Honors Peaks In Colorado: The National Honors Conference

John Watts, Honors Senior

I’m really not a morning person. For all intents and purposes, I’ve utterly convinced myself that mornings are unfortunate occurrences that happen to other people. However, on November 6, I made an exception. That morning, I woke up early to board a flight from the Baltimore airport to Denver, Colorado, travelling alongside Codey Fickes and Amanda Schwarz. In Denver we met with Dr. Klein to take part in the National Collegiate Honors Council Conference (NCHC), where we all hoped to learn and connect with students and directors of other Honors Programs from across the country. Amanda, as part of her work in the field of education and her continuing involvement with Reach Out, participated in the poster presentation gallery of the conference. Her poster, entitled “Reaching Out to Integrate Language Arts Education in the Dominican Republic,” prominently displayed to other schools the Honors Program’s international service-learning project. Many of the other posters presented during this time focused on individual research projects, all from a wide variety of fields.

Codey’s primary preoccupation for the conference was learning about Honors living/learning communities on other campuses. As the Resident Assistant in the Honors wing of Presidents Hall, he had the opportunity to attend panels discussing living/learning communities and activities for students to explore. Outside of this, he also served diligently as the scapegoat for when our directions were wrong. Dr. Klein helped organize the conference, and she received The Washington Center Award for Excellence in Experiential Education at the conference. She used her award of $2,000 to fund our students’ participation in the New York field trip, Partners in the Parks, and Reach Out.

For my part, I attended the conference in my capacity as the Editor-in-Chief of this publication. I was invited to be a part of a panel entitled “How to Create an Award-Winning Newsletter.” As last year’s winner of the Print/Student category of the newsletter contest held by the NCHC, Shippensburg University was warmly received, and the panel attractive many inquisitive attendees.

A dashing Editor-in-Chief viewing one of many pieces of public art found in Denver.

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Wandering the West with Partners in the Parks

Sarah Latch, Honors Sophomore

The opportunities that Shippensburg University’s Honors Program have presented me have been bountiful, but one in particular was life changing. I was the lucky recipient of Dr. Klein’s Partners in the Parks Scholarship for 2014, which was only the beginning point of my journey. I chose the Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument as my destination, as I had traveled to the West Coast, but never to the beautiful red-rock area of the southwestern U.S before. I truly had no idea what to expect as I packed my expedition backpack and prepared for my three connecting flights to the tiny airport of St. George, Utah. Perhaps having no expectations is what served me so well, as I was constantly surprised and thrilled as every moment of my experience unfolded.

Partners in the Parks allowed me to meet some remarkable and unique Honors Program students from across the nation. Dr. Matt Nickerson of Southern Utah University led our group, along with a student-intern who graduated as valedictorian from Long Island University- Brooklyn’s Honors Program. Three other girls and I were the student travelers selected to receive Partners in the Parks scholarships from our respective colleges and universities including Ithaca College, Southern Utah University, and Virginia Tech. Meeting students from around the country and spending a week in the wilderness together was a daring experience, but it could not have gone any better. I have never met such open-minded and vibrant people before in my life. Everything my group members contributed challenged me to see the world in a different way, which led to an enhanced experience, for which I am extremely grateful. It is amazing to think that I share some of my greatest memories with people that I only got the chance to know for a week, but yet we will have a lifelong bond because of those memories.

Partners in the Parks opened my eyes to the amazing historical and cultural elements of the Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument, as we learned about the long history of Mormon-Indian conflicts in the area. We traveled south into Arizona from the very most southern point of Utah, stopping at monuments and significant landmarks on our way. One of the most unique experiences I had was attending a Memorial Day tribute at Pipe Springs National Monument, which was conducted by a National Park Service member who is also a member of the Paiute Indian tribe. Every place we visited was rich in history, conflict, and was now being fought for to secure preservation. After spending only a week in the Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument, I am motivated to do what I can to help with the conservation movement there. The many landscapes and archaeological ruins should be preserved for future generations to experience history like I was so lucky to have the chance to do.

I can only attempt to describe the sights of the Grand Canyon in words, as it something that I now firmly believe every person should make a trip to see. Looking over 3,000 feet vertically down into a canyon layered with millions of years of geologic history was an unreal experience. I am thankful that I had the opportunity to experience the Grand Canyon from an authentic perspective in the isolated and remote area of Toroweap, where it was simply the canyon and my Partners in the Parks group—there was nothing unnatural around us. While I took hundreds of photos and have told my stories about my Partners in the Parks experience to anyone who will listen, nothing will ever do the sights, feelings, and people I met justice. The Grand Canyon is a place one must see and feel in order to understand. For anyone who has yet to apply for scholarships and other opportunities provided by Shippensburg’s Honors Program, I strongly encourage looking into it.

More information about this year’s Partners in the Parks will be provided at the Honors Program General Meeting on January 27.
Save the date!
Honors Spring General Meeting
3:30 p.m., Tuscarora Room, Reisner Hall
All Honors students are REQUIRED to attend.

National Honors Conference, cont’d.

As content, design, and the differences between print and electronic media were explored and discussed by the panel members.

Afterwards, attendees to the panel were given copies of the *Honors Chronicle*, and I certainly believe their reading material has been vastly improved as a result.

On the first day, during the time not attending panels, discussions, workshops, or meetings, Codey, Amanda, and I had the opportunity to explore the surrounding area, such as the interesting shops along the mall, or the main avenue running near the hotel where the conference was being held. I particularly enjoyed the area of the mall called Writer’s Square. It was in Writer’s Square that we found The Tattered Cover: the oldest independent bookstore in Colorado. The Tattered Cover offered a printing service to customers to print and bind full-length novels. I made a point of purchasing a book of poetry entitled *Hawsapple*, written by a local writer and printed by The Tattered Cover. After the trip to the bookstore, we enjoyed dinner at a local restaurant entitled Sam’s No. 3, where I had the pleasure of trying a buffalo burger for the first time.

During our final full day in Denver, we had the entire day available to explore, and see more of the city, and we certainly took the opportunity to the fullest. After stumbling upon a Veterans Day parade and walking in the vicinity of the capitol building, we learned more about the state at the Colorado Museum of History. It was there that I discovered that the unique architecture of the area and the large amount of public art such as statues and sculptures was a part of a public initiative, requiring 1% of all large construction projects to go towards public art.

If you should have the opportunity to attend the National Collegiate Honors Conference, or to visit Denver, I would highly recommend doing so. At the conference, you will meet many students and professors interested in many of the same topics you might find interesting, and it is a great forum for ideas. Every Honors Program student will find something new and exciting to explore. As for Denver, if you visit, you will find a beautiful city full of art and history, with a breathtaking view of snowcapped mountains in the distance.

Codey Fickes and Amanda Schwarz examine an interactive exhibit at the Colorado Museum of History.
Looking Back: December 1984

This article is reprinted from the December 1984 issue of the Honors Program Newsletter, the second issue to ever be published. The Director’s Progress Report below, written by Dr. James Payne, shows the drive to succeed that characterized the students and professors of the early incarnation of the Shippensburg University Honors Program. In the article, Dr. Payne explores the idea of achieving perfection, and its ultimate impossibility. However, he encourages taking an active role in a healthy learning environment where mistakes can be made and corrected, and to not fear our failures, but to learn from them, as stepping stones towards excellence.

“The goal of the Honors Program is excellence in scholarship and in personal development. Too often excellence is confused with perfection, which connotes freedom from fault or defect.

Perfection requires an unsurpassable degree of accuracy infallible in pursuit of an ideal standard. Since the Honors Program, the Honors students, and all involved with Honors can never reach a flawless state, the goal cannot be perfection.

Excellence indicates that which has intrinsic value, is effectual and praiseworthy and deserving of respect. It leads to a visibility and to a ‘standing out’ so its representative is readily perceived or noted. Imperfect persons in a less than perfect world can strive for excellence in personal growth and in careers, but not for perfection. Giving the impression when viewing the Honors Program and Honors students that perfection is expected of persons in the state of becoming can stymie their development into psychologically healthy people. Honors attempts to create an environment where students can develop their potential for cooperation, achievement, and growth while satisfying their innate psychological needs.

These students, as do all students, need characteristics of flexibility, spontaneity, courage, openness, humility, and willingness to make mistakes. They need to be able to see things freshly and without pre-judgment and not to be fearful of the ridicule of others. They must learn in a safe, secure environment wherein mistakes can and will be made. Fear of making mistakes or an overly intense drive for perfection often paralyzes or freezes the individual and leads to inaction, wherein nothing can be accomplished.

Persons of distinction have reached their excellence through the vale of mistakes, errors, and corrections. While the goal of the Honors Program will always be excellence, it will be achieved through action which will involve mistakes. Your indication of those mistakes to us is appreciated, since it contributes to our pursuit of excellence.”
Editor’s Corner

Why does the masthead look like part of a backdrop to a detective film? Why are dashed lines spread throughout the newsletter? Why am I opening my editor’s corner with a series of questions? All very good questions that I don’t intend to answer.

It is my pleasure to bring you the latest edition of the Honors Chronicle. From our latest installment of the 30 Years of Honors series, to Sarah Latch’s reflection on Partners in the Parks, this issue of the Chronicle is sure to entertain the whole family.

As the final issue of 2014, I want to thank you for joining me on this journey. It’s been close to a year since I started as Editor-in-Chief of the Chronicle, and in that time, I have received emails from many readers with their thoughts about the newsletter. Your ideas and encouragements have been absolutely wonderful, and they are a part of the process of making this newsletter the best it can possibly be. We here at the Chronicle look forward to bringing you the best news of Honors Program next semester, and in many more semesters to come.

Once again, thank you for your continuing contribution to the Shippensburg University Honors Program.

- John

The Book: Sloppy Firsts by Megan McCafferty

Summary: If you were (or are) a cynical, sarcastic youth, then the Jessica Darling series, starting with Sloppy Firsts, is for you. Witty, charming, and a little uptight, Jessica Darling does her best to navigate her teenage, college, and young adult years in this series written in the form of journal entries and letters to her best friend. After Hope, her best friend, moves away from her dismal hometown of Pineville, New Jersey, Jessica is devastated. A stranger to her parents and a big fish in the small pond of her high school, Jessica feels truly lost and disconnected. Heralded as one of the most true-to-life coming of age novels, Sloppy Firsts documents another year of the torture that is teenage years.

Why You Should Read It: Jessica’s sometimes pessimistic, sometimes neurotic outlook provides a poignant commentary on growing up, sure to charm those currently in her same predicament, as well as those who can rest with the knowledge they don’t have to be a teenager again.