



honorable mention

An Honors Program Publication

October 18th, 2006



UHP director, John Nelson, and Provost, Michael Hogan, scoop ice-cream for eager honors students.

Acts of birth

by John S. Nelson
Director
University Honors Program

One of the things I teach is political theory; and one of my favorite theorists of politics is Hannah Arendt. It is the centenary of her birth, and the significance of birth for politics was one of her big themes. Gatherings in her honor have been preoccupied this year with Arendt's ideas about political evils. With George Orwell and others, Arendt made the mythos of totalitarianism that has informed the western responses to Nazi Germany and the Holocaust, the USSR and the Cold War, the lies of ideology and propaganda that surpass statecraft, the killing fields of Cambodia, the mar-

tyr-bombers of Islamic radicalism, and more. Even so, the politics of birth are Arendt's most provocative concern; and they bear glad tidings for our University Honors Program.

For Arendt, birth enters politics as free action in the publics composed by the people who collaborate and compete with us. The politics of birth are the politics of beginnings. When we repeat old patterns, argued Arendt, we should be prepared for new departures. When we settle for mere reaction, we should leap past revenge into forgiveness. When we fall into thoughtless habits, we should jump beyond routine into invention. Otherwise we become caught in chains of reaction

that preempt the initiatives able to liberate us from earlier limitations.

Honors are high priorities for Arendt's politics. They acclaim excellence in action within the public arenas that Arendt took to make us most fully human. They give us responsibility for who we become, both as individuals and communities. Recently reborn as the honors program for our whole university, the UHP is acting even more ambitiously than before. Especially this year, it is developing venues for students to learn by doing - in class, research, service, travel, teaching, writing, performing, play and more.

Thus the UHP is giving birth to ICRU (described in the article on page 9).

Last spring, UHP students Mark Kresowik and Lauren McCarthy turned their leadership of the UI Student Government into a university-wide Experiential Learning Council. This fall, the UHP is building on their beginning by hiring Andrew Willard as its Experiential Learning Coordinator. He comes to the University from many years at the Yale School of Law, and his work on public policy connects the academy to larger communities, particularly on matters of environment and human

rights. Willard taught an honors seminar for the UHP last spring, and he recently has become a member of the Executive Board of the University of Iowa Center for Human Rights.

By autumn's end, the UHP also plan to hire an Honors Advising Coordinator. The staff additions come courtesy of the Provost's Office, now the UHP's administrative home for the second year. In the spring, the UHP celebrated contributions from the retiring Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education, Lola Lopes, by presenting her its first Staff Award for Outstanding Campus Support. This fall, the UHP welcomes as her replacement, Tom Rocklin, who earlier created the University of Iowa Center for Teaching.

Also this autumn, the Honors legislative Research Service led by Professor Tom Rice is enjoying a banner first round of drafting policy paper for the State Legislature. Next door on the BHC third floor, the new Honors Satellite Writing Center is meeting so much demand that it immediately doubled its hours by adding Sunday evenings to Monday evenings each week. The new University Honors House in Daum celebrated its beginning with a successful

moving-week reception in the August thanks **(continued on next page)** **(continued from page 1)** to leadership from Lisa Raffensperger. And Scoops for Scholars, the UHP's first-ever ice-cream social, kept Provost Michael Hogan busy serving vanilla due to the energetic organization of Nikki Guarino. (We chocolate fans vow resurgent demand next fall.)

Over the summer, the UHP expanded greatly its orientation for new students. Perhaps as a result, it began the fall

with full complements of students in seven honors seminars for entering students, another five three-semester honors seminars, and many honors sections. As the fall unfolds, the Honors Listserv will be announcing a set of exciting new spring seminars to come. And while we're on the subject of honors seminars, another innovation by month's end is the first annual Honors Commendation Ceremony. It celebrates students who complete at least four honors courses or sections in their first

four semesters at Iowa. Their number continues to grow, and a public jubilee in their honor seems only right.

The start of the 2006-07 academic year is bringing us a wealth of beginnings, with more to come. Each of these births bestows new capacities for learning and doing through the UHP. As Honors Secretary Mary Uhl says, ours is the emerging spirit expressed by Bill Watterson in his final comic-strip panel for feisty Calvin, the adventurous little boy, and his sidekick Hobbes, the sophisticated tiger: "Let's go exploring!"



Participants of University Honors Program Blitz Build pose for a picture, put up siding, and cut siding for the house they helped construct with Habitat for Humanity

UHP students volunteer for Blitz Build

by Mark Hernberg

On September 9th, 13 people armed only with hammers and a will to serve, made a difference. For hours that Saturday afternoon, 11 first-year honors students, UHP student staff member and coordinator for the Volunteering Program Anastasia Bassis and LaShelle Christensen, UHP professional staff member, came together with the Iowa Valley Habitat for Humanity to help build a house in Coralville.

The students and UHP staff members worked with IVHFH on what is called a "Blitz Build": a concentrated effort to build one or more

houses with a swarm of volunteers, usually working in shifts. A national Blitz Build this summer built hundreds of simple, affordable houses for low income families. Like on Extreme Makeover: Home Edition, these houses were all completed in just one week. But unlike the show, which is fueled by millions of dollars and professional homebuilders, Blitz Build uses the 'sweat power' of volunteers who sign up for a shift lasting a minimum of 2-4 hours. In Coralville, the team of volunteers worked to put up siding on the house and clean up inside and around the area. Working with the father of the family that would eventually move

into the house, the team got the chance to get dirty, hammer things, and meet new people, all while helping the community.

Blitz build is just one of the many volunteering opportunities the UHP provides for students. If you'd like to know just how fun and fulfilling it is to give up your time and energy to serve others, then check out some of the upcoming volunteering events you can attend through the UHP.

- Twice a month students go to the Wesley Center (a three minute walk from the Blank Honors Center) and help with the Free Lunch Program. FLP was created almost 25 years ago and

serves, on average, over a hundred lunches a day. The next opportunity to serve is on November 8 from 11am - 1:30pm. Students who volunteer get a chance to prepare and serve the meal.

- Every weekend (until Halloween) students can volunteer to help out at Field of Screams. This will be at night and will typically take a few hours.

- On October 24, there will be an opportunity to volunteer for a Big Brothers, Big Sisters event from 6:30-8pm.

If any of these events sound like something you'd like to participate in, if you want more information, or if you have ideas for future volunteering, contact Anastasia Bassis at honors-volunteering@uiowa.edu.

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Meet the Professional Staff

John Nelson



Position: Director
Years on Staff: One in the UHP, thirty-one in Political Science at Iowa

What do you do for the UHP?

Generate initiatives

Education:

University of Kentucky
 - BA in Philosophy and Political Science
North Carolina at Chapel Hill - PhD in Political Science

Favorite Book:

Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance by Robert M Pirsig

Favorite inspiring quotation:

To go in the dark with a light is to know the light.

To know the dark, go dark. Go without sight, And find that the dark, too, blooms and sings, and is traveled by dark feet and dark wings.

- Wendell Berry

Goals for the UHP:

Create intellectual communities, especially through honors courses

Favorite food in the Honors Center:

Chocolates - Stop for some in 447 BHC

Bob Kirby

Position: Assistant Director and Director of ICRU
Years on Staff: Six



What do you do for the UHP?

Anything needed

Education:

Western Washington State College
Washington State University
University of Washington
University of Virginia

Psychology and biopsychology for BS, MA, and PhD degrees

Favorite Book:

The Naked and the Dead

Favorite inspiring quotation:

"The test of courage comes when we are in the minority. The test of tolerance comes when we are in the majority."

- Ralph W. Sockman

Goals for the UHP:

Leave it a better place than I found it.

Favorite food in the Honors Center:

PEZ (maybe that's not a food).

Sarah Prineas



Position: Scholarship Coordinator and Publications Wrangler
Years on Staff: Three

What do you do for the UHP:

Like Grover, I am many things to many people. Mainly, I run the UHP scholarship program and work with honors students who are applying for major national and international scholarships. I also work with the student staff members responsible for the website, newsletter, and the old Gold and Presiden-

tial scholars. And I write/edit all the UHP publications.

Education:

Carleton - BA
U of Wisconsin-Madison - MA
U of Arizona - PhD in English Literature with a minor in Rhetoric, Composition and the Teaching of English

Favorite inspiring quotation:

"All we wanna do is eat

your brains."
 - Jonathan Coulton

Goals for the UHP:

Take over the universe(ity)!!!

Favorite Book:

See if you can guess. I have the following action figures in my office: Gollum, Legolas, Gimli, and Boromir, and a student-built trebuchet with orc head accessories on my bookshelf.

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Meet the Professional Staff

Lashelle Christensen



Position:
Interim
Coordinator
of Student
Programs
**Years on
Staff:** Two

What do you do for the UHP?

I coordinate extra-curricular programs. That means I help set up and guide the totally awesome programs that the student staff coordinate. Along with making sure there is art on the walls, food in the kitchen, and an open door for students to come talk to me about any sort of thing. Ulti-

mately if the students want it, it is my job to see that we can make it happen. Which means the students that want something - should come talk to me!

Education:

University of Iowa - BA with honors in Psychology
University of Iowa - MS in Epidemiology
Scott Community College - AAS Sign Language Interpreting

Favorite Book:

After having little time to read for pleasure when I was in college, I found that the Harry Potter series could get me lost in that wonderful world of pleasure reading again.

Mary Uhl

Position:
Office Man-
ager
**Years on
Staff:** Four



What do you do for the UHP?

I pay the bills

Education:

Northern Illinois University - BA
Northern Illinois University - MA

Favorite food in the Honors Center:

Any chocolate I can wrest away from Sarah Prineas

Favorite inspiring quotation:

Life is mostly froth and bubble;
Two things stand like stone:
Kindness in another's trouble,
Courage in your own.

- Adam Lindsay Gordon, "Ye Wearie Wayfarer"

Love the UHP? Join the Facebook group "Honors Programs Rock!"

Need help with your writing?

Call the UHP at (319) 335-3220 to set up an appointment for a writing center session.

**Mondays 6pm-8pm
Sundays 7pm-9pm**

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The STUDS of the UHP

Shajia Ahmad

Year: Junior
Major: Journalism and International Studies



Favorite book: *Midnight's Children* by Salman Rushdie
Favorite rainforest animal: Llama

Favorite season: Fall

Favorite Room in the Honors Center: The lactation room on the fourth floor of the women's bathroom

Country you most want to visit: Bangladesh

Least Favorite Food: Grape flavored stuff

Favorite onomatopoeia: Oink

Andrew Carey



Year: Sophomore
Major: Ha ha, good question

Favorite book: *On the Road*

Favorite onomatopoeia: Blam

Favorite season: Season 11 of the Simpsons

Best birthday present: My old, dirty sweatshirt that my dad thought was new and wrapped to give to me because he didn't have anything else

Actor to play you in a movie about your life: Meryl Streep

Favorite food in the Honors Center: Marshmallow Mateys

Anastasia Bassis

Year: Senior
Major: Microbiology



Favorite rainforest animal: Spider monkey

Best birthday present: A smoothie maker (aka blender)

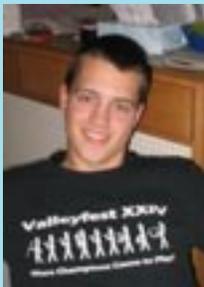
Country you most want to visit: Australia

Favorite book: *Karlson*, a Russian book about a little fat man with a propeller on his back

Favorite Room in the Honors Center: The library. On most nights, it's what death sounds like.

Least Favorite Food: I loathe green beans

Barrett Anderson



Year: Junior
Major: Economics and Political Science

Favorite onomatopoeia: Swish

Favorite food in the Honors Center: Popcorn

Least Favorite Food: Asparagus

Most embarrassing moment: When I hit an old NASA scientist in the crotch with a heavy bag while trying to shake his hand

Actor to play you in a movie about your life: Harrison Ford

Favorite book: *John Adams* by David McCullough

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The STUDS of the UHP

Amy Domeyer

Year: Junior
Major: English, Pre-Medicine



Favorite book: *Pride and Prejudice* or *Great Gatsby*

Favorite onomatopoeia: Whamo

Least Favorite Food: Tuna

Country you most want to visit: Cuba

Favorite food in the Honors Center: Lucky Charms

Favorite season: Summer

Favorite Room in the Honors Center: The reception area - where all the conversation happens

Favorite rainforest animal: Iguana

Nikki Guarino

Year: Senior
Major: Mathematics and English



Favorite onomatopoeia: Yowee!

Least Favorite Food: Olives

Country you most want to visit: Egypt or Japan

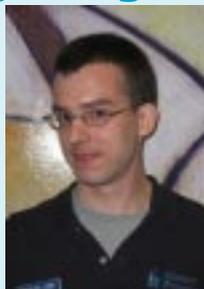
Favorite book: *All the King's Men* by Robert Penn Warren

Favorite food in the Honors Center: Toasty Os and Earl Grey tea

Most embarrassing moment: Crying in front of my advisor the first week of freshman year because I had to drop a class and add a different one

Doug Long

Year: Senior
Major: Psychology and Philosophy



Favorite onomatopoeia: Ah-choo!

Country you most want to visit: Australia

Favorite book: *The Lorax*

Actor to play you in a movie about your life: Woody Allen

Favorite food in the Honors Center: Marshmallow Roos

Favorite Room in the Honors Center: The north end couches are lovely for naps

Favorite rainforest animal: Proboscis monkey

Cody Beckman

Year: Sophomore
Major: Cinema and Asian Languages and Literature



Favorite rainforest animal: My server Daniel, from when I was at Jungle Kingdom in Disney World.

Least Favorite Food: Cauliflower

Favorite food in the Honors Center: Mini spooners

Favorite Room in the Honors Center: The north commons...have you seen the TV?

Favorite onomatopoeia: Kaboom

Favorite season: Baseball because it never ends

Favorite book: *The Prophet* by Kahlil Gibran

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The STUDS of the UHP

Tom Niblock

Year: Senior
Major: Economics and Religious Studies



Favorite food in the Honors Center: Pink lemonade in an official BHC mug with lots of ice cubes

Favorite season: College Football bowl game season

Least Favorite Food: The special food they make for vegetarians at Burge cafeteria

Actor to play you in a movie about your life: Vin Diesel

Most embarrassing moment: Basically every date I've ever been on. It's pretty hard to tell them apart.

Mark Hernberg



Year: Sophomore
Major: English and Physics

Favorite onomatopoeia: Swoosh!

Best birthday present: A triathlon bike

Favorite book: *Ender's Game*

Least Favorite Food: Brussels sprouts

Favorite Room in the Honors Center: Study room in the library - totally quiet and nestled away

Country you most want to visit: Australia

Actor to play you in a movie about your life: The Rock (honestly, would probably be DJ Qualls)

Kat Rokhlin

Year: Sophomore
Major: International Studies



Favorite onomatopoeia: Buzz

Least Favorite Food: Condiments

Favorite book: *Me Talk Pretty One Day*

Best birthday present: A trip to Australia and New Zealand

Favorite food in the Honors Center: Green tea

Favorite rainforest animal: Slow loris

Country you most want to visit: Israel, again

Favorite season: Fall

Laura Savage



Year: Senior
Major: Management and Music

Favorite book: *Where the Wild Things Are*

Country you most want to visit: Czech Republic

Favorite season: Fall

Actor to play you in a movie about your life: Rainbow Bright

Best birthday present: A dance party with lots of good food

Favorite onomatopoeia: Splat

Favorite Room in the Honors Center: The reception area - you get to eyeball everyone who walks around

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The STUDS of the UHP

Jacque Leonard

Year: Junior
Major: Political Science/ International Business Certificate



Favorite book: *Pride and Prejudice* and *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

Actor to play you in a movie about your life: Julia Stiles

Favorite onomatopoeia: Yowza!

Favorite rainforest animal: Jaguar

Favorite food in the Honors Center: Hot chocolate

Best birthday present: A surprise breakfast hosted by my mom in the school parking lot for my 18th birthday

Lisa Raffensperger



Year: Senior
Major: English and Biology

Actor to play you in a movie about your life: Drew Barrymore

Favorite book: *Life of Pi*

Least Favorite Food: Beef Jerky

Favorite Room in the Honors Center: Study Room #2. Have you seen the dry erase board? The biggest and whitest one imaginable.

Country you most want to visit: Spain

Favorite rainforest animal: Tapir

Favorite season: Spring



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ICRU: Research opportunities for undergrads

by Mark Hernberg

Ever wondered if there's more to college than 400-person lectures? Wanted to take college beyond the classroom? Get involved with something hands on and really yourself and learn? Then maybe research is for you. There's no need to wait until you're a graduate student, Bob Kirby and the ICRU want to help you get involved now.

ICRU is the Iowa Center for Research by Undergraduates. Bob Kirby, assistant director of the UHP, is the director of ICRU. He has a strong desire to see undergrads involved in research around the university and across various disciplines. Bob views research as not just something for students studying biology or

chemistry, but something that spans the humanities as well. For example, humanities research might explore the history of choreography and dance. Ultimately he says that "research is a creative process that cuts across all boundaries between sciences, getting creative students together with creative faculty."

In the past, undergrads involved with research would look to the USA (Undergrad Scholar Assistant), a program providing stipends for students doing research projects with faculty, and the IREU (Iowa Research Experience for Undergrads), a program providing stipends and research money for advanced undergraduates working independently. Students were also given the op-



Adam Heiniger, a senior physics and math student, does research in a University of Iowa lab. This year, Heiniger is an applicant for the Gates/Cambridge and Churchill scholarships.

portunity to present their research at SURF (Spring Undergraduate Research Forum). All of these programs have been combined into ICRU.

Kirby described ICRU's role as "connecting students with other students and faculty, advising them about

time management, helping them secure funding, providing opportunities to present their research, and giving advice on how to approach faculty."

For more information about ICRU email ICRU@uiowa.edu or robertkirby@uiowa.edu



The University of Iowa Homecoming Court poses with UI president, Gary Fethke. The homecoming court includes (from left to right): Barrett Anderson, Nikki Guarino, Christine Kotarba, Greg Buehner, Kristi Musser, James Ankrum, Tom Niblock, and Shannon Thomas, who are all honors students.