

Honorable Mention

Spring The newsletter of the Honors Program at Westminster College 2005

National Honors Conference in New Orleans

Last semester, Nicki Blair, Ray Bradford, Mary Dirks, and Jen Morrison attended the National Collegiate Honors Council conference in New Orleans, November 10-14. They gave a presentation on the new student-directed Honors orientation. This orientation provides a more interactive, supportive start for freshmen making the transition from high school to Honors, and develops a stronger sense of community in the program.

Richard Badenhausen presented "Holding an Honors Faculty Retreat and Living to Tell About It." Professor Mark Rubinfeld, who came to Salt Lake from New Orleans in 2003, provided a session entitled "The New Orleans Riverfront: A Virtual Tour of the City as Text."

The students enjoyed exploring New Orleans, and spent time in the French Quarter, on Bourbon Street, and at Mardi Gras World. Dr. Badenhausen took the students to two popular restaurants, Jacques-Imos and GW Fins, where they



Ray, Jen, Mary, and Nicki bond over dinner at Jacques-Imos in New Orleans.

sampled unusual local cuisine. The ultimate new eating experience took place at an oyster bar, with some encouragement and even goading from Dr. Badenhausen. "I had to prove that I could try new things," said Ray.

"Oh my gosh, it was fabulous. Traveling with Honors could not be fur-

ther from boring," gushes Nicki. Mary Dirks reminisces, "Learning how to do creole and zydeco dancing and then teaching Richard at the gala was great. He was one of the only professors out there willing to just let loose and have a good time with his students."

-Jen Morrison

Sushi Shindig is a Lesson in Japanese Culture and Following Your Dreams



Ray Bradford and Scott Tillett get a lesson in sushi selection from Peggy Whiting of Ichiban Sushi. (photo: Nicki Blair)

Peggy Whiting, a world-renowned sushi chef, came to speak to Westminster's Honors students during lunch hour on a Friday afternoon. As students ate sushi, this culinary professional shared her amazing experiences in the world of Japanese cuisine.

Peggy got into the sushi business as an adolescent when she was asked to help fill in at a friend's family sushi restaurant. From there her interest and understanding in Japanese cuisine flourished until she set up her own restaurant in Park City and, with the help of her Japanese language skills gained while serving an LDS mission, soon found herself presented with the opportunity of studying under a sushi master in Tokyo, Japan.

Students who attended this event grew in cultural understanding as Peggy shared her amazing experiences as the only American to ever study under a sushi master. She is also one of only five women to ever work as a profes-

sionally trained sushi chef in Japan. The students were both entertained and amazed by Peggy's affable affect and lively stories of a woman who has entered a male dominated realm and become a huge success.

Peggy currently owns and runs the local Ichiban sushi restaurant (downtown on 3rd East) that is located inside a renovated church and has been acclaimed as one of the best sushi bars in the world. We are grateful that she took the time to share a little bit of her life with us as well as heighten our sense of cultural understanding. It is now possible for us to be able to eat a Japanese meal without making such cultural faux pas as filling our own glass at dinner or sticking our chopsticks in our rice while taking a drink!

Peggy's message to Honors students was to find the courage to take advantage of the opportunities that life presents to you and remember that we are all connected to each other's success.

-Nicki Blair

Finally, a Scholarship for Honors Students

In the past, no scholarship has been available specifically for Honors students. However, things change over the years and this year's freshmen were the first class of incoming students eligible for the new Alvin and Helene Richer Academic Excellence Scholarship. This scholarship will be awarded annually to an entering Honors freshman that shows particular promise and interest in academic excellence, campus leadership, and a commitment to undergraduate research. The award makes up the difference between the highest college-awarded scholarship the student receives and Westminster tuition. The first Richer Scholar is Blakely Neilson.

Neilson was first in her class of 512 at Cottonwood High School. She took AP courses in high school, which prepared her for the Honors program at Westminster. On her application for the Richer Scholarship, Neilson wrote an essay about Hilary Clinton, the person she admires most. "She redefined what it meant to be a first lady," said Neilson, "She is a very strong woman to be able to handle all of the scrutiny she has faced." In her essay, Neilson focused on women's rights. Neilson's writing was impressive enough to make her one of three finalists for the award. "I was very impressed with Blakely," said Badenhausen. "She appeared to be a

very mature student, a strong writer, and very driven."

The theory behind the scholarship is to allow the Richer scholar to devote the majority of his or her time to educational pursuits, as well as leadership and research opportunities. Badenhausen said he is concerned that Honors students spend too much time working instead of focusing on their studies and research. His crucial concern is to have a learning community both in and out of the classroom without running into conflicts with work commitments. In the fall Badenhausen surveyed Honors students and found that 88 percent of Honors students work a job or two in order to pay for tuition. Those students spent an average of 21 hours a week working. Badenhausen found this disturbing because most professors agree that there should be three hours of studying per credit hour. That means an Honors student with a full class load of 16 credit hours should be studying 48 hours a week. To add on 21 hours a week at a job leaves little time for Honors students to get involved in activities on campus such as lectures, pizza with profs, and other opportunities for Honors students. "Donors like Al Richer understand this and try to help," said Badenhausen. Right now Neilson can enjoy the luxury of not

working while going to school thanks to the Richer scholarship. Nielson has been involved in the Debate and French club and had the chance to go to Weber State University and compete in the Ethics Bowl, things that she couldn't do if she needed to work a job as well.

Alvin and Helene Richer are the generous donors of this scholarship. Richer is a successful businessman who graduated from Westminster in 1982. Since Westminster gave so much to him, he wanted to give something back. "My considered belief is that academically superior schools come from their academically superior students," said Richer. By creating this scholarship which rewards academic excellence, he hoped that it would bring in more talented and bright students to Westminster. Richer explained, "Just like there are students out there who say that they are a Rhodes Scholar, I hope that some day students will be saying that they are a Richer Scholar."

Even though this scholarship is awarded at the entry point to the program, it's only the first step to more scholarships for Honors students. Badenhausen has already submitted a proposal for more scholarships like the Richer award. "All it requires is a donor," he said. **-Jessica Shurtleff**

Pop Culture dissected at Pizza with Profs

Have you ever asked, "Why bother studying Popular Culture? What is there to gain?" Honors Professor Mark Rubinfeld posed that question to the group of Honors students who gathered in Nunemaker for "Pizza with Profs" on March 18.

Rubinfeld led a discussion about the way popular culture impacts our lives, focusing especially on the cycle by which any new or counter-cultural messages in society are commercialized, watered down to reflect capitalist ideals, and sold to the public; becoming the norm instead of a rebellion. This cycle is especially apparent in rap music, Rubinfeld said, as the lyrics are now more about the ladies and the cars than social injustice. The students agreed that this trend is evident in today's society, and most of the media and cultural messages we see reinforce the main-

stream ideologies of capitalism, mass consumerism and social stereotypes.

With this realization, some students began to express the opinion that the cycle of commercializing new or authentic messages will never end, so why study something we have no power to change? Rubinfeld sympathized with this idea, agreeing that "You're not going to change the world with a three-minute song," but he added that studying popular culture could still be beneficial on the individual level. He encouraged the students to think about how often they buy into the messages in our popular culture, without realizing it, and emphasized the value of becoming questioning consumers. "The power to understand marketing ploys," he said, "is the power to resist them." The personal transformation is the most important. **-Anna Hansen**

The Honors program would like to thank the following parents who have made substantial cash contributions to the Student Honors Council fund since the last newsletter. These tax-deductible donations accumulate in the fund until they are used to help support students attending academic conferences to further their intellectual development.

**John & Regie Bradford
Barbara Neilson
Lisa and Thomas Short
Gregg and Julie Simonds**

Contributions are welcome at any time of the year and can be sent to the Student Honors Council fund, care of the Honors program, Westminster College, 1830 South 1300 East, Salt Lake City, UT 84105.

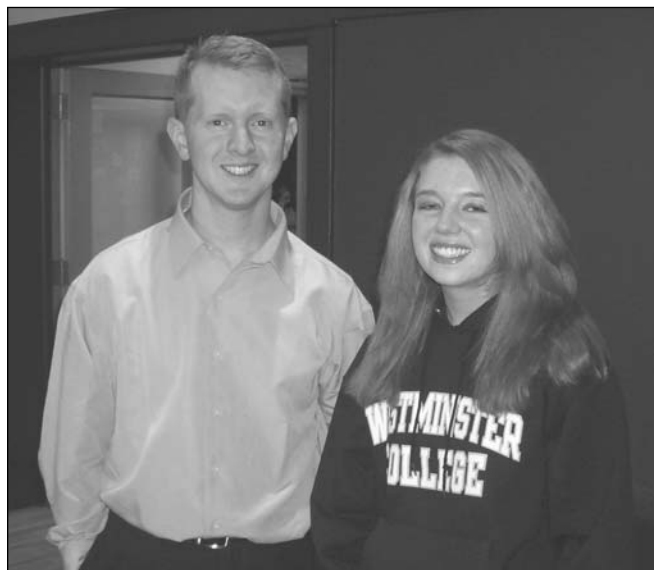
Honors Student and Honors Prof Take on the King of *Jeopardy!*

Talk about a tough final exam. How would you like to make it to your last semester at Westminster College, only to have to face all-time *Jeopardy!* champion Ken Jennings in a general knowledge challenge? And in front of more than 500 audience members! That is the precarious position in which Honors student Pepper Hayes found herself on the evening of January 13, 2005, as Jennings kicked off his nationwide tour of college campuses with a visit to his home state of Utah.

Jennings, the Murray resident who famously ran off 74 straight wins against almost 150 opponents on his way to winning more than \$2.5 million on the long-running game show, talked to an overflow crowd at Westminster about his record-breaking streak. While offering a spirited defense of the value of trivia, the energetic and humorous Jennings captivated the crowd with a “behind-the-scenes” look at *Jeopardy!* He talked about lift systems on the stage floor that equalize the height of the contestants behind the podiums, techniques for buzzing in before your fellow contestants, and the nature of the 50-question quiz potential contestants take to make the first cut. In Jennings’ case, he did not hear back from the show’s producers for a full year after taking the test. And during his amazing run, he shot 10 episodes in 2 days during each of his visits to California, before flying back to Utah to resume his “normal” life.

The highlight of the evening, though, occurred after Jennings’ formal comments, when senior Honors student Pepper Hayes and Professor of Geology Dave Goldsmith, who happens also to team-teach “The History and Philosophy of Science” for the Honors program, faced Jennings in a 15-question trivia challenge. Hayes, who carries a 3.96 GPA and has been active in a wide variety of clubs and activities on Westminster’s campus (including co-editing *Honorable Mention*), will attend law school after graduating this spring. Goldsmith, who earned a Ph.D. at Harvard while working with noted paleontologist Stephen Jay Gould, actually appeared a decade ago on *Jeopardy!*’s College Tournament for almost a week.

As student government leaders Ray Bradford and Alisha Panunzio brought out the sealed envelopes containing questions in the categories of History, Geography, and Literature,



Ken Jennings and Pepper Hayes pose for a photo before the match.

Jennings grabbed his marker and put on his game face. Bradford and Panunzio, who are also Honors program students, identified “answers” like “The great king of the West Saxons from 871-899” and each contestant was required to write out the proper “question.” In this case, the correct response was “Who is Alfred the Great?”, which even Jennings missed. While it seemed unfair to expect Hayes to be able to call on the massive body of knowledge accumulated by Jennings and Goldsmith during their respective lives, Pepper (clearly the crowd favorite) did charm the audience with a variety of humorous responses.

Ultimately, Jennings proved too much for his competitors, wowing the audience with his knowledge of obscure 18th century conflicts and small mountain ridges in Northwest Israel. The final score: Jennings 11 correct answers, Goldsmith 5, and Hayes 2. Despite the defeat, Goldsmith and Hayes can always say that they took on the *Jeopardy!* champ and demonstrated the value of the reflective life or, as Jennings remarked, “living every day in the form of a question.”

2005 Honors Writing Awards

Each year the Honors program gives cash awards to students to recognize excellent writing in their Honors courses. One student is awarded “Best Honors Program Essay of the Year” and receives an additional prize. Carlin Felt was awarded this honor at the Honors Banquet on April 20.

Best Humanities Paper: Ray Bradford, “When an End Becomes a Means: Self-Expression in Marx and Shelley” (Badenhausen & More)

Best Science Paper/Best Paper: Carlin Felt, “Where’s the Stuff?” (Goldsmith & Wright)

Best Social Sciences Paper: Meghan Hamilton, “Examining the Reality of ADD/ADHD” (Ellis and Rubinfeld)

2005-2006 Honors Peer Mentors

Congratulations to the new class of Honors Peer Mentors. These students will facilitate the full-day orientation for incoming first-year Honors students over the summer and act as an important resource for those students as they make the transition to college and Honors.

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

Student News & Notes

Lela Larson is going to study abroad in Morocco this summer to learn Arabic.



Cody Coonradt is getting married to Westminster student Linzy Caple, on June 7 in the Salt Lake Temple. Cody is also sitting for the life and health insurance exams in May and will be working for Beneficial Financial Group as an Estate and Retirement Planner.



Trisina Dickerson and **Rachel McDonald** have been working hard to finish *Ellipsis*, Westminster literary magazine that will debut at the end of April. Rachel will be graduating this year and has received a scholarship to the Professional Writing and Editing Master's Program at the University of Cincinnati.



Honors alum **Stewart Anderson** was accepted at SUNY Binghamton to study modern European history and historiography this fall. He's on the M.A./Ph.D. track.



Casey Rasch and **Stan Sarkisov** went to Mexico City during Semester Break. They spent the week with Mexican college students, attended classes, and did construction work on a school library.



Alana Dela Cruz gave a paper at the annual meeting of the Folklore Society of Utah. Her paper, an analysis of Amy Tan's use of folk belief in *The Joy Luck Club*, was selected for publication in the society's publication, *The Folklore Annual*.



Carlin Felt was accepted to Middlebury College's prestigious foreign language program to study Italian this summer.



Pepper Hayes, gave a paper on suffrage at the Phi Alpha Theta Regional Conference has received a scholarship to Boston University Law School where she will be enrolling in the fall.



Honors students **Ray Bradford** and **Rebecca Givens** were elected as executive cabinet members in ASWC as vice president and director of clubs and organizations.

Jen Morrison

Jen is in her third year at Westminster and will be graduating this spring with a Honors and Psychology degree and a Spanish minor. Jen is planning to pursue a Ph.D. in psychology. Jen has been very active in several organizations. This past year, she was an Honors program Peer Mentor and attended the National Honors Conference. In addition, Jen reactivated the Students for Free Tibet club, volunteered with Habitat for Humanity, and served as vice president for Students for Choice. Through her involvement on campus, Jen has had the opportunity to travel to diverse places. She spent Spring Break in Hawaii with Habitat for Humanity and later visited Washington, D.C. to join the "March for Women's Lives" with Students for Choice. Last May, Jen learned about social change in Guatemala, in the fall she went to New Orleans with Honors, and she plans to spend a month in Mexico this May to perfect her Spanish. "Traveling has been the best part [of my college experience]" she said. Jen has enjoyed being in the Honors program because "it's a deeper way to look at the basic stuff everyone complains about." Also, it has helped her become more comfortable speaking and participating in class. Without the help of the Honors program and its professors, Jen probably wouldn't have applied or even thought about a Ph.D. right now. "[The Honors Program] helped me decide to go for it" she explained. When asked what she loved most about being in Honors, Jen replied "There's a lot an individual can have ideas about and then put into action. If you have a few dynamic individuals, it's small enough to make a difference."



-Sharayah Coleman

Faculty Profile

Karlyn Bond



A Utah native, Karlyn Bond came to Westminster College ten years ago after a "fluke" discovery by Professor Chris Quinn at one of her piano recitals. She began teaching full time in 1999 and is currently the Chair of the Music Program. Karlyn earned her bachelor's degree in piano performance from Walla Walla, and a master's in piano performance and Ph.D. in piano performance, music history and literature, chamber music performance, and tonal theory from USC. Rather than teach piano lessons, Karlyn prefers a classroom atmosphere concerned with interdisciplinary subject matter or music history. So, it makes sense that Karlyn enjoys the interdisciplinary structure of Honors program classes. Karlyn and Professor Nick More team-teach the Seminar in the Arts class. Previously, the class focused on a "rigorous" study of music. This semester, the two professors experimented with a new curriculum centered on nine art events ranging from opera to painting to film. According to Karlyn, Honors Director Richard Badenhausen, Nick, and herself are "all for" this new curriculum. "I envision it sticking" she said. Overall, Karlyn loves being involved with the Honors program because the "students are so clearly in college" and "it's a community." In her spare time, Karlyn is an avid reader and traveler. She plans to "spend big chunks of the rest of [her] life traveling," especially to England. Why England? "I feel like that's where I belong" she replied. When she can't make it out of Salt Lake, Karlyn enjoys curling up in her comfortable camping chair under the biggest tree in her yard and disappearing into a 19th century British novel.

-Sharayah Coleman

Dear Honors Students,

As a Student Honors Council we find that learning and thinking can take place as much outside as inside the classroom. For this reason we try to provide the sorts of activities that will both stimulate and intrigue the Honors student population. In our attempts to achieve this goal we have found that bringing students and faculty together outside of the classroom, in particular, has offered many opportunities for all of us to get enthused about learning. From guest lecturers, movie watching, and lunch, to softball 'smackdowns,' our time together as students and faculty has proven invaluable. Our faculty members are certainly of a unique kind that offers their time and energies to improving the entire individual. So, a special thanks to such an engaged faculty whose passion is fed by helping us succeed as both thinkers and 'do-ers'. We appreciate your investment more than you know. Also, from the SHC to all of you: thank you all for being the cause of our success, as well as the cause of our existence. Please let us know if there is anything else you would like to see!

Sincerely yours,
The SHC

Prof's Pick the Flick: Cool Hand Doug

This semester's edition of Prof's Pick the Flick was a success, despite the small turnout. Professor Doug Wright presented the film *Cool Hand Luke*, a Stuart Rosenberg film starring Paul Newman. Professor Wright called the film an "idiosyncratic success," explaining that it didn't quite fit in with the other popular films of its day. The film won an Oscar in 1968 for Best Actor in a Supporting Role, was nominated for three others, and is credited by many as one of Newman's best films.

Professor Wright gave us a short introduction to the film, but refrained from too much explanation saying he feared ruining the film's unique effect

on its viewers. He explained that there are so many layers of symbolism and so many subtle meanings to the film that one must simply experience it on his own in order to really appreciate it. Most of the pre-film talk centered on the importance of film interpretation in a more general sense, and the efforts on campus to create more courses, and perhaps even a major, that focus on film appreciation.

We settled in with our popcorn, candy and drinks to let *Cool Hand Luke* reveal its secrets, something Professor Wright claims it still has not completely done for him even though he has seen it several times.

-Lenni Keyes



Westminster's resident film scholar, Doug Wright, shares one of his favorite films, *Cool Hand Luke*, with Honors students. (photo: Lenni Keyes)

Ask the SHC

Why Come to Nunemaker?

There are so many reasons to allow your presence to grace the architectural masterpiece that is Nunemaker. Here are the top ten:

10. The SHC meetings (which you are dying to sit in on) are held there!
9. It's a comfortable place to study and pick up a wireless signal on your laptop.
8. Its history includes weddings, sermons, sleepovers, and a multitude of ghost stories.
7. It is always stocked with fresh fruit and yummy goodies.
6. It hosts amazing activities offered by yours truly, the SHC.
5. Some of your classes are held there. (Yes, class . . .)
4. It contains a useful library with helpful books.
3. Upon entering you will be met by the friendly and helpful fellow Honors student who will be dutifully staffing the workstudy desk.
2. It is three stories with a fireplace, a loft, a kitchen and two bathrooms. How cool is that?
1. It is where our fearless leader, Richard Badenhausen himself, is housed.

These reasons and oh-so-many more are strong motivators for making use of Nunemaker: a *joie de vie* in structural form.

Perspectives

Part of learning is acting, or doing. So what can you *do* with all the “stuff” you learn in the Honors Program? (Hello, Monads?)

Faculty Response

Alumni Response

Richard Badenhausen

Director of the Honors Program



In my mind, “doing learning”—if that phrase isn’t too awkward—rests at the heart of the Honors program. Imbedded in this philosophy is a belief that students will come to own their intellectual experiences inside and outside of the classroom if they are challenged to interact with seminal texts and ideas on their own terms instead of those of professors whose biases about the material have

already been firmly established.

This isn’t easy, though. As Teresa Elias notes in her response, the Humanities seminar, which serves as the “gateway” course for the Honors program, can be a daunting experience for first-year college students, for they are being asked to change a number of fundamental attitudes about education: the way they think about their place in the classroom environment, the way they approach challenging and often unfamiliar texts, and the way they decide what those texts ultimately mean. In each case, students are being asked to become more active in the learning process. Add to those challenges the fact that the course is run as a full-blown, discussion-oriented seminar with writing assignments due every week, and you end up with the heart palpitations Teresa mentions.

“Doing learning” (rather than passively receiving nuggets of pre-packaged information that are tied up neatly with a bow) is a difficult path to follow and some find it so perplexing that they choose to step off this path, which is fine—the approach is not for everyone. Honors seminars, built around an interdisciplinary focus, encourage students and faculty to make connections across disciplinary lines—it demands engagement.

The emphasis on directed writing about texts and ideas, especially in the Humanities seminars, combined with in-class discussion establishes conditions under which students can engage in a journey that helps them develop an identity as a thinker, writer, and speaker. They must find a way to “do learning” and, in the process, find a personal voice in their writing and speaking that reflects who they really are. As the Nobel Prize winning Irish poet Seamus Heaney once wrote, “Finding a voice means that you can get your own feelings into your words and that your words have the feel of you about them.” That is a sentiment that we ask Honors students to live by, which is why we always cite Heaney’s remark in the Humanities syllabi.

Another way to think about this experience appears in one of my favorite comments from a student in another Honors seminar, a comment written anonymously at the end of the term: “This class gave me the glasses through which to look, but I got to see for myself. It was my discovery.” Discovery often involves a difficult journey, but the prize that comes from that struggle is usually worth it, particularly if you will carry that prize with you, as Teresa notes, for the rest of your life.

Teresa Elias

Class of '04



At first, I tried to recall scraps of information. “Well, let’s see, I learned in Seminar in the Arts that...gee, what was that class about again?” “I really enjoyed my class about Nietzsche, and I learned about perspectivism and so now...well, hmm.” I mean, what did I learn at Westminster that is helping me now, at my current position in Oregon as an

AmeriCorps volunteer at Habitat for Humanity? I’m working with Habitat homeowners who only dream of having the opportunity to go to college. So what do I have that they don’t? And what am I doing with the intangible knowledge that’s represented by a piece of paper called a degree?

It seems a rather odd question to me, after mulling it over for a few weeks. What will I do with the knowledge I have gained in the Honors program? I suppose the same thing I’ve been doing with the knowledge I have gained over the course of my personal, never-to-be-repeated-in-the-history-of-the-world experience that my life has been so far. See, just by living I have been fortunate enough to grow into the person I am today. And I plan to continue growing and learning more about the world and myself through my everyday experiences. But I truly believe that the only reason I think that way today, the only reason I really value my day-to-day existence on this marvelous planet, is because of my Honors classes.

No kidding. The Honors seminar on Nietzsche was, honestly, life changing. When I first arrived at Westminster College, I thought life was about doing in order to fulfill some unknown life-gaining purpose. You do your homework to get good grades. You get good grades so you can get a degree. You get the degree to get a good job. You get the good job so you can afford to have a family. You have the family for...wait, did I just miss out on my whole life while constantly striving for something more? What I learned in the Honors program gave me a clue. Life is the process, not the goal. And learning is part of the process that makes living worthwhile.

My Honors courses taught me a way of thinking, a way to see the world, a way to live that I could not have imagined when I was 18 and sitting in my first college course (Humanities, which, by the way, scared me so badly that I think I developed a permanent heart palpitation). But, it was worth it. You know why? Because knowledge really is intrinsically valuable. And if more people knew that, this world would be a better place. Now don’t get me started on why reading *The Odyssey* or the works of Plato, Aristotle, Hanslick or Nietzsche helped get me to that conclusion. That’s something you’ll just have to find out for yourself. But make sure you do the two things I do with the knowledge the Honors program allowed me to gain: think about it, and then live your best life.

Women's Suffrage Activism in Utah, 1870-1895

by Pepper Hayes

Honors degree recipients write and present a senior thesis. The following excerpt is from Peppers Hayes' thesis on the "lost" history of women's activism in Utah. Women's role in Utah's suffrage is traditionally overlooked, but recently feminist historians have recognized women's agency. The following discusses some specific actions in which Utah's women participated and offers a discussion of the importance of including these women's actions in the historical record.

"The ladies of Utah [have] too long remained silent while they [are] being so falsely represented to the world... It is high time that we should rise up in the dignity of our calling and speak for ourselves."

Eliza R. Snow, Great Indignation Meeting, January 13, 1870

In 1870 Utah became the second, and most populous, territory in the U.S. to adopt women's suffrage through an act of the territorial legislature. Women in Utah voted for seventeen years between 1870 and 1887, during which time their franchise was under almost constant attack by the federal government. The United States Congress finally disenfranchised Utah's women in 1887 with an antipolygamy act, but after a protracted struggle of almost a decade, women in Utah reclaimed their right to vote in 1895 when equal suffrage was included in Utah's constitution.

Contemporaries and historians have questioned how and why women in Utah were privileged to vote fifty years before the rest of the nation in a territory that was so culturally "backwards" that men were allowed to marry more than one wife. There are two answers to this query: either some group was using the women as pawns in a bid for power, or the women themselves took an active role in demanding equal rights. This paper supports the latter explanation.

There is ample evidence that since 1870 Mormon women's suffrage advocates in the Utah territory were involved in grassroots organizing on the local and national level. Grassroots organizing is a "bottom-up" method of political organizing in which community members work together to find solutions to common problems. It is particularly important to emphasize the presence of grassroots activism in Utah because historians frequently attribute the success of suffrage in Utah either to a decision made by tyrannical leaders of the LDS church or to antipolygamy forces outside the territory. But the women of Utah were not pawns, they were activists. Eliza R. Snow's moving words at the Great Indignation Meeting in 1870 still ring true: it is high time that historians stop falsely representing nineteenth century Mormon women's agency and recognize that women had a voice in their civil destiny.

Who were these activists? The matter of *who* the suffrage leaders were is a key factor in the success of Utah suffrage. The leaders included Sarah M. Kimball, Zina D.H. Young, and Emmeline B. Wells, all three of whom served as Relief Society Presidents at some point in their lives; in addition Young was the third wife of church leader Brigham Young, his daughter Zina Young Williams was also active in the suffrage cause. Suffragist Emily S. Richards was the wife of Franklin S. Richards, the attorney for the Mormon Church. These women were the elites of the Mormon Kingdom in Salt Lake City. As one historian commented, "a movement... so completely dominated by the 'respectable' women of the territory, could hardly be laughed off as the pet cause of a few radicals."¹

While the women of Utah had the support of the church hierarchy, this support from above is not enough to explain the widespread success the suffrage movement enjoyed. Suffrage leaders worked long hours and traveled great distances to win support for their cause. Their activities were documented in their newspaper, the *Woman's Exponent*.

The *Exponent* was founded in 1872 to give an alternative view of Mormon women, who were often degraded in the media. Emmeline B. Wells recognized the value of the publication in the *History of Woman Suffrage*, "it was the champion of the suffrage cause."

The *Exponent* helped suffrage organizers communicate with women

everywhere. In 1877 a woman from Philadelphia wrote a letter to the editor in which she said that she had always believed that Mormon women were tools of the male leaders so that, each man had, "just as many votes as he owns wives."² Reading the *Exponent* changed this woman's mind about the autonomy of Mormon women, as she could immediately see that these women respected women's rights. The paper became an even more important activist tool for women after they were disenfranchised. It provided a forum for the suffragists to discuss the injustice of their position and it kept women abreast of suffrage news by printing reports from local suffrage organizations.

Suffrage women also participated in mass actions. Their favorite action, the mass meeting, included a large meeting in Salt Lake, followed by satellite meetings all over the territory. The 1886 mass meeting, protested the Edmunds-Tucker Act that would disenfranchise the women of Utah on the grounds that women's vote was controlled by the church and tainted by polygamy. Utah's women emphatically denied this charge: "Resolved, By the women of Utah in mass meeting assembled, that the suffrage originally conferred upon us as a political privilege, has become a vested right by possession and usage for fifteen years, and that we protest against being deprived of that right without process of law, and for no reason other than that we do not vote to suit our political opponents."³

The women's activism reached a peak in 1895 when the suffrage decision was finally out of the hands of the federal government and back within the power of locals as Utah made its final bid for statehood in 1895. Suffragists lobbied and petitioned to include suffrage in the Constitution and to oppose a movement for submitting suffrage separately. The final vote on including equal suffrage in the constitution was 75 to 14 in favor of suffrage. This success is due, in no small measure, to the tireless work of the Mormon suffragists who were absolutely committed to the cause and who would accept no compromises.

Activism can empower the powerless. In the nineteenth century Mormon women were looked upon as the most degraded women in America because of their participation in polygamy. The government persecuted these women and denied their civil rights. In the face of this subjection, these women organized and took back the vote, yet history remembers them only as pawns in a political battle between men. Without over-dramatizing the actions of the Mormon suffragists, it is important to acknowledge the contributions these women made to Utah's history and to remember them as the intelligent, confident, independent women they were. A member of the Salt Lake County WSA confessed at a meeting, "I feel that in this suffrage move I am experiencing something which I have longed for a long time, not knowing what it was I did want."⁴ To deny this woman's agency in the historical record is to deny her the empowerment she experienced through the suffrage movement. It is the task of a new generation of feminist historians to keep this woman's empowerment alive.

NOTES

1 Judith Rasmussen Dushku, "Feminists," in *Mormon Sisters: Women in Early Utah*, new edition, ed. Claudia L. Bushman (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1997), 189.

2 *Ibid.*, 177.

3 Heather Symmes Cannon, "Practical Politicians," in *Mormon Sisters: Women in Early Utah*, new edition, ed. Claudia L. Bushman (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1997), 168

4 M.A. Caine, "W.S.A. Reports: Salt Lake County," *Woman's Exponent* 20, no. 20 (1 May 1892): 159-60.

Musings

From Your Editor...

When you apply for graduation here at Westminster, the registrar will enter your name into a computer, count up the number of credits you have earned, and determine if you have put in enough hours to earn your college degree. There is no essay, no interview, no further proof required to show that you are indeed worthy of entering the ranks of “educated people.” But I haven’t just been sitting at a desk in Converse these past four years, waiting to accumulate enough hours on my transcript to graduate, and no one else in the Honors program has either. Learning isn’t just sitting and listening -- learning is doing! Whether that means thoughtfully interacting with the text or applying classroom lessons to community issues, the Honors program is committed to an active learning process. That’s why when I am awarded my diploma on June 4, it won’t only represent the hours I have clocked in or the facts I have learned, it will be a symbol of my active participation in my education -- the real “proof” of being an educated person.

Our guiding theme for this newsletter has been, “learning, thinking, acting.” In the first four pages of this newsletter you will find reports of Honors students and faculty out in the community traveling to the National Honors Conference, interacting with pioneer sushi chef, Peggy Whiting, and participating in a public battle of wits, *Jeopardy!* style. On page six, the Director of the Honors program and an Honors alum reflect on the value of active learning and an Honors education. And if you still don’t believe that I’m committed to this whole idea of action, I invite you to turn to page eight to read an excerpt of my senior thesis on the role of women’s activism in the suffrage movement in Utah.

I am so happy to have been a member of this learning community and it has been a true privilege to be the voice of our community the past few years through this newsletter. Next year I will be passing the baton to a group of three great Honors students: Jessica Shurtleff, Lenni Keyes, and Sharayah Coleman who will keep you informed through the next few years as the program continues to change and grow. I hope you have enjoyed reading the *Honorable Mention* as much as I have enjoyed creating it. Happy trails to the class of ‘05 as you continue on your path in life and good luck to the class of ‘08 at the beginning of your adventure. It has been a pleasure “doing learning” with all of you and I am certain that our paths will cross again.

Peace,
Pepper Hayes
editor of *Honorable Mention*

email: pah0530@westminstercollege.edu

Honors Program
Westminster College
1840 S. 1300 E.
Salt Lake City, UT 84105
www.westminstercollege.edu/honors