
The Honors Eagle

Auburn University

Newsletter of the University Honors College

Spring 2006

Casino Night

The second annual Honors Congress Game and Casino Night, held February 17, was a smashing success. About 75 people attended Casino Night and had a great time playing games and meeting other Honors Congress members. Over 40 people participated in the Texas Hold 'Em and Spades tournaments. After four and a half hours of playing time, Brian Bolerjack was declared the winner of the Texas Hold 'Em tournament, with Mark Alexander claiming the runner-up spot. Jacob Young and John Higginbotham defeated last year's champion Aleksandr Zhushma and Blake Carrell to win the Spades tournament. The winners received \$150 in gift cards to area stores and restaurants.

This year's Casino Night was located at a new venue, the Greystone Mansion. Everyone agreed the move from Foy Ballroom transformed Casino Night's atmosphere, and social co-chair Aaron Chastain said it was the biggest improvement of the event. In addition to changing venues, Casino Night 2006 improved upon last year's inaugural success by adding door prizes. Kathie Mattox kept the refreshment table full and Byron Caudle generously volunteered his sound equipment and expertise to provide music by Sinatra and friends, while Katie Baldwin and Aaron Bush did a great job dealing for Texas Hold 'Em.



The social committee will be hosting one final event of the semester, the always popular Pizza Study Break. The study break will be held at 7 pm, Tuesday, May 2, at the Honors Center in Broun Hall. Take a break from studying and join us for pizza and a coke.

—**Kathryn Chandler**

Honors Makes a Difference: Auburn Boys & Girls Club

This spring a group of Honors students have given their time to a special, on-going partnership with the Auburn Boys and Girls Club. From helping children with their algebra to showing them how to shoot free-throws, Honors students have worked hard to fulfill the current needs of the Boys and Girls Club. Honors students have been blessed to be able to make a significant contribution to the Auburn community through their connection to this great group of kids.

—**Jessica Sherrill**, Service Committee Head

Honors Congress Officers

President:	Aaron Chastain
Vice-President:	Caroline Brown
Secretary:	Elise McClanahan
Treasurer:	Adam Carlisle

Undergraduate Research Opportunities

One of the most exciting opportunities I have had here at Auburn is Undergraduate Research. It has given me the chance to broaden my knowledge and understanding of science and laboratory techniques. I am working with Dr. Doug Martin at the Scott Ritchey Research Center of the Auburn University Vet School studying lysosomal storage disorders and their contributions to neurodegenerative disease. More specifically I am building a virus vector coding for both marker proteins as well as a therapeutic gene. Once the vector is created here in Auburn, I am hoping to get the opportunity to travel to Harvard and work with one of our collaborators there with putting the vector into a virus. Undergraduate research is a great way to supplement classroom instruction and get hands on experience, along with being a valuable connection with professors and researchers that will last a lifetime!

—**Kelly Moreland**, Sophomore, Molecular Biology

Study Abroad

My year abroad was the most exciting cultural experience of my life. I spent the last school year (04-05) in St. Andrews, Scotland. Besides taking a full load of classes, I immersed myself in various school sports and clubs. The University of St. Andrews is steeped in tradition and historical significance—both for Great Britain and the world. It is the oldest university in Scotland, founded in 1413, and the third oldest in Britain, after Oxford and Cambridge. During breaks I had the opportunity to travel all over England and Scotland, staying with various friends I made at school. I also went on a brief tour of Ireland as part of the Scottish Universities Swimming and Water Polo teams. I was selected for these teams while competing for St. Andrews and also participated in two other sports at the university level. Each team I played on afforded me greater opportunity to experience the British culture through sport. Their athletic and social cultures are very different from ours, and it was truly an honor to be accepted into their circle, if only for a year.

I would encourage all Auburn students, especially in the Honors College, to study abroad for at least a semester if their major permits. Students shouldn't be in a hurry to finish up their degree or double major just for the sake of its accomplishment. My year abroad helped me learn how to slow down, take full advantage of my opportunities, make



Andrew relaxes by the famous Loch Ness

new friends, and appreciate cultural differences. If you can't get away for a term abroad, you can always explore your interests in other ways. Take a class outside your major, complete a research thesis, study abroad, or just join a club you've always been interested but haven't made time for. You might find something you weren't even looking for.

—**Andrew Nelson**

Call for Volunteers!!!

We are still in need of Honors Mentors! This is a fun way to get involved with Honors Congress without having to commit a huge amount of time. Applications will be available in the Honors Office until Friday, May 5.

The Honors Camp War Eagle sessions will begin June 14 and June 21. Current Honors students are needed to welcome incoming students. If you would like to volunteer for this, email Summer Orientation Coordinator Amanda Jones at jonesam@auburn.edu.

From the Desk of the Director

All good things must come to an end, and I have decided that it is time to return to full time teaching and research at the end of the summer. I have had the honor of directing the University Honors College since the fall of 1998, and it has been both a challenge and a pleasure to work with so many bright, energetic, and talented students over the years. Enrollment in the College has increased from 600 to 700 students during that time. Our entering freshman class has grown from 200 students to 250 new freshmen this year. Earlier this year we moved into a new, much larger Honors Office on the third floor of the library, which I will miss next year when I return to my office in Parker Hall. But there are a number of mathematical problems I want to work on, and it is time to move on.



I want to recognize the students who have contributed the most to making this a memorable year for the Honors College. Special thanks are due to the leaders of the Honors Congress, Michael Paine as President, Sarah Hardekopf as Vice President, Mustafa Ali as Secretary, and Michael Zerkoff as Treasurer. Thanks to the very active leaders of the Honors Congress committees, this has been a memorable year, with an unusually large and varied number of service opportunities and social events scheduled.

I also want to congratulate the recently elected Congress officers for next year: Aaron Chastain, President; Caroline Brown, Vice President; Adam Carlisle, Treasurer; and Elise McClanahan, Secretary. They are already making plans to insure that next year will be an outstanding one for Honors students.

Best wishes to all!

Jack W. Rogers, Jr., Director

From Behind the Lectern

English professor James McKelly does not understand why he keeps winning teaching awards: “At my age, you just don’t feel cool anymore.” His students—former and present—however, beg to differ: Dr. McKelly is the 2005-2006 Honors Congress Professor of the Year and it’s the second time that he’s won this award. If pressed, he speculates that his connection with his students is based upon his belief that what he teaches matters—not only in an abstract theoretical sense, but in the practice of everyday life. Wry yet sincere, impassioned and demanding, McKelly appears to have hit upon a combination of traits that keep students enthralled during his lectures in Honors World Literature I. Dr. McKelly was kind enough to speak to the Honors Eagle about the award, literature, and teaching.

**Why did you become a professor?
What other careers did you consider?**

I thought about law school. I had been around lawyers my whole life and I’m naturally combative or, rather, adversarial. I really liked the drama. However, I was lucky to have a wonderful professor when I was an undergraduate. When I looked at him teaching, I thought that I could see myself, see my future in him. [As a professor] I can wake up in the morning feeling good, knowing that I benefit the world in a material way: politically, intellectually, and morally. It’s a very humane pursuit. You come to love the humans you teach and forge genuinely emotional connections [with

your students]. I’ve taught long enough now that I am able to put my current students who are pursuing a career in education in touch with former students who are currently teaching at the high school level. It’s a holy thing to be part of that kind of continuity...holy in a secular sense.

What were your first literary loves, and why did you decide to pursue English as a discipline?

Rock music turned me onto literature. When I was thirteen years old, I was into Patti Smith’s *Horses* album and Bruce Springsteen’s *Greetings from Asbury Park*. I wanted to participate in their creativity in some way, and studying literature seemed like a way to do this. In high school, I loved Jack Kerouac’s *On the Road*, *The Fellowship of the Rings* (Tolkien), Allen Ginsberg, Walt Whitman, Herman Hesse’s *Glass-bead Game* and *Narcissus and Goldmund*.

What do you think of as your role as an instructor? What are your responsibilities to your students?

I believe that I am obligated to be prepared. I need to know the text well. As Conrad says, I need to have something to say, and say it. I try to discover in my ideas what matters and structure my lectures so that the material is revealed by enacting the proposition. I try to dramatize it, becoming an avatar of an idea to show to my students that I really “mean” what I’m teaching, that I am sincere. [Planning lectures] is a solitary



pursuit. It takes humility. And humility is the best way to have a strong ego. Frankly, I think students can smell the insecurity that pomposity usually masks in professors, and they withdraw from it.

What are some of the pleasures and challenges of teaching for Honors?

It’s so personally fulfilling. With Honors students, my intellect is “pedal to the metal.” In those classes, I am unbridled—I give it all that I have and am. And there is a certain exhilaration in that: in teaching before a group that picks up on those kinds of efforts. [Honors classes] are sort of like dream classes for professors.

Is there anything you’d like to say that I haven’t asked you about?

Yes. I am deeply humbled and grateful to be recognized by my students in this way.

—Emily McCann

Committee Chairs for 2006-200

Social: Kathryn Chandler
Spirit: Kelly Moreland
Philanthropy: Heidi Owens and Rachel Watson
Intramurals: Jay Owen
Webmaster: Mary Ella Hill

Service: We are still looking for someone to fill this position. If you are interested in coordinating service projects for the Honors Congress, email Aaron Chastain at chastra@auburn.edu.

The Honors Eagle is published by the University Honors College of Auburn University.

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For other information about the Honors College, see <http://www.auburn.edu/honors>

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University Honors Scholars

Tiffany Bock
 David Boozer
 Daniel Boyett
 Katy Braden
 Kim Brigner
 Courtney Cagle
 Donna Lee Davis
 Brett Elmore

Evan Epps
 Heather Fields
 Kathryn Foti
 Ivy Grimes
 Adam Hajari
 Laura Keller
 Lisha Li
 Lindsey Longmire

Emily McCann
 Ahmed Owian
 Michael Paine
 Megan Rector
 Adrienne Reeves
 Matt Souther
 Brian Williams
 Aleksandr Zhushma

Finals Study Break
 May 2nd, 7:00 p.m.
 Honors Center
 Pizza-Soft Drinks

Senior Honors Scholars

Karen Nelson
 Zachary Seitz

Honors Ambassadors
 for 2006-2007

Mustafa Ali
 Aaron Chastain
 Sarah Hardekopf
 Anne-Marie Hodge
 Abby Hogelin
 Jessica Jerabek
 Rebecca Ludvigsen
 Kelly Moreland
 Hollie Nolan
 Lindsey Reid
 Brian Sullivan
 Christine Taylor
 Katherine Westbrook
 Sandy Wolf

To graduate as a University Honors Scholar, students must complete all of the requirements for the Junior and Senior Honors Certificates, the requirements for their discipline, and have a minimum cumulative unadjusted GPA of 3.4.

To graduate as a Senior Honors Scholar, students must complete the requirements for the Senior Honors Program and have a minimum cumulative unadjusted GPA of 3.2.

The University Honors College
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