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Arête: Honors College at WKU Newsletter

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Honors College

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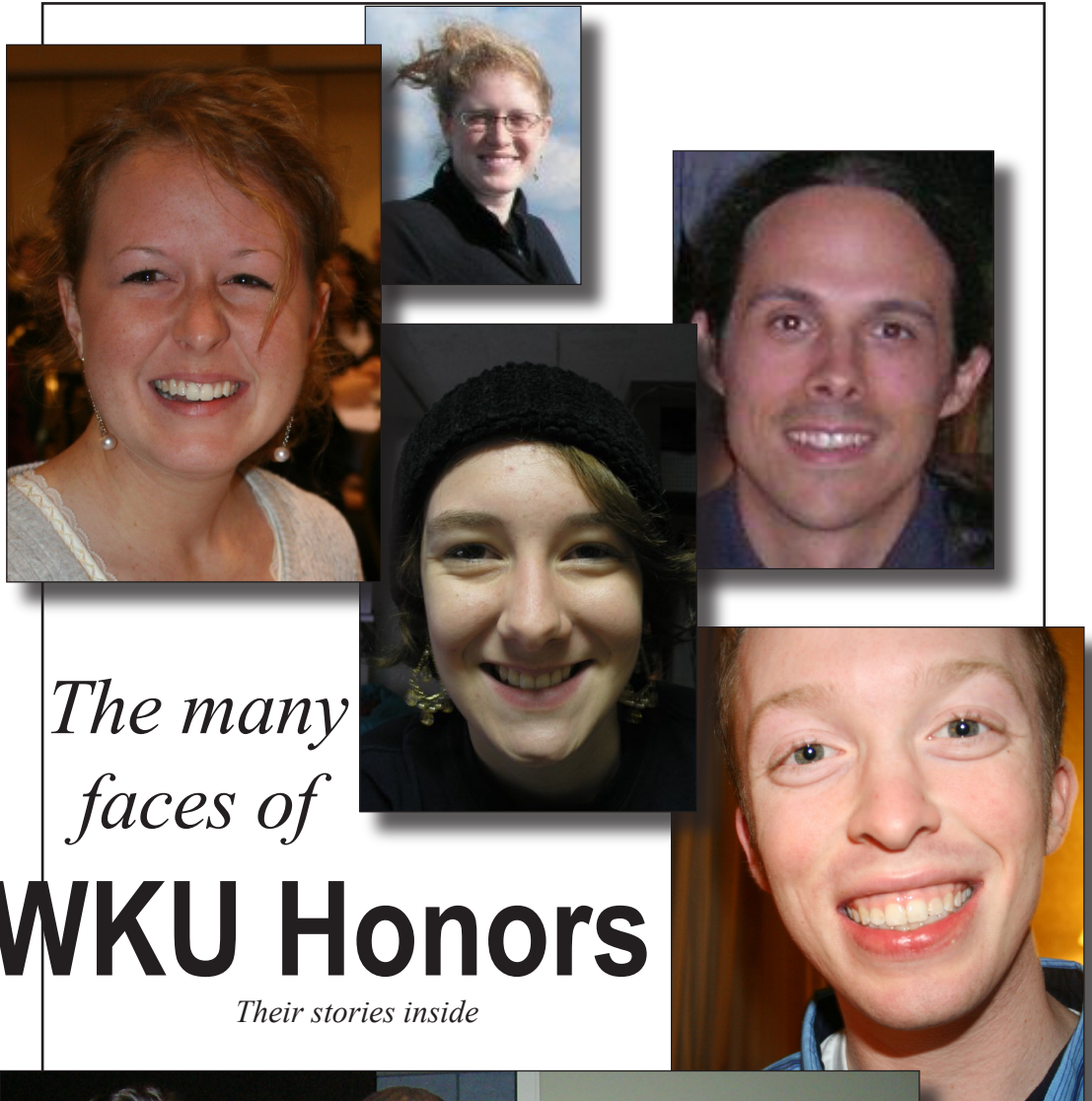
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Congratulations to
Lindsey Thurman,
NCHC student of
the year.



*The many
faces of*

WKU Honors

Their stories inside



Director's Column

Honors: More than just a community feel



By Craig T. Cobane

“Collegial Associations” is a term I use regularly. It is a concept that is at the core of my philosophy of what defines an Honors experience. Rest assured you will hear more about, and see the development of, collegial associations in the future.

The term collegial associations is often used as a synonym for “honors community.” Although there is substantial overlap in the terms, collegial associations is a broader and more encompassing concept.

On most college campuses there are four broad communities: students, faculty, staff and administrators. Typically, “community development” focuses on inter-group dynamics, and the development of social bonds to a near familial-like relationship among those who participate. Some obvious and visible communities on campus include: Greek system, varsity athlete programs, and departmental and collegiate faculty social networks, all of which are self-selecting communities facilitating the development of social bonds. The development of a deep familial-like relationship with those outside the self-defined group or between these groups is less common (and not a stated goal).

There is nothing intrinsically wrong with creating these types of communities. In fact, most research demonstrates conclusively that active participation in a community improves both the college experience and the performance of student. Addi-

tionally, the deeper and richer the bonds the more benefits students gain from participation in the community.

Each group listed above strives to develop community, but each limits the breadth of its relationships. For example, members of the Greek community focus almost exclusively on their own “Houses” and then to a lesser degree on other Greeks organizations. Of course, there is nothing inherently wrong with this and there are many advantages, but community misses out on the possibilities inherent in including staff, faculty and administrators in a conscious and sustained manner. The same could be stated for almost all communities on a campus.

It is the Honors Program focus on collegial associations, over mere community, which makes it different from others on campus. The Honors Program’s primary *raison d’être* is the building of collegial associations which facilitate the “life of the mind.” Put simply,

the development of familial relationships between and among students, faculty, staff and administrators is the primary objective of the WKU Honors Experience.

You see this in almost every Honors event (e.g., BBQ with the Prof., Picnic with the President, whitewater rafting, camping, Lion King, etc.). The goal is that events include all four WKU communities. It helps to explain the Honors Program’s promotion of interdisciplinary study, shared cohort experiences, small faculty-to-student ratios, faculty-led study abroad and field trips, and the CE/T committees. The goal of each is to bring together students, faculty, staff and/or administrators in an environment conducive to developing the “life of the mind.” It is in the development of rich and lasting familial relationships between and among these four diverse communities which produces the life-changing benefits of the Honors experience.

CALENDAR *of* EVENTS

■ JAN. 2

WINTER TERM CLASSES BEGIN

■ JAN. 15

MLK DAY - UNIVERSITY CLOSED

■ JAN. 17

DORMS OPEN FOR SPRING SEMESTER

■ JAN. 22

SPRING TERM CLASSES BEGIN

Do you have an Honors event we should include here?
Email the editors at arete@wku.edu.

New! Areté writing contest

Each month, the Honors newsletter will hold a writing contest for Honors students. Entries will be judged by the newsletter staff, and the winning submissions will be published in the next month’s issue of *Areté*.

There will be no contest this month due to winter break. If you have an idea for a future writing contest, email us at arete@wku.edu.

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Christina Billings	Matthew Jenkins
Bobby Deignan	Brittany Kittleman
George Eklund	Sam Micallef
Reagan Gilley	Mannie Webb
Dunja Zdero	

Questions? Comments? Got an idea for a story?

EMAIL US AT ARETE@WKU.EDU

HDB student column**What your reps have been up to this month****Your representatives****Senior Representative**

Lindsey Thurman
 Hometown: Russell Springs, Kentucky
 Major: English
 Where do you see yourself in ten years?
 I see myself in an administrative role in an Honors Program or College, preferably here at WKU!

Sophomore Representative

Ashley Belcher
 Hometown: Owensboro, Kentucky
 Major: News Editorial and Spanish
 Where do you see yourself in ten years?
 In ten years I hope I will be out of the Peace Corps. I will be living on the Spanish coast,

writing for an ultra-liberal revolutionary paper.

Freshman Representative

Kevin Smiley
 Hometown: Danville, Kentucky
 Major: Social Studies Ed. and History
 Where do you see yourself in ten years?
 In ten years, I would like to be a successful high school social studies

teacher, teaching students the necessary information to be civically and historically aware of the events that surround them and are important to them.

This month's columnist**Junior Representative**

Jeff Sorce

Hometown: Arlington Heights, Illinois
 Major: Social Studies, History Ed.
 Where do you see yourself in ten years?
 I plan to be a high school history teacher. Also, I want to be married with one kid and another on the way. I may have a master's degree in my future, as well.

There has been a lot of talk as to what the Honors Development Board student representatives really have a say in, and what we are working on to better the Honors Program. To give all of you a taste of what we have been working on, here is one of the hot topics that has crossed our table. This issue will affect all Honors students living on campus, and we hope that you will give us feedback by emailing any of the student reps.

Everyone in Honors wants to be in the coveted Honors housing. But, did you know that there is a point system that gets you there? We (the student representatives of the Honors Development Board) are currently redesigning the way that point system works. There are many variables affecting your points, but we are doing our best to make sure that the system is fair to everyone. As most of you know, the Honors Program has acquired some new residence halls next year. We will now occupy McLean Hall, Bates-Runner Hall, and the first five floors of Minton Hall. As the Program grows, there are going to be competitions to get into a "better" hall. The hierarchy being designed is that seniors and high-end juniors will be in McLean, juniors and high-end sophomores will be in Bates, and the majority of sophomores and freshmen will be in Minton. Students will earn points determined on how many

Honors credits they have taken. This way, if there is a sophomore who REALLY wants to be in McLean over Bates, the following year, he or she will have the opportunity to take some extra Honors classes and possibly have more points than that junior. G.P.A. will only be used in tie-breaking situations.

There are sticky issues when an Honors student wants to room with a non-Honors student. In such a case, these two students would take the average of both of their points as their total points as a unit. For example, if there is an Honors sophomore with 12 points who wants to room with a non-Honors junior who, of course, has 0 points, they each will have six points. This will significantly lower their chances of getting into a "better" hall. This is a decision that they both will have to make, and see if it is "worth" it to room together.

We understand that these situations are bound to come up and we will soon be putting out a form so that all Honors students will know exactly how many points they have and where that might place them the following year. Again, we are trying to be as fair to everyone as possible, but there are just some situations that cannot be solved on paper. Thank you all for your understanding, and please know that we have your best interest in mind. We look forward to hearing from you in the future!

On the road

NCHC attendees to help shape Honors

By Tedde Harden

Our Honors Program is going through some exciting changes, which promises to make it one of the best in the nation. There is no doubt that WKU's inaugural trip to the Nation Collegiate Honors Council is a sign that the program is ready, willing and able to start these changes.

Eight students and eight professors from the Honors Development Board traveled to Philadelphia from Nov. 15-19 in order to learn what Honors students, staff and professors are doing around the country to make their Honors programs special. We wanted to bring these ideas back to WKU to implement them here, all in the hopes of making our own program top notch.

From panels on diversity to mentoring programs there was a wealth of knowledge to obtain at the NCHC; surely the Honors Program at WKU will begin to see the effects of this introductory experience soon.

It was not all about learning new things though; WKU Honors also shared our own experience with others from around the country. Both at the personal level and through panels, WKU made its voice heard.

Our own George Eklund presented a panel at the conference about a court case in Pennsylvania that dealt with the ever-present issue of evolution and schools. This was one of the many crowning achievements that showed WKU has a stellar program and has something to offer other schools.

WKU had another amazing experience thanks to the hard



work and dedication of Lindsey Thurman. Lindsey was recognized as the Honors Student of the Year. Her work for WKU's Honors Program set her apart and helped her win this honor over twenty other finalists from Honors Programs around the nation.

Next year when Lindsey has graduated we all will sorely miss her, but she has set a standard that all Honors students should strive for. If every Honors student put forth even a fraction of

the effort that Lindsey has, her legacy will live on in a thriving Honors program.

In the next few years the inaugural class who attended the NCHC conference is sure to be moving our program in a new direction.

From our Director of Recruitment, Ashley Belcher, to the president of our Honors Club, Emily Turner, to Honors Toppers Derek Gaboriault and Reagan Gilley, the future of our program is in good hands, thanks in

part to the experiences they all had at the NCHC conference.

Next year the NCHC plans to hold its annual conference in Denver, Colorado, the mile-high city. It is sure to be a great experience for all who attend. As Honors students you all have the opportunity to go and add to the discussion about Honors.

If you are interested, talk to Dr. Cobane and see how you could help bring the future of the WKU Honors program to fruition.

Honors presents

Students show off at mini-conference

By Tedde Harden

On Dec. 1, 2006, Dr. Angela Jones' Honors English 100 Class put on a conference for WKU freshmen to present their work relating to their experiences at college. The presentations were grouped into three panels.

First, there was a panel dealing with the college community, second, there were papers focusing on college advice, and finally, papers about campus life.

Together these topics and the papers in each made up the Centennial Project Conference. This conference provided a way for young students to experience what a real national or regional conference might be like, preparing them to go further in the future. Often people's number one reason not to do something has to do with fear or nerves, but a chance like this will give all involved confidence in themselves and their work.



The conference opened with a welcome by none other than Dr. Gary Ransdell, an ardent supporter of this Universities Honors Program. It was great to see him come out in support of not only the Honors program but also the English department. It is wonderful to see students being involved on campus and hopefully programs like this one will continue to blossom and showcase some of the excellent talent that exists here at WKU.

**On the road**

Honors has a roarin' good time in Nashville

By Bobby Deignan

On Nov. 7, members of the Honors Program, accompanied by President Gary Ransdell and his wife Julie, went to see the award-winning musical *The Lion King*. At 2:15 in the afternoon, the coach bus departed from campus and headed south on I-65. About an hour and a half later, we arrived in beautiful Nashville, TN.

Our first stop was Lalibela's Restaurant where we enjoyed traditional Ethiopian food. We had to be a little adventurous—

we were supposed to eat our dinner with our hands, but some of us cheated and used forks.

"It was definitely fun and interesting to eat according to Ethiopian customs," said Renee Davidson, a junior English major. After we finished, we headed over to the Tennessee Performing Arts Center (TPAC) for the show.

You could see how anxious everyone was for the show to start. As soon as the lights dimmed and the curtain rose, the voice of Rafiki, the shaman-like baboon, filled the entire auditorium. Ac-

tors dressed as different wildlife paraded onto the stage—there was everything from rhinos to cheetahs, two towering giraffes, and even an elephant.

Jacob Vervynckt, a sophomore Chemistry major, said, "The show was amazing. The casting was perfect and the visuals were extraordinary."

Aside from the astounding set pieces, the costumes also played a huge role in the show's spectacle. "The costumes were out of this world," said Rachel Mccubbins, a sophomore Fashion & Costume Design Major.

"Since costume design is my thing, the show was a really inspiring experience!"

There wasn't a weak member on the entire cast, and the leads gave exceptional performances. Rafiki continually stole the show with her lively presence and incredible voice. Nala brought the house down in the second act with her song, "Shadowland." It was truly an unforgettable time. The trip was an excellent chance to meet new friends in the Honors program and enjoy a great evening of exciting food and magnificent theatre.

Honors achievers

Freshman publishes poetry

By Brittany Kittleman

Kaitlen Osburn is most certainly an Honors student here at Western, being a freshman and also a published author. In March of 2006, she published a book entitled *Java Dreams*, a collection of six original miscellaneous short stories. The subjects cover a wide range of ideas, from a ship doomed at

sea to an English butcher to a young man's quest for love.

Kaitlen explained that she published her book for her high school senior project, a requirement for graduation. "You had to choose a career and produce a product with twenty-five plus hours of work into it, and write a research and ethics paper on a topic relating to the career. The book was my product."

Just recently, her book went through a second printing after the first printing of two hundred books sold out. If you are interested in purchasing a copy of *Java Dreams*, it is available online at www.bardyoung.com for \$10, or at Landmarks Booksellers in Franklin, Tennessee. The funds from the selling of Kaitlen's book go towards study-abroad trips.



Kaitlen Osburn

Honors achievers

Alumnus' book describes travels in Asia

By Christina Billings

Have you ever wanted to go abroad to Asia for three years? Visit eight different countries in 1000 days, and then write a book on your journeys?

This is exactly what Chris Wedding, 1999 WKU Honors alumnus, depicts in his book, *Three Years in Asia: Forgotten Buddhist Temples, Barefoot Children, and Unexpected Romance*.

The book describes Wedding's experiences with the Japanese Exchange and Teaching Program, shares concerns with the culture and environmental issues, and includes a touch of humor.

The JET Program is a government program that invites graduates to live in Japan to work with the local government. Wedding taught over 5,000 children while he traveled around Asia.

One of his goals for this book is that it will reach college students in hope that they will learn about other countries and travel overseas.

Wedding's book is available online. He is donating more than 25 percent of the proceeds to a charity in Southeast Asia whose purpose is to improve the welfare of local children. He is currently living in North Carolina with his wife and son.



Chris Wedding

Honors achievers

Students take on KAS, several win awards

By Reagan Gilley and Mannie Webb

The 92nd annual meeting of the Kentucky Academy of Science (KAS) was held on Nov. 9-11, 2006, at Morehead State University.

This conference covers all major fields in the sciences—

areas such as biology, chemistry, mathematics, physics, geography, and psychology, amongst a number of others (23 total)—and is the largest meeting of scientists in the state.

A number of Honors students attended this annual conference, and several won awards for presenting their research.

Award winners included:

Cabrina Hamilton
3rd Place

Ecology and Environmental Science

Mannie Webb
2nd Place - Zoology

Reagan Gilley
3rd Place - Physiology and Biochemistry

Congratulations to all who won, and best of luck to all who will present next year (make sure you attend if you can—it's a blast!)

Thesis matters



Costumes make the thesis

George Eklund

Glamour. Style. Authenticity. These are words that Laura Franzini lives by when she practices her trade. Franzini is a costumer. She is currently working on her capstone project and is taking a non-traditional approach to it.

Franzini designed the costumes for *Blood Brothers*, a recent play here on campus.

When creating costumes you either use the stock that you have in storage or you manufacture some new ones, she said. For all of the main characters, she designed and manufactured their costumes. The hardest thing about making the costumes is to make them flow and complement each other.

Costuming is crucial to the success of the show. The characters have to have costumes that reflect their personality. In the case of *Blood Brothers*, the mothers in the show were complete opposites in personality and the costumes reflected that. Her favorite part of her experience working for the WKU Theater Department was creating costumes for the children in the shows. This was her favorite because she had to get them dirty and make them look like poor children.



Laura Franzini

More work goes into the designing of costumes than some may think. When Franzini got her script, she read it cover to cover, leaving no page unturned. Then she researched the time period in which the play takes place and decided what concepts would work and which would not. It took her six weeks of long days to devise the whole show.

Franzini explained that costuming is often written off as easy work and shopping, but that is not the case.

"Clothes and costumes are completely different. Clothes are something that you wear in your day-to-day life. Costumes are personas that an actor puts on. Costumes are designed and tailored to fit the needs of the designer and the show. Sometimes they are ripped and made to look worn so that they convey a certain message," she said.

After the show Franzini plans to use this project for her capstone project. She plans to talk about her inspirations of her designs and all of the preparation work that has gone into this design scheme.

After graduation, Laura plans to do more shows and design more costumes. She loves what she does. She has never seen herself doing anything else but living show to show.

Honors achievers

Students dance the winter away

By Dunja Zdero

While many students these days head to popular dance clubs, two Western Kentucky University Honors students fulfilled their dancing needs at this year's *Winterdance*.

Senior Laura Franzini and sophomore Rachel McCubbins participated in the five-day event, which premiered on Nov. 30 in the Russell H. Miller Theater. While Franzini worked behind the scenes as part of the costume shop staff, McCubbins brought her talent to the stage. The second annual event, sponsored by WKU's Department of Theatre and Dance, included 11 dance routines, ranging from ballet to modern and even jazz.

"It's like from *The Nutcracker*, like visions of sugarplums dancing through your head, only it's more like a nightmare," said McCubbins in the Dec. 5 edition of the *College Heights Herald* about the "Carol of the Dolls" performance.

She performed in four routines, including "Carol of the Dolls," "Reign of Chaos," "I Believe" and "Oceans to Streams," according to the performance program.

While McCubbins rehearsed for most of the semester, Franzini only had a few weeks to work on the show's costumes.

"It took long hours, but we got it done," said Franzini, who also worked on costumes for last month's musical *Blood Brothers*.

Franzini worked with four other employees and a supervisor to make most of the costumes for the performance. Although the staff did not design the costumes, they cut out the patterns and sewed them for each dancer.

Franzini also made costumes for the children's touring show "Everybody Dance Now," she said. She became interested in theatre her second semester of college, she said. She has also acted, but has lately been concentrating on costume design and technology. Franzini has been a part of dramatic honorary fraternity Alpha Psi Omega for about three-and-a-half years, she said.

"It was just a pinnacle moment of the entire process," she said when she saw her costumes on stage. "It was just so great I had to be excited."