Like Thoreau in Walden, we will record our sauntering here, remembering that “if one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours.”

TIME AND THE TONY
By Dr. Richard England

When you have a little time to put to good use, any number of things can happen. I write from the edge of one of my precious last sabbatical days, and so I have been thinking a bit about time as I try to finish some writing on my favorite Victorians. It strikes me that the students this semester have been experimenting with time in a similar way, as they have been given the opportunity to explore the fascinating subjects of their Honors classes in “new, improved” four-credit form.

Now a philosopher and a luddite does not admit a necessary connection between the words new and improved, but the whispers that have been filtering back to my little sabbatical cell suggest that in this case the improvement is happening. Dr. Morrison, who is shining as Honors acting director, has inspired the faculty she recruited this term to take their Honors classes to new places, literally. She lead her “Wilderness and Literature” students on a Pocomoke river canoe trip before they read Deliverance, giving them wholly different perspectives and understandings about the text and the relations depicted therein. Dr. Gene Williams (biology) has taken his “Cancer and Society” students to the National Institutes of Health to show them the way that money and medicine coalesce in cancer-fighting institutions. And of course Dr. Bill Folger (music) has broadened the minds of his “Diversity in Musical Theatre” students by taking them to shows, well, all over the show.

Of course the less glamorous and more exciting (to bookish me) aspect of all this is the chance to go new places in texts. Extra readings and writings open up new vistas for discussion, which is, after all, the native learning environment of Honors. Students in HONR111 are going beyond “Critical Thinking and Writing” to learn how to navigate the exploding Web of information: six library labs designed by instructors Dr. Charlotte England and Caroline Porter-Long have introduced students to all kinds of sources beyond Google and Wikipedia, and we hope to see the results in outstanding first year research papers.

It was the promise of excellent first-year writing that made Drs. Morrison and England (not me, I’m on sabbatical) come up with the idea of a first-year writing prize for Honors students, to be judged by the Honors program committee. And of course, it provided an excellent opportunity to celebrate the work of Dr. Tony Whall, who taught HONR111 in various incarnations, for something like 26 years, from his founding of the Honors program until his well-deserved retirement. Freshmen—sharpen your pencils—or fire up your laptops—and prepare to earn the first annual Whall Honors Award for Writing Excellence.

With a name like that, we could call it the Wowee (WHAWEE!), but to those in the know, I am sure it will...
A Camp, Some Conversations, A Cause and Some Rice:
The Story of SU’s Shantytown
By Andrew Bond

After flooding SU’s campus with literature, sidewalk chalk and signs, news was spreading fast about our Shantytown. For three days in October, we created a mock refugee camp to raise awareness about the plight of displaced persons around the world. For these days, we came to call home the patch of grass between Henson and Devilbiss halls.

On Monday morning—after a long, cold night’s sleep in a broken tent that was patched with cardboard pieces and duct tape—I woke up to realize that all the hard work and creativity that had gone into our Shantytown project was now a reality. As the 20 student members of Amnesty International emerged from their makeshift homes so carefully constructed the day before, other students began to stare, not realizing people were sleeping out on campus. The plan was working exactly as we had hoped—we were living as refugees. And more importantly, others who were not yet involved were asking “What”!

Though at some points we joked about feeling as if we were part of a wildlife exhibit which is always on display, we were too hungry to worry about what others were thinking. We decided to live on a limited diet for the three days and thus our diets consisted only of small portions of rice, beans and oatmeal.

Throughout the day the town was quite a sight. We lived our lives—studying, relaxing and working—as if we had been exiled for one reason or another from our native land.

Each night we held an event to raise awareness of and participation in our cause. The first night, a group sat under the night stars, strumming guitars and banging drums during an improv jam session. People played songs and read poetry with aspirations of peace and harmony. The atmosphere was both moving and powerful.

We held a candlelight vigil on the second night. Over 200 candles were lit as the crowd sat in silence, taking in the night and praying for the men, women and children they had been representing for the past 48 hours. Visitors passing through were offered to light a candle as well; many took the opportunity to stay and talk with us about what we were doing and why we thought it was so important.

As we reached the final day, we were still the talk of campus. To complete our journey in another’s shoes, Sarnata Reynolds, the refugee program director for Amnesty International, made a poignant presentation about refugees around the world—the same people we had been trying to embody for the past three days.

In the end, everyone agreed that SU’s Shantytown was a great success and all planned to participate again next year. That night I enjoyed a hot shower, a great meal, and an unbelievable night’s sleep. I think I can speak for all when I say that I miss the camp, the conversations and maybe even the taste of a nice bowl of rice.

Andy Bond and friend Caitlin Averill enjoy a bowl of rice while living in Shantytown for three days.
Is it possible to take 21 credits and love every minute of it? Yes! If you are interested in acting, directing or playwriting, you should look into the Actors Studio M.F.A. Program at Pace University in New York City. I started going to the Actors Studio M.F.A. Program this September and could not be happier. The classes are invigorating, strenuous, enlightening and thrilling. This is a professional training program, which involves intensive training of the body and mind to work in a very competitive field.

If you watch Bravo, you may have seen Inside the Actors Studio with James Lipton. He is the dean of the Actors Studio Drama School. One of our classes is sitting in on the interviews that James Lipton does for the show. We also get to ask questions after the interview is done. Since I’ve been here, there have been three guests: Alec Baldwin, Halle Berry and John Cusack. The shows are taped ahead of time and the tapings usually take between five and six hours. We do not get credits for this course, but, really, we get so much more.

The M.F.A. Actors Studio students have the privilege of sitting in the pit, right in front of Dean Lipton and his guests. This has been a very surreal experience, especially since I often watched the show on television. There is so much to learn from each actor, and I strongly encourage students who are interested in theatre, in any capacity, even as an audience member, to watch it. Inside the Actors Studio comes on every Monday night at 8 p.m. on Bravo.

Of course, the school isn’t just about hoping to be on TV. Students at the school can take the acting, directing or playwriting track. As I am in the acting track, I take two movement classes per week. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings are boot-camp-like classes to prepare us for the day and to help with our awareness of our bodies. One of our movement classes is African Dance, which we take at Alvin Ailey. We are certainly not all dancers, and, when we walk around the school, I think the real dancers can tell! This is an incredible privilege for us as actors in training.

The other classes in the acting track include basic technique (acting), voice (mostly speaking rather than singing), theatre history and our Friday workshop. Basic technique is six hours a week, split between two days, and the workshop is three hours long. In workshop, we have the opportunity to learn from professionals who specialize in acting, playwriting, or directing. We are hoping soon to have a workshop with Ellen Burstyn, who is one of the co-presidents of our training program.

If you are interested in the program, visit the Web site at http://appserv.pace.edu/execute/page.cfm?doc_id=20051, or e-mail me at Abigail.treut@gmail.com! I would be glad to talk to you about any aspect of the program.
In March I was sitting at my desk outside of Dr. England’s office when Dr. Morrison dropped by and said one thing that would turn my final semester upside-down: “Your GPA is high enough to graduate with distinction. Why not write your thesis?” At that time I was content to graduate early and just take the classes I needed to get out of here. I just wanted to graduate and move on to new things. I felt willing to do just what I had to in order to get by and graduate, although Dr. Whall would never have approved.

I had never considered writing a thesis before. I hadn’t even taken Thesis Prep. She said I could do Thesis Prep in the last half of the semester and then write my thesis this semester. I toyed around with the idea for some time. I remember when I first came to SU and met other Honors students. Very few even mentioned the thesis. It was this long-lost thing that was only done by a few students who had some extra time. It seemed daunting to them. They didn’t even consider it because it just seemed like too much work.

I decided to write my thesis after about a week of mulling over the thought. I decided to work on it over the summer as well, although I realize that this wasn’t really necessary. I have learned so much from writing my thesis. While I’m not quite done yet, I know I will be by the time the end of the semester rolls around.

My thesis has been challenging and exciting. I started with wanting to investigate mathematical models of cancer treatment. Essentially, a system of equations is used to simulate what would happen in reality. Variables are used to represent rates of change and different properties. These equations can be graphed and analyzed in order to see what would happen under different conditions and in different situations. After much research, I became most interested in mathematical modeling of virotherapy. Virotherapy is engineering viruses to specifically attack and kill cancer cells while leaving healthy cells unharmed. The math model looks at the populations of uninfected tumor cells, infected tumor cells and the virus population. In short, using these models can save time, money and, most importantly, lives. We can find the best ways to treat people. Since the model represents a real situation, we can manipulate it to see what would happen in any given situation without having a high risk of hurting people or running unnecessary lab experiments.

I have learned a lot about math modeling, writing, cancer treatment and so much more. I’ve learned how to question and analyze in a way that I never could before. I never pictured myself as an undergraduate who could actually comment on and understand the work of those who have a Ph.D. and have been doing this for more years than I’ve been alive.

While not everyone picks the same topic for a thesis, I highly recommend that all Honors students write their theses. Find something that interests you. You never know where it could take you. Certainly it’s a lot of work, time and effort. However, it has been not only one of the best experiences of my Honors career, but one of the best experiences of my college career.

Rachel playing her cello. Pictures of her typing are boring.
Honors Students Go Wild
By Corey Meissner

There’s not much that can get college students out of bed at seven in the morning on a Saturday, so when Dr. Morrison proposed a canoe trip for our Honors 311: Wilderness in Literature class, she received mixed reactions. On the morning of the trip, we stumbled bleary-eyed to the athletic fields, where our two vans were waiting, each trailing about eight canoes. We hopped in the vans and set off, slowly waking up as we were treated to the sounds of NPR, the perpetual soundtrack of Honors professors’ cars. After about 20 minutes, we reached Snow Hill and got out of the vans. As we looked out across the Pocomoke River, its calm and beautiful waters running across the horizon and into the woods, we began to get excited for our canoeing adventure.

Our trip got off to a less than promising start, as Korey Cunningham and Arnold Jenkins tipped their canoe within a minute of getting into it. The rest of us watched from the riverbank with a mixture of laughter and trepidation. Luckily, everyone seemed to learn from the boys’ example, and no one else flipped a canoe all day.

We began to paddle, navigating our canoes around logs, rocks and other obstacles. The morning sunlight shone through the canopy of trees which covers the river, giving the whole atmosphere a cheerful glow. Some of us pretended to be characters from The Last of the Mohicans, Into the Wild or even Pocahontas, singing “Just Around the Riverbend” as we paddled along.

As the trip progressed, we became more skilled at controlling our canoes. Our initial inept paddling led us to appreciate the skill of the characters we were reading about. While we were utterly worn out after our three hours of canoeing, the heroes of our wilderness texts were on the river for days and even months. We had a blast on the river, but we were quite happy to get out of the canoes once our five miles were up.

Back in the classroom, we’ve been discussing how to define the wilderness, and what types of places and situations can really be defined as wilderness. Technically, our class never entered the wilderness, since we knew exactly where we were and where we were going, but the trip certainly allowed us to better understand the wilderness experienced in the books we’ve been reading.

The Pocomoke River in an area between the wild and spooky shallow swamps of the north end and the wide civilized south end.
Wasting Your Rights
By Jeremy Riffle

For citizens to vote in elections is considered the central basis of a democratic government. Unfortunately, for college-age voters, voting is not a strong priority. In 2000, only 32.3 percent of citizens between the ages of 18 and 24 voted in the presidential election. This is in stark contrast to the 54.7 percent of total citizens that voted in the same election. In fact, since 1972, the first presidential election that 18-24 year olds could vote in, only an average of 39.78 percent of our nation’s youngest voters have chosen to exercise their right to vote.

These disappointing numbers are indicative of a great apathy or, at the least, lethargy among college students and their peers. Among the many different reasons why college students may have to avoid going to the polls are their strenuous course schedules, work commitments, difficulties in getting to the polling places and the perception that their votes will not matter even if they did vote.

Regarding the first three difficulties, there is a remarkably easy solution: voting via an absentee ballot. It is a simple action to take. All a registered voter needs to do is to go to the Web site of their state’s board of elections, print and complete a form, and send it to the board of elections. The voter will receive a ballot in the mail that they can fill out at home and send back when they’re done voting. By doing this, voters can avoid lines at polling places that may be hard to get to and prevent conflicts with professors and employers over taking time to vote.

The most serious misconception that college students may have about voting is that their voices do not matter. This is easy to understand, since the majority of politicians prefer to discuss issues that matter to students’ grandparents, such as Medicare and Social Security. The reason that politicians do this is because senior citizens vote at nearly twice the rate of college-age voters. Catering to the wants and needs of seniors helps politicians win elections. If the number of college students that vote was remotely close to the number of seniors that vote, we would all see politicians talk about issues that matter to students, such as financial aid, tuition costs and college loans.

Unfortunately, the statistics are proving remarkably hard to change. Before the 2004 presidential election, there were several highly publicized campaigns to draw students to the polls. Despite ubiquitous cries of “Rock the Vote” and “Vote or Die,” only 41.9 percent of students voted that year, a meager nine percent increase from 2000.

If college students want a government that respects them, then they cannot accept low voter turnouts. The system is not going to miraculously change for students. Students have to take their ballots and use them to inform the government that students are not to be ignored. Instead of Diddy’s hyperbolic “Vote or Die” campaign, students need to hear the true consequence of not voting: Vote or be deemed irrelevant.

When he’s not busy fighting to inform us of our basic rights, Jeremy enjoys a variety of activities, including the occasional hot dog eating contest. Jeremy was named El Champion last May!
Goaaaaaaaaaaallllllllllllllllllllllllllll

By Zachary Haney

The Salisbury University Honors Program took 20 lucky students to our wonderful nation’s capital for the D.C. United soccer game against the Columbus Crew. We arrived in the city around 2 p.m. on Saturday, October 20, and were free to explore as much as we wanted until kickoff at 7:30 p.m. Our erudite personalities drove us to learn about the bones of dinosaurs in the Smithsonian as well as view the beautiful modern art of the Hirshhorn. Although figuring out the rudiments of the Metro was challenging, many students used their Honors senses and traveled to other parts of the capital.

Two other students and I journeyed to DuPont Circle to see the embassies that are housed there. Our goal was to find Azela Coffee, a quaint Middle Eastern hookah bar and coffee shop. While we did end up finding our Mecca, we were extremely happy with the small Middle Eastern café that we discovered next to the coffee shop. We feasted on foreign-named foods such as baba ghannouj (eggplant dip), zaytun msabbah (spiced olives) and fatayer bisabanikh (spinach pastry). And, to our surprise, they were delectable!

After our feast and smoke session, we traveled back to RFK to watch our team take on the Columbus Crew. It was my first time at RFK as well as my first time witnessing a live MLS game. The energy of the stadium was powerful as our team took the field. Our tickets were for two entire rows and we Honors students added to the chants of “Olé!” and “D.C. United!” Columbus Crew took the lead 1-0 within 20 minutes of the first half thanks to sloppy play by the goal keeper. They later scored their second goal in stoppage time at the end of the first half. Christian Gomez was able to cut the Crew’s lead in half late in the second half. However, the Crew quickly scored again in stoppage time. The game seemed like it was going to end 3-1 until Christian Gomez scored on a penalty kick in the 93rd minute. The game ended in the 94th with a final score of 3-2.

I sure did receive my money’s worth, all five dollars of it (the cost of the trip). I was able to broaden my palate and enjoy foods from the Middle East while exploring their culture. I also witnessed live five amazing goals in RFK under the lights while rooting for D.C. United. Although our team lost the game, the students that went on the trip all turned out winners.
Honors Student Association Report: Fall 2007
By Lauren Broderick, President

In the middle of spring semester 2007, Julie Bayer, our former HSA president, informed me that she wouldn’t be running for president again for the following year. I, as the current vice president, swallowed a big gulp of surprise and split-second trepidation and decided to run for president. I thought that this would be a great opportunity not only to have something fabulous on my resume, but to give more of my time to the Honors Program that has helped me further my education and enhance my college experience. I owe a big thank you to the Honors directors and past HSA officers for all they have done for me, so this was my chance to do the same for other Honors students.

My main goal as president for this year has been to increase HSA volunteer work throughout the Salisbury community. With the hard work of my fellow officers, we have been able to do just that. First came Sea Gull Century, and as many of you know that whole process of getting HSA a paid position was a fiasco. However, thanks to the perseverance of Dr. Morrison and the willingness of many Honors students to volunteer their time without the opportunity of making money, we made quite an impact at Sea Gull Century—even making the front page of The Flyer (thanks to Sarah Wright). After Sea Gull Century came volunteering at Night of the Living Zoo, which was coordinated by Monika Kauffman. I know the HSA volunteers were greatly appreciated by this event.

The semester isn’t over yet and we still have some volunteer plans in the works with the Humane Society and, in collaboration with Wor-Wic’s Honors students, for the Jaycees program, taking needy children Christmas shopping. With the continued HSA student activism that we all appreciate, I know the rest of the year will be a success.

On the opposite side of volunteering and hard work there are the fun, affordable Honors activities. We started out this semester with the Welcome Back BBQ, which had a great turnout of students participating in water balloon tosses, egg and spoon races, and marshmallow-stuffing contests. Then came the adventure to Baltimore with the Drs. Englands to see Arsenic and Old Lace which included, for some, a new dining experience at an Afghan restaurant. Later in October there was the D.C. United trip. The game was a bit of a disappointment with United losing 3-2, but the journey home was quite exciting with a late night trip through a bad part of DC very low on gas. Finally, there was the Halloween party complete with a scavenger hunt and costume contest.

There are more events in the works for the rest of the year, including a holiday semi-formal at the Honors House in December and a ball, with ballroom dancing, in the spring. Keep sharing your ideas for activities, and we will do our best to make sure they occur.

To end this article, I thank all of you for coming to meetings and events, giving your input and supporting your Honors Program. So, thank you, and here’s to a great rest of the year!

“Encouragement was necessary and present along most of the 100 miles. As a participant in the Century, I really appreciated the presence of support at the finish line. Though I didn't finish in time to see my fellow Honors students show their community spirit, I’m glad to know that they were there for others who needed to be congratulated (or maybe committed) for having just ridden 100 miles.”

—Billy Mahoney
Working Together: SU and Wor-Wic Honors Students

By Nathan Dorman and Erin Twilley

If you’re looking for intense discussion and a chance to have a positive impact on your community, then get ready! The leaders of the Honors programs and accompanying student organizations at Salisbury University and Wor-Wic Community College are working together to provide exciting opportunities for honors students.

Honors students at both WWCC and SU share a common endeavor. These students not only want to better themselves as students, but they also want to become active in a life of volunteerism. By providing an opportunity for students to participate at shared events, leaders of the respective schools hope to strengthen the common endeavor of Honors students.

WWCC and SU’s Honors organizations are attempting to accomplish this task by combining and opening up the various discussions and community activities hosted by the individual colleges. Below is a description of an upcoming event that will be open to Honors students from both schools. As this is the beginning stage in accomplishing the stated goal, it is imperative to future success of shared events that you, the Honors student, make great strides to attend this and future events. Not only are these events designed to better you as a student, but they are also designed to help foster the public good of both the community and the two schools that are a part of this community. Take a look, because this is your chance to get involved.

- December 8: Jaycee’s Christmas Shopping Spree
  This event is one of the most rewarding experiences of the season! Jaycee’s Christmas Shopping Spree is a program that partners with Wal-Mart to bring the spirit of the holidays to underprivileged children. So how can you help? Volunteers are needed to help these vivacious, enthusiastic little shoppers spend $60 on Christmas presents that their particular situation cannot provide. For many of these children, this is the only opportunity they will have and they want your help. Join in the fun and start off the holiday season right by helping us on December 8.

- February 29 - March 1: MCHC Convention
  This spring 2008, the Maryland Collegiate Honors Council convention will be held locally at Wor-Wic Community College. Don’t let this opportunity slip by. Join with your fellow Honor students and participate in and/or showcase research ideas, creative writing, and leadership skills. This year’s theme is “The ‘Far Side’ of the Bridge.” The deadline for submitting proposals is December 10. For more information on submitting a proposal or on attending this event, please contact Dr. Morrison.

For more information on either of these events, please contact either Nathan Dorman (nd62097@salisbury.edu) or Erin Twilley (et47758@salisbury.edu).
Fun Facts About Your Fall 2007 Honors Professors

Charlotte England: "I can (and do) sing Byzantine liturgical chant in Greek—despite being a Canadian with Dutch parents!"

Richard England: "I enjoy writing verse, nonsensical and, well, more or less sensible."
(See elsewhere in this issue!)

William Folger: "The only interesting thing I can think of is that a few summers ago I went hang gliding in the Outer Banks, NC. Out of five or six flights I crashed once!"

Keith Brower: "I was once a float in a Christmas parade (it's a long story) ... "

Lucy Morrison: "When I was at college, I won a bet by going parachuting with a group of friends—on the same day that Margaret Thatcher resigned. I was the only girl who didn't chicken out."

Jason McCartney: "I was a military brat as a child (my dad was in the army and we moved around quite a bit) and I have continued my wandering lifestyle as an adult. In fact, I've never actually lived anywhere more than five years until I arrived here at SU in fall 2002. I've lived in Germany, Kentucky, Texas, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Maryland (three times now). I finished high school in Honolulu, Hawaii, and then spent my freshman year of college at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, so my first college mascot was a rainbow. I've also run three marathons in the past 12 months."

Caroline Porter-Long: "I have pajamas with pictures of coffee cups on them ...

Joaquin Vila: "My favorite trip in the world was to China, where I studied Chinese language and culture during the summer of 1982. Things were a bit different back then as China had just opened its doors to the west and hotels were just starting to be build. Our group, from Michigan State University, was given VIP treatment and we walked the Great Wall, went down into the Ming tombs, visited the excavation site of China's first emperor and the Terracota Army and climbed up the steps of the Big Goose Pagoda in the ancient imperial city of Xian. My friend and I also learned Tai Chi from and old master and took cooking lessons. I try keeping up with the Tai Chi, but my old bones resist it. However, to this day, making dumplings or Su-O's fried rice (a Chinese friend and a great cook), brings memories of the adventure of living for a summer in an intriguing land with a rich history going back over 6,000 years."

Eugene Williams: "I really enjoy sailing in my spare time. Several times I have sailed my 22-foot boat across the Chesapeake Bay singled-handed (meaning alone in the boat), often with a group of friends some of whom were also single handing."
The Glutton’s Song
By Dr. Richard England

O I am perfect in every way
I eat my breakfast every day,
it's kippers, spuds and bacon too,
croissants and coffee alone won't do.

And when the clock strikes half-past ten
you know its time to dine again.
Pancakes make great elevenses
when stacked unto the heavenses.

And once we've cleared those plates away
we'll enter on the luncheon fray.
You cannot call yourself a mensch
unless you lunch just like the French

on ham and quail and escargots
washed down with a steady flow
of lemonade and pink champagne,
stirred with sticks of sugarcane.

And as you hear the bell chime three
you know it must be time for tea:
you will have taken sufficient scones
when you can no longer feel your bones.

But by the time the clock shows five
your appetite will come alive -
though supper is a light repast
four courses help to break the fast.

And you will think me quite a saint,
although I'm feeling rather faint,
at seven no dinner can be seen—
I always wait 'til seven-fifteen.

But then out come the soup tureens
the mountainous bowls of salad greens
the jellies, veggies, plums and nuts
and in the midst of these out juts

a roast (with gravy) thickly carved,
a dozen chickens neatly halved,
devilled eggs upon a dish
and here and there a bit of fish.

Prudence now, must never stifle
your appetite! Here comes the trifle,
and if you're not a trifling sort,
do save some room for linzer torte.

And though dear guest you fear the worst,
be not alarmed! I never burst!
To leave the table just won't do
before the cheese course is quite through.

With Jarlsberg, swiss, and ancient cheddar
to round things out, you can't do better,
unless perhaps we pause to pair
a tawny port with camembert.

And now nine tolls. Et voila—fini!
But before bed - may I, shall we?
Take macaroons and sweet hot milk,
topped with foam as smooth as silk!

And if, about the stroke of twelve
you should feel not quite yourself,
then down into the kitchen creep
where you will find me sitting deep

midst piles of Dagwood sandwiches
and roasted lamb of course which is
my favourite of all viands,
I love to eat it with my hands.

And somehow through the hours of night
I survive without a bite.
I'm not as hungry as I might seem
I feast once more in every dream

Until again I see the sun
which looks just like a sticky bun:
I'll hear the clocks all echo soon
the music of the fork and spoon.

So now you know that any time
is suitable for food or rhyme,
perhaps my song has made you feel
as if you need a little meal.
Rediscovering Ourselves Through Children’s Literature
By Corey Meissner

With Dr. Richard England on sabbatical this fall, Dr. Charlotte England has taken over his Honors 111 classes as well as his office in the Honors House. In addition to teaching Honors 111, Dr. England is bringing back last spring’s popular gardening course and has developed a new course for the fall, Honors 311: Children’s Literature, 1650-2000. Students taking Children’s Literature read everything from Locke’s *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* to Roald Dahl’s *Matilda*, discussing how children’s literature has changed over the years and what societal values have contributed to those changes. “I have learned a lot about my favorite children’s stories, such as history, background and connections to the time period it was written,” said sophomore Julie Pessagno, adding that the class has exceeded her expectations.

In order to get her students to understand better the different genres of children’s literature, Dr. England assigns imitation pieces, so that students have a chance to mimic the style of famous children’s authors. Inspired by one of her former professors in grad school, Dr. England remembers attempting to recreate works by Fielding and Austen, noting how much these exercises helped her get into the mind of the authors and to appreciate their works. Her students are having a quite similar experience. “Writing children’s stories has helped me learn to write in several different genres that I didn’t know I could write before,” said junior Dana Alsup. “The imitations, while not the easiest thing for me, have helped me grasp the basic concepts and structures of different types of stories,” added Pessagno. “Through writing the imitations I have gained a better understanding of the work that is involved in writing a children’s story that teaches a moral or lesson while still entertaining children.”

As the semester draws to a close, the Children’s Literature class will be editing and compiling the best imitation pieces into an “Annual,” which will let the class see both how children’s literature has changed over time, and how the individual students have improved their creative writing skills over the course of the class. The class also went to see *Into the Woods*, a musical that combines many of the fairy tales which the class has studied in depth.

Most importantly, the class has been fun. Students read interesting, enjoyable stories, and then discuss exactly what it is that draws children (and parents) to these tales. “Taking Dr. England’s children’s literature class has made me remember all those wonderful stories that got me into reading in the first place,” said Alsup.
Book Review: *Acts of God* by Ted Steinberg

By: Billy Mahoney

The opening line of a special report by *Time* magazine on Katrina reads: “The most important thing to remember about the drowning of New Orleans is that it wasn’t a natural Disaster. It was a man-made disaster, created by lousy engineering, misplaced priorities and pork barrel politics,” lending credence to the old adage that “If you aren’t angry, you aren’t paying attention.” If you still think that Hurricane Katrina was a natural catastrophe, *Acts of God* by Ted Steinberg might convince you that it was in fact a human catastrophe caused by groups who have an economic investment in poor planning practices.

Here's the short and dirty on how it worked in New Orleans. When the French colonized New Orleans the city wasn't below sea-level because rivers build up land as they wind and flow downstream, endowing the French with natural earthen levees which could protect against flooding. They also enjoyed 20 more miles of wetland and cypress swamp between them and the Gulf than do the modern day saints. 100 yards of cypress can reduce wave energy by 95 percent and wetlands are naturally expert at mitigating floods. Wetland protection was and is the best storm and flood control plan for New Orleans.

When water meets concrete at dams, the soils carried from upstream settle, and when the water is released it is devoid of this floating soil, halting the land building process downriver. Without land accretion, and with the marsh-destroying effects of saltwater intrusion (caused by inland shipping channels to the gulf), wetlands and swamps disappear, and with them the natural storm surge and flood protection which allowed the city’s establishment. Building shipping channels and dams is the work of the Army Corps of Engineers (from now on the Corps). The projects create many jobs and may have good intentions, but are often designed too quickly, turning free and effective natural storm protection into costly and ineffective storm protection. Many devices designed to protect against flooding actually made the effects of hurricane Katrina much worse. Most notorious is the Mississippi Gulf Outlet canal, which resulted in the leveling of the Ninth Ward.

Before 1927 the Corps was building flood control structures along the Mississippi River. In 1927 New Orleans was nearly destroyed by a flood which overpowered the levees, canals and dams. The response of Congress was to give the Corps control of the entire river and its tributaries, ushering in an age of boosterism where localities would find any way they could to get the Corps to bring projects, money and work into their town; often times resulting in quick and shoddy engineering and the placement of flood control structures in places where they were viable neither from an economic nor a safety standpoint. New Orleans was pounded again in 1965 by Hurricane Betsy, and this again caused a stream of funding for new destructive flood protection projects.

Katrina was a weak category 2 hurricane, and it didn’t even pass over New Orleans. A lot of people died, a lot of people donated money to the Red Cross, a lot of people spent time working for projects like Habitat for Humanity, and taxpayers certainly paid too. Few people went to jail for the destruction that occurred. Many more should have.

Steinberg’s *Acts of God* is a history of how the U.S. Office of Housing and Urban Development, politicians, insurance agencies and the Corps (to name a few groups) have been consistently responsible for an increase in the level of destruction caused by natural occurrences. It guides you through a ‘how to’ on avoiding responsibility for these increasing levels of destruction—and make money while doing it. The gist of it is that it has been sufficient for the responsible parties to label these man-made disasters, such as annual (predictable) floods, hurricanes, tornados and earthquakes as ‘acts of God,’ or in modern times, ‘natural disasters.’ The next step is to motivate the workforce, rebuild infrastructure and watch it happen again.

Steinberg also explains that during relief efforts certain parties systematically make it easier for the rich to receive relief than the poor. He examines how it is that after seeing these patterns time and again our culture is no closer to changing the prevailing institutions which perpetuate them. When reading *Acts of God* it is infuriating to see how many times taxpayer money has been spent on faulty levees, canals, dams, etc, and to then realize that in the rebuilding of Katrina money will be spent the same way, except the structures will be larger, costlier and more damaging to the environmental ecosystems which should be protecting The Big Easy. This has been a very watered-down explanation of some of the issues at hand in rebuilding New Orleans. For a fuller understanding of why the rebuilding of New Orleans is very likely to be a failure check out *Acts of God.*

Arsenic and Old Lace
By Lauren Friedman

After a two-hour bus ride, students were happy to arrive at the Center Stage in Baltimore. On the itinerary were a quick bite to eat and then a performance of *Arsenic and Old Lace*, a play by Joseph Kesselring. The play follows a pair of elderly ladies (who end up as murderers) and their nephews. As anyone who has seen the movie could tell you, the play is a dramatic comedy, emphasis on the comedy. Just as expected, the audience was laughing the entire time.

The actors and actresses in the play portrayed their roles very well. They each had aspects that were different from the other characters, making them unique and likeable. One character is mentally unstable and thinks himself to be Teddy Roosevelt, and it was made obvious from the first time he came onto the stage. He had a childlike innocence that made the audience identify with him. The other characters were just as lovable.

The show was extremely funny not only in dialogue but also in movement. Aspects of slapstick were applied to the show, as well as other physical actions to make the audience laugh. Dead bodies were in the window seat and were misused at various times. The dialogue contained funny parts, especially since one of the characters, Mortimer, was a theater critic who hated everything he saw. This led to many laughs because we were hearing him bash actors while acting in a play.

Everyone really seemed to enjoy the show. Anyone who gets the chance to see *Arsenic and Old Lace* should definitely take advantage of the opportunity. If you do not get the chance, rent the movie version. Sure, it’s black and white, but it is still hilarious.
Yeehaw! Honors Students Go To Denver
By Kiernan Waters

On the morning of November 1, barely awake in the hours following tricks and treats, Drs. Morrison and Long, Zachary Haney, Jeremy Riffle and I headed west for the National Collegiate Honors Council 2007 Conference. We would be presenting a panel on last spring’s Honors class about the 1994 Rwandan genocide and the benefits of team-teaching a course that involved many disciplines.

Held in Denver, the 42nd NCHC is the largest conference for Honors programs across the country. Deans, professors, advisors and students come to exchange knowledge and advice on keeping a thriving Honors community, different teaching styles and individual interests ranging from bacteria growth in the Magdelina Bay to Kosovo. “Creative Tensions, Challenging Environments” was this year’s theme.

The first challenge we faced from the environment was the high altitude and dry air of Denver, which is beautiful, with 140 miles of mountains visible from the city. We meandered the 16th Street Mall outside our hotel, retracing the steps of Kerouac and Ginsberg. 16th Street is closed to all but pedestrians and a free shuttle and lined with Denver’s best chocolate, Moroccan food, turquoise jewelry and Nepalese treasures. This summer, Denver will be the host for the Democratic National Convention.

Off the mall, the Hyatt Hotel was the location for the NCHC Conference. Each day from sunrise to sunset the Hyatt was bustling with Honors students. Poster sessions, master classes, general sessions, student research panels and panel presentations were held simultaneously with people coming and going from one to the next, trying to absorb as much as possible for the short duration of the event. Walking around, I was able to enter into conversations about Ginsberg, Bush’s abortion policies, the Bell Witch of Tennessee and many other thesis topics. Each individual showed great passion for his or her presentation and dedication to his or her education. Whether one was a writer or a biologist, all were accepted and well respected.

After two conference-filled days, the five of us, relaxed after giving our wonderful and well-received presentation, left the Mile High City for something even higher. We headed for what surrounded the city, the Rocky Mountains. Dr. Morrison rapped along with Tupac as the rental car climbed the steep roads that gave way to breathtaking views. Snow-covered peaks and miles of Aspen trees swayed in the wind. For miles there were no signs of human interference with nature. We passed old gold mining towns and stopped for lunch at 2004’s Best Restaurant Above 8,000 Feet, an Indian and Nepalese all-you-can-eat buffet in Nederland, where “there’s a dog in every Subaru.” We drove on, passing the hotel made famous by the film The Shining, finally reaching Rocky Mountain National Park. Not half a mile in we stopped to photograph, and convinced Dr. Long not to run after, a herd of elk. Being so lucky upon our arrival, Dr. Morrison got our hopes up for the sight of a bear. We climbed peaks, searched scenic overlooks and walked the paths by Bear Lake, but were unsuccessful.

Next year’s NCHC will be held in San Antonio, Texas, in late October. The theme will be “Crossing Frontiers” and it is guaranteed to be an educational and interesting trip.
Attention Alumni!

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