

# The Broad Street Journal

Volume 4, Issue 7

www.messiah.edu/philly

April 4, 2008

## From the Classroom to the Cubicle: My Life As An Intern

By Matt Lettieri

At this point in our college careers, we all pretty much know the drill. We've done all the routine work that comes with being students: the tests, quizzes, pop-quizzes, essays, research papers, copy and pasting...I mean...citing sources, projects, group projects, presentations, speeches and whatever else our professors ask of us.

But this semester, many of us have decided to test our courage in the final frontier of educational exploration. We've embarked on a journey to a land only the boldest of the bold dare tread, a dominion where results are the bottom line. A realm where our quest for succeeding in the cold, hard professional world is as close as it's ever been, staring us right in the face with all its peril.

That's right, I'm talking about (pause for dramatic effect)...the internship (insert Indiana Jones theme music).

Ok, maybe I over dramatized it a bit. But there are a lot of differences. Instead of getting graded, we get evaluated. Instead of classes we have meetings. Instead of assignments we have "tasks to complete." Instead of studying we must simply prepare. Instead of doing homework, we must stay late to get the job done.

The biggest difference for me has been my introduction to office life and all its quiriness. I still haven't gotten used to the phone extension system. Maybe it's just me, but it seems odd to have a conversation with your coworkers over the phone when you're sitting 10 feet apart.

Cubicles have proven to be as solitary and constricting as everyone makes them

*Continued on Page 2*



*MCPC Student Sarah Pabst Gardening. Photography by Lacey Ward.*

## Common Text Immersion Weekend

By Lacey Ward

For some of Messiah College's Philadelphia students, this weekend was a great opportunity for them to get out and see the city. Some of the activities included having dinner on Friday night at any restaurant of choice, cheese steaks at Pat's or Geno's located in South Philly, and a two-hour trolley ride Sunday afternoon throughout Philly to see many of the murals completed through the Philadelphia Mural Arts Program. Saturday morning was spent working with Skip Weiner and the Urban Tree Connection at the Uber Street garden.

But this weekend was not just about seeing the city, it included having engaging conversations about what it means to live in the city as a Christian.

Two sessions were held to discuss the common-text reading, "Sidewalks in the Kingdom" by Eric Jacobsen, and the effects of New Urbanism, lead by Dr. Timothy Peterson. Short clips from the documentary "The End of Suburbia" were part of these sessions, but the full-length version of the documentary was offered as an optional event to attend later Saturday afternoon. To finish off the weekend, Debi and Timothy Peterson graciously offered their living room as the setting for the first MCPC Story Slam! Sunday night. Students such as Matt Lettieri, Georgia Rinker, and Lindsay St. Clair participated in telling their own stories that took place in Philadelphia this semester. Along with these stories, Debi Peterson provided many delicious deserts along with coffee and tea. Emily Yoder, the third place winner, states, "It was great to hear about people's various Philadelphia experiences, knowing that most of those stories wouldn't have occurred any other place in the world."

# Community

## Intern

*Continued from Page 1*

out to be. I'm like those mimes who act like they're stuck in a glass box, except I actually am. Sometimes I get up for a trip to the water cooler and feel like Tom Hanks after he gets rescued in *Cast Away*. I just can't remember how to deal with real people after spending so much time with a computer (instead of a volleyball).

Then there's the bathroom down the hall from the office with the broken lock. Having somebody walk in on you in the restroom isn't necessarily the best ice breaker when you're new in the office. But one good feature is the sign above the toilet that says, "If you sprinkle when you tinkle, please be neat and wipe the seat." Unfortunately, not all office memos are so catchy and easy to remember.

Perhaps the hardest office situation to negotiate is the ride up the elevator. It can be quite awkward when you're joined by employees from other offices in the building. I still never feel comfortable as the odd man out in conversations about "the Johnson files" or about how "Bill better watch his back because some heads are going to roll" or how "at this juncture, our C-level mid-sized 401k plan is panning out quite well for the foreseeable future." I just try to stare at my feet inconspicuously until I reach my floor.

As you can see, interning can be a completely new experience. At the end of the day, though, one thing remains the same. Work is still work, whether it's in the classroom or the cubicle.



*Image Courtesy of Google Images*

## The Political Circus

By Douglas Yeisley

Wednesday, April 2, Barak Obama was interviewed in front of West Chester University's student body by Chris Matthews of MSNBC's *Hardball*. Senator Obama answered such poignant questions as how to handle Iraq, but he also came down to earth a bit by discussing his struggles with cigarettes, his faith in God, and his admission that "basketball, I can play." As intriguing and newsworthy as this interview was, though, it almost paled in comparison to the pandemonium that occurred outside the auditorium's doors. It really showed the two sides to politics: the serious discussion of issues by the candidates and the theatrical performances by candidates and their supporters alike. If you are more interested in the more serious side, then visit MSNBC's website to watch clips of the interview. This article, from this point on, will jump into the theatrics of it all. Just a warning, since I was right among the multitudes being theatrical.

As the students and other ticket holders lined up to get inside the auditorium, members of the Sierra Club, myself included, showed up to drum up support for various environmental

causes such as reducing oil subsidies, support for renewable energy, and reduction of carbon emissions. Our tactics were signs that stated our issues, a petition to Governor Rendell, and flyers on energy conservation. Our best method, though, was to stick someone in a polar bear suit and set him or her loose on the crowd. Like usual, it was a big hit. He danced around with various signs, and posed for pictures constantly.

Then, another special interest group showed up. A special interest group is an organization that is invested in a particular cause (like the Sierra Club's involvement with environmental issues). This group, though, was a so-called pro-life group. I saw them forming, and thought, I wonder what they are supporting. They look like hip individuals; definitely more hip than myself. As the idiom says, I judged those books solely on their cover. They unfurled graphic pictures of mutilated babies and shouted through megaphones about sin. Members walked up and down the lines shouting at people, and the whole afternoon took on a different, strained air.

Meanwhile, Clinton supporters formed en masse to protest Obama's presence. They had humungous signs, and chanted fervently. They even drowned out the pro-life group from time to time. One would think that by the time the crowd entered the building, the various groups dispersed. Quite the contrary. Off in the distance, I could see McCain supporters marching in to join the fray. Obama supporters came back out and rallied around, including a woman with her dog with a sign that said "Bark for Barak." And we still had our dancing polar bear. Quickly the event became a shouting match between all of these groups. It was just as one person described to me: a zoo.

I am proud to say that my group had the most success, and I do not say that just because I am biased towards my organization. Between our polar bear and my cardboard musk oxen, we were undeniably the cutest group, especially compared to the abortion posters. Also, our issues resonated with the Clinton,

*Continued on Page 4*

## From the ends of the Earth: Polar Bears and Penguins

By Emily Yoder

A menacing polar bear stood at full height in attack mode, marking the entrance to the Academy of Natural Science's newest exhibit, "From the Ends of the Earth: Polar Bears and Penguins." Unfortunately, the exhilaration of passing underneath the posed bear on his hind legs surpassed any fun the exhibit itself provoked.

This kid-friendly landscape of exhibits attempts to teach viewers the effects that environmental changes are having on these polar creatures. The reports on the danger of pollution, climate change, and other hazards are presented on various white flat screen televisions scattered throughout the two rooms. The videos, which only show scientists speaking against a plain white background, are ignored entirely. They're located above children's line of vision and the occasional adults who paused in front of a screen leave within seconds.

Only two of the interactive exhibits had educational value. The first demonstrated how scientists weighed polar bears with an orange rope sling. Patrons could climb in and compare their weight to polar bears of various ages. I witnessed two squeaky-voiced children urging their mother to climb into the humiliating scale after their father had weighed in at the level of a "sub-adult polar bear." Hesitantly, she obliged, proudly declaring that she was the equivalent of a 9-month-old cub.

The second was tucked away in the back room: a large wall allowed patrons to press buttons to hear the mating calls of different penguins. These noises ranged from sounding like a middle school bands' brass section in the midst of tuning to an overloaded freight train. Children ran about pressing the various buttons, not pausing to distinguish the noises.

Once they had weighed themselves and heard the cacophony, the children preferred feeling the polar bear claws, then running to a small sliding board in the back room, designed to look like it was made out of ice. The other educational exhibits are all either video screens also located too high to pique the interest of the younger audience, or else displays with far too many words to intrigue casual passers-by.

A couple quiz games and other interactive contests are interspersed throughout the rooms. Patrons tended to try the games, but lose interest before any competition could pick up because of poor graphics and long loading times on the screens. In the age of computer games and top-of-the-line entertainment technology in every house, few children seemed impressed with the makeshift quizzes.

Overall, the exhibit failed to capture adult attention, and completely missed the mark of educating younger audiences. While the stuffed polar bears and penguin skeletons offered their own intrigue, any information about how environmental change affects either species could only be gleaned from the dry interviews and long panels of writing.

If the Academy of Natural Science wants to pique younger attention about environmental causes, it should find a format more accessible to younger audiences, make a persuasive point, and find ways to make learning fun.

## *L'elisir d'amore*

By Emily Yoder

Melodramatic opera storylines often seem that they'd fit in with the plethora of reality television shows and behind-the-scenes exposés which dominate today's TV airwaves in the aftermath of the writer's strike. Director Ned Canty wrote in the director's note that it was the sensationalism of modern infomercials and the energy of studio life that inspired him to reinterpret Donizetti's 1832 opera, *L'elisir d'amore* (*Elixir of*



*Image Courtesy of Google Images*

*Love*) into the setting of a modern television studio. While parts of the opera translated successfully, creating eerily relevant jokes, some cultural anachronisms distracted from the overall goal.

The convincing bright green studio set seemed out of place in the historic Curtis Institute building just off Rittenhouse Square. Tucked in a corner of the third floor, past antique framing and winding wooden staircases, the set seemed to jump ahead two centuries. Television screens sat in a pile on the floor, and a bright wall projected "Applause" and "ON AIR" lights, as well as four TV screens simultaneously showing different "I Love Lucy" re-runs. Audio equipment and the wooden plywood backsides of cheesy props littered the floor. The classic Italian songs emerging from the cheerfully kitschy set, where English translations were projected from the television screens, created a strange contrast.

The timeless love triangle storyline managed to transcend the era confusion of the setting. The male protagonist, Nemorino (Joshua Stewart), typically portrayed as a peasant, was a cable-winding, hammer-carrying maintenance man at the television studio. His love interest, Adina, usually a rich landowner, became an independently wealthy executive at the studio played with icy ambition by the soprano Ashley Thouret. Brandon Cedel played Belcore, a pompous military man and Nemorino's rival for Adina's affections.

*Continued on Page 4*

# Urban Living

## Opera

*Continued from Page 3*



*Director Nick Canty. Image Courtesy of Google Images.*

With his faded tool belt and Carhartt jumpsuit, Joshua Stewart brought an innocent sweetness to the role of Nemorino. He sang his lamenting musical numbers while performing janitorial tasks around the studio set with the earnest pining of a man hopelessly out of his league. Nemorino could have easily come across as obsessive or dimwitted, but Stewart's nuances and the modern context brought in an honest gullibility.

Nathan Bachhuber's also stood out among the talented cast in his smarmy, energetic portrayal of Dulcamara. He played a quack medicine man who promises to help anyone gain affection with a mysterious love potion -- actually Bordeaux wine. His charismatic introduction song—done in the style of an infomercial—brought the audience to audible laughter and spontaneous ovation with several of his whimsical eyebrow raises and nonverbal appeals to the camera-wielding side characters. The unethical ambition glittered in his eyes as he manipulated Nemorino to spend his paychecks for the promise of love. His forced smiles and over-exaggerated gestures while he performed on his infomercial showed the nuances of the performance.

The opera's best moments are in the

chilly chemistry between Nemorino and Adina in the first act. Her front of independence and his earnest pursuit seemed even more accurate in the time frame switch. With the rise of women's rights in the past century, women can now find financial success alone and be choosier about love. Her ambivalence to a man who seemed to be lacking career ambition could have been a subplot in any modern sitcom. After Adina's change of heart in the second act, she seems less convincing, moping around in a wedding dress which ironically resembles a cupcake.

The jokes about the effects of alcohol also translate well. Nemorino tiptoes around the stage, giddily singing to himself and commenting that "the elixir has made her even more beautiful." Dulcamara's final song where he lauds its ability to correct "every defect and blemish of nature," drew enthusiastic laughs from an audience familiar with jokes about "beer goggles" and "the walk of shame" which comes after a night of drinking.

While unrequited love and drunken mistakes seem timeless, Belcore's character didn't translate well. In our post-women's liberation context, it seemed highly unlikely that the intelligent, successful Adina would ever succumb to a man who openly compared love to a military conquest. Also, in the midst of a highly unpopular war, the idea of women flocking to a man in uniform seemed outdated as well. His character's romantic success despite his sexist dialogue didn't seem to fit with the rest of the upbeat opera.

With the exception of the Belcore subplot, the unlikely resetting brought a unique energy to an old opera. The cast pulled it off with charisma, but the most convincing parts were in the

small directorial details. An angry Adina went to attack Nemorino with a rolled-up copy of the *New York Times*. A ditsy side character read an *In Touch* magazine with a Britney Spears disaster dominating the cover, and a flashy headline reading: "My mom slept with my husband." Yes, melodrama truly is timeless.

## Circus

*Continued from Page 2*

Obama, and, to a lesser extent, the McCain supporters alike. The pro-life group displayed exactly what all special interest groups should avoid like the plague and that is antagonism. No one wants to get yelled at or threatened with eternal damnation. It takes away from the power of your cause, no matter how valid it is. The last thing a special interest group wants to be is trivial.

With that little lesson on how to demonstrate over, I will turn back to politics as a whole. It really is a lot of screaming and dancing polar bears, when the issues like the 4000 American soldiers dead in Iraq and the growing national deficit should be addressed by all parties. Makes you think of Rome, doesn't it?



*Photograph by Douglas Yeisley*

Want to write for the Broad Street Journal?

Contact Douglas Yeisley at [dy1157@meessiah.edu](mailto:dy1157@meessiah.edu)