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WKU

Areté

WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY HONORS February/March 2007

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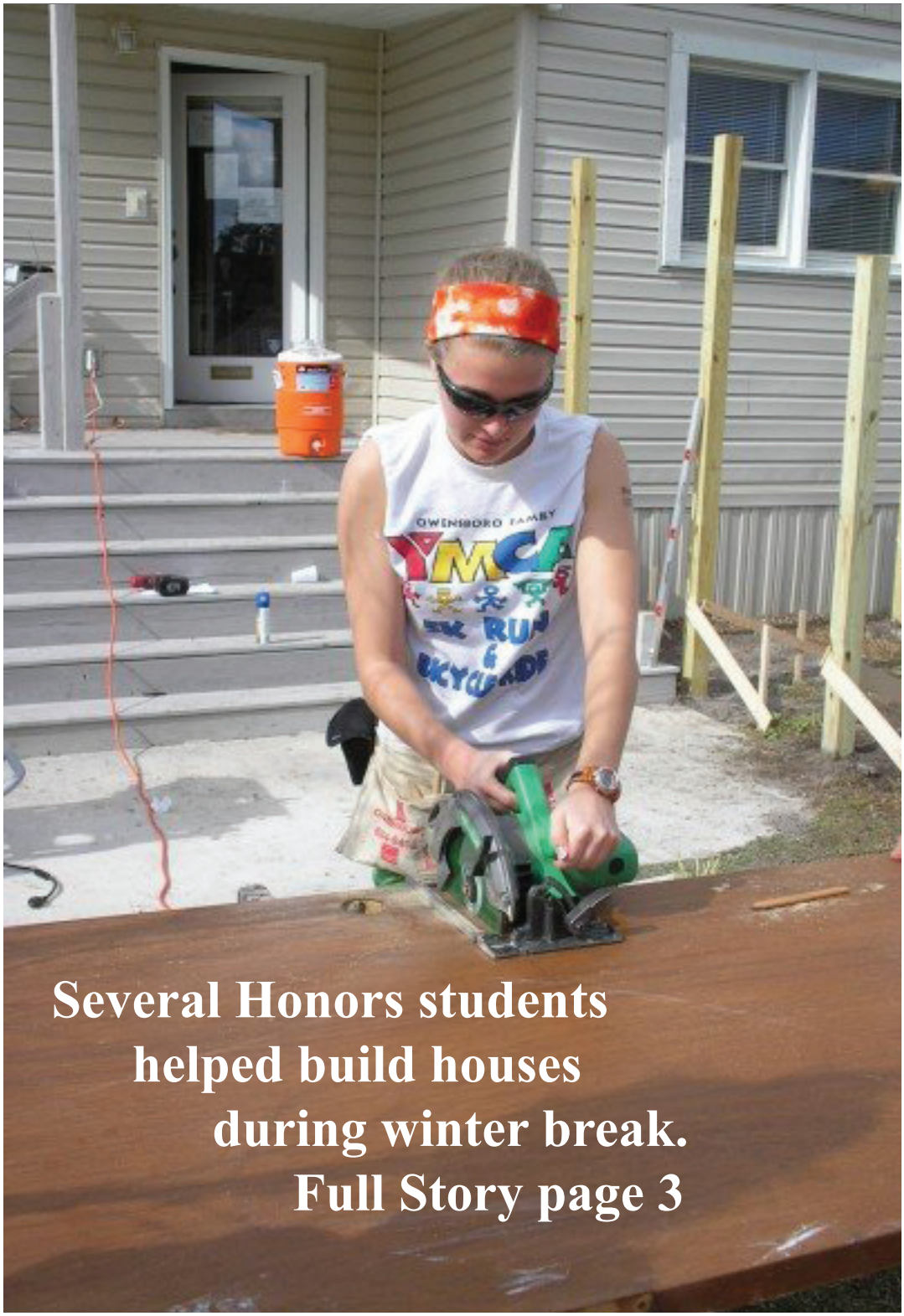

Several Honors students helped build houses during winter break.

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Profile

"Office Manager" more appropriate title for 11-year employee

by Matthew Jenkins

Odds are if you are a Western Kentucky University Honors student, in your inbox is an email from Lisa Beaty. Whether it be a scholarship application, an application for national Honors fraternity, or just information about upcoming Honors program events, almost everything related to the Honors Program is filtered through Lisa Beaty in some form or fashion.

An 11-year employee of the Honors Program, Ms. Beaty hails from Albany, Kentucky, a town of about 2,200 between Dale Hollow Lake and Lake Cumberland. Ms. Beaty graduated from Clinton County High School in 1977, and Western Kentucky University in 1981.

During her 11-year tenure at the Honors Program, Ms. Beaty has been the office associate, but she described her job more accurately as "office manager." While

Lisa Beaty

Dr. Craig Cobane and the students are the face of the Honors Program, Ms. Beaty is the driving force behind this well-oiled machine. Without Ms. Beaty's contributions, the day-to-day management of the Honors Program would fall to pieces. Her job requires that she correspond with students, complete the necessary paperwork for the Honors Program, complete computer work (including email and website troubleshooting), and keep Dr. Cobane's calendar.

Not all of Ms. Beaty's time is spent at the Honors Center, however. In her spare time Ms. Beaty sings in her church's worship choir and is involved in the children's ministry as well. She also is involved with her church's production of plays; currently, she is the stage manager for the production of *Fiddler on the Roof*. Ms. Beaty's other hobbies include watching the television show *Lost*, reading, and traveling.

While she is a busy woman, Ms. Beaty said that students shouldn't hesitate to email her with questions.

Colloquia to be offered May, Fall 07

This May Term, there are two Honors Colloquia available to take:

1. "The Earth's Water Resources: Debating the Coming Water Crisis" taught by Dr. Scott Grubbs (Biology).
2. "Radically Disruptive Innovations" taught by Dr. Scott Droege (Management).

Currently, there are three Honors Colloquia offered for Fall 2007:

1. "Climate Change" taught by Dr. Margaret Crowder (Geology/Geography).
2. "Creation of New Societies" taught by Dr. Travis Wilson (Consumer & Family Sciences).
3. "Human Rights" taught by Dr. Sam McFarland (Psychology).

Read our next issue to find out more about these courses.

Have a professor in mind that you think would do an excellent job at leading a Colloquium? Ask him or her to consider offering one soon.

Calendar Of Events

- **March 21**
  SGA applications due
- **March 30-April 1**
  Smokey Mtns. Trip
- **April 2**
  HonorsToppers applications due
- **April 11**
  Registration for Honors students

Other News

- The HDB columns, and Dr. Cobane's column will return next month.

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Questions? Comments? Got an idea for a story? Interested in joining the staff?
EMAIL US AT ARETE@WKU.EDU

Several Honors students take part in Habitat for Humanity Collegiate Challenge during Winter break

by Dana Adams

While many people enrolled in a winter term class, worked, or stayed at home with their families, life was different for a few Honors students who took up the opportunity to participate with Habitat for Humanity's alternative break program.

Habitat partakers were placed on one of three different teams traveling to Tennessee, Alabama, or Georgia. Students were merged with a diverse array of peers from various majors, activities, and backgrounds, all working towards a common goal. They were supervised by building coordinators who instructed them on the proper building techniques and monitored safety.

Not only did they work on building projects in conjunction with the local affiliate, but they were also introduced to the lifestyles of the community. For a $65 fee participants explored the town and surrounding areas, ate great meals, and had fun.

Educationally, they also learned about Habitat's mission and discovered why so many people volunteer with this organization. The team that worked in Georgia conveniently stopped by Americus (the location of Habitat for Humanity International headquarters) on its way home to explore the Global Village Discovery Center.

A model "shanty town" is the first section to tour. This shows full-size replicas of shacks that many low-income families reside in. It also has facts about the problems that occur within substandard communities and photographs that show the families that actually live in those circumstances. The next stage at the center shows a Global Village. This part contains examples of homes that are being constructed by Habitat affiliates worldwide to serve as a solution to the housing problem.

Thanks to the support from these main sponsors--WKU Campus Chapter of Habitat for Humanity, Architectural and Manufacturing Sciences Dept., Aramark, Ogden College, University Honors Program, and the Provost's Initiatives for Excellence--students are able to have this opportunity.

If you are interested in becoming involved with Habitat please contact the organization. Chapter meetings are held every other Tuesday in DUC 308 at 5:45 p.m. To contact visit www.wku.edu/habitat or at habitat@wku.edu.

Commentary

Student experiences gender differences while studying abroad in Japan

by Christy Kibodeaux

Studying abroad is an amazing opportunity that can enhance one's perspective of the world and oneself. There are many people who have never left their own state, much less traveled abroad. An entire world exists waiting to be embraced and explored beyond the comfort of your own home. People who do not seek out the unfamiliar are forever confined to a narrow stagnant perspective of themselves and relations with foreign countries. Every day we are coming closer to becoming a global society. Events, good or bad, that occur in other countries have the ability to affect us; thus we need to know what is beyond our egocentric perspective.

I am in Hirakata, Osaka, Japan, studying abroad for one semester at the Kansai Gaidai University.I have been here for three weeks, and I have already had my trials and tribulations. Being away from friends, family, and the familiar is a little daunting. Not being able to communicate is frustrating; societal conflict with different outlooks and perspectives… also frustrating.

There is a raging gender war in Japan, and the tension is rising. Japan's population is declining because of a low birth rate which has led to an ongoing political concern. The Prime Minster, Shinzo Abe, is pushing for some women's rights to be removed. The thought is that women are to blame for the low birthrate because too many women are working instead of being homemakers and producing babies.

On January 27, 2007, Health Minister Hakuo Yanagisawa stated, "The number of women aged between 15 and 50 is fixed. Because the number of childbearing machines and devices is fixed, all we can ask for is for them to do their best per head." This comment referencing women as childbearing machines has caused many people to become upset and is an example of the growing gender war in Japan.

One more example of the raging gender war in Japan is the turmoil that has arisen concerning a simple term, "gender-free." In Japanese schools, it was customary to call roll by gender instead of by alphabetical order. Boys' names were called first and then girls. This practice changed in some schools, and roll began to be called alphabetically. The Tokyo board of education believes roll calls "on the basis of the gender-free idea completely ignore the differences between men and women." The Tokyo board of education wanted to return to the traditional roll -calling method. Headlines in the newspapers such as, "Women's rights groups slam board of education" soon followed.

How do these tatoeba (examples) make you feel? Did you know anything like this was going on in a considerably industrialized modern society? I did not until I came. Incidences like this make me question many practices and ideas I have on politics. Japan is a democracy,

and if it can happen in Japan, it could happen in America. If the wrong officials are elected to office for the wrong reasons, who knows? One day a politician in America might get the bright idea to start advocating to lessen women's rights in America. Then we will find ourselves in Japan`s predicament. (Think I am embellishing? It is thought that the reason the Prime Minister of Japan was elected was because some women supported him for the same reason some women voted for President Bill Clinton: they thought he looked gentle and handsome.)

Since I am an American, I have very strong feelings about what is occurring in Japan, and I worry about the outcome. Japan is a male-dominated society and women have been making giant leaps and strides for equality. Much progress has been made, but with a Prime Minster advocating for rights to be taken away, it leaves me feeling as if Japan is trying to go backwards.

The Japanese culture is not my own, and I have to recognize that many simple questions to me are taxing to other cultures. Many activist women's organizations are working hard to keep the rights they have earned in

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Class takes Honors student to London for new experiences

by Sam Micallef

Over the long (or short – depending on who you are) five weeks of winter break, many Western students participated in a variety of activities: working, visiting family, relaxing, skiing, being brain-dead, or even learning during January term. As you may know, Western offers an assortment of classes for students to take over the winter break on campus. This year, however, thirteen of WKU's students traveled to London, England, to study works by and visit sites associated with William Shakespeare, Charles Dickens, John Keats, Virginia Woolf, and others. One of WKU's Honors students, Kaitlen Osburn, was one of the lucky students who spent her winter break doing just that.

The trip was sponsored by the Cooperative Center for Study Abroad (CCSA); therefore other schools also participated in traveling to London during this time, including NKU and EKU. Leading Western's class was none other than Honors professor, Dr. James Flynn. Osburn said that Dr. Flynn was an excellent professor to have as a study-abroad teacher and highly recommended him. "He was really energetic about teaching us, and you could tell that he knew the material well," stated Osburn.

The trip lasted two weeks, from December 26 until January 8. There were three day trips to Canterbury, Bath, Stonehenge, and Stratford, the birthplace of William Shakespeare. Of course, London is where most of the time was spent. Sights included were the Canterbury Cathedral, the Dover Castle, the Roman Bath, the Globe Theatre, St. Paul's Cathedral, the British Library, and more. Four theatrical productions were also provided, but majority of the rest of the time was spent doing what the students wanted to do. They were free to wonder London as they pleased. Kaitlen, as a performing arts major, enjoyed other theatrical shows, or visiting the local pubs.

Study abroad trips are obviously not just about seeing the sights of another country, but also about learning new things and studying. The group met as an actual sit down class only about three or four times. Selected reading included *A Christmas Carol*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, and other handouts. Osburn commented about the course, "The work wasn't too overbearing and a good amount. For me, the way everything was arranged was the perfect mix." Class also continued out on the tours and excursions.

One of the most valuable aspects of studying abroad has to offer is seeing a different country or a new culture. Osburn personally loved what England had to offer. She said, "You wouldn't think that [England] would be that different since we speak the same language and wear the same clothes, but it was a completely different culture." She felt that England is more culturally diverse than the United States and that the locals were very friendly. Good friends were also easy to find even if the students didn't know each other prior to leaving the airport.

The main concern to studying abroad is the program cost. However, there are different scholarships available and sponsorships to make the cost more affordable. Most students agree that no matter how much money they spend, it is always well worth it. Literary London was Kaitlen Osburn's first study abroad experience, and she loved it, recommending studying abroad to everyone. She said that she would definitely like to study abroad again and, "If it was free, I would all the time."

Commentary

Student experiences gender differences while studying abroad in Japan

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Japan, but the reverse is also true. Only time will tell, and then effects may be felt. If women's rights are lessened and job perspectives are taken away, what does that mean for international businesswomen wanting to do business with Japan? It does affect us, or at least some of us, and it surely can provoke negative or positive emotions depending on your position, a perspective most likely culturally engrained in your psyche.

Am I discouraged being in Japan? Absolutely not! Studying in another country like Japan is exciting, challenging, and brings out the best in me, showing me my strengths, values, and my weaknesses. There are many great things about Japan and its people. There are many things to learn and to see in Japan: intellectual pursuits, religious pondering, esthetic enjoyment, and personal self-awakening.

I encourage all of you to study abroad, or at the very least subscribe to an international newspaper. Explore your world, and discover more about yourself. Funding for international travel does not have to come out of your own pocket. Find out about scholarships available to you and apply. I wrote essays and applied to two prestigious scholarships: The Freeman-Asia and The Gilman Award, and I received both of them. Apply yourself and seek out your dreams.

Exploring the American Dream

Honors Course Opportunity for Fall

by Bobby Deignan

"Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us. It eluded us then, but that's no matter—tomorrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms farther…And then one fine morning— So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past."

With those eloquent words, F. Scott Fitzgerald ended his famous novel about the American Dream, *The Great Gatsby*. The American Dream has always been a powerful theme in literature, film, politics, and everyday life in our country. When it comes down to it, how do you define the American Dream? Do you think your life is affected by it?

Next fall, the American Studies course will give students the opportunity to explore and discuss these types of questions. American Studies is an interdisciplinary course, and three professors from different departments—History, English, and Political Science—will team-teach the class. According to Dr. Ted Hovet, an Associate Professor of English and director of the Film Studies minor, "This class will look at a variety of different sources that deal with the American Dream such as films, books, and historical documents."

The ideal American Studies class would have students with a diversity of majors. Having students from different concentrations will bring many unique perspectives to the course. Dr. Tony Harkins, Assistant Professor of History, said, "The class will be discussion-based. There will be no lectures, so the course will be student-dependent." The mixture of students will make these conversations fascinating and challenging.

What kind of work will this class have? Each week, the class will be assigned readings, and students will keep a journal for reflections on what they talked about in discussion, what they read for homework, or just things they encounter outside of class. Dr. Harkins said there would also be an eight to ten-page research paper towards the end. This way, the dialogue about the American Dream can be supplemented by independent research. Additionally, individual students will be responsible for leading the discussion on appointed days.

What sets this class apart from others? Why should I take American Studies? Dr. Hovet said, "This class is unique because it's interdisciplinary, team-taught, and students can take it more than once since the topics change each semester. Also, it's totally about the interaction between the students and their ideas. It should be very exciting and stimulating." Even if the topic of the American Dream doesn't sound interesting to you now, after hearing intense, in-depth discussions about its affect on history, culture, and politics of our country, you can't help but feel differently.

Students have the option of counting American Studies as a History, English, or Political Science credit or as a general elective. This class will also be offered as an Honors credit even though it's not strictly an Honors course. Dr. Harkins said, "The instructors will meet outside of class with the Honors students and ask them what kind of projects they would like to work on. The idea is to make the class a distinct experience with a meaningful amount of work for the Honors students."

If you take this American Studies course, you will gain perspective about the American Dream and whether the United States really is really "a shining city on a hill" or "a dystopian land characterized by violence, bigotry and materialism." What is your vision of America? Are you willing to have it challenged? If you're interested in a free exchange of ideas and thorough explorations of the American Dream, then this class is for you.

Look for this class listed as either ENG 320-501 or HIST 320-501. If you would like additional information about this course, you can contact Dr. Hovet at ted.hovet@wku.edu or Dr. Harkins at anthony.harkins@wku.edu.

We want to hear from you!

Think about the perks of being an Honors student. There are the better dorms, the smaller classes, and all those excellent opportunities for activities on and off campus. However, there still isn't an outlet for us Honors students to express our opinions publicly.

Starting next issue, the *Areté* staff is offering you the chance to write in short letters to the editor about the goings-on in the Honors program. Want to talk about an Honors class you've taken? Do you want to see something change? Here's your opportunity to do so! But there's a catch—your letter must be constructive and informed (rants and harassments will not be published…sorry).

If you're interested in sending in a short letter, email it to arete@wku.edu

HonorsToppers looking for students interested in serving the Honors Program

The HonorsToppers are now accepting applications for the 2007-2008 academic year. This is an organization that is devoted to the promotion of the Honors Program. Becoming an HonorsTopper is a unique opportunity for students to give back to WKU and the Honors Program. You can pick up applications at the Honors Center anytime. All applications are due by April 2. Interviews will be held on April 16-17, followed by a mandatory training retreat on April 20-21. If you have any questions, feel free to contact the HonorsToppers at honors.toppers@wku.edu.