On Friday, February 16th, about 25-30 well-dressed students and faculty flocked to Nunemaker for the Honors program’s first Monte Carlo Night. Gentlemen in ties and tails and ladies in lavish dresses loitered, waiting as the Westminster Poker Club set out card tables, a roulette wheel, and a craps table. A beautiful spread of hors d’oeuvres such as a cheese plate, a cookie platter, fresh fruits, and scrumptious breads graced the table. A drink bar replete with virgin margaritas and daiquiris, juices, and various sodas complemented the spread. With nectar in one hand and fruit in the other, individuals coalesced into groups, exchanging words, discussing the hallmark topics of any Honors program: philosophy, politics, cars, and the most recent events on America’s Next Top Model.

After completing its first task, the Poker Club attempted to herd everyone to their spots at the tables. With small protests the guests assented. Some joined the poker tournament with a stack of chips resting in front of them, while others ascended to the second floor to shoot craps and give the roulette wheel a spin.

Rounds of Texas Hold’em ensued, competition weaning the weak from a crop of champions. Early exiters included Dean of Students Mark Ferne, Honors prof Dave Goldsmith, sophomore card shark Chert Griffith, and SHC prez Marie Robinson. After an hour of heavy action, only one table of four remained, at which sat the infamous duo Papa Bad and Baby Bad, and two unsuspecting students about to be tutored in the ways of Hold’em. The first rounds went smoothly for freshman Jesse Resnick, allowing him to increase his lead by steamrolling the underdog, first-year Gus Paras. But the embarrassment soon began. The Badenhausens exchanged wins, crushing the spirit of their adversary. After picking the bones of their prey clean, the two turned on each other, and the elder eventually asserted his dominance. Richard “Papa Bad” Badenhausen earned the championship of the Honors program’s Monte Carlo Night Texas Hold’em Tournament, receiving everlasting fame, glory, and a $25 gift certificate to the bookstore, which he promptly passed along to the runner-up, his son Will.

Upstairs at the craps table and roulette wheel, Honors students competed over who could capitalize on the most outrageous bets. Amanda Ruiz, freshman, and Seth Longhurst, junior, chose to put it all on the roulette wheel and immediately lost, leaving the field open for the seemingly triumphant freshman John Cook at the craps table. His victory was short, as he was overcome by the modest but magnificent Marie Robinson, a junior.

-Jesse Resnick
Sudanese Students Get a Helping Hand

When freshman Amanda Ruiz isn’t cranking-up the tunes of Ani DiFranco on her stereo or sharing a line from her favorite book, Ishmael, you can usually find her at a Social Science Club meeting in Giovale Library. Ruiz is an active participant in the newly developed Social Science Club, which works to bring attention to local and global issues of injustice and provides an open forum for students to discuss controversial topics freely. In the Fall 2006 semester, Ruiz helped pull together a large scale fundraiser for schools for the Lost Boys of Sudan.

Ruiz and the rest of the Social Science Club had been planning to raise money and school supplies for the Lost Boys in the Spring, but the project came to fruition much earlier than they had anticipated. In November, Solomon Awan, one of the Lost Boys and a Westminster College senior, came to the club to tell them he and a friend would be returning to the Sudan in two weeks. They did not anticipate the short amount of preparation time, but they did not let time constraints hold them back. The next day, they rallied support from the school administration, faculty, and students through email. They also called many local organizations to ask for donations. They placed collection stations all over campus, including Nunemaker.

In two weeks, they had collected six boxes full of school supplies. They sent those supplies to the schools with the Lost Boys, and were happy to hear that the donation was greatly appreciated. Recently, the club held a bake-sale and t-shirt sale during the campus showing of “God Grew Tired of Us,” a movie about the Lost Boys of Sudan. When asked whether their efforts would continue, Ruiz said “Yes! Of course! We want to try to set up a permanent donation plan and continue helping out for a long time.”

Ruiz has some advice to those interested in getting involved in large scale service projects. She recommends, “Don’t be afraid to ask for help! Sometimes the people you think are the least likely to donate anything are the groups that really come through.” She also suggests delegating and using a good planner.

Ruiz believes that the Honors program has provided a strong support system for students to create change. In the future, she hopes that the Honors program students will initiate their own service projects and work towards improving our local community and campus.

-Honors Students Say “Order in the Court” in Mock Trials

In an effort to reach out to other Westminster students with an interest in law, Honors students John Cook and Paula Porter founded the first Westminster College Mock Trial Team. But founding the team was only the first step. After creating a team and writing a constitution to be approved by ASWC, John and Paula had to recruit members, join the American Mock Trial Association, and procure funding to compete in a tournament.

The inaugural year was tumultuous, with members dropping out and replacements being ushered in at the last minute. Funding was a constant cause of worry, and the presidency worked tirelessly to find a way to get the team to Claremont, California to compete. But a member of the Westminster Board of Trustees came through with funding in the end and the members of the team were polished and ready for competition by the time they arrived in California.

Other Honors students involved in the Mock Trial team that competed included Natalia Noble (freshman), Jennifer Niedfeldt (sophomore), Gus Paras (freshman), and Mary Enge (freshman). The team held their own in California, despite never having competed before and competing against significantly more experienced teams like the University of California-Davis. The team won a trial, received some perfect scores in their evaluations, and won top attorney and witness awards. Congratulations to the mock trial team and good luck next year!
February Madness: Ethics Bowl Team #2 in the Nation

Westminster College’s ethics bowl team—senior Asia Ferrin; junior Ali Jahromi; junior Honors student Blakely Neilsen; and junior Nissa Roper—made it to the final match in the Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl National Championship Competition in Ohio despite being newcomers to the competition.

On February 22, 2007 they matched wits with other Ethics Bowl teams, all of whom advanced through local and regional competitions to earn a slot in the national championship. Rather than screen passes and fast breaks, they used critical and analytical thinking skills to struggle over moral challenges and dilemmas associated with issues such as cage fighting, policing prostitution, affirmative action in post-apartheid South Africa, and military recruitment strategies.

The Westminster team won five straight matches, losing only its final match to the University of Miami. As disappointing as the loss was, the team was proud of its accomplishments. They knew they were prepared, but had no idea that they would take second place in the nation. They were, by most informal and official feedback, the most well-prepared of the schools competing.

Chaperoned and cheered on by Philosophy and Honors professor Bridget M. Newell, coached and supported by Philosophy and Honors professor Michael Popich, and in training on their own for several months, the team brought home a large and not-easy-to-get-through-security trophy, as well as the well-deserved respect of their peers and a secure place on the national stage of ethics competitions.

Despite a sparse turnout at their Friday night arrival at the Salt Lake International Airport (could have been the snowstorm), these students deserve the thanks of the entire Westminster community for using their Westminster educations so well and for concretely advancing the College’s efforts to gain national recognition.  

-Bridget M. Newell

From Yoga to Avalanches: Living Arts in Practice

The Honors program has typically offered a challenging, interdisciplinary alternative to the liberal education courses required to graduate from Westminster College. Last spring, when the college added the Living Arts requirement to its general education curriculum, the Honors program adopted this change. The Honors Council spent a year discussing a solution that was implemented for this year’s freshmen.

That change involved attaching a two-hour lab every Tuesday night to the first-year Humanities seminar for the entire fall term. Honors program director, Richard Badenhausen stated, “Given the busy schedules of students, a regular Tuesday evening class can get fairly tiresome at the end of a long day, but attendance was very good at all the events and Tuesday did seem the best night for everyone.” Living Arts began even before the official start of the fall term with the first lab taking place during Honors orientation. Students participated in a Yoga class to wind down from the excitement of beginning the Honors experience, while simultaneously learning the science behind the movements from professors Bonnie Baxter and Nina Vought. In later Living Arts sessions, students learned about the legal system, finances, complementary health, avalanche awareness, and a wide array of other topics.

The labs were well organized and presented effectively. Freshman Matt Polichette commented, “There were lots of interesting and helpful seminars.” Speakers included Pat Shea, Ryan Hessenthaler, Mark Ferne, and many others. Jeff Bell even taught students how to manage stress the same week as midterm exams. While some sessions were rather serious, focusing on financial markets or graduate school, other sessions, such as the Quiz Bowl, were more lighthearted.

Badenhausen feels that Living Arts was a success: “The overall program has worked out wonderfully in its first year. The outcomes hoped for by the Honors Council have occurred. Those include: 1) creating class cohesiveness amongst the first-year Honors students; 2) bringing in speakers who have not yet had the opportunity to work with Honors students; and 3) giving upper-class Peer Mentors another opportunity to develop leadership skills and interact with the first-year students.” Badenhausen added that the sessions expose students to “real life” issues in academic settings early in their careers so they can cultivate these interests while at Westminster.

None of this could have been possible without the Peer Mentors. Dr. Badenhausen said, “I am also enormously grateful to the upper-class Peer Mentors, who serve as moderators, write thank you notes to speakers, take attendance, and generally help make these sessions a success. They continue to be an integral part of the Honors program.” Furthermore, he commented, “I’ve had heard from more than one upper-class Honors student that they are ‘jealous’ of how tight the freshmen Honors class is and I attribute that in part to the Living Arts program, especially since previous years tended to see a split between the students in the two Humanities sections. Now, that gulf has virtually disappeared.” The freshmen are clearly benefiting from Living Arts on many more levels than just satisfying the requirements for graduation.

-Paula Porter
Student News & Notes

Jennifer Niedfeldt and Dallen Ford
performed in the Westminster Theatre Society’s production of *No Sex Please, We’re British.*

Breanne Eddington has spent this semester volunteering at the Huntsman Cancer Institute.

Ashley Peterson and Ben Rackham
lobbied in Washington D.C. this March.

Natalia Noble and Jessica Shurtleff
performed with the Westminster Players in *The House of Bernarda Alba.*

Sharayah Coleman will spend July in Kampala, Uganda volunteering with the non-profit organization Come Let’s Dance.

Lenni Keyes was hired as a sales assistant for *Salt Lake Style & Design* and *Utah Bride & Groom* magazines.

Marie Robinson spent the Winter Break interning at Mayor Peter Corroon’s office of Environmental Policy.

Sara Vandermolen taught a folk dance & culture workshop on January 27th.

Ray Bradford was accepted to Stanford Business School, and will start his MBA there in the coming fall quarter.

Jessica McKelvie will spend 10 weeks this summer on a Summer Project with Campus Crusade for Christ in Lake Tahoe.

Whitney Strong will go to China for the fall semester to teach 4-8 year olds English at the Wuxi Guanghua School.

Heather Hicks will be studying at the University of Edinburgh in their Political Internship Program, which also consists of working with a member of the Scottish Parliament.

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Students Tune Their Ears to Beethoven

As part of the Honors program visiting speaker series, Harvard University Musicologist Thomas Forrest Kelly visited last month. On the evening of March 8th, over 300 Westminster College community members and students packed the Vieve Gore Concert Hall to standing-room only, eagerly awaiting Kelly’s lecture on “Beethoven’s Ninth: Then and Now.”

Prof. Kelly began the night painting a picture of the immense importance of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony in the contemporary world. He explained that the theme of this “symphony that sings” has become one of the most recognizable tunes in the world, appearing in countless T.V. commercials and Olympic Games celebrations. When the world’s foremost technology experts were deciding how much music the new CD should hold, the Japanese Sony representatives insisted that it be able to fit the Ninth Symphony. Although the lyrics come from the humble origins of a popular drinking song, Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony has become “the world’s national anthem.”

After capturing the audience’s attention by communicating the relevance of this “cutting edge piece of contemporary music for other people in another time and place,” Kelly used slides to visually depict Beethoven’s world. He showed drawings of the theatres of the day, photos of extant copies of Beethoven’s work, and portraits of Beethoven himself. Freshman Ali Monjar noted, “I especially liked his showing pictures” in addition to the fact that she “didn’t expect him to be so funny.”

Kelly did shock his audience with his passionate performance. Despite the subject matter’s “potential to bore,” freshman Mary Enge stated she loved his “engaging and fascinating” presentation. Westminster music professor Chris Quinn said Kelly “made Beethoven’s [music] come alive with his wit and knowledge of the life and time of Beethoven.”

Kelly also illumined students in the Honors “Arts in Performance” seminar about Berlioz’s *Symphonie Fantastique.* Earlier in the day, he met with students for the class period, going over the finer points of Berlioz’s symphony and commenting on the historical context.

-Sharayah Coleman

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2006/2007 Winning Honors Seminar Papers

**Best Humanities Paper:**
Benjamin Rackham, “The Crown & the Queen: Claudius’ Dual Desires” (Badenhausen & Wright)

**Best Science Paper:**
Heather Hicks, “Sociobiology: When Scientific Endeavors are Judged for Their Political Implications” (Goldsmith & Wright)

**Best Social Science/Best Overall Paper:**
Chert Griffith, “Exploitation of Migrant Labor” (Watkins & Tripp)
The Veteran Comes Back: 
Dr. Jonathan Shay Speaks on the “Trials of Homecoming”

“I believe that we have the power to end state sponsored war,” announced Dr. Jonathan Shay to a classroom full of Honor students, who for two hours grilled him on every aspect of his area of expertise – a rather broad domain. This year’s Kim T. Adamson International Studies Lecture guest describes himself as “somewhat promiscuous in (his) intellectual pursuits,” having changed his career path from neuropathology research to a clinical psychiatry twenty years ago. Ever since then, Dr. Shay has worked at the Veteran’s Administration Outpatient Clinic in Boston, MA. Through this work, Shay has “made his mark on history.” By helping veterans on the path to recovery from Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Shay believes he is helping in ways above and beyond anything he could have done as a neuropathologist.

In his books, Achilles in Vietnam and Odysseus in America, Dr. Shay offers a re-reading of the ancient poems of Homer to illustrate the traumatizing experiences of American soldiers during the war in Vietnam, and then their difficulties re-assimilating upon their homecoming to the United States. This kind of inter-disciplinary approach and connection-making “fits perfectly with the goals of the Honors program,” said Dr. Richard Badenhausen, director of the Honors program.

Shay says that combat-induced trauma “chops off and truncates the future and the past,” leaving veterans “without the capacity for social trust” and “incapable of functioning fully in democratic society” – a fate that Shay says has been painfully misdiagnosed and misunderstood for centuries. One way to minimize PTSD, says Shay, is to end the practice of “dehumanizing the enemy.” Doing so “leads soldiers to systematically underestimate the enemy… to demean the enemy is to demean the soldier.”

“I consider myself an abolitionist… a missionary to the armed services,” declared Shay, who has also been working with the Marine Corps and the US Naval War College to improve the diagnosis of PTSD, and of course, to help prevent it.

Throughout his visit to Westminster College, Shay repeatedly urged students to treat soldiers with respect, regardless of political and tactical disagreements with the conflict involved. He says that “my experience [with Vietnam veterans] has subverted almost every stereotype that I had.” He also claims that recovering from trauma is a community endeavor, encouraging all of us to be more than “quintessential civilians.”

-McKay Holland

More Student News & Notes

Ashley Pederson and Ben Rackham will be traveling to Meru, Kenya, where they will volunteer at the Kaaga School for the Deaf this summer.

Seth Longhurst has accepted a position with Freestyle Marketing Group as an Account Coordinator, and will begin working full time upon graduation.

Blakely Neilsen will be spending the summer in Washington, DC at the Engalitcheff Institute on Comparative Political and Economic Systems.

The following Honors students were elected as ASWC senators for next year: Blakely Neilsen, Paula Jo Porter, Spencer Woolley, Chris Ciancone, Bryan Craven, Brody Leven, Breanne Eddington, Heath Pascoe, Robin Hill, and Ali Monjar.

The following students are presidents of Westminster College clubs this year: John Cook (Mock Trial); Marie Robinson (Alpha Chi); Amy Burns (Oxfam); Sharayah Coleman (Pierced); Lindsay Harden (Circle K); Ben Havercost (Finance); Ben Rackham (STAND).

Jessica Shurtleff was the organizer for the V-Day Event on campus that raised $10,000 for the Rape Recovery Center to help stop violence against women. She was recognized as one of Westminster’s Civically Engaged Students by the Utah Campus Compact.

John Cook, Robin Hill, and Amanda Ruiz ran the Social Science Club Open Mic Night on March 22 in Shaw, attracting an audience of over 50 people. Those three student performed, along with Amanda Grant.

Mary Dirks McBride (2005 graduate-Business with Marketing Emphasis) recently married Terry McBride and is moving to Boise where Terry’s work has relocated him.

Jen Morrison (2005 graduate-Psychology) is a Therapeutic Preschool Specialist at The Children’s Center.
Amy Burns

“It’s so fulfilling to give back to the community,” says Honors student Amy Burns about her role as a student activist. “I love working with people – I’m passionate about it.”

But fulfilling as it may be, a typical day for Amy is far from relaxing. Besides working as ASWC Activities Coordinator and as a student representative for civic engagement, Amy fills her days with volunteer work. She has mentored at the Salt Lake Peer Corp., an agency dedicated to teaching teen offenders about the political process, since her junior year in high school. She is a student executive board member on the Utah Campus Compact, where she collaborates with 11 member institutions in the state to promote service opportunities and civic engagement for young people. As if those activities were not enough, she also works with Westminster’s Diversity and Environmental centers – all with the objective of creating service opportunities for students.

“I feel like I’ve been given a lot of opportunities here at Westminster, and volunteering gives me the chance to give others these opportunities, too,” Amy remarks about her busy schedule. To her, giving back to the community is a necessary calling. She has always had a service-oriented mind; she prioritizes volunteer work above any other after-school jobs.

“I’m very proud of the fact that I’m able to balance as much as I do,” she says about her achievements. Yet Amy does more than balance; she proactively contributes to Salt Lake City. In fact, she recently helped coordinate the local celebration of the Global Youth Day of Service. Amy partnered up with the community to plan numerous volunteer opportunities for students – and when the day of service arrived, over 100 high school students came out to show their passion for giving back.

Amy sees the Youth Day as one of her favorite accomplishments while participating in community service, although she did particularly enjoy the ASWC “Night Out” auction that helped raise money for the Salt Lake Rape and Recovery Center earlier this year.

-Kaitlyn Thomas

Faculty Profile

Creativity, Compassion, and Community are the three objectives in Doug Wright’s May Term class, Meaning and Movement in the Arts (M&M). “C3,” as he calls it, developed out of the observations he made while teaching M&M last year.

“When I taught this course last May, it transformed me and many of the students because our awareness of art, the outside world, and each other really increased.”

The class focuses on the interpretation of art in relation to its external and internal motions. External movement can be found in dance and montage, while internal movement focuses on the way human attention moves and responds to experiences of art. But most importantly, Wright believes M&M teaches its students that the classroom is not confined to a physical place; it extends out to everyone everywhere.

Not surprisingly, Wright follows through with this idea of unlimited learning by taking his class out-of-doors and into Hidden Hollow, a local nature park. While there, the students learn about Eco Art and have the opportunity to make their own introspective artwork that highlights the interaction between art and nature. They become aware of how they perceive and, in turn, use this new knowledge to become more aware of the three “C’s” in Wright’s system.

By teaching this class, Wright’s goal is to help develop Hidden Hollow into an arts and performance space where the outdoors and public artistry come together in harmony. In fact, he has “been given the opportunity to write poetry for the upcoming Hidden Hollow festival, where interpretive dancers will move” to his words. It looks as though his dreams of an art-conscious community are coming true.

But Doug Wright’s impact on Salt Lake City does not stop with his dedication to nature and the arts. He has been a regular volunteer at the local Hospice, Library, and the Brolly Arts Association. Globally, he is also involved with the One Campaign against world poverty and hunger. “30,000 children die each day from extreme hunger,” said Wright, “and it makes it hard for me to focus on my own little concerns when I think of that.”

As for what students can do to become more involved, Wright has only one piece of advice: “Don’t be afraid.” He sees the world as falling into two categories of human action – love and fear. From there, it is simply up to each individual to choose which side he or she will take.

-Kaitlyn Thomas
How to Be Ready For Graduation: 6 Tips for Someday Seniors

Don’t Wait Until Your Final Year to Start Preparing!

1) Realize that at the End of Your Senior Year, You will Have to Write a Personal Statement

This means, as Professor Richard Badenhausen points out, that it’s not a bad idea to imagine as a first-year student how you might write this statement in a little under four years. Start by developing your communication skills, written and oral. Honors students already get a lot of practice in this area—after all, those Humanities prompts do have a purpose besides causing mental anguish. Realize that for the rest of your life you will need to be able to communicate well, in order to convince colleagues of your opinions in board meetings or write a book on your newest medical discovery.

But of course, there is no point to knowing how to represent yourself in your personal statement if you don’t know who you are. So, secondly: be yourself! It sounds like a cliché, but college is truly about developing yourself, discovering your personality, your likes, your dislikes, and realizing where you want to be. In order to do so, you have to stay true to yourself—don’t become what you think professors want you to be.

2) Get Involved

The Honors program offers students many ways to develop skills, to engage in the community, to prepare for graduate school or careers, and to have fun!

Take advantage of leadership opportunities (like Peer Mentoring or the Honors Council), research opportunities (summer research grants), and opportunities for conference presentations. Participate in clubs, do volunteer work, complete an internship. Realize that, in the words of graduating student Ray Bradford, there is “value and enjoyment in focusing on a few extra-curricular causes or organizations that you care about (with people you enjoy) and making an ongoing commitment.”

Don’t worry about joining ten different clubs so you appear diverse—you’ll only stress yourself out. You’ll have more fun, make more of a difference, and impress graduate schools more if you show, as Badenhausen says, “consistent engagement in activities you are passionate about.”

3) Travel!

Graduating student Stan Sarkisov says, “If I could give any advice, it would be to study abroad….You can’t just leave for months when you are an adult with adult responsibilities.” Take advantage of May term trips, study abroad options, and conferences—what better way to learn about people and broaden your mind?

4) Make Connections

If you want to go to graduate school you will need reference letters, so get to know your professors! Not only will this help them write your recommendations with conviction, but it could provide you with a mentor who can guide you.

5) Use Your Resources

Talk to professors, graduating seniors, and visiting speakers. Visit the Career Center! They help format résumés, find internships, investigate careers, look into graduate schools, and form useful contacts. They even offer career shadowing during May term as well as a day of mock interviews. This year Mock Interviews Day is April 4th from 9-3—Contact the Career Center to sign up!

6) Take Your Time

You only have the college experience once—so take your time and enjoy it! Some students become so focused on graduating that they miss out. Take the time and opportunity in college to get all you can out of the experience—stay an extra semester or year if you need to. In the words of Stan Sarkisov, “When you graduate, the entire world is available and the choices seem overwhelming. So just take it slow…”

(Many thanks to Richard Badenhausen, Pat Shea, Ber Christy, Mark Ferne, Ray Bradford, and Stan Sarkisov—if you have more questions about graduating we highly recommend talking to them!)

-Meghan Hekker

Congratulations 2007 Honors Graduates

Raymond S. Bradford**
Caprice Laine Carstensen
Alana Marie Dela Cruz**
Trisina Dickerson
Rebecca Anne Givens
Tristan David Glenn
Meghan C. Hamilton**
Lindsay M. Harden
Benjamin Carl Haverkost**
Kathryn J. Heward
Mustafa Hussain
Jordan Peter Larsen
Lela A. Larson**
Seth Richard Longhurst
Ashley McIntosh
Stan Sarkisov**
Jessica Montana Shurtleff
Daniel Sikorski
Lindsey Alanna Tripp
Cole Ryan Wright

** Honors Degree recipient

Good luck to these graduates on all their future endeavors!
Dear Fellow Honors Students,

It is getting to be that time of year when our tanks are running on empty, when we see more of the library than our own beds, when we barely remember to do the important stuff like eat and shower, when running away to a foreign country to become a snake charmer seems like a better option than pulling an all nighter to complete a Humanities paper.

During these times, it is easy to feel like nothing we do matters. Don’t let it all get you down! Remember: Whether you can see it or not, all the work you put in to your community – be it your small group of friends, your campus club, or your favorite political/social cause – really does make a difference. Keep your chins up!

As your Student Honors Council, we would just like to say thank you for letting us work to make your year a little bit better, a little bit easier, and a little more entertaining.

Signing Off!
Your SHC

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Medical Ethics and Pizza

When I was a wee lad, my mother said that everybody made mistakes; it was the normal thing to do. I certainly have made many mistakes — but thankfully, no one has died because I wrote in the passive voice or forgot to do the dishes. However, doctors and nurses make decisions and mistakes every day that can affect whether their patients remain in the land of the living.

On March 16th at Pizza with Profs, about 20 Honors students heard Dr. Jay Jacobsen, Doctor of Internal Medicine and Chief of Ethics at LDS Hospital speak on the peculiar problems that accompany medical mistakes. The average patient assumes that a doctor, having attended medical school, earning lots of money, and looking impressive in the long white coat, should know how to correctly treat their patients. Dr. Jacobsen affirmed this assumption, yet also said that all doctors will mess up eventually.

“How many mistakes did you make today?” he asked. Some were able to rattle off numbers, but most of the audience simply didn’t know. “That is the correct answer; we often don’t know that we have made a mistake until significant time has passed.” In medicine, mistakes will often cause nothing to happen; only some mistakes will result in a drug reaction, a physical accident, or a fatality.

Because of the high probability that many medical mistakes do not cause harm, Dr. Jacobsen said that “It is essential that we talk about our near-misses — where nothing bad happened — as well the mistakes that cause physical harm.” He also encouraged the students to do everything they can to ensure redundancy when they see doctors. “Asking, ‘Why am I taking this pill?’ prevents many mistakes from ever happening,” he said. I left the discussion thinking about the errors that I make, and how they affect the world around me. Vigilance and concern will solve many problems. Those attitudes benefit not only the practitioners of medicine, but those in all disciplines as well.

- Spencer Woolley

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Parent Contributions to Student Honors Council Fund

The Westminster College Honors program is very grateful to the following parents of Honors students who have contributed to the “Student Honors Council Fund” since the last newsletter.

This fund supports travel grants to assist Honors students in making decisions about continuing their educations in graduate school. That initiative fits nicely into the broader mission of the Honors program to help mentor students in a variety of different ways at different stages of their academic careers.

Contributions to this fund, which are tax deductible, can be made at any time in the year and should be sent care of the Westminster College Honors program, 1840 South 1300 East, Salt Lake City, UT 84105.

Those in excess of $150 are acknowledged on the Parents’ Honors Roll plaque, which hangs in Nunemaker Place, home of the Honors program.

Douglas & Deborah Bowen
John and Regie Bradford
Kenneth & Ellen Ciancone
Colin Crebs
Sara and Kirby Ortiz
Carla Ritter-Hill
Patricia and Bryan Johnson
Leonora Midgley and Gary Resnick
Nick and Kathy Paras
David Sherry & Jeanne Ambruster
Larry and Debra Turner
Paul and Suzanne Yoder
Why get involved in the community outside of campus? Well, unfortunately I think too many students, including myself, are motivated towards community service by two very selfish guidelines. One, community service looks good on applications for jobs and grad school. Two, if you want your school club to get funding for next year, you have to do at least one service project. Indeed, these principles ensure community service will get done, but to a minimal degree.

My experience at college has taught me one unyielding and vicious principle of life: there is notably something wrong with something everywhere, no matter what background you come from. From just my Honors classes, it is apparent to me that 1) our justice system is flawed and unfair, 2) the economic system of the world is oppressive and unfair, 3) the environment is being destroyed at an alarming rate by our everyday lifestyles, 4) our political leaders tend to be completely inept, both historically and currently, and 5) perhaps even the field of science isn’t concrete, wholesome and good enough to help us out. Therefore, I believe it is no exaggeration to say that the community and world at large desperately need active, intelligent people.

And although it’s tempting to only live a campus-centric life, I think we all need to transcend the Westminster campus and venture into the real world. Let’s face it: Westminster College is the Land of Make Believe itself. Here we have a nice, clean, and perfect campus filled with intelligent and privileged people while the outside world is crumbling around us! You have got to cross the divide, leave this land of milk and honey, and get dirty in the community if you want to make an impact.

For every problem I’ve mentioned, there is some sort of way to get involved and help solve it. There is always some way to make your voice heard, to raise money for a certain program, to lend your advocacy to a marginalized group, to mitigate the 1,000 different ways our environment is destroyed and really make the world a better place. If you have the awareness, the know-how and the resources, you have the responsibility to remedy the problems of the world. Go feed the homeless! Go knit sweaters against cancer! I command you.

Most of us approach life from a Ptolemaic point of view: we believe the world revolves around us. This view is reinforced by our culture’s messages: be all that you can be; you deserve a break today; don’t bother me, I’m eating.

A recent poll found that 75% of high school graduates identified making money as their primary goal. They are merely pursing the American dream, following a path they neither make nor chose. The point is that they should follow.

At the end of the path lies the promised golden prize. The path, however, is not without peril; there is a fine line between “promoting an end that was no part of one’s intention,” and engaging in a “war of all against all.” For most of us, the line is unseen, like the unseen hand that supposedly guides us. Intoxicated by the promise of infinite riches, we forget the needs of others.

We are constantly told people have choices, but peoples’ choices are always bounded. Each of us is given a menu in life. Some of us may choose steak and lobster, some Top Ramen, some have no choice at all. We are born into this world helpless, and we leave helpless. Along the way, we depend on the help of others. As Mary Douglass observes, “as far back as we can go in the history of human civilization, the major transfer of goods has been by cycles of obligatory returns of gifts.” The “gift” binds people together, it is an expression of our humanity, it says to another: I care. It is especially important for those whose menu is limited, who lack opportunities, who simply need a helping hand.

We are at a pivotal time in our evolution as a species; the solutions require that we go beyond ourselves.

We love to talk about rights; we seldom talk about obligations. But a right without obligation is plundering. As the Nobel Laureate Elie Weisel once said, you may claim the right to put a hole in the boat, after all, you paid for it. But what you forget is that we are all in the same boat. We survive together, or not at all.

Market exchanges end after the exchange, but the gift keeps giving. Make someone smile today; leave this world better than you left it. In the end, all we really have is one another.
As slavery in the confederate American states once proved, the most difficult aspect of many damnable institutions is that they are simultaneously both heinous and desperately necessary; that which is ethically deficient may be economically imperative. Such is the case with today’s migrant labor situation. Migrant workers comprise a desperate labor pool that profit-hungry capitalists use and abuse with near-total impunity. The discrepancy between migrants’ meager wages and the exchange value of the products of their labor allows the capitalist machine to keep running. That discrepancy also lends itself perfectly to a Marxian analysis of the origin of profits and captures in a nutshell the most convincing argument for the continuation of such an exploitative economic relationship; some capitalist systems require exploitation as a mechanism of continuation. However, a Marxist critique of the migrant labor tradition, including both a discussion of the ethics and long-term viability of worker exploitation as well as mention of the relationship(s) from which surplus profits originate in a capitalist system, ultimately finds the institution destined for self destruction and therefore dismisses any argument for its preservation as capitalist shortsightedness.

In Marx’s opinion, profits originate from the inherent discrepancy between labor and labor power. Labor, says Marx, is “the actual expenditure of human energy and intelligence that becomes embodied in the commodities that laborers create,” whereas labor power is the capacity for work, a commodity that can be sold by the laborer and purchased by the capitalist (Heilbroner 107). Marx contends that, apart from the qualitative difference between the two components of production, there is a quantitative difference in the value of each. In a capitalist system, the relationship between the use value of labor for the capitalist—which he determines by the future exchange value of the products of that labor so that he is, in effect, pricing labor relative to the value of labor power—and the exchange value of labor for the laborer, is such that “one must always be able to buy the capacity for work for less than the value that will be created when the capacity is put to use and commodities are produced” (Heilbroner 107).

To say that the exchange value of labor power must always be less than the exchange value of the product(s) of that labor means only that, for capitalism to endure, it must be so. No law of nature precludes a different arrangement. Capitalists, therefore, take great pains to ensure that value inequality remains tipped in their favor. They do this by utilizing progressive technology and a divisional labor system, both of which serve to increase the output to input ratio so that a greater volume of commodities can be created by a lesser expenditure of labor. This increased efficiency generates a surplus of available labor power. The pool of workers collectively possesses greater labor capacity than is needed to produce all the demanded commodities. In short, there are more workers than there is work to be done, and that maintains an ever-present state of unemployment within society. As long as there is a possibility of unemployment—in which case the laborer would receive no wages—he is more likely to take a lower wage—set at a level that guarantees the capitalist his profit margin—because some pay is better than no pay. Such inequitable working arrangements are not ideal, but laborers do enter into it of their own volition. They choose to work a job that pays them somewhat less than they are worth simply because it beats the alternative.

Exploitation occurs when a lack of available alternatives forces laborers to enter into working arrangements for which they are grossly underpaid. Exploitable situations develop when the only options are to work for pennies or to starve. Consider, as an example, depression-era jobs at which starving people would break their backs for a pittance simply because it was the only opportunity available, and they had to feed themselves somehow. Since this example has, historically, been well documented and well publicized, we now view it as a black and white issue. However, while one could argue that capitalists who exploit laborers are doing them a great injustice, one could also argue that the exploiting capitalist is simply executing the pure essence of his endeavor: maximizing profits. In short, there is no universally correct viewpoint, and each situation must be its own
individual ethical consideration. Thankfully—perhaps just simply—the issue is frequently circumvented, or at least avoided, because exploitation rarely occurs in a closed system.

In a closed system, the laborer is also the consumer, and the capitalist is merely the intermediary mechanism for generating surplus. In such an arrangement, pitiful wages run counter to the capitalists’ purpose, because, while they do decrease payroll, they also hamstring purchasing power. The capitalist gets his cut either way, so it’s better to pay big and charge big, because everybody gets richer faster. On the other hand, if the capitalist can remove the production process from the closed system, he can pay minimal wages to a labor pool that he has no intention of servicing, bring the finished commodities back his native system, charge prices commensurate to the wage scale within the closed system, and radically amplify his profit margins.

Capitalists go about removing the production process from the closed system by one of two methods: outsourcing or migrant labor. Outsourcing sends the production process outside the economic and physical bounds of the closed system (i.e. overseas) and then brings the finished commodities back. Migrant labor, on the other hand, brings external labor power into the system, utilizes it, and then sends the laborers home. In either case, the laborers earn wages that are poor by the system’s standards but never-the-less better than they could get locally. The problem with migrant labor as opposed to outsourcing is that migrant workers are no longer working locally. While on the job, they earn wages vastly greater than could be had at home, but they are not at home. They are physically and economically immersed in a capitalist system wherein their wages are not nearly sufficient. The migrants are trapped. They can’t afford to go home, and they can’t afford to stay. Either way, they really can’t afford to lose their jobs. So, migrant laborers continue to labor, and capitalists continue to exploit them.

Take a case in point: an article on labor conditions in England cites “migrant construction workers being paid well below the nationally agreed minimum rates, working long hours for little reward in poor and dangerous conditions, being denied contracts of employment or wage slips, living in unsatisfactory accommodation, and facing threats of or actual violence if they complain” (“Migrant”). Despite that, the “flood of migrant construction labor… has seen the local going rate on site being cut by some 50%,” with the result that “migrants… now account for one in seven of the homeless in [London],” which, says TGWU national secretary Bob Blackman, “indicates that people are being brought over…and just dumped on the streets” (“Migrant”). British capitalists entice migrant laborers with the prospect of higher wages than those offered at home. Said laborers jump at the opportunity, but soon find themselves caught in a cycle of poverty. The wages offered to migrant laborers are high for them but low for the system. Since migrant laborers operate inside the capitalist system, those low wages soon prove insufficient. Then they are really stuck. They can afford neither to return home nor to live comfortably near work. So, in this case, they sleep on the streets and keep working for a salary that has been cut in half since they signed on. The capitalists exploit the workers, forcing them to accept sub-subsistence wages because the laborers have no other options available to them.

Some economists contend that the very process of capitalism keeps capitalists in check and ensures competitive prices. Accordingly, capitalists who find that they cannot compete on a level playing field turn to worker exploitation to increase margins. However, though exploitation may keep capitalists in business for the short term, it generates long-term negative repercussions for the closed market system and calls into question the capitalists’ ethics. Such shortsighted attention to the present at the expense of the future leads directly into the economic instability that Marx finds inherent in any capitalist system. In short, employers who exploit their workers are actually destroying the market system by trying to stay in the market, though they would destroy themselves by getting out of the market. Much like slavery in the south, labor exploitation becomes impossible to sustain and impossible to discard—and it remains unethical all the while. If capitalism is to survive in a market place that is becoming increasingly globalized, it must quickly and completely abolish the capitalist tendency to exploit migrant labor.

Works Cited

Musings

From Your Editors . . .

Another year gone by . . . As we prepare to say goodbye to one of our editors, we would like to introduce you to our newest addition, first-year Honors student Paula Porter. As Jessica moves on in her life to hopefully bigger and better things, Paula will step up to fill the void.

Looking back over the year, we have seen many active and ambitious Honors students. From competing against top-tier schools for the first time in the National Ethics Bowl to collecting school supplies for Sudanese students, it is clear that Honors students understand the need to reach beyond our small campus and into the community. After all, community is where much of our learning takes place. With the new implementation of the Living Arts Program, this year’s freshman had the opportunity to get involved early on. We can only hope they will take what they learned and continue to explore possibilities throughout their Westminster experience.

Our involvement in the community defines not only our college experience, but the people we become. As an Honors program, we set ourselves apart through our academic achievement, but also through our community involvement, ultimately, and our individual character. So, a word of encouragement to our fellow Honors people: keep digging into the community and stay “honorable”!

Honorably Yours,

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