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Honors Oracle, December 2014

Marshall University Honors College

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Marshall
University's
Honors
College
Newsletter

The Honors Oracle

The Oracle

December 2014

Upcoming Dates:

- Dec. 12: Semester Ends
- Dec. 13: Winter Graduation
- Dec. 14: Residence Halls Close
- Dec. 22: University Closes
- Jan. 2: University Reopens
- Jan. 11: Residence Halls Open
- Jan. 12: Classes begin

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Opportunities Outside the Honors College

By Josh Nelson
Marshall seniors Autumn Mathews Pearson and Lauren Hatfield have many things in common. One thing they share: they've both studied abroad in Spain. Pearson, a Spanish and English Education double major, and Hatfield, an English and Spanish double major, both show strong passion for the Spanish language.

Pearson said her study abroad enriched her entire college experience. "I learned more about myself than I expected," Pearson said. "More than anything, studying abroad helped me to see that there's more to the world than my tiny view that I have acquired in West Virginia. There are people out there who think in ways I could never dream of."

Lauren Hatfield said she enjoyed being surrounded by a different culture. "My college experience

is so much greater because I chose to study abroad," Hatfield said. "Physically experiencing life in another country made me appreciate how different and similar people are no matter where they are from." Studying abroad is a frequently publicized topic at Marshall University, and both Hatfield and Pearson took advantage of the opportunity.

"Many of the programs offer financial aid, like scholarships," Hatfield said. "I received a \$500 scholarship to study in Spain just by writing and

essay. Every little bit helps."

Pearson said the little moments were the best part of the trip.

"Everything about the experience was unique," Pearson said. "Plus, I got to try tapas and make new friends from all over the United States and the world."

Students who are interested in studying abroad in Spain or a variety of other countries are encouraged to visit the Office of Study Abroad in Old Main room 321 to find out what opportunities await them.



Mathews, left, and Hatfield, right, stop to smile during their adventures abroad.

Real World Experiences

By Jameson Akins
World-renowned astrophysicist Dr. Mario Livio, author of “Brilliant Blunders” spoke to a full audience on Wednesday, Nov. 12 during the Yeager Symposium in the Memorial Student Center Room BE5. Livio’s visit included a presentation, question and answers segment, and a book signing.

Dr. Mario Livio is currently working at the Space Telescope Science Institute, which conducts experiments and operates the Hubble Space Telescope and of the upcoming James Webb Space Telescope. Livio is married to his wife Sofie, a microbiologist, and they have three children, Sharon, Oren, and Maya.

Dr. Livio’s speech was about some of the key points in his most recent book “Brilliant Blunders”. In this book, he takes an in depth journey through five of the most influential scientists in history, not to praise them for their innovations and discoveries, but to humanize them through breaking down and deciphering why they made some of their biggest blunders.

In this presentation Dr.

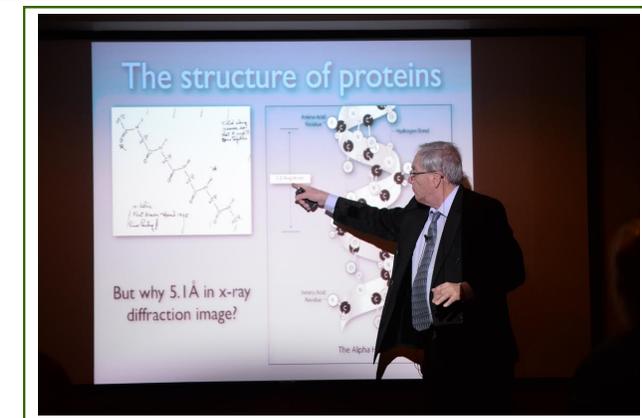
Livio only spoke of three of the five in his book: Charles Darwin, Linus Pauling, and Albert Einstein.

Charles Darwin is most famously known for his contributions toward modern theories of Evolution and Natural Selection, in his book “The Origin of Species.” However, as Dr. Livio pointed out, Darwin’s biggest mistake was accepting the current theories on heredity that genetic traits were blended like one would mix paints.

At first this might not seem like a big deal since Gregor Mendel, the Father of Genetics, was in the middle of his own research, but the theories Darwin was accepting at the time would completely undermine his theories on Natural Selection.

Linus Pauling is known for his modeling of the atomic structures associated with proteins, most notably the Alpha helix. Pauling spent a considerable amount of time on his model and waited 13 years after he had finalized it to publish his work.

Even though research supported a complimentary base pair structure as well as most likely double stranded



helix, Pauling’s model of DNA contained three strands and was structurally against all the chemical principles Pauling created and applied to his protein model.

As Dr. Livio demonstrated, it was not his model that was his mistake, it was his ego that his eagerness to publish his work before someone like Watson and Crick could, and that is what led to such a poor model.

Dr. Livio spoke last on Albert Einstein and his theory and explanation of gravity as the curvature of space. Einstein proposed a stationary universe that needed a special term in his equation for gravity to compensate for it.

Data then came out that showed the universe was actually expanding, so Einstein removed his special term since the expansion no longer needed to be countered in the equation.

Einstein’s biggest

blunder was removing this term, later discovered information showed that the universe was not just expanding but accelerating its expansion as well. The acceleration is caused by precisely the term Einstein removed from his equation.

Dr. Livio then spoke to his whole reason for writing his book. The misconceptions people have about science is that it is a straight line from A to B in discovery, however the opposite is true with many wrong turns, dead ends, and restarts. Dr. Livio is an advocate of thinking outside the box and going against the grain, not just being careless and making mistakes but taking risks in a way that may revolutionize that field of study.

To close, Dr. Livio said, “Basically my main point here is, you know, scientific blunders, and by that I mean *brilliant* blunders, can be the portals to discovery.”

A Working Student: Taylor Stuck

By Kristen Young

Taylor Stuck, a senior print journalism major, is not only an honors student, but also the managing editor at *The Parthenon*, Marshall University's student-produced newspaper. Being an honors student at Marshall University has had many demands in Stuck's career, and the curriculum is challenging and very time consuming. However, that doesn't stop students like Stuck from participating in other activities.

"I am second in command to our executive editor at the *Parthenon*," Stuck said. "I work with reporters:

helping them find stories and things like that. I also organize columnists for the opinions page, which I design. I write editorials once a week and write columns when I have an opinion to share."

Growing up, Stuck always enjoyed writing; making it a major factor when deciding what school to attend. She said one day it occurred to her that she should major in journalism. Stuck said she knows now it was the right decision.

"I'm working towards my goal of getting a good job after I graduate," Stuck said. "I've tried to take

advantage of every opportunity here at Marshall. It's an honor to be able to do things like that for the university. I just love telling people's stories."

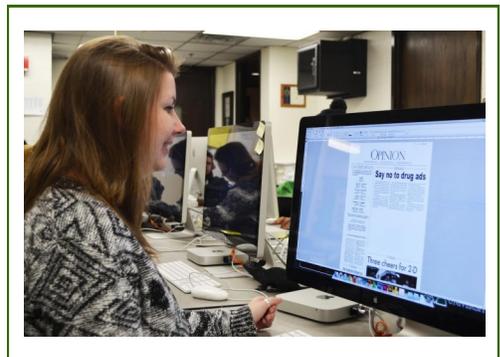
Having the pressures of being an honors student as well as a senior journalism student has challenged Stuck in a way like no other with time constraints and scheduling shifts. However, she notes how well the honors

college has challenged her in her academic career.

"The Honors College stretches my brain,"

Stuck said. "The seminars I've taken make me think outside the box, and I love it. It's really what I'm going to miss about college: taking classes to learn. I've learned a lot in my journalism classes, but my honors classes really make me think harder."

Stuck says she is now looking forward to graduation and starting her career in print.



Honors College brings Christmas cheer

By Alexis Kastigar

The holidays are a time for family, cheer, and copious amounts of presents; but for some, the bright lights and shiny ornaments bring reminders of misfortune. With the snow and cold weather comes the spirit of giving. This year, the Honors College Student Association participated in some Christmas giving of their own by making cards for the Cabell

Huntington Children's Hospital. Donations were also accepted to purchase teddy bears for the children.

Megan Justice, president of the HCSA, said she anticipated a good turnout, even though the Honors College has hosted few events this year.

"This year our turnouts at events have been fabulous," Justice said. "The

freshman class seems really interested in discovering what it's really like to be a part of the Honors College."

The event was hosted in the Memorial Student Center on Thursday, Dec. 4 from 11 am to 4 pm. Materials to make cards were provided, as well as pre-made cards for people to sign.

At the end of the drive, \$40 was collected in teddy bear

fund donations and a Student Government Association grant for \$100 of sponsorship.

Justice said she's proud her group is helping for the holiday.

"It's really important for the Honors College to impact our community—not just our campus—and showcase the type of compassionate students that we have here at Marshall," Justice said. "Being able to put a smile on someone's face is a great way to do that."

Honors LLC Makes Impressions

By Clara Maynard
Marshall University is home to many Living-Learning Communities that allow students who share common interests the opportunity to live together on a floor. One in particular is the Honors College, which has its own Living-Learning Community dedicated to bringing students in the program together.

The Honors College LLC has a floor in the first year residence hall, as well as an entire building, Willis Hall. The LLC has many traditions, including the annual pumpkin carving, honors registration prep and student/faculty events.

Caroline Eckels, a sophomore communication disorders major, has lived in the LLC for the past two academic years.

"The best part is living close to all of my friends and being able to study together," Eckels said. "Everyone is super quiet all of the time and respects you when you are studying in the lounge."

Eckels said she planned on living in the Honors College LLC

for as long as she is living on-campus.

Zach Hager, a sophomore biochemistry major, lived in the first year residence hall last year and is currently a Resident Advisor for Holderby Hall.

"Last year we all had that common bond where we were coming in as new freshmen and we didn't know anybody," Hager said, "but being that we were all in the honors college I had tons of classes with people that lived just down the hall from me. That really helped with my adjustment period here at Marshall, to know that the people doing homework in the lobby, were probably doing the same homework I was doing."

Although Hager took an R.A. position for Holderby Hall this year, but says he still benefits from the LLC.

"It helped me build relationships and it has definitely followed me to Holderby. It seems like there are less people I have classes with," Hager said "But it's nice because the upperclassmen can share their experiences



A book exchange out on the third floor of Willis

with me and help influence my decisions, such as who to take for certain classes."

The resident advisors in Willis Hall are able to hold programs that are specifically designed for members of the honors college. The third floor study lounge offers a book borrowing system for students.

Caralyne Saunders, a senior elementary education major, is the resident advisor for the third floor of Willis.

"Katie Barker, the RA that was on this floor last year, was the one to start it," Saunders said. "I think she just had some books she didn't use and looked for donations and encouraged students to give books that they no longer use."

Hallie Andrews, an

RA for the fourth floor of Willis also hosted a similar program for her residents.

Taking advantage of the Living-Learning Communities can help students both socially and academically. Marshall reported that these students typically have higher grade point averages and are able to build relationships that last a lifetime.

*"The best part is living close to all of my friends and being able to study together."
-Eckels*

Social Epidemics Explored

By Erin Boone

Dr. Ahmed Ragab, assistant professor of science and religion at Harvard Divinity School, visited Marshall University's Visual Arts Center for the fifth annual da Vinci Lecture Series, sponsored by the Honors College, on Friday Nov. 7. Free to the public, his lecture, "From Plague to Ebola: The Social Life of Epidemics and the Making of Global Health" intertwined history of epidemics, global health responses, and the worldwide element of fear in the midst of disease.

On behalf of the Yeager scholars, Dr. Ragab visited the Visual Arts Center and gave a lecture that paralleled the current Ebola crisis

to that of the Bubonic plague in the 1600s. Ragab's focus was on the social and public health aspects of epidemics. Ragab defined an epidemic as any disease that affects people of a society in that it interrupts social processes. The fact that a more involved public health initiative must be initiated in order to gain control of the Ebola Crisis was the main point of Dr. Ragab's lecture.

"Involve people; let them know what's going on," Ragab said.

According to Ragab, the media is providing too little information about Ebola for the public to have a good understanding of what is really happening in

our society. More in-depth coverage by the media would lead to pressure from the public to find a solution. When the people know very little about something as dangerous and impactful as Ebola there is little chance of successfully combatting the disease.

In order to receive positive pressure from society, the public health system needs to make changes. The public is afraid to acknowledge the disease because there is a level of mistrust between patients and healthcare.

"[A] larger public health initiative [and a] cultural shift in thinking", as Ragab

phrased it, are needed to combat the Ebola crisis.

The public health system must establish trust with society in order to begin the job of combatting and abolishing this crisis.

Marshall University's Visual Arts Center was pleased to feature Dr. Ragab to speak about the Ebola crisis and the changes in media coverage and public health initiative that must take place. The lecture was enlightening and thought-provoking, and advising members of the Marshall University's Honors College were proud to have such an eloquent guest speaker for the fifth annual da Vinci Lecture.

"Involve people; let them know what's going on... A larger public health initiative and a cultural shift in thinking [are necessary]."
-Ragab



MARSHALL UNIVERSITY

Honors College
One John Marshall Drive
230 Old Main
Huntington, WV 25755

Ph: 304.696.5421
1.800.438.5395
Fax: 304.696.7102
honorscollege@marshall.edu

Visit us at
www.marshall.edu/honors

Editors,
Lexi Browning
Alexa Antil
Josh Nelson

Layout & Design Editor,
Gabi Warwick

Honors College Graduate Student Teaches Seminar

By Callie Snodgrass
Britani Black, a second year graduate student in the clinical psychology program, is familiar with the Honors College at Marshall University: not only does she work as a graduate assistant for the Honors College, she graduated from the college, and is the first graduate student to teach an upper-level honors seminar.

Black is the instructor of the fall 2014 Honors seminar "The Hows and Whys of Popular Fiction: Reading and

Alternative Communication". This seminar is writing intensive and focuses on discussing psychological themes within popular fiction books.

Black can handle this seminar because she graduated from Marshall in 2008 with her Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology. She has been doing research with Dr. April Fugett-Fuller in the psychology department for five years, and gained knowledge about psychological topics.

This semester there were a total of five books read and discussed in the class, including ones such as "Divergent",

"Doctor Sleep", and "Walking Dead". For a final project, students chose a book from the Banned Book list, which they used as the basis for a final paper and presentation.

Ciara Moore, a junior in the Honors College, said she really enjoyed taking this seminar. "With [Black] being a grad student, she is able to relate more to popular literature and current topics," Moore said. "So that enhances what we're learning".

Moore said she enjoys the lectures that Black gives, because she includes PowerPoint slides, videos, and discussion topics, as well as the books that were chosen being current and popular books, not books that college students have never heard of.

Black was asked by Dr. Fugett-Fuller to become the seminar's instructor after she

was unable to teach the course herself. This is the only class Black has taught, but she said she has really enjoyed the experience.

"I really like it," Black said. "It's been a challenge, but it's been fun."

Shyla Cogar, a senior in the Honors College, took this seminar for her final honors hours.

"It was a good last honors credit because it had topics I was interested in," Cogar said. "She relates the course to things we actually care about".

This course is not being offered next semester, but Black would teach again if she were asked. She has enjoyed working with Honors College students and said that by teaching this course, she has had the chance to be creative again, which she hasn't really been able to do much of in grad school.

