white beard and a belly, so he

was named Santa Claus as this was the Dutch word for St Nicholas, Sintaklaas. In 1863 he was given the name Santa Claus and bore the red suit, pipe, and his reindeer and sleigh.

Now Christmas celebrations vary greatly between regions of the United States, because of the variety of nationalities which have settled in it.

However, the traditional Christmas dinner is roast turkey with vegetables and sauces. For dessert it is rich, fruity Christmas pudding with brandy sauce. Mince pies, pastry cases filled with a mixture of chopped dried fruit.

The majority of Americans celebrate Christmas with the exchange of gifts and greetings and with family visits. For many, the day begins on Christmas Eve with the Midnight Mass.

Americans like to decorate their homes with holly, mistletoe and branches of trees, most have a Christmas tree adorned with electric lights, tinsel, baubles, strings of popcorn and candy canes.

In England, Christmas Day and Boxing Day are the most important days. Christmas Eve is a day of preparations, office parties and waiting

for Santa (or Father Christmas). Children wait for presents, which they open the following morning, on the 25th December. They also hang up stockings, hoping that Santa will fill them with gifts.

Christmas Day is the day of opening presents. This is also the day of the traditional Christmas dinner, with a turkey or a goose, and sides, such as potatoes, roasted vegetables and gravy. Then there's the famous British



Traditional Christmas pudding and mince pies

pudding, full of dried fruit, spices and sherry, and served with brandy sauce.

Another traditional Christmas food are mince pies, which are not made with mince meat at all. They are simply baked pastries filled with a mixture of dried and candied fruit and spices.

It is impossible to have a Christmas Day dinner without crackers; small cardboard tubes covered in colourful paper.

When pulled from the opposite ends, they spill their contents: a paper hat, a funny gadget, and a corny joke.

After dinner the British enjoy another indispensable element of Christmas which is the Queen's speech. It began with King George V, who delivered the first broadcast speech in 1932. Since that time, the Queen addresses the people in a Christmas Broadcast.

Top 5 Christmas Songs

Well, it's that time of year again and it wouldn't be the same without a few good Christmas songs. So, to get you in the festive mood, we've rounded up five of the best along with a little bit of info about the people who made them. Enjoy!

1 **Bing Crosby - White Christmas**

Harry 'Bing' Crosby was responsible for possibly the most famous Christmas song of all time. His nickname 'Bing' came from his enthusiasm for a comic strip he read as a kid called the Bingville Bugle. Also, during World War II, he was known as 'Der Bingle' among his German fans.

2 **Slade - Merry Christmas Everybody**

Slade come from the Black Country in England and made a name for themselves playing glam rock and wearing extremely loud clothes. Merry Christmas Everybody was originally written "as a joke" but turned out to be their biggest ever hit!

3 **The Pogues - Fairytale Of NYC**

Filming the video for this song was not easy. Some scenes were shot in a real police station in NYC and actor Matt Dillon admitted being afraid after being instructed by members of the band to treat singer Shane MacGowan 'rough' while filming their scenes. The results were magical though and this song has been hailed by many as the finest Christmas song ever recorded.

4 **Wham! - Last Christmas**

The battle for the UK Christmas number 1 slot in 1984 seemed to be between Frankie Goes To Hollywood and Wham! Neither made it though, as The Band Aid project beat them to it. In fact, even after subsequent re-releases, "Last Christmas" still never made it to the top slot but holds a record for being the best selling song ever not to make it to number 1.

5 **Mariah Carey - All I Want For Christmas Is You**

Carey penned this song along with Walter Afanasieff and it went on to sell over 14 million copies worldwide. It was released in 1994 and even though this was almost halfway through the decade, it became the most-played Christmas song of the nineties. Rolling Stone magazine have called it 'Holiday Standard' and the last royalties count in 2013 stood at \$50 million.

Try matching the song with the pictures of the artists.

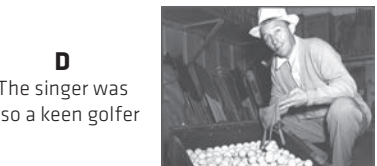


A
She made a pretty penny from her Christmas hit

B
The lead singer and songwriter of the band



C
their hit song never made it to number 1



D
The singer was also a keen golfer



E
The band was well known for their fashion sense

Key: 1D, 2E, 3B, 4C, 5A