

# AHANA Hotline

Spring 2004,  
Issue 1

## OASP Staff

Dr. Donald Brown,  
Director

Inés Maturana Sendoya,  
Associate Director

Joana Maynard,  
Assistant Director

Siu Ming Luie,  
Program Coordinator/  
Counselor

Steven Viveiros,  
Academic Counselor

Yvonne McBarnett,  
Administrative Assis-  
tant

## AHANA Hotline Staff 2003-2004

Patrick Kelly '05,  
Co-Editor

Gabriela Fullon '05,  
Co-Editor

Siu Ming Luie,  
Editor-in-Chief

## Letter from the Co-Editors

Hello friends! We hope that everybody is having an enriching and enjoyable semester. Despite the frosty weather, this is an exciting time of the year. There is so much going on within our own BC community, as well as in the great nation of the United States.

In this edition of the hotline, we will be covering one of the most exciting and successful events: hosted by the AHANA Leadership Council, the Week of AHANA Cele-

bration is always a highlight for the spring semester.

In keeping with the heightened political climate of 2004, we have included a piece about and by the BC NAACP's M.O.V.E. (Making Options through Voter Empowerment) Campaign.

Also, in this edition we will be providing our readers with the blueprint of the Hotline. This includes sections for Study Abroad memoirs, Career Opportunities, Scholar-

## Patrick Kelly & Biba Fullon

ships, and the new Newton Corner. We hope you enjoy reading this issue as much as we did creating it.

This is Patrick and Biba wishing you all a restful and fun-filled spring break.



## Big Ups

The AHANA Hotline would like to congratulate:

- **President Grace Simmons and Vice President Burnell Holland** — they will be the President and Vice President, respectively, of BC UGBC for 2004-2005.
- the AHANA Leadership Council, Brandon Slaughter and the Programming staff of the

ALC for putting together a powerful and uplifting Weekend of AHANA Celebration.

- the winners of the ALC Showdown: F.I.S.T.S. and Fuego del Corazon for their beautifully inspiring performances.
- the recipient of the Martin Luther King Jr. Scholarship Award: Helina Teklehaimanot, A&S '05.

- the following culture clubs for putting on their spectacular culture/fashion shows: PSBC (01/31/04), SASA (02/07/04), CSA/KSA (02/13/04), OLAA (02/14/04).
- Asian Caucus for coordinating and hosting a successful Perspectives Weekend (02/19/04-02/21/04).

## Newton Corner

Welcome back to the Spring Semester from the AHANA Resource Center (ARC) in Newton. Before you know it, that trip to main campus on the bus won't seem as bad with the weather warming up.

There have been some changes to the Newton Office for the Spring. We officially have a **Calculus Tutor available in the Cushing Hall Office on Monday Nights from 6 to 8 PM**. Please take advantage of these services. As usual, the

office will be open Tuesday through Thursday afternoon for counseling and advising. In addition, I would like to welcome Karen Rampersad who will serve as a peer mentor over in the Newton Campus. She will be available in the ARC on Monday and Wednesday Nights 5 to 8 PM.

Look for some programming this semester as well. We are planning on having a "Drop By Drive" during the month of March for students to stop by

## Steven Viveiros

the ARC. Also in late March, early April, we will have an AHANA Night on the Newton Campus. Look for some good food that night and an opportunity to connect with others.

If you want to get in touch with me, Steve, on the Newton Campus, give me a call at 2-2843. Please stop by to say HELLO or to ask us ANY QUESTIONS about ANYTHING. WE CAN HELP!!!! Looking forward to seeing you there.

## Connecting with the Asian American Student Community at Boston College Steven Viveiros

If you recall, last semester the Office of AHANA Student Programs (OASP) spent some time meeting with members of the Asian American student community at Boston College. Our staff has poured over the tremendous information collected at these meetings and will be using it to create opportunities to connect with the Asian American student population.

Our next step is to connect with the Asian Caucus and the cultural organizations. OASP would like to get our message

out to let them know about the various resources available. We will also be taking the information collected and preparing reports for the various components of BC mentioned during the meetings. We appreciated all of the information and find it important to communicate your thoughts and ideas with the offices discussed. Furthermore, we will be looking for opportunities to program or assist with programming for the Asian American student community. Several members of our staff serve on the Asian

Pacific American Heritage Month (APAHM) Celebration Committee, a group who provides leadership in educating the BC community about the APA experience. Look for these events and programs in the month of April.

If any student or organization would like to connect with the Office of AHANA Student Programs, please contact Steven Viveiros at 2-4807. We're looking forward to helping you and your organizations in the future.

### Upcoming Events:

- Sr. Thea Bowman **AHANA Scholars Reception** is on March 17th at 6:30PM in the Heights Room.
- **BC Internship Fair** is on March 18th from 3:00PM to 6:00PM in the Heights Room.
- Archbishop Oscar **Romero Scholarship Award Ceremony** is on March 27th at 8:00PM in Lyons Hall.
- Opening event for the 2004 **Asian Pacific American Heritage Month Celebration** is on April 5th at 6:30PM in Gasson 100.
- **Asian American Scholarship Ceremony** is on April 30th.

## Announcements

- Jaime Escalante Tutorial Program offers free academic tutoring to ALL students Monday through Thursday evenings from 6 to 8 at the Office of AHANA Student Programs (72 College Road). For the schedule, please visit [www.bc.edu/oasp](http://www.bc.edu/oasp).
- Applications for the OASP Summer Tuition Remission Program 2004 will be available March 1 and are due 4:00PM on March 26. You can access them at [www.bc.edu/oasp](http://www.bc.edu/oasp) or pick one up in the office.

# Weekend of AHANA Celebration 2004

## The ALC Showdown

Lines formed as early as 5:00PM. The ticket line extended outside the door. Robsham Theater was packed to capacity. On the other side of the doors, still-hopeful students tried to bargain their way into the sold out performance. The 3<sup>rd</sup> annual ALC (AHANA Leadership Council) Showdown packed the house, rocked the house, and brought it down all at the same time.

This year saw the return of old faces, and the bloom of new talent. Hosted by Joi Branch and Eddie Ford (class of '03), the Showdown featured a variety of performances from a step routine by the West End Boys and Girls Club, the belly dancing and glow sticks of the South Asian Students Association (SASA), to the break dancing routines of X-Plosion.

The Showdown began with an introduction and welcome by

ALC leaders, President Burnell Holland (A&S '05), and Vice-president Charles Grandson (CSOM '05), and the traditional shout-out welcoming the classes of 2004 through 2007. The show also featured a mini-fashion show, marked by the various wardrobe changes of the hosts. Also included was a trip down memory lane in which Branch and Ford revisited hip-hop of the 80's and 90's, complete with an orange jogging suit, gold chains, MC Hammer, TLC and the Running Man.

But the highlight of the evening was delivered by Fuego de la Corazón (Fire of the Heart). This Latino-based group delivered a memorable routine, featuring salsa moves and a touch of hip-hop. In a whirl of color and a blaze of sound, Fuego ignited the show. After the final performance, the crowd unani-

## Danielle Woods '06

mously chanted the name spelled out on the lollipops of the group's female members "Fuego! Fuego!".

Fuego was awarded winner for best cultural performance, confirming Ford's words that indeed, "¡Fuego está muy caliente!" They were followed by runner-up, the Philippine Society of Boston College (PSBC). F.I.S.T.S. (Females Incorporating Sisterhood Through Step) took a win the step category.



*Fuego de la Corazón at this year's ALC Showdown.*

## "Fuego, Fuego, Fuego!!"

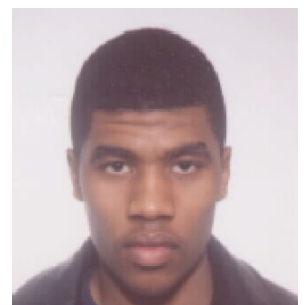
The group Fuego de la Corazón was the product of a frustrated dancer. That lack of a unique and exotic Latin dance troupe at Boston College inspired Sherar Andalcio to attempt to organize a group that would not only show talent in Latin dance, but would also be committed to

and passionate about the music. Sharing the same frustration as Andalcio, Natalia Martinez, Jennifer Jackson, and Alejandro Sierra joined the troupe and became co-captains to help lead Fuego de la Corazón. Fuego de la Corazón is now underway to becoming a successful Latin

## Sherar Andalcio '05

dance troupe.

The name Fuego de la Corazón came easily. The name had to combine the love that we had for dance, and the fire that a dancer exhibits. Fuego de la Corazón (Fire of the Heart)



*Sherar Andalcio '05, Captain & Head Choreographer of Fuego de la Corazón*

*cont. on next page*

## “Fuego, Fuego, Fuego!!”

*(cont. from previous page)*

was the perfect name: it was passionate and fierce as well as soft, expressing what encompasses the art and love of dancing. The title in Spanish made it obvious that the type of dancing the group specialized in was Latino. But there was a lot of work to do. With the help of the co-captains, tryout days were planned in a very short time and trout dance steps were choreographed. Suitemates, friends, and many others helped pass flyers and spread the word about this new, hot Latin dance troupe. A constitution was drafted with responsibilities for each member, including the captain and co-captains. This group had to be something that would thrive through the years:

a group that would be special. After tryouts, we immediately contacted the chosen dancers and began dancing. Practices were held twice a week for an hour and a half each where new moves were taught each and every time.

Although we all worked very hard, we had a lot of fun, because dance is not only about work, but also about enjoying yourself. Fuego de la Corazón has been a form of stress relief for many of the members: something to look forward to that proves to be both challenging and satisfying. We as a group have become a family, and we all enjoy each other's company. Hopefully, we will stay this way, and Fuego de la

Corazón will continue to represent a type of dancing that up until now has never been fully expressed at Boston College.

Members of Fuego de la Corazón:

Male members: Joel Tejada '05, Luis Rivera '05, Stalin Baez '06, Luis Zepeda '07, Raffi Garcia '05.

Female members: Alicia Corbosiero '04, Lauren Avalong '04, Carla Breton '05, Rosa Rodriguez '06

Captain & Head Choreographer: Sherar Andalco '05

Co-captains & Assistant Choreographers: Jennifer Jackson '04, Natalia Martinez '05, Alejandro Sierra '06

## F.I.S.T.S.—Where did it all start? What are they all about? Jennifer Charlot '05

Females Incorporating Sisterhood Through Step (F.I.S.T.S.) was established in 1999 by Juel Claxton, Janelle Hoffman, and Jennifer Tawiah. As freshmen at Boston College, they were unmotivated by the extracurricular activities offered at the time. The three young women combined their unique styles of step dancing and their different views on life to create F.I.S.T.S.

F.I.S.T.S. began as an independent group, not recognized by a majority of Boston College students and administrators. As the team grew in size and notoriety, it came to exist as a sub-

organization of the Black Student Forum (BSF). Since then, F.I.S.T.S. has been renowned for its hard work, creativity, and perseverance. As part of its continued progress in 2004, it gained recognition as a legitimate and independent organization at Boston College and in the metro Boston area.

As a step team, F.I.S.T.S. has performed at several colleges, winning many competitions, none of which mean as much as the three trophies won on their own college campus.

As an organization, F.I.S.T.S. is designed to bring together

strong, talented, intelligent, and focused young women, as well as excellent steppers. The team gives female students the opportunity to unify under a universal objective and build lasting friendships that act as a support system in the present and future.

Our primary goal is to construct a solid foundation of sisterhood among our members that will enable us to have a positive impact on the greater community. We aim to achieve this through the art of step and

*cont. on next page*



*Jennifer Charlot '05*

## F.I.S.T.S.—Where did it all start? What are they all about?

*(cont from previous page)*

the other activities in which we engage. One task we are most proud of is the work we do at the Dorchester YMCA. Every Saturday morning, four members of our team help young girls between the ages of 9 and 17 discover their paths in life through step. Many of these girls are discouraged, believing there is no escape from the

streets they walk everyday. F.I.S.T.S. offers these girls a second family, hope, support, and most importantly, role models.

F.I.S.T.S. not only surpasses traditional college dance performance groups in terms of creativity and complexity, but also cultivates an atmosphere of respect, pride and family,

which it is eager to share with the Boston College and metro Boston communities.

*Our primary goal is to construct a solid foundation of sisterhood among our members that will enable us to have a positive impact on the greater community.*

### A Brief History of Step

When many people see this rhythmic dancing, they ask, “What is step?” Is it just clapping hands and stomping feet? Is it a special dance done by black fraternities and sororities?

Stepping is more than just a dance. It evolved from slaves forced to work in pitch-black coal mines from sunrise to sundown. As a result of the rocky terrain, each slave was issued a pair of boots to wear while working. Sunday, the only day they encountered sunlight, units of slaves competed in what is now known as African Boot Dance. This dance served as a chance to re-sound the battle

cries of ancient drums. Rhythmic dance movements mimicked the fight and passion of the songs while the beat of the drums were compensated through percussive foot stomping and hand clapping.

Today, this unique dance has been called an African-American indigenous art, recently uncovered by an avant-garde in search of something exotic. Stepping is now seen as a line dance, which intricate steps are executed with drill team precision. Church groups, step teams, fraternities, and sororities now attach chants pertaining to the African-

### Researched by F.I.S.T.S.

American community, history, or their organization. It can be seen in several manners: a hybrid call, response, or a song and dance.

Stepping is now hailed an important new art form. It originates from the hearts of those who participate in it. Stepping has aided many in pooling their resources and talents to create a bond between them. It truly is a unifying art.

*[Step] served as a chance to re-sound the battle cries of ancient drums.*

*Stepping is now hailed an important new art form.*



*African Boot Dance*



*Step*

## Negro Speaks of Rivers

Langston Hughes

*I've known rivers:*

*I've known rivers ancient as the world and older than the flow  
of human blood in human veins.*

*My soul has grown deep like the rivers.*

*I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young,*

*I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.*

*I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.*

*I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln went  
down to New Orleans, and I've seen its muddy bosom turn  
all golden in the sunset.*

*I've known rivers:*

*Ancient, dusky rivers.*

*My soul has grown deep like the rivers.*



~ Langston Hughes

## I know why the caged bird sings

Maya Angelou

*A free bird leaps on the back of the wind  
and floats downstream till the current ends  
and dips his wing in the orange sun's rays  
and dares to claim the sky.*

*But a bird that stalks down his narrow cage  
can seldom see through his bars of rage  
his wings are clipped and his feet are tied  
so he opens his throat to sing.*

*The caged bird sings with a fearful trill  
of things unknown but longed for still  
and his tune is heard on the distant hill  
for the caged bird signs of freedom.*

*The free bird thinks of another breeze  
and the trade winds soft through the*

*sighing trees and the fat worms  
waiting on a dawn-bright lawn and  
he names the sky his own.*

*But a caged bird stands on the  
grave of dreams his shadow shouts  
on a nightmare scream  
his wings are clipped and his feet are  
tied so he opens his throat to sing.*

*The caged bird sings with a fearful trill  
of things unknown but longed for still  
and his tune is heard on the distant hill  
for the caged bird signs of freedom.*

~Maya Angelou

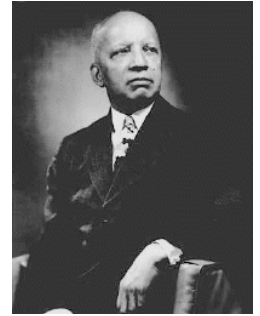


# Black History Month Quiz

Gabriela Fullon

February is national Black History Month. Take the following quiz to test your knowledge about Black history.

- Hiram Revels, the first African-American U.S. senator, took his oath of office on which date?
  - May 6, 1935
  - February 25, 1870
  - January 11, 1910
- Mary McLeod Bethune, a founder of Bethune-Cookman College and the National Council of Negro Women, also served in which capacity?
  - She organized the racial integration of the national Red Cross.
  - She was a special adviser on minority affairs to President Franklin Roosevelt.
  - She wrote an influential biography of Frederick Douglass.
- African-American political scientist Ralph Bunche won the 1950 Nobel Peace Prize for which achievement?
  - He mediated the Arab-Israeli truce in 1948.
  - He worked to integrate the US armed forces during World War II.
  - He organized relief efforts to help victims of famine in eastern Africa
- Marian Wright Edelman, a successful lawyer and activist, established which organization in 1973?
  - Children's Defense Fund
  - Operation PUSH
  - Habitat for Humanity
- Who described herself as a "black lesbian, mother, warrior, poet"?
  - Dorothy West
  - Audre Lorde
  - Maya Angelou
- What key event in the civil rights movement happened in 1964?
  - Thurgood Marshall became the first African American to be appointed to the US Supreme Court.
  - Congress passed the Civil Rights Act.
  - The Black Panther Party was formed.
- Author, educator, and civil rights activist W.E.B. DuBois published which collection of essays and sketches in 1903?
  - Native Son
  - Notes of a Native Son
  - The Souls of Black Folk
- Malcolm X was assassinated on which date?
  - February 21, 1965
  - March 10, 1967
  - July 3, 1969
- The 15th Amendment, which granted African Americans the right to vote, was passed on which date?
  - February 3, 1870
  - July 14, 1889
  - November 19, 1910
- Why has Dr. Carter G. Woodson been called the "father of Negro history"?
  - He wrote the first history of African Americans in the United States.
  - He established the first African American Studies program.
  - He proposed that a black history week be observed in February.



Dr. Carter G. Woodson

*"If we accept and acquiesce in the face of discrimination, we accept the responsibility ourselves and allow those responsible to save their conscience by believing that they have our acceptance and concurrence. We should, therefore, protest openly everything...that smacks of discrimination or slander." ~ Mary McLeod Bethune*

- Answers: 6. B  
1. B  
2. B  
3. A  
4. A  
5. B  
6. C  
7. C  
8. A  
9. A  
10. C

## Quito, Ecuador

After seven hours of grueling climbing, Pablo finally made it to the final obstacle before arriving at his goal. A week of preparation and a month of wonder and anxiety all boiled down to these last 10 minutes. Fatigue began to overcome him and he knew that his legs might not have the strength to continue if the rest lasted any longer. As he raised his head from staring at his feet in the snow, consuming his field of vision was the white peak of the summit looming large over him as if the mountain itself had eyes staring down at him. This final task, the last 10 minutes of the most challenging terrain yet daunted Pablo. A resigned sigh escaped from his mouth as he accepted the fact that he would have to exert more energy than he thought was left in his body for the last stretch of his trek. The view, in spite of everything else, was astonishing. As he saw the first rays of sunshine breakout from behind the ice covered peak of Cotopaxi, the power of the sun bestowed a rejuvenating energy on his previously drained limbs and aching head. The light reflected

off the snow like a crystal and the blue ice blazed in the early morning. Even the crevasse did not appear as menacing as before. The conclusion of this adventure simultaneously thrilled him and sent a shiver of nervousness down his spine. Finally he decided to take a deep breath and make the final push.

Surprisingly, this ultimate climb seemed to be lost on Pablo as the destination arrived seemingly without the passage of time. His mind took over while he methodically took one step after another. Step right foot, push, step left foot, push, breathe, push off ice axe in the snow, push. This pattern continued as if a reflex. A dream-like state overtook him during that period of time while random, unconnected thoughts raced through his head and the summit drew nearer.

Then the climb was over. There was nothing left as the exhausting journey came to an end. Pablo felt an amazing rush of adrenaline and astonishment, but also a profound humble-

## Peter Toepfer '05

ness for the majesty of nature surrounding him. The view overlooked the landscape for miles around and dwarfed everything in comparison. 20,000 feet. This was a height which Pablo might never reach again in his lifetime. Next, a feeling seized him which can not be properly articulated in words. The closest description to it is a weightlessness combined with a sense of utter peace. Pablo had conquered nothing; he accomplished something impressive yet the mountain had given him his consent for a successful climb. He had a right to be proud, but not boastful. Incredible contentment made the episode all the more special.

The only thing that might have made this experience better is if his Ecuadorian family could have been on the summit with him. The group of people who were largely responsible for his happiness during his time in Ecuador deserved the same experience he was currently having. Although it could not be, he wished them there.

*cont. on next page*



*Peter Toepfer '05*



*Cotopaxi, Ecuador*

# Quito, Ecuador

*cont. from previous page*

The thought occurred to him of how he was going to show his gratitude to them when he returned to their loving and comfortable household. He would do his best to come up with something during the trip back. It was at this point that Pablo silently thanked the family for everything and also thanked the country in general for the time it gave him.

\* \* \* \* \*

The experience of being abroad is much like the art of climbing,

One has many choices in what type of activity one wants to do, where to go, how to do it, at what pace, the difficulty involved and the effort put in. Just as in the act of the climb there are amazing rewards and frustrating setbacks. There is fatigue and challenge that one does not often face without the opportunity of removing oneself from the comfort of home or home country. There are hills; there are valleys; there are mountains; there are canyons. There are language barriers, cultural barriers, personal barriers and frustrations waiting

almost daily, but these are just minor bumps in the path to the overall encounter with the country and its people. While one should not overly romanticize the time abroad, it is important to recognize that just as after a mountain climb, the memories are powerful and lasting. The problems and impediments usually fall by the wayside, but the beauty, wonder and joy sustain themselves for the long road after the experience is completed.

*As he raised his head from staring at his feet in the snow, consuming his field of vision was the white peak of the summit looming large over him as if the mountain itself had eyes staring down at him.*

## Not just “Study Abroad”

What I experienced in El Salvador, Central America, cannot be reduced to “study abroad.” It would be an insult to the richness and complexity of the opportunity. It was more accurately called a privilege—a privilege to know another reality and in the process know oneself a little better. I went to El Salvador consciously motivated only by the idea of service and the opportunity to speak Spanish. What I learned is that, in the end, it was I who had been served.

No matter how many stories you hear, how many images you create in your mind, how many texts you read, nothing can pre-

pare you for the forlorn look on the face of a twelve year-old carrying a full bucket of wet corn kernels on her head, or for the embrace of a ninety-seven year-old campesino whose head only reaches your chin. I was not fully appreciative before my arrival that I would be living with some of the most intelligent, other-centered, giving individuals that Jesuit Universities have the good fortune of calling their students. Nor that I would find myself living with Salvadorans who, although my peers, had a formation quite different from mine, which they caringly shared as though I were family. The moments I spent with children—painting

rocks, making tortillas, picking coffee—were some of the most liberating moments of my education. It was not an isolated academic experience, but rather, a life-long lesson in living.

## Amaris Kinne



*Women and children getting water in El Salvador.*

## My Home, a Nation of Paradox

Exiting the Cape Town airport, I stood in awe of the solid, resilient, and magnificent mountain, Table Mountain, that rose a short distance ahead of me. At the same time, my body was paralyzed by the sight immediately in front of me: a small peephole of approximately one million shanty houses surrounding the area, all of which are clustered into "townships." South Africa is one of the most gorgeous countries to have met my eyes, but also one of the most shocking places as well. My six months of study abroad in Cape Town challenged me to reevaluate some vital questions in my life, heightened my global awareness, evoked my strong sense of connection to nature (oh the sunsets there!), steered my vitality and academic passions, and invited me into a once new place—now, home.

My journey, which began in late June 2003 and lasted until December 2003, had many different aspects. The most obvious aspect known to the world is South Africa's justice issue: particularly race issues. Ending in the early 90's, South Africa's government was once based on a system of apart-

heid, where races were divided in housing, education, and opportunities. In a post-apartheid era, the remnants of the difficult past still show through in some people's stereotypes and the grave economic disparity. In volunteering and befriending people who are products of the system, I grew to learn as much as I could from what the six months granted me. Though I wish I had much more time, the few hours a week I spent in the townships were rich and filled with many lessons I could only learn by experiencing the realities of life there first hand. Beyond my time in the townships, my classes and friendships, museum trips, and my own observations and contemplation played large parts in my understanding South Africa's history and obstacles, and my motivation to NEVER give up my quest for justice.

Looking past the racism and AIDS challenges, South Africa has so much richness and love to embrace. The many people I met there, in Cape Town and beyond, always provided me with a sense of welcome and a sense of pride in their nation. They radiated hope and a commitment to improving the

## Lauren Marra '05

"New South Africa." The beauty of South Africa is not only in its people, but also in its scenery. Every morning, I woke up to Table Mountain, the centering point of Cape Town. I continually felt alive, in my skin, ready to fully experience life in South Africa. The entire nation, and Southern Africa as a whole, encompasses a myriad of cultures and landscapes. Whether I was hiking in the northern Drakensburg Mountains, admiring the stripes of a nearby zebra, sitting at the top of Table Mountain falling in love with the sunset, or enjoying the serene beaches of Mozambique, there were always moments to appreciate, to rub my eyes in disbelief of what I was seeing! But of course, studying abroad does involve classroom learning. On an academic level, my classes completely intrigued me! Each class was packed with a new enlightenment displayed in an exciting way. I cannot describe my academic experience more honestly than this: my teachers were ABSOLUTELY incredible and my courses were pivotal in finding what impassions me and



Lauren Marra '05

*My six months in Cape Town challenged me to reevaluate some vital questions in my life, and invited me into a once new place—now home.*

*cont. on next page*

*A bird's eye view of Cape Town. From here, you can see the Drakensburg Mountains.*



# My Home, a Nation of Paradox

*cont. from previous page*

where I see my life going in the future.

South Africa is a hidden gem with so many layers, each revealing some interesting and even challenging experience. I

have told the beginning of my story here, knowing that I will soon return to South Africa to start the next chapter, to unpack the next layer. I urge those interested to challenge themselves, reward themselves and discover South Africa. You will fall in love.



*Sunset over Table Mountain, Cape Town*

## Upon Going to Africa

“Don’t they still practice female genital mutilation? Aren’t you afraid you might get A.I.D.S.? Do the ‘natives’ swing from trees? And wait... you’re white.” Surprisingly, and disappointedly, these were some of the comments and questions I received upon deciding to study abroad in Africa. Prior to my four months in the country of Ghana, I thought that I had a pretty good grasp on race relations. I certainly didn’t consider myself prejudice in any way. I had taken classes on racial inequality in the United States. I had been to countries on service trips for short periods of time, in which I was the “minority,” and I had friends of many different ethnic backgrounds. And hey, I just wanted to see Africa! I had always imagined traveling there, and now I finally was. So with all of these qualifications in mind, I hopped on a plane headed for Ghana, ready to experience all that West Africa had to offer.

When we arrived at the house which American students had been placed in, we divided our-

selves up, with very little background knowledge of one another, into rooming assignments. Sayida, my soon to be roommate, announced that she was open to living with anyone, but would prefer a roommate who wouldn’t be having lots of boys coming and going, nor sleeping in our room. After about a two minute session of awkward eyes looking around the room, I figured “who am I kidding?” and raised my hand.

Sayida, an African American from New Jersey, is a junior at Spellman College, a single-sex, Historically Black College in Georgia. Sayida is also a devout Muslim, covering herself at all times, and a strong black nationalist; she described her household growing up as being equivalent to the “Black KKK.” So one can only imagine what she must have been thinking to have a white roommate, from suburban Connecticut, who had decided to come to Ghana for her semester abroad. Interestingly, I learned that Sayida didn’t know what to think, she couldn’t understand why “white

folks” would want to come to Africa. She had grown up with the notion that one white person was the same as the next, with little interest for a racially diverse environment. In Sayida’s eyes, due to a number of experiences growing up, she was under the impression that white people, as a race, were only looking to keep the status quo of racial diversity as it is, thus keeping the black race at a comfort level of mediocrity in the school system, the work place, and any other possible social stratosphere connected to American life. In addition to being puzzled by the question of why a white person would choose to come to Africa, she felt that

## Emily Walsh ‘05



*Emily Walsh '05*



# Upon Going to Africa

*cont. from previous page*

and pride of Africans. Although we became incredibly close friends, there were conversations in which I felt incredibly defensive, even hurt, and wanted to accuse her of being a racist. How could she judge an entire race of people, based on what their ancestors had done? Shouldn't we be looking to the future, rather than harboring past resentment? In a way, my problem was that I was simply personalizing what she was saying, rather than allowing myself to look at the broader picture.

I had always considered myself as open to anything and anyone as I could possibly be. And yet, while this may have been true about my character, I had never really known what it was like to be the minority in a real way. Stories, classes, movies, experiences with friends—none of these experiences allow one to fully experience being in another person's skin. I had been born into a society of white privilege, in which racial biases are still a very strong force. And yet, while I will never truly know what it is like to live in a society where I am the minority, after spending four months in Ghana, as a white, American female, I have gained a new perspective on race issues and a broader definition of racism and its different facets.

I witnessed beautiful African women with patch marks of bleached skin, in an attempt to make themselves appear lighter. There are businesses in Ghana

that actually market bleach cream for such a purpose, with the slogan: "Everything you've always wanted to be." There is also the notion that, for much of the population, marrying a white person equates with raising one's social status. I had Ghanaian friends who told me this straight up. As an American girl who stuck out like a sore thumb, I was approached by a number of men, with cell phones in hand, ready for my number, address requests, and even marriage proposals (which were actually quite humorous most of the time). When I would go to the market, people would touch my hair and skin at random as I walked by. Stepping onto the campus of the University located in Ghana, I felt the eyes of passing students on me as I walked by. An overwhelmingly male campus, clearly I was the minority in more ways than one and staring at foreigners was a common practice.

I had not anticipated this to be such a large component of my experience, nor how draining it would be both physically and mentally at times. Of course I knew I would not blend in physically, but I guess I was under the impression that we were moving beyond our differences as an international community. While this may be the case, it has been and continues

to be, a slow process; I was disheartened to truly recognize what white skin represents in much of Africa: money, power and a history of imperialism. BUT that doesn't mean I don't believe there is potential to keep moving in the direction of a more open and integrated world. I believe there is.

So now, four months later, I am back at Boston College, in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts, with a different perspective on what the term "diversity" means—a term that has always held a certain amount of ambiguity in my mind. I will never stop putting myself in new situations, with new people and in new environments. I will never stop asking questions about other people's feelings and experiences. I will never stop myself from allowing new perspectives to enter my mind that challenge the ones already there. I realize how naïve it is to think that one can have such a strong grasp on the people and world around them. Because the truth is, the only eyes I will be viewing the world from are my own.

*I witnessed beautiful African women with patch marks of bleached skin, in an attempt to make themselves appear lighter...*



*Women from North Ghana*

---

## The M.O.V.E. Campaign

The M.O.V.E. Campaign—  
Making Options through Voter  
Empowerment.

The M.O.V.E. Campaign is part of the concentrated effort by the Boston College Chapter N.A.A.C.P. to empower the millions of disenfranchised voters in this nation. The M.O.V.E. Campaign is a non-partisan, aggressive, Voter Empowerment Campaign designed and created to empower communities of color by increasing awareness and participation in

the full political process in local, state, and federal elections.

Our three overarching objectives are Registration, Education, and Mobilization.

Through a collective effort with the Boston College community and its various clubs and organizations we hope to achieve several goals. They include, but certainly are not limited to, mass voter registration drives of Boston residents as well as Boston College students, to educate voting eligible members of the Boston College and Greater

## Valerie Merisier '05

Boston community on the connection between voting and public policy and its affect on their lives and future opportunities, and to bring awareness to the importance to full participation in the political process. As an organization, we fully believe that through voting and active participation in the political process your community is uplifted, your power is demonstrated, and most importantly your voice is heard.



## Scholarship/Internship/Advancement Opportunities

- The **Lagrant Foundation** annually provides 10 scholarships to undergraduate students who are attending accredited, four-year institutions and are pursuing careers in the fields of advertising, marketing and public relations. To learn more about the scholarship and the criteria, please visit [www.lagrantfoundation.org](http://www.lagrantfoundation.org). You can pick up an application in the Office of AHANA Student Programs. Completed applications must be received by the foundation no later than 6:00PM on March 31, 2004.
- **Citizen Schools** is recruiting for their National Teaching Fellowship Program. It's a two-year paid program which provides hands-on experience for those interested in becoming leaders and educators. Fellows graduate with a Masters in Education. For more information, visit their website at [www.citizenschools.org/teachingfellows/](http://www.citizenschools.org/teachingfellows/).
- **Morgan Stanley** is recruiting for the Infrastructure Summer Internship Program, which is designed to serve as a feeder to the Analyst Program. They provide students with a challenging 10-12 weeks assignment, giving them the opportunity to assess the students' skills and contributions. The program includes an extensive Senior Management Speaker Series, as well as intern presentations, which gives interns a broad understanding of the organization. This is also supplemented by professional skills training, as well as social/networking events, which provides a complete internship experience. For more information about this program, please visit the Office of AHANA Student Programs at 72 College Road.
- The **Asian/Pacific American Association for Advancement at AT&T** is seeking qualified applicants for its 2004 National 4A Scholarship Program. They award six \$2,000 scholarships to qualified applicants based on individual merit. All third-year college juniors who are US citizens or legal permanent residents in the US are eligible to apply. Applicants will be evaluated on the basis of their scholastic and person achievements, leadership, community involvement and their contributions to the Asian American community. Applications are due March 31, 2004. For more info. and the application, visit <http://www.4a-att.org/National/scholarship.html>.

## Boston College

Office of AHANA Student Programs (OASP)  
Sister Thea Bowman AHANA Center  
72 College Road  
Chestnut Hill, MA 02467

Phone: 617-552-3358

Fax: 617-552-4313

Email: [oasp@bc.edu](mailto:oasp@bc.edu)

We're on the Web!

[www.bc.edu/oasp](http://www.bc.edu/oasp)

*Enhance Learning Through  
Diversity*



## The Office of AHANA Student Programs

### Mission Statement

The mission of the Office of AHANA Student Programs is to model servant leadership to students of AHANA descent and to provide a broad array of services that nurture their academic, social, cultural and spiritual development. While the traditional target group of the office is students who enter Boston College through the office's six week summer Options Through Education Program, the office's vision is to reach out and embrace all AHANA students in an attempt to help them actualize their dreams, fulfill their potential and become servant-leaders. The Office of AHANA Student Programs provides quality programs and services aimed at responding to the continuum of needs of AHANA students.

### Programs and Services

- Comprehensive Academic Advisement Program
  - Performance Monitoring
- Options Through Education—Transitional Summer Program (OTE)
- Benjamin Elijah Mays Mentoring Program
- Jaime Escalante Tutorial Program
- Father Ellacuría AHANA Resource Center
- Ladies Let's Talk
- AHANA Hotline
- On-Site Services
- Sister Thea Bowman AHANA Scholars Program
- Gospel Caravan