Honorable Mentions
Newsletter of the University Honors Program
Wright State University
David L. Barr, Director Mary E. Kenton, Assistant Director Beverly Rowe, Secretary
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Scholarship News

Six continuing students were awarded $500.00 Honors scholarships for winter and spring. They were chosen from a group of outstanding applicants, according to Donna Schlagheck, who chaired the selection committee. Prof. Schlagheck's committee--Eileen Self, Rosemary Speers, Eric Crouch--reviewed about 50 applications, examining transcripts, letters of reference, and personal essays. Those selected represent the cream of a very fine crop. Congratulations to--

.Karen Kerwin .Sharon Souder
.Steven Shotts .Jonathan Graetz
.Nancy Baker .Cynthia Konieczny

Ira Fritz is chairing the Research Fund Subcommittee this year. He and fellow committee members Tony Cacioppo, Todd Funderburg, and Verdain Barnes made three awards for fall quarter--

.Eric Bork Motion Pictures
.Karim Tarmohamed Computer Engineering
.Beverly Williams Psychology

$600.00 remains in the fund. The application deadline for winter and spring is February 5. Any student working on an officially approved departmental Honors project is eligible to apply. The fund exists to reimburse students for out-of-pocket expenses connected with their Honors projects.

April 1 is the deadline to apply for Salsburg ($1,800) and Distinguished Senior ($1,500) scholarships. Applications are available in the Financial Aid Office. These awards are for continuing Honors students who are planning to complete the requirements for graduation as a University Honors Scholar or with Departmental Honors. David Wyatt, Terri Gordon, and Karim Tarmohamed are recipients this year.

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Congratulations

Four Honors students--Toby McEvoy, Jo Sine, Todd Funderburg, and Matt Burton--are the Wright State College Bowl Champions. This fabulous four will travel to Flint, Michigan in February for the regional competition. Todd says the hardest question he answered correctly was:

A sheepherder gave 1/2 of his sheep to one son, 1/4 to another son, 1/5 to a third son, and the remaining 7 sheep to his last son. How many sheep were in the herd?

He had only 20 seconds to come up with the answer. It has something to do with the common denominator of 20.

Wish Jo, Todd, Toby, and Matt luck in Flint. Some of you may even want to caravan up to lend more direct support. Details are available from the Student Activities Office in the University Center.

BOOK OF THE QUARTER

Beloved, by Toni Morrison (Knopf/Random House, 1987) Available at the Dayton Library but not at the Wright State Library.
On My Honor

It is now three--almost four--months since I was named to direct the Honors Program. I am beginning to learn the ropes (a task made far easier by the able assistance of Mary Kenton), beginning to discover new possibilities for the program, beginning to get free of the other obligations that I had agreed to before this appointment. Time now to act.

Having talked with many other Honors Directors, read countless program descriptions, and investigated other programs at similar institutions, I am convinced that we have one of the finest programs in the country--a tribute to my predecessor Dr. Jacob Dorn. But a new director implies new directions and new times bring new needs. The greatest weakness of the program, in my view, has been its lack of visibility. Hidden away in the back hallway of Millett with its energies focused on the program, Honors is not well-known or well-understood on campus. We have installed a few signs to help you find us and this Newsletter is an attempt to open up new channels of communication. We have a few other things in mind and are open to your ideas.

In the next few weeks (months? years?) we will be giving attention to how to improve the quality of Honors classes; how to give coherence to an Honors education; how we might better prepare students to compete for national awards; how to secure more scholarship funds for Honors students; how to improve and broaden the pool of Honors teachers; how to relate University Honors to departmental Honors and to stimulate departmental Honors; how to attract more of our bright students into the Honors Program; how to increase and diversify our honors constituency; how to build bridges to the Dayton Schools, to Sinclair Community College, and to other programs which could feed into our Honors Program; how to reward and honor Honors students; how to understand the nature of the universe. Again, suggestions are welcome. If you have concerns or ideas, please share them with Mary or me. This is, after all, your Honors Program.

Food for Thought

This is what David Orenstein wrote in response to the question "what is an honors course?"

I believe the difference between an honors course and any other university course is one of degree, rather than of kind. All higher education (worthy of being called such) demands that students not only amass related sets of factual information, but that they critically reflect upon information gained in class lectures, texts and discussion. In the process of such reflection students look at and evaluate new materials from the vantage of past learning and experience, thereby creating for themselves new understandings of the world and their roles in it. In an honors course the demand for reflection, comparison, evaluation, and creativity is raised to a higher level. The comparatively small size of classes, their inter-disciplinary emphasis, and the selection of highly motivated students combine to produce an atmosphere conducive to exploring views and assumptions in greater depth than generally possible and provide for a comparison of viewpoints from a wide variety of sources. Correspondingly, the role of professors in honors classes is not primarily to lecture (although lecturing may be a part of their activity), but to challenge students. It is to demand that they not just "know" the reading materials, but also know what they think of the ideas expressed in them. It is to encourage students to elaborate their own ideas in an organized confrontation with others, recognizing that the give and take of discussion can produce self-clarification and learning even where it does not produce agreement between all involved.

Professor Orenstein "readily admits that others may not be in agreement." Does anyone want to augment or challenge his definition? Send your ripostes to the Honors Office.
STUDENT HONORS ASSOCIATION NEWS
President, Teresa Pace

The SHA had an active fall and is gearing up for winter. The "Entertainment '88" coupon book sales were a success, netting about $100.00. Lisa Wainscott, SHA historian, put together a scrapbook of SHA since its beginning in 1974. She updates it regularly with photos, meeting announcements, and the like. Watch for news of a student/faculty breakfast late in February. The group plans to raffle bookstore gift certificates around the eighth week of the quarter. Watch the bulletin board outside the Honors Office for SHA news and activities.

ALPHA LAMBDA DELTA NEWS
President, John Herzog

Alpha Lambda Delta is an organization that honors students who maintain at least a 3.5 GPA their first two quarters of college. Wright State's chapter was chartered in 1986 and installed its second group membership in October of 1987. Along with honoring its membership for scholastic achievement, Alpha Lambda Delta also participates in other projects. In December of 1987, the group donated $100.00 to the Holiday Aid drive for the greater Dayton area. Alpha Lambda Delta members volunteered to give tours during new student orientation. This year we hope to develop programs to help freshmen earn better grades. Those who are eligible to join the society are invited to a reception at Rockafeld House hosted by President Paige Mulholland and his wife Mary Bess. The Mulhollans support Alpha Lambda Delta's goal of maintaining an atmosphere at Wright State that will enhance and promote a high level of scholastic achievement.

MID EAST HONORS ASSOCIATION (MEHA)

The MEHA annual meeting will be held in Dayton this year. Honors folk from Ohio, Northern Kentucky, Michigan, Indiana, and Pennsylvania will gather at Bergamo Center on April 15 for an exciting STUDENT CENTERED weekend. Between the big parties on Friday and Saturday nights are sandwiched many fine workshops, a business meeting, an unforgettable talent show, and an old people v. young people volleyball game, weather permitting. The general theme is "what Honors can do for you." If you have some ideas on this subject, propose a workshop. Maybe you would like to help out with local arrangements—if so, see Kevin Denlinger, WSU student representative to the MEHA Executive Committee. Stay tuned for details.

Featured Alumnus

Todd Locher earned a B.S. (summa cum laude) in Biomedical Engineering in 1983. He served on the Honors Committee and was active in both the Student Honors Association and the Pre-Med Society. He won a special Honors Scholarship for the spring of 1982. Although he didn't complete an Honors Program degree, Todd took seven Honors courses, earning "A's" in every one. He will finish medical school at the University of Cincinnati this year. He's scheduled for a stint with the Native Health Service in Alaska before starting his internship, maybe at Minnesota. After that, he owes the Air Force five years. Unlike many, he is looking forward to fulfilling his obligation, and, in typical Todd fashion, he wants to do it someplace interesting—maybe Turkey. Todd fondly remembers his time at WSU and can't understand why anyone would want a six year combined baccalaureate/medical school program. He had such a great time as an undergraduate that he wouldn't have wanted to shorten it.
Guest Column

by Karen Sieger, senior Political Science Major.

Is graffiti political art? Can we blame the homeless for being homeless? Are UN peacekeeping forces effective? How many seats are there on a subway car?

These are only a few of the questions I wondered about during my stay in New York City this past Fall as a participant in the United Nations Semester. This academic term, sponsored by the National Collegiate Honors Council, provided an opportunity for college students to study both the city of New York and the United Nations. The theme of the semester was "Urban to Global Community." Thirty-seven students from all over the United States, as well as Nigeria, Japan, Lebanon and the Bahamas, resided at the Long Island University Brooklyn Center. Academic classes covered such subjects as UN politics, global debt, art and politics, comparative democratic theory and urban communities. Each student also had to do an independent study project.

Instead of studying about New York, we experienced it. In fact, we saw more places than most native New Yorkers ever see. We visited community action groups in Brownsville and the Northwest Bronx, two of the most depressed areas of the country. We met sixth graders in the South Bronx who told us of their experiences avoiding junkies in their apartment buildings and seeing shootings in the street. We also found beautiful treasures in these bombed out areas, such as the Schomberg Center for Black Culture and the Fashion Museum of Harlem.

Our explorations of the city were combined with investigation of the international issues of the United Nations. We had briefings with UN experts on such topics as refugees, US/Soviet relations, the UN Decade for Women, the UN budget crisis and peacekeeping. I did my independent study project on the status of women in the UN Secretariat.

Unfortunately, I found that the UN is not nearly as progressive as I had hoped. But I did meet some very exciting and dynamic women within the system. I had access to the UN library, a wonderful collection of the development of the UN and documentation of the progress of issues the UN has faced since its inception in 1945.

Before the semester, New York had meant a frenzy of crazed shoppers and lunatic cab drivers. But now I realize that it is a city made up of numerous smaller communities. It is also the center where the international community can come together in an attempt to resolve conflicts and improve the global standard of life. Through the UN Semester, I was exposed to issues and situations I had never really thought about, but which have altered my perceptions of the world and my own community and provided me with one of the most exciting opportunities I have ever had.

HONORABLE PRINCIPLES (a.k.a. Murphy's Laws)

The only time you can ever find a parking place in under thirty minutes is when you get confused about floating holidays and come to school when it's closed for Presidents' Day.
Honors Class Profile

Eng. 102: Fall 1987, Vietnam
Professor James M. Hughes

Professor Hughes decided to offer a course on Vietnam for several reasons, not the least of which is "the recent explosion of interest in books and films." Since English 102 is a composition class, the focus was on teaching writing and research writing skills. But all of the literature the students read concerned Vietnam. Here are Prof. Hughes' comments about the books he selected:

Bobbie Ann Mason's excellent novel seems the perfect place to begin looking at the importance of the Vietnam war in our lives today for the book is told from the perspective of a young woman who discovers herself this importance as she increasingly shares her uncle's post-Vietnam anguish--in many ways the book is a pilgrimage and it was hoped that the course would be too.

W.D. Ehrhart's Carrying the Darkness is a collection of poems by Vietnam veterans--this collection inspired our own: everyone in the class was expected to write his or her own poem or short story.

Michael Herr's Dispatches is a journalist's account of the war--a graphic non-fiction prose that was to help students get some of the facts, some of the atmosphere, and inspire them to conduct their own interviews and interview reports.

Christopher Hudson's The Killing Fields is an account of Cambodia, reminding students that "Vietnam" is not the whole geographical story and reminding the students that whatever mistakes the U.S. made, the other sides made some pretty horrendous ones, too.

Finally, the final exam was a free-for-all response to Norman Mailer's shocking Why Are We In Vietnam? All the Mailer challengers did very well on the final, an in class essay answering Mailer's title question with citations from his text.

Class sessions included William Wyler's film, The Best Years of Our Lives, a student made a slide-music presentation, and two visits from Frank Merica, a WSU student who is a Vietnam veteran. A member of the audience on those occasions was Merica's son who was hearing his father's story for the first time.

Students in the class prepared research papers and gave twenty minute oral reports. Prof. Hughes was impressed with the range and quality. Some examples he mentions: there was an excellent...
study of the experience of nurses in Vietnam
there was a provocative analysis of the war effort
and Christianity (e.g. role of chaplains and just war
theory)
there were several papers on post-Vietnam syn-
drome and the effects of
Agent Orange
One paper showed the
pre-war, 1930's and
1940's, foundations of the
new left protest movement

Given the still controver-
sial nature of the topic, Hughes says "two warnings
governed my own handling of the ideas in the
course: one, all ideas
were respected even though
debate was encouraged...and
two, respect for veterans
[was] central."

According to the student
evaluations of the course, it
was a resounding suc-
cess. They report that in
addition to learning about
Vietnam, they learned to
read, write and think bet-
ter and to discuss more
freely. What did the in-
tstructor learn?

- how quickly history is
  forgotten!
- how remote even the
  recent past seems!
- how puzzled new genera-
tions are by the fuss of
  past generations!
- how easily shocked we
  are by the obscenities of
  war and war talk!
- how reluctant the older
  generation appears to have
  been to share its experi-
ces with its children
  and grandchildren!

Samples from the work of
the class---

Sandra Allen interviewed a
man who served 25 years in
the Marine Corps and spent
two tours of duty in Viet-
nam. Some excerpts:

Student--So, you were
already in the service
before Vietnam, correct?

Soldier--Yes, I went
into the service in 1952.
Fact is, I left Spring-
field from recruiting duty
directly to Vietnam. I
was sitting in an office
downtown one month and the
next month I was in Viet-
nam.

Student--Did you ever
personally kill or wound
anyone?

Soldier--I don't know.
I shot at people, but I
really don't know.

Student--Were you ever
wounded?

Soldier--No, I was
lucky!

Student--Did such a
shock cause you to have
any nightmares or flash-
backs?

Soldier--It's all pres-
sure, constant pressure,
no matter where I was. I
went on R and R with my
wife in 1967, to Hawaii.
I even experienced
pressure there. One
night, some kids threw
firecrackers at our bed-
room window, and I dove
from the patio down three
floors to the ground
below because I was
trained to take cover.
That's how conditioned you
get. When I first got
back to the states from
Danang, I would wake up at
3 a.m. every morning.
Nobody could figure it
out, but I knew. Every
morning over there, they
sent the planes out
running the strikes to
Hanoi at the same time and
it woke you up. When I
came back to the states, I
still woke up. It was
just a conditioned reflex.
I got over it! I
personally feel that all
this trauma that people
have and blame on the war
is a cop-out for a lot of
them. There's a hell of a
lot of them that were
maimed and injured, but,
there's also a hell of a
lot of them who got hurt
and don't have all of
this trauma. My brother
and I never went through
any of that garbage. Out
of the five of us that
were there, only one got
killed. He was in the
army. His name is en-
graved on the wall in D.C.
It's all psychological.
If you're a doper or a
cop-out then that's it. I
never had any trouble
adjusting, and if I sat
around and worried about
it, I would go crazy.
From Christopher Altevers' short story ...

Morning came and they were on the hill. Bullets screamed their death-song as men answered in their own macabre tunes. Planes flew overhead spraying fiery death, and bombs took their toll.

All around men lay with broken bodies, the cries of the wounded and the dying as nothing compared with the voices of the echoing guns spattering them with cold metal. Peter saw it all. The pain, the anonymity of the bullets, the terror on the faces of the men, the death. For the first time, he really saw the horrors of war, and it chilled him like nothing else ever had. David was next to him, playing his part in this mad play. Peter saw that his buddy was just a face here, just something to shoot at, just as Peter had been. He was just a target in this living shooting gallery.

Peter saw the enemy mow down his sergeant with artillery fire. He saw that same enemy accidently shoot in the back of the head by another enemy. Peter saw an arm go flying by, as up ahead somewhere a bomb went off.

He was shocked at the utter destruction he saw being meted out. Trees were broken and uprooted, shrubs were burned and shot to bits. Everything was gone.

Then he saw him. He saw a Vietnamese who had been masquerading as a dead man rise up behind his buddy. Before he could shout a warning, the man had thrown the grenade he had been holding.

The earth exploded upward as the grenade went off, and Peter thought he heard David scream. Then all was still, and a haze covered him.

As usual, the teacher gets the last few, carefully arranged words.

DMZ

even in the classroom
the one in the amen corner
the one used a lot by Religion
the one in the stairwell
the one nobody can find
lines count
and there are zones
combat and otherwise
but we don't number the sectors
and we're too serious to play
battleships
and bombers
with grids and coordinates
like the line between father and son
that stretch of words across space
that till now hidden trapeze
we all must learn at last
to fall
from
whirring blades mill the wind
stirring up only tears

still deep in ducts
the tunnel-under of being
manly
jet streams snake skies
leaving tell-tale trails
as if silvery slugs
transcending cups of beer
precision propels itself
again against the bad guys
and manmade sunsets
become filmed spectaculars
but the holistic body counts
that noncombatant student
whose line on his father
extending sure and taut
dwarfs an anonymous roomful
of baffled
because by proxy
love

JH
10/7/87