

## Scholarship Recipient Writes Home

The Homer Foundation manages ten scholarship funds. Colin McArthur was the 2007 recipient of the Alain and Daniel Rieser Scholarship through the Tin Roof Fund. This scholarship award goes to a Homer High School graduating senior with a demonstrated interest in foreign language and culture. Prior recipients have used the award to pursue foreign language study at college. Colin's award was the first to support a self-directed foreign language and cultural immersion project. Colin spent eight weeks in Europe last summer, traveling, writing, and honing his photography skills. What follows is a collage of Colin's experiences in Europe:

We spent our first two and a half weeks in London-Glasgow-Edinburgh... saw my grandfather's name in the war memorial at Edinburgh Castle, visited the Wallace Monument...

Then to Amsterdam... first place with an entirely different language, and we thought the Scottish accent was hard enough! I met a French man in the hostel who came to Amsterdam to teach, and he complimented me on the French I had... I think mostly because he was surprised to know they speak French in the land of igloos and polar bears.

... it's fantastic to take in all the little details of all these cities... so much history, so much flavor... the homeless people ask you for money and you have to tell them you don't have any on you (which was the truth, most of the time), and you wonder what it's like to have nothing. A girl poses in the window, you look once and she puts on her mask, her best provocative come hither face, but you keep walking, and then turn around a second later, that's when you catch her with a little more truth, with the tired eyes and the sunken lips and you wonder if any of them really enjoy what they do.

Brussels was next, where I got to try out my French... crazy... the whole way I think of words began to change after only a day or two... I saw things and the French word popped into my mouth... There's a lot of immigration, and from what I gathered from the French magazine I was

doing my best to read, racial tension is a problem. You see a lot of mothers holding their children, propped up against lightposts, and they don't look up, they hold their children or hold their hands together in prayer, and it's almost the same gesture. They have a small cup in front of them, and business men walking by with change clinking in their pockets, and I walk by... and it's hard to ignore.

Greece now. Patras. The people are good, loud, emotional, and extremely generous, straightforward. They look you in the eye. Lots of Mopeds, big sunglasses, big hair. All the older men go down to secret spots along the coast to fish, and watch, and meditate. Its fun to just sit, and watch them, completely at peace. There's graffiti everywhere.. some English, some Greek. There's a local gang, apparently, called the Patras Club 13. it's amazing.. kind of like live art, and sure, a lot is bad, but some is mind-blowing. Sas Efharisto is thank you, that's one I use a lot, where ever I go... Quite often, I find myself thankful for the human race, both terrible and divine.

Photographs of Colin's trip can be viewed at [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com).

**Scholarships Available:** The HF manages ten scholarship programs. These scholarships resulted in a total of \$14,500 being awarded to local area youth last year. The 2008 scholarship applications are available from school counselors or on the HF website: [www.homerfund.org](http://www.homerfund.org).

## Consultant Bill Somerville to Visit Homer

Bill Somerville has long been called a maverick grantmaker for his unorthodox, decisive, hands-on grantmaking. Mr. Somerville is also a nationally recognized consultant to community foundations in the United States, Canada, and the U.K, and the individual most responsible for the Homer Foundation's current style of year-round, responsive grant-making.

In January, 1999, Bill Somerville came to Homer at the invitation of the Homer Foundation with support from the Packard Foundation. He took one look at the grants program the Homer Foundation had developed, which utilized an annual grants cycle, and encouraged the organization to use its size to its advantage. He admonished them, telling them they could respond to a grant request faster than the Ford Foundation could answer a phone call.

Within days, the Homer Foundation had simplified its application form, begun to offer grants on an on-gong basis, and authorized the Distributions Committee to approve grants up to a designated ceiling. This provided the distributions committee the flexibility to respond quickly to an applicant, without having to wait on the full board for a final decision.

Mr. Somerville will be making his third visit to Homer March 3rd and 4th. He will be putting his skills to work to help the Homer Foundation think strategically about organizational effectiveness, community needs assessment, and grantmaking. On

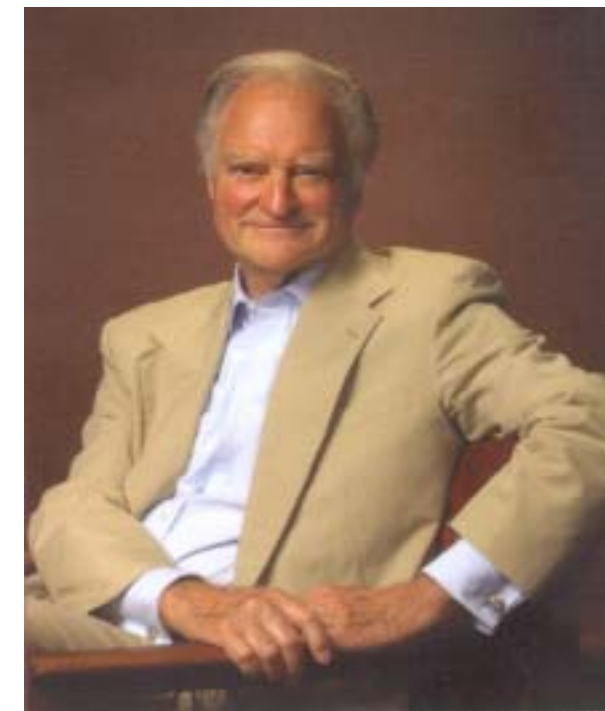
Tuesday, March 4th, he will be leading a session with local grantees to facilitate an evaluation of the Foundation's grantmaking process. Along the way he will also meet with donors and community members. There is no question that Mr. Somerville

will leave all of us inspired by the power of community philanthropy, and the HF board energized for the work ahead.

In addition to his consulting work, Bill Somerville is the founder and CEO of the Philanthropic Ventures Foundation, in Oakland, CA, which specializes in responsive approaches to grantmaking.

Additional information on Bill Somerville and his style of creative grant making is highlighted in his new book, *Grassroots Philanthropy: Field Notes of a Maverick Grantmaker*, recently

released by Heyday Books.



Maveric grantmaker, Bill Somerville

Anyone wishing to participate in a session with Mr. Somerville should contact Joy Steward at the Homer Foundation, 235-0541.

Ten reasons people give through community foundations:

- one** We are a local organization with deep roots in the community.
- two** We have broad expertise regarding community issues and needs.
- three** We provide highly personalized service tailored to each individual's charitable and financial interests.
- four** We help people invest in the causes they care about most.
- five** We accept a wide variety of assets and can facilitate even the most complex forms of giving.
- six** We partner with professional advisors to create highly effective approaches to charitable giving.
- seven** We offer maximum tax advantage for most gifts under federal law
- eight** We multiply the impact of gift dollars by pooling them with other gifts and grants
- nine** We build endowment funds that benefit the community forever and help create personal legacies.
- ten** We are a community leader, coordinating resources to create positive change.

The Homer Foundation - your community foundation. Connect with us on the web at [www.homerfund.org](http://www.homerfund.org)

*Connecting generosity with community need on the southern Kenai Peninsula since 1991.*

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# THE HOMER FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER: Community Connections

February 2008

## HF Undertakes Community Scan

One of the Homer Foundation's early strategies for assessing community needs, and one that continues to be effective today, is to have a board of trustees with broad reach into the community. The Foundation's board members keep their fingers on the pulse of the community and make funding and programmatic decisions based on input from board members, fund holders, and grantees. This methodology has led to the development of the HF's year-round small grants program, which has served the community well for more than a decade.

A desire to become more proactive and even more in touch with its community has led the HF to launch a Community Scan project inspired by the Council on Foundation's *Making a Difference: A Community Impact Series*. This is an assessment process that is beautiful in its simplicity. The Foundation began this process in January by enlisting board member Mary Epperson to do a "scan and clip" of the local weekly newspaper. Each week through June, Mary will scan and clip articles related to eight selected issues. Recently, forty-five community leaders in the business, public and nonprofit sectors received a 4-question survey soliciting their perceptions on needs and opportunities in our community. Responses are proving to be illuminating and we are inviting interested community members to participate in the survey through the Homer News website: [www.homernews.com](http://www.homernews.com) starting March 7th. Your participation is encouraged.

The scan also includes site visits to area nonprofits and "no agenda" gatherings to solicit community input. The project is scheduled to be completed in June when the data collected will be analyzed. Results of the Community Scan will help set future funding priorities and opportunities for the Foundation to leverage, collaborate and convene around community issues. Anyone wishing to learn more or participate in our Community Scan should contact Connie Alderfer at 235-7232.

## Triple Your Investment in Our Community

It is not very often that you have the opportunity to turn every dollar you invest in your community into three, but that is exactly what will happen when the Homer Foundation launches into the Rasmuson Foundation/Alaska Community Foundation Community Asset Building Initiative. This initiative challenges the HF to raise \$25,000 by June 30th (and a second round by December 31st), provides up to \$10,000 for regranting in the community, and establishes a permanent fund for the benefit of the Homer community at the statewide Alaska Community Foundation. Watch for details on how to triple your social investing!