

HONORS COLLEGE

Oakland University

ECHO COGNITIO

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 1 FALL 2010



DIRECTOR'S ADDRESS

UPCOMING EVENTS

Winter Semester Begins
January 4 (7:30 am)

No Classes
January 17 (MLK Day)

Winter Recess
February 18-27

Classes End
April 18 (10 pm)

Final Exams
April 20-April 28

HC Graduate Reception
April 16

Spring Commencement
April 30-May 1

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Director's Address	1
Study Abroad & Special Events	2
Honors College Classes	3
-The Mythology of Travel	
-The Human Animal Bond	
Our Thanks	4
Honors Conventions	4
Student Association	5
HC "Happenings "	6



I was climbing out of Bryce Canyon in Southwest Utah on a hot summer day this past August when I was surprised to hear the cellphone in my shirt pocket ringing—surprised because I was generally in a no-signal reception zone and had been out of phone contact for some while. The caller was Dr. Susan Awbrey—OU's Senior Associate Provost. Over a somewhat crackly connection, Susan asked me if I was available, willing, and able to replace Barbara Mabee as second interim director of Oakland's Honors College. I affirmed that I was and thus plunged myself into an ongoing experience very far removed from the relaxing temptations of retirement I was just beginning to savor.

The days that have flown by

since Susan's call have been hectic but undeniably rewarding. The Honors College has always occupied a special place in my conception of Oakland University—as an Honors College teacher and long-time member of the HC Advisory Council—and I am gratified to be reunited with it in a way that permits making a contribution to its continuation and stability during a critical, transitional period.

The Honors College is growing precipitously with well over 600 current students on our books—a more than three-fold increase since 2002 when I was last formally involved with the HC. Focused efforts to increase retention of Honors students in the program (i.e., through completion of requirements through graduation) appear to be working. Furthermore, university expectations are to augment recruitment of qualified students until our numbers constitute approximately five percent of undergraduate enrollment at OU. This goal could boost our

population to approximately 1,000 Honors students in the next several years.

Such growth poses both challenges and exciting new prospects. Perceptible progress is being made on a number of fronts to meet these challenges and to explore some new directions for the Honors College. I hope I will be able to report more specific developments in the next newsletter. Meanwhile, this year has already yielded a wide range of significant activities and accomplishments for our current students, as highlighted throughout the following pages

The continuing support (moral, programmatic, and financial) from you, our readers—especially our Honors alumni—is, as always, a critical factor in the continuing success of the College. Thanks!

Gary Shepherd,
Interim Director

CONGRATULATIONS!



Marta Bauer, Senior (left) and **Emily Tissot**, Junior (right) were appointed by the President, as the two student liaisons to the Oakland University Board of Trustees for 2010-2011.



Questions or comments, please email us at hc@oakland.edu or call 248-370-4450

To remove your name from our mailing list, please [click here](#)

STUDY ABROAD & SPECIAL EVENTS

ISREAL

By Danielle Ager and Emily Tissot



Emily and Danielle

First of all, we would like to thank the Honors College for the Study Abroad scholarship we were awarded for our trip to Israel. Without it, we wouldn't have been able to participate in this wonderful program.

This summer Danielle and I spent three weeks Israel. The trip was led by Special Lecturer Michael Pytlik and Associate Professor of Anthropology Dr. Richard Stamps. The trip was designed to give Archaeology students an international and hands-on dig experience. We excavated at Khirbet Qeiyafa, which sits on the Elah Valley, southwest of Jerusalem. The dig is conducted by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. It is a 'hot spot' in Israel due to its potential connection to the biblical figure, King David.

We spent our time on the site excavating squares, sorting pottery, and shifting through layers of past civilizations to reach the bottom. Some of our most exciting finds were: an Egyptian scarab and carved bedrock. It was amazing to touch artifacts that are thousands of years old.

Our weekends were spent touring at Beit Shean, Jerusalem, and Caesarea. We prayed at the Western Wall, touched Jesus' tomb at

the Holy Sepulcher, and saw the Romanesque cities that King Herod built. Overall, it was a life changing experience and we are so thankful for the opportunity that was given to us!



Trying on Muslim wedding attire made by the number one fabric maker in Israel

My Adventures in España!

By Max VanRaaphorst



Gijón, Spain right near the Ocean.

Now you might ask me, "Max, what is a biochemistry major doing in Spain"? Oh let me tell you! If you ever get a chance to study abroad, be enveloped in another culture, expand your horizons and get a chance to meet amazing new people around the world, you would be crazy not to take that opportunity! Preaching aside, I conducted my studies/adventures in Oviedo, Spain. Oviedo is the capital of the Asturias Region of Spain, way up in the north.

I lived in the Povedo residence hall with other American students taking classes at the University. They were an extraordinarily outgoing, dynamic group, as I have ever seen. Classes ran Monday through Friday 9:30am to 2:30pm, with a little break in between for Café con leche and tortilla española.

My trip included many adventures. The first Friday all the summer students at the university went to a restaurant for a little Asturian party, called an Espicha! There was Celtic music, appetizers, good company and the local drink of choice – Sidra! There were even some official dancers that danced the old fashion Celtic dances. After a few glasses of Sidra, the next thing I knew, I was up there dancing with the Celtic dancers. Oh what fun!

Some other adventures (that I do not have that much room to talk about, but please ask me about some time) would include: Spain winning the world cup, canoe trip down a river to the Ocean, dancing, visiting FC Barcelona stadium, and many more.

FRIDAY LUNCH CONVERSATIONS



One of the best things the Honors College does is expose students to a wide variety of stimulating learning opportunities outside of formal coursework. This past fall we initiated "Friday Lunch Conversations," a bi-monthly noon-time visit from distinguished guests who give informal talks on topics they are either expert in or passionate about. (See the list of guests and topics thus far presented on page 4 of this newsletter). Tasty lunches are provided (and consumed!) during these presentations, and students are able to ask questions, make comments, and generally have informative exchanges with our guests in a relaxed learning environment.

We will continue this series throughout the upcoming winter semester, but will need to switch to Thursdays at noon instead of Fridays. We look forward to hearing presentations from such well-regarded experts as Professor Richard Stamps on his recent archeological excavations in Israel, Professor Terri Orbuch on the art and science of love relationships, and Professor Annie Gilson on writing novels. Stay tuned for announcements of dates and times on the Honors College Web page for these and other speaker presentations as we move forward into 2011.

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO JOIN US!



HONORS COLLEGE CLASSES & SPECIAL EVENTS

"A BIG THANK YOU"

**to our Fall 2010 faculty
and their departments.**

Mark Doman: *Lean Thinking*

Amy Johnson: *The
Human-Animal Bond*

Paul Kubicek: *Politics &
Cultural Borders of West &
Europe*

Barbara Mabec: *German
Literature and Film in Post
Unification Germany*

Daniel Shepherd:
Pakistani-American Relations

Eugene Surdutovich: *Four
Journeys in to the World of
Brilliant Ideas*

Mary Wermuth: *The
Mythology of Travel*

Pamela Mitzelfeld: *Thesis
Preparation*

Mythology of Travel

By Professor Mary Wermuth



Is there mythology in travel? Twenty-four HC students have decided their is. First, they travelled with Abraham to Canaan, fled with Moses across the Red Sea, and followed Gilgamesh and Enkidu to the Great Cedar Forest. Much discussion ensued about the role of divine powers in human lives. The open discussion proved thought provoking and insightful. Then came travels that stepped away from great cultural/religious stories. Huck Finn traveling down the Mississippi, teen agers riding the rails during the Great

Depression, Santiago catching a big fish and beating the sharks. As levels of interpretation and motivation for journeying from home were discussed, the myth opened up

to the inspiration, the need for lessons about life to be learned, and the deeper understanding of the inner self.

Several selections of poetry reinforced the students' awareness that a journey is more than flying to someplace in the sun. Then came William Dalrymple's travels to Xanadu in the steps of Marco Polo. Next students walked in the Songlines of the Aborigines of Australia. The journey became a fulfillment of a promise, of a return to earth. Finally, the long great cultural journey home—*The*

Odyssey—expressed values that students still find important today—loyalty, faithfulness, courage, trust, and a bit of divine intervention.

Class work reinforced the multi layered significance of all journeys even ones just across campus. The course ended with Robert Frost's poem *The Road Not Taken*.

The students agreed that myth does exist in travel—the individual myth of who each person is and the choices each makes along the path of life. They agreed that they need to stand a bit longer and peer down the diverging paths before making decisions about which path to travel.

Professor Wermuth is honored to have been able to repeat *Mythology of Travel* at the HC this past semester with such a special group of students.

Em-BARK-ing upon the Exploration of the Human Animal Bond

By Professor Amy Johnson

"Happiness is a warm puppy." Charles Schulz

Just walk a puppy into a room full of children (or adults) and wait for the collective swooning. There is nothing academically profound here alone, but there is a science behind our innate desire to coddle that puppy. That science falls generically under the Human Animal Bond (HAB) and rests in the literature and practices of multiple disciplines.

HC 208 explored this phenomenon and its offshoot, Animal Assisted Interventions (AAI), via journal articles, videos, anecdotes, research studies and student-conducted surveys using lenses of empathy, reciprocity, social learning and



Professor Johnson & students at
Leslie Nature Center

developmental theories, the biophilia hypothesis (our innate need to be close to nature), neuroscience, mirror neurons (that we share with our canine counterparts

which allow them to be attuned to our emotions) and more.

By investigating theories and foundational insights as to how and why animals have been so therapeutically effective, some students in the class reported a change in their beliefs about our relationship with animals while others felt justified and supported in what they've always felt in their hearts.



“THANK YOU” TO....

OUR WONDERFUL FALL DONORS

Susan Awbrey
Ellen Bristol
Philip T. Clampitt
Susan Davies Goepf
Gary Laidlaw

ALUMS Who Participated in HC 100 Career Day

Elspeth Coats, '91
Susan Evans, '88
Julie Granthen, '81
Peter Halabu, '07
Judy Hegelund, '95
Christopher Rohlman, '84
Lauren Schoenstein,
Desiree Snyder, '07
Mary Wermuth, (Charter Class)

***If you would like to volunteer for next year, we will need panelists in Business, Education, Engineering, Law, Liberal Arts, Medicine, and Social Services. Please contact us!!**

LUNCH CONVERSATIONS

Richard Burke- “What Philosophers Do”



Vince Khapoya- “Growing Up in an African Village”

Brian Murphy- “How I Got Hooked on Opera”



Andre Ruede- “How I Escaped from the Nazis”

Paul Tombouljian- “Protecting and Restoring Natural Resources”



MICHIGAN HONORS SOCIETY

This October, I, three of my classmates, and the renowned Mrs. Dawn Deitsch of Oakland's Honors College, had the distinct pleasure of attending the Michigan Honors Association 2010 conference. Part immodest advertising opportunity, part collective honors think tank, the retreat serves as a yearly opportunity for schools to compare notes, sharing what has worked as well as what has not, and what could be implemented as well as what perhaps should be. The guiding principle this year was nature, centered on nature conservancy, and it was well suited to the forested environment of Roscommon, Michigan just off Higgins Lake.

The daylight hours found us attending lectures and undertaking informative, group-building activities; the night saw us stumbling through the woods and thawing around the bonfire. Our discussion was not tightly restricted and, as one can easily imagine, was free to traverse all the various threads and tangents that might derive themselves from such a pertinent theme. However, despite the obsequious idealism, it was an atmosphere of innovation, enthusiasm, and action. Oakland walked away looking impressive, but, more importantly, with plans for constructing an even more impressive future.

By Alex Green



Bill Othman, Alex Green, Reanna Douglas, and Alexandra Faber

NATIONAL HONORS COLLEGE CONFERENCE



Liz, Gary and Jessica

This past October I went with Doctor Gary Shepherd and Jessica Drogowski to Kansas City, Missouri, to participate in the National Collegiate Honors College Conference. We arrived in Missouri late Thursday night and woke up early for the conference Friday morning.

The events of the conference took place in a Marriott hotel located in downtown Kansas City. Honors students and faculty from all over the country gathered in the hotel to share success stories of their programs.

Jessica and I went to multiple group sessions where we listened to students and faculty contribute ideas on how to better an Honors College program. In these sessions we learned about everything from how to build camaraderie to which types of fundraisers would be the most profitable for our Honors College program.

Friday night, Doctor Shepherd, Jessica, and I attended a comedy show and blues concert hosted by the conference. The night's activities allowed us to see some of downtown Kansas City and enjoy the music of a popular local band. Overall it was a very worthwhile and entertaining weekend and most importantly, it provided us with some great new ideas for our Honors College here at Oakland.

By Elizabeth DeFour

STUDENT ASSOCIATION (HCSA)

HONORS COLLEGE STUDENT ASSOCIATION

By Jessica Drogowski



Selling HCSA t-shirts
(Sarah Tarockoff, Chloe Akers,
Rachel Butler, and Chris Jozwick)

This semester has been full of events and activities the Honors College Student Association (HCSA) has been bringing to the honors students. We began with a "Meet & Greet" before Convocation in September, which provided students with a chance to get to know other honors students and become involved with the HCSA. In October, we co-sponsored and planned the campus-wide Vandenberg Halloween Party, at which there were costume contests, prizes, games, food, and more! We took a trip to Yates' Cider Mill in early November and had a great time eating donuts, drinking cider, and exploring the

nature trail. We also held our annual Thanksgiving Pie Sale fundraiser. It was a huge success this year! We had so many donations we had to extend the sale to a second day to sell them all, and we made quite a profit! We have also held monthly HCSA T-shirt days, during which any student who wears their HCSA t-shirt and stops by our table receives an awesome prize! We've had a great first semester and are very excited for our winter semester plans!



Freshmen Meet & Greet



FRESHMEN MEET & GREET/CONVOCATION



Cell group leaders get ready to "Meet & Greet" their groups for the first time



Followed by a walk to the O'Rena and attending Convocation

HC "HAPPENINGS"

STUDENT STARS ON THE BIG SCREEN

By Ali Armstrong 9/29/10 The Oakland Post

With a resume including a film with Eminem, training at the Purple Rose Theatre, and awards from Oakland University's short film contest, junior Courtney Zimmer is an OU student who plans on making her way to Hollywood. While her big break was playing alongside Eminem in the MTV short film, "Eminem, Where Have You Been?", Zimmer got her start acting in the fifth grade as the lead in her school's play, "Louis and Clark." "For now, my plan is to graduate with a teaching certificate and then do acting for a couple of years, move to California and audition all the time," Zimmer said. [READ the entire article...](#)



PULITZER PRIZE WINNING AUTHOR, JUNOT DIAZ, VISITS HONORS COLLEGE

Junot Diaz, winner of the Pulitzer Prize in 2008 for his novel, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, spoke to over 400



students, faculty and members of the OU community at a campus wide lecture on Nov. 4th. He also shared his thoughts about writing and life at a student luncheon in the HC. Mr. Diaz's novel was chosen as one of the required books for the Freshmen Colloquium Class this semester.

OU STUDENTS BRING GRIZZLIES PRIDE TO ROCHESTER CHRISTMAS PARADE

More than 25 students from The Honors College braved the cold temperatures to walk in the parade Rochester parade.



"It's exciting to show people in the area how great Oakland is," said Jim Van Nada, a sophomore and sociology major in The Honors College.

"I like the idea of showcasing The Honors College. People from Rochester see us and think of OU as a good neighbor. It's cold out, but still nice," said Travis Nagler, a freshman from White Lake majoring in chemistry and secondary education in The Honors College.

"FESTIVAL OF WRITERS" WINNERS

Two Honors College freshmen received 2nd place honors at Oakland's annual showcase of student writers. **Brittany Kelly** took 2nd place for her Individual Presentation and **Rose Brewart** for her Oral Presentation. CONGRATULATIONS TO BOTH!

MEN'S SOCCER TEAM WINS SUMMIT LEAGUE TOURNAMENT

Article by Dan Fenner 11/17/10 The Oakland Post

Another Oakland University team is headed to an NCAA Tournament as the men's soccer team won the Summit League Tournament Sunday by defeating Oral Roberts, 2-0, at the OU Soccer Field on campus.

The third-seeded Golden Grizzlies will advance to the NCAA College Cup later this month as Sunday's win earned them an automatic bid to the tournament, the fifth time in school-history.

The Grizzlies triumph Sunday serves as vindication after last season's disappointing end, when OU entered the conference tournament, also played on campus, as the No. 1 seed and was upset in the first game. [To see more photos of the game ...](#)



HC students; Nick Kristock (pointing right of flag) and Miche'le Lipari (front row, 2nd from left)

****To make a donation to The Honors College visit: <http://www.oakland.edu/ur>**

s=Oakland