

PSP Alumni Attend First Program Reunion

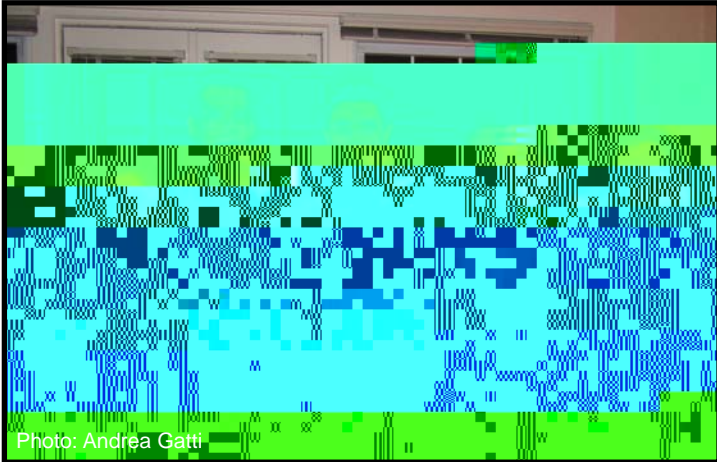


Photo: Andrea Gatti

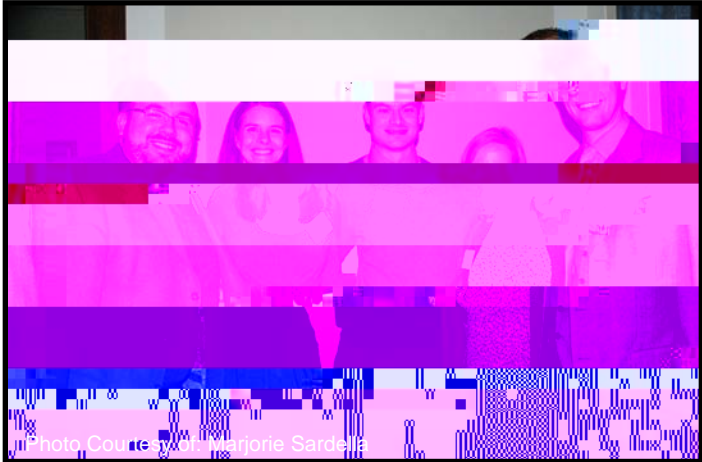


Photo Courtesy of Marjorie Sardella

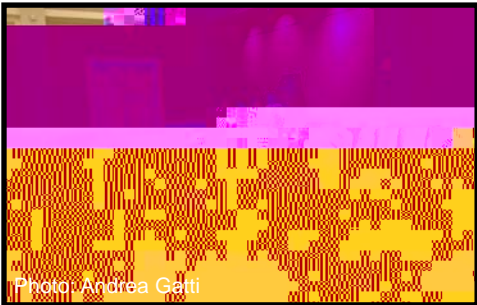


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PSP'10 alumni at Friday evening reception (top left), PSP alumni at formal dinner (top right), PSP alumni and Scholars discussing careers at lunch (bottom left), Cece McDonald, PSP'10 & Nick Akerman, PSP'09 enjoying dinner (middle), Brian Veprek, PSP'99 looking at photos from his years in the PSP.

By Andrea Gatti & Ryan Polischuk, A&S '15

Scholars who were eager and excited to meet PSP alumni and talk about their experiences in the program and beyond.

Over the years, there had been much talk of a reunion for the PSP, as the program now has over 225 alumni, living across the country and abroad. The formal

alumni were integral in spreading the word, as there was much discussion about the reunion via e-mails between alumni and on the Presidential Scholars Program Facebook group.

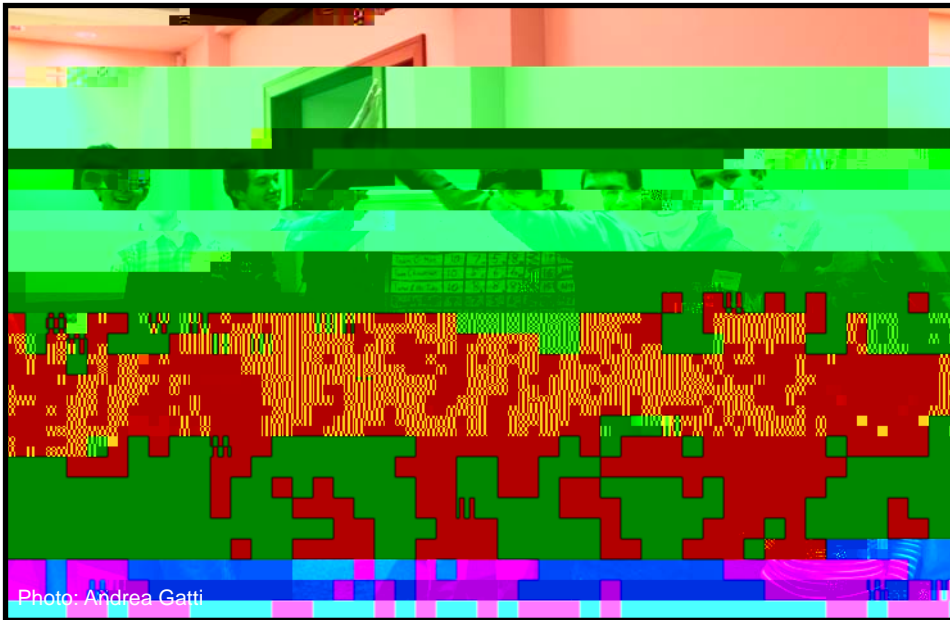
The festivities began on Friday, November 4

th, with an alumni cocktail reception at Fr. Keenan's residence. The PSP was delighted to welcome back more than forty former Scholars, who took advantage of the casual setting to reconnect and network with former acquaintances in a familial setting.

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PSP Weekend Offers Glance at Class of 2016



The winning trivia team with current Scholar, Stephen Buell, A&S'15.

By Andrew Skaras, A&S '15

This year's Presidential Scholar's Weekend brought 64

gifted high school seniors to Boston College for five days in the first weekend of February. Hailing from 29 different states and two

foreign countries, these prospective scholars were selected from a pool of 6,580 Early Action applicants. In stark contrast to the mess that the snowstorms caused during last year's weekend, everyone arrived in a timely fashion on Wednesday afternoon and evening.

The weather was unseasonably warm on Wednesday when the scholars arrived on campus. Those who arrived early were given a tour of the campus by several current Scholars before being briefed about the upcoming weekend. Joined by several members of the Admissions staff, including Director of Admissions John Mahoney, the current Scholars serving as hosts met the prospective Scholars over a casual *see PSP Weekend page 8*

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Immediately following the reception came a formal dinner hosted on Boston College's Brighton Campus, with more than fifty alumni and their spouses/partners in attendance. A variety of classes were represented, including an alumnus from 1996, the second graduating class of the PSP. Alumni thoroughly enjoyed the dinner, as it was an opportunity for folks to catch up with one another and reminisce about their time at Boston College and in the PSP. Dr. Sardella, the founding director of the PSP, and his wife, Marjorie, were thrilled to see familiar faces of former Scholars at the reception, the dinner, and the lunch the next day.

The next morning, a handful of PSP alumni attended a "Conversation with Fr. Leahy," a

unique opportunity to personally address their concerns to the University's president. Fr. Leahy spoke about the current state of Boston College, as well as plans for the future.

From the perspective of the current Scholars, the highlight of the weekend came during a casual luncheon, which immediately followed the morning conversation and served to cap off the reunion. It was a remarkable opportunity for current Scholars to sit and chat with the PSP alumni, many of whom were none-too-far removed from their time on the Heights.

The luncheon was structured so that current Scholars could network and connect with PSP alumni in relation to their career field. Scholars and alumni were broken up into tables representing different career fields (law, business, media, education,

grad. school, etc.), where they talked about a variety of issues concerning each field. Ryan Polischuk, A&S'15, noted that he "was struck by the remarkable accessibility of the PSP alumni." In speaking with a PSP alumnus, Ryan said, "our conversation quickly turned from the particulars of and opportunities in a field to one of interests matching career choice, work-life balance, and personal vision."

The PSP alumni reunion was a wonderful opportunity for alumni to reconnect with their former classmates, the current Scholars and the program. The PSP looks forward to providing more opportunities for reconnections and networking in the coming years and truly value the time and efforts that so many alumni have invested in keeping these connections strong.

Scholars Share Unique International Experiences

By Nick Moffa, A&S '14

My Time In Russia had

By Sasha Savinkina, A&S '13

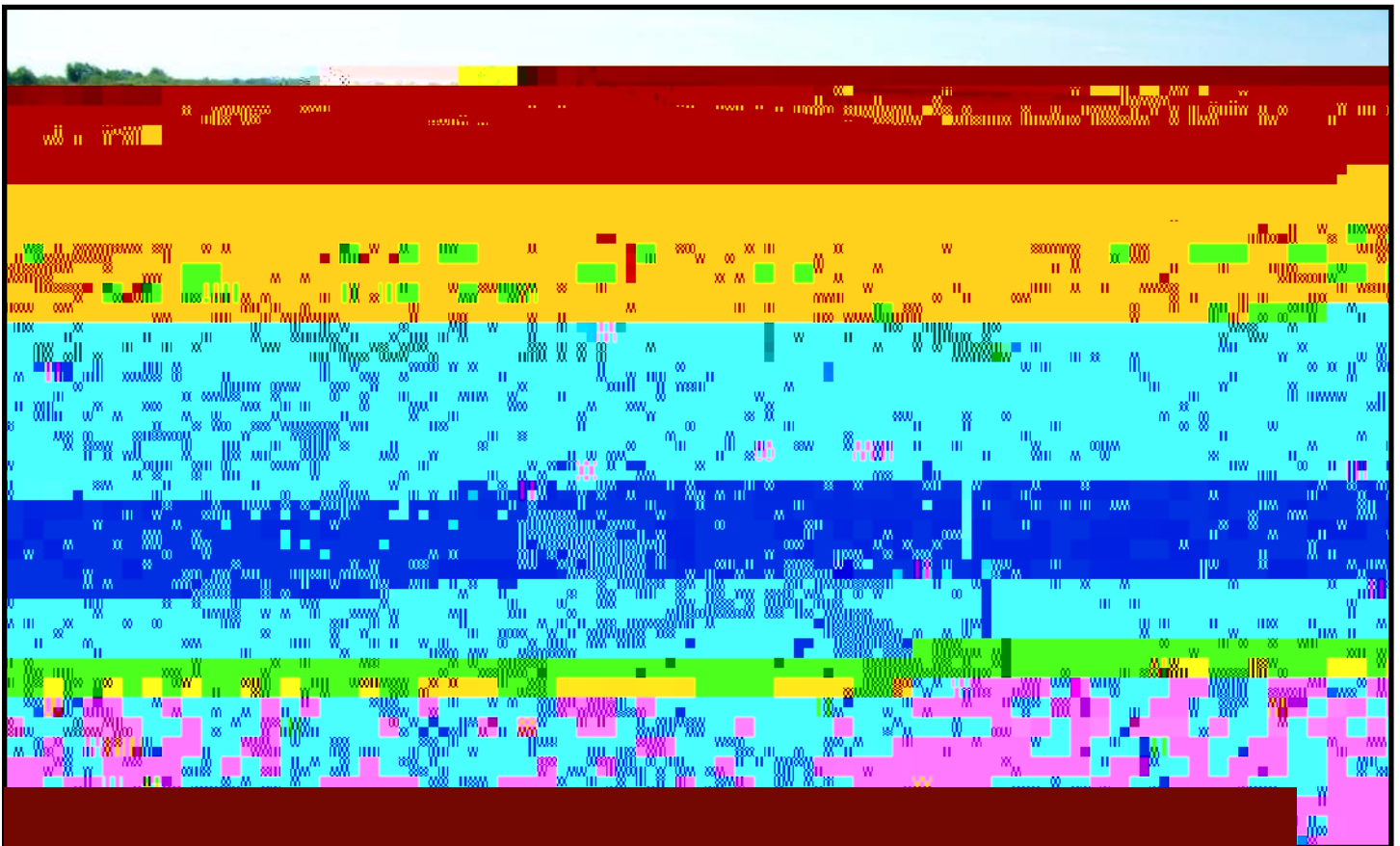
Last summer, for part of my international language immersion experience, I went to Western Siberia to work as a part of a team of Russian archaeologists on a dig. Archaeology was something that had interested me in an abstract kind of way ever since I was eight years old and first fell in love with Indiana Jones. It seemed like such an adventure, travelling around, digging in the ground, finding bones and ancient artifacts. And, while it wasn't exactly as I had pictured it, it was definitely all of the above.

For two weeks, I lived in a tent at a campsite, bathed in the (cold!) Tartas River, and cooked over a fire (not easy when your team consists of over 30 people!).

Every day (except Monday) we went out to the dig site at 9, came back for lunch, and then went out again until 7. Learning about the archaeology was interesting. I learned mostly that, while parts of it are definitely exciting, a lot of the work is tedious and requires massive amounts of patience. You can dig for a day and find just an empty hole, which you still have to draw, measure and photograph. But my favorite part of the dig wasn't really the archaeology. The other big reason why I went on this dig was to improve my Russian. I was born in Russia and have spoken the language my entire life, but not in a formal or technical way, and generally only with family. This experience helped to improve my grammar and vocabulary by leaps and bounds because I was forced

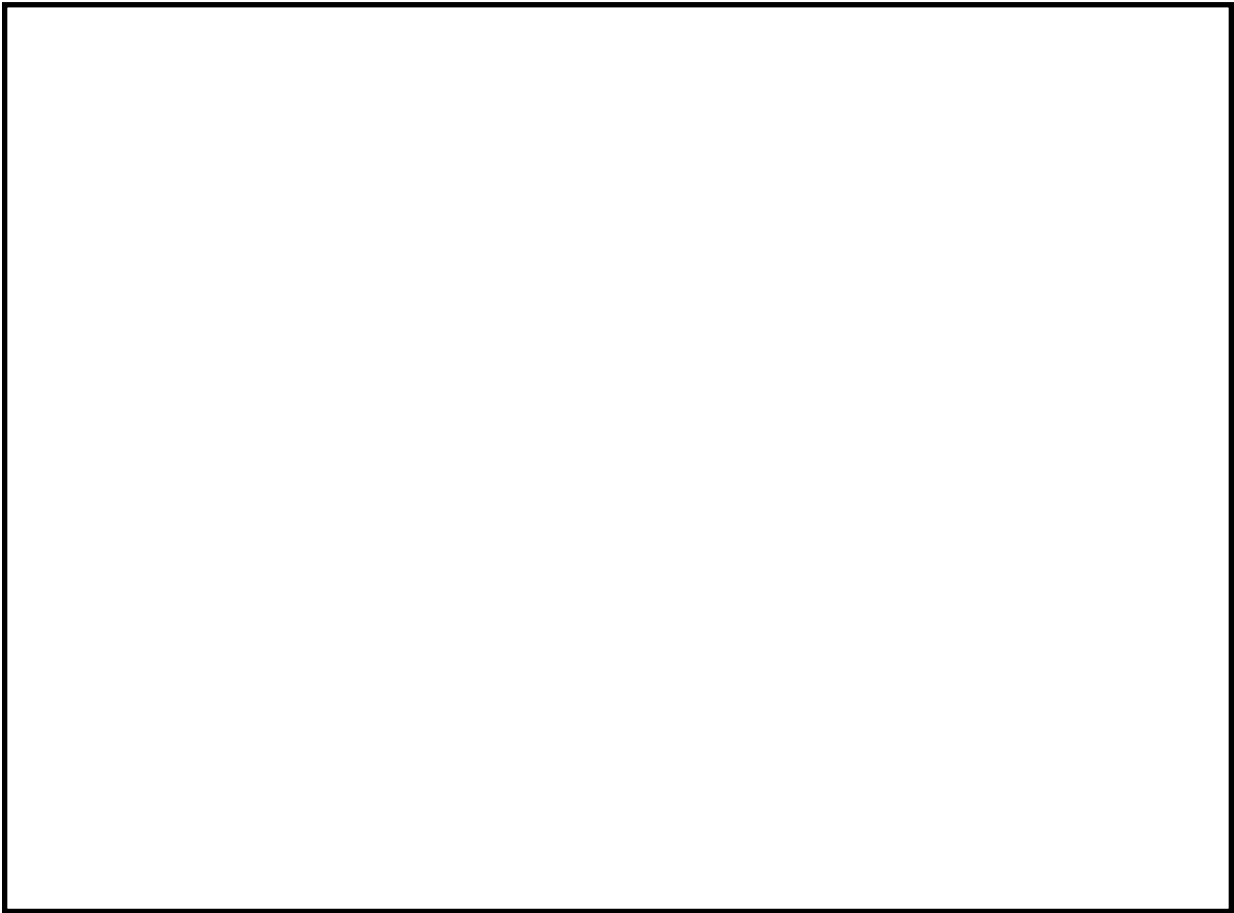
to speak to people about topics I had never had to converse about in Russian before (or, sometimes, English), with people who wouldn't understand my Americanizations. I learned a lot more formal Russian by communicating with world-renowned archaeologists in the field. Even better (I think), I also got to learn a lot about the student culture in Russia from the other interns there, and learned quite a bit of Russian slang, most of which was learned at night around the campfire as we shared stories and sang songs.

I had an absolutely amazing summer experience that I wouldn't trade for anything. I got to do something I'd always dreamed about, learned a lot about an area I hadn't known much about before, and drastically improved my language ability. It was great!



Sasha Savinkina, PSP '13, at the archaeological dig in Western Siberia.

A Night at the Boston Symphony Orchestra



make their own governmental decisions was the most important foundation for a successful country. Others saw opportunity in foreign investment, showing us PowerPoint presentations of the improving trends of the Nicaraguan economy. Many believed that human development and achieving basic human rights were keys to the prosperity of the people of the nation as a whole, and walked us through their lives' journeys of

volunteer work, demonstrations, and research projects. Some of these views were very different from one another, but all reflected a

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Alumni Announcements

Emily Cersonsky, PSP '07, will marry Erik Hayman, BC '07, in June 2012.

Allison (Foley) Shenk, PSP '03, is a volunteer for the Foundation for Prader-Willi Research, and maintains a blog about her 3 boys, one of whom has Prader-Willi Syndrome: www.divingintothewaves.com.

Emily Gruber, PSP '07, will marry Sean Keck, BC '07, in August 2012.

Rebecca Kraus, PSP '07, will marry Jarret Izzo, BC '07, in August 2012.

Ana Mascagni, PSP '10, is engaged to John Archibald and will be getting married in 2013.

Kelly McCartney, PSP '11, will be joining the 2011-2012 Teach for America corps in Chicago next year.

Kevin Meme, PSP '03, and his wife, Erica, welcomed their first child, Jonathan Robert Meme, on February 1st, 2012. Kevin was accepted to the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, where he will begin MBA studies this fall.

Patricia Noonan, PSP '07, just finished up a production of

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