

# Honorable Mention

Fall

The newsletter of the Honors Program at Westminster College

2005

## A Fun-Oriented Beginning

Books. Introductions. Essay writing. Board games? Yes, board games. This year's Honors Peer Mentors teamed up with incoming Freshmen during Honors Orientation, held August 26th, to duke it out in fierce contests of Cranium, Taboo and Trivial Pursuit. While planning the orientation, peer mentors shied away from incorporating "get to know you" games into the day's plans, knowing such contrived and often embarrassing icebreakers tend to fall flat. The peer mentors sought out more genuine, enjoyable ways to help the entering class of Honors students get to know one another. They settled upon two new ideas previously unseen in Honors orientations: first, having students cover a whiteboard in Nunemaker with self-annotated photos of themselves and, second, leaving open time for some good old-fashioned game playing.

All this fun was made possible largely because the Honors program director, Richard Badenhausen, procured an entire day for Honors orientation activities. In years past, the freshman introduction to the Honors program took place over two days, sandwiched between or conflicting with other campus activities, leaving precious little time for all but the basic question and answer or shared reading discussion

sessions. A separate Honors orientation on the day before the campus-wide orientation enabled the Honors students to meet and mingle, enjoy great food and music while kicking back on Nunemaker's patio, show their creativity in "InkBlots", and later relax at a movie night in the Behnken Lounge.

The ten hours of orientation programming consisted of more than fun and games. An opening session in Gore Auditorium included parents this year. Badenhausen walked the audience through the Honors handbook and introduced the ten peer mentors, who then fielded questions from the new Honors students and their families. After lunch, four peer mentors led students in a discussion of James Gleick's *Faster*, which incoming students read over the summer. All enjoyed the lively ninety-minute conversation; and the common read session was once again a success. Following a writing assessment exercise, students were



treated to a short film about the program, produced last year by senior Honors student Cody Coonradt, and a students-only Q&A session devoted to the "Real Honors program."

Honors orientation is still expanding and improving and the next peer mentor planning team may go to even greater lengths to prove that orientation can be synonymous with having a good time. Sure, there were intellectual discussions involved, but in the end, the new freshmen benefited by meeting fellow classmates. Of course, for Nunemaker, the greatest benefit was the acquisition of some excellent board games!

**-Anna Hansen**



*The incoming Honors class takes a break from orientation activities*



## Thanks to the 2005-2006 Peer Mentors

I want to thank this year's Honors program peer mentors (listed below) for all that they have done during orientation and throughout the fall semester to help our new class of 36 entering Honors students make the transition to college life more smoothly. This year's peer mentors helped lead a very successful expanded orientation session that was especially notable for the liveliness of the activities, which was due mostly to their involvement. I'm very grateful for their support and leadership. **-Richard Badenhausen/Director**

**Mike Acord**  
**Creed Archibald**  
**Ray Bradford**  
**Meghan Hamilton**  
**Anna Hansen**  
**Blakely Neilsen**  
**Alisha Panunzio**  
**Marie Robinson**  
**Lahdan Saeed**  
**Stan Sarkisov**



## Crash Proves to be an Insightful Look Into the Human Condition

On October 18th, the Student Honors Council (SHC) sponsored this year's first "Profs Pick the Flick," hosted by Dr. Bridget Newell, professor of Philosophy, co-designer (with Dr. Bonnie Baxter) of the popular Honors seminar "Science, Power and Diversity," and a team-teaching partner this term in Humanities I. At each of these events, the host professor is asked to choose a film that he or she has enjoyed and wishes to share with Honors students because it is compelling in some way.

Dr. Newell selected the complex 2004 feature *Crash*, directed by *Million Dollar Baby* screenwriter Paul Haggis and starring a plethora of Hollywood A-list actors, including Don Cheadle, Matt Dillon, Sandra Bullock, and Brendan Fraser. Rounding out the cast are Jennifer Esposito, Ryan Phillippe (better known as Mr. Reese Witherspoon), and Ludacris, among others.

In the film, a number of stories overlap--a la Robert Altman--as we follow a series of characters whose lives intersect in positive and negative ways during a two-day period in Los Angeles. Prominent themes include racism, fear, violence, hate, alienation, power, and the human potential for redemption.

Dr. Newell helpfully foregrounded some of the issues brought up in the film by commenting on their meaning for the students in attendance, a process that fits in with one of the SHC's goals of sponsoring fun, social activities that also double as learning experiences. If you did not make it to the movie night, you should strongly consider adding this film to your "must see" list. Also, look for future "Profs Pick the Flick" events or nominate one of your favorite Honors professors to sponsor one of the screenings.

## Graduate School Demystified at Pizza with Profs

Graduate school. Who isn't terrified by the very idea? But this semester's "Pizza with the Profs" on Friday, October 7 went a long way to soothing those fears. Three panelists spent ninety minutes in Nunemaker talking about their graduate school experiences with about 20 Honors students eager to learn the secrets of life beyond Westminster College.

Speaking about her graduate school, Christine Seifert, a new Communications professor at Westminster, explained how she loved the freedom involved. She got her Ph.D. in Communications from Oklahoma State University, where she loved exploring her many options. She mentioned that among graduate school, med school, and law school, one has a few more options in the Humanities, as one is still encouraged to experiment to find where your passions and potential lie.

Seth Hobby spoke about his law school experiences, both in England and at BYU. As an attorney at Utah's largest law firm, Parsons Behle Latimer, Seth was able to share what habits best helped him succeed in graduate school and get a good job. He recommends not going to law school "to see if you like it," since law school rarely answers questions for students and it requires nothing less than dedication and hard work, not to mention an enormous financial investment.

Recent Westminster Honors graduate Eric Glissmeyer offered the same advice, as he discussed his medical school experience. Currently at the University of Utah, he just began his second year of medical school. Again, he says not to go to medical school to "try it on for size" or "see if it fits." If you want to go into medicine, you must be dedicated to your cause.

The panelists also discussed such topics as having a family while in school. Both Hobby and Glissmeyer got married during their college careers. They admit that it has been difficult, but not impossible. In addition, all three panelists recommended having a mentor in your field in the form of a professor, a senior member of the graduate program, or someone who has recently finished his or her graduate studies. Such mentors can help you pick the right program, prepare a strong application, and succeed once in the school of your choice. All in all, the panelists demonstrated the importance of hard work and dedication for students interested in pursuing their studies beyond the undergraduate level.

**-Leah Welch**

## Honors Faculty vs. Students 2005 Softball Smack Down

The tension in the air was palpable as Honors students prepared to face off against the faculty in a no-holds-barred, winner-take-all softball challenge on a bright, sunny day in Sugarhouse Park on April 15, 2005. Students had been talking smack about their athletic prowess all semester until program director Richard Badenhausen finally threw down a challenge by declaring, "Are you sure you want a piece of this?"

Word on the street was that the Honors students (as Honors students are wont to do) held a series of rigorous practices in preparation for the event. The faculty, on the other hand, cobbled together a rag-tag team at the last minute. The average age of the faculty outfield--anchored by veteran softballers Steve Haslam (French) and Cindy Akana (Campus Ministry), in addition to Doug Wright (Art/Philosophy)--was 55, or thereabouts. The students countered in their outfield with a trio of strapping, well-conditioned young athletes--Ben Haverkost, Casey Rasch, and Honors newcomer Boone Bolinder--all of whom are known to frequent the college weight room, when not studying.

Both sides recognized the seriousness of the contest, as they were playing for some serious spoils that would make even Achilles proud: a shiny

trophy acquired at D.I. and originally awarded in 1978 to the 2nd place team in the "Cougar Classic Debate Tournament."

The faculty jumped to an early 7-2 lead, paced by the fast bats of Wright, Akana, Haslam, and Badenhausen. Jeff Nichols (History), Dave Goldsmith (Geology), and Chris Cline (Physics) also contributed key blows. On defense, Dave Stanley (English) flashed some mean leather at the hot corner and Sharon Cody (Provost's Office) directed the defense from behind the plate. Judy Rogers (Biology) shouted encouragement to her teammates from both sides of second base.

Early on, the students complained about the dancing pitches being thrown by Badenhausen, but they started to plate some runners when the faculty side eventually tired in the harsh sun. The biggest bat was wielded by Haverkost, who managed to send a few long flies onto the distant road in left field for



*The second place team, who deserved to be first*

home runs. Other key batters for the student side included Meghan Hamilton and Alana Dela Cruz, both of whom also played some sharp infield, especially when they turned a nifty double play late in the game. Also taking turns at the plate were Jen Morrison, Nicki Blair, Mary Dirks, and Alison Poulson.

Student pitcher Ray Bradford seemed shaken in the early innings and his usual frenetic chatter seemed somewhat subdued in the face of the faculty onslaught. Eventually, he was replaced on the mound, a move that happened to coincide with the students' late-inning comeback. Alas, it was not to be the students' day, as the faculty held on for a 17-13 victory over nine innings.

Proving they were graceful losers, the students (under the leadership of the Student Honors Council) hosted a post-game barbecue, but not before conducting a sneak water-balloon attack upon the faculty team, as its members were posing for their team picture. As the festivities wrapped up, many cries of "Wait 'til next year" could be heard from the student side, though Badenhausen countered that he might screen for athletic prowess (or lack thereof) in future Honors classes to ensure continued faculty dominance. He concluded by inviting all Honors students to stop by his office to admire the Cougar Debate trophy, which sits on the mantle in recognition of the faculty victory. **-Richard Badenhausen**



*The gloating winning team*

## Student News & Notes

**Sara Vandermolen** has become the "youngest ever" General Director for Zivio. Zivio is a non-profit semi-professional community Balkan dance troupe.



**Rebecca Givens** went with the volunteer organization YouthLINC to Ocatlan, Mexico where they volunteered in the city's Special Education school and orphanage. Rebecca also received the honor of being the student leader for the upcoming trip to Mexico in summer 2006. She will have the responsibility of organizing monthly meetings, providing Spanish language practices, and keeping the records of all students involved in the project.



**Daniel Perez** was accepted into Vanderbilt Medical School.



**Colin Crebs** was cast as "Raul" in Westminster's production of *Extremities*.



**Jessica Shurtleff** was cast in Westminster's production of *The Abdication* as the lead role "Queen Christina." *Deseret News* praised the performance as "above a typical student production." Jessica also completed an internship at CBS News during Fall semester.



**Andrew Waterhouse** was also cast in *The Abdication* as "Oxenstierna." He was featured as Geek of the Week in *The Forum*.



**Jennifer Niedfeldt** also performed in *The Abdication* as the "Lady in Waiting."



**Sharayah Coleman** spent the summer in New York City on a Christian Mission where she taught English to foreign students.



**Trisina Dickerson** is the Editor in Chief of *Ellipsis*, and **Anna Hansen** is Poetry Editor.



**Tristan Glenn** played the guitar to win fourth place in Westminster's Annual Talent Show.



*Blakely Neilson, Marie Robinson, Jennifer Niedfeldt, and Leah Welch socialize with the governor and his wife*

## Governor Huntsman Honors Honors Students

On November 4, Honors students Marie Robinson, Jennifer Niedfeldt, Leah Welch and Blakely Neilson attended a luncheon and reception at the Utah Governor's Mansion to receive recognition for their academic success. The four were among 44 students from colleges and universities across Utah who comprised the first ever group of Governor's Scholars. Governor Jon Huntsman created this new program as a way to recognize past and present academic achievement in both high school and college; these four were chosen to represent Westminster. Jennifer mentioned that the best part of being a Governor's Scholar was "being able to meet other students from other colleges who had the same distinction, and being able to meet the governor. Being a part of the beginning of something like that was really neat."

The governor treated the recipients to a reception and luncheon at the

Governor's Mansion, where they roamed through rooms filled with traces of Utah's history and had many great photo opportunities. The four Honors students each had a chance to speak for a few moments with the governor and have their picture taken with him and his wife.

Following the reception, the Governor held a luncheon on the third floor where both the Governor and Dr. L. Jackson Newell, former longtime Honors professor at the University of Utah, addressed the students and college representatives who attended. When speaking to students, Governor Huntsman stressed the importance of continuing to do well in school and giving back to the community. He then handed out plaques to all the Scholars. Dr. Newell discussed continuing education, specifically giving tips to get accepted into graduate school. Marie Robinson commented that the speakers

were "enlightening" and gave them "two thumbs way, way up!" The four students each enjoyed the speeches given, the recognition received, and their overall experience as Governor's Scholars.

**-Blakely Neilson**



*Jennifer and Blakely enjoy their exciting reception*

# St. Louis or Bust!

Unbeknownst to many Griffins, the Westminster Honors program provides exciting adventure beyond the traditional mental escapades within the classroom. While traveling to St. Louis this year, one Honors student struggled getting her 53.7 lb luggage through the airport (Delta limits bags to 50 lbs) and another lost \$4 to a hustler playing a game of cups on the metro train. Nevertheless, Honors students Casey Rasch, Alana Dela Cruz, Heather Dangerfield, Seth Longhurst, Amy Burns, and Professors Richard Badenhausem and David Stanley managed to arrive in one piece at the conference of approximately 1,700 Honors college students and faculty from programs across the nation.

This year's National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) conference was held from Oct 26-29 at the Grand Renaissance Hotel in downtown St. Louis. During the first day, students explored the metropolis through a "City as Text" class. Students selected a course and set off to discover certain aspects of the local culture by walking the streets and interviewing residents. After conducting their research, each group returned to the conference to report on their findings. This exercise helped students connect with the city and begin

to understand the people and the local culture in that community.

Participants partied at an opening social where the students of Columbia College in South Carolina held a silent auction to raise disaster relief aid. The Westminster Honors program donated a "Winter at Westminster" Ski and Snowboard package as its contribution to the auction. After learning that the package was the subject of fierce bidding between his fellow Honors directors and that it ultimately went for \$600, Professor Badenhausem was further delighted to be told that it received the highest bid of any auction item. Students attended various workshops such as "How to Build an Honors Retreat" and "Retention in Honors" in an attempt to bring helpful ideas back to the program. Westminster students also had the opportunity to participate in the 40th anniversary of the Gateway Arch and see the famed courthouse where the Dred Scott decision, which led to increased tensions immediately before the Civil War, was rendered.

Students filled up free time by doing the usual homework and playing poker. Although none of the students brought poker chips, they employed their honorable brains, and resourcefully used

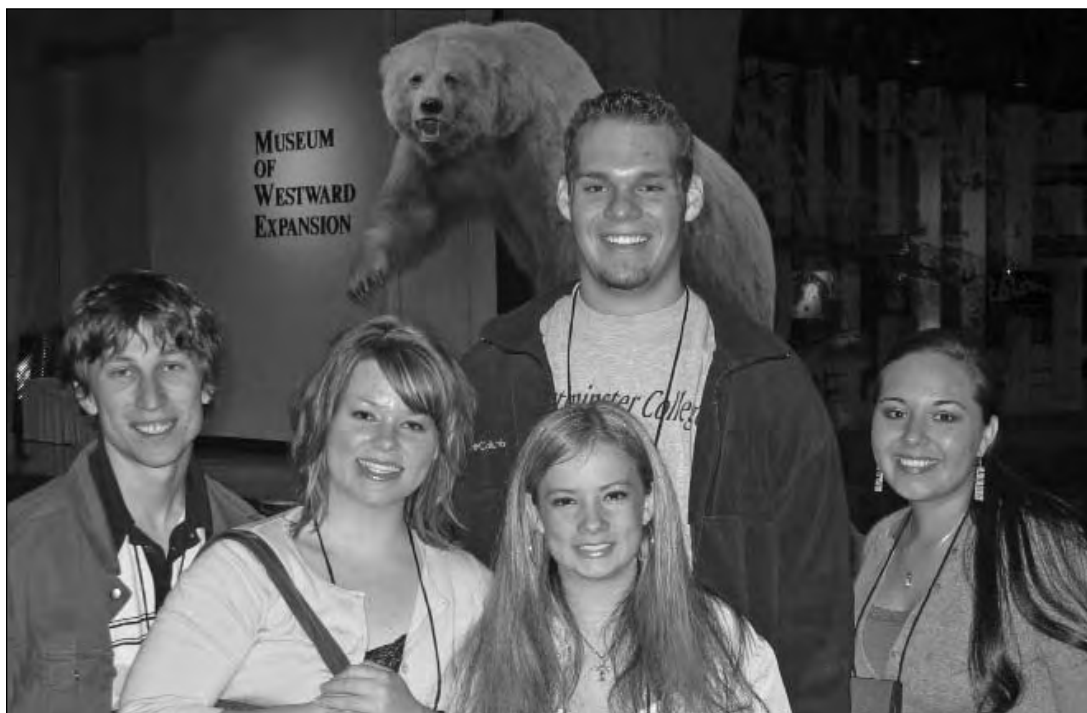
different colored sugar packets to improvise for chips. Heather Dangerfield proved herself to be such a poker champion that she warranted the poker persona of "Veronica." Professor Badenhausem, a.k.a. "Mr. Blue" (nicknamed after betting substantial amounts of blue Equal packets) surprised the group with his heavy handed betting and stare-down contests with "Veronica."

On Saturday, Alana Dela Cruz presented her paper, "Security against the Unexpected: Women and Folk Belief in the Joy Luck Club," on a panel that addressed issues such as immigration, ethnic identity, and culture clashes. Alana successfully presented an explanation on how women adapt folk beliefs to help them endure their situations in life to about 50 conference attendees.

All in all, the Westminster Honors Students enjoyed their adventure in St. Louis. Despite missing the Halloween dance this year, the Griffin Honors crew still felt the holiday spirit. Freshman Amy Burns said, "Our interaction with some of the [other Honors students] and local vagrants fulfilled our desire to be scared and spooked during the Halloween holiday, so we weren't too disappointed."

Through the workshops, parties, food, and music, the Honors students experienced the wonderful hospitality of St. Louis, continued to develop friendships, and challenged their understanding of the world around them. Whether St. Louis is the true "Gateway to the West" or not, the conference proved to be a gateway to building community and knowledge within the Westminster Honors program.

**-Seth Longhurst**



*Casey Rasch, Amy Burns, Heather Dangerfield, Seth Longhurst, and Alana Dela Cruz enjoy more in St. Louis than just a conference*

### Lela Larson

Spending this past summer on Moroccan sand dunes was a far jump from Lela Larson's hometown in Riley, Kansas. Larson left the farm to pursue a very global goal--she hopes to become an intelligence officer in the US Air Force and eventually work in counter-terrorism. She dreams of being involved in international relations, with a special focus on the Middle East.

Larson progressed in her plans as she spent this summer learning Arabic and Moroccan history at the American Language Institute in Fez, Morocco through the Virginia Military Institute.

Larson loved the introduction to a new culture while living with a native family from late May to mid July. "My favorite thing about Morocco was when we went on a camelback camping trip in the Sahara," Larson said, adding that she was extra pleased that she found no scorpions.

As for experiencing culture clash, Larson noted that she had to work around local modesty rules during her morning jogs. "I love to run and had a bit of a problem there due to the ridiculous heat and the problem with girls wearing shorts," she explains. Finding a guy to accompany her on the run offered the loophole in restrictive social laws that Larson needed. Otherwise, "I just got stared at and whistled at a lot," she said.

She also experienced a language barrier. "My host family didn't speak any English and they didn't like Arabic so they only spoke French," Larson said. They were able to compromise and speak in broken Spanish to each other.

Now that Larson is back, she is having different adventures, like a ten-mile hike in Zion National Park. Larson recently risked hypothermia as she had "fun" swimming through freezing water. "I can't even begin to tell you how cold it was, but it was a ton of fun," she adds.

The Air Force ROTC program has allowed her to have all these experiences. As for the Honors program, Larson says "I have a great love-hate relationship with [my Honors classes]." She explains, "I love how challenging they are, but I hate that, too." But do not worry; you can still spot Larson on campus, especially every Thursday when she wears her uniform for her ROTC classes.

-Stan Sarkisov



### *Faculty Profile*

### Teresa Knight



Instead of taking mid-terms and finals this semester, Teresa Knight will be grading them. After finishing her masters, Knight coincidentally visited her alma mater at the right time. Now, as an adjunct professor of English, she teaches Research and Composition to undergraduate freshmen.

Knight graduated from Westminster College in December of 2003 with a Bachelors of Arts in English and her Honors Degree, secured with "three easy payments of \$39.95," she joked. She continued her higher education at the "hoity-toity" King's College in the sprawling cosmopolitan capital of London, England. While working on her Masters in Comparative Literature, Knight surprisingly had to adjust to an undergraduate environment after being roomed with a group of freshmen. "I felt very old compared to the freshmen who were partying for their first time," she recalls.

She withstood the late night parties in the surrounding dorm rooms and didn't even let the sights of the big city veer her off-course. Instead of the standard tour of Big Ben, Knight read French Surrealist authors at the British Library. "I spent most of my time indoors or on the subway. I don't have any exotic stories really," she commented.

Although not exotic, Knight did get acquainted with the youth culture of London and experienced a British take on McDonald's. She recalls waiting in the food queue (as the British call ordering lines) for a prime choice of ice-cream with music videos in the background and a dance floor centerpiece. "This Mickey-Dee's was a special one," she explains. "London is very 'Americanized.' It's kind of sad because all the stereotypes of Britons aren't apparent in London. Aside from a bit of an accent and some choice words, there is nothing to distinguish them [from Americans]," she said.

While in London, Knight worked on her thesis. Her work centered on how the playwrights Edward Albee and Eugene Ionesco used animals to convey human emotions and difficulties in their plays. Knight says that she missed Westminster "deeply" while abroad. "In addition to the beautiful campus and all the plush chairs, the most meaningful part of my education was here." She now uses what she has learned through her experience to teach new students that graduate school is not a big and scary ordeal. "I found that it's much like the undergrad program with much more reading. I did nothing but read, read, read for the courses." And we all know that the Honors program is big on reading.

-Stan Sarkisov

## Honors Students Recommend Summer Research Experience

Each spring, the Westminster Honors Council provides three students with a unique opportunity to perform their own self-directed summer research in an approved area of their choice. Last summer, Honors students Meghan Hamilton, Tristan Glenn and Heather Brown conducted individual research projects on topics ranging from the effects of meditation on attention span to Zen Buddhism in America to 20th Century Italian women's literature.

After students complete an intensive application process that asks them to examine the viability of their proposals, the Honors Council awards the top three applicants individual grants in the amount of \$2,300. The grant funds research costs and provides the researchers with the financial capability to focus their time on the project instead of having to work at a full-time summer job. The students are required to sign a contract agreeing not to work more than 25 hours a week at any outside job.

They also agree to share their research at a public presentation in the fall semester immediately following their grant period, a meeting that took place this year on November 4. A lively group of 20 fellow Honors students and faculty members listened as the three researchers shared the findings of their work and took questions. Afterwards, Richard Badenhausen reviewed the timeline for this year's grant competitions. He noted that grant forms will be made available in early January by email, completed applications will be due by March 13, and applicants will hear the results by mid-April, early enough to make summer plans.

Although Hamilton, Glenn and Brown emphasized that their projects were very time-consuming, they each agreed that it was well worth the effort. "I really enjoyed doing what I was doing, and it was a great way to make the

summer fulfilling," said Brown, who spent a "substantial part of each day studying in the library."

Hamilton faced some unique challenges when she chose to conduct an empirical experiment. Whereas the other students collected information from books and seminars, most of Hamilton's data came from human subjects. She discovered the difficulties in working with human subjects and argued, "It is important to be confident in the knowledge that you have gained, so that those who are participating can be confident in you."

While Meghan was studying the affects of meditation on the brain, Tristan Glenn was busy meditating and learning about the integration of Japanese Zen Buddhism into modern America at the Kanzeon Zen Center in Salt Lake City. Glenn also had the opportunity to travel to Portland for a weeklong solo meditation excursion. When asked about his experience last summer, Glenn replied, "It was the best opportunity in the world to study something you are really interested in."

Graduate programs look highly upon students who have conducted undergraduate research. Most Honors students who participated in the summer research program believe that their experience led them to other opportunities. In fact, due to her experience, Hamilton was recently offered an opportunity to conduct further research in a lab at the University of Utah investigating the dopamine system in the brains of rats.

If you do decide to pursue a summer research grant through the Honors Program, these students recommend picking a topic that really interests you. Glenn eloquently spoke of this opportunity, saying, "The grant gives you wings -- so fly." **-Marie Robinson**



The proud recipients of the Summer Research Grants: Tristan Glenn, Meghan Hamilton, and Heather Brown

## A Glimpse at Grads

Welcome to the first *A Glimpse at Grads* section in *Honorable Mention*. Here you can keep up on what Honors Alumni are up to. Enjoy!

**Eric Berggren**- Class of '93  
Major: Accounting/Honors Degree  
Currently employed as an IBM Global Services Manager.



**Angie Clifford (Carlson)**- Class of '99  
Major: Business/Honors Certificate  
Currently employed as Student Data Specialist for Sublette County School District #9 in Wyoming.  
Will graduate with a MBA in Strategic Leadership in May '06.



**Teresa Knight**- Class of '03  
Major: English/Honors Degree  
Recently completed a MA at the University of London, and is currently teaching freshmen composition for the Department of English at Westminster.  
Also performed as "Dominic" in *The Abdication*.



**Eric Glissmeyer**- Class of '04  
Major: Biology/Honors Degree  
In his second year at the University of Utah Medical School.



**Chris Averill**- Class of '05  
Major: Biology/Honors Certificate  
Enrolled in the Masters program in Music Theory and Composition at the University of Utah.



**Mary Dirks**- Class of '05  
Major: Marketing/Honors Certificate  
Currently employed as an Assistant Media Planner for the advertising agency McCann Erickson.  
Advice to current students: The Honors experience happens in more than the classroom. It's the discussions, activities, and conferences that bring it all together. Be involved.

We hope you've enjoyed this first installment of *A Glimpse at Grads*. Alums, as new and exciting things come up in life, don't keep Honors in the dark. Please email Mary Dirks at [med1017@westminstercollege.edu](mailto:med1017@westminstercollege.edu). We welcome info on all of life's events and special shout-outs to the Honors community.

# Student Honors Council

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Dear Honors Students,

Welcome to a new and exciting year! As your Student Honors Council, we encourage you to take advantage of the intellectual and social components of the Honors program. One of our goals this year is to promote a learning community and encourage social activity among Honors Students. It is amazing to think of all the stimulating experiences that we have already encountered in and outside of the classroom. We would like to thank all of those who have participated in the various activities that have already taken place this school year. We really enjoyed seeing all of the new faces and some old at our "Fall Fiesta" and other programs like "Profs Pick the Flick" and "Pizza with Profs." Do not get discouraged if you have not been able to attend, because we have other exciting activities in the upcoming months. Be on the look out for the "Sushi Shindig." We want all Honors Students to make the most out of this program, so please come and voice your opinion at any of our Honors Council meetings and let us know of your new ideas.

Sincerely yours,  
*The SHC*

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## Even Honors Students Need to Have Fun

As Westminster Honors students bravely venture into their yearly academic pursuits, diligently attending to their readings and pondering the greater significance of life, they tend to neglect other important needs. Adequate nightly rest and proper nutrition habits quickly perish as our knowledge of Socrates, scientific progress, and utopian societal structures deepen.

For many, rare is the devotion of a single night, nay, a single hour, to activities not directly corresponding to class preparation. To ease the heavy burden of college monotony, the Student Honors Council (SHC) has championed the cause of re-familiarizing students not only with food and drink but also brief interludes designed to foster socialization.

Salvation for the overworked and undernourished arrived earlier than expected this year in the form of the Fall Fiesta. A new addition to the Honors program, the opening social provided an opportunity for students to interact outside of the classroom to simply enjoy each other's company. Also, the fiesta reflected a renewed effort on behalf of the SHC officers to bridge the gaps between freshmen and the already well-adapted and experienced program students.

Jessica McKelvie, an entering freshman and attendee of the event, aptly noted one of the many intended purposes of the evening's festivities: "Through my Humanities class I've been able to meet most of the people in my year, but I wasn't really familiar with

who else was in the program. I was excited to go to the Fall Fiesta because it allowed me the opportunity to get to know the upperclassmen and learn more about the ins and outs of the Honors program."

Enchiladas, chips and salsa, and other traditional Mexican fare also provided for an atmosphere conducive to conversation and excitement. Nearly forty people gathered throughout the night to enjoy the caterings of Tres Hombres, generously donated by the Panunzio family. The crowd swelled, however, to unparalleled proportions as piñatas filled with assorted candy were unceremoniously beaten until unrecognizable.

Although difficult to arrange due to the hectic and pressing schedules of many Honors students, extracurricular activities serve to ensure the extended success of the program. The Fall Fiesta, only one of the many opportunities for engagement within the program, provided a venue for students to acquaint themselves with their fellow classmates. Relationships developing from these events allow students to take advantage of one of the greatest resources in the Honors program: their peers.

Seth Longhurst, a sophomore and the Secretary of the SHC, agreed. "Events like the Fall Fiesta," he said, "help in building a learning community within the program where students feel welcome, open, and want to challenge their understanding of the world around them."

Deemed a great success by both the SHC and the thirty or so students who attended the event, annual opening socials will continue to be sponsored within the Honors program. Alisha Panunzio, SHC president, conveyed the importance of the inclusion of such activities. She explained, "If we can build relationships and a community early on in the year with things like the Fall Fiesta, students will have a more enjoyable experience in the program throughout the year."

-Amy Burns

### Student Honors Council

President: Alisha Panunzio  
Vice President: Casey Rasch  
Secretary: Seth Longhurst  
Treasurer: Meghan Hamilton

The Student Honors Council is always looking for input from other Honors students when planning upcoming activities. If you have any suggestions please contact Alisha Panunzio at [aap0524@westminstercollege.edu](mailto:aap0524@westminstercollege.edu).

Honors students are also encouraged to attend meetings, so keep an eye out for emails about upcoming meetings in the spring.

# How do activities outside the classroom enrich the overall learning experience?

## Faculty Response

## Student Response

### Dave Goldsmith

*Professor of Geology and Team-teaching partner in "History and Philosophy of Science" (HON 221)*



When I was in college, I spent three years taking geology classes. Then, in the summer after my junior year, I spent seven weeks actually learning geology. As part of my geology major I had to take a summer field course. Twenty students, five professors, and four vans traveled from Central New

York to Southern Arizona, back-stopping at almost every point of geologic interest in between. This was not only my introduction to the state of Utah, but also to the importance of learning outside of the classroom.

There are two reasons that experience outside of the classroom is an important component of education. The first is practical. It is a cliché that experience is the best teacher. It is also true. A classroom is a wonderful place to learn the principles and theories behind a particular field of study, but outside the classroom is where those principles get put into practice.

In the sciences, out-of-class learning often takes the form of field trips. Whether you're a geologist studying mountain formation or a biologist studying moose behavior, slideshows and lectures can only do so much. In other fields of study, however, experience is an equally important teacher. It is easy to imagine that studying history is simply the accumulation of facts. Hearing a historian give a talk on an active research project, however, quickly reminds you that there is a living component to historical investigation. And of course, a plan of study in art or music could be absolutely dreary without the opportunity to experience art exhibits and music recitals firsthand.

There is, however, a more important, philosophical reason for learning outside of the classroom. Simply put, it's how the world works. The principles you learn in Macroeconomics or Organic Chemistry don't only apply for ninety minutes twice a week. Life is continuous and education should reflect that fact. Continuing your education outside of the classroom can be through formal means like attending a lecture, or can be as simple as talking about marketing while watching Super Bowl commercials with your friends. Either way, it reinforces one of the most important aspects of any education. It reminds you that what you are learning actually is relevant.

### Leverett Woodruff

*Sophomore, majoring in English*



I am engaged in a number of extracurricular activities, but the two that occupy most of my time are being co-president of Westminster Students for Choice and volunteering for four hours a week at Crossroads Urban Center, a food pantry downtown. I feel that both of these activities

have a strong impact on my life now, both academically and personally.

Students for Choice gives me the opportunity to be directly involved in a cause that means a great deal to me: working to make sure that women and men in America continue to have access to safe reproductive health care, and that my college community is provided with information that enables its members to stay healthy and safe. Not only is this immensely rewarding in itself, but the educational aspect of it gives me a great appreciation for my professors' efforts in the classroom, and I think this inspires me to be a more responsive student since I am aware of all the responsibilities they have. Also, working with others is a huge and vital part of my role in the club. This experience helps me when classes or other on-campus activities require teamwork. Last but not least, I feel that the club has helped me get more comfortable with deciding where I stand on important issues and then defending my position, which is an important part of the maturation process that all college students undergo.

Volunteering at the food pantry has also provided me with enriching experiences. In my opinion, part of attending college is gaining a wider perspective on the world and interacting with a greater variety of people than might be encountered in home life. I have always known that my background is by no means shared by everyone around me and that I have a lot to learn from those whose are different. Working with the wonderful people at Crossroads has made this a reality of my life and not just an idea in my head. It has taught me to see myself as part of a community that is universal rather than limited to people whose experience resembles mine. As a result, I feel that I am a more compassionate individual now than I was before.

In all, I feel that both of these activities have contributed greatly to the goal I set for my college years: to learn more about how the world works and how to work in the world.

## Their Bodies, Their Selves: Sexuality, Marriage and Maternity in Aleramo's *A Woman* and Maraini's *Woman at War*

by Heather Brown

*Honors students have the opportunity to apply for one of three independent summer research grant awards annually. The following excerpt is drawn from the work of Heather Brown, one of this year's grant recipients. The following study examines the construction of the female body and sexuality in 20th century Italian women's literature and explores the larger social implications of the literary awakenings of these and other female protagonists.*

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Twentieth century British and American women's literature contains variations on a prevalent theme: female rebellion against marriage and motherhood. The female protagonist's quest for spiritual and intellectual development, the mark of a male's successful coming-of-age, leaves her instead desperate, frustrated, alienated and suicidal--incapable of leading traditional lifestyles but emotionally and socially scorned for seeking alternatives. The most frequent solutions, whether leaving behind husband and children or consummating suicide, problematically confound the woman's first and only opportunity to attend to the needs of her autonomous body by simultaneously inflicting considerable pain on it.

My study of *A Woman* by Sibilla Aleramo and *Woman at War* by Dacia Maraini examines the themes of male/female intimacy, marriage and maternity through the lens of female Italian writers of the 20th century. The female protagonists' failure to reach sexual intimacy in their marriages and their ultimate need to abandon husband and family reveal larger implications for the position of the female body inside social power structures. Traditional structures of marriage and expectations for femininity within it fail to translate to the female protagonists' self-fulfillment in these novels because of a denial of the female as an autonomous self, or literally as an independent body. This leads to the issues of female anonymity, marital subjugation, and psychosocial dependence on men that have been reflected in the novels of awakening.

Kate Millettt states that sexuality is a "microcosm" of culture, reflecting normative gender relations in social spheres from the family to the workplace to the community. By closely reading sexuality as it appears in 20th century Italian women's literature, the reader may gain clarity into the mechanisms which maintain females' subjugated position within that cultural context. By understanding the body as a cultural text on which social expectations for gender norms are written, and sexuality as an outlet through which males and females either meet or defy such expectations, one can also better understand the position of the ill-fated female protagonist whom society has denied control over her body.

The perpetual flaw to the structuring of gender roles lies in the ignorance on the part of both genders of the female possessing an autonomous body in the same right as a male--a body worthy of rights and respect, as the legal body is conceived, and also as a corporeal body capable of acting in its own sexual interests, which, however, she seldom has any knowledge of aside from the projections of males. The male holds greater power and control in this relationship by default: by virtue of her lack of sexual knowledge, he can manipulate

her interpretation of events in his favor, according to traditional gender roles and expectations.

Problematically, in the absence of any means to educate herself, the narrator of Aleramo's text remains ignorant of her body and her sexuality from childhood to adulthood. "Like many young girls, I had read novels which stirred up shapeless fantasies, never clarified for me...At fifteen, my understanding of sexual matters was still too rudimentary for me to suffer very profoundly" (38). Her conception of sex, love, and intimacy, in childlike naiveté, is linked to novelistic romance and fairy tale--a "rudimentary" knowledge that was "never clarified." One can assume that this fantasizing never, at least during her marriage, evolved into a legitimate education, a knowledge of her own body and its sexual functions or of a man's. As she says, "there was no one there to look me in the eyes, ask me directly about my feelings, and talk to me about them truthfully and forcefully in words I would have understood" (42).

Traditionally, the language of sexuality suggests an inherent hierarchy in the relationship between men and women, at times as extreme as lexically and legally implying man's ownership of women, especially within marriage. As the Movimento Femminista Romano aptly noted in 1976, "The values of power, of the domination of man over the other, are reflected in sexuality, where historically woman is given to man for his use...it is not by chance that one says that man 'takes' woman and that she 'gives herself' to him, or that man 'possesses' woman" (Bono & Kemp 68). While the terminology may seem extreme, consider the orthodox practice of the husband asking the father for the woman's hand in marriage and the father transferring ownership as he "gives away" the bride.

The resultant lack of intimacy in the marriage-as-ownership construction is striking and devastating. Aleramo's narrator describes sexual relations with her husband as empty of "emotional satisfaction or sensual arousal" (46)--so cold and impersonal that she admits, "I closed my eyes, stopped myself thinking, and lay as if in a coma" (48). Writing almost a century later than Aleramo, Dacia Maraini produces a female protagonist in a cultural context more accustomed to the emancipation of women but in which repression of the female body permeates as thoroughly as ever. Maraini's protagonist, Giovanna, narrates, "He wanted me to stay there like a corpse, until he had satisfied himself. Whether I wanted him or not, felt desire or not, didn't seem to matter to him in the least" (238-9). Her husband, Giacinto, replies, "All you have to do is to lie there quietly, what hassle is that for you?" (246). The necessity to lie and act as if dead, while being passively acted upon by their husbands, creates for the female narrators

psychological damages not unlike those of rape: sense of violation, feelings of futility and displacement of control. In both cases, the female's right to an autonomous body is disregarded by an outside force.

Presumably, the protagonists feel obligated to submit to their husbands within the marriage contract and feel unable to question the men's authority over their bodies. As one Italian feminist group stated, "Sexuality has always been presented to women in the twisted and twisting light of 'duty'--the duty to be a mother, or to accede to the husband's requests. A whole cheap morality has been built up on this 'conjugal duty'...which totally leaves out of account female sexuality" (Bono & Kemp 253). Duty binds the wife to the husband and the child in such a way that self-sacrifice appears a necessary element. Yet this construction denies the female's need for autonomy and self satisfaction, leading repeatedly to a frustrated rebellion against the institutions which constrict and deny her.

Of course, the unique position of the female body as a potential carrier of human life, a possibility denied to any male body, further complicates the position of female bodies in society and in marriage. A woman, either by physically experiencing pregnancy and labor or by recognizing that potentiality in her own body, may intuit more pressingly than a man the distinctions between her own and other bodies and the implications of sacrificing one's own body for another. In this sense, the lived reality of a physical self-denial weighs more heavily on the female body than the male body. In *A Woman*, presumably because her right to an autonomous self had been disvalued and denied throughout her adolescence, the narrator relishes motherhood as an opportunity to sacrifice her poorly-developed self towards a higher purpose: the development of another, untainted human life. She accomplishes this abandonment of self so completely that consideration of her son outweighs all consideration of herself: without him her life does not seem worth living.

Ultimately, the perpetual denial of women's bodies evidenced in the subjugation of women's sexuality and the reduction of her function to procreation culminate in the female literary protagonist's paradoxically self-asserting and self-destructive awakening. The oppressed female's attempt to counter the cultural denial of her autonomous body, her identity and her self manifests itself through desperate means: abandonment, abortion and suicide. Evidently, no solution transcends the problems intrinsic to society.

Aleramo and Maraini suggest that alternatives to suicide exist but must inescapably center on the struggle for autonomy of the female body and use the body as an instrument of protest. Freeing herself from her oppressive marriage, Aleramo's narrator says, "I had left it to my body to rebel, to cry out, to fight for its freedom. It was to my body that I owed my liberation" (209-10). Necessitated by the repression of the female body in the traditional institution of marriage as a function of larger systems of patriarchal dominance, the female's assertion of her body, however radical, becomes her most effective means to live a freer, more fulfilling, liberated life.

However, unambiguous glorification of literary protagonists' solutions would inexcusably ignore the trauma that these women experience even in the assertion of their bodies. Both Maraini and Aleramo highlight the conflicts inherent in the traditional conceptions of marriage, maternity and sexuality, especially for the subjugated woman. Their descriptions encourage a critical analysis of the societal institutions themselves--marriage as ownership, hierarchical family structures, compulsory motherhood--which perpetuate cycles so fundamentally damaging to all parties.

A binary distinction between the public and the private realms must be collapsed in order to recognize the interdependence of private, especially sexual, relations between males and females and their significant implications for the maintenance of stereotyped roles in a larger societal context. As Sibilla Aleramo's *A Woman* and Dacia Maraini's *Woman at War* reflect, a perpetual cycle connects the family to society with common themes: the objectification of women as sexual objects, the denial of women's education on their sexuality, the resultant disadvantage this presents to the sexualized but ignorant woman, and the predetermination of women as self-sacrificial mothers. Because neither woman nor her partner realistically accept the autonomous female body, marriage and sexual relations remain sources of struggle and frustration rather than intimacy and pleasure. Women internalize the objectification and subjugation of their bodies, a dehumanizing process that further preserves gender imbalances. The body therefore becomes a site of resistance by which women must assert their autonomy. The desperate measures that literary protagonists resort to in order to liberate themselves, and the harm they often impose upon themselves to do so, attests to the severity of their oppression and warns of the pervasive harm of gender inequalities in any society. Until society critiques and reforms the institutions that justify gender dominance in private lives--the traditional constructions of sex, marriage and motherhood--these structures will continue to fail with detriment to men, women, children, and the whole of society.

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# Musings

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## From Your Editors...

Hey y'all! Welcome to the Fall 2005 edition of *Honorable Mention*. A lot has changed since the last newsletter. To start, you have a few new editors: Jessica Shurtleff, Lenni Keyes, and Sharayah Coleman. We've worked hard this semester to uphold the high standards set by previous editors while adding a few touches of our own. For example, you've probably noticed that *Honorable Mention* has grown slightly since its last printing. Ok, so it's grown a lot. We felt we needed to expand the newsletter to accommodate all the many exciting things happening in the Honors program. We hope this change is a welcome one.

As Honors students, we often face the assumption that our lives consist of nothing more than reading, writing, and studying. Yet our very Honors program shows that some of the most important learning takes place outside of the classroom. From trips to St. Louis to lunch with the governor, Westminster Honors students know that a real education goes beyond just the books. Getting involved outside the classroom helps solidify and expand knowledge gained within the classroom. As seasoned Honors students, we offer a bit of advice: learn to recognize and take advantage of opportunities for unconventional learning as they present themselves. The Honors program provides many such opportunities. Embrace them! Apply for a summer research grant or just go to one of the many social events offered throughout the year. You may be surprised by how much you can learn.

Creating this newsletter has been a fabulous learning experience for the three of us. We hope it encourages you to embrace learning opportunities of your own. Until next semester...

Honorably Yours,

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