

THE AMPERSAND

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Phi Beta Kappa</i>	2
<i>Phi Eta Sigma</i>	2
<i>Phi Kappa Phi/ Psi Chi</i>	3
<i>Tau Sigma</i>	4
<i>Fellow of the Year</i>	7
<i>Student Organization Spotlight</i>	8

Special points of interest:

- Read about Research Forum winners
- UIAA recognizes student leaders.
- Flaherty scholarship winners
- Find out why smart women play rugby on page 9.
- Tons more!



A NOTE FROM DEAN BOTTOMS

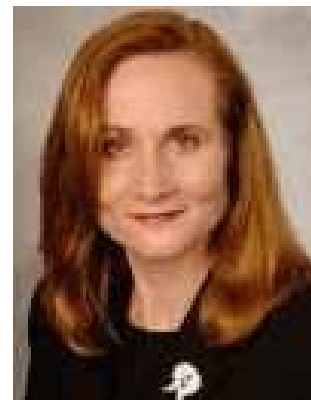
What a semester! The Honors College hosted its usual full slate of interesting core courses and special seminars, talks by honored guests such as Attorney General Lisa Madigan and History and Gender and Women’s Studies Professor John D’Emilio, a panel discussion of alumni speaking about careers in law, a year-end recital of the Honors College String Ensemble, another successful student/faculty HCAB luncheon, the annual HCAB Ball, and a publication party celebrating the release of the latest issues of the three Honors College student journal publications: *Red Shoes Review*, *Journal of Pre-Health Affiliated Students*, and *UIC One World*.

And of course, herds of Honors students have won awards, been inducted into honor societies, received research grants, and most importantly, the seniors are graduating – after having written and publicly presented excellent capstone projects! Congratulations to all Honors College students, and especially to the graduating seniors – I’m sure you will continue on the path toward excellence that you started here in the Honors College. Remember us when you’re rich and famous

Finally, I want to publicly thank all the

faculty members, staff members, alumni, and other friends who have volunteered their time to help the Honors College this year. At the risk of omitting someone, we have done our best to list all of you below. Thanks so much for everything you have done, including reading dozens of scholarship applications, serving on research award committees, showing up early on Saturday mornings to interview prospective students, attending student/faculty luncheons, and so on. And of course, many others who are not listed (including all Faculty Fellows) have provided important teaching and mentoring experiences for Honors College students.

Working with all of you and the students of the Honors College has made this year one of the best of my eighteen years at UIC!



Dean Bette L. Bottoms



- Sankarshan Acharya
- Louise Anderson
- Jennifer Ashton
- Clara Awe
- William Ayers
- MaryLou Bareither
- Richard Barrett
- Barbara Berger
- Angela Bixby
- Brian Bolger
- Faith Bonecutter

- Tess Briones
- Joel Brown
- Catherine Caporusso
- Donald Chambers
- Hui-Ching Chang
- Rhonna Cohen
- Stephanie Crawford
- Cecil Curtwright
- Ryan Dahl
- Chris Deegan

(Continued on page 10)

PHI BETA KAPPA ELECTS HONORS COLLEGE STUDENTS

The following Honors College students were recently inducted into the prestigious Phi Beta Kappa Society. Phi Beta Kappa is the nation's oldest academic honor society, founded in 1776. Phi Beta Kappa celebrates and advocates excellence in the liberal arts and sciences. Its campus chapters invite for induction the most outstanding arts and sciences students at America's leading colleges and universities.

Congratulations to the new Honors College inductees!



Ekua Gilbert-Baffoe, Sarah Green, Andrew Guerrero, Ekaterina Khramtsova, Adam Kuranishi, Pankaj Malhotra, Nisha Mehta, Yara Mekawi, Jocelyn Ou, Krupa Patel, Gregory Pratt, Neha Sarvepalli, Daniel Schneider, Khushbu Shah, Majdi Sweis, Lucia Wu, Erin Yargicoglu, Lisa Zhang, Kayla Zimmerman

HONORS COLLEGE STUDENTS INDUCTED INTO PHI ETA SIGMA

The honor society induction season kicked off earlier this semester with Phi Eta Sigma's ceremony taking place on Monday, March 29th. Phi Eta Sigma is the national freshmen honor society, and it was founded at the University of Illinois in 1923. Students who earn a 3.5 GPA or higher during their first semester of college are eligible for membership.

At the ceremony, Psychology Professor David Wirtshafter gave an inspiring keynote address, telling the students to keep up their good work as they progress throughout their college careers. Additionally, three students received \$500 scholarships. Keith Patel, Ansel Youngblood, and Laura Zamudio were the deserving recipients.

Congratulations to the following Honors College students inducted into Phi Eta Sigma:

Doah Abusara, Dana Al-Khaled, Alethea Appavu, Cathleen Aquino, Vaishak Babu, Aimee Bobko, Eduardo Castro, Vivian Chan, Chen-An Chang, Sabarish Chockalingam, Harish Chockalingam, Lisa Conte, Alvaro Cruz, Christina Cruz, Sarah Davis, Deblina Deb, Mary Diedrich, Shane Dillon, Shelby Duncan, Shaheera Fatima, Nabeela Fatima, Shriya Gandhi, Anjolie Gang, Andre Gatorano, Quarat-ul-ain Ghani, Lora Gjoni, Katie Guidone, Deborah Happ, Rachel Hartman, Hana Hashim, Bianca Hassoun, Michelle Helton, Sidrah Hussaini, Sabrin Jaber, Theresa Karras, Mounika Kata, Alexis Khosravani, Alexander Kim, Chaitra Kishore, Gajanan Kulkarni, Jingpin Li, Elizabeth Loper, Tova Miller, Seyed Mirzamani, Raquel Morales, Demetrios Nikoloulis, Julia Orlovskaya-Novak, Jesus Paniagua, Jihyun Park, Jay Patel, Aalok Patel, Kruten Patel, Priya Patel, Nina Patel, Trupti Patel, Kripa Patel, Patricia Pernal, Thuong Pham, Sindhura Pisipati, Linette Rayahin, Antonio Rodriguez, Sana Said, Sallie Sinfuego, Pooja Singh, Morgan Valenzuela, Gabrielle VanSpeybroeck, Rena Vlahodimos, Elias Votzakakis, Zahra Walji, Lindsay Weedman, Richelle Wescott, Margaret Zero



Phi Eta Sigma president Vinod Sehgal and Dean Bottoms



Newly inducted Phi Eta Sigma members Andre Gatarano and Shane Dillon show off their membership certificates



New Phi Eta Sigma members Aalok Patel and Antonio Rodriguez at the reception honoring new inductees

HONORS COLLEGE STUDENTS INDUCTED INTO PHI KAPPA PHI

The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi held its annual induction ceremony on Tuesday, April 13th. The Honors College was well represented with 33 new inductees. Additionally, new faculty initiates were Robert Sloan of the Computer Science department, and Honors College Dean and Professor of Psychology Bette L. Bottoms.

Professor Sloan gave the keynote address, entitled, "The Two Cultures and Computer Science."

A highlight of the ceremony was the awarding of Phi Kappa Phi's Grants for Scholarly Projects. Each year, the officers of Phi Kappa Phi select several students as winners of an award to support their research. This year's recipients were all Honors College students. The students and their projects are listed below:

Shefta Akhunji: Autophagic Vesicles as the site of Formation of the T.thermophila inducer-stomatin

Grace Allawirdi: Zinc: A Modulator for Neural Communication

Sarung Kashyap: Effects of Mild Traumatic Brain Injury on Verbal Learning

Ekaterina Khramtsova: Role of miR-96 Cluster in Prostatic Zinc Homeostasis

Congratulations to all the new Honors College members of Phi Kappa Phi!

Erin C. Berthold, Erin Cho, Akshi Gandhi, Salwa Halloway, Briana C. Jackson, Vikrant Jagadeesan, Ariana Ariel Khosravani, Julie Kim, Jessica Elizabeth Kuppy, Hilary Leathem, Allison Y Lee, Eun Byul Lee, Melody Lee, Dawn Lei, Pankaj Malhotra, Anders Milton, Kelly Murray, Amee K Patel, Krupa Patel, Ravi M Patel, Matthew Perryman, Chen Shi, Lily Simmons, Gaurav Singh, Amanda Lynne Stephenson, Angela Yeon Suh, Shawn Claude Sutherland, Jessica Louisa Szafron, Breana L. Taylor, Kayleigh Tovar, Bonnie Elizabeth Voigt, Mary Youkhana, Lisa B. Zhang



Grant winner junior psychology major Sarung Kashyap with his faculty mentor, Professor Deborah Little of the Anatomy and Cell Biology department.



Grant winners (l to r): Ekaterina Khramtsova, Grace Allawirdi, Shefta Akhunji, and Sarung Kashyap

PSI CHI INDUCTS HONORS COLLEGE STUDENTS

The following Honors College students were recently inducted into Psi Chi, National Honor Society in Psychology. For more information on Psi Chi, see: <http://sites.google.com/site/psichiuc/home>

Congratulations to the new Honors College inductees: Amanda Herron, Annais Santiago, Caroline Olvera, David Michelberger, Gaurav Singh, Julianne Faust, Kamila Baczek, Lily Simmons, Maria Menacho, Meghan Funk, Mimi Nguyen, Natalia Olejarska, Reetu Dave, Regina Meza, Stephanie Monroe, and Tatiana Karpouzian

Congratulations to Adam Kuranishi, this year's Riddle Prize winner. This award is presented each year to the outstanding graduating senior.



TAU SIGMA INDUCTS HONORS TRANSFER STUDENTS

Tau Sigma held its annual induction ceremony on Wednesday, April 21st. Celebrating its fifth year on UIC's campus, Tau Sigma is the national honor society which recognizes and promotes the academic excellence and involvement of transfer students. To be eligible for membership, candidates must achieve either a 3.5 GPA or be in the top 20% of all incoming transfers during the term in which they transferred.

At the induction ceremony, after the new student officers took their oaths of office, Associate Vice Provost of Academic and Enrollment Services Cecil Curtwright gave the featured address. Curtwright spoke of being an original "Circle Baby," and he told the new inductees that they were in prestigious company, as five of our nation's presidents were transfer students at one time. He encouraged the students to continue to strive for excellence in all they do.

The Tau Sigma officers are all Honors College students. They are: President Daniel Aiello, Vice President Shraddha Akhikari, Secretary Terri Davis, and Treasurer Bonnie Voigt.

Congratulations to all the new Honors College Tau Sigma members:

Tome Adi Allali, Abby Marie Bilderback, Mitchell J. Bosman, Bridget Mary Coghlan, Jesse James Cross, Kokou Gbehode Dagawa, Kathryn Mary Kemp, Caitlin Ashley Kendler, Hannah Abigail Kloppmann, Nghi Nguyen Quynh Le, Jessica D. O'Connell, Stephen P. Ondracek, Graham Dondas Peterson, Andrea Christine Shelton, Anastasia Rosemarie Talarico, and Djatou Traore

ANOTHER GREAT YEAR! AND, A THANKS FROM HCAB

BY JOSEPH ESPARAZ

If you haven't noticed, the Honors College Advisory Board has been busy planning and hosting socials before the end of the semester. Last month, HCAB held its second Ice Cream Social and Book Crossing event. This event had another successful turnout with many Honors College students mingling with faculty members. Almost all of the students and faculty left the event with a new book in hand as well as a stomach full of ice cream!

In the upcoming weeks, HCAB will be saying goodbye to some great Honors College seniors. These individuals have proudly supported the Honors College throughout their undergraduate years, and have not only been excellent role models at this university, but also across the community.

HCAB would also like to congratulate and welcome the newly elected 2010-2011 Honors College Advisory Board. A special welcome to the new executive board: President Joshua Kannankeril, Vice President Helen Hwang, Treasurer Deborah Happ, and Secretary Joseph Ou. These members will be joined by the following Members-at-Large: David Esparaz, Jason Manaparambil, Meredith Maresh, Jay Patel, Keith Patel, Krishna Patel, Ravi Shah, Guarish Soni, Anam Syed, Karan Thakkar, Jose Valencia, and Annabelle Vidal-Ruiz. Congratulations everyone!

Finally, on behalf of the 2009-2010 Honors College Advisory Board, I would like to thank all the Honors College students, faculty, staff, fellows, and Dean Bottoms for coming out and supporting HCAB. We appreciated all your participation and hope to see everyone at future HCAB events!



From left: Cecil Curtwright, Shraddha Adhikari, Daniel Aiello, Bonnie Voigt, Terri Davis

*Congratulations to those UIC students who participated in the Seventh Annual John Marshall Law School National Undergraduate Diversity Mock Trial Competition. We would like to extend congratulations to Honors College student **Majdi Sweis**, who was recognized as Third Best Advocate and received a \$9,000 tuition waiver to The John Marshall Law School in Chicago.*



Majdi Sweis

RESEARCH FORUM SHOWCASES STUDENT EFFORTS

The 2010 Student Research Forum took place on Tuesday, April 20th, and highlighted the importance of research to Honors College and UIC students in all departments. More than 200 students took part in the forum where they were given an opportunity to present their research and have their work judged by faculty members and other researchers. Cash prizes were awarded in several categories.

"The student body at UIC understands what research is and what its benefits are," says Honors College Dean Bette L. Bottoms. "UIC students understand how to ask questions about what they face in the world, how to answer those questions, and therefore, how to interpret the world and how to make discoveries that explain and improve the world."

Vice Chancellor for Research Joseph "Skip" Garcia called the forum a "tremendous success." "The depth and quality of this activity was remarkable and illustrative of the capacity UIC possesses for creativity and innovation."

Research projects were grouped into three different categories: the Humanities, Social Science, and Business Practices; the Life Sciences; and the Physical Sciences and Engineering. Awards were given for first, second, and third place in each category, with an honorable mention.

The following Honors College students were recognized for their outstanding work:

Humanities: Social Science and Business practices

Third Place: Andrew Guerrero, History (Advisor: Dr. Renato Barahona)

"From Harlot to Hag: An analysis of women and witchcraft in early modern Europe"

Life Sciences:

First Place: Chen Shi, Biological Sciences (Advisors: Drs. Charles Louis Mix and Jane Wu) "Understanding the role of TDP-43 in the Nervous System"

Honorable Mention: Brian Lin, Economics (Advisor: Dr. Yong Zhao)

"Human cord blood stem cell-modulated regulatory T lymphocytes reverse autoimmune type 1 diabetes in nonobese diabetic (NOD) mice"

Physical Science and Engineering:

First Place: Abdulrahman Dia, Chemistry (Advisor: Dr. Scott Shippy)

"Capillary electrophoretic assay of the concentration effect of NO metabolites after capillary vacuum pull at varying rates"

Third Place: Manpreet Kohli, Computer Science (Advisor: Dr. Mitchell Theys)

"Gaussian inverse of an invertible square matrix using parallel processing on a Graphics Processing Unit (GPU)"



Sophomore Anthropology major Jessica Grant explains her research project, entitled "A Look at Scholarly Book Publishing, 1990-2009."



Honorable Mention winner Brian Lin explains his research in layman's terms to Yara Mekawi.

UIAA RECOGNIZES STUDENT LEADERS

On Thursday, April 1st, the University of Illinois Alumni Association held its annual UIC Student Leadership Award recognition ceremony. Exceptional graduating students are honored for their contributions as leaders of various societies, groups and organizations at UIC. Recipients of the Student leadership Award are nominated based upon their demonstrated leadership through their involvement in diverse campus student organizations, and continued impact on UIC.

Congratulations to the following Honors College seniors who were honored at this prestigious event:



UIAA Award Winners, L to R: Majdi Sweis, Katie Senkiw, Dan Schneider, Angelica Alonso, Adam Kuranishi, Lisa Zhang, William Biancucci

Angelica Alonso, Kinesiology
 William Biancucci, Economics
 Meghan Grebic, Bioengineering
 Adam Kuranishi, Political Science
 Ashley LaFleur, Theater
 Brian Lin, Economics
 Priscilla Lizasuain, Teaching of English
 Esther Ogedengbe, Nursing
 Daniel Schneider, Anthropology
 Katie Senkiw, Kinesiology
 Majdi Sweis, Psychology

FLAHERTY SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

Several Honors college students were recently named recipients of the Flaherty Scholarship for Study Abroad.

The students and the cities and countries where they will study are listed below. Congratulations to all the winners!

Elizabeth Christian: Geneva, Switzerland
 Katya Gorecki: Paris, France
 Jade Newman: Krakow, Poland
 Louisa Ng: Copenhagen, Denmark
 Caroline Olvera: Buenos Aires, Argentina
 Alexandra Plattos: Siena, Italy
 Katelynn Turrisi: Siena, Italy

GRACE ALLAWIRDI WINS LASURI AWARD

Honors College sophomore Neuroscience major Grace Allawirdi was recently awarded the LASURI award to support her research. Grace's primary research interests include neural communication mechanism. She currently works with Dr. Paul Malchow of the Biological Sciences department.

The UIC College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Undergraduate Research Initiative (LASURI) is a college-wide program that supports faculty-student research in the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities. Its mission is to make undergraduate research integral to teaching, learning, and scholarship in LAS by providing support to undergraduates and faculty involved in research collaborations. The program was initiated by Dean Dwight A. McBride in Spring 2009 with seed money from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and generous donor support for undergraduate research.

FELLOW OF THE YEAR: MARY LOU BAREITHER

GREGORY ROYAL PRATT

The Honors College names a Fellow of the Year each spring to recognize a fellow who has gone above and beyond in mentoring their students.

This year, it's Mary Lou Bareither, Director of Undergraduate Studies and Clinical Associate Professor in the Department of Kinesiology and Nutrition. Dr. Bareither is a life-long member of our community, having received her bachelor's degree in Biology and her doctoral degree in Human Anatomy and Cell Biology from UIC. Her current research focuses on bone mineral density.

Today, she is honored for her contributions as a mentor to Honors College students. As most people know, mentoring is not an easy process. It's

another time-consuming activity for busy faculty members to juggle, and forging a relationship with students isn't simple. Many students are shy about bringing their problems, research or otherwise, to their fellow. Some fellows don't know how to draw their mentees in and aren't very involved with their students' careers. Dr. Bareither works hard to make sure her students know that she's there for them. What's her secret?

"I'm aware that it may be up to me to develop that relationship," explains Dr. Bareither. "I'm not sure they understand what that relationship or process is supposed to be, so I'll send them emails periodically. I always invite them to lunch on the Honors College or ask them to meet for coffee or lunch. Once the student understands that you are interested in forging this relationship, they'll ask for more help."

Sometimes, she says, it's as simple as a small gesture.

"I've heard from a lot of students that if they send you emails or call you and you don't respond to it quickly or in a positive manner, that sets up a sort of wall that you're not available. You have to break that down and respond to them and be available." You have to be willing to do both, says Dr. Bareither, if you want to foster a good relationship.

Dr. Bareither was nominated for the award by two of her students, Angelica Alonso and Katie Senkiw. Both of them are thankful for her help with their research and more.

"Through her guidance, I was able to explore more options offered by the Applied Health Sciences College and summer



**Back, L to R: Kristina Ottens, Staci Molinar, Mary Lou Bareither, Eric Montminy, Mike Jones, Dr. Karrie Hamstra-Wright, Jason Sikorski.
Front: Angelica Alonso, Katie Senkiw**

programs. Dr. Bareither gave me the chance to become an ATA and teach Anatomy 251/252 lab," says Alonso. "She has continuously written letters of recommendation for me, even if I found a program I was interested in at the last minute. Moreover, Dr. Bareither has been there when I just needed a person to listen to my concerns or when I needed advice on academics, summer programs, and personal advice."

Senkiw received the opportunity to work on a research project at Rush University.

"I learned as an undergraduate to start and finish an entire research

project," says Senkiw. "Thanks to her, I can now feel confident in applying to graduate schools due to all the skills that I've gained through my research experience."

"Dr. Bareither's door is always open and she is always willing to help a student in need of some help. Dr. Bareither puts in so much hard work and effort to make sure that all the undergraduates in our department are successful at accomplishing our goals; and because of this, most of us are!"

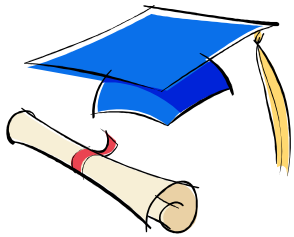
"I have never met a person as incredible as her," adds Alonso.

For her part, Dr. Bareither loves helping her students with their projects. "We have to find spots to place those students" when they want to do research, "and having research opportunities or knowing people who do research in your field is helpful. I'm sort of the liaison to them."

Dr. Bareither was born and raised here in Chicago and has been married for thirty four years. Her husband is also a professor who has won "tons of awards" in teaching. This has helped her be a better teacher, she says. "It's really nice for me to have someone to ask questions about and bounce questions off of, such as, 'Nobody seems to be understanding this material; how can I teach it?'"

In her free time, Dr. Bareither likes country music and being outdoors.

Congratulations to Dr. Bareither on this well-deserved honor.



*Congratulations
and best
of luck in
the future
to all
Honors
College
graduates
from the
staff of
the
Honors
College.
Please
keep in
touch!*

STUDENT ORGANIZATION SPOTLIGHT: UNIFYING DIVERSITY

SASIDHAR MADUGULA

UIC is one of the most ethnically diverse universities in the nation, not only recognized as such by the US News & World Report, but also increasingly by those on the campus itself. With students from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds and a population stemming from a diverse geographic range, this is not surprising. Sadly, however, instead of being an even blend of cultures, UIC remains for the most part, a mosaic of isolated groups, and misunderstanding between them still exists.

Unifying Diversity was founded to help close the gap between students on campus. The organization is young, having been founded in the fall of 2008 by Honors College students Prashansa Sharma and Natasha Shah. It is supported on the faculty side by Dr. Charu Thakral and Associate Vice Provost of Academic and Enrollment Services Cecil Curtwright, and has the mission "to promote cultural awareness and alleviate prejudice by educating members from various backgrounds about customs and beliefs in an open forum through integrating experiences." The novel methods used to achieve this goal have attracted many members for the budding organization: anywhere from thirty to fifty people come to the events hosted by the organization.

One example of such a method was the "Speed Friending" event, held just after Valentine's Day this year. It involved prompting participants to make spontaneous conversa-

tion with complete strangers on pre-determined ice-breaking topics such as their favorite You-Tube video or the most adventurous activity they've engaged in. Because of UIC's demographics, attendees were guaranteed to learn about other cultures in the process; and indeed they did, and enjoyed doing so.

Unifying Diversity also holds other events such as town-hall meetings, during which students attend talks on the subject of diversity by speakers from various organizations and fields. The latest one was a workshop on "Identity on Isolation," and featured student leaders from the Muslim Student Association, Brothers Reaching Out, and the Society of Future Physicians, to name a few. True to its title, the stimulating workshop addressed the problem of isolation of different groups at UIC and how to overcome it.

The above are but two examples of the many activities that Unifying Diversity hosts; others include an International Potluck, General Body meetings, a movie marathon, and so on. For such a young organization, Unifying Diversity has effectively catapulted itself into the awareness of Honors College students with its many interesting events and even more interesting mission statement—one that addresses the core issue of diversity. As Founder Prashansa Sharma says, "It's nice to see people getting involved with that aspect of their education." Only time will tell how the organization will evolve, though one can be sure of its continuing growth.

CHANCELLOR VISITS HONORS COLLEGE



**Ekaterina Khramtsova, Office of Special Scholarship Programs
Director Beth Powers, and Chancellor
Paula Allen-Meares.**

On Friday, April 9th, Chancellor Paula Allen-Meares visited the Honors College. She had a chance to meet with and speak to several students about their academic and service activities.



Prashansa Sharma, Josh Kannankeril, and Lisa Zhang at the recent Honors College reception for the Chancellor.

SMART WOMEN PLAY RUGBY

ANNA ZINGA

I am a rugger. This is a super cool term that I learned this weekend and it is a fancy way to say that I play rugby. Not only do I play rugby, but I proudly play for the UIC Women's Rugby team.

I joined rugby not because I am a violent beast of a girl but because the advertisement I saw for rugby promised me that I could play despite my lack of any athletic ability. Also, as I am a recent transfer student, I was pathetically desperate for friendship and willing to do anything for human interaction, even subject myself to bodily harm.

To be honest, I was also entirely ignorant about the sport. The poster I saw for women's rugby looked very innocent. It was just a group of smiling girls in nice blue and red uniforms. The men's poster that was next to it however, was a display of some of the angriest looking individuals I have ever seen. It was this terrifying poster that encouraged me to research this sport on YouTube before signing up for the team and possible death. What I discovered on YouTube was footage of the most absurd sport I have ever seen. There was tackling, yes. There were also girls being lifted into the air by their shorts, balls being thrown backwards, seemingly random kicking, and some weird group structure called a scrum. The sport still did not make any sense but I was hooked.

The first practice was a combination of wonderful and awful. I was expected to participate and this resulted in me mostly running around making a fool of myself. However, my roommate and I were partners for tackling practice and it was during this time that I discovered my love for organized rage.

At the end of that first practice we ran a lap as a team. As we were nearing the end of the lap, I felt the hands of my teammates on my back. My somewhat creepy dreams of friendship were quickly becoming reality! Despite my happiness I was still curious as to why I was being touched and I tried to ask about it. My inquiry was met by "Shhhs!" from the entire team. Soon though, the hushing was replaced by a very quiet chant. As we moved closer to completing our run, the chant became louder and turned into a song. When we finished our run, everyone joined together in a circle, arms over each others shoulders, and sang louder and louder until the song finally progressed into an angry yell. It's just a silly song with very few actual words but it is amazing to me because it was able to make me feel included amongst a group of strangers. We sing the song at every practice and before every game and it is probably one of my most favorite parts of rugby.



Anna Zinga contemplates her next move on the field.

The first thing I noticed about all the girls on the team was their really impressive bruises. No one brags about them but I could not wait to play a game and get my own rugby injury. I will not even discuss the first game because I was completely clueless as to what was going on and I had absolutely no contact with the ball or any other players. This was embarrassing, yes, but this is just another example of what a great team I have because they still allowed me to play even though I could not function in a game environment!

Game number two went a lot better. We were in Tennessee for the Nash Bash tournament. I actually got the ball and was so excited and surprised that I froze and did absolutely nothing with it. I

was promptly pummeled by a girl with a shaved head and lots of muscles. It was exhilarating! I could feel my body doing an unintentional somersault. One moment I felt like I was in a fight scene in a movie, the next I thought I was going to land on my neck, and then I was just flat on the ground. I jumped up, ready to turn my adrenaline into aggression.

When the game ended, I had blood on my finger. I was complaining to a teammate (pretending to be disgusted) that I had someone else's blood on my finger. In reality, I was thrilled to have enemy blood on my hands. This was a short-lived thrill as my teammate pointed out that my own lip was bleeding and this was probably why my finger was bloody. It was not even an impressive bloody lip. I think I probably bit down on it myself as I was being tackled but I still felt like an official rugby player.

Now it is the end of spring season, my first rugby season. I have real injuries (bruises and even a slight limp!) and I get the ball sometimes in games. Besides my injuries, I have made friends (my lonely, creepy days are over!) and I have been introduced to a whole culture of rugby that I did not know existed. There are rugby teams across the entire country and a lot of the other colleges in Illinois also have both women's and men's teams. Just last weekend we traveled to Sycamore for NIU's rugby tournament and there were college teams, out of state teams (we played a team from Nebraska), and other Chicago teams that are not affiliated with colleges.

Deciding to play rugby was one of the most random but exciting decisions I have made in this life of mine and I encourage anyone who is even a little intrigued by this sport to come to a practice or contact me. My email is azinga2@uic.edu.

