

## Class of 2012 begins academic journey on Thompson Island



Freshmen Scholars engage in an exercise fostering teamwork and camaraderie.

*By Karen Kovaka, A&S '12*

It is always a bit surprising to feel a sudden pressure on your ankle. The surprise can turn into terror when you realize that the slight “pressure” is actually the hand of someone six inches taller and fifty pounds heavier than you grabbing onto your leg. Thankfully, though, terror can turn into relief when you realize that no one is harming you: you are just on Thompson Island participating in an Outward Bound team building activity with a group of Presidential Scholars, and the ankle grabbing is just a cultural tradition invented and practiced by a “nomadic” tribe that, apparently, goes by the name of *Bojankety*.

I know that I speak for the entire group of freshman Presidential Scholars when I say that the Thompson Island retreat totally shattered our expectations. We did not plan on inventing customs for made-up

### Inside...

Day of Service.....p.2  
Summer Programs....p.4-7  
In the News.....p.9



*By Tue Tran, A&S '11*

Service is a pillar of the Presidential Scholars Program as well as an essential element of the Jesuit tradition of service, which is why the Program includes a summer of service after freshman year. This summer, in addition to the two placements at which the rising sophomore Scholars volunteered, included a new event that took place on June 4th. Student leaders of the Watertown Youth Coalition (WYC), an organization committed to fostering healthy lifestyles among the youth of Watertown, joined the Scholars at Boston

## Class of 2011 Community Service Placements

At the close of their freshman year, Scholars remain in Boston for six weeks to volunteer in various placements. This program allows students to get to know the local communities on a much more intimate level while serving populations that are often forgotten and overlooked by mainstream society. The following is a reflection of one current sophomore.

# Freshman Scholars serve greater Boston area

By Brian Varian, CSOM '11

Over the course of my freshman year at Boston College, I had grown quite familiar with the city of Boston, a place I now rightfully regard as a second home. During that first year I availed myself of the many cultural and recreational opportunities that Boston has to offer. I traveled on the Green Line to the North End, Symphony Hall, Boston Common, the Prudential Center, and many other worthwhile destinations. I experienced a city steeped in history, resplendent with diversity, and thoroughly enraptured by progress.

This past summer, I traveled on the Green Line to Haley House, not a typical destination for many Bostonians, but a worthwhile destination, nonetheless. At Haley House, I experienced the breadth of diversity in Boston, which assuredly extends to socio-economic diversity. Haley House, located in the South End of Boston, is a self-described “spiritually based community nurtured by the personalist tradition of the Catholic Worker Movement” that provides a wide array of programs for the community, including low income housing, soup kitchen, food pantry, bakery café, cooking lessons, elder meals, and more. For six weeks I was involved in the day-to-day operations of Haley House, working with the elderly, indigent, and neglected—the most vulnerable and voiceless members of society. This was a side of Boston that I had not yet seen, a side of Boston that some lifelong Bostonians had never seen. This was one component of the PSP Summer Service Program.

This year, Scholars of the Class of 2011 served at a variety of placements: Haley House, Hampshire Educational Collaborative, The Italian Home for Children, The Labouré Center, Project Bread Foodsource Hotline, Rosie’s Place, Saint Francis House, and Suffolk County Correctional Facility. While the experiences of the Scholars varied according to their particular placements (each Scholar served at two placements), Scholars

were asking many of the same questions over the course of the six-week program: “Are the poor entitled to a choice?” “How do people become homeless?” “What role do laws play in society?” In large part, these questions were facilitated by weekly seminars led by Professor David McMenamin, Director of Boston College’s Pulse Program. At the seminars, Scholars discussed selected readings that resonated with the service they had undertaken during the week. These readings were: *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, by Jane Jacobs; *Doing the Truth in Love*, by Father Michael Himes; *Development as Economic Freedom*, by Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen, *Discourses on Inequality*, by Jean-Jacques Rousseau; *The Working Poor*, by David Shipler; and *The Plague*, by Albert Camus. Not only were the readings insightful in

their own respect, they also provided some common ground as a basis for excellent discussions.

Each week, Scholars wrote reflections on their service. For many, these reflections were quite personal and oftentimes remarkably revealing of our character and its development. Undeniably, the Summer Service Program awakened the emotions of every Scholar, but in very different ways. While some Scholars expressed feelings of sorrow, others communicated feelings of confusion, still others conveyed feelings of joy – joy in celebrating the dignity of every individual, regardless of circumstance. Yet, all Scholars were challenged personally and changed for the better by this experience.

Now, when I travel on the Green Line, I know exactly what city it leads to.

The following is an excerpt from a reflection written by Tue Tran, A&S '11, a Communication major from Nebraska:

“The overwhelming emotions I felt included powerlessness the week 2011

# Sophomores engage in foreign culture

*By Patrick Passarelli, A&S '10*

Though relatively brief, my four weeks in France with the Presidential Scholars Summer International Experience made my world simultaneously shrink and expand. Although I had studied the French language intermittently over a period of five years, visiting France allowed me to enter into a culture I had only experienced through staged textbook photographs, literary excerpts, gastronomical delights,



*Each summer the rising senior Scholars complete internship experiences that challenge them to venture into private and non-profit organizations in order to apply the knowledge and leadership skills that they have cultivated over their three years at Boston College.*

## Peacemaking in the Middle East



Amy Kyleen Lute, A&S '09, with community activists in Palestine.

**By Amy Kyleen Lute, A&S '09**

For most Americans, the Middle East is a headline, a hijab, a terrorist. Jerusalem is an epicenter of spiritual experience and religious history, but it remains surreal to most Americans. Our exposure is, for the most part, limited to Sunday mornings of reading the New York Times and listening to the Gospel at church. Despite this limited exposure, we still hold some vague understanding that this mysterious place does actually exist somewhere outside our imaginations.

This summer I was fortunate enough to live within Jerusalem and come to know its layered history and realities which allowed me to form my own perceptions. Fittingly, my initiation into this complex region was an intensely challenging seven-hour trip from Amman, Jordan – where I had been studying abroad – to the holy city. Five of the seven hours were spent being interrogated and herded through Israeli security checkpoints. Despite continually reminding myself that I was surrounded by people who

had it worse, I still could not help but feel that this atmosphere was demeaning, emasculating and unjust. This was the first of many such experiences that I was to endure over the next seven weeks.

The lessons that I learned and the experiences that I had gave me unique insight into the infinitely-complex situation in which I was immersed and also shed new light on my abilities, interests, and passions. By choosing to intern in Jerusalem, I ensured that I would be challenged not only at my placement, but in every minute of every day. These challenges came in many different forms: speaking Arabic, adjusting to new cultures and value systems, constantly being exposed to opposing opinions and beliefs and attempting to give every person and perspective equal weight. I was an object of potential, power, sex, healing, hatred and admiration. My situation mandated that I be at all times mindful of my actions, words and appearance.

As soon as I arrived I was given tasks and contacts, and I fit securely into a community of non-government

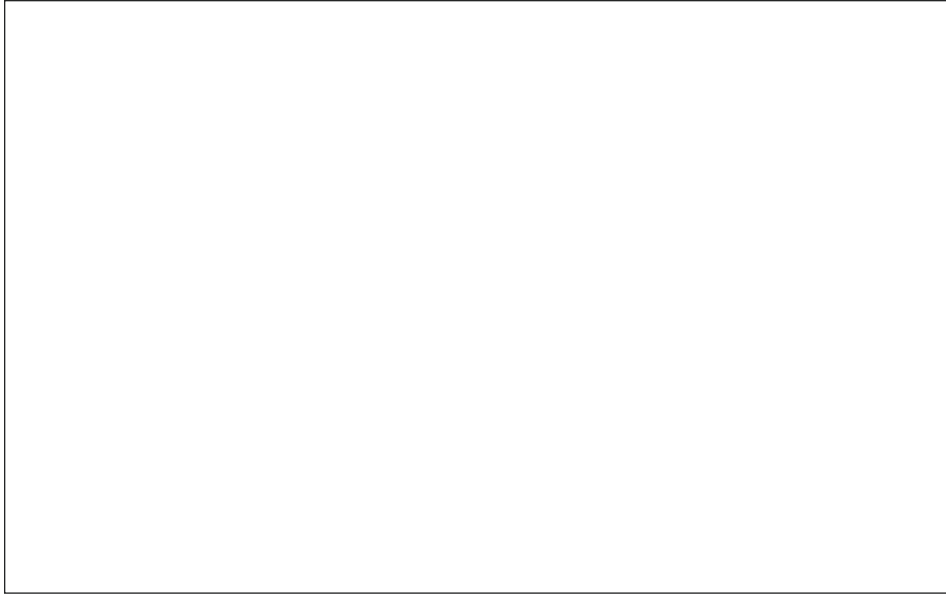
organizations (NGO's) and foreign intervention that was more extensive than I ever imagined. I was working for Middle East Nonviolence and Democracy, an NGO that promotes a culture of nonviolence in Palestinian communities. Through the framework of an Active Nonviolence Network, regional coordinators work to educate and empower their communities with training, workshops, seminars and summer camps. The organization relies heavily on these local community organizers and activists as well as on media and educational campaigns to create a respected alternative to violent struggle against the occupation.

While I was there, I facilitated and translated seminars and interviews. I was present during conferences and conversations between people who have devoted their lives to ending an oppression that does not directly affect them beyond their own empathy and guilt. I was introduced to an entanglement of good-intentioned, international community organizers who attempt to impose their ideas onto a suffering population without once asking the people themselves what should be done.

It afforded me an opportunity to see reality in a conflict that is drastically distorted and misrepresented. I was privy to the trust and honesty of so many Palestinian people who shared their stories, homes, traumas and dreams with me. I came to see Jerusalem in its broken and layered reality. I observed with interest the inner workings of grassroots organizations and the inefficient, laborious funding circus. I was frustrated by both the lack of accountability in these organizations and the waste of precious resources.

From these unexpected outcomes and lessons, I emerged – alhamdulillah, thanks be to God – with a cracked and jostled foundation, but also with the inside of me to question, learn, and discern. My experiences these past two months have helped me begin to chip away at the uncertainty of my future by further defining my passions and direction.

# A summer down under



Pilar Landon, A&S '09, pulls a raft full of rotting sea grass during her hands-on internship.

**By Pilar Landon, A&S '09**

It's 5:50 a.m. and I'm huddled behind the open door of the "ute", the one place offering refuge from the icy gusts tearing across Cape Banks. I'm dreading the moment when I'll need to strip down and start struggling to pull on my damp wetsuit. The scalloped sky promises a nice sunrise – the one silver lining amongst all this drudgery. "Gotta love an early low tide," says the post-doc, as we researchers set out for the tidal boulder field, viewing

tubes and waterproof notebooks in hand.

Sure, doing research on marine biology at the University of Sydney sounds glamorous at first – lounging on the shore, examining tide pools, traveling up and down the coast – but the reality is a little ... murkier. In my eight weeks as a research assistant, I waded through waist-deep mud while hauling a raft filled with rotting sea grass, bolted cages to a seawall in the harbor during a torrential downpour, I very nearly drowned in quicksand, and spent hours plodding

around in a lake which our experiments happened to share with a 21-foot long great white shark. But those are just the highlights.

I also observed rare and unusual aquatic Australian life up close and personal – "friendly" octopuses that play tug of war with you, others that glow blue and will kill you with one bite, seaweed that looks like Pop-it beads from the '90s, snails that look like black pebbles. I learned how to tell an insect larva from a piece of sea grass, how to patiently separate entangled amphipods, and how to pick out and identify 1,000-plus worms from a sample of dirt. I gained experience in all sorts of ecological experimentation methods, and came to understand the logic behind much of the experimental design and analysis.

My experience in Sydney during the summer of 2008 was the first time that I stopped looking at the ocean as something that provided for us and, instead, as something that, through study, we could start to provide for and protect. It is no secret that the ocean is teeming with life arguably more varied than what we find on land, but the only way we can maintain this diversity is to understand it and what it means to preserve it. Science provides clues to this puzzle, but it is by no means the complete answer. It was a winter in July that I will not soon forget.

# Serious business at Comedy Central

**By Nick Ackerman, A&S '09**

I was fortunate enough to spend my summer in the Programming Department at the Comedy Central offices in Manhattan, New York. I spent time in Programming's three sub-departments: Program Scheduling, Promotion Scheduling, and Digital Programming. Additionally, I teamed up with two other interns to pitch two television shows to Comedy Central executives as a cumulative project—by all accounts a resounding success.

As someone with no previous experience in the entertainment industry, the Programming Department allowed me to observe the astounding amount of behind-the-scenes work that goes into

running a television network. Over the course of the summer, I helped create Comedy Central's on-air schedule, catalogued hundreds of episodes of "Futurama" and "South Park" to provide easy access for theme weeks, and wrote descriptions of "Daily Show" and

# Seniors present summer internships

*By Zachary Zimmerman, A&S '12, and  
Jessica Seminelli, A&S '12*

Prior to the beginning of senior year, Presidential Scholars complete a summer-long internship experience, gaining skills in their prospective professions while also expanding personal knowledge and global awareness. On September 16, ten members of the senior class presented brief outlines of their summer experiences and offered insight and advice to underclassmen. Ranging in scope from business internships to academic research and spanning the globe from Australia to Boston, each Scholar had a unique, mind-opening summer.

Tim Mooney, A&S '09, spoke about his work in the corporate sector at UBS in Stamford, CT. He was employed in a credit-risk management position, which required him to analyze the risk in macro finances and manage credit for large businesses and banks. Working in the midst of the current economic crisis made his work especially poignant and realistic as he dealt directly with the ramifications of the credit crunch.

Interning in a research setting, Matt Hamilton, A&S '09, spent his summer working with Dr. Arthur Kaplan at the University of Pennsylvania studying the field of Bioethics. His internship culminated in a trip to the SES European Summer Activity at which Matt served

as an ambassador of Bioethics, sharing his new knowledge from Dr. Kaplan and bringing to the European constituency about American findings.

Jeff Sun, A&S '09, worked for JP Morgan Asset Management in New York, NY, serving as a member of the strategic investment advisory group with a focus on international clients. He displayed the graphs and systems he developed to assess risk and model optimization for different portfolios.

Michael Camacho, A&S '09, followed an interest in theology and Polish to create his tri-partite internship. He began his summer in Kansas City, studying the works of Pope John Paul II and writing terms for the glossary of the Pope's academic work. He then spent one week in an immersion program on Catholic Sexual Ethics in Philadelphia, which correlated well with his work in Kansas City. Michael finally ended his summer in Poland, completing an intensive language program.

Nicole Wong, A&S '09, combined a traditional internship setting with community service, working for Phaidon Press in New York City and volunteering for 826NYC. At Phaidon Press, an internationally acclaimed art book publisher, Nicole worked on the sales team, which was an interesting experience as previously she had only dabbled in the editorial aspects of publishing. At 826NYC, much of her time was spent at a summer filmmaking camp, culminating in a screening of the students' movies, which was a powerful representation of the impact of her volunteer work.

Tim Kelly, A&S '09, completed his internship as a lab assistant to Dr. Douglas Kerr at the Johns Hopkins Institute for Cellular Engineering. His work specifically focused on testing treatments for Multiple Sclerosis, using mice as models for new pharmaceutical products. He gained new appreciation for lab work, great exposure to the field of medicine, and shared his time with a doctor whom he respects greatly.

Nate Keegan, A&S '09, shared his two-pronged experiences, having spent the first two weeks of his summer in Argentina learning Spanish and the remainder of his time researching psycholinguistics at Harvard. In Harvard's Lab for Developmental Studies, Nate worked with

renowned linguists while conducting child development studies. Much of the research incorporated Spanish speakers, which perfectly combined his language studies with his interest in psycholinguistics.

Additional presenters psycholinguistics.







**ink on these things**

*Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.*

*- St. Paul (Letter to the Philippians 4:8)*