The Promethean: Fall 2010

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The Promethean Wins National Award

By The Promethean Editors

In October, The Promethean received an award for the second-best Student Produced Newsletter from the National Collegiate Honors Council. Justin Jackson attended the NCHC Conference in Kansas City, Missouri with Honors Director Dr. Donna Kowal to accept the award on the behalf of The Promethean staff.

“We are extremely honored to have our newsletter chosen for this award, especially given all of the work we have put into perfecting its layout and content in the past semesters,” said editor Jessica Geraci.

“It’s really rewarding to know that everything we have worked for has paid off in such a positive way,” agreed editor Danielle Barthel. “Having people acknowledge the work we have put into the newsletter, people beyond those in our Honors Program, is humbling.”

“I am proud of The Promethean and everything that we have been able to accomplish,” said editor Justin Jackson. “I especially want to thank Jess and Danielle for their hard work that helped to make this publication so successful. The Honors Program staff have also been extremely supportive and helpful as they guide us each issue.”

The Promethean staff is dedicated to continuing to work as hard as ever to produce interesting, informative, and exciting issues for our readers.
As The College at Brockport celebrates its 175th anniversary, it seems like a fitting time to reflect on the history of our Honors Program. Our Program was founded in 1974, although experimentation with offering Honors courses began in the 1960s with the goal of attracting talented students to Brockport.

The inauguration of our Program reflected a nationwide trend. According to the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC), the earliest forms of Honors education in the United States emerged in the 1920s. By the 1960s, Honors Programs had sprung up across the country. NCHC was established in 1966 to promote and serve the interests of Honors education nationwide, providing support to institutions seeking to develop Honors curricula and leadership opportunities for faculty and students (http://www.nchchonors.org/aboutnchc.shtml).

Honors alumnus Holley S. Domino researched the history of Brockport’s Honors Program for her senior thesis project in 1999 and discovered “a cyclical pattern of successes and failures” that was typical of many Honors Programs. First, our Program got off to a weak start because the idea of offering a special program limited to academically superior students seemed to conflict with the core mission of public higher education—that is, the egalitarian ideal of providing a quality college education to all students. However, opinions about the merits of Honors education evolved over time. Honors Programs are now seen as valuable assets to academic life at public universities. They offer academically talented students the opportunity to pursue a challenging education without having to attend a more expensive private college or university.

Our Program also struggled for many years because of limited administrative and financial support. In 1998, upon careful review of the decline of the Program, the College’s former President Paul Yu appointed a new director and new resources to invigorate the Program. Over the past decade, with a steady population of 375-400 enrolled students, Brockport’s Honors Program has thrived thanks to the ongoing strong support of the College’s administration and faculty—and to the highly motivated and engaged students who join the program each year!

Today, The College at Brockport’s Honors Program is one of the largest and most successful among the State University of New York’s comprehensive colleges. We are one of the few programs that recruit both entering freshmen and transfer students. We also have one of the most developed and longest running peer mentor programs. Looking forward, we will continue to seek opportunities to enhance the student experience in our Program—and work towards writing a new chapter of our history that is as bright as the last decade has been.

I wouldn’t say that I’m a world traveler—yet—but I have visited my fair share of cities. Until recently, I have never felt attached to a city. I have never thought twice about the idea of simply picking up and moving, having no connection to a particular place. However, over the course of my recent one month stay in Wrocław, Poland, I fell in love. I have never had this feeling for Rochester, the city I grew up in. Why is that? How can one person live in a city their entire life and not feel attached to that city, yet stay in another for only a month and become infused with the city and its history? I consider Wrocław my own - the place where I belong.

In Wrocław, it is rare if a building doesn’t have an intricate and long history, filled with stories and legends of the past. Take St. Mary Magdalena church located in the heart of the city. Besides the usual suspects that come with a city that had encountered multiple transfers of power, St. Mary Magdalena is a building that also has a slight claim to fame. There is a bridge that one can walk across for 5 zlotys (roughly $1.50), that connects the two towers that loom above the church. It claims to have the title of the highest bridge in Silesia. It was also said long ago that if a daughter did not obey her mother in her household duties such as cleaning and cooking, she would be taken atop of St. Mary Magdalena and her soul would be forced to clean the bridge for rest of eternity.

Those stories are just one example of the many reasons why I love the city of Wrocław and I hope to one day make it my home.
In the Fall of 2004, I came to the College at Brockport as an international student from Kathmandu, Nepal. I was enrolled in the Honors Program from the start, so the activities became an integral part of my college life. I still remember circling around Hartwell Hall trying to find the right room for the orientation program and upon entering the room, still unsure, I said aloud, “I think I am lost.” Dr. O’Brien, then Director of the Program, responded, “Don’t worry, we all are.” I guess some places are just easy to blend into.

The hearts and minds of those in Honors were definitely the most attractive features of the Program for me. It was great to be among such a diverse group of students and professors who were so supportive and inspiring. I also benefited from my peer mentors who didn’t just provide guidance on academics but also helped me acclimate to college life during my freshman year. I actually landed my first on-campus job through the network provided by my peer mentor.

Honors Program courses were definitely among the most challenging courses that I took in college. Imagine me, an international student who had never been out of his country before, taking Honors Ethnographic Studies during the very first semester with other junior and senior Anthropology students. Oftentimes I wondered whether I was studying the course or the course was studying me. And to top it off, one of the required books for the class was titled “The White Man Will Eat You!” Needless to say, I did come out of the class alive and fully appreciated it.

Honors Professional Ethics class was another personally challenging course with a very diverse student background and engaging classroom discussions. I also remember having to sing a song (twice!) as part of the midterm for Honors Improv Theatre class. And then there was the Honors Senior thesis, the seemingly never-ending venture that I got a chance to present at the National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR) under the direction of my thesis advisor. As dreadful and challenging as the Honors courses may have seemed or been then, I am so grateful they became part of my college experience and I wouldn’t substitute them for anything else.

I am now working as an Analyst Programmer at the University of Rochester. I am also pursuing my MBA as a part-time student at the Simon School of Business. Just as a river starting from a mountain-top is guided through a path by various factors on its way, the Honors Program has definitely been a key element that has shaped the stream of my life. Once in a while I get an opportunity, like writing this article right now, to look back and feel grateful for having been part of the Honors Program. The memories with friends and faculty definitely provided a sense of inspiration and fresh perspective to this sometimes hectic world. I wish all the current Honors Program students very good luck in building their own memories and gaining a rewarding future path.

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Andrew Bara
Teresa Bershawinger
Rachael Bishop
Jennifer Bryant
Kevin Cross
Kimberly Day
Alyssa Hopkins
Justin Jackson
Shane Jakubec
Mary Kohls

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Margaret Krenz
Kent Lester
T. Roz Llewellyn
Amanda Loveless
Brian Lynch
Megan Maloney
Amy Taylor
Megan Walck
Jeffrey Walter
Linda Webber
Ever since I was in the first grade, I have aspired to become a teacher. Having such a powerful impact on young people's lives, along benefitting from positive experiences from inspirational teachers have coupled together to create this lifelong desire of mine to teach. I have been fortunate enough to experience what it is like to have a student learn something you taught them or light up when they know the answer to a question that you went over with them. It is a feeling like none other and it is one that is hard to put into words. It makes me smile and solidifies the fact that I know that this is what I want to do for the rest of my life.

This summer, I participated in three different teaching experiences that helped me to develop further as both an educator and a student. Each time I taught I learned something more about myself and education as a whole.

During July, I volunteered at School 52 in the Rochester City School District for their summer reading program. I was responsible for teaching reading to children from Kindergarten to second grade, whether it be through one-on-one reading, literacy games, or other techniques to help instill in them a love for reading. I was able to work with children from all different backgrounds and all different learning styles, each with a story to tell and different life experiences. This program taught me how to improvise while teaching, whether it be getting the kids to spell out the names of all of their animal Silly Bandz or drawing three of their vocabulary words together into a monster. The connection that forms between a student and teacher is such a powerful one, and it was sad to see my month with the little readers come to an end.

This summer was the second summer of Picasso’s Posse, Jackson Studio of Fine Arts. This is a personal business that I opened in Summer 2009 where students, ranging from ages 8 to 68, can take art classes to learn to draw, paint, or sculpt. With the help of my former employer and mentor Susan Deacon, owner of ‘A Splash of Color Art Studio,’ I opened Picasso’s Posse fully equipped with a range of art supplies and students, all eager to learn. This experience taught me how to successfully manage my own business, as well as how to work with students from all different age groups and learning styles. Something you do with one student may not work with another. Different ages learn at different speeds. I was able to discover all of this through Picasso’s Posse and can’t wait to open up for our third summer of operation.

Finally, I was named St. John the Evangelist Church’s Vacation Bible School Director this summer, a huge responsibility that I quickly learned would take up a majority of my summer. Our theme was the “High Seas Expedition,” and it was full of sailor hats, fish, pirate boats, and more. I was responsible for hiring faculty, administrative duties, evaluating curriculum and teaching, decorating, ordering curriculum and supplies, staff development, and the safety and well-being of approximately 100 students grades Pre-K to 5 along with 50 volunteers. This tremendous experience is one that I will never forget and offered me a view from a different end of education: the administrative end. Each day, I met with all the teachers to go over what went well and what needed to be improved.

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I had to learn to accept criticism and make positive use of it. I also increased my public speaking skills tremendously: after dancing, flying like parrots, rowing in boat races, and getting soaked in water by preschoolers, I am perfectly comfortable in front of any crowd. Despite all the work and planning, I would do it again a million times over and have already begun planning for Summer 2011’s “PandaMania” theme. A parent sent me a letter weeks after VBS ended stating, “I cried when VBS ended because it is so heart-warming to know people who care so very much about what they do and want to share it with everyone, especially children.” This is why I chose education and love doing what I do. When you can make such a powerful impact on someone’s life, it makes it all worth while.

Each teaching experience was completely different than the last and offered me an opportunity to see education from all different angles: from a teacher, a student, and an administrator. Whatever your passion may be, whether education, medicine, or writing, pursue it with all your strength and take advantage of every opportunity you can. The rewards will be endless and the experience will take you far.

Visit our website at: [www.picassosposse.webs.com](http://www.picassosposse.webs.com)!

“Whatever your passion may be, whether it be education, medicine, or writing, pursue it with all your strength and take advantage of every opportunity you can.”

~Justin Jackson

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Picasso’s Posse’s first annual student art exhibition.

Honors Club hosted “Improv Night” with Susan Hopkins where students played fun improv and icebreaker games.
On October 2, the Honors Freshmen took a trip to the Geva Theater in Rochester to see the play ‘Amadeus,’ a story about the life and death of Wolfgang Mozart through the eyes of his enemy Antonio Salieri. Before the play, we attended a discussion about the history of the play with one of the actors, Robert Rutland, who played Baron van Swieten.

The play itself offered a surprising and humorous look at Mozart. After being told my whole life what a genius Mozart was, it’s surprising to watch a play that shows him in a completely different light. Jim Poulos, who played Mozart, did an amazing job portraying Mozart as a good humored, though vulgar, young man who did not give the immediate impression of genius. Laura Friffith, playing Mozart’s wife Constanze Weber Mozart, contributed to the play, with hilarity, and strongly played a smaller role.

Brent Harris, who took a more serious role as Antonio Salieri, the narrator of the story, gave a passionate performance, clearly expressing his character’s outrage at Mozart’s behavior and also jealousy of his talent. Throughout the play, he manages to manipulate Mozart, yet still somehow remains likable to the audience. This is true even at the end where it is clear he has caused Mozart’s unsuccessful career, the loss of his family, and ultimately contributed to Mozart’s madness. The play was a success overall, with a strong cast and an intriguing, comical, and dramatic story. Some criticism I would give the play is the length and the weak music selection. At times, the story dragged and it seemed that some scenes could have been cut or shortened. As for the music, it was very limited and poorly recorded versions of the songs. Despite this, I would recommend the play to anybody interested in Mozart or music in general. The trip was a great learning experience and a lot of fun.

“After being told my whole life what a genius Mozart was, it’s surprising to watch a play that shows him in a completely different light.”
~Devan Quinn
I’ve always had the plan set. Graduate from high school, Genesee Community College for two years, Brockport after that. What I didn’t plan for was work, bills, and paying for gas. My name is Jennifer Cassidy and I am a Junior Transfer Student at The College at Brockport this year. Preparing for Brockport was an adventure in itself. Applications, campus visits, parking passes, financial aid, and scheduling classes ruled my life for the better part of three months. Finally getting to school and actually being able to attend classes on the first day was like Christmas to me.

I knew going into my first semester at Brockport that it wouldn’t be easy. I live in the town of Alabama and I make the thirty-five minute drive to Brockport every day. I also work twenty to twenty-five hours each week at Tops Markets in Batavia. So to say the least, I’m a busy girl. When I attended GCC from 2008 to 2009, I played softball for the Lady Cougars, which helped me quickly make friends. I made the tough decision to hang up my cleats this year in order to focus on my studies and work. Not playing softball has made me realize how important it is to get involved at school in order to make friends. I only knew a few people at Brockport when I came here, and in order to meet more, I had to put myself out there. The Honors Program will hopefully help me do that in the future.

I chose Brockport for a number of reasons. I’ve always known that I wanted to be a teacher, and I’ve also always known that Brockport has a great education program. Everyone I talked to about Brockport only had good things to say about it. I never heard a negative thing about the faculty and staff, the classes, and definitely not about the food. I knew I couldn’t afford to live on or off campus in the town of Brockport, so I decided I would stay at home with my parents, and make the long haul everyday. Coming to Brockport only validated my opinions about the school. The teachers are exceptional. They are always available to meet with students if they have any questions. My classes are outstanding. I’m an English major so I’m always reading something for one of my classes or writing essays. The classes are intellectually stimulating, yet manageable.

I knew that there were a lot of great things about Brockport, but there were some things I wasn’t expecting. I never knew the Honors Program existed until this past summer. I’m so glad I joined and I hope to get more and more involved. The number of computers and computer labs also surprised me. I spend a lot of time in the Writing Computer Lab in Hartwell Hall and I would be lost without it. It is right across the hall from my classes, so I can just pop in there whenever I need to print something or check my e-mail. I had heard that the teachers at Brockport were amazing. Each of my teachers are available no matter what I need. All I need to do is e-mail them, set up an appointment, or see them after class and everything is squared away.

There were very few things I wasn’t prepared for when coming to Brockport this semester. I thought I had everything figured out and I would be successful right off the bat. Wrong. The very first day of classes I almost had a breakdown due to parking. Parking is an evil that I was not prepared for at all. I am rarely, if ever, late for class and I was late to my very first class at Brockport. As the weeks went by, I noticed that there was a lot more intellectual pressure at Brockport than at GCC. I was used to being one of the most outspoken people in class who always had a take on a topic or idea. Almost immediately, I noticed that I was no longer a standout and that a great number of my classmates were just like me. I felt like I wasn’t as smart as everyone else and I caught myself wondering a few times, “What am I doing here?”. Thankfully, I became more comfortable as the semester went on, and I now realize that everyone is in the same boat as me.

Next spring will be a defining semester for me. I will be starting Phase 2 of the Childhood Inclusive Program. This means I will be doing in-class observation with elementary students. Juggling classes, work, and my observation hours will really put me to the test and determine whether or not I can handle it all at once. As of right now I’m confident that I will be successful. I know that with the support of my teachers and my advisor, everything will work out for the best.
### Pasta
By Tomas Bavington

Oh blade of pasta stuck on the table,  
How noble and proud you once were  
When growing in the sun wild and free  
With only insects, weather and God himself  
To disturb your peace.

And yet one day the sun was blocked  
By a mechanical and roaring beast,  
Which billowed with smoke and tore its rage  
Right through you and your brother wheat.

Cut from your past, your body broken  
Only then were you finally released  
And emptied within a hall of hell  
With contraptions of metal and steel.

Durum, Einkorn, Emmer and Spelt  
The bran, the chaff, the husk  
Both wholegrain, quarter and half  
For all parts a machine to match.

Then wrapped in plastic, delivered for miles  
You meet your second bright lit home  
But no sun shines and no wind blows  
And the end coming is gruesome more.

The journey for pasta and bread alike  
Meets at the humans’ homes.  
Most are digested by acid while others  
Get lost, ignored or go off.

But do not pity the pasta my friends,  
As some details cannot be disclosed  
To how pasta is digested, ignored or thrown  
And take it from me… finds its way back home.

### Charcoal Still-Life
By Justin Jackson

Fog can roll like a lightning punch across your face.  
It’s there in an instant, clouding your path, blocking your mind.  
Sun will burn it off but you know it may return.
**Man**

By Johnny LaCourt

We are men, and nothing else. The same.
Backbones, brains, and many thoughts.
What we do and what we cause is the only change.
So accept the likeness, accept the pack,
accept the fact,
That you, no better than anyone still has the chance
to overcome,
And prove to all that a single son can love like no other one.

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**Self-Portrait**, By Elise Micale

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**Your Life**, By Amber Karpie

Your story’s been untold,
Pages to glue and fold,
Swept beneath troubled feet,
Secrets sworn from underneath,

Your pain’s been ignored,
Like it’s all happened before,
Sadness covered by neglect,
Depression’s a shame always kept,

Your love’s been buried,
In your grave and carried,
To places for those who are forgiving,
Left only for dead and not for living,

Your life’s been secretive,
Like a murderer left to life,
They never forget but always know,
It’s not too selfish to let yourself go.

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**Ceramics**, By Natalie Thompson
The Honors Program Newsletter is an award-winning 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 Justin Jackson at jjack4@brockport.edu.

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Prometheus sculpture on cover created by Arno Breker.

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