

THE Honors Program at Minnesota State University, Mankato HONORS BEACON



LEADERSHIP • RESEARCH • GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

Issue VIII, Spring 2015



Minnesota State Mankato Hosts Upper Midwest Regional Honors Conference

by Sarah Aldrich, '17 (Spanish Education; Jordan, Minn.)

The Blue Earth and Minnesota Rivers converge within Mankato. Over the years, this geography has assisted in bringing people together and causing conflict among them. Our local identity became the inspiration for the "Confluence and Conflict" theme of the 2015 Upper Midwest Regional Honors Conference held at Minnesota State University, Mankato, from Thursday, March 26th to Saturday, March 28th. Here, students from many different schools in the Upper Midwest region were able to present their research projects before having the opportunity to head to the National Collegiate Honors Council Conference in the fall. Over the course of the conference, our Honors Program had the opportunity of sharing the fascinating story of Mankato with neighboring universities.

Before the conference could begin, honors faculty and student workers had to step up to the plate and begin working, as early as March 2014. Gin-

ny Walters described it as being "an all hands on deck operation." This semester, fifteen students in the Honors Program had the opportunity to take a seminar taught by Honors Program Assistant Director Ginny Walters entitled *Exploring Leadership in the Context of Conference Development*. Walters organized students into three groups—marketing, hospitality and program development. Each committee had certain tasks and responsibilities both before and during the conference. Students involved in the class include Mohamed Al Duhbani, Sarah Aldrich, Kate Anderson, Haley Doran, Tia Jacoby, Nicole Johnson, Chad Lease, Jose Lopez Munoz, Andrew Nicholson, Stephanie Peterson, Olivia Robinson, Amanda Roche, Sajid Sarkar, Spencer Sulflow, and Jaci Ullrich.

On Thursday afternoon, 185 attendees from 26 different universities in the Midwest began arriving at Mankato State University. Some colleges chose to attend

the "City as Text"™ presentation, an excursion lead by Dr. Tony Filipovitch. This activity prompted students "to explore a new place and take its pulse." After dinner, Dr. Shannon Fisher presented a talk entitled "What's in a Name?" which chronicled the significance of the Minnesota River within our state, placing emphasis on our need to make it a cleaner watershed. To cap off the day, we hosted an ice cream social, where schools were encouraged to mingle with each other before heading back to their hotels for the night.

On Friday, presentation sessions began promptly at eight in the morning. The scope of sessions varied widely, from presentations like *Chemosensitization of Drug-Resistant Ovarian Cancer Cells with Hexanor-Cucurbitacin D and Estrone Analogs* to *#LoveYourSelfie* to *Going Deep in With Honors First Years*. Each presentation showed how diverse students

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Director's Note

Christopher Corley

In 1966-1967, a group of faculty at Mankato State College were among the first in the country to propose enriching the student educational experience through specifically designed courses suitable for highly-motivated students. These faculty had tremendous foresight and they set lofty goals. By 1974, those individual courses had turned into a full-fledged Honors Program. The Program's first graduate in 1977 was a young African-American woman named Cathy Clardy (now Dr. Cathy Clardy Patterson), who graduated in three years and went on to great achievements in her career. Along the way, she earned advanced degrees from George Washington and Harvard Universities. Despite the changes over the decades—to the University and to the Program—our common values for access, opportunity, and exceptional learning experiences continue to guide and inspire us.

In May 2009, I was asked by the University administration and our Faculty Association to lead the Honors Program at Minnesota State Mankato. In the two years prior to my appointment, an energetic team of faculty and staff had worked to re-envision honors education in response

to the changing needs of our global society. I hoped that I would be able bring the group's ideas to fruition, establish a solid foundation for the program, and serve our students and community well.

Through collaboration with our colleagues around the university, Honors has the unique capacity to draw from all disciplines to fashion a curriculum that responds to contemporary needs while helping students reach their individual goals. Our curriculum and assessment process fosters deep metacognitive learning in leadership, research, and intercultural skills – skills that no single discipline or major can offer. We offer opportunities for students to develop professional skills for work and career success, and inclusive citizenship skills that will sustain our civic life and democratic institutions. Our students have partnered with community organizations, helping them solve problems. The students have assumed leadership roles in campus organizations. They've embraced complex research projects and presented their results at national conferences. They've developing intercultural skills through second-language learning and engaged experiences via applied study abroad and study away activities.

Our collaboration among alumni, community stakeholders, students, faculty,

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Editor's Note

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

Thank you for reading the Spring 2015 issue of the *Honors Beacon* newsletter. As your Editor-in-Chief, I assure you that the

eighth issue is full of insightful, interesting stories and articles that accurately portray our students and their experiences this semester and past academic year.

Some special highlights in this issue are an article about how we hosted the Upper Midwest Regional Honors Conference, a class trip to Mississippi to study the civil rights movement, and the announcement

of our new Honors Director for next year. For the first time, the *Honors Beacon* is featuring a creative work—a historical flash fiction piece, written by Karen Muller, about a Gladiator in ancient Rome. I am proud to include this piece as the *Beacon* expands its horizons.

I would like to send a big thank you to my team of writers I have been blessed to work with this semester. They are truly the most talented, dedicated, and responsible group I have worked with on the *Beacon* this far. Their diligence and punctuality is greatly appreciated.

Happy Reading! 📖

Spring 2014 Beacon Team

Editor-in-Chief
Rachael Igo

Layout and Photo Editors
Rachael Igo
Libby Guss

Copy Editors
Rachael Igo
Sara Baranczyk
Karen Muller

Writers
Sarah Aldrich
Rachael Igo
José Lopez Munoz
Libby Guss
Katelynn Malecha
Jessica Staricka
Trisha Walker
Karen Muller
Sara Baranczyk

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Alumna Spotlight: Rachel Lind

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

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The Honors Program at Minnesota State Mankato welcomes Rachel Lind as the featured alumna speaker of the Spring 2015 Honors Convocation. Rachel Lind completed the Honors Program requirements and graduated with a degree in Finance from Minnesota State in 2001. She considers her membership in the Honors Program to be a privilege and reports that it has helped her get to where she is today.

Lind has held a variety of sales and business development positions in insurance and financial industries. She is currently an Area Sales Manager for CareerBuilder, the global leader in human capital solutions. In this position she focuses on building client relationships, increasing CareerBuilder's market share, and developing her team of Sales Executives.

As an undergraduate in the Honors Program, Lind enjoyed the flexibility it gave her. For example, she was able to take courses more focused on her degree. She says this made it easier for honors students at the time to graduate in less than four years or even double major in four years.

One of Lind's favorite memories of being in the Program was making and building a friendship with one of her best friends. The two women met in one of their first honors classes and both took the major-

ity of their remaining honors courses together. She is thankful that the Program sparked their friendship.

Her favorite aspect of the Program was the small class sizes that gave her the opportunity to get to know her classmates and professors. She strongly benefited from this unique classroom experience. "Many of the classes were not only smaller but were round table discussion based. Participating in this style of learning allowed me to appreciate differences in opinion. It taught me the value that different backgrounds and life experiences bring to the table," states Lind.

"The Honors Program taught me the value of different backgrounds and life experiences in the classroom."

In the Program Rachel Lind developed critical thinking, problem solving skills, and leadership skills. All of these equipped her in the professional world. She said all of the academic skills and intellectual growth she gained during her time as a student in the Honors Program are of great value to her.

"If you stop learning, then you stop growing. Therefore, I am always striving to learn something new," states Lind. The Honors Program is proud to have such a well-rounded, successful alumna. 

staff, and administrators has been impressive; over forty different faculty and staff have taught honors classes since 2009, and many dozens more contribute in other ways, from assisting with co-curricular activities to helping with Program governance. It has been a pleasure working with everyone.

As I end my second term as Director, I'm confident that Minnesota State Mankato has developed an Honors Program in which we all can be proud. We offer more services, in more personalized ways, to more students than we had ever done before. Our graduates are top notch, and they are prized by the most influential corporations and universities not only here in the United States, but around the world. We've partnered with community and regional organizations while providing valuable experiences for our students. We've presented papers and published articles about our work, and we've hosted numerous speakers and events which have added to the visibility and intellectual vibrancy of our university. We've had a student elected to the board of the National Collegiate Honors Council, and this spring we were the host campus for the Upper Midwest Regional Honors Conference. In doing so, we've continued to foster our tradition of access, opportunity, and exceptional learning experiences while contributing to the development of our students, the community, region, and to national discussions of educational reform. 



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.

within Honors Programs truly are. After lunch, Dr. Gwen Westerman spoke about the Dakota People's influence on Minnesota.

On Friday night, students and faculty alike were encouraged to stay for the social events. People could choose from either watching a documentary called *Minnesota: A History of the Land* or travel to All Seasons Arena for a night of ice skating fun. Jaci Ullrich, an attendant at the skating rink, said, "I think that having ice skating as the social event was a success because it seemed like the students really enjoyed themselves and got to let loose and forget about the stresses of the conference, like presenting. It was really great to see all of the honors students from different places come together and have a blast!" Some students even helped each other as they learned how to ice skate for the first time! For those who chose to view the documentary, Dr. Lori Lahlum, Chair of the History Department, and Scott Kudelka, from the Department of Natural Resources, were there to discuss the film after the viewing, providing more insight regarding the "Confluence and Conflict" theme.

On the last day of the conference, more presentations were given before the Re-

gional Business meeting and the Awards Ceremony. Selected students were awarded "most creative title," "fanciest outfit," "most colorful poster," "eye catching presentation," and "funniest introduction or conclusion." Our Honors Program was proud to try new approaches to involving everyone at the conference, through giving out awards and having judges provide feedback for student presentations.

Throughout the conference, many students from our Honors Program were able to present. Corey Ennis presented *From Pacifist to Monster: How the Politics of the French Revolution Changed Robespierre*. Zack Petzel, Julia Hamann, Mackenzie Petzel, Ali Oku and Ashley Kanak presented *Collective Creation: Declaration of Values*. Rachael Igo, Ashley Kanak and Kristen Paulsen presented *Effective Methods of Communication in the Honors Program*. In addition, Mikyla Denney presented her *Survival of the Basque Language*. In the ballroom, Ryan Colakovic shared his poster *Esterfication of Acid Chlorides* and Tatiana Soboleva also presented *Oxidative effects on muscle protein contractile function*. Presenting at the conference was a prestigious opportunity for many students from our university.

For students in Ginny Walters' class, UM-

RHC had just as much of a lasting impact on them as it did for those who came to present. Kate Anderson said of the conference, "It gave me a greater appreciation for the community the Honors Program provides, and it made me want to attend another honors conference in the future."

After the UMRHC, students will focus on reflecting upon the meaning of leadership as it applies to the conference. Spencer Sulflow reflected on the conference by saying, "Personally it was really cool that during my first conference experience, I was able to help plan it. It was cool to see other Honors directors and members make use of the social media, Twitter in particular, in a professional setting. As an honors student who will have to do research, it made me feel more comfortable about the idea of presenting, which at first sounded intimidating."

Being able to host the Upper Midwest Regional Honors conference at our own University was a tremendous honor and an all-around good time. Ginny Walters commented by saying, "For a program of our size...I don't think there's anybody who is involved with NCHC who doesn't know that we exist...It puts us in a place where everyone in the region knows about us." 📍

David Engen Teaches Honors Public Speaking

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



Dr. David Engen is the Chair of the Communication Studies Department at Minnesota State University, Mankato. He attended Minnesota State as an undergraduate where he majored in Marketing and Speech Communication. Dr. Engen received his Master's degree at Auburn University and his Ph.D. at Bowling Green State University. He started teaching in 1995 at Millikin University in Illinois

and came back to Minnesota State in 2002.

"It is always a pleasure to work with honors students," Engen states. He explained that one of his favorite parts of teaching an honors course is walking into the classroom and seeing stu-

dents committed to the class. He likes how the students bring to the class different experiences, backgrounds, and majors. He is passionate about getting to know his students, hearing their inspirations, and watching them pursue their dreams. Dr. Engen emphasized that he enjoys watching his students get excited about the things they learn as they grow as professionals.

As a student who took *Honors Public Speaking*, I believe Dr. Engen's course was successful because it not only taught students how to write and give great speeches, but also how to work in teams, become confident as communicators, and use those skills to develop our honors competencies. The course helped to develop our leadership strengths by teaching us how to build credibility, be persuasive, and give messages to the public. We also had the opportunity to develop our research skills when certain speeches required background information. A theme of the course was civic engagement, which ties in closely with the global citizenship competency. I had a wonderful time taking this course. 📍



Anne Moody's Mississippi

by Libby Guss, '18 (Mass Media; Mankato, Minn.)

Photography by Libby Guss

Textbooks, memoirs, autobiographies, and documentaries are excellent sources of information when learning about the past. However, it becomes difficult to keep names and dates straight when all you see is a two-dimensional representation. To physically travel to historical sites and talk to people who have influenced movements is a different method of learning altogether.

In March of 2015, I travelled with Sara Baranczyk, Quentina Dunbar, Alejandra Galvan, Nicole Soley, Trisha Walker, Dr. Jill Cooley and Dr. Chris Corley to the southern states to study the civil rights movement. We visited Memphis, Tennessee, and cities in Mississippi, including Cleveland, Indianola, and Jackson. This trip was part of a class taught by Dr. Cooley, titled *Anne Moody's Mississippi: Race, Culture, and Civil Rights*. The class was inspired by the 2014-2015 Common Read book, *Coming of Age in Mississippi* by Anne Moody.

We spent the weeks leading up to the trip studying the themes in Anne Moody's book, the role race has played in southern history, the different ways of presenting history, the contributions women made to the civil rights movement, and more. Dr. Cooley helped us get IRB approval to interview people on the trip for our final project. With this under our belt and our questions in hand, we left for the south, where none of us had travelled before.

We chose to spend some extra time in St. Louis, Missouri before continuing on to Memphis, Tennessee. Half of our group

went to the art museum, while the other half went to the Old Courthouse and the St. Louis Arch. I chose the second option and, along with Alejandra and Trisha. We felt a sense of power while walking across the same stones slave Dred Scott had walked across to the court house. As we rode to the top of the Arch, also known as the "Gateway to the West," Dr. Cooley pointed out how westward expansion, driven by people who talked of freedom and the equality of all men, led to genocide. This oppression would be a constant theme throughout the rest of our trip.

After arriving in Memphis the next day, we all went to the National Civil Rights Museum at the Lorraine Motel where Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated by James Earl Ray (pictured top left.) Trisha Walker said, "The museum did an acceptable job of representing its history. Nothing seemed to be shameful, or apologetic, but rather it commemorated the acts of courage of so many individuals." She also found it "fascinating to see exhibits in the museum on people whom I had actually met, like Joan Trumpauer Mulholland." Trumpauer, a friend of Anne Moody, visited Minnesota State earlier in the year for Common Read events.

We left Memphis the next day for the Mississippi Delta in the northwest area of the state. During the two days spent there, we went to sites such as Dockery Farms Plantation (considered the birthplace of the blues), Fannie Lou Hamer's grave, Emmett Till sites, and more. One of the most striking things we saw was at the

courthouse in Sumner, where Emmett Till's murderers were acquitted. On one side of the building was a sign describing Till's case, while on the other side had a statue dedicated to the confederate soldiers. "Our Heroes," was painted clearly on it while a soldier raised the confederate flag. Statues like this are not uncommon in the state.

We spent the final two days of the tour in Jackson. We visited Jackson State University, Tougaloo College—Anne Moody's alma mater (pictured top right), the site of the Woolworth sit-in, the state capitol, and Medgar Evers' house, where his blood still stains the driveway. While visiting Jackson State, a professor told us of the present-day acts of racism he has seen, such as when one of his graduate students, who happened to be African-American, was driving to his night class and was pulled over by a police officer for no reason—a common occurrence that is not unique to Mississippi.

Upon returning from Mississippi, we began working on our multimedia project. We used video footage by Sara Baranczyk, photos by me, art by Nicole Soley, and writing and more by Trisha Walker, Quentina Dunbar, and Alejandra Galvan. Though our trip to Mississippi was not a traditional, relaxing spring break trip, we did have fun and also learned much more than one can acquire by reading textbooks. 📺

The students will present their project on Monday, April 27th.



Student Spotlight: Jacob Tschann

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

the National Collegiate Honors Council Conference. Being able to attend this conference as a student is a unique and rare privilege. This conference provides an opportunity for Honors Programs across the nation to learn about each other and network. In addition, the conference gives students a chance to present their research through posters or presentations. Jacob expresses the positive experience he had at this conference: "I really enjoyed the conference and learned a lot about our Program and other Programs."

Jacob joined the Honors Program because he recognized it as a good way to meet people and be a part of something on campus. He

says, "The Honors Program is a great way to meet people and be surrounded by peers who all have different interests, and all want to succeed." He has been in a few honors classes like *First Year Seminar* and *U.S. Government*. Jacob cannot choose one course that has been his favorite, but rather enjoys how the classes are discussion-based. He enjoys how the classes are engaging and smaller; this way he can get to know everyone in the class.

Jacob is active within the Honors Program and in other on-campus activities. He lives in the Honors Learning Community. He says, "I enjoy living within the learning community because it's nice living with people who share my

same drive." He attends many of the learning community events like rock climbing and cooking, and also is involved with intermural sports. In addition, he has volunteered for Echo Food Shelf and Campus Kitchen. While not in class or studying, Jacob attends honors events and plays sports. He also participates in a weekly bible study group that consists of honors students throughout the University.

Jacob Tschann is an outstanding first-year honors student here at Minnesota State University, Mankato, with a promising future ahead of him. After attending the conference, and being active on campus, he is sure to make a difference in the years to come. 

If you have met Jacob Tschann, then you know his outgoing personality and desire to succeed. He is a first-year Math Education major from Zumbrota, Minnesota. He would ideally like to work in a classroom, teaching math courses, after college.

This November, Jacob traveled with eight other students to Denver, Colorado to attend



Student Spotlight: Mara Soupir

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

first-year students.

Mara's favorite aspect of the Honors Program is the level of involvement between advisers and students and the unique classroom setting in honors classes. "They are a lot more engaging than regular classes," Mara says. "There's a lot more discussion and one-on-one with both the professor and fellow students." Her favorite class so far has been Dr. Corley's Witchcraft, Gender, and Society in Preindustrial Europe. The entire class's participation and discussions have led her to look at historical documents differently than she may have before. Every student's motivation to get the

most out of each class session leads to numerous opportunities to share and learn new ideas.

Mara's driven personality extends to her hometown community of greater Mankato as well. She was selected this year to serve as a CoBank Rural Hunger Fellow, a student leadership role in the Campus Kitchen Project's program to create and tend community gardens. This program focuses on education and sustainability of food sources for both students and community members. She also serves as a committee member for FEAST Local Food Network, a local partnership of organizations

dedicated to growing a local food system through innovation. Her favorite thing about Mankato as a city is its push for overall health. She loves to hike, jog, and bike. "The campus really incorporates that greater Mankato initiative for outside activities," Mara says. "If you like to do things outside, both Mankato and MSU are great places."

Mara is a committed individual—professionally, academically, and through social entrepreneurship. Despite her ambitious schedule as a faithful honors student, she offers her valuable skills and impressive dedication to her community. 

As a first-year student, Mara Soupir's professional profile is already well developed. Besides her roles as both a Presidential Scholar and honors student, Mara is a member of Alpha Lambda Delta, a Greek National Honors Society that focuses on high performing



Amy Thu Nguyen Awarded Frey Fellowship

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

tion, and/or sustainable energy practices." Amy's research focuses on renewable energy; she is researching ways to safely turn waste water into usable energy, which is difficult because bio-gas from waste water is usually flammable.

Amy's mentor, Dr. Stephen J. Druschel, has greatly impacted her during her time at MSU. Amy went to the National Conference of Undergraduate Research with Dr. Druschel last year at the University of Kentucky to present research she started during her first year. Last summer, Amy worked for Dr. Druschel, assisting with his research. Recently he encouraged her to apply for the Frey Fellowship. When she

received the fellowship, Dr. Frey himself provided her with equipment for the project because they didn't have enough equipment to analyze the bio-gas. This summer, Amy will continue to research renewable energy from waste water with Dr. Druschel.

Besides encouraging her to apply for the Frey Fellowship, Dr. Druschel also suggested that Amy join the Honors Program to develop her research skills this fall. Amy is currently enrolled in the honors course *Becoming Global Citizens* taught by Caryn Lindsay, the current director of Kearney International Center, and has found that the class has been greatly beneficial to the development of her honors competencies.

Amy is genuinely enthusiastic about her work. When she's not at home or in class, she's always working in the lab. She enjoys the lab's working environment where students from all levels converge to work together on their projects.

Amy plans on going to graduate school for Environmental Engineering, and wants to someday work for the environmental and renewable energy industry to help improve the waste water system of the United States. Amy would like to thank Dr. Druschel for supporting her through classes, advising, and her research. She would also like to thank Meghann Chiodo, who helped her develop the method for her research. 

Civil Engineering major Amy Thu Nguyen, '17 is a current recipient of the Frey Fellowship. According to the Frey Fellowship webpage, "the purpose of this Fellowship is to encourage student interest in addressing climate change – its causes and symptoms – and to seek sustainable practices including effects on the biota, carbon footprint reduc-



Honorable Mentions



- Tyler Conlon, Haley Doran, Annie Humphers-Ginther, Tia Jacoby, Lisa Miller, Kristi Paulsen, and... have been accepted into graduate school.
- Tyler Keller, Courtney Sill, Sean Thomez, and Kellie Wong have been selected as Community Advisors for the residence hall communities, and Katelynn Malecha has been selected as the Honors First-Year Learning Community Coordinator for the 2015-2016.
- Marin Beck, Julia Hamann, Courtney Sill, and Ebony Wilson-Sinkfield won Student Leadership Awards
- Nicole Soley was awarded First Place at the Student Art League Juried Exhibition and has been recognized by the College of Education as a Rising Star in the department.
- Rudy Correa was appointed as chair of Mavericks After Dark.
- Sara Baranczyk and Natalie Moses have received summer internships with the Soudan Underground Laboratory and the St. Croix Medical Examiner's Office, respectively.
- Lisa Miller presented her research at the Academy of Criminal Justice Program at West Chester University in Pennsylvania, and won the President's Commission on the Status of Women's Project of the Year Award for her research.
- Kylie Gaeth is one of four Mavericks to qualify for NCAA Swimming and Diving Championships.
- Haley Doran is one of 16 Mavericks to be awarded the NSIC Myles Brand Award.
- Olivia Robinson contributed to the Maverick Women's Golf team victory in Mesa, Arizona.
- Congratulations to Senior Abrar Zawed who has accepted a position as a Junior Scientist with Dr. James Dutton's Lab in the McGuire Translational Research Facility (University of Minnesota).
- Senior Ellen Ahlness was awarded a five-year financial package which will support her Ph.D. studies in Political Science at the University of Washington.
- Makenzie Petzel and Julia Hamann will present their research with Dr. Paul Mackie this summer at the National Association of rural Mental Health Conference.

For more information about the achievements of our graduates, visit www.mnsuhonors.wordpress.com

Service Week

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

The Honors Program held its first Service Week from February 16-20. Students from the Honors Student Council (HSC) Executive Board organized and arranged events along with the Program's Graduate Assistant Ashley Kanak. Every event gave back in some way to the local Mankato area and the Honors Program hopes to continue Service Week every year.

The first event of the week took place at the Backpack Food Program. This organization assists children who are facing food insecurity. Through community donations, the Backpack Food Program provides a weekend's worth of healthy meals to qualifying students. The bags are distributed to teachers who place the food into the children's backpacks on Friday. In a little over two hours, honors student and staff volunteers packed over 200 bags for children. Julia Hamann, HSC President, reflects, "It was really encouraging working on service work as a whole and discovering all the services Mankato has to offer for those in need. It's exciting to think that we live in a community that really cares."

Monday also featured another volunteer

experience for students on campus. Students helped with Campus Kitchen, an organization which collects, packages, then distributes food to people facing food insecurity. Every week, approximately 120 meals are created and that's exactly how many meals the honors students completed in two hours. Tyler Keller, first-year class representative remarks, "It was a lot of fun!"

On Tuesday, many students found themselves in the Honors Program's office making winter hats. For two hours, students enjoyed food, drinks, conversation and made fleece tie-hats. Jaci Ullrich said, "Making hats was a great way to help our community while being social with our friends." The hats were then donated to The REACH and the Partners in Affordable Housing here in Mankato.

On Wednesday, students were able to volunteer while playing games. They visited the Autumn Grace Senior Living to play bingo while chatting with residents. Many of the residents needed assistance and were so happy to see younger people. It was great being able to make someone's day or to even smile just by

going to go play bingo. According to first-year student Alexis Cummings, "Volunteering at the nursing home was an engaging experience that we should do more often in order to give back to our community."

A clothing drive was held all week long. Boxes and bags of used clothing were gathered in the Honors Program office, and by the end of the week piles of clothing accumulated. This clothing was later donated to The REACH in Mankato that assists people in need of clothing.

Every event benefited Mankato in some aspect, whether through food and clothing assistance, or social interaction. It also benefited the students in the Program. Julia Hamann stated, "I would like to see more service within the Program; however, I am not so sure that trying to do it all in one week is the best. Ideally, I would like to see a monthly service event. These events could then reach out to all the wonderful service organizations in Mankato." Now that the Honors Program has achieved its first annual Service Week, the Program hopes to continue its service to Mankato every year. 

Why I Chose to Die: A Gladiator Historical Flash Fiction Piece

by Karen Muller, '16 (Studio Art and Creative Writing; Houston, Minn.)

It was past noon and high above me the sun had hit its zenith and started collapsing in on itself: a fiery, burning orb, a time-marker, an unbiased witness to death. Even though I was underground and couldn't see the sun, I knew it was there. It was waiting for me.

My palms were sweating furiously in the heat, bubbling up into a sheen I repeatedly rubbed off on my tunic. I had nothing better to do than stare at the brickwork around me, running a busted stubby fingernail along the uneven patches and whorls in the mortar. I felt like I'd been sealed in a tomb; this twisting maze of catacombs underneath the arena. Somewhere, separated by tunnels and gateways, stood a man waiting to fight me to the death. My first fight. My tongue was so dry it scraped the roof of my mouth. My heartbeat filled my ears with dense throbs, making me nauseous.

From far away I heard the muffled roar of the crowd, signaling the end of the lunch hour. They were a wave waiting to drown me. My time was up. Now it was just me. Me, and the opponent, and the sand pit reeking with the humid, cloying scent of spilled blood from the animal hunts in the morning and the criminal executions during the noon interlude. My breath came

out in gasps. There was a very real probability that I would be dead within a quarter-hour. I mashed my hand harder into the stone, wishing I could force my way out of here. Trapped. Trapped. Can't. Breathe.

I felt a sharp pang in my shaking hand and pulled it away from the wall, surprised to see the gash the stone had left. Nearly hysterical I watched the blood well up in the crevice, fascinated by how fast my body was ready to abandon me.

The pain yanked me out of the daze I'd willingly climbed into almost a year ago when the Roman army captured me on the coast of Crete. They'd shackled me and carted me off to Rome along with a group of other prisoners of war. Fifty of us were captured, but only two of us were taken to Ludus Dacicus: one of the four gladiator schools in Rome. Capius and I were thrown into the same cell and trained with the same specialist for three months. The only perks were the constant medical attention I'd not had in my previous life in Crete, and the sureness of a hot meal three times a day, even if it was barley gruel with beans.

Capius and I became friends. We talked about how much we missed our wives and how much I missed my children. Marelilius, my son, all blue eyes and curly black hair spilling over

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Honors in Pictures



Service Week: BackPack Food Program



Service Week: making fleece hats



Ice skating at All Seasons Arena



Service Week: making fleece hats



Students set up for UMRHC



Ice cream social at UMRHC



Service week: Campus Kitchen

New Honors Director Effective Fall 2015

by Sara Baranczyk, '18 (Physics Education and Communication Arts/Literature; St. Paul, Minn.)



"There's no other job like it," mused Dr. Christopher Corley about his position as Director of the Honors Program at Minnesota State University, Mankato. "It's the best job ever." Dr. Corley has been the Director of the Honors Program for six years, and during that time he and the Honors team have produced many changes in the Program. His appointment to the director position set forth a revitalization of the program, giving it a more esteemed presence on campus. The learning community, student lounge, and other student resources were established, and the robust curricula of the Honors competencies were founded. The Honors Program has come a long way from where it was, and it has a long and bright future ahead. However, Dr. Corley's time as Honors Director is coming to an end.

As Dr. Corley puts it, six years is enough time to make an impact, but also time enough for fresh eyes to be welcomed. The Program is ever-changing and must keep up with the students' needs. Taking the position of Director in the fall of 2015 will

be Dr. Anne Dahlman. Currently, Dr. Dahlman is an Associate Professor and a Department Chair of Educational Studies: K-12 and Secondary Programs here at Minnesota State. "I believe excellence lies in the habit of attending to the smallest details of how we function as a program," Dr. Dahlman says, "[and] I have no plans of radically changing things."

Dr. Dahlman says she is most looking forward to getting to know the students of the Honors Program. She enjoys mentoring students and pushing them to be the best version of themselves. The Honors Program exemplifies the ideals of academic excellence, and Dr. Dahlman plans to continue this trend by working closely with students as Dr. Corley has done. "I do what I do because my students inspire me," says Dr. Dahlman. She is eager for the students to get to know her as well. Students will quickly notice that she is very proud of her immigrant heritage. She grew up in Finland and moved to the United States after college. She reflects the qualities of the Honors competencies, and her distinct background makes her a unique addition to the Honors Program.

As for Dr. Corley, he will be resuming his role as a history professor at Minnesota State with a renewed focus on research. He has great optimism for the future of the Program, though he will miss the students and their vibrant energy. "Nowhere else will you get to be surrounded by so many students from different disciplines. I never would have met so many people without [the Honors Program]." He also affirms that Dr. Dahlman is meant for the Program and it is outstanding that she has been appointed to the position of Director. On a last note, Dr. Corley says, "It is an honor to have [served as] the Honors Director." The Honors Program greatly appreciates the work Dr. Corley has done for the Program and enthusiastically anticipates the installment of Dr. Dahlman. 

Flash Fiction, continued from page 8

his toddler forehead. My girl, Rowena, a bright beaming sun, tripping around in bare feet and keeping the bowl in our home full of freshly-picked weeds.

But mostly we tried not to think about our families. It hurt too much. It was easier to fall into that haze: to embrace it and forget about my past life and all the people I'd loved that I was never going to see again.

I was almost doing okay. I trained hard, throwing myself into the exercises and building up muscle with the goal of winning all my fights and gaining the favor of the crowd. Sure, I'd have to kill people. I knew I couldn't get out of this without blood on my hands, but I needed to get back to my family, and I'd heard stories about gladiators who won battle after battle, defeating all their opponents until the audience cried for their release. Until a week ago that had been the plan. I could almost live

with it. Then the manager approached me about my first fight. It was against Capius, the one person in this place I couldn't kill. I couldn't do it.

That's how I'd gotten to this present moment, shivering and sweating as the guard approached me from the end of the corridor. It was time. I swallowed, wiped my palms again, and picked up my sword, finally entering the arena.

The sunlight was dazzling, blinding me after my time in the underworld. Slowly the crowd came into focus, jeering from the safety of their seats, guzzling water and calling for my blood as they wiped their brows of sweat under the shade of the huge awnings erected around the arena. Who are you? I thought. How can you judge me? Then I saw Capius looking at me from across the sandy pit, and I did what I knew I had to do. I dropped my sword. I refused to fight. 

Gender and Witchcraft Course Reflection

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

This semester, if you ask what I'm doing on Monday nights, my answer is, "I'll be in my witchcraft class." While a handful of people have inquired, it's not like "Defense Against the Dark Arts" or "Potions" classes offered at Hogwarts from JK Rowling's *Harry Potter* series. It is actually a history honors seminar, *Witchcraft, Gender and Society in Preindustrial Europe* taught by the Honors Director, Dr. Chris Corley. This Honors 401 course goes beyond understanding the witch trial phenomenon itself. We practice learning how to understand such a phenomena.

The discussion-based course focusses on everything the title contains: witchcraft, gender, and society. Up to 50,000 "witches" were executed during the witch craze in Europe primarily from 1400 to 1700. As a class, we are not only trying to understand the witch persecutions themselves, but the traits of a society in which such persecutions could rise and fall as they did during these centuries. Our textbooks are mostly collections of primary and secondary sources relating to witchcraft, as well as the beliefs, values, and social structures surrounding it. During class, we discuss what the readings contribute to our understanding of the witch persecutions.

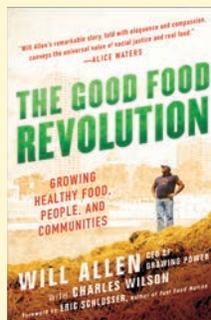
Understanding such a phenomena takes much more than knowing dates and names. In fact, dates and names may be the least important data we look at. We want comprehensive knowledge about society at the time. What did the average commoner believe about maleficium, or harmful magic? How many of these fears were influenced by religious teachings and how many were indigenous? And, furthermore, how could the majority of Europeans hold beliefs in haggish witch

women attending sabbaths with the devil? Where did these images come from? There is never a single correct answer to any question we ask, but when we search for explanations, we try to understand them in the context surrounding them. Dr. Corley emphasizes that we cannot use today's standards to judge the past. If we cannot see the witch persecutions through the perspectives of those present at the time while accounting for their beliefs, values and fears, the persecutions will never make sense.

The ability to step into the perspective of those in another culture is the goal of a global citizen. From the outside, the trial and execution of tens of thousands of supposed witches looks like nothing but a dreadful crime. However, we have to understand the set of beliefs that allowed witch persecutions to be a natural response to certain threats. Such a native understanding requires much literacy about the subject, which employs another honors competency: research. It takes a lot of reading, discussion, and inference to gain the full picture. The perspectives of those who couldn't write—which at the time was everyone but elites—were rarely recorded, for example. As a recently declared history major, this is the kind of in-depth historical studying that drew me to the class in the first place.

"My witchcraft class" has been a fantastic experience. Every class period, we work to decipher the many aspects of society in preindustrial Europe that contributed to widespread witch persecutions. As often as Dr. Corley teaches us, we teach each other. It is satisfying to work together to recognize the patterns and relationships in society that make a mystery of the distant past make sense. 📖

Indulge in the Common Read this Summer!



Fall 2015 Courses

English Composition, Justin Eells
This course teaches students to adapt their language practices based on their audience, purpose and context, and it supplies them with a toolkit of transferrable writing strategies from which to select when faced with a rhetorical situation.

European History, Christopher Corley
Through simulations, students will study the period and its events, people and ideas; engage contemporary conflicts; and make decisions that place them at the center of sweeping changes in European history.

Human Relations in a Multicultural Society, Dr. Kruienza
This course prepares students to critically examine the social and cultural foundations of inequality in the society through the lens of public education.

Research and Information Literacy, Justine Martin
By the end of this course, students will exhibit how to effectively find, evaluate, and synthesize information for academic research.

Advanced Interpersonal Communication, Kristen Cvancara
Class discussions will blend theory with everyday experiences to analyze, evaluate, and understand communication principles that affect relationship development, maintenance, and dissolution.

Developing Your Mentor Philosophy, Ashley Kanak
This course will provide opportunities for in-depth investigation into leadership styles and methods, aiming to guide discovery and development of each student's personal mentor philosophy.

Full course descriptions can be found at: mnsu.edu/honors/currentstudents/courses14.html

Honors Fun Corner: Word Search

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

Clues:

1. What degree did Honors Alumna Rachel Lind graduate with in 2001?
2. Dr. Corley's seminar this semester focuses on _____, gender, and society in Preindustrial Europe.
3. What Honors class did department chair Dr. David Engen teach this semester?
4. What fellowship did Honors sophomore Amy Thu Nguyen receive for her work with renewable energy?
5. Honors students gathered together during Service Week to make fleece _____ to donate to The REACH and Partners in Affordable Housing.
6. How many years has Dr. Corley been the Director of the Honors Program?
7. Where did Dr. Anne Dahlman grow up?
8. Next year's Common Read is The Good _____ Revolution.
9. Students in *Honors: Anne Moody's Mississippi* traveled to Mississippi and visited Anne Moody's alma matter. What was the name of her college?
10. First year student Mara Soupir was selected to serve as CoBank Rural Hunger Fellow, a student leadership role in Campus _____.



Answers to last issue's puzzle:

Kalinka, President, Glen Peterson, Rochester, Family, MSSA, Five, Woolworth, Camping

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