

# THE HONORA

VOLUME 26, ISSUE 2

FALL SEMESTER 2009

## VSU CONNECTS WITH INTERNATIONAL DEBATES

BY: MATT SCHMIDT



During the summer of 2008 several Valdosta State University Honors Program students participated in a study abroad trip to China. While in China these students had the opportunity to take part in an international debate. The University Systems of Georgia debaters included Valdosta State University's own Jenny St. Aubin, Corey Hart, and Matthew Schmidt, all of whom are in the Honors Program. Georgia State's Quan Tat, and David Galban from Kennesaw State University, were also selected. The four debaters stunned the crowd with an amazing performance as the fifth member alternate, Galban, worked tirelessly on research and knew the jobs of the other four along with every other part of the debate inside and out.

In the words of Jenny St. Aubin, "It was an amazing experience, to be able to debate against the best debaters in Zhengzhou University. I have never been in a formal debate, so of course I was extremely nervous, but the students and staff made sure we felt at ease so we could just have fun with

the debate. Both teams did great, and I am so honored to have participated in such an event while studying abroad!"

The American debate team was led by an experienced debate team leader, Dr. Tom Preston of Gainesville State College. His work was cut out for him considering the four contestants of his team possessed no in competition experience. Dr. Preston had this to say about the debate:

"This debate was one of my most challenging, unexpected, and fulfilling coaching experiences. The efforts of all five USG debaters made it that way, and that over 20 years of coaching, I had never seen so much learned in the course of five days. Coaching the debate was the last thing I had planned to do on the study abroad, but it ended up being one of my most excellent experiences, thanks mainly to the students involved. A framed picture of all the debaters from both teams is still displayed prominently in my office."



American and Chinese Debaters Unite

### RECOGNITION

**Dr. Ofelia Nikolova**  
Honors Program Director

**Mrs. Jane Robinson**  
Program Secretary

**Jessica Dickerson**  
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## BONJOUR DE GRENOBLE

BY JAY PROSSER

Bonjour de Grenoble...Hello from Grenoble. My name is Jay Prosser, a member of the Honors Program and the President of the Honors Student Association from 2008-2009. I have the great fortune to be studying in Grenoble, France this year thanks to my connections from within the Program and the close relationship with the Office of International Programs.

The experience has already been dramatically different than anything I would have experienced at home, simply because of the nature of the university I am attending and the city in which I am living. Classes on French language, culture, and the methodology of the French university system provide a varied academic schedule that keeps me speaking the language and

learning how to blend into the culture. And what a culture!

Most importantly however, the program places me in direct contact with French and other international students. We are able to swap stories, recipes, and recommendations. And I have even met a few students that have expressed an interest in studying in the US. Of course, I recommended Valdosta State!

I can honestly say that I would never have had the nerve or the mindset I needed to take this trip, let alone thrive had I not joined the Honors Program. My heartfelt thanks goes out to Dr. Nikolova, the Program, and all those who support it. Thank you.



## A CHANGE IN PERSPECTIVE

BY JAKE NEWSOME



*"It's an experience that teaches you not only about foreign cultures, but your own as well."*



Last August I boarded a plane and embarked on a journey that, in the end, led me to seven countries, introduced me to people from all corners of the world, and allowed me to become fully emerged in a culture different from my own. My destination was Marburg, Germany, where I was to study for one year at Philipps-Universität Marburg, the oldest Protestant university in the world.

I've now been back in America and at Valdosta State for three months – time enough to look back and recognize the importance of my decision to study abroad. As a history major focusing on German history, I was ecstatic to be able to visit places that I had previously only read about, and my time spent at the 480 year old university gave me something that I had long since desired: a *German* perspective on German history.

Studying abroad is something that every student should consider. Whether it's a year or semester long exchange through a program like ISEP, or a month long summer program with an organization such as the European Council, studying abroad gives students a unique chance to see the world, a chance which is usually severely limited

once we graduate into the "real world." It's an experience that teaches you not only about foreign cultures, but about your own as well. The only way to truly understand your country and culture is to step back and look at it from the outside. So, contact VSU's Center for International Programs, seize the opportunity of studying abroad, and get out and see the world. You won't regret it.



## FALL 2009 COLLOQUIUM

BY JESSICA DICKERSON

The annual Honors Program Colloquium was held on Friday, August 14, 2009 at VSU's University Center. Over 100 incoming Honors freshmen were in attendance, along with the Honors Student Association board members, staff and faculty of the Honors Program, Dr. Richards, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and the keynote speaker, Dr. Brad Bergstrom.

As everyone arrived, the afternoon started off with a delicious

southern lunch and welcome from Dean Richards and Dr. Nikolova. In his keynote address, Dr. Bergstrom talked about current threats to the environment and our responsibility for a sustainable lifestyle. Immediately after lunch, the students split up in four groups each led by a faculty member and had a great time discussing the summer reading "Stuff: The Secret Life of Everyday Things" by John C. Ryan and Alan Durning. After the discussion, all

students participated in truly entertaining team-building activities and had a lot of fun.



## PIZZA WITH A PROFESSOR

BY HELEN BURKETT



On October 8, 2009, Reade Hall, the Honors Residence Hall, hosted "Pizza with a Professor." The professor selected for this first occasion was Dr. Jim Hill, founder of the Valdosta State University Honors Program. Honors students of all levels came together to enjoy pizza and fellowship with both Dr.

Hill, and Dr. Nikolova. Dr. Hill is one of the most popular professors in the Honors Department, so it was no wonder such a large number of students turned out to hear him tell stories of the beginnings of the Honors Program. We foresee this event continuing to have a large turnout each semester.

## HSA HAUNTED HOUSE

BY MICHAEL HOLMAN

Preparations for 2009's Honors Haunted House began in late August, with several meetings being held simply for ideas on how to best scare our "guests" in a timely and efficient manner. After several more meetings, construction of the Haunted House began in later September. Little by little, the Honors House was transformed into "Rolling Meadows: Honors Psychiatric Institute." Under the direction of Michael Holman, psychotic clowns, insane butchers, zombie doctors, and terrifying patients stalked and screeched and horrified our guests night after night. Many of our visitors ran from the premises screaming in terror!

The Haunted House took place October 29<sup>th</sup>-October 31<sup>st</sup> from 8pm until 11pm. Admission was \$3, with concessions such as warm cider, candied apples, candies, baked goods, and other treats sold at the ticket booth. Everyone involved in the Haunted House worked incredibly hard to make sure it was a success, and all of their hard work paid off! After three nights of terrifying our guests (and earning quite a reputation around campus), the 2009 Honors Haunted House raised over \$900 in profits!



*"The Honors Haunted House raised more than \$900 in profits."*

## NEW HONORS PROFESSORS

## DR. JANICE ODOM

Hi, I am Dr. Janice Odom. I went back to graduate school midlife, in 1998, after a long career as a management trainer and organizational development consultant and got my PhD in Communication Studies from the University of Iowa.

I am trained in both Departments of English and Communication and

have taught in both. My interests are in visual rhetoric, rhetorical theory and criticism, feminist theory and criticism, and psychoanalytic theory and criticism.

I have truly enjoyed working with my Honors students in a Visual Rhetoric class. They are engaged, enthusiastic, and good readers of vis-

ual artifacts. The small class size facilitates student engagement, and the fact that so many of my students actually participate in the conversation about the images we have been looking at has been very rewarding for me as a teacher. I would love to work with Honors students again.



*"My favorite thing about teaching Honors so far is the creativity of my students..."*

## DR. MAREN CLEGG-HYER

My name is Maren Clegg Hyer, and I'm happy to be teaching in the Honors Program this year, my second at Valdosta State University. I have my PhD in English from the University of Toronto and specialize in medieval studies. I have taught at the university level for sixteen years.

My favorite thing about teaching

Honors so far is the creativity of my students' projects in our Honors World Literature class. We get to do more interesting work than in a larger class and get to know one another better, and I'm enjoying that. As and Honors graduate myself, I know what an added bonus an honors experience can be.

## REBECCA GASKINS

I am a lecturer with an M.A. in English Literature with an emphasis in Medieval Studies.

My experience with my honors class was one of the best of my career. The students are highly motivated and have lively, thought provoking

discussions. I have honestly dreaded the end of the semester because I would have to relinquish these students to another teacher. Because the students were more advanced, I was able to push the envelope with the writing topics I gave

to them and the format of the material I presented.

Many times, we had to end our class in the middle of a great discussion, and some of the students actually groaned in disapproval. I found myself feeling the same way.

*"The students are highly motivated and have lively, thought provoking discussions."*

GET INVOLVED WITH HONORS  
TUTOR AT S.L. MASON



Interested in helping the youth of our nation? In making a difference in the life of a child? In having a great time? Then try tutoring at S. L. Mason Elementary! Tutoring here is a great way to help a child and have a good time. All that is needed is for you to contact the assistant principal, Mrs. Chappuis, with the day you would like to visit, what time you can arrive, and how long you can stay. She will then match you up with a student who needs help in one of their classes. Please contact here at [chappuis@gocats.org](mailto:chappuis@gocats.org). She is looking forward to another great year with tutors!

JOIN S.T.R.E.N.G.T.H  
BY JENNIFER WEST

The new organization S.T.R.E.N.G.T.H. stands for Students to Roadblock, End, and Nullify Global Trafficking of Humans. It has been formed in response to the growing international phenomenon of human trafficking. Currently, there are an estimated 800,000 people held in slavery around the world, 200,000 of those are in the United States alone. The creators of S.T.R.E.N.G.T.H feel that our generation

is the future of policy making, so we are the ones who can abolish this travesty.

The members of S.T.R.E.N.G.T.H will participate in awareness campaigns, fundraising projects, and other activities to engage and inform everyone on the VSU campus about our cause. We want to educate people on how to identify human trafficking in action and give a voice to every victim.

*“There are 800,000 people held in slavery around the world, 200,000 in the US alone...”*

STUDY IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Looking for an experience of a lifetime? Then study abroad in the Czech Republic! While there, you will take an international studies class and can take up to two psychology courses. Not only will you be taking class, but field excursions are planned to help with under-

standing the material. Visits to Prague, Czech Republic, Krakow, Poland, and Vienna, Austria are planned. There is also a free weekend in which you can visit one of the surrounding countries if you would like (I recommend Budapest, Hungary)! If you have any other questions,

you may contact myself at [kmmorrison@valdosta.edu](mailto:kmmorrison@valdosta.edu).



## HSA WANTS YOU!

Benefits of joining HSA include numerous opportunities to be involved in community service and social events. For more information look for VSU's Honors Student Association on facebook and check out their website.



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## SPRING 2010 EVENTS

- **CHOCOLATE DAY**

The annual chocolate day will be held February 9th. Anyone interested in bringing a chocolate creation should contact Mrs. Robinson. See contact information above.

- **BARTRAM AWARD**

Applications are due February 12th. Please see the VSU Honors *website* for more details.

- **BAILEY SCHOLARSHIP**

<http://www.valdosta.edu/honors/baileyscholarship.shtml>

- **GEORGIA COLLEGIATE HONORS COUNCIL**

February 26 and 27, 2010 at Georgia College and State University in Milledgeville, GA. Abstracts are due to Dr. Nikolova by January 27th through email submission. More information can be found at the following website: [www.maconstate.edu/gchc.info.aspx](http://www.maconstate.edu/gchc.info.aspx)

- **SOUTHERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE**

March 25-27 in Greenville, SC. Abstracts are due to Dr. Nikolova by January 27th through email submission. More information can be found at the following website: [www.srhconline.org/](http://www.srhconline.org/)

- **PIZZA WITH A PROFESSOR**

Check out [www.valdosta.edu/honors](http://www.valdosta.edu/honors) for information to come soon!

- **HSA ACTIVITIES**

Be on the lookout for many fun and exciting activities throughout the semester!

- **SYMPOSIUM FOR UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH**

April 15th-16th at Valdosta State University. Abstracts are due on March 3rd. See the *website* for more details.

- **SPRING RECOGNITION CEREMONY**

April 20th at 7pm in the UC Theater. The ceremony will celebrate Honors student achievements, scholarship recipients, and the graduating seniors.