

CADENZA

NEWSLETTER OF THE LAMAR  UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM
Fall 2012

Preparations Underway for 50th Anniversary Celebration



The Fall of 2013 marks the 50th anniversary of the Honors Program at Lamar University. The Honors Program has served the needs of gifted students since it was inaugurated in 1963 and continues to provide both intellectual opportunities beyond the regular university courses and financial support in the form of various scholarships that many of the members receive. Students and alumni alike are preparing to celebrate this momentous occasion with gusto.

Planning is underway to commemorate this anniversary with a Homecoming bash in the Fall, and we ask everyone to be on the lookout for updates so you can join us for this special time in the Honors Program.

Honors Program Students Serve as Ambassadors

Honors students are very active in the Lamar community as a whole, not just in HSA. In particular, Honors students make up a large part of the Lamar Ambassadors. The Ambassadors are a group of students who serve as the face of the university at many public events. This year, the majority of the Ambassadors are Honors Program students, who make up only 2.5% of the entire student population at Lamar. These students are some of the brightest in their respective departments and represent the best that Lamar has to offer. The Ambassadors who are also representing the Honors Program for this year are Joshua Barnes, Fernando Mejia, Yanni Thomas, Danielle Ellis, Daniel Ward, Kristeen Reynolds, Rachel Binagia, Elisabeth Maxwell, Long Nguyen, Vaughn Ogrzydziak, Will Pickard, Jessica Pospisil, Paul Rizk, Kayleigh Romero, Riyadh Samad, and Christine Zabala.

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**Let us know what
YOU are doing so we can
include you in our
next issue of Cadenza!**

Dr. Dodson's School of Rock

By Amy Morgan



Every semester, the Honors Program offers its students the opportunity to take a multitude of courses that are available only to them. Each student in the Honors Program must graduate with 26 hours of honors credit which can be obtained through topics courses and seminars in addition to having the option of upgrading regular courses to Honors. These classes give students the opportunity to learn about subjects not offered in regular courses. They also bring together students from different majors, thereby bringing new perspectives and diversity of knowledge into the classroom. This semester, for instance, these courses ranged from a seminar about the seven deadly sins to a look into financial mathematics.

One course in particular, the Topics course "I Know It's Only Rock and Roll: Popular Music," taught by Program Director Kevin Dodson, has resonated with students in the past. Having taken this course before, I speak from experience when I say that it is, if nothing else, memorable. Tracing the history of rock and

roll from its origins in the blues, through the British Invasion, Motown, reggae, punk, and beyond, this course offers a glimpse into the ever-changing world of rock music. It covers subjects like the avant-garde, postmodernism, and the basic categories of aesthetic evaluation. But it isn't just a class filled with debates about the intangible and erudite aspects of studying music: you actually get to listen to the different genres you study, watch famous and influential concerts (Woodstock, anyone?) and movies with a basis in rock music and culture which can sometimes make for *very interesting* afternoons. Essentially, you get to see the dramatic shifts that music has undergone in the past 60 years.

This course, and courses like it offered through the Honors Program, gives students the chance to learn something different and can open their eyes to a subject that they may be unfamiliar with or enhance their interest in a something they already enjoyed.

Honors Briefs

- At the Student Government Association's Annual Toast to Leadership last May, the Honors Student Association was named Departmental/Professional Student Organization of the Year. Dana Guy received the Bess Gentry Award for Outstanding Senior Woman, and Luis Lopez received the C. Robert Kemble Award for Outstanding Senior Man.
- Gwen Mumford exhibited two of her paintings, "Figure Study" and "Father," at TASIMJAE (The Art Studio Inc. Members Jurored Art Exhibition last Spring.
- Joshua Barnes, Ana Mendez, Demarcus Prophet, and Javon Prophet presented at the 13th Annual McNair Scholars Research Symposium in November.
- Chelsea Barnard and Honour Harry exhibited their presentation "Books and Bookmaking" at the Idea Exchange of the Annual Conference of the National Collegiate Honors Council in Boston this November. Their presentation was based on an Honors Topics course taught by Professors Xenia Fedorchenko (Art) and Steven Zani (English) on that subject in Spring 2010.
- Emily McMillon will be working in Cleveland, Ohio as an intern for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) in Spring 2013.
- As participants in the Texas Legislative Internship Program, Kevin Engman and Jacqueline Hernandez will be working in Austin as interns for the State Legislature in Spring 2013.
- At the Annual Conference of the Texas Association of Creative Writing Teachers in September, Alaina Bray won First Place in Undergraduate Fiction for her story "Dust" about a young woman's struggle for identity.

A Message from the H.S.A. President



Phi Kappa Phi



Hi! My name is Jessica Pospisil, and I am the President of the Honors Student Association for the 2012-2013 academic school year. HSA is an organization committed to helping you become a more rounded individual and achieve the requirements needed

to graduate with Honors. Taking part in activities and volunteer service projects both on campus and in the community is important, not just because it helps you graduate with Honors, but because it also allows you to meet other students who could turn out to be some of your best friends. This year is jam-packed with activities and volunteer service projects that HSA is proud to be a part of. So far, we have participated in the annual Constitution Day located at the LIT campus. We are also planning to take part in other community service projects such as the annual Adopt-A-Beach cleanup at McFaddin Beach, and we are looking forward to volunteering for the South East Texas Food Bank, the Triangle Aids Network, and Trick or Treat for UNICEF. We proudly support HSA members in their other extracurricular activities like theater, dance, and band. As a member of the Honors Student Association, I hope that you will have a fun and memorable experience here at Lamar University.

In spring 2012, the Lamar chapter of the National Honors Society Phi Kappa Phi inducted nineteen students from the Honors Program into its ranks. Admission is exclusively by invitation, with only the top 10 percent of seniors and the top 7.5 percent of juniors eligible for membership in this prestigious organization. Honors Program Director Dr. Kevin Dodson took over spring 2010 as President of the Lamar Chapter. This year's Student Vice President is Honors Program student, Christine Zabala.

Founded in 1897 at the University of Maine, Phi Kappa Phi is the nation's oldest and largest collegiate honors society, with chapters on over 300 campuses. With membership drawn from all university disciplines, its mission is "to recognize and promote academic excellence in all fields of higher education and to engage the community of scholars in service to others." To advance these goals, Phi Kappa Phi makes a variety of awards supporting graduate study, study abroad, career development, and literacy programs. Lamar honors students have been recipients of these awards in the past.

The 2012 Phi Kappa Phi inductees include Honors Program students Alaina Bray, Brianna Burks, Chance Burnett, Melody Jordan, Brandon Laird, Brett Leyendecker, Emily McMillon, Amy Morgan, Conrad Morgan, Vaughn Ogrydziak, Javon Prophet, Brandon Roberts, Kayleigh Romero, Eric Rose, Nora-Beth Saunders, Jennifer Torry, Fred Vernon, Cynthia Willis, and Christine Zabala.

For more information about Phi Kappa Phi, you can visit www.phikappaphi.org.



Phi Beta Delta

Last Spring semester, three Honors students – Madison Davis, Elisabeth Maxwell, and Zachary Zbranek – and Dr. Kevin Dodson, Director of the University Honors Program, were all honored for their international scholarship by being inducted into the Beta Xi Chapter of Phi Beta Delta. As the first honor society dedicated to recognizing scholarly achievement in international education, Phi Beta Delta seeks to recognize the efforts of international students and scholars, to advance international programming in higher education, and to establish a network of faculty, students, and staff working on international projects. Since its founding at California State University in 1986, Phi Beta Delta has grown to over 180 chapters. Lamar University's Beta Xi Chapter was chartered in 1981 and now boasts 37 members.

Partners in the Parks 2012: Bryce Canyon National Park

By Daniel Ward

This summer I had the amazing opportunity to participate in one of the Partners in the Parks programs because of a scholarship that I received through the Lamar University Honors Program. Partners in the Parks is an outdoor learning program that is sponsored by Southern Utah University in cooperation with the National Collegiate Honors Council. The program that I chose to attend was a week-long excursion in Bryce Canyon National Park in the red rock country of Southern Utah.

Eager to begin my adventures, I booked an early flight to Colorado to spend an additional week and a half traveling to other National Parks in the Colorado, Utah, and Arizona region. I began my backpacking adventures in Rocky Mountain National Park, where I learned about proper camping techniques and precautions that need to be taken while in the wilderness. Then I traveled to Hanging Lake at Glenwood Canyon in Glenwood Springs, Colorado. There I went hiking and quickly learned the importance of setting a pace and remaining sufficiently hydrated. Next, I traveled on to Arches National Park to hike to the world-famous Delicate Arch to watch the sunset. Then it was on to Glen Canyon and Rainbow Bridge National Recreational Area, along with a drive through Monument Valley. It was on this drive, with jack rabbits darting out from the sides of the highway, when I realized that I needed to be aware of not only the weather changes, but environmental changes in general including the unfamiliar wildlife. While in Glen Canyon, I went on a boating trip through Lake Powell with the superintendent of the park and a friend. I learned about the erosion of the lake over years due to moving water and the sculpting of the landscapes. To end my stay in Page, Arizona, I went to Antelope Canyon and saw the canyon slits that cut through sandstone as a result of running water. The day before I met with the Partners in the Parks coordinators and the other participants of the program in Cedar City, Utah, I traveled through Zion National Park where I saw an antelope jam right before driving through the 1.1 mile Zion-Mount Carmel tunnel that opened up to the most spectacular canyon that I have ever seen.



The next day was the start of my week long Bryce Canyon National Park Partners in the Parks program. After meeting at Southern Utah University to sort out our equipment and camping gear, we began the 88 mile drive to our campsite in Bryce Canyon. During this program, we hiked several trails and backpacked through the backcountry. We learned about what makes not only that specific national park so important, but the national park service as a whole. We began our day by setting up camp, cooking lunch, and taking a short hike, and we all quickly learned what each person was best at and what everyone could do to help. Over the next few days, we attended several seminars and hiked throughout the canyon where we learned about the Hoodoos, which are tall, thin spires of rock that protrude from the bottom of an arid drainage basin and for which Bryce Canyon is most famous. During these seminars and hikes, we also learned about other aspects of the park including fire management, archeology, environmental psychology, and even astronomy.

We ended the program early in the morning on that final Saturday, and I suggested to the group that we venture down to Zion National Park for our final day and hike the strenuous 2.4 mile trail up to Angels Landing. This hike consists of a 1,208 foot elevation gain with the last .5 miles being on the edge of a shear drop-off with a mere chain to hold on to for support. Most of the participants in the program agreed to accept the challenge. After completing the hike, we were all more than satisfied with what we had accomplished together during the week.

I departed the next morning excited about the variety of opportunities that I discovered are available to me for my future career endeavors. I



learned about the need for engineers in the National Park Service and am now exploring the possibility of pursuing a job in that field. But most of all, I've learned that no matter where I go, there is something unique and special about each

and every location that should be preserved and protected, I've learned that I can adapt to even the most pressing of situations, and I've learned that each and every life situation can teach us something. The Bryce Canyon National Park Partners in the Parks program was an extraordinary experience that I'm very grateful to have had the opportunity to participate in.

Summer Abroad: Painting in Italy

By Gwen Mumford

I have always dreamed of traveling to Italy and this summer I was able to fulfill that dream. Professors Xenia Fedorchenko and Rebecca Boone organized a trip to Florence, Italy to study at the Santa Reparata International School of Art. We were in Florence for four weeks and traveled to many other cities during that time, including Rome and Venice.

I began my journey in Milan. The week I stayed there helped me to get acquainted with Italian culture and my home for the next month. We spent time exploring museums, shopping, and getting to know fellow travelers from our hostel. The owner of our hostel even took us on a tour of his favorite spots in the city, which I'm sure we would never have found without him! We also took a short train ride to the beautiful Lake Como, where life seemed to slow down. After several days in the big, bustling city, it was incredibly relaxing to sit by the water and take in the view. We reluctantly headed back to Milan, after nearly missing our train, and readied ourselves for Florence.

We arrived in Florence on June 4th, with lessons learned about over-packing, the metro, and missing trains. The school assigned our housing in apartments throughout the city, all within a short walking distance from the school. The buildings in Florence are extremely old and the plumbing and electricity took some getting used to. With seven girls in one apartment, there were many flipped breakers throughout our stay. I was apprehensive about living without air conditioning and having to hang my laundry out to dry, but I came to really enjoy the Italian lifestyle, particularly the afternoon "nap time" that it seemed every Italian took part in.

After a little time getting to know our new surroundings, orientation and classes began. I



was enrolled in "Watercolor Painting" with Xenia Fedorchenko. We learned the basic techniques of this painting style and were encouraged to use our surroundings as inspiration. Along with painting, we spent many days meeting, not only at the school, but at museums and churches throughout the city. Florence is filled with historical and artistic gems that I have learned of in several of my art courses; I was so grateful to get to see them in person. Traveling throughout Italy and seeing sites such as the Colosseum, the Sistine Chapel, the Grand Canal of Venice, and countless works by Michelangelo was an awe-inspiring experience that I know I will never forget.

Joining this trip was one of the best decisions I have ever made. I was so inspired by my Italian adventure, and grew so much as a person because of it. I encourage anyone with the desire to study abroad to start researching now, despite your financial situation. With the help of a McMaster Grant from the Honors Program, and several other scholarships, I was able to make my dreams reality.

Swimming with the Mantas

By Elisabeth Maxwell



If I had to use one word to describe my summer it would be “adventure”! Traveling to Mozambique, a country in southern Africa, for six weeks this summer was a phenomenal experience. Receiving the David J. Beck Fellowship, an undergraduate award which provides a one year academic scholarship and a stipend for a summer project, allowed me to develop a research project partnering with the Foundation for the Protection of Marine Mega-fauna. FPMM is headquartered in Tofo, Mozambique and works to research, conserve, and educate about large marine animals and their importance to the ocean ecosystem. Two of the target species are the reef manta (*Manta alfredi*) and the giant manta (*Manta birostris*). Mantas are the largest of the rays, feed on plankton, do not have a sting, and are famous for their grace under water. They are also severely threatened by a market for their gill rakers, like the shark fin trade.

Mozambique not only has a beautiful natural landscape, but is very well known for its pristine underwater environments. Throughout the six weeks I spent there, I logged over 30 dives, most of them at very deep reefs looking for mantas to sample. It was a wonderful opportunity for me to advance my SCUBA skills and learn from some very experienced divers. However, I wasn't there to only learn about diving. The majority of my time was spent working on the logistics of completing a research project in a developing nation and the complications of sampling large marine animals

while underwater. Our research project was to develop a new sampling method to collect genetic material from these mantas. I would dive with a camera in one hand and a toothbrush - yes, a toothbrush - in the other. The first step was to get an ID photo of the manta. Then we could move in closer to collect a small bit of mucus from their skin. The ID shot is of the manta's belly and we use a photo data base to compare the spot patterns on the manta and see which animal it is and whether it has been sighted before. This was a really fun and challenging adventure that provided some significant, but manageable, obstacles.

Once I returned home it was into the lab for analysis. We took the samples I brought home from Mozambique and isolated DNA, ran reactions to amplify this DNA, and eventually sent it off to a specialty lab for sequencing. Our main goals are to see if there is usable DNA from the mucus, how much is in each sample, and what the quality of the DNA is. After we've answered those questions, the next step is to compare this method to sampling methods that are already being utilized to see which work the best. This is almost my favorite part because working in the lab is very interesting and I'm learning techniques that can be applied to any kind of genetic work, whether it is manta rays or humans.

I certainly encourage everyone to find something you are fascinated by, find out who is working on that project, and then get involved! You never know what opportunities are out there until you start asking around.



A Modern Day Pilgrimage

By Chelsea Barnard



In the fall of 2011, I was lucky enough to be awarded the David J. Beck Fellowship, Lamar's most prestigious undergraduate award. This fellowship allowed me not only funding for a year of tuition, books, and housing, but it also provided me the ability to pursue the research project of a lifetime during the summer of 2012.

As an English major, I struggled with the decision to apply for the fellowship. What could I offer that was worthwhile? The more I contemplated, the more I turned toward Chaucer. Even though his *Canterbury Tales* are from the Middle Ages, they still are required reading in most schools. Why? What is so interesting in *The Canterbury Tales* that still pertains to modern life?

The Canterbury Tales, written in Middle English, tells about a group of pilgrims who travel to Canterbury and decide to tell tales in order to fill their travel time. These tales show how diverse these pilgrims are. They come from all parts of life, yet they travel together in a pretty enjoyable fashion. Today we may not exactly be on pilgrimage, but we still find ourselves surrounded with people who have various backgrounds and have experiences far different from our own. We all bring our unique story to the mix, but we still all have the same hopes, fears, and desires that the people of Chaucer's day had. I found myself wondering what a

modern pilgrimage would be like, and I developed the idea reinventing Chaucer's tales through my own personal pilgrimage.

As a Beck Fellow, I received a summer stipend to complete this research project. I backpacked across England, from Farnham in Surrey to Canterbury in Kent. Everything I needed was on my back. I joined with other walkers (or pilgrims) and shared thoughts, stories, and ideas about society today. I mainly followed the North Downs Way trail, a national trail that is well traveled by both tourists and locals. The NDW trail parallels Pilgrims Way, the historic trail taken by pilgrims who traveled to Canterbury to see the shrine of Saint Thomas a Becket. Unfortunately, modern society has paved its way (literally) through this trail and I preferred not to walk on pavement. North Downs Way is the more popular trail for modern pilgrims.

It was cold. It was wet. It was physically and mentally straining. But it was eye-opening. I met people who were French, German, Australian, Russian, who opened themselves up, eager to share just a glimpse of their lives. I journaled throughout my approximately 40 day journey, and blogged about my adventures from seeing *The Taming of the Shrew* at The Globe to meeting the poet John Whitworth for brunch. I also blogged about the issues I feel are present today, ranging from a discussion of the role of women in today's world to the separation of society due to social media.

Clearly, not everyone could join me in pilgrimage, but the internet made it possible for many to follow me along my way. (You can check out my blog at chaucerrevisited.tumblr.com) I am currently working on my book, a handmade collection of poetic tales based on my experiences in England and stories of the people I met. It will be presented at the Beck Fellowship ceremony late this semester when the committee announces the new 2013 Beck Fellows.

My pilgrimage to Canterbury has opened my mind to new ideas. I'm finding out how much I really do love studying medieval literature. I'm considering different graduate schools than I previously had in mind. I'm applying to possibly teach in France for a year. The Beck Fellowship has inspired me to dare to go beyond my personal expectations.

Achievements Recognized at the Honors Program Spring Awards Reception

2012 McMaster Honors Scholarship Recipients

- Zachary Defrancis, Sabine Pass
- Daniel Elley, White Oak
- Tory Hoecker, Santa Fe
- Zachary Holt, Ross S. Sterling
- Crystal Lively, Santa Fe
- Victoria Martinez, Nederland
- Thomas Michel, Lumberton
- Travis Miller, Port Neches-Groves
- Amy Myers, Vidor
- Danielle Noonan, Bridge City
- Justin Vasek, Santa Fe
- Caitlin Wheeland, Hardin-Jefferson

2012 Mirabeau Scholars

- Taylor Abshier, Lumberton
- Torrance Cobb, Monsignor Kelly
- Robert Ehrlich, Orangefield
- James Ellis, Bridge City
- Jenny Farris, Columbia
- Jason Hatton, Bridge City
- Matthew Hunt, Hallsville
- John Kirk, TALH
- Aaron Lavergne, Booker T. Washington
- Casey Myers, Little Cypress Mauriceville
- Clayton Robinson, Dayton
- Lauren Schuldt, West Brook
- Jamie Stafford, Nederland
- Kevin Zabala, Home School

Honors Program Graduates May 2012

- Chelsey Bromley, Chemical Engineering
- Katherine Brown, Interdisciplinary Studies
- Lucas Castle, Mathematics
- Drew Colvin, Civil Engineering
- Jake Cosio, Chemistry
- Kelsey Crainer, Communication Disorders
- Madison Davis, History and Political Science
- Megan Hutchison, Civil Engineering
- Andrew Jirrels, Mechanical Engineering
- Nathan Jordan, Mechanical Engineering
- Brett Leyendecker, Mechanical Engineering
- Meghan McInerney, Communications
- Austin Miller, Mechanical Engineering
- Daniel Mortensen, Sociology
- Brandon Roberts, Criminal Justice
- Brittnee Rodriguez, Psychology
- Susan Rothstein, Psychology
- Holly Thompson, Biology
- William Ware, Electrical Engineering and Physics
- Daniel Whitton, History and Theatre
- Chelsea Willis, Graphic Design
- Sarah Wion, Electrical Engineering



The Honors Student Association officially transferred authority to its new officers for 2012-13. Jessica Pospisil, President; Fernando Mejia, Vice President; Ashley Smith, Secretary/Treasurer; Daniel Vincent, Student Government Representative; Daniel Ward, Service Chair; Bryan Deagle, Events Chair; and Javon Prophet, Campus Involvement

Honors Professor of the Year 2011-2012

Each year, members of the Honor Student Association vote for Honors Professor of the year, and this year's winner was Mr. O'Brien Stanley. Mr. Stanley is an Associate Professor of Communications.

Honors Program Graduates May 2012

From the Colleges of Arts & Sciences, Business, and Engineering



FRONT ROW: Sarah Wion, Megan Hutchison, Chelsey Bromley, Holly Thompson, Susan Rothstein, Brittnee Rodriguez, Madison Davis

BACK ROW: Dr. Kevin Dodson, Lucas Castle, Andrew Jirrels, Brett Leyendecker, Drew Colvin, Jake Cosio, Daniel Mortensen, Brandon Roberts, William Ware

Not pictured: Nathan Jordan and Austin Miller

December 2011

From the Colleges of Arts & Sciences
and Business



Layne Ford, Katherine White, Serena Belley, Jasmine Banks, Valerie Juarez

May 2012

From the Colleges of Education
and Fine Arts & Communication



Dr. Kevin Dodson, Meghan McInerney, Katherine Brown, Chelsea Willis, Kelsey Crainer, Daniel Whitton

Partners in the Park: The Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park

By Alaina Bray

The Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park, located near Gunnison, Colorado, has been called the National Park Service's best kept secret. Though the park is smaller and less famous than many others, it is no less beautiful or culturally significant. I was fortunate enough to spend a week here over my summer and left with impressions not only of Colorado's natural beauty, but also of the land's cultural and historical significance and the National Park Service's challenges and missions.

Anyone spending time in Black Canyon of the Gunnison would be immediately struck by the beauty of the landscape. One would need no guide to appreciate the immensity of the canyon walls, the sound of the river below, and the stillness of the Aspen forests. If a group were lucky enough, they might even see one of the area's black bears. The park, of course, can be enjoyed without any guidance. However, the Partners in the Parks program enabled me to leave Colorado with more than scenic photos and memories of enjoyment.

I left having learned of controversy and challenges I never knew existed. The park faces issues with fire control, invasive species, wilderness conservation, and water rights, the latter having actually caused bloodshed in the past. While today, the park handles its issues more politically, they are no less challenging, and the answers are no more obvious. Meeting with park officials who were passionate about their lines of work enabled me and the other students to connect to and learn from the park in



Alaina received a McMaster Grant from the Honors Program to participate in the Partners in the Program

a way we never could have on our own. The discussions on park issues and history let us leave Colorado appreciating the beauty of its wilderness and the hundreds of people, stacks of paperwork, and hours of negotiating that are necessary to preserve wilderness in our society today.

So go to a National Park. Appreciate its views, the clean air, and the stars you can see at night. But don't neglect to learn about what makes your enjoyment possible. Learn about the Native Americans who lived there. Learn about the surveyors who explored there. Learn about the conservationists, the rangers, and the guides who have invested their lives there. A National Park is easy to love for its beauty, but there's no better way to grow your love for it than by learning about it, and there's no better way to learn about it than by participating in Partners in the Parks.

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