

Summer 2009

In this issue:

2009 Honors Convocation	1
SHB plans for 2009-10	1
Non-profit group impacts area youth	2
Director's note	2
Capstone student staged, performed in her own play	3
Annual Honors Capstone Conference	4
Honors class of 2009	4

**'08-'09
Capstones
now on display**

Stop by the Honors Center to peruse this year's Capstone projects. You'll find research papers, original novels, music compositions and more. Looking for something in particular? Ask an Honors staff member for help.

How to contact us:

Phone 202-885-6194
 E-mail honors@american.edu
 Walk-in Hurst Hall 206
 American University
 4400 Massachusetts Ave NW
 Washington, DC 20016
 Hours Monday - Friday,
 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
 Online www.american.edu/honors

Innovation and tradition mark 2009 Honors Convocation

The University Honors Program Convocation was held May 8, 2009, in a special setting near campus and was highlighted by a speech given by Honors graduate Abby Horowitz (SOC '09). Abby was selected from the several seniors who competed to be the inaugural Convocation student speaker and delivered a message that will be remembered for years to come.

The University Honors Program Convocation recognizes Honors graduates for their accomplishments and includes a presentation of the Honors medallion that represents their commitment to academic excellence and is a part of graduates' Commencement regalia. Individual achievements – such as the winners and honorable mentions of the Honors Capstone Research Conference – are also noted at the ceremony.

For the more than 200 Honors graduates who attended this year's Convocation, the ceremony continued a tradition started long before they even dreamed of becoming students at American University. For the faculty, staff and guests who'd attended previous ceremonies, it was a new version, but with a nod to the past.

In recent years, Convocation had been held

on the AU quad-rangle or in Bender Arena if it rained. But prior to 2003, Honors actually held its Convocation in the



Abby Horowitz.

Metropolitan Memorial United Methodist Church, near AU's main campus. This year, due to the new Commencement plans that called for a separate ceremony for each school and college, it was decided the Convocation would return to the ceremony's historical site. Judging by the comments from those attending the ceremony, the decision to return the event to its former venue was a definite hit.

Along with mentioning memorable events from her time at AU, Abby Horowitz encouraged her peers to follow advice from former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and "do one thing every day that scares you."

Congratulations to the class of 2009!

High-energy SHB plans for 2009-10

After reflecting on a very successful year, the incoming Student Honors Board (SHB) is energized and preparing for a very exciting upcoming school year.

The eight newly elected members to the 13-member group that acts as a liaison between Honors and its students include both veterans and new SHB members. Returning members Mike Roche (CAS/SIS '10) and Megan Yarbrough (SPA '11) will serve as president and vice-president, while new members Kate Kawalchuk (SPA '12), Aysel Sharifova (KSB '11) and Sam Hagedorn (SPA '12) will act as secretary, treasurer and director of communications, respectively. Veterans Trent Buatte (SIS '11) and Ayal Chen-Zion (CAS '11) and new member Joe Wenner (SIS '12) complete the spring-elected membership. After the fall elections, five more members will join the board. The new election format, introduced with a change

... Continued from Page 1

in the SHB bylaws last spring, will enable current members to lay groundwork for next academic year's activities, allowing SHB to hold events sooner and more frequently.

The new board members are already preparing for a very exciting year. At their first planning meeting, members suggested SHB

work to increase collaboration with Honors 101. To that end, SHB shall work with Honors 101 to hold a barbecue during the Honors 101 kick-off and inform freshmen about SHB events and the fall elections. To help students connect with volunteer organizations, SHB is planning to hold a Community Service Fair during the fall

semester. By showcasing the wide variety of opportunities available to students, the board looks to make a significant contribution to the campus community. Over the course of the coming school year, SHB is planning to host 13 events, including the popular Brain Bowl, Turkey Dinner and Honors Variety Show.

Non-profit group – led by Honors alum – makes life-changing impact on area youth

When Honors alumna Charise Van Liew (SIS '03) completed her independent study with Facilitating Leadership in Youth (FLY) in 2001, she never imagined she would eventually become executive director of the Anacostia-based nonprofit. FLY is a youth leadership and development organization that serves 40 young people from the Anacostia neighborhood in southeast Washington, D.C. FLY began as an AU club founded by Charise and two other AU students and was later incorporated as a nonprofit. In order to ensure the organization's continued success, Charise assumed the full-time position of executive director after her 2003 graduation.

Under Charise's direction, FLY has grown greatly and achieved much. Youth participants join FLY when they are 8 years old and remain members until they graduate from high school and go on to college. So far, all of the organization's participants have headed to college. Considering that about 35 percent of youth from

Anacostia graduate high school, this track record is quite impressive. One FLY high school senior, who has been in the program since its inception, is hoping to attend AU in the fall, and Charise looks forward to the day she can attend an Honors Award Ceremony where FLY alums are recognized.

FLY has definitely not forgotten its AU roots. The original FLY club is still in operation and provides mentors for FLY's after-school mentoring program. FLY's annual summer camp is held at AU and often, AU students serve as FLY camp counselors. Almost all of FLY's current interns are AU students, and all of



Pres. Kerwin spoke at FLY's 5th Anniversary Benefit Gala and is pictured with Candace Hetchler (SIS '08), Zach Schwartz (KSB '11) and Charise Van Liew.

FLY's full-time staff are AU alumni. Without the continued help and support of AU and its students, FLY would not be able to provide the support it offers Anacostia youth.

To learn more about Facilitating Leadership in Youth – including how you can get involved as a volunteer – please contact Candace Hetchler (SIS '08) at candace@flyyouth.org.

From Director Michael Mass ...

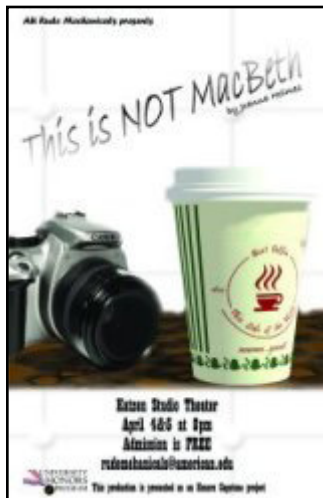
Summer break can be pretty quiet in the Honors Center. There aren't too many students coming in for advising appointments, and even fewer hanging out on the couches or popping by for a cookie or a can of soda. By now, the 2008-2009 school year is behind us, as are all of its Tea Talks, advising sessions, Honors classes and Cake Days. This year was definitely one of change, both in and outside of American University – we elected a new president and experienced a global financial crisis, and AU saw the largest freshman class in its history.

Whether the end of the spring semester signaled the end of your freshman year or your entire college career, I want to offer hearty congratulations to each of you. You have all accomplished fantastic things, some of which have been highlighted in previous issues of this newsletter. You've won national scholarships and awards, landed coveted internships and jobs and have been accepted at graduate and professional schools across this country and the world. And I'm sure that over the summer break, you'll continue on that trajectory. If you are looking for that perfect first job, why not contact our Career Center? If you're in Washington, D.C., this summer, stop by the Honors Center and say "hello." If you're not in town, send an e-mail to honors@american.edu or message me on Facebook.

At the risk of sounding like a teacher on the first day back to high school, I can't wait to hear what you did on your summer vacation!

For her Capstone, Joanna Holmes (CAS '09) staged, performed in her own play

During the spring 2009 semester, AU's Shakespeare performance group, the Rude Mechanicals, staged the first act of an original play, *This Is Not Macbeth*. I've been an active member of the troupe since sophomore year and rarely get stage fright during a performance, but



Promotion for *This Is Not Macbeth*.

this show was different: Almost every minute I wasn't on stage, I was pacing back and forth behind the scenery, radiating tension and freezing every time a silence went on a second too long. "It's going to be fine," one of the other actors kept reassuring me. "It's almost over. And hey, you'll be all done with your Capstone! Finally!"

I've always been the type of person who hates letting other people read her work, or even worse, having to read her own writing in front of the entire class. Consequently, the process of writing and acting in my own play was incredibly nerve-wracking at times. However, it was also incredibly rewarding. I began writing *This Is Not Macbeth* in a playwriting class more than a year ago, and spent the fall 2008 semester reading dozens of plays, trying to figure out what elements and character combinations made a more

compelling story. The two-act play underwent copious re-writes, based both on my own research and the two staged readings held to hone the script into a more directable work. After finalizing a production script, the play officially went into rehearsals.

After the performance, I began putting together a production journal that details the rehearsal process and the balance between a writer's connection with and an actor's detachment from a script, and finalizing the ongoing re-writes of Act II. Even after the performance, there was still a great deal of work to be done before my Capstone was actually finished. Even so, I am incredibly grateful to my Capstone advisor, Professor Caleen Jennings, and the incredibly talented director, cast and crew that made *This Is Not Macbeth* a reality: Seeing my work onstage was an experience I am so thankful to have had.

Annual Honors research conference reflects students' diverse interests, Capstone projects

Of the range of opportunities students have to present research at a formal conference on campus, there is only one that invites undergraduate students from every discipline and every school. This is the annual Honors Capstone Research Conference. Honors seniors who have completed or are finalizing a Capstone are invited to apply to present at this day-long conference. More than 70 students applied to participate this year and were narrowed down to a field of 40 presentations for the April 15 event.

During the conference, participants gave oral presentations and readings from original novels and even performed original compositions on an electronic drum kit integrating recorded polyphonic sound. The mid-day section of the event was dedicated to poster presentations in which 21 students outlined their

individual Capstone projects dealing with research on an array of topics, from the treatment of food in film and the potential of wind power for farm states to the promotion of living wills through state departments of motor vehicles and the value of technology like the online virtual world Second Life to civil-military emergency response. Other topics covered in conference oral and poster presentations included modern warfare tactics, the neurotransmitters of hyperglucemic zebrafish, patterns of undergraduate student plagiarism, capital punishment curriculum design, postmodern religion and Tuareg musical culture.

Nearly 30 AU faculty and administrators generously served as the judges for the

Honors Capstone Research Conference. After difficult deliberations, they chose three oral and three poster presentations to receive the Honors Capstone Research Conference Award. They awarded six more students with an Honorable Mention. The recipients were commended for their excellent work and celebrated at the 2009 Honors Convocation last month.



Carrie Johnson (SPA '09) presents to Prof. Peter Howard.

Congratulations, Honors class of 2009

Caitlin Louise Aber
Marcus Willard Allen
Clare Althea Allenson
Erek H. Alper
Rebecca Aman
Nicole Catherine Anderson
Thomas F. Anderson III
Inna B. Arnaudova
Kiersten M. Batzli
Katie R. Beran
Joseph Avery Berman
Amanda J. Bernardo
Christina G. Bezon
Michal C. Bilick
Bethany F. Biondillo
Mathias J. Bjorkman
Lauren A. Bobay
Alan D. Boswell
Jaclyn L. Boyle
David J. Brisson
Julie Anne Byrnes
Joshua R. Cahan
Miriam Patricia Callahan
Kelsey L. Cambronne
Kylie M. Caporuscio
Tyler Lind Case
Sarah G. Caudill
Christopher M. Chang
Elliot Yu-An Chiu
Jacob Sheung-Kay Choi
Joshua M. Cohen
Jessica Lynn Conrado
Charles Maclaren Corbett
Erwann Richard Couesbot
Lindsay E. Cronin
Megan E. DaGraca
Rose J. Davis
McKayle L. Davison
John William DeBaun
Mariah Ches Dickinson
Victoria Docu
Amy T. Doherty
Allison Marie Doolittle
Megan Jill Edelman
Anthony B. Edwards
Whitney Coleman Enright
Matthew T. Espina
Zachary William Faden
Meghan Elizabeth Falter
Jennifer Eleanor Fantasia

David J. Farber
Meghan Elizabeth Farrar
Laura A. Feldman
Laura Elizabeth Fenwick
Fletcher Anderson Fernau
Eric J. Fillinger
Kellee A. Fitzgerald
Keely Anne Foutch
Erin Rae Frankrone
Amanda Leigh Fulton
Kaylor C. Garcia
Kendra Gogol Garstka
Leah Hope Gates
Laura Victoria Gaylor
Allison Q. Gerhart
Veronica Lenore Gessner
Caroline Lea Gibson
Christina Anjali Gonsalves
Natalie N. Greene
Kent A. Harrel
Curtis Matthew Harris
Carolyn A. Hart
Jennifer M. Harvey
Joshua V. Hattem
William I. Herman
Stanley Chun Wai Ho
Julia Christine Hodgson
Joanna C. Holmes
Abby L. Horowitz
Jeanne Elizabeth Hosler
Xiaoqing Huang
Meredith L. Hughes
Daniel S. Hyman
Raphael Janove
Aly N. Jiwani
Carrie Johnson
Alexander J. Jones
Robin Lea Jones
Jamie T. Kamlet
Julia Kasyuk
James A. Kelley
Molly Catherine Kenney
Michael J. Kerman
Rebecca M. Kern
Kristina D. Khudyakova
Jeremy C. King
Bevin E. Kloepper
Kelly M. Lange
Erin Kelly Lauer
Adrienne K. Lee

Jong Eun Lee
Jessica Erin Leeser
Josh T. Levitz
Claire C. Lunieski
Kristen E. Lyon
Anna K. Madalinska
Valerie J. Mahar
Keysha I. Martinez Roman
Aishah M. Ma'ruf
Stephanie Nicole McDaniel
Erin A. McLaughlin
Ann M. McManaway
Kathleen Diane Mee
Kendal A. Melvin
Althea Mickiewicz
Farley G. Miller
Katlyn M. Miller
Thais Helene Miller
Michael J. Minnick
Catherine E. Morgan
Austin T. Morton
Carla Francesca Muhrer
Anneke Y. Mulder
Mary Aileen Catherine Murphy
Kara D. Newhouse
Sabine Gaele Nguini
Huyen Nguyen
William Bertil Nicholson
Cristen Leah Oehrig
Laura E. O'Friel
Grenye O'Malley
Cara M. O'Shell
Erin L. Owens
Eric Stephen Pajonk
Carley C. Papi
Samantha M. Parsons
Lindsay K. Perlman
Jessica C. Perrigan
Gianna Scott Petito
Stephanie L. Petrides
Emily C. Petro
Robert J. Pettersen
Carolyn Brown Phenicie
Jessica L. Piquet
Holly M. Polish
Rebecca C. Price
Juan Diego Prieto Sanabria
Tejaswini S. Reddi
Andrew K. Robinson
Rachel L. Rosenthal

Hilary M. Ross
Elizabeth A. Royall
Paul Lee Ruffner
Chelsea Nicole Ruggaber
Michael K. Sala
Hamissou Samari
Julie-Anne Savarrit-Cosenza
Andrew J. Scalise
Erin Scanlon
Victoria Schauerhammer
Brittany L. Schell
Eric James Schmidt
Mark R. Schneider
Susan Schneider
David Alan Schultz
Rachel E. Schwager
Maegan L. Scott
Mallory R. Scott
Jacob D. Shelly
Alison Katherine Shott
Alise C. Smith
Angela Kristin Smith
Elizabeth L. Smith
Lauren A. Spink
Stanislava Petrova Staneva
Jacquelyn Alexa Suarez
Katherine Lindsay Suplick
Sabrina Sanam Sussman
Joyprada Swain
Mary K. Swears
Tsuyoshi Takagi
David M. Teslicko Jr.
Kathryn R. Thornborough
Alissa Gail Tombaugh
Alessandra K. Torres
Teresa Tu
Vishal H. Vaidya
Russel James Valvo III
Amy E. Warren
Madalyn K. Wasilczuk
Dayna L. Wells
Margaret Grace White
Andrew Dominick Wolf
Evan D. Wong
Dimitar S. Yordanov
Allison Michelle Young
Stephanie M. Zechmann
Amy Lynn Zeigler
Kun Zhao
Lindsay Zoladz