

# VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM

# THE HONORA

VOLUME 23, ISSUE 1

FALL 2007

## From the Director's Desk

*Dr. Nikolova*



*Dr. Ofelia Nikolova*

This year we are publishing our newsletter a little later because of change of web-master (read about it in a separate article). We have so much to report, though, we hope it will make up for the delay. The academic year is already in full swing and so is the Honors Program! So many events took place in August - the Freshman Colloquium, the Happening, the Convocation, all with record attendance, it is hard to believe we could squeeze them all into just three weeks. September was a busy month for the HSA - they organized tutoring at a local elementary school, movie nights, participation in the flag football tournament, and much more. A few

weeks ago, on October 4, we held an Open House, which welcomed an unprecedented number of prospective students and many current Honors students who came to help out. It feels as if we have been constantly busy organizing activities and in the process, we got so well acquainted, one couldn't tell that some of us have been around for just two months!

Each fall semester is a very special time for one group of students: the students who join our Program. This year, the Honors Program at VSU accepted 111 freshman students, 15 transfer students, and so far 25 students following our Open House. Congratulations to all of you for joining a program, which has carried the banner of excellence on campus for more than 30 years! We count on you to maintain this tradition and take it to new heights.

Our returning students have shown leadership and dedication in the years past. They are back this year determined more than ever to make the Honors Program not only a community of learners, but a true family for us all. The HSA has wonderful plans for community service, social gatherings, sports, and travel. We will all work together to prepare for hosting a truly exciting event - the meeting of Honors students from all over the state at the 2009 GCHC conference here at VSU.

Let us wish ourselves a very successful and fulfilling academic year! We have been up to a great start. Let us keep up the good work!

## Recognition:

**Dr. Ofelia Nikolova**  
*Honors Program Director*

**Rebecca Thorn**  
*Student Assistant,  
Webmaster, Editor-in-Chief*

**Mrs. Jane Robinson**  
*Program Secretary*

**Honors 2006-2007  
Executive Officers:**  
*President: Jessica Thomas  
Vice President: Jake Newsome  
Secretary: Elizabeth Barwick  
Treasurer: Tim Malone*

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

From The Director	1
VSU ACES	2
Open House	3
2007 Convocation	3
ACES in New York	3
Spotlight On	4
Honors Home	5
Farewell	5
Announcements	5

## Valdosta State University is Laying Down its ACES

*Jake Newsome, HSA Vice President*

Already, this semester has been a busy one for the Honors Student Association – or as we like to think of ourselves, Valdosta State’s ACES (Autonomous Coalition of Exceptional Scholars). We kicked off this school year with the Freshman Colloquium, discussing this year’s book, *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini. Shortly following that, we had record attendance at the Fall Convocation where Dr. Jay Rickman of the History Department was our Keynote Speaker.



*record attendance for fall convocation*

We have established a tutoring partnership with S.L. Mason Elementary School, in which several HSA members go once, or even twice, a week and help out for an hour in a classroom. I know that both the teachers and students are enjoying that. HSA also helped out Jessica Thomas, HSA President, by helping to put on a regional track meet here in Valdosta.

This Halloween, HSA is going “Trick-or-Treating for Cans.” We’ll be walking around – in full costume, no doubt – collecting canned goods to donate to a local cause. Speaking of charitable actions, the ACES plan to extend their impact internationally later this semester or early next semester. We have in the works a plan to help out a small Mayan village in the rainforests of southern Belize. We’ll be sending shipments of clothes and

school books down to Blue Creek village, the site for VSU’s Anthropology Field School. It’s also possible, though not certain, that we’ll be receiving some homemade Mayan crafts and jewelry to sell on campus in order to help out the Mayan women of the village. It’s going to be a fun project and many of the students cannot wait to start.

The ACES have another chance to shine coming up in February 2008: representing Valdosta State University at the annual Georgia Collegiate Honors Council conference (what a mouthful!). This year’s GCHC conference will be held at Kennesaw State University, which means another long road trip. We already have several VSU Honors students signed up and ready to present their interesting papers. And as many know (or may not know), thanks to our wonderful Honors Director, Valdosta State University will be hosting the 2009 Georgia Collegiate Honors Council conference! The Honors Program and HSA are gearing up and excited to plan such a historic event.

But, HSA is not all work and no play. We’ve taken full advantage of our Honors House and hosted a couple of Movie Nights – and what is a movie night without pizza?! And Ricky Patel has been leading HSA’s flag football team through some fun (and interesting) games.

Just think, all of this happened in only two months! But, HSA is not slowing down; we have a lot more in store for our ACES. I’d like to quickly thank those ACES who came out and helped with this year’s Open House; it was a great success. Dr. Nikolova, our Director, also deserves our gratitude for standing at the helm of this program and holding it together. And, as always, thanks to Mrs. Jane Robinson, the Honors Program Secretary. She keeps the program running smoothly (how else do you think our Priority Registration gets taken care of?) We’d also like to thank her for her ‘need’ to bake! She always has goodies baked for us – and who could forget the wonderful breakfast she cooked for us earlier this semester – pancakes, waffles, sausage, and eggs – it doesn’t get any better!

So, while it has been busy, it looks like the great start to a great year!



*Jake Newsome and Eli Wiesel  
in New York*

## Honors Program Holds an Open House

*Ashlie Braswell, New Webmater to the Honors Program*

Several hundred eligible students were invited to attend the Open House at at the new Honors House. Over one hundred of them signed up and seventy actually came and explored the beautiful house as well as the exciting possibility of joining the Honors Program. Many volunteers from the Honors Student Association and the Honors Program were there to help the new students get an inside look into what being an Honors student was about. The majority of the people that attened this event were very interested in finding out more about the many opportunities available to them through the Honors Program and HSA. Approximately twenty-five put in their application to join the program during the course of the event.

If you are interested in looking into what the Honors Program or the HSA can do for you, please visit our website or stop by the Honors House. Applications available in both locations.

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## Honors Convocation

*Ashlie Braswell and Lani Hollingsworth*



*Dr. Jay Rickman*

This year's convocation was a great success! The keynote speaker, Dr. Dr. Jay Rickman gave a very enlightening speech entitled, "Conflict and Cooperation in American-Japanese Diplomatic History: My Intellectual Journey." Dr. Rickman discussed World War Two and the major impact that event had on his life. Many say that it only takes a spark for some students to find the object of study that will continue with them for the rest of their lives. With some children, being around one great teacher inspires them to pursue a lifetime career in teaching. For Dr. Rickman being exposed to the history behind the Japanese involvement in World War Two was that spark.

He discussed with the audience that once he heard the story of Pearl Harbor, he wanted to hear more. The simple question of "Why?" sparked an entire career. His talk was fascinating to hear. Pre and post World War Two Japan, and how those time periods impact Japan even into the twenty-first century, were the major topics in his speech.

The other aspect of the event that made it a success was the amount of participation from the Valdosta State Community. It was the largest turn out that the Honors Program has seen yet. So, a big thank you to those who attended and participated: Dr. Louis Levy, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Linda Calendrillo, Dean of the College of Arts and Science, Dr. Ofelia Nikolova, and many HSA volunteers. You all made the success of the program possible.

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## VSU Students in New York

*Jake Newsome, HSA Vice President*

This past semester (April 2007), two of Valdosta State's ACES traveled to New York City and got the chance to meet a very honorable man. Author, Holocaust survivor, and Nobel Laureate, Elie Wiesel was giving a lecture at New York's 92<sup>nd</sup> St. Y. Jake Newsome and Travis Christy (who is now attending the U.S. Coast Guard Academy) were able to meet Professor Wiesel after the lecture (See picture on p. 2). Elie Wiesel's award-winning book, *Night* is considered by many to be the most important book written about the Holocaust.

## Spotlight On...

### The Honors Program Welcomes New Professors!

#### **Dr. Lai Orenduff**

“My main area of teaching is Art History, and even though Art History lends itself to an interdisciplinary approach, I thought teaching an Honors class would give me the opportunity to try an even more integrated approach to teaching. By adopting a thematic approach that emphasizes ideals over facts, it is my hope that students will recognize not only the application of these ideals, but also that these ideals are not exclusive to any one discipline of these ideals.

The new Honors House is a nice presence on our campus. My students are bright and have very interesting interpretations to the discussion and written assignments. They challenge me and give me cause to reflect. This is important for professors so that we can grow along with the students.

I find students who take advantage of the Honors classes to be very fortunate in that they have the chance to learn in such a congenial manner. The emphasis is on learning, not memorization. Their horizons will broaden, and they will not only be better students in all their classes, but better future citizens and leaders in any community.”



*Dr. Lai Orenduff*

#### **Dr. Cheri Tillman**

“I usually teach all college freshmen. I have had a few honors students in the past. They always impressed me. When Dr. Nickolova asked if I was interested in teaching an introductory seminar I was very excited. I approached the seminar from a leadership development perspective. I thought it would be a great opportunity to help develop and encourage students to become active in various leadership roles in the VSU community.

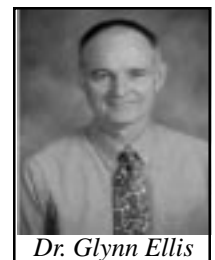
My honors class is outstanding. They always participate in class discussions which makes the class more interesting. In class one day they were talking about how they like to cook. I offered my kitchen and three of the students and myself cooked dinner for the entire class at my home. We had a great time! They have already

asked when we were going to do it again.

To all honors students, you are an exceptional group. I hope that you all get involved with the various honors activities and take an active leadership role on the VSU campus. You all can make a difference!”

#### **Dr. Glynn Ellis**

I received my Ph.D from Florida State University. I am a retired army officer (Lieutenant Colonel). This is my first year at VSU. I got involved with the Honors program at the last minute when someone else had to drop out. I have enjoyed it immensely and I am very impressed with the students’ interests, participation, and their quick grasp of international concepts and issues. I hope that I get to teach future honors courses, or at least the same one again.



*Dr. Glynn Ellis*



*Dr. Cheri Tillman and Family*

## The Honors House is a Home

*Ashlie Braswell*



*Honors House*

To many, the new Honors House may just another building on the beautiful campus of Valdosta State University. However, to some, it is a home. Though some buildings have a very stiff and academic ambience, the Honors House has a very familiar and comfortable atmosphere. In order to create

this kind of sentiment, many events, such as chocolate days or the occasional breakfast, are held at the house. Many decorations are but on display to celebrate holidays or just to make people feel at home. Many students that attend Valdosta State University are far away from home. So, the Honors Program strives to bring the intimacy and comfort of home to all of its students.

## Honors Program Thanks Rebecca Thorn for Two Years of Dedicated Work

*Dr. Nikolova*



*Rebecca and Sookie*

After two years with us, our publisher Rebecca Thorn is leaving her job as webmaster for the Honors Program. She has taken up the position of a full time Assistant Manager for the PacSun store in the Valdosta Mall. While working for the Program, Rebecca was in charge of maintaining our webpage and putting

together our newsletter, the *Honora*. She also wrote many of the articles in the *Honora* and took most of the pictures we published. In the meantime, Rebecca managed to complete the Honors Program's requirements and to obtain the Honors Certificate while maintaining a very high GPA. She was awarded the prestigious Hugh C. Bailey Family Scholarship last spring. We want to thank her for all her dedicated work and for her excellent academic achievements!

We are going to miss you, Rebecca! Your smile and your sunny disposition brightened up our office. We wish you the best of luck in your new position and we hope that you will keep in touch.



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***Honors Program -  
Dedication To Distinction***

## Announcements

Join Honors Students to Trick or Treat  
for Canned Foods on October 31!

Don't Forget to Register - Check Your  
E-Mail for Class Seats Available!

Come By and Take a Look at the  
Honors House Seasonal Decorations!