We don’t receive wisdom; we must discover it for ourselves after a journey that no one can take for us or spare us.

MARCEL PROUST (1871 - 1922)

Can you imagine the entire UB Honors student body, 1,000 strong, having the chance to study abroad? That’s what we would put near the top of our wish list.

That has always been our goal - even when the Honors Program was a fledgling operation twenty-four years ago when twenty exceptional freshmen were admitted in 1981. Then-President Robert Ketter established the Honors Program with a vision to attract outstanding students to UB. And it has done so with spectacular success. The program has grown dramatically, and the influx of excellent students to the campus has played a vital role in improving the academic profile of UB in recent years. But we still have this vision that a study abroad experience of at least one semester would be an extraordinary benefit for all students.

Now a generous gift from Jeremy M. Jacobs, Chairman and CEO of Delaware North Companies and chairman of the UB Council, moves us a step forward in that ambitious goal.

For years, Mr. Jacobs has made an annual gift to UB in support of special university needs and projects. Just prior to stepping down as UB's thirteenth president, President Greiner proposed, and Mr. Jacobs agreed, to earmark a significant portion of that funding to support the Honors Program and specifically study-abroad scholarships for UB Honors Students. This agreement established the Jeremy M. Jacobs International Honors Scholarship in honor of the Jacobs family.

Last year with the help of Sandra Flash, Director of Study Abroad Programs, we launched this exciting opportunity. Interested Honors Students applied for these scholarships, outlining their plans for a study abroad experience. The University Honors Council, our advisory group of faculty, staff, and Honors Students, judged the merit of these applications. In the pages that follow, you can read about the adventures of Brian Bradford whose ancestors came over on the Mayflower; he returned to his roots and traveled back to England.

Until now, only a small number of Honors Students have been able to travel to other countries for international study. Although many students were interested in overseas study, few could afford it. For those that could manage the financing, their experiences were transforming, giving the students a broader perspective on education and the world at large.

Now we have high hopes that we are on the way to making it possible for this experience to be an integral part of the education for all Honors Students. The seed money provided through the Jacobs gift will be dispersed to students over four years. During this period, we hope to find additional gifts so that this remarkable beginning can continue.

Apropos of our new study abroad program we thought that we would focus this issue of the magazine on some international aspects of the Honors Program. You will find seminars, trips, and adventures highlighted in the next few pages. We even have an excuse to show a picture of the two of us with international Olympic decathlon champion Bruce Jenner to whet your appetite.

KIPP HERREID & JOSIE CAPUANA
Academic Director and Administrative Director

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Welcome Hadar Borden!

“I’m very excited to become a part of the Honors community at UB.”

Hadar Borden joined the Honors Program this past fall as an Assistant Administrative Director. She replaces Christine Ryan who moved to Canisius College as Director of Academic Advisement. Hadar is a UB alum and has had a varied career with the school, first in the Office of Financial Aid and then with the Office of Admissions where she specialized in out of state recruitment.

Her background is in International Trade and she says, “I earned both my Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts Degrees in Geography with a concentration in International Trade from the University at Buffalo. I pursued a career in the field in which I was educated, but missed working closely with and assisting students as I had done as a student assistant with the Office of Financial Aid. I look forward to working with Honors Scholars, as well as the faculty and staff that provide university-wide support to the Honors Program.

On a personal note, my husband Dave and I enjoy living and working in Buffalo but spend most of our time running after our one year old son, Elliott!”

An Olympic Moment

When opportunity knocks, I tackle it.

At least, I did when presented with the chance to enjoy UB’s biggest football game of the season with the Honors Program Directors as guests of our University’s fourteenth president John B. Simpson. Along with me for the ride were my fellow Honors Students Janet Werther and Allana Krolikowski.

Our seats came with commemorative t-shirts, as well as commemorative pretzels, commemorative dip, and a commemorative referee reference card to decipher the awkwardly forced yet purposeful ballet of in-game calls. (The pirouette and grand jete were conspicuously absent; I suspect they have fallen by the wayside in the face of ever-changing conference regulations).

The pre-game show had LeAnn Womack performing our National Anthem, as well as 1976 Olympic Gold Medal Decathlete Bruce Jenner running a lap around the stadium in memorial of 9/11. The opening was capped off by a flyover of Hercules C-130s in formation. We could not see them from our vantage point (the drawback of sitting in the box, perhaps) but their thunderous presence was certainly felt.

The game proved to be thrilling with a fantastic first-quarter performance by UB. Highlights included Buffalo’s tremendous interception that brought even Dr. Herreid to his feet, shouting with applause. Further great plays brought out the vivacity of the more senior alums next to me, putting my football fan skills to shame.

Cameos abounded as members of the cheerleading squad and even Victor E. Bull himself popped in to make appearances in the box. The highlight of the night, however, was Bruce Jenner’s appearance after the half. We lined up for photo opportunities with the Olympic legend. I had the chance to speak with him personally, and I suppose my only regret of the night was not asking him to suit up for the fourth and help us pull it together and win one.)
The plane descended towards the Abruzzo airport in Pescara, Italy. I saw the snow-covered Italian Alps in the distance, the beach, and the bright sun in the sky. I knew that I had made one of the best decisions of my life by choosing to study abroad.

When I entered UB four years ago as a freshman, I had pretty much lived in Amherst, New York my whole life. I had gone to elementary, middle, and high school in Williamsville and had never really traveled, except for the occasional vacation down the East Coast. Between engineering classes, honors requirements and a part-time job, my first three years at UB were busy, and leaving the area (let alone the country) for a semester was not on my mind. Here I was on a side trip to Italy. How did it happen?

In my junior year I had a few friends who went abroad and had a great experience. I passed the Study Abroad office many times, but it was never something I considered seriously. After all, I had a rigorous schedule in the Engineering Department, and going abroad for a semester would force me to take an additional semester’s worth of classes. Still, I started thinking if I wanted to spend any period of time overseas, now was the time to do it.

The programs I looked at involved paying UB tuition and had about the same housing cost as I was currently paying, so I could be studying at another university overseas for roughly the same cost as staying at UB. The more I thought about it, the more I wanted to do it. And when I was awarded the Jeremy Jacobs International Honors Scholarship, I knew I was taking advantage of a great opportunity.

I chose England. It was an English speaking country (no language barrier to overcome), and it was the birthplace of my ancestors. The University of Leicester became my choice because of its cost and central location (good for traveling purposes, case in point: my trip to Italy). But would I be able to complete any of the engineering classes I would have taken at UB during the fall 2004 semester? Fortunately, the University of Leicester offered several engineering courses that matched the classes I needed to take at UB. I was really excited when I left in September knowing that I was about to have the experience of a lifetime while continuing my engineering education.

Despite sharing a language, the British and American cultures are distinctly different (my first English breakfast consisted of sausages, bacon, eggs, hash browns, toast, mushrooms and baked beans!). Never having been to Europe, I wanted to visit as many places as possible, and with the aid of the Jeremy Jacobs Scholarship I was able to do just that. I took trips to Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. And I roamed England: Stonehenge, Salisbury, Norwich, and London. And Paris and Italy! Small distances, excellent rail system, cheap flights - any destination was possible.

Living and studying in England was also important to me because I am a descendant of William Bradford, the pilgrim leader who sailed from England to America on the Mayflower in 1620. He became the second governor of Plymouth Colony in Massachusetts, and oversaw the first Thanksgiving between the Pilgrims and Native Americans. While I did not get a chance to travel to Yorkshire, England (the birthplace of William Bradford), I did have an ironic Thanksgiving dinner where I, an American, was back in England carving the turkey!

Between my travels and my time in Leicester, I met lots of students from all around the world. I found out about programs that would not exist in the US, like a law program combining English law and French law where students studied two years in each country. I gained a new perspective on my own education and considered new career options. I loved my experience in England and I am looking into graduate programs in Europe, studying in a graduate-level aerospace engineering program, or even one day working for the European Space Agency. New options are everywhere!
We would come to discover over the next five weeks that the story of critical supply shortages in Uganda was not limited to defibrillators, it applied to everything: school supplies, clothing, nutritious food, and medical supplies.

“O

One! Two! Three! Four!...Fifteen!” Kirk lunged over the taxi’s back seat to administer two deep breaths. While her heart was fading, mine raced ahead as I dove in for the next round of compressions: “One! Two! Three! Four!...Fifteen!”

“Where’s your defibrillator!” Kirk frantically shouted upon bolting into the hospital ER after administering CPR for an hour. I thought, “Isn’t it incredible that Alumni Arena has 12 defibrillators to serve its low-risk student population, while the 191,000 people of Iganga District, Uganda do not have access to even one?”

We learned that the hard way. We rushed the woman back to the taxi and continued to drive to the next district hospital, hoping against hope that the news would be better there. Somewhere along the line, the woman let out a chilling shriek; it was like something you hear in the movies when someone is about to pass on. Forty-five minutes later, we found ourselves approaching the gate of Jinja District hospital, just a few blocks from the source of the ancient Nile. Ba-boom. Ba-boom. These sounds were the greatest relief of my life. The woman’s heart began to beat regularly again on its own. Kirk and I just looked at each other under drenched brows with stunned amazement. It’s a good thing she came back on her own, for when we entered the Jinja’s ER, they likewise, had no defibrillator.

We would come to discover over the next five weeks that the story of critical supply shortages in Uganda was not limited to defibrillators, it applied to everything: school supplies, clothing, nutritious food, and medical supplies. Uganda Village Project is a public health initiative established in a region of Uganda that has significant shortages of governmental/non governmental organization (NGO) resources (virtually none). The project itself was started with Kirk Scirto (UB medical student), Alison Schroth (Penn State medical student), and me. Planning began about six months before the initial trip which took place in the summer of 2003.

We contacted a local NGO operating in Kampala that said it would be interested expanding with us into this rural region of Iganga. After we were there for a month, the villagers, local government, and NGOs requested us to end our “scouting phase,” and requested us to begin HIV and sanitation educational initiatives. They also led us to the main sources of water for the region, where we saw the stagnant ponds topped off with a green, putrid ooze. “Nobody would REALLY drink this,” I thought to myself. Then along came a happy little girl who ran up to the edge of the pond. She crouched down, and sure enough, started to fill her bucket. I looked on in disbelief. The statistic that one out of 10 infants do not make it to their 4th birthday suddenly became all too
real for me.

“How much does it cost to build a well?” I asked.

Richard replied “Five hundred dollars.”

“Five hundred dollars! Why doesn’t anyone build one here— it will save the lives of the children! The entire population would also be much healthier over time.”

“Look at these villagers,” his hand directed my eyes toward the couple across the street who were pounding a small plot of land with their hoes, “how can they ever come close to having that kind of money? They live off the land.”

When we began to see patients at our makeshift clinic, I came to understand. We saw children who had malaria for weeks. Parents knew that they had malaria, but they simply could not afford the treatment. They brought them to us with hopes that our clinic would have the medicine they needed. How much do you think it costs for a treatment regimen? $50? $10? $1? — Fifteen cents. That’s all. My heart sank when I realized that Rose had suffered with malaria for two weeks for no other reason than she lacked the ability to come up with pennies.

There is a freedom of village life that we often miss— a freedom to welcome a stranger and to celebrate life. When my sister (who made this leg of the trip with me) and I would play outside with the kids after a day of work, the spontaneous evolution into an all-out party with the whole village complete with dancing and drumming, became a regular occurrence. They may not have much, but they are far closer to life’s true meaning than more “advanced” cultures.

This alone I found to be tremendously hopeful. When we returned with a team of thirty dynamic volunteers, with suitcases brimming with $50,000 worth of medical supplies, that hope was reinforced. A physician, nurse practitioner, physical therapist, anthropologist, and several UB Honors Students (Amy Saleh ’03, Stacie Ward ’03, Sarah Anderson ’05, and Elise Rumpf ’06) added immensely to the leadership and facilitation of the 2004 “Uganda Village Project” (UVP) official programs. They kept a sharp focus on the empowering impact and sustainability of our programs, and expanded our “train-the-trainer” educational initiative. The most gratifying moment I experienced was when we learned that the HIV educators (whom we had trained the year before) had brought the message to over 10,000 people! The 2004 team made it possible to expand our clinical activities from three free clinic sessions to 12, offer 1,000 free HIV testing and counseling sessions, and provide improved sight for 300 people through our eye clinic.

In spite of the tremendous success, contaminated water sources remain the most dangerous threat to life and health. Last year, we were able to finance the construction of four wells that serve a population of several thousand people. However, the needs are much greater, and the villagers have asked us to build wells for the surrounding communities that lack access to potable water. Even though it is only $500 per well, we are primarily a student group and lack access to sufficient funding to bring it to fruition. We have identified 20 strategic well sites in conjunction with district government officials. I am hopeful that people in the U.S. will continue to move toward a broader awareness of the suffering that exists beyond our borders, and realize how something minor to us can mean life or death for a family who is separated from us by a mere 12 hour plane ride.

Anyone who is interested in contributing to international health and education efforts through service as a volunteer or fundraising is encouraged to contact: brent40@hotmail.com or http://www.ifmsa-usa.org/UVP/
Enid Bloch is inspired by questions. An Adjunct Professor with the University Honors Program, Bloch has taught over 15 honors seminars, many originating with her personal questions about the world and the human condition. In fact, Bloch says that she was propelled into the field of political science by the overriding moral questions of her generation. She describes going to Saturday morning movies as a young girl and watching newsreels about the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps in Europe. Bloch recalls how in that darkened theatre she clenched her fists and decided, “I will never be the kind of person who could have let this happen. For the rest of my life I have been studying how it is possible for things like this to occur...for people to be so cruel to each other. I’ve tried to learn what is needed to keep a society free so that it will not happen.”

After attending New Jersey public schools, Bloch earned a B.A. in Political Science from Bryn Mawr College and a Ph.D. in Government from Cornell University. Before graduate school she studied at the Free University of Berlin on a German government scholarship. During that illuminating year abroad, Bloch spent “very little time inside the classroom.” The Berlin Wall still divided the city and the Nazi regime had been in power less than 20 years before; she relished the chance to learn about totalitarian societies firsthand. After Germany she went on to Cornell, explaining, “I chose a graduate school that was still very humanistic. For me,
because of the questions that I dealt with there, graduate school was even more thrilling than my undergraduate education.” However, after teaching Political Science and Political Theory at Johns Hopkins, Bloch found the field too limiting. She had married during graduate school and while her daughter and two sons were young she pursued other interests, including running for local office, fighting drugs in her community, writing, and becoming an editor and photographer.

But for Bloch, it again came back to the questions. She had always loved philosophy, even before she knew the word for it. As she says, “I had been thinking philosophically since I was a little girl.” But once she reached college, Bloch realized, “Philosophy was not talking about the things that I thought really mattered. It certainly didn’t talk about the things that meant most to me in my life, such as the smile of a child. I began to wonder where philosophy had gone wrong.”

In 1992 Bloch’s husband Aaron was named provost of the University at Buffalo and the family relocated to Western New York. Bloch decided that the best way to tackle her questions about philosophy was to begin with its origins and read works in their original languages. She began studying classical Greek informally through UB’s Classics department and did so “for three glorious years.”

Sadly, her husband died unexpectedly in April 1995 at the age of 53. In his memory, his family has established the Aaron N. Bloch Scholarship, which is awarded yearly to an Honors...
of the course. I particularly remember the involvement and support she offered her students. From her presentations to the World Civilizations course committee about teaching using biography, other faculty have since adopted biography as part of the section syllabus.”

Outside of the classroom Bloch’s interests in biography and philosophy—and her fondness for questions—led her to examine the Greek philosopher Socrates. In particular she wondered: Had Socrates’ death though hemlock poisoning occurred in the peaceful way Plato described, or would the poison have produced a far more violent end, as scholars since the 17th century have argued? For three years Bloch delved into botany, toxicology, neurology, pathology, ancient languages and manuscripts, and the history of medicine. In her chapter, “Hemlock Poisoning and the Death of Socrates: Did Plato Tell the Truth?” (in The Trial and Execution of Socrates, edd. Thomas C Brickhouse and Nicholas D. Smith, Oxford University Press, 2001) Bloch concludes that Plato was completely accurate in his description; Socrates did die “gently and peacefully.” Bloch states that the controversy over his death stems from confusion between water hemlock and poison hemlock. Her argument traces the linguistic and botanical origins and the unique physiological impacts of these two similar, yet distinct plants. Bloch describes the experience as “very exciting, bringing all of those different fields together just to answer that one question.”

Bloch enjoys the freedom and fulfillment that come with this interdisciplinary approach. She admits, “I could never stay within one field...I follow the questions wherever they take me.” Many of her honors seminars have allowed her and her students to explore timely questions. One such seminar, The Psychology of Terrorism, (Fall 2002) arose from Bloch’s curiosity about Timothy McVeigh, the Western New York native convicted and executed for the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing. “I noticed that the terms that he used and the way that he talked, despite his right-wing orientation, sounded the same as the language of the left-wing bomb-makers in the radical 1960’s.” She wondered if there was something about the personalities of the people who turned to terrorism that would be similar no matter what the political point of view. After the September 11 attack, she broadened her inquiry to include foreign terrorists. Bloch found to her astonishment that, “As I studied terrorists in Japan or Europe or Egypt I wondered if there was something about the personalities of the people who turned to terrorism...and thought it was essential to teach about it because there seems to be so little understanding of what makes a terrorist.”

“I began to develop ideas about the personalities of the people who are attracted to terrorism...and thought it was essential to teach about it because there seems to be so little understanding of what makes a terrorist.”

Another seminar, Democracy and Dictatorship (Fall 2003) studied the theory of what constitutes a democratic society and examined several past and present dictatorships. Bloch remembers, “Some of the students were quite surprised at how enthusiastic I was about democracy and our form of government when it works...I could never stay within one field...I follow the questions wherever they take me.”

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properly. They had been used to a kind of cynical approach...of criticizing rather than affirming.” Bloch’s appreciation of the democratic process solidified in college, when she served as a White House intern during the Kennedy administration, as well as an intern in the US Senate and the US Department of Labor: “What I saw of government functioning then I thought was marvelous. The culture of American politics was a wonderful thing to see. We have lost a lot of that culture...[but] we could regain it—democracy is resilient.” Bloch hopes to pass this optimism and knowledge onto her students. “That is why education is so important. Students need to know the great ideas that are behind democratic life.”

Bloch’s life-long concerns with philosophy and democracy are brought together in her latest writing project. “There never has been a full philosophic exploration of democratic principles. Our country desperately needs it, and so does the world. Finally I’m trying to address the questions that have haunted me all my life.”

This spring Bloch will teach another honors seminar titled The Tragedy of Iraq. “I thought that it was important to examine Iraq. Our country is there now and if we can’t use our intellectual resources to teach ourselves about Iraq, what good is our education?” The students will study the complex history of Iraq, how the British went astray in the country and how “we are going astray in very similar ways, making many of the same mistakes.”

Bloch likens her teaching style to jazz: “I walk into the classroom and I know what the basic ideas are that I would like to touch upon in that class, but it doesn't matter in what order or exactly how they come out. I bounce off the comments of the students. I know what it is that I am trying to say and I draw it out of them. This can only be done with very bright students who are able to recognize the patterns.”

Junior Deepa Govindaraj looks at her experience this way: “Professor Bloch challenged me to look at my own previous conceptions of history and reevaluate my line of thinking. Any professor who can make a student see ideas and opinions in a new light has given that person the greatest gift a teacher can give.”

Enid Bloch’s love of photography began with the birth of her children, who were her first subjects. After 30 years of shooting with black-and-white film, she recently converted to digital color photography. “My work still reflects basically two colors,” she says, “but now they might be blue and gold or brown and red. I think it’s the black and white way of seeing, but with colors expressing whole other dimensions of emotion.”

Bloch largely photographs natural objects and people, and her choice of subjects reflects her humanistic philosophy. “When I am photographing a person, I am trying to get at what is it that is so wonderful about any human being – the miracle of this person’s existence and what is it that we love about the human personality. Every face is beautiful when you glimpse the soul behind it.” Many of Bloch’s nature photographs are taken from the front porch of her cottage retreat on Lake Erie. “A lot of them are sort of a statement of serenity, of my being at peace with the world. I don’t think I could have created these photographs earlier in my life.”

Bloch is grateful for the joy that her photography can bring to other people. “What I am trying to do through my photography is to reveal the dignity and beauty and mystery of life. That’s also what my philosophic work is about, but pictures seem to come closer than words are able to do. For me philosophy and photography are very much the same endeavor: both create a tapestry of what is important in life. That is what you are doing when you aim your camera-you are saying, ‘This is important.’”

Photo: Young ballet student rendered in “colored pencil” through a Photoshop filter.
70 hours of travel via planes, trains, and large Tata buses. Thousands of strangers. Alien languages. Unfamiliar village streets. Constant exposure to infectious agents. Hundreds of dollars in preparatory medications, and thousands of dollars of support to raise. To some, this may sound like a horrific recipe of stress and fear. For me, these were obstacles that failed to stop me from spending June 23rd-July 23rd of this past summer in Angamali, Kerala, India.

As a participant in this yearly trip, taken through Adventures in Missions (a missions organization based in Gainesville, Georgia), I was one of twenty girls whose team purpose was to both conduct Bible School programs for, as well as medically treat, Angamali’s 95-child orphanage. We also conducted street meetings throughout the village, visited and distributed food in the local leper colony, and spoke at local houses of worship.

The days were long and the work was hard; I was taxed physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually in ways life in the US - even college life - had not prepared me for. Daily tasks included playing for hours in the ever-present heat with dozens of children, long hot walks throughout the village, washing clothes by hand, and setting up a makeshift medical room to treat ill children. When we weren’t physically working, we were speaking publicly, rehearsing dramas, crafting lesson plans, and connecting with other Indian contacts. Occasionally, we made inter-village trips, some up in the mountains. Sleep came late, and every new day brought unforeseen challenges.

Yet despite all the effort, and occasional heartbreak, India became—and still is—a place of hope and joy for me. I saw children, destitute beyond American imaginations and plagued with lice and scabies, look at me with love and joy in their eyes when I hugged them and played with them. Nothing gave me greater satisfaction (or confidence in my future calling as a medical missionary, for which I am now training at UB) than when I was able to heal their hurts. I saw lepers, abandoned by all of society and racked with disease I couldn’t cure. I laughed when I talked with them, and they were amazed that someone cared. And it is those moments in India that I remember as I study, take exams, and push to make my medical dreams a reality.

Internships
Wanted!

For the last three years the University at Buffalo Honors Program has offered a unique experience to both its students and alumni. We have served as a liaison, connecting talented undergraduate students with our alumni in “real world” applications in the form of internships. We have been very fortunate and appreciative of alumni who have continued to support this endeavor. Once again we are actively soliciting internships from our alumni to increase the scope and breadth of this aspect of our Honors Program.

If you have research opportunities that could use another set of capable hands, need meaningful assistance in the day to day endeavors of your field, or are looking for the chance to open up doors of possibility for other members of the Honors community, this would be a great opportunity to do that! We are looking to increase opportunities for our Honors Scholars to do research in their prospective fields, to discover more about themselves, and to more accurately discern their career track.

If you believe that an internship in your office may be feasible, please contact Nigel Marriner, Coordinator of the Honors Research and Creative Activities Program, at nmarrine@buffalo.edu or 716.645.3020. Additionally, if your office already offers internships, please don’t hesitate to send that information to us and we will disseminate it to our students.
MEZZOGIORNO

Seventy-three years ago my grandmother, Lucia Fini, set foot on American soil for the very first time and began a new life, a life that necessitated a blending of the old and the new. Her family, as did many Italian families, made the journey with the hope that in this young and growing nation they would find opportunities that would enable them to build a better life. Two generations later I made the same journey, in the opposite direction, in search of different opportunities. I parted not out of necessity for survival, but in search of adventure, new experiences, and diverse perspectives.

My grandmother left Italy to settle in Buffalo, New York. I came to the very same city to study at the University at Buffalo, and left it to return to my roots in Italy. Some of the most influential sources of inspiration for my travels have been the professors in the University Honors Program. I remember every Honors seminar I took with precise clarity, from medieval Italian literature to UFOs to existentialism. I was challenged and inspired by the intelligence, experiences, and encouragement of these professors, and it was this type of inspiration to learn, to experience life in diverse ways, and to explore that brought me to Italy.

Five months ago, I set off to teach English in a world thirsty for a language that globalization has made international. At the beginning of September, I arrived in Milan for a TEFL certification course, and after roughly a month and a half, I was placed in a school in Calabria, in Southern Italy. I boarded a train alone with all my belongings and set out on a journey that fourteen hours later would end at the Vibo-Pizzo station. I left with mixed feelings, in part because the news of my job placement had been met by many with responses reflecting misplaced attitudes towards Calabria. Contrary to such opinions, I’ve discovered that I live in a region that is less known and less visited by Italians and foreigners alike, but in many ways epitomizes the traditional ideals of Italian culture, a region with a big heart and a big appetite.

My very first day in Vibo Valentia was spent in typical Calabrese fashion with more food than ten people can consume let alone one, several espressos, and the assertion from the owner of the language school that I was now part of the family. I had arrived in a region where family and food are of utmost importance and form the foundation on which everything else is based. The Calabrese tend to put forth a bit of a tough shell at first, but a little persistence goes a long way, and once you’re in, you’re in for life. A friend would bend over backwards for you and it doesn’t stop there, because if you know Maria, and Maria knows Antonello, who knows a guy who can help you out, you are never left in need of anything for long.

Calabria is a region steeped in tradition, and nothing exemplifies this better than the vecchie donne, dressed head to toe in black, with wrinkles carved deep by the hot, southern sun, and hands that contain the secrets of age old culinary traditions. When I see them hanging laundry, brush against them at the market, or catch a glimpse of them gossiping in doorways, I’m reminded of the warmth of my grandmother’s hugs, her strength of character, and the smells of her kitchen. Food here is a means of expression and communication and these women, as was my grandmother, are the masters of every family’s culinary secrets.

Between half past twelve and one o’clock, offices and shops close and the streets empty as mezzogiorno begins and everyone returns home for the celebration of these culinary traditions. Everything remains relatively deserted until four o’clock, when the last espresso is drunk, doors open, and the people begin to mingle. Here food is celebrated not only for its intrinsic value, but also as a means to share time with those you love, most importantly with family. It’s not every once in a while that you sit down to enjoy a meal with family and friends, but every afternoon around two o’clock.

The priority for the Calabrese that family and loved ones hold is rooted in the old ways, but continues to exist in a society where there is a visible jockeying of position between old and new. In one sense, it’s the same mix of old and new that the Italian immigrants coming to America in the 1920s and 30s experienced, the blending of age old Italian traditions with an ever-changing, fast paced American culture that in this time and age is exported all over the world. The beauty of this mix of old and new is that something as simple as mezzogiorno can bring to the forefront of modern society two things that are universally important in every corner of the world, family and food. The charm of Calabria is that to enjoy both you don’t have to find the time, everyday you are given the time.)
Very quietly I asked, “How many of you have ever made a medical mistake?”

You could see the furtive glances that were passed around the room and slowly hands were raised, including my own.”

I concluded my lecture with a video clip from the television program ER. In this episode a patient is transferred to the emergency department from a rehabilitation facility. Not uncommonly, the list of the patient’s active medications was not available and efforts were undertaken to obtain the information. Unfortunately, a well intentioned medical student administered a drug to the patient, with lethal consequences. Who is to blame? The rehabilitation facility for not providing the appropriate information? The medical student for administering the medication without having all of the necessary information? The resident or attending who supervises the medical student?

At the end of the video clip I raised the lights and glanced slowly around the room. Very quietly I asked, “How many of you have ever made a medical mistake?” You could see the furtive glances that were passed around the room and slowly hands were raised, including my own. We are raised in a culture where mistakes are not acceptable, a culture where human lives are sacred. Yet as I glanced around the room at these men and women with whom I lived and worked, I realized that we were all excellent clinicians whose only failing was that we are human. “To Err is Human” was published by the Institute of Medicine in the year 2000. One of the basic assumptions of this report, and those that followed, is that the people who make mistakes are not bad clinicians. Medical mistakes can most often be attributed to system and processes that need to be made safer.

My foray into the medical profession began during childhood and consisted primarily of “research” with frogs and other neighborhood creatures. As an undergraduate student at the University of Buffalo I had the privilege of spending time in the laboratories of Dr. Clyde Herried and Dr. David Pendergast.

Following graduation from the UB Honors Program in 1988, I spent the next three years in a research laboratory at the University of Oxford. There I had my first exposure to the National Health Service. Privatized medical services are available in the UK for those who can afford them. I was able to see the benefits of being able to provide care to those who need it without fear of financially bankrupting their family. What I didn’t hear were people talking about “suing my doctor...” for making “mistakes”. Is the “culture of blame” less in a
socialized medical system?

After returning to the United States in 1991, my immersion into medicine began in earnest. During the year I applied to medical school, I worked at a local hospital in the Administration Department. This afforded me an opportunity to stand on the other side of the looking glass and observe my medical colleagues. “Who was the highest admitted?” “Who had the highest liability insurance?” “Whose patients complained the most?” “How can we make the system better for all, clinicians and patients?”

These questions resonated frequently during the next four years that I spent as a medical student at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC), one of the best and most rigorous medical institutions worldwide. I was a member of the first class to experience the “New Curriculum”, a patient-centric, system-based training program that focused on problem-based learning. Our medical training included anatomy, physiology, ethics, computers, etc. The curriculum was challenging and provided us an opportunity not only to read but also to interact with our peers and discuss difficult clinical situations. In parallel with our problem-based learning we engaged with a clinical mentor so that from day one we were able to begin to apply our learning. It was a novel approach to medical training and one that has now been widely adopted.

Over the next several years I struggled to reconcile my skills with my goals and aspirations. I was in a wonderful, growing practice in Cleveland doing primarily head and neck reconstruction. I had an opportunity to develop a Dysphagia clinic for a large patient population with head and neck cancer who had swallowing disorders. I was teaching, trying to develop a research protocol with the help of advisors in the world-renowned Skeletal Research Center at Case Western Reserve. It is never clear what prompts us to make radical changes in life. However, it was at this time that I applied for and accepted a position with Cerner Corporation.

Cerner Corporation (www.cerner.com) is the leading Health Care Information Technology company in the US. They have designed a person-centric electronic health record that is designed to fundamentally transform health care delivery. Recent reports suggest that there are at least 7,000 deaths annually which can be attributed to medication error. The complexity of medication ordering, dispensing, and delivery combined with the complexities of human physiology make the medication administration process complex and a key focus for error reduction.

I joined Cerner in July 2003. Over the past year I have learned more about the practice of medication than I ever learned during my medical training. My current role is that of consultant to Ascension Health (www.ascensionhealth.org).

At a recent Clinical Leadership Forum sponsored by Ascension Health, I had the pleasure of hearing Sorrel King address the leaders from across the Ascension Health ministries. Sorrel King’s daughter Josie, died at the age of 18 months. Her death was the result of a series of medical errors. Sorrel King and her family established the Josie King Foundation (www.josiekingleague.org). Their objective is to educate and create an environment of patient safety that will hopefully reduce the number of unnecessary deaths that result from medical errors worldwide. As I listened to Sorrel King I wept. I wept for this wonderful woman who by the nature of her work would forever mourn the death of her daughter. I wept for those clinicians and patients who through no fault of their own would suffer due to medical mishaps. My tears were not only tears of sorrow, but tears of joy, for assembled before me was a group whose convictions and efforts would help to realize Sorrel King’s mission. Do I miss being a surgeon? Every day of my life! However, I know that the work I do today will impact the lives of my family, my friends, my patients, and my colleagues; a much greater impact than I could have ever envisioned when I began my journey as a pre-medical student at UB.

“Fortunately the Honors Program had drawn me to UB, where not only was the engineering program first-rate, but so were a myriad of other fascinating majors.”

After medical school I pursued a residency in Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery. This was followed by a fellowship in Microvascular surgery at Oregon Health Sciences University and an assistant professorship at the University Hospitals of Cleveland/Case Western Reserve University. These were some of the most grueling and gratifying years of my life. During this time I was awash in a sea of patients with benign and malignant disease of the head and neck; some of the most kind and courageous people I have ever met. I struggled to combine my love of patient care with my desire to be a clinical scientist. It was not uncommon to see patients with advanced cancer of the tongue or larynx. I would explain to them that we were going to remove vital structures that the quality of their life would be significantly impacted and yet know that we have not significantly improved survival of advanced head and neck cancer in the past 20 years. I was able to share with the patients and their families the hope that this often radical surgical procedure would improve the quality of their life and provide them a chance at a cure. I was also able to be with them when the cancer recurred and to console the families of those who succumbed to their disease.
I left UB determined to carve out a career producing movies in Hollywood, a determination that was quickly waylaid by Chicago. I spent three years in the “City of Big Shoulders” hanging out with friends and working a variety of jobs, managing a wildlife art gallery, and working for a company that distributed 16mm film prints of feature films to colleges, cruise lines, and prisons. Then, a two-month trip through Europe reignited my once cherished goal of a career in the film industry.

Returning to the US, I packed everything I could into my car and drove west to LA, where the action is. Matt and Amanda, a couple of fellow UB Honors alums, took pity on me and let me stay in their place until I found my own. I obtained work as a Production Assistant on student and low budget films, and as an intern in a producer’s office. Unpaid work is the easiest work to find in Hollywood, thanks to the city’s combined surplus of dreamers. I was able to scratch out some much needed money as a production manager on student films, an infomercial, and an extremely low budget feature film. I even became a professional television watcher for a company that sold radio and television news clippings.

An ad for “Arts Associate” for the City of Los Angeles captured my attention; it triggered a memory of a conversation I had with Professor Barbara Bono, one of my Honors seminar professors. Noting my dual degrees in media study and business, she commented that few people were qualified to manage within the arts and this could open up job opportunities for me. I had the experience and the interest; why not transfer my skills into arts management?

That’s how I became involved in the Artivist Film Festival, and joined the project as its Chief Financial Officer. The Artivist Film Festival’s mission was to screen films made for activist purposes. Our 1st Annual Artivist Film Festival took place last April at the Egyptian Theatre in Hollywood. We screened over 80 provocative short and feature length films, including potential Oscar contenders, such as “Bid ‘Em In,” “Born Into Brothels,” “The Corporation,” and “Super Size Me.” The festival went beyond films: we had an art exhibit, an evening concert series, and forum discussions each night on specific arenas of activism as well as the use of media within these arenas. It concluded with a gala awards ceremony honoring the best of the films, activist organizations, and celebrity activists Ed Begley Jr., Tippi Hedren, Mike Farrell and France Nuyen.

Shortly after the festival ended, my city job changed considerably: I was appointed the interim manager of the Los Angeles Theatre Center (LATC). Built in 1916 as a bank, converted in 1985 to a theatrical venue with five performance spaces, it is a unique place in Los Angeles. Due to the recent state and city budget cuts, I was given the task of running the LATC with no operating budget and minimal staff - two security guards and one part-time custodian. Despite these challenges, the center lives. There’s much to be done: booking and scheduling events, building maintenance, even ordering janitorial supplies! In my first nine months at the LATC I have hosted plays, dance performances, film shoots, and concerts. In the near future the LATC will be the location of the world premiere of a musical, “Shag With a Twist.”

It’s not what I imagined my career would be when I graduated from UB, but this has yet to stop me from reaching out in an attempt to make the dream a reality.
As fondue bubbles merrily on the table, several students line up to shoot an apple off of a professor’s head with a Nerf crossbow. Emlyn the beagle watches, tail wagging, and a map of Switzerland frames the evening’s theme.

Sound interesting?

The Evening with Faculty hosted at the home of Professor Stott in early November was interesting, as well as entertaining, educational, and most of all, fun! As students arrived for the evening, unsure of what to expect, they were greeted by Professor Andy Stott, his wife Josie, and Professor Scott Stevens. Professor Stott moved here from London in 2002 and is now teaching in UB’s department at UB, specializing in Renaissance literature. Professor Stevens lived between the US and Switzerland for four years, and is now teaching in UB’s English department.

As we arrived, Professor Stott informed us that we had an exciting evening ahead; one centered on Switzerland and its atmosphere of neutrality, good food, and interesting music! “The theme was my wife Josie’s idea,” said Professor Stott, “we wanted a theme, and Switzerland was the most neutral, and we like cheese!”

Neutrality and cheese, we all discovered, are a great combination!

Students enjoyed fabulous fondue and potato casserole (garnished with the authentic sides of pickles and even pickled onions for the daring!) and after introductions, the evening’s festivities began.

Professor Stevens gave a fascinating talk about Switzerland, highlighting the country’s history, political practices, and some of the interesting experiences he had while living there. Through his descriptions, funny anecdotes, and Swiss souvenirs, we all learned a lot more about the country, and by the evening’s end, many of us wanted to travel there ourselves!

Next, there were parlor games—the aforementioned William Tell reenactment, followed by “pin the arrow on Switzerland!” Swiss chocolate was given as a prize for the winners, and sumptuous chocolate fondue was available for all!

“I came this evening just to see what Evenings with Faculty were all about,” said Talia Crofut, a Junior English major. “It was well worth it. I learned even more than I expected. I would definitely do it again!”

**A Gift That Keeps on Giving**

Over the past few years, many of our alumni and friends of the Honors Program have generously contributed to our scholarship funds. Such giving has a long history at UB - many of our past and current Honors Scholars were the recipients of scholarships funded from endowed gifts given to UB over 75 years ago. Those donors were investing in the future - providing fertile ground for the coming generations. We want to thank all of you who have supported and continue to support the Honors Program through your generous donations - providing fertile ground for future generations to come!

**Thank You!**

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**Thank You!**
Alumni Updates

What they’re doing now…

1985

JASON REBMAN
Jason is currently an air traffic controller at Tampa International Airport.

CATHERINE TUFARIELLO
Catherine’s book, Keeping My Name, has been selected as a finalist for the Los Angeles Times Book Prize in the category of poetry!

1992

LORISSA (SWINIUCH) SUMMERMASS
Lorissa is living in New Hampshire with her husband and four children, Max (11 yrs.), Evelyn (8 yrs.), Grant (6 yrs.) and Lydia (4 yrs.).

CHRIS VOLINSKY
Chris received a Ph.D. in Statistics at the University of Washington, and is currently Director of the Statistics Research department at AT&T Research in Florham Park, New Jersey. He lives in Morristown, New Jersey with his wife Christine, and 2 year old daughter, Vienna...

1994

BRIAN WALITT
Brian is currently on staff at the Washington Hospital Center as a rheumatologist. The bulk of his work is clinical research, in particular pain disorders.

1996

ABHILASHA (SINGH) JONES
Abby and her husband, Dr. Michael Jones are happy to report that there is life after residency! They live in the suburbs of Chicago with their two dogs Elwood and Stevie Ray. Abby has left Northwestern University and is working in an Emergency Department on the west side of Chicago, where her Spanish courses at UB are serving the population well! Abby and Michael in Sonoma County...

1997

JEFFREY JULIANO
Jeffrey, his wife Paola, and son Jake...

KIMBERLY J. PUSTULKA
Since graduating from Harvard Law School in 2000, Kimberly has been practicing as a corporate attorney, focusing on securities and mergers & acquisitions, in the Cleveland office of Jones Day. She is also on the Board of Directors of UB’s Alumni Association and is President of UB’s Cleveland Alumni Chapter.

1999

DANA GOLDSTEIN
Dana is currently the director of vocal music at Merrick Avenue Middle School in Merrick, New York. She is also currently recording and working on her singing career. Dana recently recorded two reggae tracks which are available on the cd Dancehall Jump-up Volume 1 through Strong Island Records, under her stage name, Dana Gold (www.strongisland.com).

GLEN HINCKLEY
Glen is finishing up his Ph.D. in Biochemistry at the University of Wisconsin - Madison and has been working in the lab of Dr. Perry Frey on the redox potentials of a unique iron-sulfur protein.

ADAM KUBIK
Adam is currently the Catalog Librarian at Clayton College and State University in Morrow, Georgia.

1999

CYNTHIA RUDIN
Cynthia is a National Science Foundation (NSF) post doc at the NYU Center for Neural Science studying statistical learning theory. She is getting married in August 2005!

KARIN TOWNSON
Karin is now living in the Denver metro area and owns a wellness center in Cherry Creek called Pilates Infusion. She is teaching rehabilitation and health and wellness to people of all ages as well as teaching dance and setting choreography around the country.

2000

DAVID BENESCH
David returned to UB last year and will be graduating from the School of Management’s MBA program in May. He is majoring in finance and information systems & e-business. After graduation, he will be joining M&T Bank in downtown Buffalo as an Executive Associate/Banking Officer with their Central Technology department.

MATT SHIPKEY
Matt currently administers the Farmland Preservation Program for Monmouth County, New Jersey, which has preserved close to 10,000 acres of farmland and expends anywhere from $5-15 million annually in combined State/County/Municipal funds. He lives in Jersey City Heights.

AMANDA (SCHIFFERLE) SOULISKE
Amanda is currently an English Teacher at Grand Island High School in Grand Island, New York.

2001

SARIM AHMED
Sarim is currently enrolled at Upstate Medical University and will be graduating this May.

SEAN NEALON
Sean is working as a reporter at the Riverside Press-Enterprise, a newspaper in Riverside, California.
2002

ERIK ANSPACH
Erik is currently a graduate student in a Ph.D. Program in Comparative Literature at University of Washington.

JULIE KOFOD
After completing a Master’s Degree in Higher Education Administration and a graduate assistantship with the Office of Admissions at UB, Julie has taken a position at the University of Illinois-Chicago as an Academic Advisor in the Graduate School of Business.

Megan is currently in her third year at the Illinois College of Optometry. She was awarded a Navy scholarship and after graduation she will be serving three years with the Navy as an officer and an optometrist.

2003

RACHEL LYNN BRODY
Rachel is currently working on her MFA in Dramatic Writing at Queen Margaret University College. Last summer, she wrote and produced "PLAYING IT COOL" at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival directed by Joyce Stilson of the Alleyway Theatre. She has just been awarded a grant for the distribution of her short film "Muse Wanted," and will soon be submitting it to festivals and competitions internationally. She is also a staff reviewer for the British Theatre Guide (http://www.britishtheatreguide.info) and has organized a successful weekly script development workshop at Queen Margaret University College.

KEVIN COOK
Kevin is currently studying immunology at the University of Rochester.

ALESSANDRA DE YOT LOVO
Alessandra has been a consultant with DELOITTE ERS practice for two years now and is up for promotion as senior consultant this summer. Her main client is Tyco International and she is working on Sarbane compliance in conjunction with the audit team.

MARINA DUKHON
Marina is currently living in Seattle and working at Microsoft.

HEDVA KRAUZE
Hedva is completing an internship at Boston’s Children’s Hospital and will be receiving a Master's Degree in Child Development from Tufts University this May.

2004

JEFF COLES
Jeff is enrolled at Duke in the Mechanical Engineering and Materials Science Ph.D. Program studying mechanisms of cartilage lubrication.

BLYTHE CRANDALL
Blythe is working as a Gynecology and Urology RN at the Cleveland Clinic in Cleveland, Ohio.

MICHAEL DRAY
Mike started at Praxair this past summer as a Process Engineer.

VIKAS PATEL
Vikas is currently a graduate student in the Department of Physics at UB.

NARASIMHACHAR PRATIVADI
Simha is currently a 1st year student at UB medical school.

KATHARINE (SNYDER) TARKULICH
Katharine was recently accepted into the MFA Program for costume design at CSU at Long Beach.

In Memoriam

We are saddened to report the death of CARRIE LYNN HOUSER (Special Studies – Dance, 1994) on November 23, 2004. Her life and career were a great source of pride to her family and friends, as well as to UB and the Honors Program.

Marriages

GRETTA (BAILEY) MILES (2003)

New Arrivals

JEFFREY CHAN (1993)
Jeffrey and his wife, Rebecca welcomed the arrival of Lily on July 28, 2004!

DAVE (1994) and Korin GUGLIELMI
welcomed their 2nd daughter, Gemma Victoria on November 1, 2004!

GLEN HINCKLEY (1991)
Glen and his wife Michelle welcomed their son, Everett Ariosto Hinckley, in September 2004!

BRIAN WALITT (1994)
Brian welcomed a new addition to his family, his daughter Alexandra Justine.

Run Kipp, Run!

Kipp Herreid finishes his 2nd marathon! Are there more in his future? Stay tuned...

We would like to include a photo of you with your update in the next magazine! Photos will be returned after printing. They can be mailed to: The Honors Program, c/o Karyn St. George or e-mailed to: kcs9@buffalo.edu
We hope you enjoy these photos taken at the Honors Alumni Reception in New York City in October. It was wonderful to see familiar faces, share new stories, and reminisce about UB and Honors.

Keep in mind that we will be hosting an Honors Alumni Reunion in Buffalo in August 2006 to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the program. More information to come!