

BOSTON COLLEGE
OFFICE OF THE
DEAN FOR STUDENT
DEVELOPMENT
GRADUATE
STUDENT LIFE

Grad Student Life

VOLUME 5, NUMBER 9

DECEMBER 14, 2005

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Give someone a "free gift" with a Random Act of Kindness!
- Be prepared with Holiday Travel Tips
- Save the date! The GSA Ball is February 3, 2006!

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Random Acts of Kindness during the Holiday Season



- Donate to Toys for Tots!
- Shovel your neighbor's driveway and/or clean the snow off his or her car when the winter storms hit
- Send all your friends e-holiday cards
- Invite your friends over to watch classic Christmas movies
- Collect coats, hats, gloves, scarves, or boots, for the various homeless shelters to be distributed before the cold sets in
- Put together a notebook and fill it with holiday kindness stories and share these stories with your friends and family
- Serve holiday meals at a shelter, soup kitchen or community center
- Provide transportation with elderly neighbors to help with their holiday gift or grocery shopping
- Design and send homemade holiday cards to your friends and family and also to people in the military, homeless shelters or nursing homes
- Organize a diverse holiday party to kick off the holiday season which includes different celebrations such as Kwanzaa, Christmas, Hanukah and Ramadan



Holiday Travel Tips



When driving...

- Make sure your vehicle is well maintained: check tire pressure, oil, and coolant.
- Be prepared for winter driving with a snow brush and materials in case of emergency.
- Check road conditions and weather before leaving at www.drivecast.com.
- Bring a cell phone for emergencies, but don't use it while you're driving!
- Always wear your seat belt.
- Bring fun games or plan activities for long rides.

When flying...

- Check the weather before you leave to plan for delays and/or clothing changes.
- Get to the airport early enough for your flight!
- Use curbside check-in or self check-in kiosks
- Bring a book or music to keep you occupied during waiting periods.
- Be careful what you pack in your carry on bag. Look at the TSA website for restrictions.
- Pack a snack, as most flights don't offer food.
- Watch out! Wrapped gifts may be unwrapped at the security checkpoint.

SAVE THE DATE!

GSA WINTER BALL 2006

February 3, 8 pm—midnight
The Colonnade Hotel in Back Bay

- The first 100 tickets will be \$20, and all additional tickets will be sold for \$25
- Each ticket includes one drink ticket and lots of hors d'oeuvres and dessert
- Ticket sales begin on January 17 at the Murray Graduate Student Center and other campus locations.



Graduate Student Spotlight: Julian Arthur



Julian Arthur is pursuing his Doctoral degree in Biology.

“The friendly atmosphere at BC is the best part of going to school here.”

Where were you born? Technically, in a hospital in Summit, but I grew up in Orange, New Jersey.

Where did you do your undergraduate work and what did you study? I graduated from Boston College in 2002, where I majored in Biology (pre-medical focus) and I minored in both History and Black Studies.

What program of study are you pursuing at BC? I'm currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Biology under the tutelage of Dr. Anne Stellwagen. I'm exploring the properties and interactions of Ku, a telomerase-associated protein in the budding yeast *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*.

Why did you choose BC for graduate school? Location, location, location. Well, that along with the faculty, both those I was familiar with and those who have been added in the years since I graduated. The breadth and variety of their research was certainly a deciding factor. The transformation of Higgins over the past 6 years has been nothing short of amazing; the facilities are all that an up and coming Nobel Laureate could ask for.

What do you like most about your studies at BC? About BC in general? At the risk of sounding trite, the friendly atmosphere at BC is the best

part of going to school here. There is definitely a sense of camaraderie between the labs within the Bio department, between departments, and even between the grad school and the undergraduate community at large.

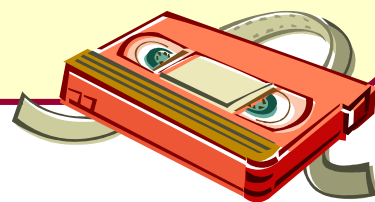
What do you like to do in your spare time? I try to enjoy all that BC specifically and Boston in general have to offer. In no specific order, I enjoy basketball at the Plex and Roger's Park, bar-hopping on Comm Ave/Brighton Ave/Landsdown/Copley/Government Center, dancing, reading, Thai food, watching movies, stalking friends on Facebook, attending BC sporting events, going to concerts, eating ice cream, doing the crosswords in the Heights, Metro and the Globe, and Salsa. In my spare time away from my spare time, I try to contribute to the BC community and beyond through participation in AID (Americans for Informed Democracy), the GSA student government and social planning committee, and just recently, the Cape Verdean Helping Hands Fashion Show taking place this April.

What do you like about the Murray Graduate Student Center? Aside from being one of the rare buildings on campus that houses a vending machine with Skittles, I've found myself gravitating to the MGC for the

free video rentals, the pool table, and various GSA/GISA sponsored events.

What is your favorite movie and why? What book have you just finished reading? (Not a school book!) Although this changes regularly because I watch and enjoy so many movies, I'd have to say my favorite movie is *Fight Club*. It just has so many memorable lines, and the social commentary about the malaise of the average middle-class American is twisted enough to be thoroughly entertaining. I grudgingly admit that I just finished reading *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*. Having just read the entire series this semester, I'd have to say that the *Goblet of Fire* was my favorite, especially since everyone spoiled the ending to part 6 over a year ago.

If you had one superpower, what would it be? I've always wanted to be asked this question, because the answer is so obvious: *The Power Cosmic*. The *Silver Surfer* has always been one of my favorite heroes, and what power could beat the ability to fly around the universe at the speed of light, fighting crime on a surfboard?



Mike Recommends... ..Elf

One Christmas Eve, a long time ago, a small baby crawled into Santa's bag of toys during a stop at an orphanage. Undetected by Santa, the baby boy was accidentally taken back to Santa's North Pole. Once discovered, the baby was quickly taken under Santa's wing and raised as an elf named Buddy. Buddy's world is made up of candy cane trees, gingerbread houses and magical talking snowmen. But soon he grows to be three times larger than his elf family and becomes a giant in a land of happy smiling little people. It starts to become evident that Buddy doesn't fit in. It takes a heart-to-heart from Santa for the obvious to sink in: Buddy isn't in fact big for his age; he's just not an elf! Furthermore, Santa discloses that Buddy's real father lives in New York City and is on the "Naughty List!" So sweet, innocent, overly excitable, Buddy decides to set off for New York City in search of his real father. Buddy soon finds out that life in the city is not all ice skating and sugarplums. In fact, New Yorkers are mean and have forgotten about the spirit of Christmas. Even though Buddy tries to spread the love of Christmas, people including his Dad, have a hard time believing a full-grown man in a green wizard's man cap and yellow tights. In New York, Buddy is out of control and obnoxiously giddy. The oversized buddy, rides on revolving doors until he pukes, hits every button on the elevator, gets hit by kamikaze taxi cabs, and at on point gets angry at department store Santa's for being a "fraud." Buddy gets put into the most ridiculously funny scenarios I've ever seen. Soon Buddy's enthusiasm becomes infectious and he starts to win over his real Dad and the cute sales clerk at the Christmas store. When everyone in New York has forgotten about Christmas, Big Buddy is here to bring back the spirit. This is a heart warming film that is filled with humor and hope for the holidays. This movie will make you go "Ho, Ho, Hoooo!" It is a true winner.



Holiday Celebrations Around the World



Here at Boston College, most of us are familiar with Christmas - the Christian holiday which celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ, as told in the texts of the Christian scriptures - and the many traditions associated with Christmas: attending religious services, singing carols, decorating a tree, exchanging presents, and the legend of St. Nicholas (a.k.a. Santa Claus) to name a few! (If you aren't familiar with these customs, and would like to know more, especially about specific Christmas customs around the world, check out: www2.worldbook.com/features/holidays/html/history.htm.) Boston College offers many opportunities to experience the best of the Christmas traditions (Just check out BC Events Calendar and Student Life Events Calendar to find out what's happening around campus! You can access these calendars from the Graduate Student Life website, at www.bc.edu/gsl). In an effort to acknowledge and honor the diverse traditions of our graduate student population, *Grad Student Life* researched holidays happening from among different religious traditions and countries around the world during the fall and winter months. Here are just a few of our findings!

Ramadan

Ramadan is a Muslim holiday, which occurs during the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. Because Islam uses a lunar calendar which is about 11 days shorter than the solar calendar used elsewhere, Islamic holidays occur at different times each year. In 2005 Ramadan began on Oct. 5. Muslims celebrate Ramadan as the month during which the prophet Muhammad received the first of the revelations that make up the Qur'an, the holy book of Islam. During Ramadan, Muslims fast daily from dawn until sunset. During this time, Muslims cannot take food or drink, inhale tobacco smoke, or engage in sexual activity. The daily fast is broken by a light meal called the iftar, followed by the evening prayer. The preferred food for the iftar is dates and water. Ramadan is also a time for other religious activities. The nights are often devoted to special prayers and to recitations from the Qur'an. During the last 10 days, some Muslims seclude themselves in a mosque to give full time to religious contemplation. The end of Ramadan is celebrated by a great festival called 'Id al-Fitr. Excerpted from: www2.worldbook.com/features/holidays/html/ramadan.htm.

Diwali

Diwali is Hindu holiday which begins on the fifteenth day of Kartika. Because there is no one universally accepted Hindu calendar, this five day festival may be celebrated on different dates in some parts of India, but it always falls in the months of October or November. Diwali means "rows of lighted lamps" and the celebration is often referred to as the Festival of Lights. During this time, homes are thoroughly cleaned and windows are opened to welcome Lakshmi, goddess of wealth. Candles and lamps are lit as a greeting to Lakshmi. Gifts are exchanged and festive meals are prepared during Diwali. The celebration means as much to Hindus as Christmas does to Christians. Because there are many regions in India, there are many manifestations of the Diwali festival. In at least one area, the festival begins with Dhanteras, a day set aside to worship Lakshmi. In the Indian culture, wealth is not viewed as a corruptive power. Instead, a wealthy person is considered to have been rewarded for good deeds of a past life. On the second day Kali, the goddess of Strength, is worshipped. This day also focuses on abolishing laziness and evil. On the third day (the last day of the year in the lunar calendar), lamps are lighted and shine brightly in every home. The lamp symbolizes knowledge and encourages reflection upon the purpose of each day in the festival. The goal is to remember the purpose throughout the year. The fourth day of Diwali falls on the first day of the lunar New Year. At this time, old business accounts are settled and new books are opened. The books are worshipped in a special ceremony and participants are encouraged to remove anger, hate, and jealousy from their lives. On the final day (Balipratipada) of the festival, Bali, an ancient Indian king, is recalled. Bali destroyed the centuries old philosophies of the society. However, in addition to this, he is remembered for being a generous person. Thus, the focus of this day is to see the good in others, including enemies. Excerpted from: www3.kumc.edu/diversity/ethnic_relig/diwali.html.

Sichi-Go-San

Sichi-Go-San is a Japanese holiday, which takes place on November 15. In Japan, children who are three, five, or seven years old are thought to be especially lucky. So, on November 15, children who are three, five, or seven years old dress in their finest clothes. Some wear Western-style clothes. Others follow the old customs. They wear traditional kimonos, beautiful, brightly colored robes made of cotton or silk. Each child carries a long, narrow, colorfully paper bag, colorfully decorated with pictures, usually of a pine tree, a tortoise, and a crane. These are symbols of youth and long life. During Sichi-Go-San, families go to a shrine, or place of worship. There, they give thanks for the good health of their children and ask for a blessing for their future health and happiness. Outside the shrine, there are stalls where parents buy candy and toys to fill the children's paper bags. After the families return home, the children give some of their candy to visiting friends and relatives. In return, the children are often given gifts. Often, the day ends with a party. Excerpted from: <http://www2.worldbook.com/features/holidays/html/shichi.htm>

Hanukkah

Hanukkah is a Jewish holiday, which usually occurs in December. Also known as the Feast of Lights or Feast of Dedication, Hanukkah officially begins on the 25th day of the month of Kislev, on the Hebrew calendar, and lasts for eight days. This holiday commemorates the re-dedication of the Holy Temple in 165 B.C.E., after a three-year struggle led by Judah Maccabee, in which the Jews in Judea defeated the Greek king of Syria, Antiochus IV, who had outlawed Jewish rituals and ordered the Jews to worship Greek gods. According to the Talmud - a compilation of Jewish oral tradition written between the third and fifth centuries C.E. - when the Jews cleaned the Holy Temple of Syrian idols after defeating Antiochus, they found only one small cruse of oil with which to light their holy lamps. But miraculously, the cruse provided them with oil for eight days. Other sources tell of a torchlight parade in the Temple, which may also have contributed to the tradition of lighting candles on Hanukkah. To commemorate this miracle, every night during the festival one candle is lighted on a special eight-branched candelabrum, called a menorah or hanukkiyah. A special candle, called a shamash, is used to light the eight candles of the menorah. For more information about the history and traditions of Hanukkah, visit the History Channel's website: www.historychannel.com/exhibits/holidays/hanukkah/history.html.



Finals and Winter Break Hours at the Murray Graduate Student Center

Sunday, December 18	noon-10:00pm
Monday, December 19-Tuesday, December 20	9:00am-10:00pm
Wednesday, December 21-Thursday, December 22	9:00am-5:00pm
Friday, December 23-Sunday, January 1	CLOSED
Monday, January 2-Friday, January 6	9:00am-5:00pm
Saturday, January 7-Sunday, January 8	CLOSED
Monday, January 9-Friday, January 13	9:00am-5:00pm
Saturday, January 14-Monday, January 16	CLOSED

Regular Hours Resume on Tuesday, January 17

Mark Your Calendar...



Friday, December 15

Toys for Tots contributions due!

Drop off boxes are located in Fulton Student Lounge, Murray Graduate Student Center, Campion, 21 Campanella Way, and McGuinn 221.

Friday, December 23 – Monday January 2

Boston College Closed for Winter Break

Tuesday, January 17

Classes for Spring 2006 begin

Wednesday, January 18

Grad Night Out Social at Big City, 7pm-9pm

130 Brighton Ave. Take the B-Line to Harvard Avenue, walk 2 blocks North to Brighton Avenue.