VOICES FROM THE FIELD: FIRST IMPRESSIONS AND WORDS OF THANKS

This has been a banner year for PiA. Fourteen summer interns have returned to Princeton and are making their classmates jealous with stories of Asia and 145 talented full-year fellows are settled in their new communities in 18 countries across Asia, learning languages, discovering the local cuisine and relearning how to cross streets. The forthcoming descriptions of their first impressions are the best reminders of how transformative a PiA year (or a summer) can be.

Ah, Manila. I don’t think anything could’ve ever prepared me for this crazy place. The skyscrapers, squatter villages, McDonalds, street balut sellers, bright pink railings, public urination, male models with names like Ding Dong (whom I saw! omg), skin whitening creams, traffic, cathedrals, malls, cathedral-like malls – it’s a lot to take in. And you’re right. It has been hard. There were some really tough days during my first week or so, and there still are sometimes.

Fortunately, the other PiAers have been incredible, introducing me to the cool corners and tricks of the trade -- and the best thing of all has been Save the Children! I feel so, so, so lucky to be working there. The office is an incredible blend of great work, great people, and great atmosphere. I’ve been analyzing Filipino national and local laws on early childhood care and development as well as international agreements on child soldiers -- which is like a box of candy dipped in chocolate wrapped in gold for a dorky policy major like me.

Alison La Porte-Oshiro, Save the Children, Manila, The Philippines

For me, China is all about the smells. There’s the sweet mellow smell of lychee fruit and bananas in the street carts. The overpowering wave that accompanies stinky tofu. The distinct mix of grease, dirt, and car exhaust that wafts down busy streets. It had been nearly eleven months since I was last in China, but the smells immediately brought me back to feeling at home. For the past two weeks, I’ve been living at Tsinghua University in Beijing while training with the China Education Initiative. In that time, I’ve ridden an amusement park ride at the Great Wall of China, chatted with a Chinese colleague about the merits of modern architecture, and learned that, yes, Chinese students really are that shy. Two days ago, I left the bubble of downtown Beijing and traveled to the city outskirts to meet and work with migrant worker children. In addition to being introduced to a whole new set of smells, I met a young girl who asked for an English name. She smiled when I wrote in block letters in her red leather notebook. “LILY.”

Sam Birnbaum, China Education Initiative, Yunnan, China

After the initial shock of being given 300 students and a 21 hours a week teaching schedule, I am beginning to really enjoy (continued on page 2)
Rick Berry ’76 was elected President of the PiA Board of Trustees in May and will serve a three-year term. Rick has been a member of the Board of since 1998, and he chaired PiA’s Strategic Planning Committee. Rick was a PiA summer intern in ’76 with Matsushita Denki (“Panasonic” and “National” brands) in Japan. He brings a long history of involvement with PiA and a unique and valuable perspective as the parent of two current PiA fellows. His son Matthew is a second year fellow at the National Democratic Institute in Jakarta, Indonesia after teaching English in southern Thailand in ’07-’08. His daughter Eliza is a teaching fellow at Can Tho University in the Vietnamese delta.

Rick Berry holds a BA in History from Princeton University (class of ’76) and an MBA from Columbia Business School. He is currently a director in the insurance practice of Deloitte in New York City. Prior to joining Deloitte, Rick was a Principal at management consulting firm Tillinghast – Towers Perrin, leading the firm’s Markets & Distribution practice in North America and consulting with life and property-casualty insurers on business strategy, market assessment, distribution and related organizational issues. Rick lives with his family in New Rochelle, New York, but he enjoys traveling across Asia with his kids and sampling bizarre Asian cuisine.

VOICES FROM THE FIELD: FIRST IMPRESSIONS AND WORDS OF THANKS (CONTINUED)

working with the students and thinking of ways to effectively teach. Or perhaps the Thai massages are chilling me out. Anyways, although I have always enjoyed teaching, I am finding that doing it abroad is a truly amazing experience. I have been considering education as a career for awhile, and teaching full time has made me more certain.

Linan Xiao, Mae Fah Laung University, Chiang Rai, Thailand

You could not have put us in a better spot. We made it into town last Friday night and spent the weekend making the rounds in the faculty - even got invited to a birthday party/karaoke jam. We love the town, love our colleagues, and look forward to spending a whole year in this little spot of heaven. Whoever comes out this way has to take Mr Thanh to karaoke. I do believe he will make you cry.

Tim Prosser, Hau Giang Community College, Mekong Delta, Vietnam

WOW! THIS PLACE IS SO BEAUTIFUL!!! When I was looking out the window as I was flying in, it suddenly struck me that these mountains were the mountains of East Timor, and this beautiful blue sea was the sea of East Timor and the hospitable girl that would be waiting for me in the airport was PiA alumna Casey of East Timor. All I could think to myself as I was looking out the window was “Wow, it was worth it” (meaning the rather long trip and leaving home and everyone) Thank you PiA!!! This place is going to make my heart sing sweet songs. I can tell already.

Mariea Mason, Land O’ Lakes Agricultural Program, Dili, Timor-Leste

I have worked on a policy article about China’s draft Energy Law and the need to prioritize energy efficiency. I have also worked on revisions to the Chinese Air Pollution Prevention and Control Law; this has involved drafting a memo on the present version of the law and providing recommendations to the Ministry of Environmental Protection for improving the law, based on our experiences in the USA. In the future, I am planning to work on a research project involving models for financing large-scale investments in demand side management/energy efficiency. Probably my most surprising discover is that the Chinese government is really addressing environmental and energy issues, and in some instances is ahead of the US on these issues. Although they have much more severe environmental challenges, they are aware of this and trying to proactively address it.

Alvin Lin, Natural Resources Defense Council, Beijing, China

As I sit in AirAsia’s low cost terminal and drip my last few drips of sweat on Malay-

(continued on page 3)
sian soil, I feel it is only appropriate to say hello, goodbye, and thank you for everything. Despite trivial frustrations, this year was truly an invaluable experience. Having to say goodbye to my close circle of Malaysian friends was harder than I expected, as I have forged some very good relationships on this balmy little isle of Penang.

Many people live abroad to learn about themselves and figure out exactly what is valuable in life. Well I think I finally figured out how to define all the things that are me. It consists of two suitcases, weighs 35kg and costs about 250 Malaysian ringgit. So the next time you’re ever unsure about how to value your life, just pack up everything you own and take it to an airport. The airline will tell you exactly what you’re worth.

I want to thank you again for providing me the opportunity to live here in Malaysia and thank you in advance for my year in Hong Kong. PiA rules!

Jeff Siegel, 2nd Year Fellow, Shue Yan College, Hong Kong

From our Summer Interns

I just returned from a four-day trek through rural Thai forests in Trat province. This was probably as authentically rural as you can get—I’m talking scoop showers, outdoor sleeping under mosquito nets, toilets are holes in the ground. We caught crabs in the morning and had them for dinner. I’m working on a feature for RECOFTC’s website and annual report. I was the only foreigner for miles, which meant that people knew all about me before I even arrived in their villages (and stared at me constantly). I think this was most definitely the best experience of the internship so far. The trip allowed me to see community forestry in action—how people use it in their day-to-day lives and what challenges they face.

Jack Ackerman ’11, RECOFT (Community Forestry NGO), Bangkok, Thailand

I just wanted to say how happy I’ve been at NRDC Beijing! The work is fascinating. As Communications Intern, I’ve been learning a lot about media relations and how NRDC and environmental issues are depicted in the news. A big part of my job is putting together a weekly report of the China/environment-related news pieces, called the China Environmental News Alert. I’m my apartment anytime and interrogate me about who I had to kill to get an internship this awesome.

David Walter ’11, The Nation, Bangkok, Thailand

I’ve been trying to learn some Chinese as I go. It’s going alright; I can say things like how are you, how much, sorry, thank you and my numbers (1-100) and things I don’t want such as no oil, no spice and no thank you. I realized a couple nights ago, though, that while I’ve been trying to say bu yao LA (no spice) I’ve actually been saying bu yao le—I don’t want this. What this means is that every night, when we wander down to the skewer vendors near the school, I’ve been picking out a plate of vegetables, showing it in the guy’s face, and demanding BU YAO LE—DON’T WANT THIS. Aside from being amusing, this explains why I frequently put in orders and wait through everyone else’s dinner to find that my skewers are nowhere to be found. While I’ve been complaining about the crazy skewer man, the reality is that I’m just that crazy American girl who comes by every night and spends 10 minutes picking out exactly what she doesn’t want to eat and telling him about it.

Lauren Allegro ’11, Summer of Service Intern, Jishou, Hunan, China

Yesterday in my individual sessions one of my students opened up to me about how her mother had died right before she went to college. She saw her mom come home from the fields and die before she walked into the gate of their house. I was so saddened by this, but more than anything I was astounded. It makes me think that I’m more of the student in this situation. My students have so much to teach me about life. They

(continued on page 4)
have lived through hardships I cannot even imagine, and yet they never seem to think their life unfair. The girl didn’t even know what her mother had died of. She said sickness. I still find it hard to believe that medicine has not really reached so much of the world. I have a string of headaches and my parents insist I see a doctor. Here so much is left to chance. I’m not quite sure yet what I’m going to leave with and what I’m going to leave behind, but I have the very strong feeling it will be one of the most important experiences of my life.

Jennifer Keeley ’11, Summer of Service Intern, Jishou, Hunan, China

What an amazing two months. It’s hard to know how to describe it to my family, and I get sick at the thought of having done anything but this with my summer. Thank you! Patrick van Nieuwenhuizen ’10, Summer of Service Intern, Jishou, Hunan, China

Recently Returned PiA Fellows

I’m sure you are ridiculously busy right now, gearing up for a new season of recruiting little youngsters to gallivant around Asia - but I wanted to write you a quick email to say thank you THANK YOU thank you for giving me the wonderful opportunity you gave me last year. Yep, that’s right, get ready for some major velveeta right here...I’ve just been thinking a lot about Vietnam and I’m realizing - even more than while I was there and loving it, even more than while I was missing it at home this summer - what an incredibly unique year I had.

Being a teacher in Vietnam TOTALLY knocked me off track, in exactly the way you described as being so difficult for many Princeton women when you came to visit last fall. It’s so true - you get to Asia, and you realize how little you matter. You graduate from Princeton and you think you’ve got it all figured out, and then you discover that you don’t at all. I came to appreciate that feeling of being forced outside of myself, of reveling in how much I don’t know about the world, and finally appreciating the value of using the little I do know to help in small ways (like one adorable Vietnamese student at a time). There is something to be said for letting go and finding your way bit by bit, and I think maybe that’s what you guys have been trying to get us to understand all along.

Julia Peppiatt, Can Tho Universitiy, Mekong Delta, Vietnam

I was fortunate enough to work at the Naz Foundation (India) Trust in New Delhi, India. This past year has been a wonderful whirlwind of experiences, and it has changed me in so many ways, I can’t even begin to enumerate them. Working at Naz meant working with the most fantastic, interesting and downright good people.

I did a wide range of work, from everyday thank-you letters, sponsor updates and general correspondence to organizing two large-scale events. I spent time playing with and teaching the 41 children orphaned by HIV/AIDS who live in the Naz Care Home, organized a three-day dance workshop for them, accompanied them on retreats and took some of them to a ballet show and an environmental festival. I wrote several proposals to different organizations, and saw the programs funded by these organizations come into being. I even wrote a draft script for an educational documentary on the hijra (transgender) community in Delhi which is currently being filmed! Looking back on this year, I realize what an incredible privilege it has been to be able to work in so many different projects.

Thank you so much for giving me this life-changing opportunity! I will never forget the lessons I learned, on the streets of Delhi arguing over the price of an auto, in the office at Naz working with my coworkers, or in the Care Home playing with the lovable, funny children who I have come to consider as my younger siblings.

Nienke Boer, Naz Foundation, HIV/AIDS Orphanage, New Delhi, India

Summer Osawa intern Joel Shor takes a break from his fast-paced job in Tokyo.
About the Carrie Gordon Fellowship

Princeton in Asia established the Carrie Gordon Fellowship as a tribute to Carrie Gordon, PiA's late Executive Director from 1994-2003. The Fellowship provides up to $10,000 in funding to a Princeton in Asia fellow or recent alumnus/a to work in Asia beyond the end of his/her fellowship to implement a service project that will help a community in Asia. Criteria for selection include the project's impact, feasibility, and sustainability as well as the qualifications of the applicant. In addition to implementing his/her project, the Carrie Fellow is expected to keep the PiA office updated on project developments, to make a final presentation to the Princeton in Asia Board of Trustees at the end of his/her fellowship, and to assist in supporting and promoting the fellowship and the program. For more information about the Carrie Gordon Fellowship, please visit the PiA website at www.princeton.edu/~pia. Applications are due May 1st, 2010, but please be in touch with the PiA office to discuss your proposal and to be paired with a member of the Carrie Gordon Fellowship Selection Committee who will help develop your proposal.

Brent Scharschmidt – Carrie Gordon Fellow 2008-2009

After serving as a PiA fellow in Chiang Mai, Thailand, Brent helped to tackle the severe malnutrition among Karen refugees who have fled ethnic conflict in Burma. He set up pilot programs along the Thai-Burmese border to train health workers to diagnose and treat malnutrition and communicate crucial health messages to families. Brent and the team of health workers screened more than 1,500 kids and treated more than 60 of the most severe cases of child malnutrition. According to Brent one-fifth of the children there die before their fifth birthday.

Brent writes, “My work this year has given me the chance to reflect on the serendipity that brought me to the Thai-Burma border, and it all starts with PiA. Three years after teaching my first class in Chiang Mai, I’m now proficient in Thai and learning the ethnic language of my Karen colleagues. Most importantly, I’ve had a chance to help launch a program that is having a hugely positive impact on the community of eastern Burma.”

Annie Preis – Carrie Gordon Fellow 2009-2010

A graduate of Princeton University, Annie Preis has been a PiA fellow since 2007, working in Thailand and Indonesia. As the recipient of the 2009-2010 Carrie Gordon Fellowship, Annie aspires to improve the public speaking and communication skills for women leaders in Aceh Tengah and Aceh Besar, Indonesia, as well as to provide a platform and archive for women in Aceh to tell their stories. To that end, Annie plans to organize storytelling workshops, and guide the women in preparing presentations and exhibitions at both the village and district level.

This project will be valuable both for the skills and network building it will provide for women to represent themselves to their community, and for the space it will open to address and process the events of the recent past in Aceh: civil conflict, the tsunami, and the enormous relief effort that is now ending. To implement the project, Annie will work with the Indonesian conflict resolution and women’s empowerment NGO, Patimadora. Her first women’s training workshop is scheduled for mid-November.
In early July 2009, PiA Deputy Director Leslie Medema arrived in Singapore to implement a much-anticipated aspect of PiA’s strategic plan: the opening of a field office in Asia. Aside from creating the dream opportunity for a PiA staff member to relocate to Asia, the Board of Trustees wished to re-establish a PiA presence in Asia in order to achieve the following aims:

- **Enhance PiA’s infrastructure for responding to health and safety emergencies.**
- **Improve in-field support to fellows.**
- **Strengthen partnerships and PiA “quality control” with more site visits and professional development for fellows.**
- **Allow PiA to react quickly and comprehensively to evaluate opportunities.**
- **Energize the PiA alumni base in Asia.**

A tremendous amount of progress has been made in registering PiA as a legal entity in Singapore, identifying office space, and setting up shop. The formal opening of the office is scheduled for Nov 19, 2009. In the meantime, the Singapore office has already proven a worthwhile investment. Some of the highlights of the Singapore office’s first few months of operation include:

- **Arranging a medical evacuation from Aceh for fellow with dengue fever who was brought to a top notch Singapore hospital. After a week of recuperating in Singapore, he is back in Aceh thriving.**
- **Providing support to other fellows with medical issues, such as helping identify doctors in the region and providing lodging for fellows flying in from sites with less advanced medical care.**
- **Holding in-field orientations for four fellows who received positions after the May orientation.**
- **Conducting follow-up site visits with two new partners (in Cambodia and Vietnam) who needed additional time and guidance to meet PiA partner criteria.**
- **Coordinating a training of PiA fellows with PiA Alumni and the Singapore Ministry of Education.**
- **Planning a site visit by PiA’s TEFL teacher trainer.**
- **Connecting with over 100 of our fellows, alumni, trustees, local partners, and friends.**

expected that our network here would be broad. I am only just beginning, however, to understand the incredible scope of the PiA family in Asia and connect with the growing multitude of people that are dedicated to PiA. I have been lucky enough to host and be hosted by five PiA Trustees who live in or have traveled through the region, and reaching out to our broad base of alumni and friends has been an inspiring part of the job.

In summary, the PiA field office is already operating in high gear and we wanted to share with you some of Leslie’s initial dispatches from the field:

On July 7th I arrived in Singapore to build a local base of operations for Princeton in Asia. I had a blank slate with endless possibilities for how PiA might work to enhance the service we provide communities in Asia and how we might enhance the in field support for our fellows. As one of the oldest programs serving Asian communities, I

The launch of the PiA Asia office in 2009 is the latest chapter in a long history for PiA in Singapore. Over 15 years ago, Richard Eu, Princeton class of 1944, suggested to the then Rector of Ngee Ann Polytechnic University that they consider hosting international teaching fellows from PiA as part of the faculty. Uncle Richard, as he is affectionately known to PiA friends and fellows in Singapore, was drawing on his own experiences in bridging cultures, knowing

(continued on page 7)
has been a dedicated presence in the country, with more than 100 fellows having lived in Singapore and having taught over 4,000 Singaporean polytechnic students. A more recent partnership with the Ministry of Education, launched as a pilot program last year, doubled the number of PiA fellows in Singapore. There are currently 15 fellows in the country working at both the University and high school levels, teaching classes as varied as mechanical engineering, film, US history, organic chemistry, and English literature.

On a personal note, I have been able to relive my PiA experience—and its profound impact on me—many times since moving back to Asia. During my third week in Singapore I visited my former PiA post in the Vietnamese Delta. In less than 48 hours, I sampled pumpkin flowers, eels on a stick, red bananas, and chewed down 10 cups of thick, amazing Vietnamese coffee. I was there to research two new posts in small villages in a very remote part of the Mekong Delta and in the process had taken a late night ride in the Delta under a full moon with bats criss-crossing our path and been "hosted" (involuntarily) by local police who had never seen a foreign visitor for decades. I saw the dramatic effects of agent orange on a disproportionately high number of children in this small community, many of whom are tied to beds for lack of ability to care for them. The needs and the misunderstandings were great and underscored the impact a PiA fellow might have and the lasting impact a community might make on them. It was particularly rewarding to know that the PiA office in Singapore would be integral to assessing and creating such opportunities for fellows and providing the support that would be needed for our PiA-ers to work in some of the neediest communities in Asia.

As long as you are kind and there is love in your heart
A thousand hands will naturally come to your aid
As long as you are kind and there is love in your heart
You will reach out with a thousand hands to help others

- Guan Zin

Leslie Medema,
Director of Asia Operations, Singapore
The past year PiA offered a new employee benefit: the opportunity to take up to a week of public service leave to go and serve a community of one’s choice. The purpose of this initiative is to encourage PiA staff members to lead by example, engaging in the kinds of service we exhort our fellows to do and reconnecting with Asia or a local community at the grass-roots level. PiA’s Director of Alumni Relations, Megan McGowan, chose to serve a community close to home for her public service leave, working as a camp counselor at Sister Pat’s Cancer Camp in Esopus, New York.

For one week each summer, the Mid-Hudson Valley campsite in Esopus, NY hosts Sister Pat’s Cancer Camp—a summer camp for children age 5-15 who are living with or recovering from cancer and blood diseases. The camp began in 1985 as an opportunity for sick children and their siblings—most of them from NYC—to get out of the hospital and into the country where they could be normal kids at summer camp: fishing, swimming, dancing, painting, bowling, and roasting marshmallows. And pouring buckets of “slime” over their counselors’ heads during the Nickelodeon-style game night that’s always a camp favorite.

I became involved with the camp in high school, and spent three summers as a volunteer counselor. I have found that the prospect of working at a camp for seriously ill children often strikes people as depressing or morose. While there are aspects of the experience that can be extremely emotional—both poignantly moving and painfully tragic—for the most part, the camp lives up to its original conception: to give sick children the chance to go to summer camp for a week and feel like any other kid.

And just like any other kids, keeping up with the campers is exhausting. They fight with each other. They put on cute faces to get extra snacks. They forget their towels at the pool. They come up with a hundred excuses to delay bedtime.

But of course in many ways they are not like other children. They have to take breaks from playing to take their medication, receive chemotherapy, get their blood checked. Many children with sickle cell anemia have to be very careful not to get too cold and so they must take frequent breaks from swimming, or watch from the sidelines. In one moment, they are unbelievably compassionate, patient, and understanding with each other; in the next moment, they fight over who has used the snorkel mask longer. They get sick at night and wake me up to change their sheets; the next morning they jump off their beds to land on my back and expect that I’d catch them. When I could find a few quiet minutes to have one-on-one conversations with them, I was amazed by their perceptive-ness, patience, wisdom, and optimism; yet the next day they would refuse to eat anything green and I would be scrambling around the kitchen trying to find extra boxes of Rice Krispies.

I was excited about going back to camp because it felt like it had been a long time since I had done this kind of service—the kind of experience that calls on you to be your best self: present, selfless, strong. We don’t often pause to consider what service really is, using instead the old “I know it when I see it” rule, which allows us to point to camps for kids with cancer as obvious examples of service, but can blind us to the service element in other work we do. Over the course of the 2009 PiA application season, I heard from several candidates who struggled with the definition of service.

For me, service means doing something for someone that they otherwise couldn’t do for themselves; meeting a need without expecting market level (or any) compensation; doing work involving an element of personal sacrifice. None of these is a perfect definition, but they help explain why being at camp for a week felt like service. And it reminded me that every now and then it’s good to seek out those full-throttle, emotionally and physically exhausting types of service. Reminds me of what I already know but too often forget—that focusing my attention entirely on someone else instead of myself for a while can be incredibly rewarding. And if it comes with tie-dye and s’mores, even better.

Megan McGowan
Director of Alumni Relations
TOP 10...ER, 12 WAYS TO GET INVOLVED WITH PIA

1. **Rope ‘em in.** Lead an information session or represent PiA at a career fair in your region.


3. **Show them the way.** Help out with orientation in May, leading a language or culture session, or assisting with setup, clean up & logistics.

4. **Give back.** Make a donation to PiA’s general annual giving fund.

5. **Represent your hood.** Become an alum representative for your city, help plan events, reach out to local alums, and fundraise.

6. **Reach out.** Reconnect with your own PiA class, encouraging them to give back to PiA.

7. **Show our thanks.** Help us thank our donors with notes & phone calls.

8. **Stuff it.** Lend a hand with PiA’s many mailings.

9. **Bring home the bacon.** Help with researching & writing grants.

10. **Get creative.** Use your graphic design skills for promotional materials and to improve this newsletter!

11. **Go online.** Sign up to monitor the PiA Facebook account for a month and help us liven it up.

12. **Be a buddy.** Mentor or sponsor a fellow. Contribute to the cost of his or her annual dinner or transportation to Asia by donating frequent flier miles.

For more information contact
Alumni Relations Director Megan McGowan
at piaalum@princeton.edu or (609) 258-1283.

PIA ALUMNI EVENTS IN DC, BOSTON, AND NY

![Image of event in DC]

Lily Samei & Jing Jin (Hong Kong ’06) Pete White (Mongolia ’06), Robin Heims (China ’97), and Theresa Koucheryavy (Thailand ’08) pose in DC.

![Image of event in Boston and NY]

DC Event host and PiA Trustee Scott Seligman (Taiwan ’73) catches up with fellow Taiwan-philes Diane and Rick Johnston (Taiwan ’64).
PiA Alums tie the knot(s)

Sarah Stein (Guangzhou, China '97) married Michael Colm on the slopes of Deer Valley, Utah in March this year. Jeff Pinfrett and Jorge Robert, who were both also members of the infamous Guangzhou China team of 1997 were on hand to celebrate. Sarah and Michael live in San Francisco, and Sarah enjoys occasionally having excuses to travel for work to China - which she says has sure changed a lot since 1997.

Congratulations to newly weds Lucy Hornby (Wuhan '95) and Eric Peng (Guangzhou '94) who said their nuptial vows together this past May in Hunterdon County. The couple met at a PiA event and they live in Beijing, where Lucy is a Reuters correspondent and Eric is a Professor of Astrophysics.

Enthusiastic congratulations came in from across the PiA network after The New York Times ran the announcement that Amy Gedal (Shenyang, China '04-'06) and Patrick Douglass (Wuhan '04, Beijing '05) tied the knot at the Prospect Park Boathouse in Brooklyn, NY, on September 6. Amy & Patrick met at Cornell and remained together despite the fact that PiA flung them to distant provinces in China. They now live in DC, where Patrick specializes in Chinese economic research at the Peterson Institute for International Economics, and Amy is a health research consultant at the Lewin Group in Falls Church, VA. Patrick gets a PiA gold star for writing his marriage proposal in Mandarin characters.

Pei Pei and Keith (Laskowski) Ma (Taiwan, '05) were married in June, and are now living in New Haven, Connecticut, where Keith is studying the geology of the Andes at Yale and Pei is an educational consultant working in CT public schools. On the theory that anything worth doing is worth doing twice, Keith and Pei Pei returned to Taiwan in October for a second ceremony for those relatives who missed the US celebration.

Also newly hitched: Sue Fou (China, '94). Sue married Nick Anderson at Princeton in May—and celebrated with a pig roast!

As we were going to press, wedding bells were ringing for David Newhouse (Indonesia '95) who wed Helena Hwang in beautiful Piermont, NY. PiA Alum Brian Vogt (Indonesia '95) was one of the groomsmen. Selamat hidup baru to the new couple!

PiAers Engaged!

Congratulations to Jon Nuger (Vietnam '04), who got engaged to Ali Levine in September! John popped the question during a visit to Dartmouth, where Ali studied Chinese. Jon and Ali are living in San Francisco, where Jon is working for Metaweb Technologies and plotting a move to business school.

Former program director Ari Wolfe (China '05) is engaged to Guangzhou sweetheart Kelly Brooks! Ari and Kelly met while Kelly was a Yale China Fellow. The couple live in Brooklyn and will be married next summer in Minnesota. Don'tcha know.

Still Living the Dream in Asia

After completing his PiA fellowship, Taylor Beck (Yakage, Japan '08) has moved to Kyoto to work as an intern in a brain-imaging lab at the institute for Advanced Telecommunications Research International (ATR). Taylor, a psychology major from Princeton, is pumped to get back into neuroscience and learning how to say things like “hippocampus” and “functional magnetic resonance imaging scanner” in Japanese.

Erica Pohnan (Bangkok '08) has completed her PiA fellowship at RECOFTC (Regional Community Forestry Training Center) and was invited to stay on as Assistant Program Officer. She looks forward to another year of awesome street food.

And if Oceana counts as Asia....Sam Grant (Mongolia '08) is now living in Port Moresby, working for Papua New Guinea Microfinance. Despite a flurry of recent tsunami warnings, he's still managing to work hard, spending weekends traveling along the coast to establish a new branch network. In addition to chatting up the locals in farming and fishing villages, Sam is already planning ways to use his new skills to give back to PiA: “...my knife and gun skills should greatly improve in the next year. This coupled with the wrestling skills from Mongolia could be used as combat training at the next orientation. Think about it. I'll clear my schedule.” We're thinking about it Sam. We're thinking law suit.

Singapore fellows (from left to right Colin Emerson '08, Caroline Loewner '08, Nate Edgerton '08, Kurt Kuehne '08, and Bea Chang '08)

Holding it down in the pristine city-state as educators beyond their PiA Singapore fellowships are: Colin Emerson, Kurt Kuehne, Nate Edgerton, Steven McCutcheon, and Taylor Maltz (all Singapore '08). Some may never come home-lah.

(continued on page 11)
New PiA alum James Schulmeister (Singapore ’08) will be completing his position as PiA Lecturer of Mechanical Engineering and attending MIT’s Masters in Mechanical Engineering program in the fall. Oh wait, but he’s not leaving Singapore just yet! A research partnership between the Singapore government and MIT’s Ocean Engineering program has hired him as a research engineer. He will spend the first semester of his graduate studies literally on the Singapore Straights.

PiAers Back in School

After substitute teaching, 2 NYC marathons, and generally enjoying the PiA NYC/NJ alumni network, Mariah "You can take the girl out of Jersey, but you can’t take Jersey out of the girl" Mulvihill (Kurashiki ’05) began law school at Seton Hall in September. She will try to refrain from bowing to her professors.

Dan Honig (Thailand ’04) has traded Monrovia for Massachusetts, after two rewarding years at the Liberian Ministry of Finance. He has begun a PhD program in Public Policy at the Kennedy School.

Elise Novitski (Singapore ’08) went from lecturer in Physics at Ngee Ann Polytechnic to PhD student in physics in less than 24 hours. She’s traded in the hawker center for the lunch line at Harvard University.

Carol Wan (Hong Kong ’98) recently left her gig at the Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center to start a PhD program in counseling psychology at Boston College. She’s doing her best to squeeze time for dim sum in between classes, research, teaching, and an off-campus internship.

Dorian Needham (Laos ’05) is completing law school at McGill in December, and sticking around Montreal long enough to study for the NY and MA bars. He plans to spend a few months in Brazil before moving to Tokyo. Rough life.

Kathlyn Querubin and Dan Portman (Chiang Rai ’05) are living in San Francisco, where Kathryn is in her last year of law school trying her best not to drown in case law. Dan recently completed law school and a two-month adventure in Indonesia, and is now working as a public defender.

PiA in the Working World

Tess Soroka (Bangkok, Thailand ’05) was a PiA fellow at AIG, and bitter-sweetly left Bangkok in April 2007 to pursue entrepreneurial dreams in NYC. She’s launched her own company while also working full time to help launch two others (Charlotte Moss Townhouse and AppNexus, Inc.). Her new venture Ame Ame is an urban fashion rain gear company that started an online web boutique in Spring 2009. Tess hopes to soon go full time with Ame Ame and create her own Ame Ame line of rain gear. Until then, visit www.AmeRain.com for cool umbrellas, rain outerwear, unique rain boots, and yes, doggy rain jackets. She’ll even hook us up with a discount - use the code "PIALove" before December 1st to get free shipping.

After his year in Singapore, Jon Li (’08) has discovered that passing as a local is difficult when your Mandarin level is the equivalent of a middle schooler’s. He will be moving to Taiwan to take a three-month language program, listen to lots of Mandopop, and reconnect with his Taiwanese family. Then he will be returning to New York as a pharmaceutical consultant with ZS Associates, (and be paying three times as much for lousy Chinese food. Sad.)

In yet another piece of PiA legal news, Melissa Magner (China ’04) graduated from Stanford Law last spring and after taking the bar, jetted out to travel around the Middle East for a bit. She’s now practicing corporate law at Latham & Watkins’ San Francisco office.

True to the PiA spirit of service, Beth Frank (China ’81) is working with Special Olympics Virginia, coordinating athletes, volunteers and activities in Virginia. Bob Atmore is no doubt smiling from above.

Updates from PiA on the West Coast

Bay Area alumni gathered on Saturday Sept. 12 at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco for a docent tour of the “Lords of the Samurai” exhibit, the private collection of the of the Hosukawa family, one of Japan’s most famous Samurai clans. Coordinators Peter Poullada (Afghanistan ’75) and Michelle Capobres (China, ’92) were joined by a group of PiA’s thriving chapter of Bay Area Alumni. Attendees included new San Fran resident Teresa Velez (Yakage ’07) who recently joined the KIPP foundation, doing development work for their network of college-preparatory schools. Sounds like Teresa is whipping the office into shape; she writes, “So far, I have roped KIPP’s chief of staff, chief development officer, chief people officer, chief financial officer, my immediate supervisor, and the executive assistant to the CEO into a 100 pushup challenge with me— by the end of 6 weeks we’ll all be able to do 100 in a row. We do them on our lunch breaks in the office.” A challenge for the PiA staff…?

Our ESP is spotty at best. Have an update? Just want to embarrass your classmates? Email Alumni Relations C’zar Megan McGowan at piaalum@princeton.edu
PiA Has Wheels!!

In our last newsletter, PiA sent out a plea for a much-needed new rickshaw to help us cart our chickens, rice, and dozens of “family” members around Princeton — and Tammy Vu answered the call! Tammy recently moved with her family from Huntington to Albany, NY, and made the incredibly generous donation of her Audi to PiA. Megan, Kai and Anastasia can now be found tooling around town blasting bhangra beats in the PiA Hotrod.

From left to right: Executive Director Anastasia Vrachnos, PiA intern Sophie Van Horne, Director of Advancement and Programs Kai Evenson, Director of Alumni Relations Megan McGowan, and the PiA Hotrod.

The PiA 2009-2010 Calendar of Events

The 2009 PiAers are all in the field and we are getting ready to hit the road to see their great work first hand. As the office has been busy recruiting for the next round, we would like to acknowledge our esteemed alumni for all of your tremendous support — we could not do it without you! Thanks to all who turned out for events or held recruiting presentations in New York, Washington DC, Boston, and beyond. We hope to see you at interviews in January!

December 1, 2009 – PiA 2010-2011 applications due.

January 9-10, 16-17 & 30, 2010 – Interviews held on Princeton campus. Interviews for Southeast Asian countries are generally held on the first weekend, interviews for East Asian and Central Asian countries the second weekend and interviews for South Asian countries the third weekend.


February, 2010 – West Coast Interviews: Date and Details TBA.

May 14-17, 2010 – PiA Orientation at Princeton.


May 17, 2010 – PiA Annual Dinner for Alumni.