

THE HONORS BEACON

Honors Program at Minnesota State University, Mankato



LEADERSHIP • RESEARCH • GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

Issue VII, Winter 2014



Coming of Age in Mississippi: The Common Read Experience

by Jessica Staricka, '18 (History; Swanville, Minn.)

The Honors Program joined Minnesota State University, Mankato this past summer in reading civil rights activist Anne Moody's memoir *Coming of Age in Mississippi* to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Movement. This year's Common Read has been the center of many campus activities and class discussions this fall.

The book chronicles Anne Moody's life growing up as an African-American girl in the South during the 1940s and '50s. She struggled to understand what it meant to be African-American, and why she lived in fear of the racism and violence around her. In her late teens and twenties Moody eventually found her place among Civil Rights activists at Tougaloo College, and dedicated her life to fighting racial injustice.

In September, two special guests joined us at Minnesota State to add to our discussion and understanding of the book and the era. In a public lecture with a question and an-

swer session on September 9th, students, faculty, staff, and community members spent an evening learning from prize-winning historian and author M.J. O'Brien and civil rights activist and personal friend of Anne Moody, Joan Trumpauer-Mulholland.

"It is not a story," O'Brien reminded the audience. "It is not fiction." He shared with the audience Anne Moody's experience growing up in the "racial caste system" of Mississippi at the dawn of the Civil Rights Movement. Moody wanted to "invite the rest of the world into Mississippi" with her memoir, O'Brien stated. "Fear is a major theme of the book." Present is the fear of poverty, racism, and violence: fears that still plague the world today. *Coming of Age in Mississippi* has never gone out of print. Moody's story continues to invite the rest of the world into Mississippi to this day.

By the end of the book, O'Brien stated, "Anne is worn out by her own efforts and

by black apathy." He explained something most readers have been curious about—what exactly happened to Moody after the book's ambiguous end? While still in her twenties, Moody was encouraged to write her story by African-American Major League Baseball player Jackie Robinson. After its success, she lived with her husband in Europe for ten years. She returned to Mississippi only when her mother was near death. The traumas of her youth still affect her today, and Moody has preferred for a long time to stay out of the public eye. "She made her statement with her book," O'Brien said.

Joan Trumpauer-Mulholland wore a t-shirt commemorating Medgar Evers, a civil rights activist assassinated in Jackson, Mississippi at age 37. As a teenager, Mulholland decided she "wanted to make the South practice what it preached" in terms of Christian compassion.

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Director's Note

by Ginny Walters, Assistant Director



Honors Program students and staff had an exciting fall semester. We welcomed an outstanding class of first-year students, and we have enjoyed getting to know them over the course of the semester! First-year students and mentors worked together to institute new extracurricular programs, namely camping at Land of Memories Park and our first honors orientation and fall retreat. We were excited to collaborate with offices around campus and engage in conversations around this year's common read novel, *Coming of Age in Mississippi*. Eight of us traveled to Denver, Colorado to represent the university and program at this year's NCHC national conference. It was exciting to see one of our students, Lauren Bach, display her talents as a student member of the NCHC Board of Directors! We are proud of this semester's graduates who defended their electronic portfolios. We welcomed two site visitors, Art Spisak from the University of Iowa and John Zubizarreta from Columbia College, to conduct our five-year program review. Their findings will inform the next strategic plan and undoubtedly have long-term effects on the program and its staff and students. These are just a few of this semester's activities. The Honors Program had an enjoyable fall semester, and we eagerly anticipate spring semester! 📧

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Editor's Note

by Rachael Igo, '16 (Creative Writing; Mendota Heights, Minn.)



The Beacon team and I proudly present to you the seventh issue of our *Honors Beacon* newsletter. My hope is that as you read the articles in this issue, you will see how exceptional the Honors Program at Minnesota State is. I am especially excited to welcome the fresh enthusiasm of our new first-year students who have volunteered to assist with the Beacon.

This issue spotlights our honors athletes. I want to give a special thanks to Paul Allan, Assistant Athletic Director of Communications, who provided us with professional photographs of our athletes from the University's Athletic Department. I also want to acknowledge the athletes and writers who made this section possible with their cooperation.

I am proud of the newsletter we have put together this semester and I hope that all readers find it enjoyable. Happy reading! 📧

Honors Alumna Spotlight, Jessica Maher

by Rachael Igo, '16 (Creative Writing; Mendota Heights, Minn.)

Jessica Maher (History, '96) is one of the many honors alumni from Minnesota State University, Mankato. Maher graduated with summa cum laude honors, a major in History, and a minor in Anthropology. Afterward, she attended the University of Minnesota Law School and graduated cum laude in 1999. She now practices family law as an attorney and is celebrating her fourteenth year in private practice of family and juvenile law at Walling, Berg & Debele, in Minneapolis.

When asked about her accomplishments, she reports a plethora of achievements. Maher told us, "On a professional level, I am proud to be a shareholder in my law firm; to be a Fellow in the American Academy of Adoption Attorneys; to have served on a number of committees including the *Hennepin Lawyer* (bar association magazine) committee, including two years as chair, for the Hennepin County Bar Association and on the Minnesota Supreme Court's Juvenile Rules Committee. A high note in my career to date has been appearing at the Min-

nesota Court of Appeals for oral argument on cases. I used to sit in that courtroom as a clerk. Family law is a stressful yet also rewarding practice area."

Mankato's Honors Program attracted Maher because it offered her an exceptional education and a "private school experience" along with the lower cost of a state university. She wanted the ability to take advantage of the smaller class sizes, individual attention, access to professors, and flexibility the program offered. Maher's favorite part about being an honors student was the small class sizes. She avoided most large lectures her peers took through the General Education Program. The small class sizes enabled her to develop relationships with her professors, which later assisted her when making decisions about attending law school and completing the application process.

Maher appreciated being offered a position in the honors office when she was a student. When meeting with the Director one day, he admired how


articulate and intelligent she was, so he offered her a job. Having an on campus job enhanced Maher's experience: "[I] learned a great deal about professionalism, office environments, multi-tasking, prioritizing, and other skills that were invaluable outside the classroom. At the same time I was also receiving a top notch education in the classroom."

Her honors classroom experiences taught her how to work directly with professors. This made her well-equipped for law school and her life beyond school. Maher learned the importance of self-advocating, utilizing opportunities, and working with diverse personalities in a team environment: "Because of my experiences within the Honors Program, I was prepared for the academic rigor of law school, which made that transition easier. I was comfortable interacting with and working with professors and administrators, which made the experience of working in the Court of Appeals and then a law firm environment a better experience from the very



beginning."

Maher reflects upon her time spent in the Honors Program at Mankato with great satisfaction. She believes the skills the program taught her were the foundation of her experiences and successes in life: "Looking back, two significant benefits to the Honors Program for me were (a) that flexibility and opportunity to explore options and (b) the ability to receive a top notch education at a relatively lower price, minimizing the student loan debt that affects post-graduate decisions."

We are proud to have given such a successful lawyer a foundation to work from, and that the legacy of her experience still continues. 



Make a difference in the lives of those preparing to make a difference.

Because they have the opportunity to push themselves to do more here at Minnesota State Mankato, students in the Honors Program will be ready to push for success in the real world as well.

Supporting the Honors Program has an impact on students who will become widely recognized, prominent, distinguished leaders, researchers and global citizens who are able to bring about change in the world, no matter what their chosen discipline may be.

Giving to the Honors Program is easy; simply visit mnsu.edu/giving/giving and designate your gift to the Honors Program.

Give Now

The Honors Program attracts academically talented and highly motivated students, and we strive to offer them the very best opportunities. Your gift will help fund:

- Leadership Training
- Academic Programming
- Social Events

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As a white daughter of Virginia segregationists, she horrified her parents by enrolling in Tougaloo College, a historically black school outside Jackson, Mississippi. Mulholland explained that at the time, Tougaloo was “movement central,” and Anne Moody seemed like just another one of the many student activists. The intense anger her friend exhibited in her writings really surprised her. “My memories of Annie are just . . . another one of us.”


Both O’Brien and Mulholland spoke about the famous Woolworth sit-in in Jackson in 1963. The sit-in is chronicled in O’Brien’s *We Shall Not Be Moved* for which he was awarded the Lillian Smith Book Award. Both Mulholland and Moody joined other civil rights activists in integrating Woolworth’s lunch counter as they were assaulted for hours by an angry mob of high school stu-

dents. Mulholland shared how at the time, she was not new to such activities. As an ally, she knew her place, and she knew how to be useful. She stated “You gotta use what you got. I have white skin.” She explained how she used her white skin to her advantage in multiple civil rights demonstrations.

When asked how far society has come since the Civil Rights Era and how much racial equality we have achieved, Mulholland answered, “Maybe we’re halfway there. But if we don’t watch it, it’s going to roll back.”

On September 10th, O’Brien and Mulholland met with honors students to help them prepare for leading community discussions of Moody’s memoir. The number one suggestion made was to make the events of the past relevant to today. *Coming of Age in Mississippi* was published over 45 years

ago, but the injustice and fear in it still exist. O’Brien and Mulholland used the shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri as an example. There is still injustice, and there are still people willing to fight it. Honors students lead community discussion in First Year Experience courses, and at community centers and churches throughout Mankato.

In the intimate meetings with O’Brien and Mulholland, it seemed the Civil Rights Movement veterans were passing a torch onto the circle of students. In the 2040s, whites may no longer be the racial majority in the United States, and if so, today’s college students will be the ones to see that day. *Coming of Age in Mississippi* didn’t just invite us into Mississippi—it invited us into a realm most of us couldn’t have fathomed. The Common Read Program and the guests who shared in it will help us share that realm with others. 

Honors Program Conducts Self-Study and Program Review

by Trisha Walker, '17 (Anthropology; Kenyon, Minn.)

Minnesota State Mankato requires each academic program to complete a self-study and program review every five years. Fortunately, the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) provides Honors Programs across the nation with trained site visitors to assist in this process. The purpose of these site visits is to engage the power of reflection and critical analysis, affirm the value of Honors, reinforce excellence of teaching, learning, and leadership in Honors, and suggest improvements through peer review. This October, our Honors Program had the benefit of having Dr. Art Spisak, a NCHC Assessment and Evaluation Committee member and Dean of the University of Iowa’s Honors College, and John Zubizarreta, an Honors Director since 1989 at Columbia College (South Carolina), join us to review our program.

Dr. Spisak has had seventeen years of honors teaching experience and eight years of honors administrative experience. He has special interest in research and experience on defining honors, honors curriculum design, and honors recruitment and retention. As a site visitor, Spisak believes that “[my] main purpose is to use the time before the visit, while onsite, and in any interaction afterwards to understand what the program encompasses and really does, and, as much as possible in the short time, why it is as it is. Some of that understanding comes through documentation, but most comes through personal interaction. Therefore, a site visitor should give a lot of time listening, observing, and getting answers to questions that are relevant to the specific institution.”

John Zubizarreta is the director of Columbia College’s Honors Program. He is a well-published professor in both the honors and English fields. For honors, he has published articles on the power of critical reflection, motivating students and faculty, as well as a book on teaching exemplary students. He has also published a

book about reflective portfolios, which is housed in our Honors Lounge library. Through NCHC, Zubizarreta has been trained on how to assess honors programs.

Because of his experience reviewing programs, Zubizarreta knows what he considers to be a healthy program. Although no two programs are alike, Zubizarreta stated that “a healthy honors program works in synchronization and harmony with the mission and values of its institution, and successful honors programs foster and help develop creative and innovative teaching and learning.” He also emphasized that honors programs should encourage their students to take risks, learn in a different way, and to seek out challenging opportunities.

Zubizarreta’s favorite part of reviewing honors programs is seeing them through the eyes of their students. “I find it enlightening to hear the students’ voices,” Zubizarreta said. Interacting with students adds value and other opportunities to his visit. He likes looking at the multiple conflicting opinions that students have. For example, one student may love small class sizes while another may dislike them. Zubizarreta likes how honors students are not afraid to disagree and are willing to speak up and make suggestions at meetings that often times make their director say, “Well, why didn’t we think of that?” There are many things students have to say that are beneficial for the faculty to hear, and it is also important for them to talk about the program without the faculty around.

Spisak’s favorite part of site visits is experiencing the differences among different honors programs. “Part of a review is in seeing how each program or college is unique.”

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Mariah Haffield- MSSA President

by Rachael Igo, '16 (Creative Writing; Mendota Heights, Minn.)
and Katelynn Malecha, '18 (Mathematics; Lonsdale, Minn.)
Photo by Jaylynn Nash

Mariah Haffield (Human Resource Management, '16) leads the Minnesota State Student Association (MSSA) as the first honors student in recent history, and first female in fourteen years, to be president. Originally from Worthington, MN, she decided to attend Minnesota State University Mankato to major in Human Resource Management and minor in Political Science. Haffield plans to graduate in Spring 2016 and continue her education in law school. She hopes to become a Public Prosecutor.

MSSA is Minnesota State's student government and exists to be a voice for students. According to their webpage, their mission statement is "[to represent] Minnesota State University, Mankato students at the Institutional, Local, State and Federal governing levels through listening to and voicing the thoughts, ideas, and concerns of all students."

"I love being able to represent students and push for something I know they want."

Mariah Haffield pursued a position as an executive member because of her love of MSSA and its mission. She joined the spring of her freshman year, running for off-campus senator, and has been involved with the organization over the years. During her current term as president, she hopes to raise students' awareness of the Association's existence, increase involvement, and grow the size of committees. She wishes to utilize her hands-on approach to add to the significance of the presidential position and MSSA generally. "If I can make a difference by improving the experience of one other student, then my job is complete," said Haffield. She wants people to love it here

as much as she does.


As president, Haffield serves as a liaison between administration, students, our University, and the six other universities in the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) system. Once a month she meets with MSSA Vice President Joe Wolf and President Davenport to discuss issues and concerns raised by students. Haffield also attends monthly Meet and Confers with Wolf, President Davenport and his cabinet, along with five other students from the University. This is a great opportunity where students' voices can be heard and various issues are discussed. Haffield works hard to gather students' opinions and concerns and raise them in these meetings. This is her favorite aspect of her position. "I love being able to represent students and push for something I know they want," said Haffield.

Having regular meetings with President Davenport is one of the perks of her position. Haffield states, "We are really fortunate to have Dr. Davenport as our president. He enthusiastically takes interest in what students have to say and he cares about their opinions." Through her position as MSSA President, Haffield has been able to develop a friendly relationship with President Davenport—not something every MSU student has the opportunity to do. During the homecoming parade she and Wolf had the honor of riding in an antique car with Dr. Davenport and his wife.

Another opportunity Haffield experienced through her presidency was the privilege to attend Minnesota State University Mankato's 20th Annual Foundation Purple and Gold Gala. This event honors the University's donors and volunteers. Haffield enjoyed



the opportunity to talk with alumni and donors to hear about their experiences. One of her favorite guests was Dr. Margaret Preska, University President 1979-1992. "It was really enjoyable getting to meet Dr. Preska because she contributed a lot to the University," she recalls. Haffield also lived in the Margaret Preska Residence Community during her first year at Minnesota State, so meeting her was an exceptional experience.

Haffield sees her term as MSSA President as a wonderful opportunity to grow in her honors leadership competency. She looks forward to learning more about her leadership style and watching it develop through her term. This is a great time for her to exercise her hands-on leadership approach, encouraging personality, and tenacity. Haffield invites her fellow students to dream big and to not be discouraged. "Find what you are passionate about and go for it. Do not think a goal is too big. I was passionate about student advocacy, I got involved with an organization that advocated for students, and it led me to my position as MSSA President." 

Honors Student Council: Executive Board

by Katelynn Malecha, '18 (Mathematics; Lonsdale, Minn.) and Jessica Staricka, '18 (History; Swanville, Minn.)

President, Julia Hamann




Down to earth, humble, and bubbly all describe this year's Honors Student Council President Julia Hamann (Social Work, '16) who is looking forward to representing this year's honors students. Her peers suggested and persuaded her to pursue a position on the board. "The Honors Program shaped me a lot and I want to give back and encourage my peers, just as they did for me."

When asked about her favorite

part of the Honors Program, she has no hesitation in saying, "I love everything! The values, the competencies, the small class sizes, and the ability to develop in a community where everyone is working hard: all of these aspects are inspiring and keep me motivated."

One of her favorite honors classes was *Memory and Representation* with Dr. Gwen Westerman, from the English Department. Through the course she

learned about the U.S.-Dakota War and Dakota culture which really opened Hamann's eyes. She still carries some of the big philosophies they discussed in class with her in her daily life.

She plans to start out as a clinical social worker at the micro level. She hopes to someday move onto macro work to be involved with the creation and implication of social welfare policy. 

Vice President, Alexa Turgeon




Because she grew up in a small town and attended a small high school, the close-knit honors community attracted Alexa Turgeon (Community Health Education, '17). Having a smaller community within the larger community of MSU was a major motivation for joining the Program.

Turgeon enjoyed Student Council in high school. In Spring 2014 when her Learning Community Coordinator Zach

Petzel suggested she consider a position on the Honors Student Council, she jumped at the opportunity. "I'm excited to see what develops," Turgeon says.

One of her greatest interests is special needs and disabilities. Her favorite Honors course so far has been *Sensitivity to Disability*, taught by Dr. Glen Peterson, a retired faculty member from the Department of Rehabilitation Counseling. "It was a really interesting class to me,

especially considering what I want to do in the future. I want to focus on working with children with special needs," Turgeon says. She hopes to attend graduate school in occupational therapy. Her experiences and connections within the honors community will no doubt help her attain these goals. 

Secretary, Rebecca Osborn




Rebecca Osborn (Cognitive Science, '17) joined the Honors Program at MSU so that she would be pushed to her fullest potential. Joining the Honors Executive Board as secretary is part of that journey. After familiarizing herself with the Honors Program her first year, Osborn learned she could make a difference by joining the Honors Student Council Executive Board. "I wanted to know what was going on behind the scenes. I'm excited to be on this side of the curtain," she explains.

The opportunity honors students have to network with professors especially drew her to the program.

Osborn appreciated that most of her connections with faculty on campus are with professors who teach honors courses.

Her favorite honors course so far has been *Social Problems*, a class she took her first semester. Each week, the class traveled to the Shakopee Women's Correctional Facility and had class with "inside students" who were taking the course for col-

lege credit. "Working alongside the 'inside students' is an experience you can't really get anywhere else. Just seeing that they're normal people—it altogether changed my opinion on corrections," says Osborn.

Osborn plans to graduate with a degree in Cognitive Science and then attend graduate school, ideally in Rochester. Her experiences in the Honors Program and on the Honors Student Council Executive Board are sure to help her achieve success. 

Honors Student Council: Class Representatives



Tyler Keller

Hometown: Medford, Minn.

Graduation Year: 2018

Major: Secondary Education:
Mathematics

Favorite Movie: Transformers

"I enjoy the Honors Program because of the sense of community. Through the Program I have built friendships I believe will last a lifetime."



Natalie Moses

Hometown: Somerset, Wis.

Graduation Year: 2017

Major: Exercise Science

Favorite Book: *This Side of Paradise*, by F. Scott Fitzgerald

"I believe Steve Jobs' famous quote 'Because the ones who are crazy enough to think they can change the world are the ones who do' perfectly captures our honors students."



Anna Rice

Hometown: Mitchell, SD

Graduation Year: 2016

Major: Biomedical Sciences

Favorite Restaurant in Mankato: Shogun Sushi & Hibachi

"The Honors Program has opened many doors and given me many opportunities to excel as a student and prepare me as a well rounded individual."



Shelby Flegel

Hometown: Benson, Minn.

Graduation Year: 2015

Major: Psychology

Favorite Book: *So Much Pretty*, by Cara Hoffman

"The Honors Program has helped shape me into the person I am today. I see my own potential and the potential in others."

Honorable Mentions

- Congratulations to seniors who passed their portfolio defenses! Ellen Ahlness (International Relations and Scandinavian Studies), Lauren Bach (Psychology), Slade Baumann (Computer Information Technology), Marin Beck (Elementary Education), Myra Colakovic (Nursing), Haley Doran (Communication Disorders), Annie Humphers-Ginther (English), Lisa Miller (Law Enforcement and Corrections), Kristi Paulsen (Psychology and French), Katie Westermayer (Psychology and Spanish)
- Senior Slade Baumann accepted a position to work for a student-run company B302 at HAN University in Arnhem, Netherlands during Spring 2015.
- The Honors Program welcomed 46 new entering first-year students this fall. The honors class of 2018 averaged a 27 on their ACT scores, graduated high school within the top 12% of their graduating classes, and it includes six high school valedictorians and six Presidential Scholars.
- Congratulations to senior Annie Humphers-Ginther who has been offered a position as a technical writer within the Taylor Corporation of North Mankato.
- Under the leadership of Learning Community Coordinator Ali Oku Eastman, the honors learning community gathered 996 pounds of food for the ECHO Food Shelter.
- The Honors Program is proud to announce the graduation of Lauren Bach, Slade Baumann, and Katie Westermayer this December.
- Congratulations to Sadie Anderson who was awarded a Research and Professional Development Grant through the President's Commission on the Status of Women. The grant helped to cover expenses for participation in the Greater Mankato YWCA Women's Leadership Conference.

A Spotlight For Our Honors Athletes

by Katelynn Malecha, '18 (Math; Lonsdale, Minn.)

in coordination with Laura Cattrysse (English, '16), Elizabeth Guss (Photography and Journalism, '18), Rachael Igo (Creative Writing, '16), and Trisha Walker (Anthropology, '17)

Valuing time management, honors athletes take being a college student to the next level. Honors alum Jake Ball (Biochemistry and Human Biology, '14) balanced being both an athlete and an honors student by making both aspects a priority in his life. He states, "If you enjoy doing something, it won't be hard work. Being an athlete was an awesome experience and not hard to balance with schoolwork because it was enjoyable."

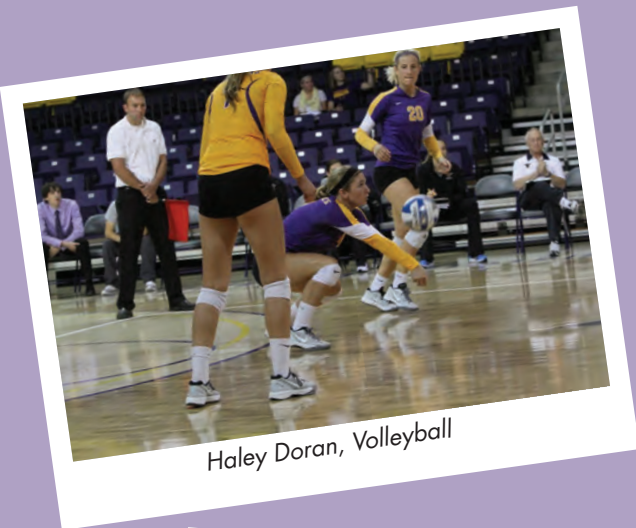
To remain organized, sophomore Taylor Glover (Nursing, '17) keeps an updated whiteboard and planner to stay on track. Athletes also see their sports as a good asset to their studies. Junior Jessica Herion (Marketing, '16) comments that sports are a "good outlet when I'm stressed about my classes." Self-motivation amounts to successful honors students proudly representing Maverick pride through athletics and academics.

The primary reason a vast majority of honors athletes joined the program is because of their academic drive. Freshman William Peters (Biochemistry, '18) joined the program to challenge

himself like many other students claiming "anything less is unacceptable." Others are attracted to the competencies, which can be personalized to fit the interests of individual students. Each student makes the honors experience their own. Senior volleyball player Haley Doran (Communication Disorders and Spanish, '15) especially values the leadership competency. She says "leadership is important for volleyball, preparing for a future career, and life in general."

The competencies, such as learning a foreign language or developing public speaking skills prepare students in various ways. Honors alumna Emma Grumke (Accounting, '12) benefited greatly from the public speaking opportunities she experienced through developing her research competency. Her skills excelled while presenting her research at the Minnesota Collegiate Honors Symposium and while interviewing for jobs. Grumke reflected upon her honors athlete experience as positive and helpful. If she could re-live her undergraduate experience, she would do it again the same way:

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Haley Doran, Volleyball



Sydney Geisness, Volleyball



Olivia Robinson, Golf



Kylie Gaeth, Swim and Dive



Taylor Glover, Track



Kellie Wong (center), Track



Abigail Nordeen, Soccer



William Peters, Football



Jacob Ball, Cross Country and Track



Emma Grumke, Soccer

Under the Stars

by Sarah Gorman, '17 (Aviation; Lakeville, Minn.)

There are some things in life that never get old. Candy, boat rides, soaking up the sun, swinging on swing sets, and hugs are just a few examples. How about enjoying a cool fall night under the stars with friends, both new and old? That is exactly what the Honors Program of Minnesota State University, Mankato did on a beautiful fall day late in September. On September 26th, about fifteen excited honors campers set up camp at Land of Memories Park in Mankato for a relaxing night of fun, games, storytelling, and community bonding.

Camping has a way of bringing out the fun and creative side of people. We played classic games such as Corn Hole and learned new card games like Revolution. They weren't set in stone for us to play, but they arose through conversation and fun. When the ideas became our own, we had a lot more fun and were able to form a stronger bond of community.

"We bonded as an honors community during a night of friendship and fun under the stars."

Community bonding is one of those things that just seems to come naturally when you are under the stars with your friends. The telling of stories that make you laugh until your sides hurt or make you cringe, thinking "I am glad that didn't happen to me." Some



especially funny ones were told of civil war re-enactments and a group of ten-year-old cub scouts that were scared out of their mind thinking some maniac ghost was shooting at them. How can you not bond over such enthralling stories?

We bonded as an honors community through this camping trip. We made new friends, laughed with mouths full of hot dogs, played new and intriguing games, and enjoyed lots of food during our evening under the stars. It continues to amaze me that, despite the lack of an agenda, you are still able to have a lot of fun, sometimes even the best type of fun. The Honors Program was able to create an amazing night of friendship and fun under the stars. [H](#)

Eurasian Night

by José Lopez Munoz, '17 (Aviation; St. Louis Park, Minn.)

It is important to explore different people and cultures. There are many benefits that a person can gain when getting involved in cultural activities. The Honors Program offers opportunities to participate in cultural events that contribute to one's education. The Program purchased tickets for students to attend Eurasian Night on October 12th. This event gave us the opportunity to learn about the cultures of multiple countries, including Russia, Moldova, and Ukraine. My personal experience was educational, interesting, and fun at the same time. During the event there were different types of activities and shows that immediately captured the attention of the public, such as dances, songs, food, and surprises.

Everyone had the opportunity to try the borscht soup and plod. The event opened with a waltz performed by three couples. When they presented this waltz, the students projected a cartoon on the screen above the stage. The coordination between the partners and the cartoon was well done. A fashion show followed, where students from Russia, Moldova, and Ukraine showed the traditional clothes of their countries. These outfits are worn for important celebration days.

Students also presented a dance named Kalinka, a very popular dance in Russia. I was impressed with this dance because those who participated in it were perfectly coordinated with the music. The song was fast-paced and the dancers did not make any mistakes when they sped up their movement to the music. The audience clapped along because they enjoyed the dance.


Volunteers from the audience had the opportunity to participate in two activities. One activity showed how people of Moldova use plants, water, and fragrances to get rid of the negative energy. Three people from the public volunteered to do the same activities that they watched on the video. Other volunteers were invited on stage to participate in a dance from Ukraine. The host led the volunteers in a series of dance steps. They did the best they could to follow the dance, which required complex positions that were not easy to imitate.

Lastly, at the end of the event, there was a flag parade set to music. It was a great way to close the event because the music was motivational and most of the audience joined in song and celebration. Students offered to write a name or phrase in a different language on cards outside the ballroom. In this way, the guests were able to take something with them to remember the evening.

I enjoyed this event because it was full of surprises and I learned a lot. The Honors Program encourages us to explore different cultures. It feels good to meet new friends and learn about their countries. Events like these encourage us to have an open mind to different ways of life. If I visit one of these countries in the future, I will be more informed and will have more knowledge about their cultures. We encourage students to attend our University's culture nights because they are enjoyable, educational, and fun. [H](#)

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"For example, MSU's Honors Program is unique in its second language competency, which it sees as an essential piece to its global citizenship mission," Spisak stated.

The purpose of program review is to encourage commitment to ongoing assessment. Art Spisak and John Zubizarreta's review results are designed to provide expert perspectives on the state of our program in an effort to improve it. The review will address areas of potential growth as program staff develop our next strategic plan. The results of the program review will impact the Honors Program far into the future. 

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"The balance that I found between being an athlete and a member of the Honors Program allowed me to have the college experience that I had always wanted to have. Both programs allowed me to be a member of a team, athletically and academically, and gave me the chance to be a member of two amazing campus communities. I wouldn't have gotten the full college experience I was looking for without the opportunity to be on both of these teams!"

The athletes emphasize the value they find in the relationships they hold with the directors and other honors students. First-year student Kellie Wong (Biochemistry, '18) states, "I really like all the people I have met in the honors program. Everyone is so friendly and you can ask anyone for help. It is a good feeling knowing I can always count on people in the honors program, especially Dr. Corley and Ginny Walters." Sophomore volleyball player Sydney Geisness (Accounting and Finance, '17) loves the inviting community the Honors Program creates and the sincerity with which Dr. Corley asks her about her coursework or just her day in general. The small class sizes offered through the Honors Program are more one-on-one and they make it easier to talk and make friends. "When I was applying to colleges, I knew that I wanted to go to a school that would push me academically," Geisness explained. "The Honors Program offers me that opportunity."

The Honors Program is proud to have athletes as part of its community. Their academic drive and determination are exactly what makes them honorary. 

Honors Spring 2015 Courses

Art History Survey I, Dr. Eimen

We will travel around the globe as we study works as diverse as ancient cave paintings, Egyptian pyramids, Roman statuary, and temple, mosque, and cathedral architecture. This course introduces you to key masterpieces, monuments, and moments in the history of human civilization from the Paleolithic era through the fourteenth century.

Introduction to Ethics, Dr. Cooke

Ethical thought gets started with two simple, but vital, questions: What must I do? How should I live? This course investigates the efforts of philosophers to provide compelling answers to these questions and others. Interpersonal and intercultural disagreements about ethical values lead many people to conclude that ethics is nothing more than personal opinion, or nothing more than self-justified cultural norms. We will see that both of these views should be rejected—and in part for surprising reasons related to the importance of toleration and mutual understanding.

Becoming Global Citizens, Caryn Lindsay

"Global citizenship" and "intercultural competency" are aspirations – goals that we can set for ourselves, learn about and work toward – but which take a lifetime of experiences, learning and effort to hopefully, one day, accomplish. In this course, each participant, including the instructor, will reflect upon the meanings of these concepts and work on developing personal definitions and development plans that they can return to and refine in the future.

Witchcraft, Gender and Society in Preindustrial Europe, Dr. Corley

This seminar will examine the changing features of European culture and society that allowed the witch hunts to develop. Students will study the broader historical context, paying particular attention to gender and sexuality, economic and social life, philosophy and theology, and politics and the law.

Exploring Leadership in the Context of Conference Development, Ginny Walters

This course will introduce students to various perspectives on leadership and assist students in developing their authentic leadership style. The course will cover topics such as values-based leadership, cross-cultural contexts, emotional intelligence, and gender and racial equity as they relate to leadership. Students will relate course content to their personal development as a leader and apply course content by developing and planning the Upper Midwest Regional Honors Conference (UMRHC), which will be hosted at MSU, Mankato in Spring 2015.

Developing Your Mentor Philosophy, Ashley Kanak

The goals of this course are to help students discover mentor qualities, to guide students to become more comfortable and confident with what it means to be a mentor, to utilize students' strengths and weaknesses to build their individual mentor philosophy, to provide opportunities for students to practice their mentor philosophies, and to contribute to student portfolio development in leadership competencies.

Anne Moody's Mississippi: Race, Culture, and Civil Rights, Dr. Cooley

This is a study away course that examines race, culture, and civil rights in Mississippi. Before the trip, we'll use readings, web assignments, class discussions, and other activities to gain a better understanding of the geography, history, and culture of the state. During a trip to Mississippi, we will examine the museums, landscape, memorials, and other on-site visits to gain first hand knowledge of how the state memorializes its difficult civil rights history.

Full course descriptions can be found at: mnsu.edu/honors/currentstudents/courses15.html

Honors Fun Corner: Word Search

by Trisha Walker, '17 (Anthropology; Kenyon, Minn.)

Clues:

1. What popular Russian dance was performed at Eurasian night?
2. What position does Julian Hamann hold on the Honors Student Council?
3. Where does Rebecca Osborn ideally want to go to graduate school?
4. Vice President Alexa Turgeon's favorite Honors class was taught by Dr. _____.
5. What type of law does Jessica Maher practice?
6. Mariah Haffield is the first female in 14 years to be president of _____.
7. An Honors Program review happens every _____ years.
8. What was the name of the store where Joan Trumpauer Mulholland and Anne Moody had their famous sit-in in 1963?
9. How did Honors students take a break and relax at Land of Memories Park in late September?

R	K	C	C	Y	C	X	L	U	C	T	P
G	L	E	N	P	E	T	E	R	S	O	N
R	E	T	S	E	H	C	O	R	Q	B	Y
O	G	N	G	N	I	P	M	A	C	A	S
Z	H	T	R	O	W	L	O	O	W	K	A
F	A	M	I	L	Y	D	M	S	X	N	M
E	V	I	F	Q	A	U	S	U	B	I	B
Y	X	D	J	F	P	N	S	Y	P	L	E
J	Y	S	E	J	E	R	A	S	U	A	G
T	N	E	D	I	S	E	R	P	W	K	T

Answers to last issue's puzzle:

Norman Adams, Leadership, IRB, Belize, Collegiate, Germany, Research, Middle Eastern, Pakistan, Dass

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Big ideas. Real-world thinking.

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