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News, arts and culture of Wheaton College, Norton, Massachusetts

[wire]



Unearthing the past, discovering her passion

Maggie Spaziano had no ordinary summer vacation. This junior traveled to Spain in July for an archeological dig, where she uncovered more than just dirt.

Scratching the Surface

Maggie Spaziano '06 travels to Spain for an archaeological dig

—Jen Robertson '05

photos courtesy of AP/Worldwide Photos

Margaret Spaziano's interest in all things ancient ignited when she uncovered a genuine artifact, a colonial butter knife while on an archaeological dig as an eighth grader. A personal quest for knowledge about early empires fuels her passion to this day.

The Norton resident's interest in ancient civilizations remained just that, an interest, when she enrolled at Wheaton in 2001. A former math major and an avid softball player, she did not understand how her hobby could become a vocation until she encountered the Classics Department. Here she discovered a wealth of information on

the Greeks, the Romans and even older cultures. Inspired, Spaziano wanted to know everything she could about how these people lived, and suddenly her plans exploded. Approaching her senior year, Spaziano's dreams of graduate school, internships at renowned museums, archaeological expeditions and unearthing the mysteries of prehistoric societies are beginning to be a reality.

Lacking the advantages of a time machine, Spaziano looked to expand her experience in the archaeological world through the help of Assistant Dean of Studies Alex Trayford. Spaziano proceeded to plow through his

extensive list of archaeological dig sites and was rewarded with the discovery of the ArchaeoSpain program, designed to give students the opportunity for hands-on work in the archaeological field. Out of the many destinations available, Spaziano chose Tiermes, Spain, which boasts one of the most extensive and well-preserved style of rock architecture from the Roman era, "called arquitectura rupestre in Spanish," according to the program.

To help her on her way, Spaziano won the Davis International Fellowship: a grant of \$5,000 established in 1994 by the Shelby Cullom Davis Foundation.

This fellowship is designed to "provide intensive globally focused internships, both domestic and international," which "enhance the students' course of study, provide opportunities to utilize and expand on their academic experiences and strengthen their academic, personal, and professional futures."

Spaziano used ArchaeoSpain as a chance to fill in the gaps of previous experience. With minor archaeological work in New Hampshire and artifact handling at the Attleboro Area Industrial Museum, Spaziano expected to learn the intricate details of what happens to an artifact between the time it's found and when it arrives at the museum. ArchaeoSpain certainly promised all that and more. The program encourages participation in "excavation, land survey, mapping, photography and the conservation, cataloguing and exhibition of artifacts."

Spaziano eagerly anticipated joining the other archaeologists, citing Indiana Jones as an inspiration. Realizing, and probably hoping, that this adventure would not be quite as wild, Spaziano was not daunted by the hard work ahead of her. The day-to-day toil of digging carefully through layers of accumulated soil heightened the reward of finding a relic that could add to our understanding of early cultures.

"Everytime you find something new, there's more questions and less answers. It's great. It's just a giant puzzle and we'll never know all the answers," Spaziano said confidently.

With a little bit of Spanish and a lot of enthusiasm, Spaziano embarked on her month-long escapade in July. "I've been waiting for this forever," she said with a smile.

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At an archaeological dig site in Tiermes, Spain, Margaret Spaziano gained valuable experience in the delicate work of surveying and uncovering artifacts.



Maggie Spaziano '06 (below) is just one of the eight students selected to travel and study abroad last summer with funds from the Davis Fellowship. As she assisted in the archaeological dig in Spain, Spaziano marvels in the thought of finding history, "Every time you find something new there's more questions and less answers. It's great. It's just a giant puzzle and we'll never know all the answers."



Learn more about the Davis Fellowship

The Davis Fellowship program is a unique abroad opportunity in that it is designed specifically by Wheaton for Wheaton students. The fellowship provides a 5,000 dollar stipend for sophomores and juniors who are interested in pursuing a project internationally, whether it be an independent study, an internship, or doing service work.

Students are given the opportunity to create their own study abroad experience, pursuing interests that they may not be able to find in other study abroad programs for JYA. Also, students returning from JYA can extend their

stay in their host country, or sophomores can get a head start on their abroad experiences before junior year.

A committee of six, composed of faculty and staff, review the applicants' written proposals, looking at both their academic success as well as international experience to see if they qualify for the program.

There is a minimum GPA requirement of 3.0, and while international experience is a plus, it is not required. Students can propose to study or work in any country that is not on the U.S. State Department's travel warning list.

2004 Davis Fellowship Receipts

Jared Duval '05 - Worked for the Foundation of Sustainable development in Tanzania.

Colin Hagan '05 - Worked for the American Bar Association in Beijing, China.

Britany Krupica '06 - Worked on an independent research project studying indigenous people in Geneva, Switzerland, and London.

Stephanie Pinto '06 - Worked for Amigos de las Americas, a health care organization in Mexico.

Audrey Robert '05 - Worked on an independent research project studying the daily lives of women workers in Managua, Nicaragua

Liza Semler '05 - Worked for the South Africa Environment project in South Africa.

Sarah Whitri '05 - worked for ELENA, a non-governmental organization doing a research/internship program in Cameroon, Africa

Eight students are chosen for each summer and it is open to all students regardless of their major. One-third of all applicants are chosen.

When writing the application, it is helpful to show cultural awareness and to have a solid foundation in the proposal. The application deadline is in April, but it is important that students start planning their proposal now.

Students interested in the Davis Fellowship should contact the program advisor Ed Canton in the Filene Center for more information.