

Areté

Newsletter of The Honors School

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From Birch to Beechwood: The Honors School Finds a New Home

By Katelyn Nawoyski

The Honors School has recently made a move from its previous home in Birch Hall to its current location in Beechwood Hall for the 2009-2010 school year. The move took place to accommodate more honors students who requested honors housing.

The move was not an easy one. After the decision was made at the end of the Spring 2009 semester, the planning began. The former first floor, head Resident Assistant apartment in Beechwood was dismantled: walls were knocked down, glass windows were put up, and desks replaced the bunks. The Honors School Office was built.

Interim Honors School Dean Dr. William Mitchell said, "It was a mess...we thought it couldn't be done." But with extensive help from Facilities Management, the project was completed.

Although honors sophomore Kyle Reinhardt believes Beechwood is a great location for the Honors School, offering residents the chance to get to know more people, he feels "Birch fostered a bit of a tighter community" among honors residents. Honors first-year student Carolyn Taylor said, "I love the environment in Beechwood. We live with people we take classes with so we're always there to help each other out."

And what exactly are the benefits of the new location? Not only does Beechwood have a greater capacity to allow more freshmen honors housing, but it also offers more space to returning honors sophomores. In addition, it allotted space to transfer students which created a unique mixture of residents.

The Honors Office is conveniently located directly inside the front doors of the hall, easily accessible to all honors students - resident or commuter. The lobby also houses a computer lab with nine computers and a printer for 24-hour use by Beechwood residents and commuting honors students. In Birch, this computer lab was in the Honors Office and was, therefore, only accessible during office hours.

One of the favorite new additions to the Honors School is Beechwood's spacious basement which plays home to the Honors School's basement lounge. It contains tables and chairs for studying, couches, a TV and DVD player, dart boards, and a mini-fridge, making it the perfect relaxation spot for study breaks.

However, one of the most popular reasons to visit the basement is the infamous ping-pong table. First year students Aziz Mama and Matthew-Donald Sangster play ping-pong a few times a week and Sangster feels "it's one of the

How Can Commuters Get Involved?

By Emily Steeber

INVITATION TO JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL

Not everyone is aware that students may join the Honors School even if they did not come into Honors in their first semester. If you have a 3.5 or better GPA after completing 12 credits at Monmouth University, and you are interested in more information about joining a tailored curriculum to suit your needs, please contact the Honors School Office at 732-263-5308.

It can sometimes be difficult for Honors commuter students to feel like a part of the Monmouth University student community as well as a member of the Honors School family. Luckily, there are many ways in which Honors School commuters can feel involved and right at home in Beechwood Hall.

The Honors School has designated part of a parking lot near Beechwood Hall exclusively for commuter students. Lot 2, located to the right of the honors building near the Health Center, has about eight parking spots open for all Honors School commuters with parking decals. These parking spots make it convenient to stop over in Beechwood to hang out with friends, study in the lounge, or drop in to say hello to Dr. Mitchell. Honors commuter parking decals for Lot 2 are available at the Monmouth University Police Department and must be displayed if a student intends to park in Lot 2.

Overnight parking passes are also available to all commuter students. If a student wishes to stay anywhere on campus or leave their car at MU overnight, he or she must obtain an overnight parking pass from the Monmouth University Police Department.

Another way for Honors commuter students to feel welcome in Beechwood Hall is by using the new Honors lounge in the basement of the building. The lounge contains a refrigerator, TV, DVD player, ping pong table, white board, and dart boards, as well as a chess set and various other games. During normal mailroom hours (8:30 am-3:30 pm), the door to the lounge is unlocked and all Honors students may access the room. After 3:30 pm, the mailroom door will be locked and students must use a key to enter. Any Honors commuter student wishing to obtain a key to the lounge must contact the Honors School Office with a written request including your name, cell phone number, address, and student ID number. Once approved, keys are available to be picked up at the Office of Residential Life. Failure to return an Honors lounge key will result in a \$50 replacement fee.

All Honors students should feel welcome and comfortable in Beechwood Hall, and commuter students are no exception. In order for all students to feel at home, the Honors school urges all commuter students to get involved. For more information on how to obtain an Honors commuter parking decal or an overnight pass, contact MUPD at 732-571-3467. To find out how to get a key for the Honors lounge in the basement of Beechwood Hall, please contact Reenie Menditto at 732-263-5308, or via email at imenditt@monmouth.edu.



Beechwood Hall social lounge



Dr. Mitchell admiring the Honors School's new home



Beechwood Hall academic lounge

From Birch to Beechwood...(continued from page 1)

more fun things to do here in Beechwood.” The table is always in use providing healthy competition and extreme fun to Beechwood residents.

And to top it off, the basement has recently become home to Zumba classes with Dean Mitchell. Zumba is a dance workout class growing in popularity. Dean Mitchell has worked to create a community in Beechwood for his residents. He decided to bring Zumba to the Honors School to do just that. He aims at giving students the opportunity to create networks and make friends outside of the classroom. He said, “Zumba dance is just one way to do so. And besides, when else would any of you get to see my knobby knees?”

Beyond all these perks specific to Beechwood, the Honors School continued to offer resources and assistance to all honors students. The Honors School also treated their students to a “Welcome to the Honors School” barbecue and a “Welcome Back” party after winter break. Rachel Werner, a first-year Honors student, said “the best part about the parties was seeing other [honors] freshman that don’t live in Beechwood.” Having the chance to socialize with honors upperclassman was beneficial to the first year students as well.

Because of the move to Beechwood Hall, the Honors school can now and in the future offer housing to the many incoming first year students. However, Dean Mitchell does not want to lose the sense of openness and intimacy the honors staff had with its students. He encourages students to continue stopping by the office to say “hello!”

“I love the environment in Beechwood. We live with people we take classes with so we’re always there to help each other out”
-Carolyn Taylor



“Clad in purple tie-dye, the building’s battle color, the team marched out to the battlefield ready for the competition.”



Team Beechwood competes in pie-eating contest

Beechwood Dominates in Campus “Battle”

By Katelyn Nawoyski

The move to Beechwood started a good year for the honors students. Each year, Monmouth University’s Residence Hall Association hosts a “Battle of the Buildings” competition. It is an event in which each residence hall competes in physical and mental events, such as Ultimate Frisbee, Mad Gab, volleyball, and even a pie-eating contest. By ranking in these events, buildings earned points towards their team totals. The building with the most points at the end of the day is crowned winner.

And who came out on top this year? Beechwood, of course. Clad in purple tie-dye, the building’s battle color, the team marched out to the battlefield ready for the competition. Although Beechwood did not take the lead early on with volleyball or the obstacle course, they came back and swept the field in Ultimate Frisbee and

racked up points in Mad Gab, Taboo, and the pie-eating contest as well. Within the last couple of events, Beechwood knocked out fellow competitors Pinewood and Willow Halls to take the lead. Beechwood students were able to maintain their lead and steal the competition.

The newbies to the Honors School definitely led their team into battle, composing the majority of Beechwood’s competitors. Sophomore honors resident Kyle Reinhardt claimed the win “definitely wouldn’t have happened without the freshmen” and everyone was happy for the win.

First-year student Kelsey Jorgensen believed Beechwood’s win showed the rest of the campus that “we’re smart and we’re athletic”, a triumphant combination. Let’s just say, Beechwood brought fierce competition this year and plans to continue the tradition of winning.



(left to right) Meghan Johnson, Gillian Shaw, Becca O'Malley, and Perissa Betkoski in the Botanical Gardens of Sydney



Blue Mountains of Australia



Shaw in Flock Hill, New Zealand



Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia

Monmouth Honors Student Travels to Australia

By Jenna Intersimone

Gillian Shaw, a second year Honors student majoring in chemistry, is one of the 2% of students in the United States who studied abroad in 2009. Shaw studied at Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia from July 23rd to December 5th 2009.

Shaw's living situation at the University was much like that at any other university in the United States. She lived in an on-campus style housing facility called Macquarie University Village, which contained five bedrooms, each with its own bathroom, and a shared kitchen and living room area. However, one significant difference when compared to living at Monmouth was that Shaw lived with four other study abroad students, each from the United States.

Gillian said that her biggest challenge in studying abroad was making new friends and becoming comfortable in her new environment. "I'm a shy person when I first meet people so I don't usually make friends quickly. I also don't like being alone, though, so I forced myself to make friends, not that it was too difficult. Monmouth paid for my trip to the Blue Mountains where I stayed with random people for a few nights in a row and I got to know the people who I now consider my closest friends," said Gillian. In fact, Shaw says that making new friends was her favorite part of studying abroad. She said that she has made friends from New York, Michigan, Illinois, France, England, and of course, Australia. "They are all really wonderful people," she said. "I love them all and I can't wait to travel the world and visit them again."

This fear of having to meet all new people is a common worry of students looking to study abroad and unfortunately a common reason why students choose to miss out on this valuable experience. Shaw felt scared just like anyone else, but in the end it turned out to be worth it. "I was so nervous!" she said. "I was going to the other side of the world with nobody I knew very well! I was leaving everything I knew behind to go somewhere I had no connections. But I faced my fear and I couldn't be happier that I did."

Another challenge that Gillian faced was trying to fit studying abroad into her busy schedule, since the science curriculum is so rigid. Many people who are not science majors do not have any trouble fitting studying abroad into their schedule, but even for Shaw, it was still well worth it. "I had to take three summer classes in order to go to Australia. But I knew studying abroad was something I personally needed so I was willing to do whatever I could to get there."

In listening to the wide range of activities that Shaw enjoyed while she was at Macquarie University, studying abroad sounds like a four-month adventure. She said that while there she visited the Botanical Gardens, went to night clubs and cruises on the harbor, climbed the Sydney Harbor Bridge, white-water rafted and snorkeled in Cairns, boated through the Daintree Rainforest, toured the South Island of New Zealand, hiked a glacier, and toured the Blue Mountains.

However, what sets studying abroad apart from a "vacation" is the fact that in being in another country for such a long time one really

comes to understand the culture of that country as if one is native to that country. In being in Australia, Shaw came to understand, among other things, the peculiar Australian sense of humor. “They are very cynical and sarcastic but it’s so funny,” she said. “They love to call Americans ‘sepos’ which is short for septic tank. But it’s all in good fun. Call them a rotten criminal and they’re bound to laugh and you could have a ‘mate for life,’ as they say.”

The tuition at Macquarie University was about the same as Monmouth tuition, however there was no meal plan included. In addition to the tuition, Shaw reports that she spent about \$7,000. However, this was all worth it for the valuable life skills that she gained while studying abroad, many of which will help her in her future career and other endeavors. “My newfound independence has already helped me out in more ways than I can count. I also feel more outgoing which is bound to help me in job or graduate interviews in the future,” Gillian said.

And, most importantly, she has gained skills that will help her to be a better and more courageous person. “I feel like I gained a sense of independence. Before I studied abroad, I was always a moment away from somebody I could depend on. I went somewhere where I had no connections and had to make it my own. In accomplishing this, I feel like I can accomplish anything.”

What’s Going On with the Honors Student Council?

By Kimberly Russomanno

Since the fall semester of 2009, cabinet members of the Honors Student Council have been working on several projects to enhance the privileges of honors students. The Honors Student Council is one of the newest student groups at Monmouth University. As this academic year is its first year in existence, its elections were held mid-fall semester.

The first official president of the Honors Student Council is the energetic Kyle Reinhardt. Kyle felt a spark of interest when hearing about the initial meeting of the Honors Student Council. He attended, decided to run for office, and won. Reinhardt already had experience with similar positions; he is the secretary of the Monmouth University’s Outdoors Club. The other hard-working members that join him in the cabinet are fellow honors students Alison Pass (vice president), Jewell Huffman (secretary), and Dharm Patel (treasurer).

Perhaps the biggest challenge of the Honors Student Council in its first year has been establishing itself on campus. In order to gain the privilege of becoming an official campus organization, as well as to gain the respect of other long-established clubs and organizations on campus, it must create a constitution explaining its objectives, goals, and overall mission as a group. So far, the Honors Student Council has a rough outline of its constitution and is continuing to work diligently towards gaining a sense of sovereignty.

Even though the Honors Student Council has been very busy getting its feet on the ground as a new group at Monmouth, members have accomplished exciting things so far this academic year. They are responsible for the creation of the comfortable lounge in the basement of Beechwood Hall. The lounge is a place where honors students can go to study, socialize with their friends, or watch TV. They have also gotten a ping pong table for the lounge.

Some might ask why it is necessary for Monmouth to have an entire Student Council specifically for the Honors School when the university already has a general Student Council. The Honors Student Council addresses concerns that might be held solely by honors students. Kyle commented that “the desires of honors students are different and unique from those of the general student body. Especially now with an entire dorm for honors students in existence, we can use the Honors Student Council as an outlet to work on enhancing the privileges we have been given.” He and Jewell agree that honors students typically experience more stress linked to school work than the typical student and anything that can be done to enhance their campus experiences would be helpful.

The Honors Student Council has not even been a group for an entire academic year yet, but it has already had an impact on improving the university experience of honors students. Its next goal is to paint a vibrant mural in the basement lounge and involve honors students in its creation. Members plan to find an art major in the Honors School to volunteer as a position of authority in the project. Although members of the Honors Student Council are not positive what they want the mural to look like yet, Jewell says that it will “be something representative of the diversity among all the honors students as well as the connection they share.” Hopefully the Honors Student Council will have much success in its endeavors.

“A Midsummer Night’s Dream” at Two River Theater

By Emily Steeber

The Two River Theater Company in Red Bank, along with some help from the California Shakespeare Theater in Berkeley, CA, performed William Shakespeare’s comedy, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, from October 24-November 15, 2009. Students in Professor Douglass and Professor Belinski’s Honors English and Western Civilization cluster took a bus trip to the play during the fall semester, and many other Honors School students attended on their own. The night was filled with songs, dance routines, fairies, romance, and tons of laughs enjoyed by all.

The plot of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* consists of three different stories. The first includes four younger lovers, Hermia, Lysander, Demetrius, and Helena, running off into the woods to escape their oppressive parents, with a few roadblocks thrown in the way. The mischievous fairy, Puck, plays a large role in deterring the lovers’ getaway while creating a majority of the comedy in the play while the fairy king attempts to dupe his wife into giving up a human boy. The third part of *Midsummer* involves some actors (who are in all actuality just a bunch of goofy workmen) trying to put on a play-within-a-play for the duke of Athens and his bride about forbidden love. The main message Shakespeare is trying to get across through each sub-plot of the performance is that love does not always seem as if it will turn out the way people want it to, but it will prevail in the end.

Many people automatically expect a Shakespearean play to be dull and filled with language they can barely decode. Many college students usually tend to avoid the Bard’s work, fearing that their boredom will either put them to sleep or drive them to insanity. The Two River Theater production was quite the contrary. The director, Aaron Posner, threw in a few unexpected twists and turns to the play that made the lively comedy even more enjoyable and hysterical.

As the play began, it was obvious that it was not a traditional performance of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. While the fairies were still dressed up as expected, some characters were dressed in jeans, t-shirts and sneakers rather than the traditional Elizabethan clothing most people expect from a Shakespearean production, which gave the play a more laid back and modern feel to it. Props included a microphone, a backpack, and a remote control dog, all of which added to the modernized feeling. Additionally, the normal set, resembling a forest

where the lovers can chase each other and hide, was done away with. In place of the typical forest scene were a few ladders and pillows in front of a backdrop resembling a quarter pipe, which characters used to jump on and climb up.

In addition to spicing up the costuming and set, Posner also chose to add a few changes in the dialogue, including a variation of lines and throwing in a few songs. By throwing in a few more modern and slang terms into the dialogue (“I totally suck!”) the old Elizabethan feel most theater enthusiasts expect when seeing a Shakespearean play was toned down, making the performance lighter, brighter, and more entertaining to those who do not typically find enjoyment in William Shakespeare’s plays.



Photo Courtesy of T. Charles Erickson of The New York

Before going to sleep in the woods, Lysander began serenading his bride-to-be, Hermia, with Marvin Gaye’s “Let’s Get It On,” incorporating some pop culture into a typically traditional play and making the audience squeal with laughter. Bringing in even more pop culture and adding to the excitement and twist of the production, Bottom, played by the incredibly talented and dynamic Danny Scheie, belts out “I Whistle A Happy Tune” from Rodgers and Hammerstein’s *The King and I*. After what seems like hours of giggles, liveliness, and entertainment, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* ends with a *High School Musical*-esque dance number that took the audience by surprise.

Monmouth University has a partnership with The Two River Theater company which means students are able to get free tickets to incredible performances such as *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. If you are interested in obtaining free tickets or learning more about the theater and what they have to offer, call The Two River Theater Company box office at 732-345-1400 (be sure to let them know that you are Monmouth University student) or log on to www.trtc.org.

The Museum of Jewish Heritage- A Worthwhile Experience

By Samantha Wilson and Lauren Halton



Fanya Gottesfeld Heller

The Museum of Jewish Heritage is a living memorial to those Jewish victims who suffered through the Holocaust. On April 7, 2010, Professor Douglass' Honors Western Civilization class was offered the opportunities to not only tour the museum, but to hear the Holocaust survivor Fanya Gottesfeld Heller speak.

The theme of the museum is to remember and embrace Jewish culture. One of the first pieces you see when walking through the exhibits is a wall broken into six panels with the Hebrew words, "Remember-Never Forget-There is hope for your future."

Each floor of the museum focuses on different aspects of Jewish culture. The first floor is titled "Jewish Life: A Century Ago," and displays pieces explaining different traditions. The importance of family is apparent through such things as family photos, charity boxes, and wedding clothes and pieces. During the tour, docents stressed how Judaism is not a race to be discriminated against, but a religion with its own beliefs and customs. After learning the culture, patrons were shown how Jewish beliefs were used against them in the Holocaust.

The second floor, "The War Against the Jews," exhibits the cruelty executed by Hitler. It shows the rise of the Nazi party and how Hitler used his power to begin the Final Solution. Hitler and Germany blamed those of Jewish descent for the economic depression in Europe. The museum displays a "biology" book published by Germans that proved the Aryans superior over those who are Jewish. After seeing the rise of hatred, patrons were shown the mass murdering. The walls are covered with photos of Jewish people in ghettos and concentration camps; students experienced the true horrors that occurred. The final message of the second floor explains how victims had their own identity. A wall of photos of victims can be matched to their name and short biography, making the museum a true living memorial.

The closing floor, "Jewish Renewal," focuses on Jewish people starting a new life after suffering through the Holocaust. Patrons can observe the involvement of the Jewish culture in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s exhibit. A photo in the exhibit captures a moment when a Jewish girl hugs an African-American boy. Those of Jewish descent want to ensure the world never again sees such a tragedy as the Holocaust.

Included in the third floor is a special exhibit by Chris Schwartz titled, "Traces of Memory-A Contemporary Look at the Jewish Past in Poland." These were "photos of the destroyed Jewish Civilization that once flourished in Poland and an exploration of the commemorative efforts now taking place there." Some of these photos include scenes of the gates of Auschwitz, the aftermath of concentration camps, and portrayals of those who protested against the Nazi party.

The conclusion of the trip was a special speech given by Fanya Gottesfeld Heller. Fanya is a Holocaust survivor and author of *Love in a World of Sorrow*. Professor Douglass' class read her memoirs prior to this trip. One student, Leona Mostowski, commented, "I enjoyed that we got to meet her after reading her book and put a face and personality to the words."

Fanya went further into depth about her struggles during the war, and how she survived through constant hiding. Heller mentions the book *Ordinary People* by Christopher Browning, and explained how she is baffled that common human beings committed such atrocities. Fanya said, "People make choices-you don't have to be a bystander," in a way to prevent history repeating itself. She also talked about that during her entire time in hiding she just wanted to be "normal" again. Once Fanya was liberated, she did not let her hardships suppress her. She earned many degrees and honorary degrees, and she continues to promote education today.

Students found the trip beneficial to their understanding of the Holocaust. Beginning at the first floor of the museum and ending in the classroom with Fanya, patrons learned not only the factual history, but the emotions of individuals involved. The trip was successful in giving those insight into one of the most horrific times in the world's history.



Monmouth students with Fanya Gottesfeld Heller

Alumni Spotlight: Sara Van Ness, Class of 2008

By Anthony Panissidi

Sara Van Ness is someone to admire when it comes to upholding and further cultivating the academic reputation of Monmouth University. Thanks to her hard work and dedication, Van Ness, a former member of the Honors School who attended MU as an undergraduate student from 2004-2008, has already published a book at the young age of 23 and has a promising future ahead of her.

Van Ness graduated in 2008 with a Bachelor's degree in English and Secondary Education. She is currently a second-year graduate student at MU, where she is pursuing a Master's degree in English, which she will obtain in January 2011.

Not surprisingly, Van Ness plans to continue studying even after receiving her M.A. "I plan to pursue a Doctorate's degree in either English or Education. I want to teach on the college level," said Van Ness. "I just love kids, and would love to teach them in a classroom," she said.

As impressive as her future plans sound, Van Ness has already accomplished the great feat of publishing her own book, *Watchmen as Literature: A Critical Study of the Graphic Novel*, which is now available on Amazon.com. Her book analyzes *Watchmen*, the graphic novel released in 1986.

Van Ness has much enthusiasm for what she hopes her book will achieve. She said, "For fans of *Watchmen*, I hope that this book will provide insight on the complexity and profundity of what it is....For scholars and teachers of literature, I hope that this book will give them the opportunity to understand and appreciate the graphic novel form, and to see how literary theory can be applied to a text that is truly on the fringe of literary studies."

It may take just a quick explanation to summarize Van Ness' book, but there was nothing quick about writing and publishing it. The whole process of putting the book together took three years, as Van Ness first read *Watchmen* for an independent study class during the summer after her sophomore year. It did not take long for the novel to captivate her imagination.

"I was drawn into the text by the reality of the characters and setting, the action and suspense of the text, and the beautifully detailed images," she said. "What began as recommended reading material became the focus of my undergraduate thesis, some of my graduate course work, and, eventually, a book-length study."

In order to complete her thesis, Van Ness worked closely with Professor Bright of the Art department and Dr. Garvey, the Dean of the Honors School. When it came to further advancing her thesis so that she may publish it as a book, Van Ness gives much credit to Dr. Stanley Blair of the English department.

"I can honestly say, with one hundred percent assurance, that without Dr. Blair's continued and tireless support, I would never have published. He believed in me and my work even when I was doubtful that a publisher would accept it," said Van Ness.

Returning her praise, Dr. Blair upholds Van Ness' character with what is perhaps the most accurate description of the 23-year-old author thus far.

As a result of Dr. Blair's endless encouragement and Van Ness' tireless work ethic, she can now speak of what it feels like to be a published author at the young age of 23. "It's exciting of course," she said, "but it's also surreal because it doesn't hit you until you're holding the final copy of the book."

Van Ness also offers credible words of wisdom to today's undergraduate students. "Never discount the potential of your work. I never expected to have a book published at 23, but it's possible with the support of friends and family," she said.

Without question, Van Ness' level of success is one that all college students should strive to reach. Through her hard work and dedication, she serves as a role model who is helping MU get recognized as an educational institution that produces students only of the finest quality.

