

Areté

Newsletter of The Honors School

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Chile

by Sasha Goldfarb

When I first heard about the *Sin Fronteras* project at Monmouth University, I was sitting down to check my e-mail. I read through a brief description about a trip to Chile to volunteer working with youth in an impoverished area of the country. I imagined it as a far-off possibility in an obscure and exotic destination, least likely to happen to me in less than three months. I never could have imagined the series of events that would begin to unravel that night, after I had gotten off the phone with my mother and hit the 'reply' button on my e-mail window. Soon enough I was attending meetings, lectures, and perusing materials on the country I would be traveling and working in somewhere on the other side of the world. I was meeting people from the Monmouth community and elsewhere who had participated in the *Sin Fronteras* project before. Everything was an indiscernible whirlwind that I could not seem to grasp. I was working three part-time jobs, taking eighteen credits, and fulfilling all of my other obligations while trying to absorb as much information as possible about my anticipated experience.

The *Sin Fronteras* (Without Borders) project in Chile is sponsored through Monmouth University's Social Work department. For two weeks, we traveled to the shantytown of La Pincoya, in the north of Santiago, the capitol of Chile. La Pincoya is characteristic of the urban areas in Chile. The *población* is rendered vulnerable by the problems of many inner cities, including poverty, high unemployment, poor schools and lack of education, and an inferior health care system worsened by poor nutrition and contamination. Worsened conditions are cyclical, stemming off an economy driven into the ground by manipulative capitalism and exploitation, with little or no relief in sight.

I had the privilege of working with local community leaders and my peers from the Monmouth area to organize and offer the *Escuela Popular/Colonia Urbana* as a summer camp program for children. Since many of the children in La Pincoya do not have the expectations children in the United States have to go on field trips, take a summer vacation, go away to a camp, or have a safe and enjoyable environment for recreation, the Colonia Urbana was an especially fulfilling and rewarding undertaking. As a special education and Spanish major, I had hoped that Chile would offer me an opportunity to further explore my field and to tap into my passion for working



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NJ Rep's *Don't Hug Me* Shines in Lumia

by Anoop Shah

In December 2006, the New Jersey Repertory Company featured the production *Don't Hug Me* at the Lumia Theater in Long Branch. The theater seats about fifty people in a comfortable setting. Located on Broadway in Long Branch just miles from Monmouth University, the Lumia usually draws a sizeable crowd and operates near full capacity on show nights. The audience sits in close proximity to the stage, which measures about thirty feet across and about six feet deep. Much of the lighting equipment rests directly overhead. All of these features contribute to making the show an interactive experience for the audience.

Written by Phil and Paul Olson and co-produced with Shotgun Productions, *Don't Hug Me* employs a cast of five characters. The musical comedy takes place in a rural town in Minnesota. In the midst of a cold winter, an elderly couple debates abandoning their prized local bar named The Bunyan and moving to Florida to relieve themselves from the frigid temperatures. A waitress at the bar aspires to pursue her acting career in the Twin Cities while being caught in the middle of a love triangle. Regarding the two men chasing after her, one owns a few local businesses whereas the other sells karaoke machines. After the owners of The Bunyan buy it, the karaoke machine serves to escalate emerging problems, but also helps to soothe distressed cast members through its variety of musical selections.

The writers of the musical certainly kept their target audience in mind when composing it. Often, the dialogue features jokes geared toward the elderly. The performance includes themes such as retirement, marriage at old age, and relocation to warmer climates. Without a doubt, the audience can relate to these issues and appreciate the humor as well. Additionally, the playwrights sprinkled the songs appropriately over the course of the show. The lyrics usually incorporated a rhyme scheme coupled with comedic wit that compellingly brought across information relevant to the plot of the play.

The presentations of *Don't Hug Me* at the Lumia Theater concluded with the 2006 calendar year. In 2007, the NJ Repertory company produced *October 1962* for the month of January. The company plans on showing *tempOdyssey* beginning on February 22, 2007. Additional information as well as tickets are available online, and all Monmouth University students are eligible to receive discount pricing. For more information, go to <http://njrep.org/>.



The Pavilion

by Mike Edwards

The Pavilion covers a longer time span than most plays, from the beginning of the universe until a 20th high school reunion in present day Minnesota. It is one of the more creative plays you will see, with the quality of acting and minimalist approach making this an experience you have to share with your friends. Well, at least try to tell your friends about. You walk away with much more sentiment than information, and that's what makes this play special.

As I was watching it, I didn't much like the first act. The play is billed as talking about the universe and how time only goes in one direction. The narrator stands on stage telling the audience how the universe starts with a drop into a body of water, the tiny tea leaf of consciousness, reverberations, onto thoughts, ideas, Napoleon, and Minnesota. The narrator speaks from the center stage in a very interesting manner. He searches for the right words to use and often seemed uncertain in how best to portray his mental pictures to the audience. I found it at first disheartening that he chose a nature-based, dimmed down approach to explaining how the universe started and progressed by using metaphors left and right, but it ends up playing harmoniously into the theme of the play.

He introduces us to the other two characters of the play shortly thereafter. Once high school sweethearts, we find out that he has done an unforgivable thing to her before they graduated, something which neither of them can forget. Where are the other mem-

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INVITATION TO JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL

Not everyone is aware that students may join the Honors School even if they did not come into Honors as freshmen. If you have a 3.5 or better GPA after completing 12 credits at Monmouth University, and you are interested in more information about joining a tailored curriculum to suit your needs, please contact the Honors School Office at 732-263-5308.



Normajeane Garriton

"This internship truly transformed me as a person."

Internship: Museum of Jewish Heritage

by Normajeane Garriton

This past semester I've been interning at the Museum of Jewish Heritage: A Living Memorial to the Holocaust. The Lipper Internship was one of those life altering experiences that shapes you as a person and changes your views on life. The program takes sixteen individual students, from college campuses throughout the east coast, and in a two week period transforms them into Holocaust scholars and teachers. This is to prepare us to spread very important messages about one of the greatest known tragedies. As a group we spent fourteen days speaking to survivors and learning how to educate the youth of America on very sensitive subject matter, while also trying to learn the galleries of a three story museum. Added to that was a trip away from home to a strange city and eating kosher on a regular basis. We had to emerge teachers, for we would be spending the semester visiting school systems to teach about the Holocaust. The program featured three specific sections: a pre-visit, museum tour, and post-visit follow up with every high school. Over the course of the semester I worked with Raritan High School, Monmouth Regional High School, Arthur L. Johnson High School, and Emerson High School. While I entered this internship seeking to expand my knowledge in Holocaust studies, I received an education unlike I had ever experienced.

This internship has truly transformed me as a person. Besides the training, which has opened my eyes to a religion I've come to respect and enjoy learning about, teaching in the classroom about this important topic has been an amazing experience. I've learned a great deal from the students I've taught and the experiences they've had. Many of these schools have rarely, if ever, spoken about the Holocaust and cannot even tell you when World War II ended. As the generation which lived through the Holocaust gets older and older, we see an interest about these experiences die and the younger generations lose their connection to it. Presented with the information, however, I found that most students are willing and eager to learn about this episode in history. It makes me wonder why we haven't stopped other genocides from happening, with such bright-minded youth as the backbone of our future. I think we are severely undermining the capabilities of school children today. I strongly believe that if these children were given a curriculum which focused, at one point, on the Holocaust, we could make a very positive change for our future.

The Children of Johns Hopkins

by Sara Van Ness

As I finished up the fall semester last year, I received an email from Dr. Garvey notifying students that Johns Hopkins University was offering summer employment working with gifted and talented students. Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth provides students, who are considered exceptional or gifted, the opportunity to become immersed in a highly motivated, fun, interactive, and intellectually stimulating environment. It provides a unique experience in that the students are surrounded by peers who are the same age and on their level intellectually, something most of them never encounter in their normal schooling. Day sites are offered for students starting early in elementary school. Intensive sleep-away camp is offered for students who recently completed fifth or sixth grade, and other sites offer classes for students from seventh grade through juniors in high school. Job opportunities for college students include teaching assistants for the classes as well as resident assistants at sites across the country.

As an English Education major, I was excited by this opportunity, and I knew that it would not only be a fulfilling experience, but also a challenge. I applied for the position of teaching assistant. After the initial acceptance of my application, I had to write a lesson plan and have an hour long interview. The application process was intense and, looking back, extremely beneficial in preparing for "real life" situations in teaching and interviewing. I was accepted as a teaching assistant for a class entitled "Heroes and Villains" at a fifth and sixth grade site. The students with whom I worked were cognitively on the level of twelfth graders or college students.

The session ran for three weeks with teachers, students, and resident assistants all working really hard to promote a positive and enjoyable experience. As a teaching assistant, I helped with lesson planning, taught quite a few of my own lessons, as well as helping with end of session evaluations and parent conferences. It is not your

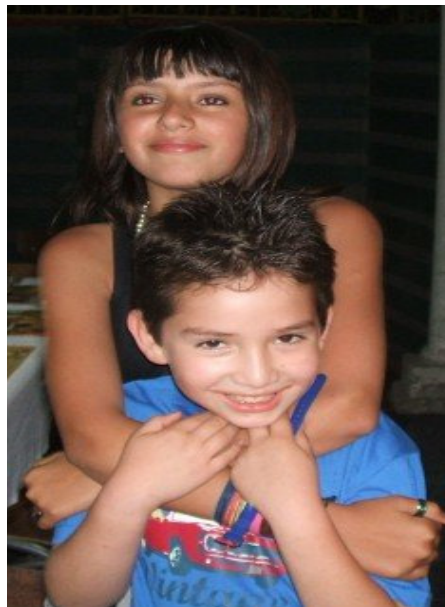
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"Each (student) brought an essential element to the classroom"

Chile *(Continued from page 1)*

with children. Each day was a renewed exploration, for the students and volunteers alike. I found myself waiting to go back each morning with new plans and ideas. One of my best memories was deciding to teach the children in my group, who were ten to twelve years old, the American pastime of baseball. It was the first time I really felt confident in my use of Spanish, explaining the rules of the game and demonstrating how to steal bases when players on the other team were not paying attention. It was only my second day at the Colonia, but I knew I had broken down the first barriers in unfamiliar territory.

Besides our work at the Colonia, we were also fortunate enough to enjoy the historical and cultural aspects of Chile during our trip. We visited one of the homes of Nobel Laureate Pablo Neruda, a famous poet, and learned of the influence of his life and work on the people of Chile. Our group hiked in the Andes mountains and lingered in the warm and invigorating hot springs, spent a day at the beautiful beaches, and shopped in the local markets. But our lives were not that of tourists for two weeks, but of people who were welcomed to live as part of a family and a community.



"Our lives were not that of tourists for two weeks, but of people who were welcomed to live as part of a family and a community."

As part of our trip, we had begun learning about some of the history of Chile, including the military coup that tore apart the country in the 1970s, leaving thousands of Chileans "disappeared." "Detained and disappeared" refers to those people who were captured, tortured, and often killed by Pinochet's fanatic regime in the name of censorship and conservatism. We visited the Parque por la Paz Villa Grimalde, covert and sickeningly "effective" and powerful in its attempts to "dispose" of any alleged traitors or rebels in the country. The sad truth is many of the victims of Pinochet's reign of terror led to the deaths, torture, and displacement of countless people. The worst aspect of the "desaparecidos" (disappeared ones) is the anguish of family members left behind who would never know the fate of their loved ones, to perform a funeral or lay the missing body to rest. Even more than thirty years later, there are many who cling to the irrational hope that their family members will return or come out of hiding. The sadness of the place and the stories of its few survivors are overwhelming, but the hope and indomitable spirit made clear in the actions of many people make it more manageable. Moreover, it inspired me to take a message home to those I could reach, including my friends, family, and now, my readers.

Many will reflect on this and similar experiences and say that they now have to return to the life they knew before, always feeling altered by what they have experienced. Some feel isolated by their feelings, knowing that few others could begin to understand what they knew in another country. Others feel they have something special they are obligated to share, while more still will pretend that nothing has changed. I hope I will eventually fully understand and come to terms with my encounter as a volunteer, traveler, and friend to those in a foreign country. But for now, I am more than grateful for my experiences. I am honored to have been a part of it and be able to share them with an open audience.

The Children of Johns Hopkins *(Continued from page 3)*

IF YOU ARE
INTERESTED IN
APPLYING FOR SUMMER
EMPLOYMENT WORKING
WITH GIFTED AND
TALENTED STUDENTS
THROUGH JOHN HOPKINS
UNIVERSITY, CONTACT
THE HONORS SCHOOL AT
imenditt@monmouth.edu
AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

average summer camp. Students are in the classroom from 9:00 till 4:30 with two short breaks and a half hour for lunch. My cooperating teacher and I had a class of twelve students. The class was very diverse, including students from rural Pennsylvania to Brooklyn, New York and everything in between. The students were diverse in their abilities as well. Each brought an essential element to the classroom. The students were indeed quite amazing with what they already knew as well as their thirst to learn even more.

Concepts we covered in the class included such things as hero and villain archetypes, willing suspension of disbelief, Social Darwinism, prototype, relativity, prototype, and context. We read Shakespeare's *Othello*, *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*, Stephen Crane's "A Mystery of Heroism," and much more. As one can easily see, the content of the class was very advanced, but I and my colleagues had to remember that these students were also children, all around the age of eleven or twelve. Therefore, we had many fun activities for them to incorporate what they were learning in class. Some projects included designing a hero or villain "candy bar" with the ingredients of the archetype and creating a "heroic potential" comic book. Students also put on an extensive play using Joseph Campbell's Monomyth cycle of the hero.

Overall, my experience with CTY was extremely positive and also challenging. I had the opportunity to teach in a classroom and really feel what it was like on the other side of the desk. I would recommend to anyone, even if he or she is not an Education major, to apply. Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth provided me with a rewarding experience I will never forget.

The Pavilion *(Continued from page 2)*

bers of the cast if this is a high school reunion? The narrator deftly plays at least ten other characters of both sexes, separately interacting with the estranged couple to advance the plot, often humorously.

After a big confrontation, it seemed that the former couple would never get back together, nor would either of them ever find happiness. Still the narrator persisted. He periodically reappeared from the background to announce the time, change the scene, or work his way through explaining more aspects of the universe. Off he would go on tangents of interpersonal relationships, time, or the stars.

I don't want to give away the ending because I hope all of you will get a chance to one day see this Pulitzer Prize nominee for best new play. From the start they talked about generalities of life to the point where I didn't think I'd learn anything from the plot; yet playwright Craig Wright was much more subtle than I'd imagined. The uncertainty in the voices and actions of the narrator and the high school sweethearts gave an undertone of validation for everyone who has never been certain about their life's direction. His searching for the right words symbolizes our trying to do the right thing even when we're not sure where to go. As for everyone in the reunion, there was at least someone that resonated with regrets each of us have had about what might have been.

More than any play I have reviewed so far, I left the theatre with a deep sense of satisfaction and inquisition in the human spirit - a perfect theater experience.



"I left the show with a deep sense of satisfaction and inquisition in the human spirit - a perfect theater experience."

Alumni Corner: Gordon Ott—Class of '93

by Nicole Stevens

HONORS ALUMNI

**WE WOULD
LOVE TO HEAR
FROM YOU!**

E-MAIL US AT
arete@monmouth.edu
AND LET US KNOW
**WHAT YOU HAVE
BEEN DOING
SINCE YOU LEFT
MONMOUTH.
TO CONTACT
DR. GARVEY
DIRECTLY, E-MAIL**

Driven—Monmouth alumni Gordon Ott uses this word to describe Dr. Brian Garvey, Dean of the Honors School. After inspection of Gordon's own achievements, one could certainly use such a term to describe him as well.

Born and raised in Marlboro Township, Gordon was first attracted to Monmouth for its proximity to his home as well as its modestly-sized campus and small classes. Gordon graduated from Monmouth in the fall of 1993 with a degree in English, although he surprisingly went to work in the field of technology.

He went on to found his own technology consulting company, called V3C, where he is able to use many of the lessons and skills he acquired through the Honors program. For example, he says that the program's emphasis on the interrelationships of disciplines, "proved invaluable in translating technologies into concepts understandable by people who might be indifferent or downright hostile to the technology itself." Gordon's firm now operates out of Central New Jersey and Southern Florida, and he is looking to expand even further.

Similar to most Honors alumni, Gordon distinctly remembers writing his Honors Thesis about the evolution of Gothic literature into the modern horror, science fiction and fantasy genres, and why most critics consider it "useless drivel." A bit surprisingly, however, Gordon refers to the experience as "great fun," remembering how he enjoyed reading works by both classic and modern authors including H.P. Lovecraft and Steven King. He goes on to say that those students who dropped the program because of their reluctance to write the paper missed out on a wonderful opportunity.

Additionally, Gordon owes his appreciation of art to the honors program, which required his freshman class to take a specialized history of art course. He hopes that the Honors school continues its successful program, providing students with artistic and cultural experiences.

"There is a price to be paid for everything," says Gordon. For this Monmouth alumni, working hard, completing his Honors thesis, and using the lessons gained from the Honors program to achieve success in his own technology firm afforded him an accomplished academic history, a successful career, and, of course, his own article in the Honors newsletter.

*Note: The staff of *Arete* wishes to congratulate Gordon and his wife, who are expecting a baby soon.



Swinger of Birches

By Alyssa Hayek

There are many different outings and get-togethers that the Honors Program has assembled for us in order to meet and mingle with all the honors students as well as other students on campus. The September Pizza Party Mixer and the fall Barbeque are two events where honors and non-honors students got together and ate delicious food and played croquette, horseshoes, and volleyball. Even though we are so tight knit and do a lot together, we still have non-honors friends on campus and attend other campus events. A lot of our classes in our majors aren't honors classes, which helps us to meet other students who aren't part of the Birch clan.

Birch Hall, the freshmen Honors dorm, is more than just another residence hall; it's a family. Birch houses 32 residents who have one thing in common - they all are part of the Honors School. Usually, when you hear the term "honors school" or "honors student" you immediately imagine the stereotype as depicted in "Revenge of the Nerds," yet as you enter Birch there is a camaraderie and common bond between the students.

Being part of Birch Hall has been as educational as it is fun. Since your fellow classmates are residing in the same building as you, it makes accessing information easy. If you don't remember a due date or what topic has been assigned, you are guaranteed that someone in the dorm will be able to help you out. The fact that we take the same clusters and academic habit, allowed us to go out to do cultural things as a group.

We all have different majors, yet we all work towards the same goal, staying in the honors program and striving to excel. Even though we are all honors students, we still know how to have fun. We watch movies together and play video games in the common area. Within the first month, we got to know each other and since that time have spent practically every spare moment together. We are friends and enjoy hanging out together whether we're going to classes, getting food, going shopping or traveling off campus somewhere.

We all are part of the honors program, we share common goals, have special interests and gifts to offer. Birch is more than a building; it's a way of life.