Three students were selected to participate in the AUDEM Conference (Alliance of Universities for Democracy) in Cluj-Napocca, Romania from November 4-7th, 2007. The conference's purpose was to, "promote the development of democratic values, civil society, civic engagement, and intercultural understanding through international exchange among institutions of higher education,” according to the AUDEM website at www.audem.org.

As part of a student panel, Josh Sliker (Communication Department), Sarah Irvine (Delta College) and I (Honors Program) presented position papers on democratic processes in the college classroom. In addition to the Brockport student delegation, two students from Poland, Paula Matuszak and Marta Zielen, presented their position papers as well.

The experience was nothing short of amazing, as diverse cultures from all around the world met and discussed their positions on democracy. During the conference, students learned from professors, and professors learned from students in turn. In addition to the learning experience, students on the trip made lasting friendships with other students from around the world.

(Continued on page 7)
FROM THE DIRECTOR’S DESK
BY DR. DONNA KOWAL

It has been a great pleasure to serve in the role of Interim-Director of Honors this semester during Dr. O’Brien’s sabbatical leave. The best part of the job has been the opportunity to get to know so many more Honors students from across the disciplines. I have had the privilege of hearing about your successes, your challenges and your future aspirations— I use the word ‘privilege’ because it is indeed an honor to work with such a bright and talented group of students.

In addition to the usual director responsibilities, there are several initiatives I have been working on this semester, including improvements to Honors promotional materials and Honors Contemporary Issues course options. Regarding promotional materials, a three-fold Honors Program brochure is currently in the works and updates to other program literature have been made. Volunteer Honors students working with Dr. Priya Banerjee, the Interim-Associate Director, created an all-new and improved table-top display for us to use during public events. Also, with the help of Dr. Banerjee, we will have an updated and enhanced Honors web site by the end of this semester.

Regarding course offerings, this fall there are two new Honors Contemporary Issue courses: “Life in the Digital Age” (CSC 356.02) taught by Dr. Joan Lucas, and “Culture Change” (ANT 321.02) taught by Dr. Pilapa Esara. In the future, I hope that we can continue to offer new and interesting course options. Remember, if an Honors course topic interests you, consider taking it not only to meet a General Education requirement but as an elective! Also, if you have a suggestion for a future Honors course topic, please don’t hesitate to let us know.

At the close of the spring semester, Dr. O’Brien plans on returning to Brockport and resuming his role of Director. Likewise, I will resume my former role as Associate Director. I look forward to continuing to work on your behalf, and wish the best of luck to our graduating seniors as they embark on a new adventure.

GRADUATION AND THE PROMETHEUS MEDAL
BY DR. DONNA KOWAL

The Honors Graduation Ceremony is held each May on the day before the college-wide Commencement Ceremony. During the ceremony, graduating Honors students are formally presented with the “Prometheus Medal” by their Thesis Director. The thesis is considered the capstone experience of the program not only because it is a major scholarly or creative project, but because it is a unique expression of each student’s intellectual curiosity and the process of producing it involves working closely with a faculty member who shares that curiosity. Therefore, it is most fitting that Honors students are “hooded” with the Prometheus Medal by your Thesis Director upon completion of the Honors Program.

The “Prometheus Medal” was specially designed by Robert Marx, Emeritus Professor of Art. Cast in bronze, the medal weighs over one pound and depicts the face of Prometheus surrounded by beams of light. Inspiration for the medal design came from the Prometheus sculpture featured in front on the Allen Administration Building on New Campus Drive. According to Greek mythology, Prometheus symbolizes the characteristics of intelligence, creativity, and inventiveness.

If you are graduating this May, please remember to let your Honors Thesis Director know so (s)he can plan on attending the ceremony. In the event that s/he is unavailable, Dr. Kowal will present you with the medal. Of course, don’t forget to also invite your family! A reception immediately follows the ceremony. Also, keep in mind that graduating seniors in Honors are expected to attend both the Honors Graduation Ceremony and the College’s general commencement ceremony held the next day on Saturday, May 17.
It’s thesis time once again. The Honors Program involves a capstone experience of the Senior Thesis, a three-credit mandatory course for Honors students. As many of these students embarked on their research journey in Spring 2008, four of them wish to share their experience with you.

Emily Dulanski, an English Major in the concentration of Creative Writing and a Studio Art Minor, is currently working on Ekphrasis poems. Ekphrasis, an art about art, involves poems that are written about, surrounding or related to specific pieces of artwork. Dulanski detailed that since this is a relatively new field, she had quite a bit of trouble finding analytical material on the subject. She said, “… not many authors have written about [Ekphrasis], but instead only write Ekphrasis poems themselves.” She has been to some museums in New York City to view many pieces firsthand, which helped her gain a better understanding of this artwork.

Steven Begy is busy in the field of number theory, with an unsolved mathematics problem known as Lehmer’s Totient Conjecture. The problem has apparently remained unsolved for over 80 years! As a result, one of Begy’s hiccups with his thesis lies in actually solving the problem. He also had to learn LaTeX, a program that “encourages authors not to worry too much about the appearance of their documents but to concentrate on getting the right content.” However, Begy has found immense satisfaction in the possibility of getting this article published in a Mathematics journal.

Alicia Capparelli, a health science major graduating in May 2008, is currently investigating relationships between alcohol and nutritional health. She is focusing on the impact of alcohol expenditure on the average student’s calorie intake and nutrient absorption. Capparelli says that her lack of time to spend on writing her thesis paper has so far been her greatest challenge. On the other hand, she is very proud that her original paper involves her own research and effort. She sincerely hopes that Brockport students will benefit from her thesis through “an inside look at how drinking can affect their nutritional health.”

Cassandra Hayes, a junior Nursing Major, has focused her attention on oocyte donation, oocytes typically being female human eggs. Hayes detailed that her research covers the procedures involved, the criteria for donor eligibility, as well as a reasoned exposition of why today’s fertility practices require oocytes. She notes that the development and distribution of a survey amongst a diverse group of young women and then analyzing the data were the most difficult parts of her Honors thesis. This drawback, however, has been offset for Hayes by her opportunity to work closely with Dr. Joanne (Jody) Stevens, her thesis advisor. Hayes believes the knowledge she has gained from the research will profoundly assist her in her nursing career.

Submitted by Emily Dulanski, English Major

Hand-cranked dysphoria and
Creating clockwork jaws,
Their pitiful pieces of sputtering mechanized voices
In that empty room, scratching all the way to my hometown,
“Hello, Buffalo, Buff-a-stuff-a-Buffalo,
Scrape us off the edges of your
Absent-steel-plant, grinding twilight twit-ay-light!”
Choking on their own tongues,
The twisted appoggiatura in their unresolved chord of twangs and fizzles
Spills over into the mirror below,
The peal and echo resolute in lapped-up watercolor.
Vibrating gears pedal their clamped wire legs around,
An oscillation of an ostensible haze, and all but they are deaf again.
“Hello, Buffalo, Buff-a-stuff-a-Buffalo,
Trickle down to our wheezing counterbalance
And wrap your metal hands-and-dand-san-ands
Around this unrealistic s-s-s-soun-sound…”

Submitted by Emily Dulanski, English Major

“Hand-cranked dysphoria and
Creating clockwork jaws,
Their pitiful pieces of sputtering mechanized voices
In that empty room, scratching all the way to my hometown,
“Hello, Buffalo, Buff-a-stuff-a-Buffalo,
Scrape us off the edges of your
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Around this unrealistic s-s-s-soun-sound…”

SUBMITTED BY EMILY DULANSKI, ENGLISH MAJOR
THOUGHTS TO CONSIDER FOR STUDYING ABROAD
BY MELISSA BRODERICK, ENGLISH MAJOR

To those members of the Honors Program who are interested in the study abroad program that The College at Brockport offers, I commend you. It is very important to seek out new and inevitably life changing experiences, no matter how unnerving the process may be. I made all the preparations to study at The University of Maynooth in Ireland for this spring semester and after all of the work and plans I put into this venture, after two weeks of being there, I came to the strong realization that it was not the right place for me to be at the time. I was confronted with the fact that I had many notions about the culture and an expectation about the experience as a whole which were simply unfounded and unrealistic. Because I want others who embark on this adventure to have a fulfilling time, here are a few considerations for those of you who are interested to either dismiss or embrace, but either way, consider yourselves informed.

First, I recommend students to formulate a list of expectations that you have for your experience abroad. If you see the theme of an interest in cultural diversity, do not choose a place which has a similar society to the U.S. Do your homework! Does it seem as though the country and school you intend to visit is not all that different from Brockport, NY? You may want to seek out an environment which will be more exotic and challenging to adapt to.

Next, if your list is mainly comprised of places you want to see and countries you want to go to, remember that you are studying abroad. This involves paying tuition and attending classes and doing homework. If your key interest is getting out and seeing lots of sights and even delving more into your chosen country’s culture (apart from the college culture, which is almost universal) then really ask yourself if studying abroad is the route you want to take. If you’re like I was, you may feel like studying abroad in college is your one chance at seeing the world, but I found that putting myself in a college setting, I was limiting my ability to have time to travel and also the cost of college takes a big bite out of the funds which you could be using for the sole purpose of traveling.

Finally, go with a friend. Just the fact that you want to pull up your roots and make yourself the “foreigner” and pretty much relearn how to live shows that you are an independent and driven person. You don’t need to do it alone. I found that I really would’ve benefited by having a comrade especially toward the beginning of the endeavor because you are not necessarily going to make friends immediately and having someone to talk to while you are jetlagged and the rest of the country is asleep would come in handy.

I do not regret going to Ireland. I learned a lot about myself and about the things I really care about. I do not regret coming home. It taught me a great deal about staying true to myself. The easier thing would have been to stay. The harder thing was to admit that after all the effort and money I put out, the wiser course for me to take was to come back. Realizing and acting on this does not make me a failure. I feel that I was a success because I went. Please be willing to consider other paths when you realize that your dreams and goals are changing. Don’t necessarily stick with a plan for the sole reason of sticking to your plan. Be willing to change. It doesn’t matter what anyone else thinks is right for you.

CASSIDY J. BALL MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP
BY STEPHANIE CUMMINGS, BROADCASTING MAJOR

Throughout the spring semester, the Honors Program, Department of Business, Scholarship Office, and Division of Advancement joined together to offer unique bookmarks in memory of Cassidy J. Ball. Cassidy has been deeply missed by all, as he was an active member in each of these programs. All of the proceeds from these bookmarks contributed to a memorial scholarship established in his memory.

A Memorial Dinner also took place on April 22nd for Cassidy. Over 100 guests attended in order to celebrate, reflect, and give donations for our missed student, son, leader, and friend.

Photo submitted by Melissa Broderick
Relay for Life is an important event devoted to raising money and awareness for finding a cure for cancer. Colleges Against Cancer President (and Honors Club Senior Representative), Alissa Chaney, and Vice President Kayla Callahan have agreed to answer a few questions regarding their club positions, responsibilities, and passions to find a cure for cancer.

**What do your responsibilities include?**

**Chaney:** I am the overall planner of the event. I have chairs of different committees and I make sure that all of the necessary objectives are being accomplished. I also fill in where I'm needed, which meant that last semester I was entertainment chair and logistics chair. This semester I'm assisting with corporate sponsorship and fundraising.

**Callahan:** We have weekly meetings to plan activities, set goals, and concentrate on Relay, our biggest event. I also set up our promotional table and sit there a couple times a month to educate students and promote Relay and cancer awareness. Last semester, I got to travel to Texas to attend the National Colleges Against Cancer Conference! I’m also always recruiting members.

**How much time do you spend weekly with Colleges against Cancer and Relay for Life?**

**Chaney:** I spend about 10 hours a week with Colleges Against Cancer and Relay planning.

**Callahan:** We have weekly meetings to plan activities, set goals, and concentrate on Relay, our biggest event. I also set up our promotional table and sit there a couple times a month to educate students and promote Relay and cancer awareness. Last semester, I got to travel to Texas to attend the National Colleges Against Cancer Conference! I’m also always recruiting members.

**How did you become so involved with Colleges against Cancer and promoting awareness?**

**Chaney:** I became involved with Relay for Life as a high school sophomore and have been involved with everyday Relay that has taken place at SUNY Brockport. Initially, I just thought it was a fun event for a great cause. Since then, it has become much more personal as I have met so many fabulous cancer survivors.

**Callahan:** A few years ago, I suffered through a series of skin cancer. At such a young age, it was a huge wake up call. I knew I survived for a reason, and now I have the opportunity to promote awareness to others.

**What is your favorite part of Relay for Life?**

**Chaney:** I love the Remember Ceremony where we all remember those who have been affected by cancer through luminaries.

**Callahan:** It’s great to see our hard work come together at the Relay. We all have so much fun and get to help others learn about cancer, remember lost loved ones, and honor survivors.

Chaney says that this year, “two bands will be performing at Relay, along with a comedian and the dance team. Also, there are tons of prizes, contests, games, a white elephant auction, and food throughout the night!” The Honors Program has created their own team and is always open for any member who wants to take part in the event. Over 100 participants will take part in the event on April 25th from 6 p.m until April 26th at 6 a.m., collaborated by our very own devoted students with hopes of finding a cure for cancer.
I graduated from Brockport in May 2007 and I am currently a full-time English teacher in a local district. During my time at Brockport, I was a member of the Honors Program and also achieved Alpha Chi honor society membership status. Alpha Chi members are in the top 10% of each class, and do not have to be Honors Program members to be inducted into the society. Here are some things I learned from my experience over the past year.

First, interviewing is a skill, and you will get better at it over time (hopefully, not too much time!). Second, when sitting in a job interview within your chosen field and with an employer you desire, the last thing you want is to be unprepared. Your preparation must be wide and varied because, the truth is, you have no way of knowing what they will ask you.

So, you took the right courses and you got some work experience by volunteering and doing an internship. Great! But so has almost everybody else. However, not everyone will be able to say: “In addition to my other qualifications, please note that I graduated in the Honors Program. I am also a member of Alpha Chi National Honor Society. I volunteered to do community service, completed more challenging coursework, maintained a high grade level, and that I presented a forty page thesis (an Honors Program requirement) that I prepared over the course of two semesters.”

The employer will see that you have an excellent attitude, you seek to be challenged, and you know how to get IT done. And what is IT? IT is whatever they need, and they will intuitively understand that. I found that the positive impact of being able to say this was palpable. It moved the interview forward, and that needs to be your goal. Both the Honors Program and Alpha Chi are excellent ways to stand out from the crowd. I wish you the best of luck, but please remember that luck is preparation meeting opportunity. These are excellent ways to prepare.

**CONGRATULATIONS TO THESE HONORS STUDENTS WHO WERE INDUCTED INTO ALPHA CHI!**
After the conference, the group traveled to the University of Lower Silesia in Wroclaw, Poland, where Marta and Paula attend school. The school and the surrounding city reflect a typical European style city. While at the University, I attended a Spanish class with Paula. It was neat to be able to understand what was happening in class, because classes at the University are taught in Polish. The students at the University were very friendly, and had genuine interest in my political perspectives as an American. The students also showed me the ropes of social life in Wroclaw, and told me that I have a place to stay the next time I am in Poland.

Overall, the entire trip was one of the most enlightening academic experiences I have had at Brockport. I highly recommend the three-week summer study abroad in Poland, “Experiencing the New Europe”, to anyone willing to go. For more information, students can contact the International Education office if they are interested in taking part in this trip in the future.

[An excerpt from Will’s position paper on democratic processes in the classroom is included below.]

The Ideal Democratic Classroom

“Traditional Western democracies have several key components, many of which are based on James Madison’s writings. Without several key components, democracy would cease to exist: voting, participation of citizens (government by the people), majority rule with protected minority rights, and freedom of expression. Therefore, the same democratic values can be transferred to values in a democratic classroom.

A fundamental right in democratic governments is freedom of expression. By ensuring freedom of expression and voting rights, we enable every citizen the ability to be an active participant in their government. This can be applied to the idealistic democratic classroom. Each student would have the right to be heard by their peers and the teacher, allowing for an engaging and philosophic discussion. This would lead to better understanding of a topic. Freedom of expression in an ideal democratic classroom would also include the right to vote on major decisions such as course curriculum, classroom policies, grading scales, etc.

In an idealistic classroom setting, each member of the class would have the ability to form a course curriculum tailored to their needs and interests. In having a curriculum that interests the students, they would be more likely to be engaged in the classroom. For instance, the teacher and the students would vote on the course curriculum based on their academic curiosity and interests. The advice of the teacher would be carefully considered by the students, but in the end, the decision would be up to the majority. Although some may believe this can lead to a tyranny of the majority, individuals have many differing interests, making it impossible to create a faction that wins every vote every time. Therefore, each person in the class would be able have some input in the course curriculum.”

-Will Mitchell
Katie Koestner, founder of Campus Outreach Services, was sexually assaulted by a fellow college student when she was 18 years old. Ms. Koestner is the first survivor to take her story and cause across the country and has since spoken at over 1,000 schools in the United States. She has been featured in *Time Magazine*, on *Larry King Live*, *Oprah*, *CNN*, *Good Morning America*, as well as being the subject of an HBO movie. Further, Katie’s testimony on Capitol Hill was instrumental in the passage of the Campus Sexual Assault Victim’s Bill of Rights into law in 1992. Her program has inspired over one million students with her messages of strength through adversity, and mission to promote respectful relationships. The event was held on April 22 at 8:30 p.m. in the Bronze Room of Edwards.

Honors Improv night was held on April 30th, in Room 119 in the Union from 6-8. This event is sure to be fun for everyone, even if you’ve never taken an acting or improv theater class. The festivities were based around the popular television show “Whose Line Is It Anyway?”. There was plenty of free food and fun for all. Students agreed this was a great way to relieve stress before finals week.

The First Annual Honors Program Reception for graduating seniors took place on April 11th at 4 p.m. The Alumni House hosted Dr. John Halstead, president of the College at Brockport, along with members of his cabinet. Dr. Kenneth O’Brien, director of the Honors Program also joined our celebration as we welcomed him back from his sabbatical. This reception has hopefully begun a tradition that will continue for years to come.

A homemade spaghetti dinner was prepared by the Honors Program Directors! Dr. Kowal and Dr. Banerjee cooked up a special meal to celebrate a semester of hard work.

The Honors Program Newsletter is a publication dedicated to the Honors Program, faculty, students, and alumni. Articles are written by Honors students and are designed to provide information to the Honors community. Content will include a variety of topics, including research, Honors program news and events, student and professor spotlights, experiences, and creative work. For submissions or more information, please contact Stephanie Cummings at scumm1@brockport.edu.