

BOREN FORUM NEWSLETTER

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and Stacia Falat (Scholar '00)

WELCOME

Welcome to the first **Boren Forum Newsletter**, a publication written by and for alumni of the National Security Education Program.

The Boren Forum, a new, free nonprofit organization for Boren alumni, is designed to promote the educational, social, and career development of Boren Scholars and Fellows upon return to the United States. The goal of this newsletter is to better connect Boren alumni and promote their impressive range of achievements. Each issue will profile an alumnus and his or her work in the federal government. Additional sections will announce social events, professional forums, job fairs, committee activities, reading suggestions, cultural events and more.

This is your forum! We encourage you to suggest alumni to profile and other interview prospects along with networking tips and news items. Send us your favorite pictures, recipes,

sayings, jokes, local ethnic restaurants and anything that you think represents your country of specialization at info@borenforum.org. Please let us know what you think of these content ideas and if there are other features you want included.

JOIN

As Boren alumni, we would love for you to join the Boren Forum. Visit <http://www.borenforum.org> and register today to become a member. While based in Washington D.C., the Boren Forum is eager to start chapters nation-wide. Explore the website for more information about the National Security Education Program, David L. Boren, starting a chapter, and, of course, alumni events and forums.

Send us pictures from your study abroad with captions for the alumni *Photo Album*. Meet and network with other Scholars and Fellows like you! Stay connected and in the know through the Boren Forum.

MEET AN ALUM

Q: What connects Spanish bullfights with Chinese trade missions?

A: Boren Fellow **Ebonique Padgett**

Ebonique completed her Boren research in 1999 in Beijing on Chinese trade law.

Ebonique experienced a tense but educational time during her 1999 study at a Chinese university because of a crisis triggered by the Balkan conflict. Thousands of Chinese students marched on the U.S. Embassy after an errant U.S. missile hit China's legation in Yugoslavia. Swastika banners and ink bombs underscored their Anti-American anger. Ebonique was told to stay indoors during the protests, but she staunchly went out to observe the dramatic events anyway (without experiencing any problems).



Watching these incidents and noting the official response of the United States heightened Ebonique's understanding about the *power of cultural knowledge*. She felt that greater awareness of what makes a proper apology in China could have tempered the crisis. Sincere apologies in Chinese culture use much more overtly emotional language than what we normally use in the United States.

The way to China

A serendipitous route brought Ebonique to Beijing. A high school trip to Spain made her want to return for a college year abroad to perfect her Spanish and experience such famous expressions of Spanish culture as Pamplona's running of the bulls. Since Lincoln University did not have any room in its Spain program, she opted instead for Taiwan. She was lured, in part, by the prospect of teaching English for \$20 an hour, but discovered a joy for learning Mandarin. After Taiwan, a summer program in Oslo entitled "Looking at America from Outside America" stimulated Ebonique's interest in international relations, which she pursued in a Masters Program at Tufts University. A Boren Fellowship enabled Ebonique to study how China's trade laws are taught in Beijing. This experience gave her insight into how current and future Chinese policy makers view their country's evolving international commerce.

From China to civil service

Ebonique has successfully applied her Boren knowledge to government work. She followed her Beijing research with a summer internship at the U.S. embassy and after returning to Boston, began looking for a job with the U.S. Commerce Department.

Initially, this was frustrating process. Finally, Ebonique came to DC to network with officials and explain how her Boren status would let them circumvent a hiring freeze. This strategy paid off, and Ebonique found a job as an International Trade Specialist in the International Trade Association's China section. In 2002, Ebonique was awarded a Certificate of Recognition for her

contributions to the Office of China at the Department of Commerce.

LANGUAGE LESSON

Some words don't translate directly into English, but every language has a word for "good." (Always good to know!)

Uganda superlative (Nancy Peterson): "**Bulungi**" -- This is a Luganda term for good, great, or more generally a term for expressing delight, satisfaction or approval. The length of the word also indicates how MUCH delight one wants to convey -- i.e. "buh-loooooooooo-n-gi" denotes GREAT whereas "buh-loon-gi" is only OK.



Argentina superlative (Bronson Lee): "**Macanudo**" -- This is a Spanish adjective meaning "very good" (for a situation) or "friendly and accommodating" (for a person).

Tanzania superlative (Stacia Falat): "**Safi**" -- This Swahili word actually means "clean," but is used as "all good." Use when responding to "Mambo vipi?" or "What's up?"

Brazil superlative (Kevin Gormley): "**Bom**" -- This Portuguese word means "good," as in "good day," or "everything is really good." Use "**bomzinho**" when you're only a *little* good, as in "just ok."

INTERNATIONAL GRUB

Local (Washington D.C.) Peruvian food (Bronson Lee): "El Pollo Rico" serves yummy Peruvian rotisserie chicken with cole slaw and fries which you can accompany with the national soda, Inca Kola. You can also order traditional desserts like *alfajores* with *dulce-de-leche* and *arroz-con-leche*. It's basic, hearty, and affordable, and has several locations, including one on Kenmore between Fairfax and Wilson Blvds in Arlington near the VA Sq. and Clarendon Metro stops.

JOB SEARCH TIPS: Hiring Advantages

Because you are an NSEP award recipient, you may be hired *without competition* for any job in the federal government. This job may be for up to 4 years. This hiring exemption allows the federal government to consider you for special jobs that may be short term, out of the country, or that allow you to provide special assistance in your field of expertise. This exemption is not well known, or used by the government very much, but it exists. It is in the Code of Federal Regulations, (CFR) 213.3102(r). You should *always* mention it to potential hiring organizations. If they don't know about it, tell NSEP, and they will educate them.

What is this hiring exemption? Up until December 2002, many Federal jobs were open only to people who were already members of the Federal government. They were Full Time Permanent Federal employees. (That is STATUS.) Now, under the authority of the Homeland Security Act, (Public Law 107-296, Title XIII, Subchapter D, Section 1332) any

person who receives money from the federal government, and who incurs a service obligation, must be considered for ANY federal job if they apply. This means All NSEP Scholars and Fellows must be considered for all jobs in the Federal government, *if they apply*.

Note: These tips and more will be available soon on <http://www.nsepnet.org>.

WHERE ARE THE JOBS?

So where does one look to find a federal job? A good place to start is the official federal government job search website, <http://www.usajobs.opm.gov>. From there click on “Search Jobs.” Search by agency, job title, location, salary, and series number. Be sure to check the “yes” circle under the “Applicant Eligibility” option.

Where else can you look? Visit <http://www.nsepnet.org> and click on “Students” and “Job Announcements.” NSEP posts five new positions daily that would qualify for your federal service requirement. Also, check out “**What’s hot**” for time-sensitive job postings.

Remember, even if you’ve fulfilled your service requirement NSEP can still help you with your career by writing **Letters of Introduction** and **Letters of Recommendation** to federal agencies on your behalf. Be sure to visit “**What’s new**” to find out more about this opportunity.

CELEBRATE WITH...CUBA

Celebrate Cuba’s major student-related holiday on November 27, the “Day of the Student Martyrs.”

Cubans have celebrated this anniversary since 1872 when a group of involuntary Cuban exchange students (exiled from colonial Cuba by the Spanish crown) crept at dawn through Madrid to post broad sheets written by José Martí (later known as the “Apostle of Cuban Independence”).



The sheets decried Spain’s unjust execution one year earlier of eight medical students in Havana after a sham trial that shocked Cuban society. The anniversary has remained a major yearly event in Cuban political culture ever since, especially for youth groups, University of Havana students, and Cuban doctors. Under the Castro regime, the anniversary has typically focused on celebrating student activism at home and abroad.

BOOK REVIEWS: Columbus

The Harp and the Shadow: The Beatification of Christopher Columbus by Alejo Carpentier, translated by Thomas and Carol Christensen (San Francisco: Mercury House, 1990), 159 pages.

In a sense, Columbus was one of the first exchange ‘students’ to bridge, however imperfectly, the cognitive gap between Europe and the Americas. Admittedly, he did not prove a model goodwill ambassador. Most would agree that enslaving the locals does not foster healthy inter-cultural relations. Still, his efforts to comprehend a dramatically

different milieu and to disseminate his experiences back home (aided by the newly invented printing press) explain why he remains a legitimate object of commemoration. Alumni should see in last month's celebration of Columbus Day more than just a federal holiday.

Columbus serves as the subject of countless books, operas, and poems as well as some remarkably bad movies. For example, Tom Selleck's performance as King Ferdinand in "Columbus: the Movie" represents one of Hollywood's all-time lows. Carpentier's vivid historical imagination proves better suited to capturing the essence of Columbus than even the best historical research. Columbus after all was a slippery character who probably lied about his origins, social status, religious background, and motives. We do not even have a reliable portrait of him. In short, Columbus would have made an excellent grant writer, but a poor security clearance prospect.

The novel begins in the nineteenth-century Vatican with Columbus's ghost anxiously awaiting the results of his sainthood trial. This clever and historically based starting point lets the author take Columbus through the major events of the explorer's life -- good, bad, and ugly -- while reflecting on the myths which have sprung up around him in the centuries since his death. Carpentier does play at times with the known facts. It is highly unlikely, for example, that Columbus was ever Queen Isabel's lover.

Overall, however, the novelist creates an engaging and highly plausible depiction of a gifted crosser of multiple boundaries: lower class/upper class;

Mediterranean/Atlantic; Jewish/Christian; Medieval/Renaissance; Europe/Americas; but not, thank goodness, human/saint [the tribunal wisely rejected the sainthood petition]. The Harp and the Shadow successfully brings out the complexities of a very human figure who fell far short of sainthood but who did change our world.

RECIPE CORNER

Chapatti [Stacia Falat]: round, flat unleavened bread traditional in West Asia, particularly India, Eastern Africa, and South Africa.



Ingredients

2 cups all-purpose flour (or whole wheat flour or a mixture of the two)
1 tsp. salt
¾ cup warm water
Small amount vegetable oil

Preparation

1. Mix flour and salt.
2. Add water and about a spoonful of oil and knead until dough forms a soft ball.
3. Shape dough into a ball. Cover with plastic wrap and let dough stand at room temperature (about 1 hour).
4. Roll each chapatti on lightly floured surface to form a thin circle 6 to 8 inches (15 to 20 cm) in diameter. Heat a large

ungreased griddle or heat a large frying pan over medium heat until hot.

5. Cook each chapatti until golden (about 1 min. on each side). (Press chapatti with wide pancake turner or cloth to cook evenly.)

6. Serve hot with stew, lentils, curry, soup, rice, mangoes, Nutella, anything!

PHOTO ALBUM

Pervaze Sheikh (Fellow '99) contributes photos from his study abroad in Brazil.

Pervaze, a student of Pennsylvania State University, did doctoral research on the impact of livestock ranching on the floodplain forests of the Brazilian Amazon. He currently works for the Congressional Research Service (CRS) as an analyst in Environment and Natural Resources.



Brazilian champs -- Pervaze Sheikh (row one, last on the right) is pictured with the *Projeto Varzea* team fresh off a soccer victory at the "*Dia de Alegre*" (day of happiness) in Sao Miguel, Brazil. Fresh *Acare* (a type of catfish) and liters of beer selling for about a dollar were on hand to facilitate the celebration.



Trees in Water -- A typical scene in a floodplain region off the Amazon River. The floodplain floods six months during the year and extends an average of 50km on either side of the Amazon River. Floodplain forests are thought to contain 20% of the biodiversity in the Amazon, yet occupy only 5% of the area.



Water buffalo -- Introduced during the turn of the 19th century, water buffalo are rapidly expanding in ranches along the Amazon River.

Contribute to the next issue! E-mail
info@borenforum.org.