

WELCOME,  
SPARTANS!

CRISIS IN  
FERGUSON

ROBIN  
WILLIAMS  
TRIBUTE

SUMMER  
INTERNSHIP  
ADVICE

PAGE 2

PAGE 3

PAGE 5

PAGE 8

VOLUME 49, EDITION 1

SEPTEMBER 3, 2014

THE ST. THOMAS AQUINAS COLLEGE

# THOMAS

## Staxford 2014: STAC's 2015 Honors Class Travels to University of Oxford

KATHRYN BAUMGARTNER



“Well, here at last, dear friends, on the shores of the Sea comes the end of our fellowship in Middle-earth. Go in peace! I will not say: do not weep; for not all tears are an evil.” ~ J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Return of the King*

Author and philologist J.R.R. Tolkien was a professor and resident of Merton College, part of the University of Oxford, from 1945 to 1959; from July 21, 2014 to August 9, 2014, 19 students from St. Thomas Aquinas College were residents there as well.

Students of the STAC Honors Program (class of 2015) participated in a three-week program in Oxford, England, the annual Oxford-Berkeley Summer School program, taking courses in a variety of topics alongside people from across the United States. Half of the group arrived in Oxford on July 20 in

order to get settled into the dorms before the start of the program, while the other half arrived on July 21 after spending a few days in Dublin, Ireland.

Each student had their own dorm room, located in either 20 or 22 Merton Street, outside of the campus grounds. Students had to use their fob, an electronic device attached to a key-chain that allows access to certain programmed doorways, to enter the grounds through the “late gate.” This gate felt much like the entrance to the Secret Garden – it nearly blended right into the ivy-covered wall surrounding it and when it was opened, students were greeted by a beautiful garden where creatures of all kinds could be seen depending on the time of day. Aside from the usual birds and squirrels, there were reported sightings of a red fox

near dusk!

Luckily, most of the preparation for each student’s chosen course had been completed prior to their coming to Oxford, so they had plenty of time to explore when they arrived on July 20. The weather was perfect for exploring as well, since students arrived in the middle of a heat wave that lasted for a couple of weeks. An intense rainfall during one of the second weekend’s field trips quickly cooled temperatures, though, and soaked those who were unprepared to meet with traditional English weather so suddenly.

After an orientation and the first formal dinner, students met up with their tutors and classmates for the first time on the evening of July 21. They met in their designated classrooms, chatted about their course for five to ten

minutes, and then rejoined everyone else on the tennis lawn to enjoy sparkling wine and mingle with other participants in the program.

On July 22, students were introduced to the Bodleian library system and given cards that would allow them access to all of Oxford’s most prestigious libraries. Everyone had to take an oath, swearing that they would not harm the books in the libraries nor kindle any fires in the buildings. After this introduction, students proceeded to their classrooms for the first class session.

Some of the courses offered include: Jane Austen in Context, Castles and Country Houses, The Art of the English Garden, Shakespeare’s Kings and Queens, and the Great Families of Britain. Courses ran from 9:00 AM until 12:30 PM, with a half-hour coffee and tea break

at 10:45 AM. All of the tutors were professors at the University of Oxford and were extremely knowledgeable not only in the subject they were teaching, but in a wide variety of subjects. They were also extraordinarily friendly, spending time with students outside of the classroom and getting to know students who were not in their class.

The older students who were signed up for the program through UC Berkeley were extremely knowledgeable as well and though this knowledge could be quite intimidating at times, it was also inspirational. They were always more than willing to share any extra knowledge they had, as well as offer career advice or words of wisdom where they saw it was welcome or necessary.

...continued on page 8

## EDITORIAL

“What’s money? A man is a success if he gets up in the morning and goes to bed at night and in between does what he wants to do.”  
~Bob Dylan

This is a fantastic ideology in theory, but it seems completely impractical in reality. The necessity of money to do any of the things we really want to – topping my list is constant travel, which does not come cheap – is painfully apparent, especially to college students who have not really begun to make their way in the world yet and are still struggling to secure their futures.

## THOMA STAFF

KATHRYN  
BAUMGARTNER  
EDITOR IN CHIEF

SAVANNAH  
FINVER  
COPY EDITOR

SARAHJO  
MONTELLO  
DEPUTY EDITOR

JEANINE  
GRILLO  
PUBLIC EDITOR

JOY ALACAR  
PHOTO EDITOR

STAFF WRITERS  
REBEKKA SLATE  
EMILY HOUGH  
JOCENELLE  
ALCIME  
TIMOTHY HER-  
ASIMTSCHUK  
QUINTON  
CHAMBERS  
ARIANNA  
SOTOS  
BRENDAN  
DOLAN  
JUMANA  
KHATIB

My dream is to be an author. I would love to be able to make money doing what I love and what I love to do is write. Countless people have told me to become a technical writer or a journalist or an academic, as though these things are interchangeable with creative writing, when in reality writing an article for a newspaper is an entirely different exercise than writing a novel.

Luckily, there are many programs nationwide that allow students to study creative writing without paying tuition. Unluckily, these programs are highly selective and extremely difficult to be accepted into. So do I give up my dream and take a position that will earn me the

money I need to sustain my lifestyle, or do I find a way to barely scrape by while be-



*High Table, Merton College, University of Oxford.*

*Photo credit: Kat Baumgartner*

ing able to do what I love? There does not seem to be any in-between. Dylan is right – money does not make a person a

success. Neither does the possession of a lot of fancy gadgets, like smartphones, tablets, cars, etc. So perhaps the solution is to give up all these extraneous things, these unnecessary material items that people managed to do without thirty years ago, take public transportation, live simply and do not overindulge, in order to follow your dreams. Cut out the extra things to focus on what is really important – but that is so much easier said than done.

I do not know if this feeling of the impossibility of following one’s dreams due to the major factor of money is something that only affects our generation, but I do know that it is not only my close friends who experience this. I met a young

man on my flight back from England this summer who is a recent graduate, age 22. Many of the topics of conversation we engaged in on the seven-hour flight led back to the same place – we do not want to be forced to work in order to live. We want to just be able to do what we love, plain and simple, without worrying about jobs, money, or security.

Perhaps if Bob Dylan was able to find a way, then we can as well. If it is something that is truly important to you, you will make it happen.

TTFN,

*Kat*

## Welcome, Spartans!

REBEKKA SLATE

Hey New STAC Spartans,

First of all, Welcome to St. Thomas Aquinas College!

Four years ago I sat in your place, a new student on campus, reading The Thoma, having no clue what the college experience would be like. When I first started looking into STAC as a possible option for a college, I would pick up a copy of The Thoma every time I visited. It was a simple insight to me of what the college might be like from the students’ point of view. I thought I would someday write for the paper since my major was Journalism, but like many things in college, interests change.

Flash-forward to the present: my roommate, Kat, is the Editor of The Thoma, and I am assistant editor for the Thomist Yearbook. When I read The Thoma, I remembered some of the articles and the names of who wrote them. A major benefit of STAC is the small

population, because once I was on campus in the fall, I quickly became friends with the upper classmen whose names I had known so well. In addition to that, remember when you met students when you visited for open house or accepted students day? Those stu-

tation group, but it took us two years to cross paths again and figure out we should dorm together.

College is difficult, and can even be scary, but we are all in the same boat so we get through it together, whether it be studying for a final

ment to figure out your career interests, and your friends and professors as people to support and guide you. I originally began at STAC with an interest in Journalism, but through the help of Professor Prior and Professor Winship’s classes, I have discovered my passion is in visual communications and public relations.

If you ever take a class with Dr. Durney you will hear the term ‘networking’ at least 1,000 times, but some of the best connections do not have to be a president of a company, but simply the student sitting next to you. My advice is to take a look at the people around you, because you may very well be spending the next four years with them, whether it be in a class, the dining hall, or even a dorm room.

The connections you make will last a lifetime, and they can help you figure out your interests, and even help

you get a job. Most of the amazing opportunities I have had the past several years are thanks to other fellow STAC students just like you.

So if you ever see me on a campus, please introduce yourself because I would love to meet you and pass the connections on!



*If you ever see Rebekka around campus, feel free to stop her and say “hello”! Photo credit: Rebekka Slate*

dents will most likely cross your path again and you never know, they could end up being your new best friend. Most of the people I am close to now, I have known since before I even started attending STAC, due to all the times I visited campus. For example, my best friend Emily and I were in the same orien-

all weekend or bonding over watching ABC Family shows after a stressful day. I did everything I could to graduate early and now that I am in December, it is terrifying and that is the honest truth. I have no idea what career I might have but I will have to figure it out once I get there. Think of your classes as an exper-

## EDITORIAL

The Second-Year Experiences of a Female STAC Alumni  
Volunteering with the Peace Corps in Indonesia

EMILY HOUGH

Dear STACers,

Welcome back, or to the Freshmen/Transfers--just welcome! If you are new to reading this column, my name is Emily Hough. A long time ago when dinosaurs ruled the earth (or from 2008-2012) I was a STAC student. At STAC I found that I possessed a need to help the world, so I applied for the Peace Corps and finally deployed for Indonesia in April 2013. Since June 2013 I have been a TEFL teacher at a small vocational high school on the island of Madura. This editorial is part of my third goal outreach--to teach my American counterparts about the beautiful country I live in. That, and I cannot let go of the newspaper I worked so hard on during my college years.

Well then, during your (hopefully wonderful) summer break, nothing much happened over here. After school ended in early June, I traveled back to the states for a whirlwind tour of friends, activities, family,

and food. After gaining ten pounds from inhaling massive quantities of cheese, I returned to Indonesia in the middle of the holy month of Ramadan.

Indonesia, having the largest number of Muslims in a country (89% of the population is Muslim), celebrates the fasting month. School

days are shorter and the evenings are filled with noisemakers and fireworks set off by the local boys. Since I fell ill last year from fasting, I did not choose to participate, something my host-family understood. Instead I snuck around during daylight hours,

making PB & J sandwiches for lunch (until my jam rolled out of my cupboard and shattered--what a mess!) and staying in my room for a vast quantity of my time.

As I write this (on August 17), I have just finished my second week of the new semester. The English curriculum for the country has changed since last year, but my school did not receive

Last year all this information would have been an overload, or at least upset me, but not now. During my Peace Corps training (April-June 2013), I was constantly told that the second year would be easier; that I would find a sense of self in my community and everything would begin to come together. That could not be more true. I am excited for my year ahead, and I hope you are too. Good luck for the new year!

Peace STACers,  
Emily Hough

The contents of this editorial are of Emily Hough and do not reflect any position of the U.S. government or the Peace Corps.

*Emily Hough is a 2012 graduate of St. Thomas Aquinas, majored in Philosophy & Religious Studies as well as Social Science. At STAC, she served as Editor-in-Chief of The Thoma. Feel free to contact her at ehough08@stac.edu with any questions or comments.*



*Emily stops for a photo-op with her host-mother and host-cousin before a children's fashion contest.*

*Photo credit: Emily Hough.*

I spent my hours watching television, working on my book project, and reading. I would have planned for the year ahead, but I had finally learned my lesson: Indonesia is a take-it-as-it-comes country. That is not a bad thing, it is just different.

the new book until after the completion of the first week. The schedule has changed three times. My class statistics run the gambit;

I have one class with 52 students (computer science), another with 12 (fashion). Four of my classes are all-boys, one all-girls, and I have five mixed. While most of my students are overjoyed to see me, a couple believe I will not catch them sneaking out of class.

## “With Liberty, and Justice, for ALL”

JOCENELLE S. ALCIME

Recently many are assembling in Ferguson, Missouri and in other parts of United States demonstrating their feelings

towards police brutality. Darren Wilson, a police officer, viciously murdered Michael Brown, an unarmed 18-year-old teenager who had a promising future at Vatterott College in Missouri. His death has left a crowd full of an angry army who simply want answers.

Why was he shot? What did he do so wrong that propelled the officer to shoot him repeatedly? Why are young African American

teenagers constantly profiled as a danger to society? Why was his body left in the street for four hours? With these questions floating in the air, it makes you wonder what exactly are we as African American people doing wrong. Is it the fact that we are striving to attain greatness like those around us that threaten authority? Other men and women, aside from Brown, have been subject to beatings and murders from those

who we look to provide us with protection.

This new trend of attacking those of African American descent or any other minority is inescapable. However, we as people can learn to stay together and defend one another. When you see someone being abused by authority, or anyone, do not be the person that turns the other cheek. It is about time that we, as Americans, stand up as a nation and

be that good Samaritan. Be aware of your rights. You are allowed to petition, protest, and refuse to consent to a search of yourself or your personal belongings.

It is time for us to rise and start carrying out the words of our pledge of allegiance. Do not let it become merely words, but let it be a vow to yourself and others around you. “With Liberty and Justice, for ALL”.

## How Do You Get Your News?

TIMOTHY HERASIMTSCHUK

There are many different options on television for us to get our news and to find out what is going on in the world around us. For what is going on in the New

York area we go back to where it started on Channels 2, 4, 5, and 7. We have MSNBC, CNN, FOX News, and even the newspapers to learn about various political and world issues.

However, in a world where we are always on the go and do not have much time to watch television, many of us are turning to sites such as Facebook and twitter to find out what is happening

in the news. This is not always the most reliable way to check the news, as there are often many pranks and a lot of false information being spread. For example, I was on Facebook when I found out that Robin Williams passed away and I did not believe it until I went home and saw it on TV.

As a communications and journalism student this is a very important topic to me

because as the times change it will affect the foundation of the industry and the way news is put out. While I feel social media is a useful tool in getting news out quickly for reporters who cannot always be on TV, it is also not the most reliable as information can easily be misinterpreted and sent out across the internet causing confusion. Anyone can make a Twitter account, put a news stations logo on that

account, and send out false information. Television also allows reporters to go more in depth and get to the bottom of the issues in a way that social media does not.

Overall, there are many ways to report on the news and as social media becomes a more popular medium, citizens need to be aware of the potential drawbacks of this method of communication.

## EDITORIAL

## Are We Using Our Phones Too Much?

QUINTON CHAMBERS

Take a look at your phone: does it have a touch screen? Is it sleek? Does it condense hundreds of items and place them at your fingertips? I think it is fair to say that we have smoothly transitioned from the age of cellphones, and have arrived at the dawn of the “smartphone”, which generally means a pocket-sized computer.

Nowadays, instead of simply making and receiving calls on your mobile phone, you can do things like: track your workout, map a route to any destination, discover the name of that song on your favorite commercial, and scan the barcode of a product to find the best price, all while juggling the basic capabilities of making calls, sending texts and taking pictures.

So I guess a better question to ask is, “What can’t your phone do?” Although any other product that is widely available to the masses cannot match the convenience of smartphones, is their advancement really for the best? With social environments becoming altered by “social networks”, constant beeps and notifications distracting us from everyday tasks, and personal information possibly being used in ways we may not approve of, should we not be asking: “Are we using our phones too much?”

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, and Vine are all household names of social media apps within the ever growing social media network. All of them involve a system of sharing moments in words or pictures with your friends or followers as often as you would like, which is great because who does not love to share?

But all of this sharing is beginning to cloud the

existence of everyday social gatherings, with people more concerned about how many likes or favorites they can get off of a post, rather than actual interactions going on around them. For example, think about the last concert you have attended. Instead of the occasional lighter swaying through the air, you probably saw tons of illuminated rectangles (and that one person who decided to bring their Ipad) jostling for the best position to capture that perfect picture or video clip. What happened to enjoying the moment and bonding with the people around you, or viewing the performance you have paid for uninterrupted? This is not to mention that it is not always safe to reveal where you are and what you are doing.

It seems as if social media has caused people to feed off instant gratification. “Look at me, look what I’m doing, look at how many likes I got, retweet if you agree with me!” This then results in tainted egos and sometimes the mistreatment of others, when truthfully there is no real benefit to gaining 100+ likes on something you post. So next time you are at any type of social event, turn off your phone and really connect with the people around you, then tweet about how much more fun you had after.

Picture this hypothetical scenario: 19-year-old Emma and 18-year-old John are driving on the thruway, heading towards an old friend’s house. The music is blasting while the two are laughing and singing together. Suddenly, Emma feels her phone vibrate in her pocket and she does not hesitate to take it out. At 75mph Emma takes her eyes off the road to read

the text message that she had received, yet she did not have enough time to reply. Traffic had come to a stop in front of her and her speed had not decreased. The car then slammed into the line of vehicles and by the time it came to a stop it was a mangled piece of metal.

According to researchers at Cohen Children’s Medical Center in New Hyde Park, texting and driving estimates total more than 3,000 annual teen deaths nationwide and 300,000 injuries. Texting and driving, among young adults and teens, has become more of an issue than DUIs. Smartphones have clearly made contact between individuals faster and more frequent, yet those benefits have not come without drawbacks. Ultimately these pocket-

case we feel either frustrated or left out. The fact of the matter is that there is a time and a place for everything, and as long as you have received the notification on your phone, it is not going anywhere, so there is no need to be anxious about it.

Recent information released to the public about how the NSA are tracking smartphone information eerily reminds me of the book *1984* by George Orwell. According to Edward Snowden, a former NSA contractor, the government collects data from a few hundred million devices and logs their locations. If data is received, there needs to be a device or system configured to read that data, in order to render it useful. Now if a device were

resources, from creating similar devices to invade our consumer activity and private affairs? Conspiracy theorists can run rampant with this topic, and the situation does leave an unsettled feeling in the mind of a savvy smartphone user.

There is no doubt that smartphones have boosted us somewhat into the future, with intuitive apps and capabilities far beyond what we could have imagined. Although the next time you pick up your iPhone, Samsung Galaxy, HTC, or Windows phone, remember that everything does not need to revolve around it. Remind yourself to soak up life and never let technology cloud your vision. Know that taking your eyes away from the road for 5 seconds, around 50 mph, equals driving the length of a football field without looking. Also be careful with personal information on your smartphone, because if an app or the phone itself can track and log data, then some person or super-computer somewhere could access it.

That reminds me of a funny story I could tell about a middle schooler, an FBI agent, and a dolphin, but first let me take a selfie.

References:

- <http://www.newsday.com/news/nation/study-texting-while-driving-now-leading-cause-of-death-for-teen-drivers-1.5226036>
- <http://www.textingandrivingsafety.com/texting-and-driving-stats/>
- [http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/nsa-tracking-cell-phone-locations-world-wide-snowden-documents-show/2013/12/04/5492873a-5cf2-11e3-bc56-c6ca-94801fac\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/nsa-tracking-cell-phone-locations-world-wide-snowden-documents-show/2013/12/04/5492873a-5cf2-11e3-bc56-c6ca-94801fac_story.html)
- <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2013/12/08/cell-phone-data-spying-nsa-police/3902809/>



Photo credit: Google Images

et-sized computers are the main distraction in today’s world, and not just on the road. Mobile phone distractions are so entrenched in our everyday life that rules in colleges and even high schools are enforced about the use and interruption of them during class. Pedestrians checking their latest notification have slowed even walking on city streets.

So why are people so concerned about what they could be missing when something more important could be (and most of the time is) going on around them? It is simple: in our new on-demand world flooded with 4G and high speed technology, people expect everything to be instant. Whether it is sending a text or posting a tweet, we expect an answer back just as fast as it was sent out, and when that is not the

built to read the NSA’s data and possibly collect its own, it would then have been distributed to certain agencies for surveillance purposes. Would you not say that situation could become intrusive with time?

Well such a device has already been created. According to a “USA Today” article, the records from more than 125 police agencies in 33 states reveal that 25 police departments own a Stingray, and in some states local departments can request the use of one through government funded surveillance units. The Stingray is a suitcase-sized device that costs \$400,000, which acts as a cell tower and tricks phones into connecting to it. When connected, the Stingray device can then access most information off that smartphone. If the government and police are capable of using such technology then what is keeping big businesses, with unlimited



SAVE OUR SCHOOLS  
THE CAMPAIGN FOR ARTFUL RESISTANCE

# SAVE THE DATE!

## 2nd Annual Campaign for Artful Resistance: A Celebration of the Arts

Celebrate a day of performances and workshops! Music, theater, art, yoga!

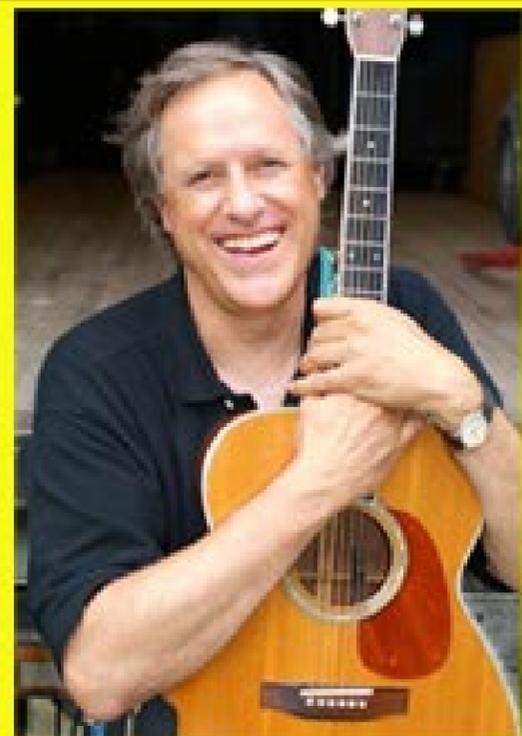
**Saturday**  
**September 27th**

*St. Thomas Aquinas College*  
*125 Route 340, Sparkill, NY*  
*Romano Student Center*

*1:00 - 4:30pm*

**FREE ADMISSION**

*Come & Enjoy!*



Special Family Concert  
by Grammy Award Winner  
**TOM CHAPIN**  
& THE CHAPIN SISTERS!

For more information contact:  
Dr. Michael Shaw [mshaw@stac.edu](mailto:mshaw@stac.edu)

**PLUS**  
Chiku Awali African Dance  
& The Storycrafters

**Proudly sponsored by**



## LIFESTYLE

## Oh, Captain, My Captain: Reflection and Understanding of Robin Williams' Suicide

ARIANNA SOTOS

The moment the news broke about Robin Williams' tragic death by suicide, it was as if the world stopped turning for a heart wrenching second. For three generations, Robin Williams brought joy and laughter into not only American households but households globally. The fact that he took his own life was, and continues to be, a hard pill to swallow. However, this tragedy has sparked a necessary conversation about mental illness and suicide.

Despite the numerous heartfelt and touching tributes from fans and fellow entertainers alike, nothing has stuck out more than the hateful and ignorant comments on his cause of death. Upon first reporting the news, Fox news anchor Shepard Smith said the following statement:

*It's hard to imagine, isn't it? You could love three little things so much, watch them grow, they're in their mid-20s, and they're inspiring you, and exciting you, and they fill you up with the kind of joy you could never have known. And yet, something inside you is so horrible or you're such a coward or whatever the reason that you decide that you have to end it. Robin Williams, at 63, did that.*

This statement highlights a lot of the misguided beliefs that fuel the stigma towards suicide. First off, Smith insinuates that it is next to impossible to fathom what it feels like to be in an extremely dark place in life; he makes it seem almost as if Williams was a crazed madman who could not see the beauty of his children and his life because, after all, life is just like a big Disney movie where all the birds sing to you and chipmunks and mice do your laundry.

Then comes the elephant in the room: the coward line. It is not uncommon for a person who has taken their

own life to be called cowardly or selfish. Yes, suicide is a social taboo and many frown upon it, but that gives no person the right to disrespect the deceased, whether that person is famous or not. The deceased has no way to defend themselves, and furthermore it is hurtful to a family to have to hear negative commentary of their loved one in a time of grieving. Of course, Smith quickly tried to amend his words using the "Word Vomit Defense." All the Mean Girls fans know the reference, but for those who do not it basically means that the words just came out in a regurgitating fashion and there was no way to stop or control them. "To the core of my being, I regret it," Smith told Mediaite.com, "It just came out of my mouth. And I'm so sorry. And to anyone and their families who see that, I am sorry."

The sad truth is that this one statement highlights many of the thoughts and beliefs towards suicide. The fact that people can say such things almost as if it is a natural thought process solidifies the fact that the stigma is deeply engrained in our culture. There is a lack of education when it comes to depression and suicide. Many institutions simply say, "Suicide is bad. If you have suicidal thoughts, say something." While communication is lifesaving, that is nowhere near the information needed to truly make a difference.

Suicide is often times even mocked by popular culture, stating things such as, "Only emo people want to

kill themselves," and many believe that suicides are a rare occurrence. In 2011, the CDC reported that there were 39,518 completed suicides in the United States, 9,913 of which were performed through suffocation. In 2011 alone, 8.3% of adults between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five suffered at least one major depressive episode (MDE). These numbers clearly indicate that mental illness and suicides are far from being rare.



RIP Robin Williams. 1951 - 2014.  
Photo credit: Google Images

Many often do not know what a major depressive episode is or even how to spot one in a friend or loved one. A MDE is classified with symptoms, which last for five or more days, that include: depressed or irritable mood for most of the day, every day; decreased pleasure or interest in activities, weight change or appetite change; changes in sleep and activity; fatigue; guilt and feelings of worthlessness; decreased ability to concentrate; and suicidal thoughts. Now, while it is difficult to understand the full toll these symptoms can have on a person unless it is experienced first-hand, it is

important to show empathy.

The best way to try to understand what MDE feels like is to imagine yourself in a room, full of light, friends, and laughter. Then, you are cut off. The light turns to pitch black and you are alone. You can still hear your friends talking and laughing and having a good time, so you desperately try to escape. But the harder you try, the more exhausted you become. The darkness begins to push itself on

top of you until you feel almost suffocated. You try to get help but all your loved ones say to you is, "Well, have you tried getting out? Maybe you just need to try a little harder." Despite your best efforts, all you can focus on is the darkness forcing itself into your mind. You feel there is only one way left out, but it is extreme.

Then comes the breaking point, when you feel as if you will never return to normal, you are more of a

burden alive than dead and it will be best for your family and friends since you have

no way to get back anyway. If any of the latter saddens or even shocks you, imagine how someone who is actually suffering from this disorder feels every day. This adds insult to the belief that people who have taken their own life were merely cowardly or selfish. Struggling with suicidal thoughts and depression is an uphill battle. While drugs like SSRIs will take the edge off the symptoms, they will hardly ever eradicate them completely. There is no miracle cure. Even with talk or behavioral therapies, dealing with symptoms is a constant struggle. The best course of action to

take when interacting with someone who is suffering depression or is in the midst of a MDE is to educate yourself and to offer unconditional empathy and understanding. The DSM is free online and offers insight from a scientific perspective what mental illness can look and feel like. There are also many helpful blogs written by both doctors and lay people offering support and guidance to those who have someone suffering from any mental illness in their lives.

While it is clear that Williams was suffering a major depressive episode at the time of his death, no one will ever know for certain if this was the reason behind his suicide. In all honesty, speculating the reasons serves no positive purpose. While mourning his death, it is important to highlight the impact he has made on the world. The millennials grew up watching him in movies and seeing him as almost a member of the family. Even outside the entertainment industry, he gave openly and often to charity causes. He was one of the top wish granters for Make-A-Wish foundation, an avid supporter of St. Jude's Children's hospital, and a frequent performer for the USO.

The most important thing, however, is to not let his loss be in vain. Let this be a moment where education and understanding begins so further tragedies can be prevented. Mental illness does not discriminate. It is ruthless and unforgiving. The only way to combat it is through education. Let people know that they are not alone in this battle and that there is hope. If you, or someone you know, is thinking about harming themselves call 1-800-273-8255. The line is open 24/7 and there are people who are open and understanding. Yes, it is tough, but there is hope and people do care. "Oh, Captain, my captain- you will be missed."

LIFESTYLE

Brad Paisley at PNC

BRENDAN DOLAN

One of the top stars in country music today, Brad Paisley rocked out a fully crowded PNC Bank Arts Center on Friday. What could have been a dull, rainy afternoon turned into a major music session as crowds poured in from all over the tri-state area to see what country music is like in the north.

Leah Turner made the first opening line up with her

Nashville roots before Randy Houser kicked things off for Brad with several of his songs and had introduced Paisley himself. Starting off his set with one of his hot songs "Mud On The Tires," Paisley worked his way around the crowd kneeling and playing his guitar in close range, taking pictures with people's phones and his sarcasm made it an entertaining night. With the help of his band and his famous white cowboy hat, Paisley made



Photo credit: Google Images

"Hot For Teacher" and honored some of country mu-

sic's greatest legends. A spinoff with the disc jockey had the crowd going as well when he and Paisley were going at it with random songs that Paisley would follow the rhythm to, even the song from Disney's Frozen, "Let It Go."

Paisley was flirting with girls as he walked amongst the arena and even jokingly thanked a young woman for coming to the show with her friends and not her husband; he also let a married couple come right on stage

with him and made them kiss each other for the whole arena to see, just before taking a selfie with them.

Paisley was even gracious enough to bring one of his favorite contestants from ABC's "Rising Star," twenty-year-old Jesse Kinch, as he played his own song to the crowd and played along with Paisley.

Brad Paisley is still proving that he is one of country's favorites as he pleased a packed house and stepped outside of his country roots for change for his entertaining display in Holmdel on Friday night.

Wonder Of The World

JUMANA KHATIB

This summer I got to experience something that I recommend everyone should do at least once in his or her lifetime. I visited Jordan for five weeks, which I must say was amazing, beautiful, and filled with hidden history throughout the whole entire country.

One of the most memorable experiences that I encountered was going to one of the Seven Wonders of the World: Petra, Jordan. I luckily got to have this experience with my family and cousins, and my aunt explained to me the history

of these amazing structures. We walked about half a mile through a mountain retracing the footsteps of my ancestors some 2,000 years ago.

Man had built these structures and built a path in the middle of the mountain, but my aunt thinks otherwise. It is her belief that aliens built this monastery out of a mountain. At the end of the alley though the mountain, a huge carving inside another mountain faces you with the most beautiful, detailed designs and a room on the inside, which was unfortunately closed off. This phenomenon was so advanced that it was hard to believe that man had done this with basic tools.

We continued our voyage through the mountains, rode camels and horses, and looked at more carvings and steps in the mountains. When it was time to turn back I decided to run back with my cousin to stay in shape for cross country season, and when we finally stopped we got bombarded by little gypsy children giving us "gifts", which were just postcards. This was in exchange for money, of course. I was a bit nervous because they grabbed my phone and began taking photos and these girls were once on the news for attacking a tourist, but no harm was done.

After Petra we hopped on bus to go to Wadi Rum, where we jumped onto the back of a pickup and sped away into a beautiful desert. We raced with other pickups down sand dunes and finally reached our destination to a beautiful black tent where Bedouins, also known as sand dwellers, served us traditional tea, which of course was



The view from on top of one of the mountains in Wadi, Rum. to "touch" the stars.

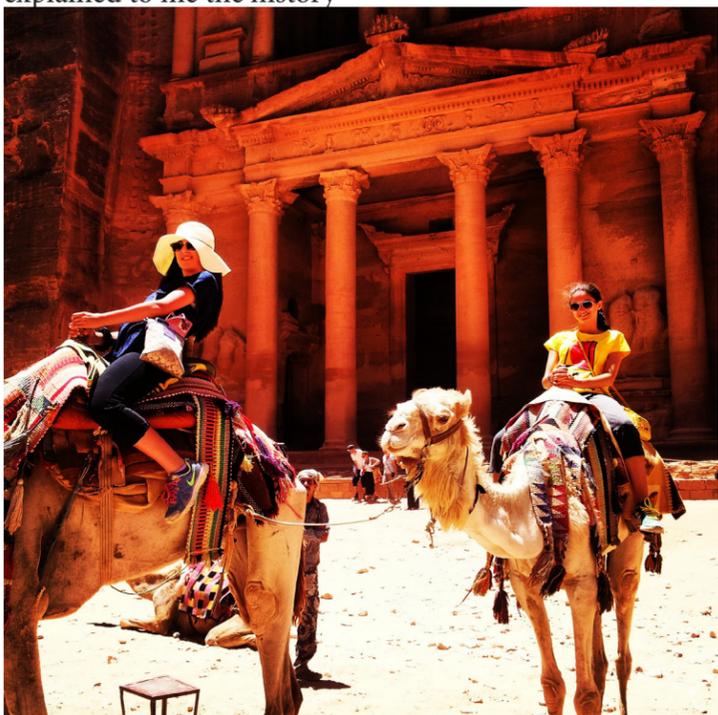
Photo credit: Jumana Khatib

delicious. We then climbed up more sand dunes and onto a mountain where we watched the sun go down and there was not one cloud in the sky. We then drove back to a camp where we had tents set up for us and in the middle of the camp were cushions around a dance floor where we sat and watched the Bedouins perform their traditional dance all night.

After all this, around half past midnight, the entire camp cut off all electricity, where we then laid on the softest sand and watched the stars. There were thousands of stars that we could see and we used our laser

It was an experience that words cannot even describe.

The next morning we drove to Aqaba, Jordan and went to the Red Sea. We tanned on the beach and went on a banana boat cruising through the salty sea and looking at the surrounding cities such as Eilat, Israel, which was right across the sea. Unfortunately, Aqaba was our last stop and we had to head back to my aunt's house. Visiting these three destinations was one of the best experiences in my life. To be able to even visit these places was a blessing in itself.



Jumana and her sister camel riding in front of one of the seven wonders of the world. Petra, Jordan.

Photo credit: Jumana Khatib

## LIFESTYLE

## Staxford 2014

...continued from page 1

There was plenty of time in the afternoons and on the weekends to do things other than diligently work on the paper and presentation that were a part of the course grade at Merton. Some extracurricular activities the students participated in included: weekend trips to London, where students visited the Tower of London, rode on the London Eye, strolled along the South Bank, etc.; weekend field trips put together by the Oxford Summer School Office to places such as the Cotswolds and Berkeley Castle; and punting, which is a boat ride resembling a gondola, though all the work must be done by one of the passengers – the Honors girls became well acquainted with the trees of England, as they crashed into just about every tree lining the shores of the river.

Field trips were also a part of the students' courses, so

they traveled to places such as the Roman Baths, Chawton Cottage, Winchester Cathedral, the Globe Theatre, and various gardens, castles, and country houses in England and in Wales. These really helped to enhance the experience of the class because it allowed students to experience firsthand what they had previously only read about.

Students also attended three formal dinners a week, where they dressed in business casual attire and were served a three- or four-course meal by a professional dining staff. The staff was extremely open-minded and friendly when dealing with people who had special dietary needs, which was very much appreciated. Each student also had the opportunity to dine at High Table

at least once, which included pre-dinner drinks in the Queen's Room. The Queen's Room is so named because Queen Henrietta Maria of France, wife of Charles I, stayed there in 1643 during the English Civil War.

The students would like to

possible to name everyone whose hard work went into this program, here is a short list of people the students would like to thank: preparing the students for the trip before they had even purchased their plane tickets or chosen their course,

and checking in to make sure the students made it to Oxford and back home without any issues, Dr. Marell, Dr. Wynne, and Dr. Durney; the directors of the Oxford-Berkeley Extension Program, Ramu Nagappan, Stan Weisner, and Chris Day; the Programme Administrator, Hazel Arrandale;

Jenn Hourani; the Summer School Assistants, Fabienne Cheung and Rosa Hurdidge; the night porter, Ian, who always had a tip or a joke on hand and made sure a couple of students did not

get locked in Dead Man's Walk when they stayed out past the time the gate closes (not once but twice); and last, but absolutely not least, the greatest bartenders any of these students will ever meet, Dave Hedges and Linsey Bruno.

All of the people listed above, along with the dining staff, the porters, the tutors, and the older students, made this trip completely unforgettable for STAC's Honors group and they made it very difficult to say goodbye when the three weeks came to an end.

The tears shed on the last night in Merton's College Bar were not an evil, but the clocks that moved too quickly certainly were. The three weeks felt more like three hours, but the friendships forged will go on forever.

Chris Ferrara sums up the trip, "De le de le deledede."



The city of Oxford is filled with old buildings. The one to the left is called the Radcliffe Camera, and is part of the Bodleian Libraries.

Photo credit: Kat Baumgartner

send a huge "thank you" to everyone who made this year's trip so incredibly amazing, through their wonderful hospitality, kindness, and dedication! Though it would be im-

## Making the Most of That Summer Internship

JEANINE GRILLO

You said goodbye, closed the door, and walked away from your summer internship. You had your taste of the real world and are now back on campus as a student, a kid, submerged in the environment of learning, growing, and surviving in a bubble of your own peers. In college, you find immediate answers to academic mistakes in a comfortable world run by mentors with your best interests in mind. The internship environment often proves different. At the end of your college years you receive a prestigious diploma. At the end of your internship you hopefully receive a positive letter of recommendation. If you are still scratching your head and questioning your internship experience, some suggestions below

might help you evaluate your brief period in the post graduation world.

Chances are, you found yourself relating to those from different generations. You sought out their

how to communicate, but are limited to our peer driven surroundings. Lunch meetings, networking events, and other future career seminars will be filled with people from a variety of ages and backgrounds.

there, you can ask about their position, company, or academic accomplishments. Use your age to your advantage, not detriment.

Mistakes are part of life and looking back on



Photo credit: Google Images

wisdom, and they sought out your millennial innovation and energy. They were your colleagues, and conversing with your wise elders may have been a challenge. Did you completely mess up or find your inner gift of gab to break the age gap barrier? As students, we learn

Reading up on light current event topics can help fill the awkward silence. Because you have youth on your side, breaking the ice will be easy. Generally, company members will likely to ask you about your major and future career ideas. From

your internship, you probably made a lot of them. Everything from failing to read over an email to sleeping through your alarm can be used as a learning exercise. The best way to avoid error is to ask questions. The company that took you on as an intern will be prepared

for you and your peers to lack certain knowledge on company details. However, they will expect you to be professional enough to ask questions. Think of an internship as a class, not a job. If you continually approach each internship task as a school assignment, you will quickly see the academic value in each experience. Whether it is learning to use a fax machine, or researching economic data, reap the benefits and take them with you for future use.

Lastly, and most importantly, ask yourself if the environment you worked in will suit you as a viable career outcome after college. By fully immersing yourself in the field you are studying, you hopefully found yourself enjoying your work, and watching those older than you take on issues and tasks that you one day anticipate on handling. If not, it might be a good idea to meet with your advisor to search other career options and internship opportunities. Best of luck on all future internships!

SAVE THE DATE

SAVE THE DATE

19th Annual Rockland County  
**Storytelling Festival**



**Sunday, November 16, 2014**

**1:30 P.M. – 4:30 P.M.**

Haverstraw King's Daughters Public Library  
10 W. Ramapo Road Garnerville, NY 10923

**FREE Multicultural Family Event!**

Light Refreshments!

**Everyone has a story to tell!**

For more information, contact Debbie, [dstudnitzer@rockteach.org](mailto:dstudnitzer@rockteach.org)

Like us on Facebook at RCNYStorytellingFestival!



---

 LITERACY
 

---

**19<sup>th</sup> Annual**  
**Rockland Literacy Extravaganza Conference**  
**Saturday, October 18, 2014**  
**7:45 A.M. - 2:30 P.M.**  
 at  
**St. Thomas Aquinas College**  
 125 Route 340  
 Sparkill, N.Y. 10976

**Common Core Standards and Beyond: Teaching Close Reading and Academic Writing to Reach and Teach All Students, PreK – 12**



**Doug Fisher**

International Reading Association Board of Directors, National Leader in Teaching Close Reading and Academic Writing, Dynamic Presenter

[Doug Fisher Video on Close Reading](#)



**Ken and Yetta Goodman**

Ken Goodman is Past-President of IRA;  
 Yetta Goodman is Past-President of NCTE  
 Reading Hall of Fame members

[Ken and Yetta Video on Professional Schools of Conscience](#)

- Complimentary continental breakfast
- 20 professional development workshops by excellent literacy specialists, PreK -12
- Publisher's display
- Free raffle for professional books and classroom resources
- Certificates of Attendance for professional requirements
- Author signings
- 5 hours professional learning, N.Y. and N.J.

**Secure online registration at [www.rockteach.org](http://www.rockteach.org)**

Mail in and discounted student registration available: Contact Dr. Shaw

**Pre-register by August 31, 2014: \$35**

Registration starting September 1, 2014: \$40

On-site registration: \$50

For more information contact:

Dr. Michael Shaw, St. Thomas Aquinas College, [mshaw@stac.edu](mailto:mshaw@stac.edu)

Deborah Studnitzer, Rockland Teachers' Center, [dstudnitzer@optonline.net](mailto:dstudnitzer@optonline.net)

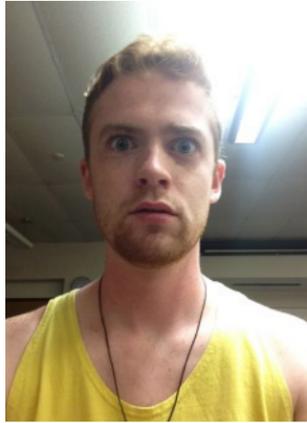
Proudly sponsored by



GET TO KNOW SGA



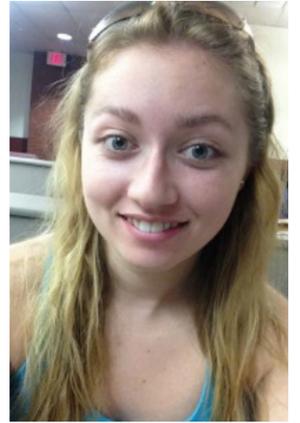
*Steph Constantino, Junior Class Secretary*



*Sean Cochran, Executive Chief Justice*



*Harut Minasian, Sophomore Class President*



*Marissa Grieco, Sophomore Class Secretary*



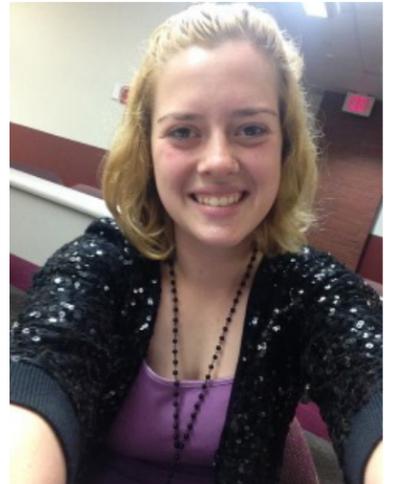
*Akiel Andrews, Sophomore Class Treasurer*



*Tamara Ireifej, Senior Class Vice President*



*Leslie Melendes, Senior Class Chief Justice*



*Alex Mangus, Executive Board Vice President*



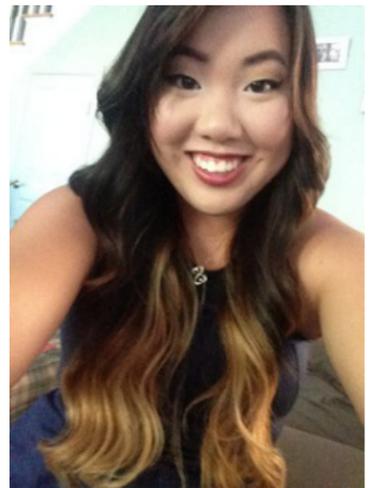
*Lindsay Heiberger, Sophomore Class Treasurer*



*Katie Meyers, Senior Class Treasurer*



*Megan Dwyer, Sophomore Class Chief Justice*



*Julie DeCristofaro, Junior Class Secretary*



*Michelle Roux, Sophomore Class Vice President*



*Halley Hudson, Senior Class Secretary*



*Toni Ann Buchalski, Junior Class Vice President*

# Spartan Sport Schedule

### Women's Tennis

September 5, 2014  
Dist. columbia  
St. Thomas Aquinas  
2:00 PM

### Women's Soccer

September 4, 2014  
Bloomfield  
St. Thomas Aquinas  
3:00 PM

September 6, 2014  
Concordia (NY)  
St. Thomas Aquinas  
12:00 PM

### Men's Soccer

September 4, 2014  
St. Thomas Aquinas  
Bloomsburg  
3:00 PM

## Within These Pages

P N T U T J T W S L U E P W D  
 E Z E R N H R H M G O C L R S  
 A M G W B G E G A C E J O R W  
 C Q O O S N C V I Y G F E I R  
 E W I C S K N I L L X D N L M  
 C N R J L D O S L O N T A V H  
 O X Z V D E C F I O E Q F B L  
 R M E D I A W H W R N O S B T  
 P V P U M Y I N N K K D I G U  
 S M X U N N E S I L Q D Q L Q  
 F B F M F V H S B Q H A V Z P  
 K F K N E I F N O S U G R E F  
 K K H S P B L K R X J L D B F  
 S M A R T P H O N E S Z M L A  
 A H C X C C C X I A R T K B D

CONCERT  
 FERGUSON  
 INTERNSHIP  
 MEDIA  
 NEWS  
 OXFORD  
 PEACECORPS  
 ROBINWILLIAMS  
 SEVENWONDERS  
 SMARTPHONES  
 WELCOME