

THE AMPERSAND

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Special points of interest:

- Lincoln Student Laureate winner!
- Read about our editor's trip to Italy.
- Important end of semester reminders.



A NOTE FROM DEAN KAUFMAN

Hopefully, everyone has had a chance to enjoy the fall foliage; the campus looks terrific.

The end of the fall semester finds the Honors College Advisory Board (HCAB) preparing for our 15th annual Honors College Ball to be held on Saturday, February 23rd. I look forward to seeing many of you there. Please remember that there is a silent auction at the Ball.

All proceeds from the auction support student scholarships.

I would like to take a moment to thank everyone who has commented so positively on the new look of the Ampersand. Congratulations to the student editorial, graphic, layout and writing staff on their accomplishment.

Here's hoping your semester comes to a comfortable close.



Dean Lon Kaufman

NEWS FROM THE HONORS COLLEGE ADVISORY BOARD

First, congratulations to the newly elected HCAB Freshman Representatives. Anita Mathew and Prashansa Sharma are both Biological Sciences majors and are interested in becoming involved with planning activities and getting to know more students.

When asked about her new role as the new freshman rep, Anita had this to say. "Before coming to UIC, I had the mindset that I would be coming home every weekend just because there would be no social atmosphere here. Fortunately, I was mistaken, and a major reason why was because of the community established

by the Honors College. I was interested in being involved with HCAB because networking and social interactions are a huge part of a good and well-rounded college experience and HCAB definitely helps to promote these."

Prashansa also shared her thoughts about joining, saying "I wanted to join HCAB because I wanted to better involve myself with the Honors College. Not only did it look like fun (the board members seemed so passionate), but I knew it would allow me to understand how the Honors College works with its students. I like being involved

in organizations that listen to others' opinions and create a better environment.

Hopefully, I can share new ideas which allow all students (commuters and residents) to connect to and feel comfortable in the Honors College; I'm excited to work between the staff and students."

HCAB has been very busy lately, as evident by all the activities that have been happening at the Honors College! We hosted our fall semester luncheon on November 7th. Approximately 270 students and over 40 faculty and staff enjoyed the fare from Athena restaurant.

(cont. on page 8)

ALTERNATIVE SPRING BREAK AUCTION A HUGE SUCCESS!

ANAND SANDESARA

"Do I hear ninety dollars, ninety dollars, ninety dollars? Going once, twice, three times, sold!" On the evening of Monday, November 5th, Alternative Spring Break held its annual live auction to help fund various weeklong service trips for UIC students. Professor Jeff Lewis once again honored the event as the presiding auctioneer and graced the audience with his incredible voice and encouragement to help ASB have a hugely successful event.

As one of the most unique fundraisers on campus, Alternative Spring Break holds silent and live auctions once a year. This year, the events took place in the Illinois Room of Student Center East and drew in admirable crowds of students, parents, faculty, and staff, all aiming to grab the best deals possible on a variety of hot items. Thanks to the fundraising efforts of the ASB Board, this year's auction had a large and varied collection of items up for auction. These included restaurant gift cards, hotel

packages, comedy club tickets, sports tickets, spa sessions, gym memberships, bars, cruises, Kaplan courses, gift baskets, autographed memorabilia, RA dates and artwork from a Pilsen graffiti artist. Bidding became quite competitive as signs waved wildly through the audience on announced items in the live auction. Thanks to all of the support, ASB was able to raise nearly \$6,000 to help offer a wide range of trips for the lowest possible cost to college students.

Alternative Spring Break, coming up on its ninth year at UIC, is a student organization open to all UIC students aimed at fostering a spirit of community service. For a week during winter break and spring break, groups of students travel to volunteer at sites across the country that tackle a wide range of social issues. Individuals learn more about the problems facing our nation and help alleviate them first-hand, while exploring new parts of the country and making lifelong

friends. In recent years, we have worked with issues surrounding urban poverty, rural poverty, homelessness, Native American reservations, HIV/AIDS, environmental conservation, and more.

This winter, we have three trips offered. One team will be traveling down to New Orleans to work with the National Wildlife Federation in revitalizing the environment damaged by Hurricane Katrina. A second team will be working with La Union del Pueblo Entero in San Juan, Texas to help the poor migrant communities living on the US-Mexico border. The last team will be working with Habitat for Humanity, building houses in West Palm Beach, Florida. All trips promise to be affordable and life changing experiences!

For detailed information on each trip, please visit www.asbuic.org, and feel free to contact us at asbuic@gmail.com. Applications are now up on the website, so check them out and turn them in ASAP!!

103,680 MINUTES IN MADRID

ELIZABETH BOYLE

As Christmas decorations begin to make their gradual debut within the windows of local *tiendas*, and Christmas trees stand proudly near the Plaza Mayor, it seems nearly impossible that this semester is nearing its end, and that my time here is almost half-way through. Stunned exclamations of, "We only have how many weeks left?" and the dawning knowledge that there are still many sights left unseen for many students, is a poignant reminder that there is still much to do for some. I count myself quite fortunate to still have another semester to look forward to, especially considering the length of my "Places to See and Things to Do List." Yet it seems surreal that conversation is now dominated by discussion of plans for the upcoming Winter Break, and the saddening thought that soon it will be time to say good-bye to many peers as they return home.

103,680 minutes, and it is now that I have finally come to find my stride within the city of Madrid. No longer do I need to prepare all of the needed vocabulary before heading out to a restaurant, bar, or any excursion in the city, because it has become second nature. The rhythm of Madrid has become a part of me, and has challenged me to experience life in a countless number of new ways. From traveling to *barrrios* that are not listed in Frommers, to tasting that new dish where I cannot identify one food component, or getting lost in its maze of streets only to discover a new plaza, the city continues to surprise me. Madrid is a city built for those who wish to delve beyond the superficial to

truly understand its core, and it invites its inhabitants to take this journey. Experts in finding the equilibrium between working hard and playing hard, *Madrileños* truly know how to live life with fervor, as they approach each day as a new experience, and open themselves to embracing the new and the unknown. At times it can be quite overwhelming to witness the passion that seems to radiate from every corner within the city, but in a blink of an eye, one is swept up in its momentum, and the passion begins to beat within their soul.

The most beautiful lesson I have come to learn is that each day continues to be a learning experience, and I should approach it as such. It is never an easy task to challenge one's self to live life in the manner, as it is necessary to continually remind one's self to push the envelope. However, the results are indescribable, as life becomes filled with more beauty, and self-discovery abounds. I have learned deeply about the person that I am currently, and the person that I hope to become. The scary truth is that one cannot begin to imagine the amount of personal growth that occurs, unless one lives it. As I look forward to the coming semester I am anxious to see the new discoveries I shall make, the new knowledge I shall gain, and the greater love for life I shall develop.

Honors College senior Spanish major Elizabeth Boyle is spending the 2007-2008 academic year studying abroad in Spain. This is the second in a series of her reports from Madrid.

COLLEGIATE ATHLETE RECOGNIZED AS LINCOLN STUDENT LAUREATE

LISA B. ZHANG

Earlier this fall, Honors College senior Lisa Petty was selected for the highly prestigious award of Lincoln Academy Student Laureate.

Established in 1965, the Lincoln Academy seeks to recognize Illinois' outstanding students and citizens through two distinct awards: the Lincoln Academy Student Laureate and the Order of the Lincoln. The Academy annually awards the high honor of Student Laureate to one senior from every four-year institution of higher learning in the state of Illinois for excellence in academics and extracurricular activities. Through this award and the Order of the Lincoln, the Lincoln Academy hopes to foster progress and dedication in Illinois citizens.

The 48 recipients of this award were invited to attend an elaborate ceremony held at the Old State Capitol building in Springfield. At the ceremony, United States District Judge Richard Mills presented each student laureate with a medallion and a \$150 scholarship. In addition, UIC plans to match Petty's scholarship.

"I honestly did not realize the magnitude of the award," Petty said, "until I went to Springfield to accept the award. She went on to say that "The ceremony was very elegant and sophisticated. I felt very

lucky and honored to be there."

To be eligible for this award and scholarship, Petty applied through the Office of Special Scholarships. All applicants needed a nomination and a personal statement that shows academic success and involvement at the University and in the community.

During her time at UIC, Petty has been an active member of the cross country and track teams, which gave her many opportunities to volunteer and serve the greater Chicago-land community. Through the athletics department at UIC, she became very in-

"I honestly did not realize the magnitude of the award until I went to Springfield to accept [it]."

involved at the UIC hospital, where she delivered gifts during the winter holidays and taught children about other significant dates such as Martin Luther King Day. Petty was also involved with the Special Olympics Events that are held twice a year in the Physical Education Building. Her responsibilities included setting up the events, teaching the children how to play field

hockey, and encouraging them throughout the games.

Two summers ago, Petty was chosen as the first ever UIC student-athlete to attend the NCAA Leadership Conference in Orlando, Florida. Besides meeting many other stellar athletes from around the country, Petty learned about leadership, communication and problem solving. She believes that the weeklong conference was one of the best experiences of her life, and was excited to bring back and apply what she learned to the athletic programs at UIC.

With a Secondary History Teacher Educations major and a Gender & Women's Studies minor, Petty is currently student teaching at Manley Career Academy in Chicago. She chose to be a history teacher because she loves reading and learning about the topics in and outside of her classes.

At UIC, Petty was intrigued by the numerous details, viewpoints and stories that history and historical figures had to offer, and desires to ignite the same wonder in her students. After graduating this December, she hopes to continue working in the Chicago Public School System as a Social Studies teacher and a cross-country or track coach.

Some Helpful Reminders!

Don't forget to register for HON 222 for spring semester:

CRN: 15072 (for students whose last name starts with A through G)

CRN: 15073 (for students whose last name starts with H through O)

CRN: 20217 (for students whose last name starts with P through Z).



With finals approaching, now is the time to see an Honors College Tutor. You don't need an appointment and they are right upstairs in Room 220 BH. Check out the tutoring schedule online to see when help is offered in a particular class: <http://www.uic.edu/honors/learning/tutoring.shtml>



Honors activity Completion Forms are due by 4 p.m. on Friday, December 14th. After you have obtained the signature of your instructor or activity supervisor, you may turn them in at the Honors College front desk.

NEWS FROM THE OFFICE OF SPECIAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS

The Office of Special Scholarship Programs (OSSP) assists undergraduate and professional students in applying for nationally-competitive scholarships. We also provide information about other scholarships either at UIC or external to the university, advice on application preparation, and assistance throughout the application process.

As the semester winds down, have you begun to wonder if there is funding available to help you cover your for next year? Do you wonder if there's a scholarship to help you study abroad? Would you like to intern at a Washington think tank for a year? Or maybe you'd like to be featured in a national women's magazine? Honors students should consider the following scholarships, for which OSSP will help you apply:

Glamour Top 10 College Women Competition:

The Glamour Top 10 College Women Competition recognizes the exceptional achievements and academic excellence of female college juniors from across the country. Winners receive \$2000, coverage in the October 2008 issue of Glamour, and an opportunity to meet with top female professionals during a trip to New York City.

Candidates are evaluated based on the following criteria: leadership experience, personal involvement and community and campus affairs, and academic excellence. **The national application deadline is November 30, 2007.**

For more information regarding this scholarship opportunity, or to get an original application, please contact the Office of Special Scholarship Programs at 355-2477 or email OSSP at ssp@uic.edu.

Carnegie Endowment Junior Fellows Program:

The Junior Fellows Program at the Carnegie Endowment is designed to provide a substantive work experience for students who have a serious career interest in the area of international affairs. Approximately eight (8) students will be hired to work at the Carnegie Endowment in Washington, DC, on a full-time basis for a period of one year. Junior Fellows provide research assistance to Associates working on Carnegie Endowment's projects such as non-proliferation, democracy building, Middle East political reform, trade & environment, economics, international security, South Asian politics, China-related issues, and Russian and Eurasian affairs, and will have the opportunity to conduct research for books, participate in meetings with high-level officials, contribute to congressional testimony and organize briefings attended by scholars, activists, journalists and government officials.

The monthly salary is \$2,750 (equivalent to \$33,000 annually) subject to federal, state and local taxes. Benefits include medical, dental and life insurance as well as vacation leave. A \$500.00 allowance (less taxes) will be given to individuals relocating to the Washington, DC area. Junior Fellows are responsible for their own housing arrangements.

Students who compete for the Carnegie Junior Fellows Program MUST BE NOMINATED by UIC committee; therefore, there is a UIC deadline and a national deadline. **The UIC deadline is December 3, 2008. The national deadline is January 15, 2008.** For more information or to begin applying, contact Beth Powers or Amanda Onysio of OSSP at 355-2477 or bpowers@uic.edu and amandao@uic.edu, respectively.

National Security Education Program (NSEP) Boren Undergraduate Scholarship:

The NSEP is a unique scholarship opportunity for U.S. undergraduates to study abroad. The NSEP awards scholarships to American students for study of languages and world regions critical to U.S. interests. Scholarships are available for study year round, and students may study for eight weeks (summer), a semester or an entire year.

Award amounts range from \$2,500-\$20,000 depending on the length of study and expenses associated with the program. NSEP Boren Scholars also incur a service agreement requiring that they "enter into an agreement to work in a national security position as a priority in the area of study for which the scholarship was awarded." NSEP is willing to work with students to find ways to fulfill the service requirement.

Students who apply for the NSEP Boren Scholarship must be reviewed by a campus committee; therefore, there is a UIC deadline and a national deadline. **The UIC deadline is January 8, 2008 (during winter break). The national deadline is February 12, 2008.** For more information or to begin applying, contact Amanda Onysio, the NSEP campus representative, at amandao@uic.edu or 355-2477.

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Scholarship Association for UIC (SAUIC) 2008 Scholarship Competition:

The Scholarship Association for UIC was founded in 1963 by a group of concerned faculty, staff and friends of UIC in order to raise money to support scholarships for UIC students. Today, this group of scholarships is a primary source of funding for current UIC students. SAUIC scholarships range in dollar amount from \$500-\$2000.

Awards are offered each spring, and are open to current UIC students who meet the specified requirements for each award. For further information on the awards, please go to the SAUIC website (<http://tiger.uic.edu/orgs/scholar/>) to view both the awards and the eligibility requirements. **Students can apply for as many awards as they are eligible; however, READ THE REQUIREMENTS FOR EACH AWARD CAREFULLY and apply for only those for which you are eligible.**

Applications will become available during Fall 2007 Finals Week (December 11-15, 2007), and can either be filled out online or picked up in OSSP's main office, 2506 UH (Please note – only a limited amount of paper applications will be available). **The SAUIC deadline is February 15, 2008.** For more information, please contact OSSP at 355-2477 or sauic@uic.edu.

STUDENT IN THE SPOTLIGHT

JACQUELINE HARTFORD

Amy Maduram, a first-year GPPA medicine student at UIC, is hardly a typical freshman. This past summer, Maduram was invited to attend the Dr. Bessie F. Lawrence International Summer Science Institute to perform research at the Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot, Israel. She was one of only nineteen students from the USA to participate with fifty other students from around the world.

Maduram's research in the Sachar Lab focused on B-CLL Leukemia, which included extracting bone marrow from mice. Her experience in Israel showed her that "medicine and research are very compatible fields."

At UIC this fall, Maduram began rotations with Dr. Eunice John, the director of pediatric nephrology at the UIC College of Medicine. The rotations, which have lasted for ten weeks since now, were "eye-opening to the fragility of human life and the need for extensive outpatient healthcare long beyond the initial surgery."



Amy Maduram

Interacting with patients and doctors has changed Maduram's outlook about her career in medicine, and initiated a new interest in public health. "I like the idea of studying and researching the role of healthcare policies on patients, especially children who need critical care throughout their lives," Maduram said.

This December, she will be attending the 42nd annual American Society of Cell Biology conference to present her paper, "Organization of Mechanical Forces Generated by Cells and Tissues on Micropatterned Surfaces."

Maduram is also involved in the Undergraduate Research Forum committee, writes for *One World* magazine, is involved in the Society of Future Physicians, and plays violin. Amy first took classes at UIC through the Talented High School Students Program as a high school freshman. She says that by the time she arrived here for her official undergraduate studies, she already felt at home.

ANAND SANDESARA CHOSEN TO REPRESENT UIC AT YP4 SUMMIT

Congratulations to junior History major Anand Sandesara, who has been selected to participate in the Young People For (YP4) National Summit for Young Progressive Leaders. A division of People for the American Way, YP4 selects just 200 students from across the country to take part in its 2008 fellowship program. Fellows receive an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C. from January 17-21, 2008, to attend YP4's National Summit for Young Progressive Leaders.

At the summit, Sandesara will meet other young progressive leaders from all over the country and learn powerful strategies and tactics for creating sustainable social change. Additionally, he will be supported while implementing a self-designed "Blueprint for Social Justice." Other benefits include internship placements, job opportunities, travel opportunities, and networking opportunities.

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

On Tuesday, October 16th, Honors College scholarship recipients were recognized at the 2007 Scholarship Recognition Ceremony. The ceremony took place in the Illinois Room of Student Center East, where Dean Kaufman, Chancellor Manning, and Dean Madia congratulated each of the students. After the ceremony, the students, their families, Honors College staff and faculty enjoyed a reception. Congratulations to all of the recipients, who are listed below.

CEO Scholarship for Women in Engineering

The CEO Scholarship is awarded each year to an outstanding woman in an engineering discipline.

Julie Truong Electrical Engineering

CPS Science Fair Scholarship

The CPS Science Fair Scholarship is awarded to an incoming freshman on the basis of their participation in the Chicago Public Schools Science Fair, scholastic achievement, future goals, and personal interviews.

Ekaterina Khramtsova LAS-Undeclared

Flaherty Scholarship for Study Abroad

The Honors College Flaherty Scholarship is awarded each term to students planning to participate in study abroad, to help defray costs associated with participation in international study.

Elizabeth Boyle Spanish
 Challin Meink Marketing
 Mechu Narayan Neuroscience
 Lea Pagels Psychology & Criminal Justice
 Anand Sandesara History
 Pawan Singh Biological Sciences
 Jenna Wolf Architecture

GPPA Chancellor's Excellence Award

The GPPA Chancellor's Excellence Award honors an incoming GPPA freshman for overall excellence and promise for his or her college career.

Michelle Apple Biological Sciences

Honors College Advisory Board Scholarship

The Honors College Advisory Board (HCAB) Scholarships are awarded to current Honors College students based on merit and need. The awards are funded by money raised by HCAB the student governing board of the Honors College.

Darius Barwacz Psychology
 Dharmesh Bavda LAS-Undeclared

Honors Council Award

The Honors Council Awards are given annually to Honors College students to recognize excellence in their honors activities.

Briana Jackson French
 Emma-Leigh Pearson Biological Sciences
 Michael Peña Nursing

University Scholars Award

The University Scholar Awards are awarded annually to incoming freshmen students covering partial tuition and fees and are renewable for up to 4 years.

Ashraf Abbas Chemistry
 Geethi Abraham Biological Sciences
 Syeda Asad LAS-Undeclared
 Tanya Bhattacharya Bioengineering
 Garrison Buss Mechanical Engineering
 Renee Disrud Movement Sciences
 Joseph Esparaz Biological Sciences
 Meghan Funk Biological Sciences
 Silas Joseph Physics
 Noelle Kwan Biochemistry
 Anna Madrigal LAS-Undeclared
 Amy Maduram Chemistry
 Thaddeus Maguire Biochemistry
 Girish Mohan Biochemistry
 Annakaren Morelos Psychology
 Jocelyn Ou Biological Sciences
 Milan Patel Biological Sciences
 Panyaiotis Petropulos LAS-Undeclared
 Yevgeniy Raskin LAS-Undeclared
 Jordan Schultz Biochemistry
 Khushbu Shah Neuroscience
 Jack Shen Biological Sciences
 Chen Shi Biological Sciences
 Benjamin Trimble Chemistry
 Melissa Wagner Biochemistry
 Annie Wang Biological Sciences
 Grace Wu Biological Sciences
 Lisa Zhang Chemical Engineering

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John Curtis Johnson

The John Curtis Johnson award is awarded annually to an Honors College freshman who has excelled in his or her Honors College core. The award is named for former Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs John Curtis Johnson, a long-time friend and supporter of the Honors College.

Priscilla Kunamalla Biological Sciences

Kerr Scholarship

The Kerr Scholarship is awarded annually to an incoming freshman student, covering full tuition and fees, plus a housing stipend, and is renewable for up to 4 years. The award is named for Howard Kerr, former Dean of the Honors College.

Ruixan Jiang Chemistry

Sarah Madonna Kabbes Scholarship

The Sarah Madonna Kabbes Scholarship is awarded to outstanding students who have served as Undergraduate Research Assistants. Ms. Kabbes was an alumna of the Urbana-Champaign campus and a former faculty member at UIC's Navy Pier campus.

Tanya Basu	Political Science
Aravind Boomiasamy	Bioengineering
William Chiang	Neuroscience
Deepika Chitturi	Bioengineering
Tony Joseph	Biochemistry
Brandon Lutz	Bioengineering
Shantesh Nalawadi	Mathematics
Victor Nekrasov	Bioengineering
Emma-Leigh Pearson	Biological Sciences
Briana Perry	Sociology
Lisa Rydigier	Psychology
Mitali Shah	Human Nutrition
Kyaw Sint	Biochemistry
Annie Velarde	Movement Sciences
Corey Walker	Psychology

Sister Dorothy Drobis Award

The Sister Dorothy Drobis Awards is awarded each year to an outstanding junior or senior member of the Honors College majoring in education who intends to teach in the city of Chicago. The Drobis Award is made each year in recognition of Sister Dorothy Drobis and her many years teaching elementary education in Chicago.

Sommaiyya Ahmad	Teaching of History
Sana Jafri	Teaching of English

WHY CHILE? WHY NOT? AADITI DUBALE

This past spring semester I studied abroad in Santiago, Chile. "Why Chile?" was the question I had received most before and throughout my experience, from people in this country and Chileans alike. My answers alternated between "To have an experience in a continent I hadn't learned much about in school" and "To practice Spanish."



Aaditi Dubale

Apart from those goals, my preference was to stay in a metropolis. I recalled that the Office of International Affairs offers a Student Exchange Program and that, for my financial situation, traveling abroad via this Office was more economical than through the Study Abroad Office. I learned of an exchange program with the Universidad del Desarrollo (UDD) in Santiago, Chile. I applied and I was set!

In preparation for my experience abroad, I had to coordinate my own housing. The UDD had sent me suggestions along with their acceptance packet, I emailed several landlords in Santiago. I decided to stay in a 70-student independent residence hall that was located near a Metro station in Providencia, which is an easily-accessible neighborhood in the northeastern part of the city. Its residents were from countries including Columbia, Denmark, Mexico, Panama, and England. That in itself was certainly a fascinating experience.

Living in my area of the city was not that different from living in Chicago: I dealt with a crowded Metro and bus on the way to school, I shopped in malls and supermarkets and people asked *me* for directions. Certainly, language was an issue. Foreigners will attest, and Chileans also acknowledge, that Chilean Spanish is particularly distinctive.

Of course, living in another country can produce bouts of culture shock and, more amusingly, occurrences of various cultural faux pas. However, my most unusual experience was not the result of a cultural misunderstanding but rather a peculiar coincidence. While traveling I took a bus from La Paz to Copacabana (on the Bolivian side of Lake Titicaca), and another student-traveler onboard recognized me as her Orientation Leader.

My first piece of advice for future study abroad students is to not take classes every day. Several of us chose not to have courses on Monday and hence we were able to frequently take weekend trips together throughout central Chile and into Argentina. I also chose not to have class on Wednesday in order to volunteer: I was an Assistant Language Teacher in a K-12 school through the Ministry of Education's English Opens Doors Program.

My second piece of advice, of course, is to travel extensively. My travel-mates and I were able to reschedule all of our exams onto the first few days of Finals. In five-and-a-half weeks, I traveled to regions of Chile, Argentina, Bolivia, Peru and Uruguay.

I recommend that all college students study abroad. If you have any questions about my experiences, feel free to email me at adubal2@uic.edu

We Want to Hear
from YOU!

Are you interested
in writing for The
Ampersand? The
Ampersand is open
and eager to accept
submissions from all
Honors College
students.

Please contact
Jennifer Kosco at
jkosco@uic.edu if you
are interested.

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Caitlin Cohn, Editor
Karen Oram, Layout
Kylene Reese, Layout
Jennifer Kosco, Advisor

Contributors:

Aaditi Dubale
Anand Sandesara
Elizabeth Boyle
Jacqueline Hartford
Lisa B. Zhang



L'AVVENTURA

CAITLIN COHN

I arrived in Forli, Italy on June 2nd feeling somewhat disoriented and extremely nervous about how well I would be able to communicate in Italian. Forli is outside of Bologna, which is a city in northern Italy. Unlike Bologna, which is beautiful, Forli seems to exist only because of Ryan Air, an Irish airline which flies into Forli's tiny airport. This trip was my first experience with Italy and with traveling alone.

UIC has a program through which one can go to Italy and study Italian, but I wasn't interested in going with a large group of students. It would have been too easy to speak English together and spend almost no time actually speaking Italian, which was the whole point of going to Italy in the first place. People frequently ask me why I decided to study Italian, which is arguably not the most useful language. There isn't an entirely logical reason. My background isn't Italian, which is why many other students take Italian. Yet, my mother has always talked about how beautiful Italy is and how she wishes she could speak Italian.

I took two years of Italian at UIC before going to Italy this summer, which prepared me more than I originally anticipated. It was a shock how easily I fell into speaking Italian with people, although there were certainly times when I wasn't able to communicate nearly as fluently as I would have liked.

I found a small language school in Spoleto, a small city located in Umbria. Umbria is south of Tuscany, where Florence is located. Spoleto is about an hour and a half north-east of Rome. Spoleto is built up a hill, like many Roman and medieval towns, and the older part is absolutely beautiful. Lower Spoleto is modernized with paved roads instead of cobblestone and ordinary buildings instead of the slightly claustrophobic medieval architecture of the old part of the town. Spoleto was beautiful, but my experience in the school is unfortunately a tale of caution.

Apparently, there used to be an Italian school that usually had anywhere from 20 to 40 students and occupied a small building in the old part of Spoleto. However, when I arrived there, it became apparent that there was not actually a school. I did have an apartment, and there were classes, but there was no school. There were five other students and the director wanted to hold classes in his restaurant, but it was far too cold and dark to function very well. Instead, we had classes in a hotel room. We were divided into two groups, advanced and basic. The teacher was actually very good, but that didn't make up for a lack of a proper building and the paucity of students.

The experience wasn't entirely negative as Spoleto was lovely and my Italian improved immensely. However, I feel that my Italian improved less from the classroom and more from speaking with Italians and one of the students, an Austrian woman in her sixties, who was already fluent. I do not exactly regret my experience because it was certainly interesting, but I do wish that there had been students my age or at least an opportunity to meet more people. I was much more homesick than I would have anticipated because, despite my roommate, I felt very isolated. My roommate and I got along very well, but she was from Japan and spoke very little Italian and almost no English. Unfortunately, I speak no Japanese. I imagine that the situation was frustrating for both of us because we could not communicate fluently. Without her, the stay would have been fairly awful, but even with her I wished that I had gone to another school.

I did research the school, and spoke with a woman from Illinois who had gone there, but the school changed in the last few years. If you decide to study abroad but do not go through a university, it's important to do as much research as possible. Even then, it is possible that you will arrive to something entirely different than what you expected.

(HCAB, cont. from page 1)

Everyone raved about the Greek cuisine, which included moussaka, chicken kebabs, spanikopita, and a variety of other goodies. A special thanks to HCAB member Jess Sheynman for all her hard work on the luncheon, and the entire Honors College community for coming to the event.

Other activities have included a breakfast themed bake sale, a group trip to see the Phantom of the Opera at the Cadillac Theatre and a taffy apple social for Honors College Students.

We are also holding a children's book drive. We are asking you to donate any children's book to our efforts. All books will be donated to the Reach Out & Read program, as well the Children's Oncology department of UIC Hospital. Drop off your books in the box in the Honors College lobby.

And, last, but not least, save the date for the Honors College Ball. This year's event will be on Saturday, February 23rd, 2008 at the Chicago City Centre Hotel. We look forward to seeing everyone there.