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Arête: Honors College at WKU Newsletter

Honors College at WKU

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Honors College

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Western Kentucky University Honors

October 2006

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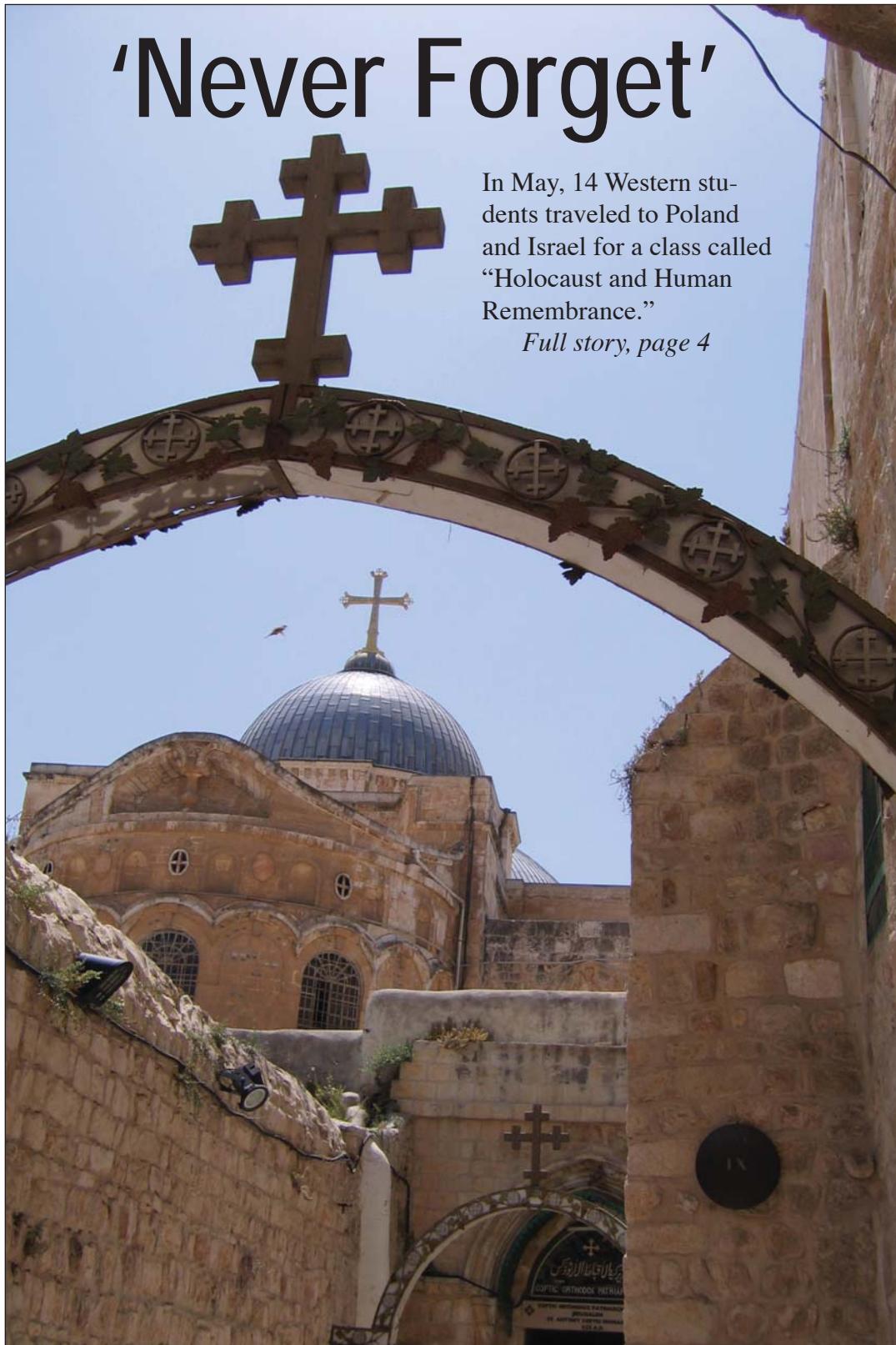
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'Never Forget'



In May, 14 Western students traveled to Poland and Israel for a class called "Holocaust and Human Remembrance."

Full story, page 4



Director's column

WKU Honors: Your gateway to the world

Let me begin by saying welcome to both new and returning Honors students. It is good to have you all back at



By Craig Cobane

WKU because there is a certain energy and excitement on campus when you are here.

The Honors Program (HP) staff has been hard at work all summer planning interesting events and finding ways to improve the program. One of the areas we, along with the entire university, have spent a great deal of effort on is study abroad. In 2005-06, the HP sent nearly 30 students abroad for various periods of time, up from an average of 1.5 in 2000-2005. Also, although Honors comprises only 1.6% of the students at WKU, it represented over 10% of all those who

studied abroad last year. Great job, I am proud of you!

This year there are even more opportunities, and we want to encourage all of you to study abroad. Among the thousands of study abroad opportunities, WKU has sister institution relationships with approximately a half-dozen universities across the globe where you pay your regular WKU tuition and it counts for your tuition at the international university – really a great deal (and yes, most likely your scholarships would pay for it).

Most students and parents do not realize that depending on

where you choose to study, for some of you it will actually be less expensive to study abroad for a semester than to stay here at WKU! This is especially true when you combine your financial-aid package with an Honors study-abroad grant and the WKU WorldTopper scholarship.

Additionally, there are a plethora of scholarships for studying abroad (e.g., Congress-Bundestag, NSEP, Rotary, Freeman Asia, Gilman, etc.).

Come in and let us talk about how to make the WKU Honors Program your gateway to the world.

Academics

Studying abroad: 'the opportunity of a lifetime'

By Sam Micallef

"I had a blast. It was the best money that I had spent thus far," George Eklund IV said of his trip to Germany last May. A total of twenty-five Honors students, including Eklund, studied abroad last winter, spring, summer, or May term.

From Mexico to France, Germany, Ireland, Poland, the Baltic States and more, everyone agrees that they had a wonderful and fun time. Almost everyone said that they would even do it again if they had the chance. Emily Turner, who traveled to Poland and Israel in May, thoroughly enjoyed her trip and said, "I had the most amazing time of my life...and I experienced things that will never pass my memory."

When asked what the best part of study abroad was, most students had trouble naming just one thing. Everything seemed to be a great experience: the food, the people, the sights,

the culture, everything. "My favorite part was the people," Emily Chrisman said about her Poland and Israel trip in May, "The Polish girls were great, giving us tours of the city and teaching us Polish. It's good to meet other people my age who are so unlike me and like me at the same time!"

Some amazing sights spotted were the Cliffs of Mohr in Ireland, the Bundestag in Berlin, the Frauenkirche in Dresden, the Sea of Galilee, and hundreds more. Paul Love, who traveled to Mexico in the winter, particularly enjoyed a sixteenth century cathedral twenty minutes outside of San Cristobal. He said that there were pine needles covering the floor and hundreds of candles scattered across the ground, making the sight remarkable.

Haley Pendleton, who studied abroad in Ireland last summer, said that not only did she get to study in a foreign country, but she also made new friends

and learned more about herself as a person. Pendleton said, "I learned a lot about Ireland's history and culture that I wasn't familiar with before, but the most important things I learned were about me and who I am."

Almost everyone asked said that they would definitely recommend any study abroad destination to everyone. Especially "anyone who is interested in experiencing world travel and learning about a different culture," Eklund added.

Though the cost of travel is a concern to some, others disagree. Love stated that in his opinion, "winter term is especially great because it is the most affordable and the easiest to plan for." Other students said that their experience was well worth the cost.

Traveling with a group can also help keep the cost down. Turner said that her trip to Poland and Israel would have not been the same if she didn't go with a group of other WKU

Honors students. She commented that not only is the price more manageable, especially with the scholarships offered, but that it was designed for everyone to get the most out of the trip. She also added that, "If you don't go in college, you are missing out on the opportunity of a lifetime."

It's not just for language majors

Of the 25 Honors students who studied abroad last year, only two are language majors. Other areas represented:

- Accounting
- Archaeology
- Biology
- Chemistry
- English
- History
- Journalism/Broadcasting
- Philosophy
- Political Science
- Psychology
- Social Studies
- Visual/Performing Arts

Honors Development Board

Students to help run program

By Reagan Gilley and Sam Micallef

This academic school year, the Honors Development Board added four new very important representatives to the committee: students. Wish that you could have a say in how the Honors Program is run? Talk to your newly-elected student representatives.

The Honors Development Board is a committee that oversees the affairs of the Honors Program, and the direction of its progress. It is currently composed of two faculty members from each of the five colleges and, as of this year, includes four Honors students as active voting members.

Dr. Craig Cobane, director of the Honors Program and chairman of the Board, gave his feelings about Honors students on the Board: "Most Honors programs have a token student, who may or may not be able to vote. We want Honors students to be invested with authority on how the program is run."

Therefore, the selected Honors students will make up 25% of the total vote. This will allow the students to have a say in matters important to them, as well as the ability to directly affect the lives of their peers.

Emily Turner, president of the Honors Club, clarifies more about the student positions: "The positions are open to the entire Honors club, and since membership in the Honors Program means membership in the club, that's everybody. We'll have 4 representatives, one from each year class (based upon time in school not credits). These [the elected students] are voting members of the committee; they have

almost all the rights of the faculty members (minus some personnel issues). They will give input and vote on all new Honors policies, study abroad moneys, Honors Development Grant money, changes to GPA requirements, what Colloquium proposals will be accepted, reading through the new CE/T handbook and Honors Student Handbook to see what needs to be changed. As we discuss the new Honors program rules, they will have a say and also be able to pass information along to other students."

Even if you are uninterested in running for a spot on the Board in the future, you should be interested in who will represent you this year. Freshmen voted for the freshman candidates, sophomores voted for the sophomore candidates, and so on.

Of course, being a representative is full of responsibility. Those who were elected to the Board will be expected to attend every meeting, study the issues, vote on almost everything, and write articles for the newsletter on what is new with the Honors Development Board.

If the above sounds like something that may interest you, you should consider running for the Honors Development Board next year.

This year, 147 students (28% of Honors students) voted in the HDB student elections. The elected representatives are:

Freshman class – Kevin Smiley
 Sophomore class – Ashley Belcher
 Junior class – Jeff Sorce
 Senior class – Lindsey Thurman

Honors Development Board 2006-7:

Chair

Craig T. Cobane (Director -- Honors Program)

Honors Program

Walker Rutledge (CE/T Coordinator)
 Angela Jones (Faculty Advisor – Newsletter)

College of Health and Human Services

Dana Bradley – Gerontology
 Gary Villereal – Social Work

Ogden College

David Neal – Mathematics
 Kevin Williams – Chemistry

College of Education and Behavioral Sciences

Anne Rinn – Psychology
 Sylvia Dietrich – Special Instructional Programs

Gordon Ford College

Michelle Trawick – Economics
 Krist Schell - Management

Potter College

Yvonne Petkus - Art
 Jerry Daday – Sociology

Student representatives
(see story)

Academics

Honors increases general elective course offerings

By Sam Micallef

This academic school year the Honors Program is offering the most Honors General Education courses to choose from than it has in the past. The average number of sections available over the last several years has only been 12 sections, excluding non-General Education, Colloquia, and English 300. This fall, however, the

number of sections has more than doubled. There are now 30 Honors sections of freshman-appropriate General Education and Business/Education Core classes available to choose from.

Thanks to these extra classes, there were 671 seats to be filled this fall. In the past, approximately only $\frac{3}{4}$ of the seats were filled. This year, however, a new record has been set with

91.4% of the seats occupied as of August 18. Good news since the more students interested in taking Honors classes, the more classes that can be offered to Honors students.

One reason some students do not wish to join the Honors Program is because they are afraid that taking Honors classes may hurt their GPA. Finally, there is proof that this is definitely not the case. In fact,

according to the data over the past couple of years, 91% of the grades in Honors General Education courses are A & B. The Honors students' grades in non-Honors General Education courses were only 86.5% of A & B. This suggests not only that Honors classes do not hurt GPAs, but that students are more likely to get a better GPA by being in the Honors Program and taking Honors courses.



■ Study ■ Travel ■ Remember

■ Story by Tedde Hardin. Photos by Kat Wilson. ■



Holocaust survivor Halina Birnenbaum describes her experience in the Warsaw umschlagplatz, the place where Jews were collected before being deported to camps like Auschwitz and Birkenau.

Do you remember what you did during your first week of summer vacation? Well, the students who went on the study abroad trip to Poland and Israel sure do.

Without a doubt one of the most rewarding experiences that college offers is the chance to see the world. This summer a group of Honors students and their trusty leaders braved security lines, air travel and passport control to experience a whole new world of adventure and self-reflection.

It wasn't all fun and games though. Their first week of summer vacation consisted of an entire week of class, two papers to write and three books to read. However, no one could complain that it was too much for a semester worth of class credit. After this initial ordeal only adventure and discovery lay ahead.

An initial trip to the "Garden State" and a day of seminars, and finally it was time for a rag tag group of excited travelers to begin their journey.

The next day brought a flight to Poland where the weather is cold, the people are warm, and most of the food is good. Although travel is exciting and new experiences are fun, the time spent in Poland was somber. Along with visiting beautiful cities with Anti-Defamation League friends and exploring culture with new Polish friends, the trip included visiting the remnants of Nazi German occupation.

Continued on next page

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It is difficult to explain an experience at a concentration camp if only because of the highly personal nature of every person's experience. However, everyone who went on this trip was profoundly changed by the experiences. There was fun though because studying abroad is not only about learning. While in Poland the students had the opportunity to eat authentic perogies, dance at a discotheque (with Dr. Cobane), and visit picturesque city squares.

Can you believe this was not even the entire trip? After many miles on a bus and a week in Poland, it was time to leave and visit a new area. This new place was Israel, the tiny Jewish homeland on the Mediterranean. As soon as the airport doors open the proximity of the equator is apparent. Israel is hot, almost all the time, but it is a very workable heat – one that does not take long to get used to. It is truly amazing to follow the Jewish people from ruin to riches. Israel has grown into a unique, interesting and enthralling place. From millennia-old cities to modern skyscrapers, from salty low-altitude lakes to awe-inspiring plateaus, from sandy deserts to mountain passes, Israel has something for everyone.

It is difficult to express almost a month of travel and fellowship in a short article. This is all the more reason for people to take advantage of the Honors Program and International Studies Office to take trips around the world.

Continued on next page

Clockwise from top left:
 Bunks in the building at Birkenau where Halina lived. Honors Director Craig Cobane rides a camel in Israel. ADL students have an emotional moment at Birkenau. Western and ADL students explore a photo exhibit at Birkenau.

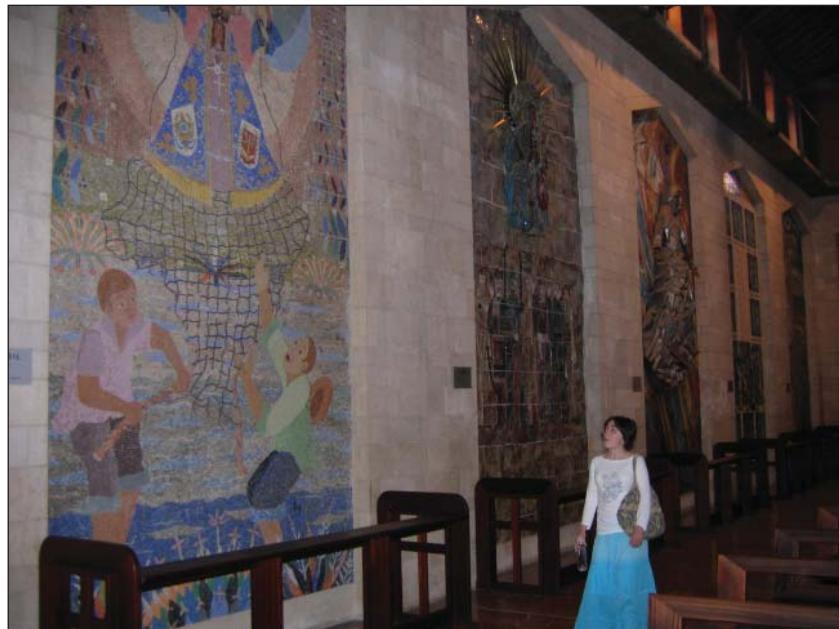




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These are great opportunities to learn new things and have grand adventures. Take the opportunity and start making memories of your own; I'm

sure Dr. Cobane would love to help. Special thanks must go to Dr. Cobane and Dr. Schaffer for going on this trip and sharing so much. Also thanks to all the other WKU staff who helped make this special trip a possibility.



Clockwise from above: Western student Heather Whited looks at depictions of Mary and Jesus from around the world. Western professor Shannon Schaffer and ADL student James Atwater read graffiti on the security barrier separating Israel from the West Bank. Western and ADL students walk down Palm Sunday Road towards Jerusalem.

First-person account

Student gets a 're-education' in Germany

By George Eklund

A feeling of dread overcame me as I sat helplessly 30,000 feet in the air. Turbulence rocked the plane while I gripped my armrests for dear life. Only the thought of my destination, Germany, comforted me and gave me something to look forward to.

I set out for Germany on May 14 and was to visit many sites in and around Berlin and Dresden. My purpose of this trip was to view firsthand the

German culture. When I finally reached my destination, I wasn't sure what to expect. I had no real knowledge of how the German people lived and acted in daily situations. Prior to this experience my exposure to real Germans was very limited and I had no idea what to expect. I was filled with many misconceptions about how the German people were. I held the beliefs that they were a stern and cold-hearted people that showed little compassion or tolerance for others.

During my time abroad I learned many things, but the thing that I cherish the most is that I was proven wrong in how I view the German people. I came to know this culture as a fun loving one that is very willing to help you learn their language and culture.

This realization is far from my false impressions that I had held to be true. At many pubs, restaurants, museums, and train stations, people were very willing to converse with me. I enjoyed how friendly people were

to me even though I was an American. It reminded me very much of southern hospitality that is exhibited in our region of the States.

Going on this trip to Berlin and Dresden was a very worthwhile endeavour for me. I feel that every bit of the money that was paid for the trip has gone toward the betterment of my intellectual development. I look forward to returning to this country to further my education of the German language and culture.

Picnic with the President

On Sept. 7, Honors students and faculty were treated to a picnic, party, and prizes at President Gary Ransdell's house.

Photos by Tedde Hardin

WKU shirt

*Dr. Dana Bradley (Director of the Gerontology Center and Cliff Todd Distinguished Professor of Gerontology)
Brandon Coulvin
Chase McNulty
Josie Theisen

WKU cap

Amanda Brown
Emily Ellison
Roger Gregory
*Dr. Ed Yager (Assoc. Prof. of Government)

WKU umbrella

Brandon Kerr
Chase Thompson

Yard sign autographed by President Ransdell

Justin Mobley
Candace Read

Big Red bobblehead

Heather Johnson
Ben Mudd

Baby Big Red

Samantha Potts
Jeff Sorce

Plush WKU Baseball

Brittany-Ann Wick

Grand prize: iPod

Lizabeth Likins

Honors Bag

(*frisbee, ruler, & sticky notes*)

Devin Bell
John Brantley
Matthew Cooke
Jennifer Dooper
*Dr. Blaine Ferrell (Dean of Ogden College)

Super Honors Bag

(*Honors bag plus water bottle & memo board*)

*John Bonaguro (Dean of College of Health & Human Services)
Ashley Bryant
Geneva Ged
*Dr. Emmanuel Iyiegbuniwe (Asst. Prof. of Public Health)
Abbie Leali
Tony Richardson
Thomas Nash
Jessica VanWinkle
Bradley Venable

*Faculty members

