

# THE SYDNEY Shout!

SEMESTER BOSTON UNIVERSITY  
SYDNEY PROGRAM  
2'07

STUDENT PANEL:  
MANAGING OZ  
PAGE 6

SYDNEY FILM  
FESTIVAL  
EXPERIENCE  
PAGE 7

TRAVEL  
WRITING  
LAUNCH  
PAGE 3

PHOTOS FROM  
THE TRAIL  
PAGE 4

SEMESTER STATS  
PAGE 2

THE FINAL  
WORD  
PAGE 8



Actresses Joan Chen and Cate Blanchett on the 2007 Sydney Film Festival Red Carpet.

PHOTO: Fared Ben-Youssef

## LOOKING BEYOND THE RED CARPET

by Fared Ben-Youssef

The red carpet shimmers as world-renowned actresses Cate Blanchett and Joan Chen walk past hordes of screaming paparazzi. Such was the scene at the Opening Night Gala of the 54th Sydney Film Festival in early June. For some students involved in the Boston Sydney Entertainment Promotions and Film Studies program, this opulent event marked the start of their immersion into world cinema. Each sampled over 25 of the 290 films presented which ranged from classic John Houston flicks to somber Japanese dramas. As a participant in the

Sydney Internship Program who worked in the film festival office, my own time there was markedly different. Instead of simply watching the films presented, I was given a behind-the-scenes look into all the hard work and effort that goes into making an international film festival a success.

Initially, I imagined the office would be a relaxed place where film buffs spent their days chatting about movies. After only one day, I soon found this idyllic preconception was dead wrong. The workplace often bordered on chaotic, and the employees often came in at nine in the morning only

to work into the evening. When I arrived in the office a week before Opening Night, I was given the blasé title “marketing assistant” and thrown headlong into the pandemonium. Any fears I had of spending my internship making photocopies quickly evaporated after I learned of all the responsibilities with my position. My broad range of assignments included writing email bulletins to contacting cultural bodies such as the Lebanese consulate and even The Vampire Society at Sydney about specific films. In my first week I had written over 3000 words for the site! All the while, I sat in on in-depth meetings where the staff planned out minute details of the day. These **CONT. PAGE 2**

## WHAT'S WITH THE MATESHIP?

by Jimmy Buck

I have always classified a mate as someone's other half or a partner. Animals have mates; people have mates; socks have mates. In Australia, mateship is a way of life. For instance, Microsoft Word recognizes “mateship” as a spelling error when the language is set to American English; however, once the setting is switched to Australian English, it becomes a regular word. To Americans, the idea of mateship is like the word underlined by the red, squiggly line - foreign. To the Aussies, mateship is so normal that it doesn't even stand out. During my time in Sydney, I interned at Global Gossip and followed

Peter Ovenden, the director, around like a permanent shadow. I tagged along almost everywhere, listening intently to all of his conversations and taking note of every instruction. In following him, I met many interesting people—business associates, friends, and even his children.

Annie is a seventy-year old widow and friend of Pete's who lives in a renovated warehouse under the ANZAC Bridge. One of the windows above her heater was broken and she refused to have it replaced. Pete called a window repairman and scheduled an appointment for him to stop by Annie's home. Then, Pete and I hopped **CONT. PAGE 2**



PHOTO: Cal Hawk

20 Students tackle the trail for the inaugural semester of BU Sydney's new Travel Writing Program

PAGES 3-5

## ON THE TRAIL IN SMALLTOWN OZ!

## RED CARPET INTERNSHIP

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

conferences made clear that logistics were just as important, if not more so, than the movies actually screened during the festival.

Of all my various tasks, my ongoing assignment of compiling the staff biographies best illustrated the unique makeup of the staff. Nearly every member of staff had a least one foot in the entertainment industry. One of my superiors, the Sponsorship Coordinator, Andrew Murray, directs commercials for Australian television while the Volunteer

media room, a space where accredited journalists picked up DVD copies of the films being shown, to write reviews for the website. This permitted me to see the festival from a professional journalist's point of view. Unlike most festivalgoers who watched the films in the theater, I usually viewed them in a café accompanied by a cappuccino and a pastry.

My time at the Sydney Film Festival was best summed up by the Research and Materials Coordinator, who described the festival as "hectic and crazy, but totally

worthwhile." I developed a myriad of skills and improved my abilities to write in different journalistic styles. Nine weeks and a few thousand words later, I was both tired and exhilarated knowing that I had taken part in a one-of-a-kind experience. Like the best movies shown at the festival, the internship was thought-provoking, exciting, and over all too quickly.

**Fareed Ben- Youssef will be graduating in 2009 from Princeton as an English Major with a concentration in Film. Fareed's articles can be found at <http://www.sydneyfilmfestival.org> under the What's New tab.**



Fareed (far left) with the SFF office crew.  
PHOTO COURTESY:  
Fareed Ben-Youssef

Coordinator, Vicki Woods, spent many years in the music world managing bands like the Gorillaz. While these interviews were often insightful, with sober accounts of the realities of artists' lives Down Under, my subjects always cheered up when I asked them for their favorite film moment. Their passionate responses suggested that my initial notion that the office was full of film aficionados was not so far from the truth after all.

Working in an environment where everyone knew their Antonionis from their Von Triers, was a perfect fit for me since I aspire to someday be a movie critic. My bosses understood my long-term goals and strived to make my work relevant to these ambitions. They granted me access to the

## semester stats

Sydney Internship Students

46

Sydney Film  
Festival Students

12

Schools/Universities  
Represented by  
Students this Semester

20

Staff / Faculty Total

11

Total Years Running

15

Total Students Attended  
Sydney Programs to Date

2,482

## WHAT'S WITH MATESHIP?

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

in the company van and drove to Annie's and met the repairman. Pete explained Annie's situation and asked that the repairman pretend to be an old handyman pal of Pete's and fixing Annie's window is merely a favour for a mate. While at Annie's, Pete discovered that her hot water was not working. Apparently, Annie had been without hot water for months. Pete replaced a dead battery and instantly, Annie had hot water again. Annie made us tea and the three of us talked about our individual travels around the world and my life in America.

Global Gossip's primary business product is retail internet. Annie doesn't own a computer, and I'd be surprised if she ever used the internet. Frankly, the time spent with her had no benefit to the success of Global Gossip in any way. Instead, the encounter highlighted the importance of relationships and demonstrated that people matter. In America we have friends, best friends, buddies, and a slew of other everyday relationships. Mates share a connection like a pair of argyle socks balled up in a dresser draw—one is hopeless without the other.

I have been back in America for about three days. The day before I returned, one of my close friends from high school passed away. She was always a true, dear friend. At her viewing, I saw at least a hundred of my fellow classmates from high school. I always considered many of them friends, but in the few short years since we donned caps and gowns, I have only interacted with a select few. As Yanks, we seem to lack the innate connection that proliferates within Oz.

If I took anything away from Australia, aside from a fascination of Sneaky Sound System and an unsightly beer belly, I now have a better understanding of people and an appreciation for my interactions with them. Mateship may simply be a side effect of too much Vegemite, but I think it is the simple admiration for a strong relationship. Friendships are forged like steel, but mateship grows organically and must be nurtured accordingly. Cheers to that.

**Jimmy Buck will be graduating from Boston University's School of Management with his degree in Business Administration in May 2009.**

# A Stranger Comes To Town



Blue Pool, Bermagui NSW

PHOTO: Cal Hawk

Summer session brought the launch of BU sydney's new travel writing program for aspiring writers and a two-week road trip through smalltown Australia.

## WRITE OR WRONG

by Andy Jones

Twenty American college students stand surrounding professor Terry Kelly of Swinburne University, eighteen or so with tape recorders in hand, on a ridge in the Australian Alps near Bright, Victoria. The students were Dr. Sharon Clarke's Travel Writing class, and today we were climbing Mt. Sarah, one of our many stops on our trip through small-town Australia. We were on the subject of why most of us were toting around tape recorders or diligently taking notes, and professor Kelly – who also happened to be our tour guide – delivered an impromptu lecture on the art and craft of travel writing.

"Travel writing is the lowest form of journalism, except maybe regional sports reporting," Kelly said, like a sergeant breaking down a bunch of new recruits. But, he continued to say, that doesn't mean it can't be interesting. In fact, it must be. The idea of making a living

by going to interesting places and then writing about them is appealing enough that editors end up with more submissions than space in their travel sections. Plus, the competition for the thirty-cents-per-word paycheck is quite intense.

The question now on everyone's mind was: how exactly do we sell an article? Every evening, each of us had been dutifully recording the happenings of the day and facts about each place we visited gleaned from tourism brochures, but at least some of us were struggling to come up with ways to turn this fodder into something interesting enough for someone to want to read. I was, anyway.



Terry Kelly instructs Alex Riccomini and Andy in spear-throwing using traditional Aboriginal techniques.

"To write it is not about what it is," Kelly continued, addressing us from his perch on a volcanic rock, "At some point it has to be about what it means. If I come up here and do the whole tourism gig, or educational tourism, whatever you want to call it, I don't care... Unless I give it meaning, unless you can touch it, unless in some

ways you can internalize it, then it's gone. When you write about it, unless you can convey that meaning or at the very least

suggest that meaning exists, what you're writing is boring."

"There are two unforgivable sins in this world," he added. "Boring is one of them. Don't be boring. Your whole lives, your lives and how you interact with your world physically and culturally is of interest. Put it in your writing, because the writer is part of what is written and the reader is part of what is read. Never forget it. Get on the bus!"

Armed with some particularly inspiring platitudes and wondering what the other unforgivable sin in this world is, we made our way to the bus. Finally, we had some idea of what it was we were supposed to be doing. Now, all that was left was figuring out how to do it.

*Andy Jones will be graduating with his degree in English from the University of North Carolina in December 2007.*

Andy in Mystery Bay >

PHOTOS: Merrill Fortier



# discovering Smalltown Australia....

Wild Kangaroos at  
Pebbly Beach



Michael Mehlman seems a little  
hesitant during his first Roo  
encounter



Neil Dhandhukia  
tries out the  
didgeridoo at the  
Aboriginal Heritage  
Centre in Bermagui

The Paper Nautilus  
migrates to Montague  
once every 7-9 years  
and they arrived the  
same day as us!



Locals informed us of the legend of  
Old Tom who's skeleton is preserved  
in the Eden Whaling Museum



DAY 1



DAY 3



Patti Fujinami has her  
first encounter with  
Australian MEAT PIE!



Lindsey Fuller  
photographing a  
seal colony

"Montague Island was gorgeous – a really perfect day. For me, riding out to the island on the boat felt like being a roller coaster, and skimming between the sky and the water; I felt extremely calm. I loved seeing the New Zealand and Australian seals and whales in their natural environments..."  
-Mary Purdey  
BU '08



DAY 3: Mystery Bay



Students watch sunrise  
over Blue Pool in  
Bermagui



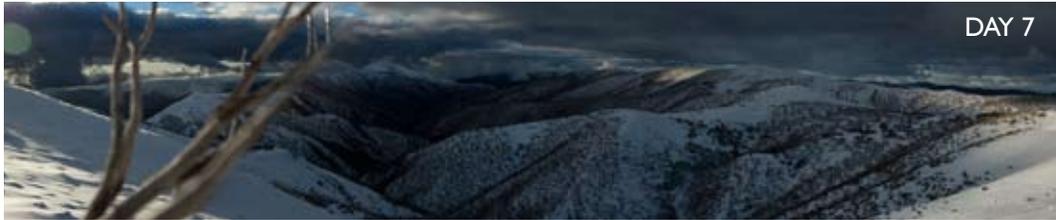
Maddy Brisotti leads the way through Mt. Hotham's snow in the same day as the students were at the beach in Boydtown!



"In Braidwood, I found myself in the backseat of the car of a volunteer for the tourist information center named Jenny, as she drove me and three other girls out into the country to meet a man who had won an Olympic medal. Jenny sped down the deserted dirt road and aggressively switched the gears on her 15-year-old transmission, simultaneously adding to the adrenaline rush from the spontaneity of it all..."

-Lisa Wauters  
BU '09

Alex Riccomini gets up close with locals of Braidwood



DAY 7



DAY 11

DAYS 9-11 Ned Kelly Country



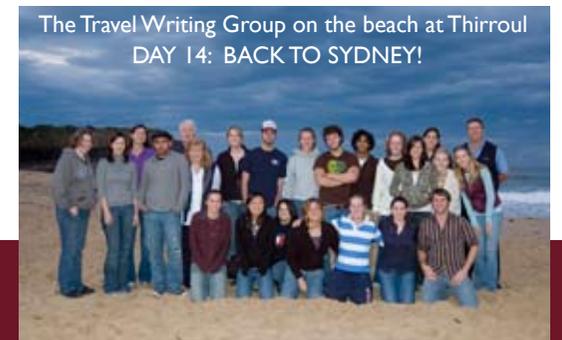
DAY 11: the Southern Hemisphere's Largest Hedge Maze!



Following Ned's Trail through Beechworth and Benalla



The Travel Writing Group on the beach at Thirroul  
DAY 14: BACK TO SYDNEY!



PHOTOS BY: Neil Dhandukia, Patricia Ramsey, Merrill Fortier, Lindsey Fuller, Chelsea Katzenberg, Lauren Gniazdowski, and Cal Hawk.

This issue's student panel talks to SMG program students about...

# MANAGING LIFE IN OZ



Photos : Cal Hawk

## After six months in Australia, what experiences do you recommend?

Jessica: "Australia Day! That was the coolest day ever and I didn't know what it was at the time. People were giving us flags and tattoos to wear. They included us."



Aaron Black  
Finance Concentration  
Minor in Economics

Aaron: "Travel. Go to Cairns but if you can afford to wait until later during the dry season."

Jeff: "Get to Katoomba." [In Australia's Blue Mountains]

Wen: "And go abseiling in the Blue Mountains!"

Jeff: "Join the Sydney Uni groups. Try the Sydney Uni Sports Teams. I joined baseball."

## The internship is the first phase of your program. What's the Australian business environment like?

Aaron: "I interned at Ten3 which was culturally great. It had a small office of two Aussies and one Pom [Aussie term meaning someone British]. My boss was also someone I could talk to."



Wen Chen  
International Business Concentration  
BA in Economics

Jeff: "I was in a small environment. More intimate settings seem typical in Aussie business settings."

Wen: "Price Waterhouse Cooper was very corporate, but my floor, Business Procurement and Administration, was very social."

Sam: "At Bather's Pavillion it was a lot of fun. I got the sense that my boss was my boss, but he was also a mentor. Bather's Pavillion was an unbelievable place to learn."

Jessica: "Put a lot into it. You can make a lot of good connections. You can figure out if it's something you want to do or not."

## In the SMG program, you take courses at Sydney University during the second phase of your program. What differences do you see going to school here versus the states?

Aaron: "The grading scale."

Jessica: "I didn't get the grading system at first ... I thought I failed. Don't freak out before figuring out grade conversions first."

## How about the students?

Jessica: "Many students still lived with their parents. At BU, everyone lives on or near campus."

Sam: "When you go to school here, you're a resident of Sydney that also goes to college. Not the other way around."

## What are you going to miss?

Aaron: "At the beginning of the semester, we were able to go to the beach."



Sam Hellman-Mass  
Entrepreneurship/Finance Concentration  
Minor in Hospitality

Jessica: "The beaches, I'm from Missouri and there are none."

Sam: "The scenery. The things you see. The things you smell. It's beautiful. And the small little places everywhere."

Jeff: "There are all these little neighbourhoods, and Turkish bread is unbelievable."

Wen: "Wedges with Sour Cream and Sweet Chili Sauce!"

Aaron: "Handheld sushi wraps."

Jessica: "Go to the Lansdowne and get the \$5 meals. I used it enough for me to love it. I recommend the veggie burger."

## Lastly, what advantages do you see with the SMG program having?

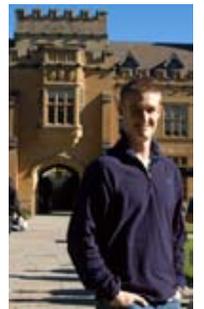
Aaron: "The time. Having two more months, we feel like we really lived here."

Sam: "We created a home here, and with the apartment, we could have people over."

Jessica: "I do like that we're here for a long time. I've done a three month program and for me it's too short."

Jeff: "The last two months have given us more opportunities to do Australian things – go to the opera house, see rugby games, etc."

Jessica: "I saved some travelling for the end. I'm going 28 days up the Australian coast, from Brisbane to Byron's Bay to Fitzroy Island, etc."



Jeff Nitz  
Finance/Marketing  
Concentration

# MORE THAN MOVIES

by Suzy Quinn

The Sydney Film Festival isn't considered among the majors – the Cannes, the Sundances, the Berlins, the Torontos. In fact, some insiders would even attest that the Melbourne Film Festival presides as Australia's premiere film festival. Yet, there is an undeniable appeal and universal appreciation for Sydney's own two-week long celebration of cinema. Initiated in 1953, SFF continues to draw innovative programming and international talent, including featured guests such as Dutch director Nanouk Leopold.

Thanks to the nature of the festival, it is easy to chat up the person next to you at the screening, I was able to procure an interview with Nanouk, who sat down with me for an hour out of her jam-packed schedule. She and I discussed culture in the Netherlands, her proclivity for using environment as another character in her films, her hippie parents, and obscure but revolutionary directors like Robert Bresson. Nanouk's three feature films were all given highly sought-after slots in the program schedule, and she articulated to me how important it has been to receive feedback from a festival audience. For her most recent feature, *Wolfsbergen*, she has even relied on the audience in Sydney for their criticism before embarking on her next venture.

Nanouk and other filmmakers from around the world grace the presence of Sydney every June to collaborate on projects and soak up the unique customs that this great city alone offers. The four festival venues are led by an ever-glamorous movie palace called the State Theatre, which screens the most elite of the festival line-up and houses over 2,000 moviegoers. It is also a superb fit for the Opening and Closing Night Galas, replete with red carpet and national icons like Cate Blanchett, Hugo Weaving and Phillip Noyce in attendance. SFF isn't about attracting the big names, but it does help their credibility and funding for the years to come. In addition,

CONT. PAGE 8

## screen life: PENINA WEISMAN

Having never attended a film festival in its entirety, I didn't realize I would encounter the same people at more than one film. But I did, and that's how I met Edward and Rose, a lively Sydney couple with a combined age of well over 120. Audience members might recognize Ed as the old man who yelled out at Q&A sessions for the cast and crew to "speak up." They have been to the festival every year for the last ten, and spend the entire two weeks hopping from one darkened theater to another, not unlike the Boston University students.

The three of us ran into each other often. They were with me at *Climates*, a Turkish film about nothing, but with excellent cinematography. Ed remarked loudly, "I could have walked home and back and I wouldn't have missed anything...and I'm old and slow!" Rose

sat one row down from me at *Paprika*, a Japanese Anime thriller. When I inquired after Edward, she wrinkled her nose. "He doesn't think 'cartoons' are worth his time," she said. Then she grinned knowingly, adding, "but he's a bit of an old fart." They were also there to explain the cultural nuances of Australian humor in *Lucky Miles* and other Australian films.

Edward and Rose were a source of entertainment and camaraderie throughout the festival. I'll always remember their unabashed behavior and unexpectedly sharp quips, vibrantly coloring my Sydney Film Festival experience.

*Penina will be graduating with her MFA in Film Studies from Boston University's College of Communication in June 2008.*

From Left: dance-off after screening of *Planet B-Boy*, Hula Dancers after screening of *Hula Girls*, BU Sydney SFF group at Opening Night Gala, Actress Joan Chen on SFF Red Carpet.

PHOTOS COURTESY: Suzy Quinn and Fareed Ben-Youseff



SYDNEY  
FILM  
FESTIVAL  
2007



## MORE THAN MOVIES

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)

SFF realizes the value of its patrons and offers various incentives and packages to encourage loyalty, and, for students, there are concessions.

Newly crowned SFF director Clare Stewart has brought her own style to the annual event, and the festival's target demographic has expanded to reflect a younger crowd (the future generation of filmmakers?). Stewart and her staff have screened thousands of entries in anticipation of narrowing down the list to a mere few hundred films. During the festival, Clare could be spotted from afar in her signature outfit of a red blazer and a colorful skirt, accessorized with funky boots and bold orange hair. She and her colleagues Jenny Neighbours and Nick Hays were on-hand for most – if not all – of the nearly three hundred events spanning just seventeen days.

The films spanned nearly thirty countries of origin, and covered everything from the harsh realities of autism to the fantastic memories of a man who resisted the Nazi regime by marrying

one of its most devoted supporters. Truly there was “something for everyone”, and still once the festival concluded I found myself yearning for more. After thirty-five films and four forums, I found my love for cinema reinvigorated. I know that my peers will agree with me when I say that to have this chance is so meaningful to students who are denied comparable access at other film festivals.

In addition to extra movie passes and exclusive forums, all of us on the program were invited to attend the regal Opening Night Gala which – for many of us – was the first time getting star treatment. Hundreds of industry-types mingled among the most majestic of settings with the lucky few outsiders given access. Every few minutes we would do a double-take towards someone who may have looked like they “were somebody”. Chances are, they were. For not just one night but sixteen others, I felt very much a part of the magic that ensues within the Sydney Film Festival.



*Suzy Quinn will be graduating with her MFA in Film Studies from BU's College of Communication in May 2008.*

screen life:  
SUZY QUINN

The key to surviving a full day in dark movie theatres is to be prepared. I ventured out Friday morning around 9am to catch my first of five films that day. In my heavy purse I carried a supply of candy (mostly Cadbury's chocolate), a large water bottle, the ever-present festival guide which became more important than my room key for 17 days, a small notebook and four-colored pen, some Nurofen, my mobile, my wallet, a handful of \$1 and \$2 coins, and a Travel Ten bus pass. While a backpack is more suitable than a purse, stylish roomy handbags are a compromise within any fashion-savvy city.

More helpful than any of the things I have mentioned, is contact with fellow filmgoers. Whether friends from the program or any random patron sitting next to you, engaging in conversation about film is easy and fun. Better yet it keeps the mind refreshed. For a bonus pick-me-up, it's affirming to approach any filmmaker in attendance.

I saw a film at 10am, one at 12:30, another at 4:15, followed by one at 6:45, and my final screening at 9:30. I find, it helps to schedule the day at different theatres. Most surprising to me after such a long day was that I wasn't burnt out. In fact, I came back to my room that night and wanted to cool down by watching another movie on TV. Due to the limited offerings of either Big Brother or Rugby League, I settled for a spat of footy. I couldn't have ended the day a better way: cleansing the art-house/foreign film palette with hearty Aussie sport.

## THE FINAL WORD!

This semester has marked the beginning of a new experience for aspiring travel writers, the continuation of our involvement with the Sydney Film Festival and another successful semester of internships. However, it also marked the end of an era as one of the Shout's staff editors, Lauren Scott, is returning to the states. Lauren has been with BU Sydney for nearly two years and will be greatly missed.

Best of luck Lauren with all your adventures stateside!

-the BU Sydney Staff



Lauren Scott and Australian Supermodel Elle McPherson pose for a paparazzi shot in Costa Rica.

PHOTO COURTESY

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