

# Ex Libris

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARS PROGRAM, BOSTON COLLEGE

Volume X, Issue 2

Winter 2008

## Potential Scholars in Boston for PSP Weekend

By Brian Varian, A&S '11

At the end of January, a handful of young men and women assembled around a table in McElroy Dining Hall. Business attire and the uncommon use of meal trays hinted that these were visitors and that the undertaking was serious. Conversation suggested a degree of familiarity within the group, while an atmosphere of nervousness indicated that the Presidential Scholars Program Weekend was once again underway.

The annual recruiting weekend for the Presidential Scholars Program was immensely successful. Selected from Boston College's Early Action pool of more than 7000 applicants, fifty-seven intelligent and ambitious high school seniors from across the country converged upon Boston College to vie for one of the fifteen places in the Presidential Scholars Program Class of 2012, the eighteenth in the Program's history. The prospective Scholars arrived on campus with an insatiable curiosity about the Program and the final selection process, asking their student hosts questions regarding the Evening Speaker series, the number of Scholars who are Classics majors, and the percentage weight assigned to each of the two interviews, one with a faculty member, the other with an Admission officer.

The weekend began with some delicious fare from Bertucci's Restaurant. This informal dinner provided the perfect opportunity for the prospective Scholars to mingle with their hosts and introduce themselves to one another. Shortly after dinner, they proceeded



Photo: Marjorie Sardella

Fr. Neenan spoke at dinner in front of current and future Presidential Scholars. At right, potential Scholars who correctly answered his annual quiz questions await their prizes.

down College Road to Lawrence House, the Presidential Scholars Program's new home, for further socializing. Still, the evening was not purely social, but had a competitive element – an intense, bracketed tournament where prospective and current Scholars alike battled over games of Connect Four and Catchphrase. Soon thereafter, they headed back to dormitories for the evening with their hosts, knowing that the next day would be full of presentations, interviews, other

sundry events, and a formal dinner.

Bright and early on Thursday morning, Professor Sardella and a panel of Scholars provided a thorough presentation on the Presidential Scholars Program, describing everything from the speaker series to the post-sophomore study to France. Following this, they headed out for interviews with faculty members and Admission officers or to get a taste of the Honors Program's Western Cultural

*see Weekend, page 2*

### Inside...

Alumni Spotlight .....p.3  
Speaker Series.....p.4-7

### The Presidential Scholars Program has Moved



Photo: Mary Pat Johnston

Over winter break, the Presidential Scholars Program moved out of its old home at 36 College Road. You can now visit Dr. Dennis Sardella, Director, Jennie Thomas, Assistant Director, and Mary Pat Johnston, Graduate Assistant at the Program's new home down the road at Lawrence House, 122 College Road.

# *Presidential Scholars Weekend*



Photo: Marjorie Sardella

Professor Carlo Rotella of the English Department talks with prospective Scholars following his talk on Jazz music in America

## **Weekend** cont. from p. 1

Tradition seminars, or other classes. At 4:00 PM, in an afternoon counterpart of an Evening Speaker meeting, they gathered to hear Professor Carlo Rotella of the Boston College English Department offer an insightful lecture on the cultural influences surrounding the development of Chicago Blues during the 1960's and 1970's. The day concluded with a formal dinner in the Heights Room, featuring Father William Neenan, S.J., economist, former Academic Vice President, and legendary raconteur and humorist as keynote speaker. The speech gradually evolved into a game of trivia, peppered with humorous references to Fr. Neenan's native state of Iowa, but concluding on a more serious note, with Fr. Neenan offering the prospective Scholars some insight from the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola on how to make their college choice.

Friday began with an essay writing session, followed by more interviews and classes, after which many attended the annual Undergraduate Research Symposium. At the symposium, they were able to hear about the research that many current Scholars and other BC students are conducting. Later that afternoon, senior Scholars Sam Dolinger, Emily Neumeier, Lindsay Williams, and Paul Wendel guided them on a trolley tour of Boston. Despite freezing rain, the entire entourage of prospectives, current Scholars, and adult chaperones enjoyed

a tour of Fenway Park followed by dinner at the Hard Rock Café. The evening ended with a thoroughly entertaining visit to Charles Playhouse to see Blue Man Group perform its routine of paint and percussion.

Saturday, everyone attended Admitted Eagle Honors Day to learn about the Honors Program, participation in which is required of all Presidential Scholars. On the last night of the Presidential Scholars Program Weekend, BCbOp!, Boston College's acclaimed jazz band, performed exclusively for the prospective and current Scholars. Music, ice cream and dancing made for a truly memorable evening.

The weekend concluded on Sunday morning with an optional mass celebrated by Fr. Neenan in St. Mary's Chapel, followed by a buffet brunch for prospective Scholars and family members in the Heights Room of Corcoran Commons on the lower campus. While they were saddened to return home from what had been their home for the past five days, there was a pervasive sense of anticipation. The future of the Presidential Scholars Program was being written that very weekend. Colleen Maher, A&S '11, captured this spirit of excitement: "It was wonderful to meet the next generation of Presidential Scholars. I was very impressed by the rich cultural backgrounds, travel experiences, accomplishments, and goals possessed by the students. I am sure the PSP Class of 2012 will offer great contributions to not only the Program, but also to the University."



# PSP Alumni Spotlight

## Brett Huneycutt: A Scholar serving others

Tim Mooney, A&S '09

The last ten years have taken Brett Huneycutt around the world to sites as varied as Chestnut Hill, Oxford, England, the Arizona-Mexico border, El Salvador and South Africa. A Rhodes Scholar and member of the Presidential Scholars Program class of '03, Huneycutt a native of Phoenix, Arizona, has spent most of his life since graduating from Boston College working on problems of economic development in the Third World.

Brett's post-junior year internship took him to Mexico City, where he worked at the United States Embassy, after which he traveled briefly to El Salvador to establish contacts for his senior thesis on remittances sent home by Salvadorans working in the United States.

Following his graduation in 2003 with a major in economics and minors in Latin American Studies and Math, Huneycutt spent one year in El Salvador on a Fulbright grant where he studied immigration and small business development. Awarded a Rhodes Scholarship (one of Boston College's first two) that year, he then traveled to Oxford University where he studied Economics.

During his time in graduate school, Huneycutt spent time working on the border in Arizona where, together with BC classmate Victoria Criado and his long-time friend Rudy Adler, he conceived and carried out a project called the Border Film Project. Setting out to capture two different sides of the illegal immigration story, the team gave disposable cameras and self-addressed envelopes to migrants and Minuteman volunteers on the border, asking them to take photos illustrating their experiences on the border, and promising a small reward for the return of the cameras.

The three then collected the photos from the cameras they received and coauthored a book entitled "Border Film Project." The project has been featured on the CBS Evening News, CNN, Fox News, the Wall Street Journal and Financial Times, among other media outlets, and the photos have been turned into a touring exhibition that has now been shown in ten cities including at Harvard Law School and Comicion Nacional de Derechos Humanos, in Mexico



Photo Courtesy of:  
Brett Huneycutt

PSP Alumni Brett Huneycutt ('03) (left) with his friends Rudy Adler and Victoria Criado spent a summer working with Mexican immigrants on "The Border Film Project."

City.

"Our goal was to put a human face on the immigration debate, and allow two groups most often caricatured in the press to tell their own stories," Huneycutt said. "It's great that our project has been so well received. However, it's frustrating that there has been no material change to our country's immigration policy – or even the way we talk about immigration – since we started in early 2005."

Huneycutt now works for the consulting firm McKinsey and Company, in New York City. McKinsey is a leading management consulting firm that advises senior executives of major corporations, government agencies, and special secondary organizations (NGOs, etc.) on strategy, operations, and other business matters.

Though Huneycutt's initial clients were a Spanish-language media company and a major U.S. bank, his more recent work has allowed him to consult for organizations within his field of expertise – financial inclusion and economic development. In the last six months, Brett has served the microfinance divisions of a Mexican retail bank and a major U.S. foundation.

"It's been enormously satisfying to be able to learn on the job while working and having impact on issues I deeply care about," Huneycutt said.

Huneycutt also said that he hopes to deepen his involvement going forward. "I think consulting is a fantastic opportunity for the first few years of my career," he noted, "My long term passions lie in Latin America. Going forward, I could see myself working for one of the major multi-lateral organizations like the Inter-American Development bank or the World Bank. I could also see myself doing something more entrepreneurial on the ground in Mexico or Central America."

Huneycutt said he looks back fondly on his Boston College days, in particular to instructors like Political Science professors Jennie Purnell and Donald Hafner, and his Presidential Scholar peers.

"I had a wonderful group of mentors and peers who inspired me constantly and taught me a lot," he said. "BC was a great place to explore my interests and deepen them."

Now that he is back and settled in the United States after years out of the country, Huneycutt said that he would be happy to be a resource for any Scholars interested in Latin America, economic development, Oxford or management consulting.

Huneycutt said that those wishing to learn more about the Border Film Project can visit [www.borderfilmproject.com](http://www.borderfilmproject.com) for more information

# Evening Speaker Series 2007-2008

## Technology and finance with Paul Deninger

Steve Liu, A&S '11

Business leader Paul Deninger discussed the past, present, and future of innovation in his talk entitled “Technology Finance, A Global Overview” at the final Evening Speaker Series event of the fall semester on November 27. Deninger, the Vice Chairman of Jeffries & Company and a member of the World Economic Forum, broke down the complicated world of international business and economics into a clear and simple presentation.

Deninger, a graduate of the Carroll School of Management class of 1980 and who also holds an MBA degree from Harvard Business School, began by comparing the current state of the United States economy to the economy when he graduated from BC nearly three decades ago.

The economy was also in decline in 1980, but unemployment and inflation were both much higher than today’s levels. The reason the US was able to get out of its abysmal state, according to Deninger, was the growth of the technology industry during the 1990s.

He cited numerous factors that formed what he called a “virtuous cycle” as the reason for the technology boom in the US. Some of the main factors were a strong American entrepreneurial spirit, the rule of law, and the wide availability of capital. The US also attracted talent from abroad, with the result that today 35% of Silicon Valley companies are headed by non-US nationals and naturalized American citizens.

In the past seven years though, there has been a dramatic drop-off in the number of technology initial public offerings (IPO’s) and a trend toward increasing profits through consolidation.

“Consolidating industries does not create employment,” Deninger said. He placed part of the blame on the banking industry, which is shifting more of its focus to hedge funds.

He also blamed three pieces of legislation: the Sarbanes-Oxley Act, decimalization, and the Investment Banking Consent Decree. These acts were well intentioned but unfortunately had the



Photo: Marjorie Sardella

Paul Deninger, who spoke about technology and the future of the economy, speaks with Scholars (from left) Andrew Rivera, A&S '11, Leon Ratz, A&S '11, and Angie Brewster, A&S '08

effect of making investing in startups more expensive and difficult. All of a sudden, the US was caught in a “cycle of doom.”

Meanwhile, Western Europe and Asia are stepping in and are now threatening to leave the US behind. The IPO market for technology companies in Europe is at its highest point since the days of the 1990’s technology bubble, while the US capital market resembles an “EKG gone flat.”

Around the world, countries are improving in categories that contribute to a strong innovation-driven economy, but the US is not. Deninger said that globalization was inevitable and that “all of our political, economic, and academic establishments must recognize this and adapt.”

Fortunately, Deninger sees clean technology as the catalyst for the next wave of economic growth. He pointed out that, in the past year, investment in clean technologies such as alternative energy increased five times its previous amount.

On another positive note, the US leads the world in clean-tech investment. Deninger cautioned, however, that it may take a while for the clean-tech industry to take off like the computer industry of the

‘90s did.

The main problem is that there is not yet an available counterpart to the “microprocessor,” or piece of technology that dramatically improves the price performance of products in the industry.

In order to realize this future and make the world better, Deninger urged the socially conscientious group of Presidential Scholars to pursue their own interest and careers because their personal success will also help others.

Summing up the need for successful entrepreneurship, Deninger said, “You have to have a pie before you can split it.” He pointed to John D. Rockefeller whose Standard Oil Company created jobs and innovations that changed the world. He also cited Bill Gates, as well as Rockefeller’s philanthropy as examples of the good that people can accomplish once they had amassed their fortunes.

“I found Mr. Deninger’s presentation interesting because of his point of view,” said Scott Molony, A&S '11. “Often, people like me can get locked in the ivory tower of abstraction, so it’s good to have someone from industry be able to remind us of the force for good that economics can be.”



# Evening Speaker Series 2007-2008

## Clare Dunsford: Persevering at home

Hope Sullivan, A&S '11

On Tuesday, January 22, the Presidential Scholars gathered to hear a speaker with a deeply personal connection to her subject matter. Dr. Clare Dunsford, Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, addressed the Scholars in a presentation about



Photo: Marjorie Sardella

Dean Dunsford addresses the Scholars

her recently published book, *Spelling Love with an X: A Mother, a Son, and the Gene That Binds Them*. The book is a reflection on Dunsford's experience as the mother of J.P., her 22-year-old son, who has a genetic mutation known as Fragile X syndrome.

While her book contains a number of episodes from J.P.'s life that have shaped him as an individual, much of the subject matter is introspective. Stories from Dunsford's own childhood parallel the childhood of J.P. and her life. Hers is a story about coming to terms with her role as mother of a child with fragile X, as well as a distinctly individual portrait of J.P.

"I thought it was a really interesting concept for the book, alternating between her life story and J.P.'s. It really made it clear how much of an impact that fragile X has on not only the person who has it, but also on the family," remarked Kari O'Neil, A&S '11.

The Scholars listened to stories from J.P.'s life such as his intense proclamation in middle school that he had "found the girl he wanted to marry." In one particularly poignant anecdote, Dunsford describes J.P.'s graduation from high school. After much anticipation at the idea of attending the ceremony with the rest of his class, J.P. freezes at the edge of the stage, only moments away from receiving his diploma, yet unable to move. After an outburst of profanities and a subsequent calming from his family, J.P. proudly holds his diploma and is all smiles. Dunsford remembered the feeling of acceptance that this was the way that her family was meant to experience the occasion: not simply as everyone else did.

Many of the Scholars interested in science also found the chromosome charts that Dunsford displayed to illustrate the genetic background of the disease to be one of the most interesting parts of the evening. "I found the talk to be very interesting. I'm studying genetics this semester, so the topic of fragile X really related to what I'm studying," said Anne Kornahrens, A&S '11. The Scholars, strongly engaged by the story, asked many questions during the Q&A and several Scholars approached Dunsford individually with questions after the formal presentation.

As Colleen Maher, A&S '11 puts it, "I greatly admire Clare Dunsford. I felt privileged to hear from someone who faced disability and hardship with a spirit of kindness, acceptance, and perseverance. Her attitude and her openness taught us all a lasting lesson about looking for the best in difficult situations."

## Kenneth Himes and Joseph Quinn debate "The Market as God"

Matt Hamilton, A&S '09

Economists and theologians are historically strange bedfellows, often finding each other at odds. On October 30, the Evening Speaker Series occasioned a meeting of the two disciplines as colleagues Dr. Joseph Quinn, former Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences and newly named holder of the James P. McIntyre Chair in the Economics department, and Fr. Kenneth Himes, O.F.M., chairman of Boston College's Theology Department, gathered to debate the merits of thought-provoking 1999 article, "The Market as God." In that article, Harvey Cox, one of America's pre-eminent Protestant theologians, draws a parallel between the language used to describe the market and that traditionally used to describe the attributes of God.

Dr. Joseph Quinn opened the debate by jesting that economics is simply common sense made obscure. In response to Cox's assertion that economists stand by the market with great faith, Professor Quinn answered that economists' so-called faith in the market has more to do with governmental regulation than omniscience. At its core, said Dr. Quinn, the enterprise of economics is simply asking if the theory can explain the facts – and whereas religious faith is immune to evidence and sometimes even held in spite of the evidence, economics relies on testable hypotheses, readjustments, and new answers.

With a sense of humility, Prof. Quinn ended with a concession that economics cannot provide all the answers, but "what it can give is useful insights." The economist's answer reflects simplifications of human behavior that religions and theologians would most surely disagree with. That, according to Professor Quinn, evinces the tenuousness of Harvey Cox's connections.

Remarking that he would be hard pressed to disagree with the man who hired him, Fr. Kenneth Himes presented his view of "The Market as God." Cox, says Prof. Himes, is at best "a good trendspotter and a provocateur, and was likely writing with tongue firmly in cheek."

To begin, he pointed out that since the 1960s, goals for an optimal economy have shifted, and that such changes reflect value preferences. "Religion and theology are not meant to formulate policy but instead, to help us think about the goals of the good life," stated Fr. Himes. Religion and theology illuminate our values, and for Himes, these values must be present in the underlying motivation in the decisions of economists. Although not devoid of values, economics represents choices indicative of what society values. Fr. Himes ended by pointing out that our values have not of late aligned with the theology. Instead, American influence and values can shape the economic structure.

A spirited question and answer session following the presentation demonstrated Scholars' interest in the dichotomy between economic and theological schools of thought. An undergraduate economics and theology major, Amy Kyleen Lute, A&S '09, was happy with the opportunity to watch two eminent scholars debate the place of their respective fields in the shaping of modern values. "I enjoyed hearing two mentors debate with such passion – it helped me to think about my own view of these two disciplines," she said.

# Evening Speaker Series 2007-2008

## James Carroll addresses issues of war and peace

Kelly McCartney, A&S '11

Award-winning Boston Globe columnist and author James Carroll spoke to the Presidential Scholars on October 16 on the topic of war and peace, and specifically how this complicated issue will affect our generation.

"I don't presume to speak out of the experience you're having," Carroll said. "I was never your age; your age is unique to you." Rather than making assumptions about the situation of our generation, Carroll, author of several highly regarded books, including most recently, *Constantine's Sword: the Church and the Jews: a History*, spoke about his own experiences growing up in the Cold War Era, a topic that was the subject of his book *An American Requiem: God, My Father, and the War That Came Between Us*.

For Carroll, whose father, an Air Force General who served as Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency through the decade of the sixties, during the Cold War and the Vietnam War, those wars changed his perspective on both his father and the country his father loved. Growing up, Carroll wanted to become an Air Force officer like his father. However, as the Cold War continued to develop and the possibility of a nuclear holocaust became imminent, Carroll became less sure of both his possible career choice and the validity of the battle-less war that America was fighting.

"We were prepared to destroy the Earth to destroy the Communists," Carroll said. "There was a saying 'Better dead than Red.'"

Carroll was also struck by the unrecognized role religion played in the Cold War. To Carroll, the Cold War was a war as much against Atheism as against Communism.

"Atheism justified the nuclear arms race," Carroll said.

Atheism was not the only factor that Carroll enumerated as a cause of the conflict. He also discussed the large amount of funding the United States devoted to defense and the proliferation of atomic bombs during this period. In 1950, the United States had 200 atomic bombs. By 1960, the number of bombs had grown to 19,000 plus.

Although America's stock of nuclear weapons has since been reduced



Photo: Marjorie Sardella

Scholars (from right) Sam Dolinger, A&S '08, Dillon Gardner, A&S '08, and Scott Moloney, A&S '11, converse with Boston Globe columnist James Carroll who spoke on war and peace.

considerably through arms control agreements, Carroll noted that there are still many connections to be drawn between the rhetoric often used to justify both the Iraq War and the Cold War including the possibility of viewing the Iraq conflict as another sort of "Holy War."

"Osama would love to define this as a Holy War," Carroll said. "To give into that definition would be the most self-destructive thing to do."

Carroll also drew on his experience as a former Paulist priest and his faith as a Catholic to discuss the ramifications faith and religion can have on the attitude toward war. During the Cold War, to many people, including Carroll's father, there was no contradiction between God and country, and religion and nationalism were fully linked. Today, many people seem to have a similar perspective on the War in Iraq and the relationship between Islam and the Middle East. To Carroll, such religious links create fear that becomes contempt and creates an "us versus them" attitude that can become very dangerous.

Given that the relationship between states and religion seems to be so deeply ingrained in many nations, several questioners asked Carroll what hope he sees for change.

"The hope is that it has to change,"

Carroll said. "If we don't change the way we relate to each others as creatures on this earth, we are doomed."

The evening ended with a lively discussion period, during which many Scholars enthusiastically posed questions and contributed their own observations.

"I thought the questions and answers were particularly thoughtful," said Katherine Wu, A&S '08. "The questions were insightful and they got a good conversation going."

The reactions to Carroll's presentation were equally positive.

"I thought he gave an impressive and even-handed assessment of our need for both skepticism and hope—the union of which has the ability to incite powerful social change," said Courtney McKee, A&S '11.

Many Scholars found James Carroll's reflections impressive for their intensely personal, yet balanced tone.

"James Carroll's observations on politics were insightful in that they weren't stereotypical; he made a point of not lambasting a political party or a group of people, but rather the attitude toward war and peace on a universal basis," said Chris Scullin, A&S '10. "Suggesting that it is our worldview and not politics that must be addressed is a much more constructive way of approaching change for the future."



# Evening Speaker Series 2007-2008



Owen Gingerich addresses Scholars on the topic of the relationship between science and theology in his talk “Is It God’s Universe?”

## Owen Gingerich considers the universe and God

*Brian Varian, A&S '11*

Recently, the Presidential Scholars were afforded the opportunity to consider some of the most elusive questions ever posed – the origin of the universe and its connection to God. On the evening of November 13, Scholars boldly approached these questions alongside Professor Owen Gingerich. Gingerich is Professor Emeritus of Astronomy and the History of Science at Harvard University and Senior Astronomer Emeritus at the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory, and author of twenty books, including most recently *God’s Universe*. Taking as his title, “Is It God’s Universe?” Professor Gingerich delivered a stimulating lecture that intelligently and moderately portrayed an often times polarizing subject matter.

Dr. Sardella began the evening by stating that, “It was taken for granted [years ago] that science and religion were related.” Today, the relationship between science and religion is even more ambiguous than a generation ago; the relationship is a question both ripe for discussion and forcefully rejected by such vocal proponents of materialism as biologist Richard Dawkins and philosopher Daniel Dennett. Professor Gingerich tackled this question by asserting that both science and the Bible are valuable sources for understanding the origin of the universe. According to Gingerich, for everything there is a final cause and an efficient cause. God is the final cause; physical laws are the efficient cause, and science, by its nature, is capable of studying only them, but not God.

In case this construction was not quite clear to any members of the audience, Professor Gingerich provided a readily accessible example. Pulling an apple from beneath the podium, he dropped it to the floor. While the falling apple could be explained as the result

of divine will, gravity is a more appropriate explanation. Divine will is the final cause, but gravity is the efficient cause.

On this note, Gingerich argued that the religious perspective of Intelligent Design, which asserts the universe and evolution are guided by an intelligent cause, does not provide an efficient cause, as science does. Therefore, to Gingerich, in a high school classroom, it is wrong to teach Intelligent Design as an efficient cause, because it is not science since its assertions are experimentally untestable. That said, he said it is equally wrong to teach evolution as a final cause.

Next, Professor Gingerich addressed the related topic of evolution. Can random mutations cause a change in a species? Can those mutations be divinely inspired? The answer to the first question, according to Gingerich, is yes. The answer to the second question is indeterminate, again based on whether they make assertions and predictions that are experimentally verifiable. In this second question, Gingerich said, is where science and religion are indeed related.

Overall, the presentation was very well received, as evidenced by the many questions that followed. Shane Ulbrich, A&S '11, said, “Professor Gingerich made clear demarcations of what science, philosophy, and theology each could say about the subject. I think Intelligent Designers too often mistake theological propositions for historical or scientific ones. And scientists sometimes mistake their theories with theology.”

In quoting *God’s Universe*, Professor Gingerich stated, “A superintelligent creator exists beyond and within the cosmos.” This quote summarizes the point of the evening: science and religion are distinct, but exist and operate within a similar realm, and that this realm is the universe.



## Bread for the Journey

### The False Self

When we seem to possess and use our being and natural faculties in a completely autonomous manner, as if our individual ego were the pure source and end of our own acts, then we are in illusion, and our acts, however spontaneous they may seem to be, lack spiritual meaning and authenticity ... [R]ecovering this awareness of our inmost identity implies the recognition that our external everyday self is to a great extent a mask and a fabrication. It is not our true self. And indeed our true self is not easy to find. It is hidden in obscurity and “nothingness,” at the center where we are in direct dependence on God.

Thomas Merton, *Contemplative Prayer*