

Houghton College student joins film crew in Antarctica

By Tyler Briggs
Olean Times Herald

HOUGHTON — When most people imagine studying abroad, images of Paris, Madrid or Rome come to mind. Kerry Brogan isn't most people. She received college credit by doing an internship in Antarctica.

The Houghton College senior spent 21 days at the coldest continent in the world.

"The experience was amazing. Everyday we were faced with beautiful and amazing sights," Ms. Brogan said in an e-mail. "Between the wildlife and the scenery, it was a lot to take in."

The 21-year-old was doing other film work when the co-owner of the media production company, Switchvert, asked her to help with the Antarctica trip.

She had to make sure she could get school credit from

Houghton first, though.

"My mom would have killed me if I dropped out of college, no matter what the opportunity was," she said.

Altering her semester schedule and counting the trip as an internship, Ms. Brogan boarded a ship in

Argentina that set sail for the icy continent.

Switchvert was filming a group of Irish students as they learned science there.

Ms. Brogan served as the audio engineer, holding the boom mic, placing wireless mics, keeping equipment running, and making sure the crew had all the needed supplies before they set out each day. She also operated a third camera when necessary.

The crew filmed from the ship they were staying on and would take up to three small, inflatable boats to film on land.

"The conditions were defi-

nately extreme. We filmed in gale-force winds and high seas," she said. "There was also plenty of rain and snow. It's hard to film on a boat, especially on high seas, because it's hard to get footing and because the ship has so many tight spaces we were often running into each other. Outside could be challenging for footing as well. I fell into pretty deep snow a few times."

The trip served as a great learning experience for Ms. Brogan.

"I learned a lot about production and, secondarily, about wildlife. It was very intense because of the sheer amount of work that we did," she said. "We often worked all day and most of the night, depending on what was going on. This was also my first shoot with a real production company, so I was a newbie. No one can tell you how to hold a boom mic or get good audio in the weather conditions we were filming in. I had to learn by doing."

One of the more memorable parts of the trip was the one night the crew didn't sleep on the ship and camped out in tents on the continent.

"That was awesome," the communications major said.

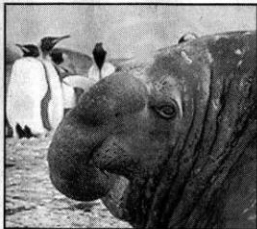


Photo by Kasey Kirby
An elephant seal takes a break from staring at a penguin colony to look at the camera in Antarctica.

Photo by Kasey Kirby
Houghton College senior Kerry Brogan holds a boom mic and video equipment while a penguin colony mingles in Antarctica. She spent 21 days in Antarctica, serving as an audio engineer for the production company Switchvert and receiving college credit.

"(It was) cold, but awesome to fall asleep listening to a penguin colony."

Another part of the adventure Ms. Brogan will always remember is diving into the Arctic water, which was at around 35 degrees Fahrenheit.

Though she got seasick on the ship, Ms. Brogan said she wouldn't hesitate to go to

Antarctica again.

"I never in a million years thought I would make it to Antarctica. I would do it over again for sure," she said. "Though, maybe not on a boat. That wasn't always fun."

Now freelancing for Switchvert and finishing up her last year of college, Ms.

Brogan recommends that people travel.

"Production or not I would always recommend people to go see the world. It makes life more real in some aspects," she said. "You can always watch planet earth but to be able to stand on an iceberg and to watch a penguin slide into the sea is just amazing."