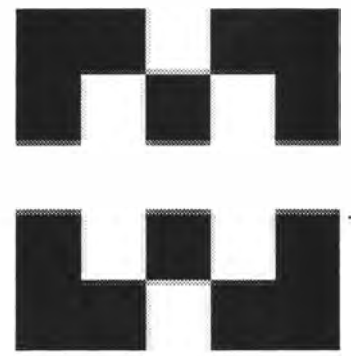


THE

CHALLENGER



A Publication

of the Harper College Honors Society

Fall 2004 - Issue 2



Harper & Honors

Honors Evolution:

The Secrets Behind the Society

By: Margaret Brigham

Okay, so there really is no secret! Yet, it is not common knowledge to most Harper students where the Honors Society and Honors Program came from or how they have developed over the past fifteen years. Some students (and faculty for that matter) are still oblivious to the fact that although Phi Theta Kappa members are automatically qualified to be Honors Program members - PTK and Honors Society at Harper are *not* the same thing.

For this writer (as is the case for many aspiring students) Honors was the largest selling point in deciding on a college to begin study. The concept that Honors courses have been created based on enrichment, not acceleration, is a swaying factor for those looking to challenge themselves at the collegiate level. According to founder Betty Hull, this was the initial philosophy the Honors Program was based upon.

In speaking with her, the recurring theme for the creation of

Honors was enrichment. As she explained, the nature of a community college has a much different atmosphere than a four-year university. In creating a program to meet the needs of ambitious students, it was necessary to create a more varied program here than one would find in a university.

It is exactly for that reason Harper College created an honors committee in the late 1980s to establish guidelines for the Honors Program and make it appropriate for the Harper atmosphere. As the committee searched for a first coordinator, and none stepped up to the plate, Betty Hull assumed the initial responsibility. She continued to look to the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) for the commonly accepted standards of community college honors programs. So, the original Honors Program curriculum was launched in the 1989-90 school year and was originally limited to basic communications courses. One of the biggest challenges Honors first faced (and still does) was the ability to offer new cur-

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The Seven Steps of Harper Planning

By: Mustafa Bhikapurwala

When determining potential discussion topics at the opening meeting of the Honors Society this year, the question, "How are the significant decisions made at Harper College?" was proposed. The building of Avanté, plans for Harper offering four-year degrees, Harper's no-smoking zones, and other major developments around us invoked this question of an otherwise alien process. Students at Harper have been traditionally detached from these higher-level decision-makings; and we students of Harper College need to be aware of the practices which affect us. After all, the information is at our disposal on the Harper College website. Without a doubt, the decision-making process at Harper must include meticulous research, consultation, amendments, plan-

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The Writings of Mr. Wilson...



The editor of this issue of the *Challenger* has asked me why I wished, a few years ago, to assume the duties of the Honors Program Coordinator at Harper. Being mindful of the limitation of space in this publication, I will (try to) answer with uncharacteristic brevity.

You, my reader, might not know that there are those - and they are all gentle souls - who question the appropriateness of an Honors Program in a community college setting. A community college, someone told me recently, is a venue for students who are not quite ready for the rigors of a four-year institution. According to this same person, who is an excellent person, an Honors Program therefore runs counter to the mission of a place designed primarily to assist students in their efforts to leap (or inch) from high school to College X or University Y.

But I respectfully disagree with this view, which is, I think, a bit narrow in its understanding of community colleges in general and Harper in particular. In fact, I *agree* (happily) that Harper should zero in on its struggling students, should welcome them into the college-level arena and help them,

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Fast Forward

By: Allison Riggio

You may have heard people in the halls say, "Harper is going to be a four-year school soon, you know!" Currently, those whispers are nothing more than rumors. Harper College is attempting to begin a few full baccalaureate programs, but we will remain a school primarily for two year degrees. The idea of Harper becoming a university has been buzzing around campus for some time now. Many have dismissed the idea as simply hearsay. Or, others have put the idea to rest with comments such as, "It will never happen. Harper will be as it always has been - only a community college." Things have taken quite a turn, however, and it is this writer's goal to clear up all the rumors and confusion about our college's future plans.

Daily Herald staff writer Michael Puente recently published an article entitled, "Harper votes for 4-year degree" on June 23, 2004. In this article, Puente explained how a majority of Harper's seven-person board approved college President Robert Breuder's plan to offer bachelor's degrees in the future.

Unfortunately, this may be in the distant future. The idea still needs to be approved by the Illinois Community College Board, which has thus far been against the idea.

There are 10 other states in the U.S. that allow community colleges to offer bachelor's degrees, but Illinois is yet to follow. One of the reasons that legislators oppose the idea is the lack of state funding for such a plan. According to the motion presented by Harper's favoring board members, the pro-

gram will be supported through tuition and state funding alone, without raising local property taxes. This brings up an issue with the opposing Harper board members who fear that tuition costs will rise too much if state funding is not sufficient; or, the programs will be underfunded, and this in turn will compromise quality.

Those in agreement with Breuder's plan feel that the bachelor's degree program is the next logical step in the advancement of the college. They feel it meets the growing demands of its students and follows a trend that other states have already proven worthwhile. Many agree that it is a wise idea for community colleges to offer such programs, especially since the student body at such schools is largely nontraditional. Being able to obtain a bachelor's degree in certain fields would be beneficial to those nontraditional students who are unable to drop everything and go away to a university. Hopefully the program could offer an inexpensive solution to receiving certain bachelor's degrees.

The idea of bachelor degrees at Harper was first officially brought to the board in the spring of 2003. No solid decision has been made as of yet, but it should be safe to say that it will still be a few more years before a student can walk off of Harper's campus with a B.A. or B.S. in hand. According to Harper's web site, even if the program is approved, it likely will not be in order and ready to go for a pilot period until 2006 or 2007. However, if the idea does indeed go through, William Rainey Harper

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7 Steps (continued from Page 1)

ning, proposals, etc. at all levels. But, what is the process, and how is it initiated? Let us take a sneak peek into Harper's decision-making arena.

At Harper, planning takes place annually, and this annual planning cycle consists of the following seven phases:

In phase one, the Office of Research will perform environmental scanning (this consists of Harper's economical, political, regional, moral, and judicial environment) and is responsible for coordinating the internal audit and external assessment of Harper's environment. This assessment includes demographics, community input, and usually other studies are conducted also. The college conducts one major study each year on a three-year rotating basis, which also includes research on the community, students and employees. The result of this phase is the Fact Book and the Environmental Scan. This assessment brings light to primary issues which need to be addressed during the next planning period. Also, the Institutional Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) are updated using this assessment.

In phase two, Harper College's philosophy, mission, and vision statements are reassessed and modified, if needed, to reflect changing environments and times.

In phase three, the institutional directions are established as initiated by the President's Council. The assessment, internal audit and external assessment from the previous year's Outcome Report is used to set priorities. Thus, every year the goals and tasks are reviewed and updated as necessary.

In phase four, annual plans are prepared by administrators in the area at divisional and departmental planning levels. These plans contain objectives that are consistent with the Institutional Core Values, Institutional Direction and the Goals and Tasks.

In phase five, all participating staff members from various administrative areas of the College submit a report on their performance in accomplishing their annual plans and thereby contribute to the implementation of the Strategic Long Range Plan.

In phase six, an Outcomes Report containing the achievements of the College toward implementing the institutional Goals and other accomplishments is sent to the Board of Trustees for review.

In phase seven, the Strategic Long Range Plan development process is evaluated and adjusted as needed. This takes place annually. The Institutional Planning Review Committee will give a comprehensive review based on a cycle. Environmental Scan, Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats analyses are conducted in the first semester whereas Goals and Tasks are reviewed in the second semester. When required, Philosophy, Mission and Vision are also reviewed.

As you must have noticed by now, most of the planning at Harper is long term and thorough. Strategic long-term planning is the name of the game at Harper. Initiation, follow-up and decision-making is primarily done by the President, Vice-President and the Board of Trustees. There is student representation on the Board, by the means of a Student Trustee, who acts as a link between the Board

and the Student Senate. This brings to light the fact that the people we elect for the Board of Trustees and Student Trustee, as tax-payers and students, are ultimately those who mold future decisions for Harper College. More information on Harper's Strategic Long Range Plan can be found at the Harper website: <http://www.harpercollege.edu/about/slrp.shtml>

Evolution (continued from page 1)

riculum that is also transferrable.

Another difference in a community college is the classes are not homogeneous. The greater amount of diversity offered by the community college affords an enrichment within itself. With a larger combination of both cultural diversity and life experience there is an atmosphere of vast experience to learn from outside of the classroom. Furthermore, at Harper, compared to a four-year school, we do not have the opportunity or space for a honors dorm or floor.

Therefore, the Honors Society proved to be necessary in order to allow students within the Honors Program social support and an opportunity to interact outside of the classroom. This also provides an additional enrichment while making the program known throughout the school with involvement in student activities. Beyond the academic and social aspects of the club, the Honors Society also provides an opportunity for students to complete service work with programs such as Adopt-A-Highway, Inspiration Cafe, and various drives for charity.

When meeting with Trygve

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Meet Your Vice President

By: Nicole L. Ejzak

Scot Laudenbach is one of our beloved "non-traditional" students. At age 36, Scot has served in the Air Force, worked as a store manager for fourteen years and is currently in his second year of studies at Harper.

Scot and Karen (his wife) have just celebrated their fourth wedding anniversary. Scot graduated from Denfeld High School in Duluth,

Minnesota in 1986.

His major is Political Science and his minor is in teaching. He chose Political Science because a former teacher of his, Mr. Heikenien, had a great influence on him.

He first started becoming politically active while serving in the military. Scot is an avid, proud Republican with many revolutionary ideas. In the Air Force, Scot served in the Special Forces unit as a combat security team leader. Scot was named 1988's Airman of the Year. He is now a proud veteran of the Air Force.

Scot currently works full time as a training coordinator for Wal-Mart following his work as a manager in the retail store at the district and regional levels over the past fourteen years. Scot has European roots in Germany in Scotland, but when you ask him where he came from he says, "I'm an American."

When asked who his hero is, he

said, "I have to be a hero to myself." What Scot meant by this is if you spend your whole life looking up to others, you may never become someone who can be looked up to. He says that his mother had great influence on him.

Scot's hobbies are baseball, hockey, digital photography, and (of course) politics. Scot is unsure

where he is going after Harper, but he wishes to continue to further his education. The classes he is taking this semester are Education 201, Geography, Honors Colloquium, and Art History (Honors). He chose Harper because of the low tuition cost and close proximity to home.

Scot would like to leave the Honors Society with the following quote from a Knute Rockne speech, "Play like a champion today!" To Scot

this quote means you should always try your best, despite any situation or odds you face, so you

Honors (continued from page 3)

Thoreson, the second Coordinator of Honors Program (previous to our current valiant leader Andrew Wilson), he shared the story of Honors' further growth and development. He stated that his interest in Honors began when teaching Honors courses at the very beginning of the program.

Trygve Thoreson was immediately sold on the concept and was excited at the prospect of working with the students outside of the classroom and getting to know them in a different context as the

Honors Coordinator. He did just that with his beautiful balancing act between allowing the Society to be student-centered and allowing the students to make the decisions, while facilitating a combination of activities of a cultural nature in order to fulfill the needs of the Honors Society.

During Trygve Thoreson's ten-year run as Coordinator, much growth of the program occurred. This included the introduction of the Honors Colloquium course, which was created as an equivalent to the Honors projects many university programs within the NCHC offered. As mentioned previously, a different environment called for an altered option since a full program capstone paper that many programs offered would not work. This also offered another chance of continuity within the program to allow for the student diversity.

Also, with a collective involvement on the part of the faculty, along with the input of Honors students on their interests, the courses were able to grow abundantly. This included expanded offerings and an increase in science courses offered along with specialized courses in the Business Department.

Fundamentally, the roots of the Honors Society and the Honors Program are based in the NCHC, and the ultimate goal beyond courses and Honors graduation is to present at the conferences offered at both the national and regional levels. By doing this, Honors students have a chance to interact with Honors students from other schools, and they also have the opportunity to give Harper a name within the council to showcase our success. No secrets!



Photo of Knute Rockne courtesy of: <http://www.chron.com/content/chronicle/millennium/sports-century/00-34.html>

The Wonderful Thing about Smoking

By: Nicole L. Ejzak

The wonderful thing about smoking is you don't even have to smoke once. You, too, can die from smoking-related diseases without even smoking. A pack of cigarettes costs \$5.00, but you don't have to pay anything to inhale second-hand smoke. You don't have to pay anything to contract lung cancer.

In 1964, a report released by the Surgeon General's Committee on Smoking and Health recognized that cigarette smoking is "a cause of cancer and other serious diseases." The 387-page report concluded that smoking leads to death, that smoking is the highest cause of death in the United States, and that "the only way to prevent the diseases caused by smoking is to quit smoking."

Dictionary.com defines a cigarette as "a small roll of finely cut tobacco for smoking, enclosed in a wrapper of thin paper." You could maybe breathe a sigh of relief if that were the end of the story. Somehow, there are 4,000 ingredients in a cigarette. According to quitsmoking.com, among those 4,000 ingredients are: acetic acid, ammonium sulfide, beeswax white, caffeine, calcium carbonate, carbon dioxide, dimethylterhydrobenzofuranone, ethyl alcohol, sodium bicarbonate and valium. (*BBC Health*) Isn't that nice? Sounds like a chemistry experiment! Some of these chemicals can be found under your bathroom sink. Just think about it; you don't have to buy cigarettes to ingest dangerous chemicals! Just take your Windex bottle, point it at your mouth, spray and enjoy!

The ingredient list also contains the formula for rat poison, insecticides, pesticides, and cyanide. Just what you always wanted to inhale, right? "Unlike food and drug companies, tobacco companies are not required to include a list of ingredients on their packaging" (Phillip Morris, USA). I guess it wouldn't fit.

Yet, water companies are required to list the ingredients and nutritional facts on bottled water. "In 1990, 72 million bottles of mineral water were voluntarily recalled because of small traces of benzene. The smoke from one pack of unfiltered cigarettes has as much benzene as 169 bottles of the contaminated water" (thetruth.com).

Thetruth.com was created by an anti-smoking advocacy group that (by court order) is funded by Philip Morris USA. When I emailed thetruth.com, the reply stated that information on the site comes from "sources such as Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Food and Drug Administration, and the American Cancer Society."

"In 1989, millions of cases of imported fruit were banned after a small amount of cyanide was found in just two grapes. There's 33 times more cyanide in each cigarette than was found in those two grapes...Tobacco companies introduced 'light' or 'low tar' cigarettes which have holes where people normally cover on a cigarette with their fingers and lips. When cigarettes are tested with machines, the result is a low tar and nicotine reading because [those poor] machines don't have fingers or lips" (thetruth.com).

Why do people smoke? Smokers have some pretty interesting answers to the question. Some people answered this question by

saying that they smoke for tension reduction. Well, here's a newsflash: "When nicotine is deposited into the bloodstream, it increases your heart rate by forcing your heart to pump harder" (*The Oral Cancer Foundation*). Therefore, nicotine does not actually reduce any tension; instead, it induces, or increases stress and pressure!

Your average smoker often reacts by saying, "So what, I'm going to die anyway." Yes, this is true (good job), but she/he will die 5.5 minutes sooner for every cigarette smoked. If a person smoked one cigarette per day for the rest of her/his life, starting at age 18 with an average life expectancy of 80, I have calculated that the smoker would be taking 124,465 minutes off her/his life (about 3 months), if she/he didn't die of a smoking-related disease first.

This next answer is my favorite. When asked "Why do you smoke?" some people actually answered that they like the *handling* of a cigarette. They said they have nervous hands and that's why they smoke. Isn't that a mental disease called Obsessive Compulsive Disorder? I would advise them to seek medical attention. Healthcenter.com advises them to hold a pencil. Yes, it actually states "Hold a pencil."

Are you ready? Now I will magically reveal the statistics about the people who choose to smoke and the innocent victims they take to the graves with them. I will attempt to answer the age-old question: "How many people will die from smoking?" According to thetruth.com, tobacco companies make a product that kills 1,200 Americans per day and 431,000

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Smoking (Continued from Page 5)

per year. Thanks to tobacco companies, now 1 in every 5 of us can have the opportunity to die from tobacco products! Statistically, that means out of 25 people in a classroom at Harper, 5 students are doomed to die thanks to the tobacco industry.

"Tobacco kills more Americans than AIDS, drugs, homicides, fires and auto accidents COMBINED!" (*The Oral Cancer Foundation*). Cigarettes are predicted to eventually kill 1/3 of the people who use them. About 48 million people smoke, so about 16 million people who smoke will die because they made the choice to smoke. Wait, isn't this suicide? Yes, it most definitely is. And, there is no homicide investigation of the tobacco companies or suicide investigation of the individuals who choose to smoke "just because." Actually, nothing has been seriously done to combat smoking because the tobacco companies make generous million-dollar contributions to political parties each year.

When you go to harpercollege.edu, under the "About Harper" section on the right, there's a link for "Smoking Policy." The title is a good laugh:

"Harper College is a Smoke-/Tobacco-Free Environment." (Sure, and I

live two doors

down from the Easter Bunny!) The average student also reads, "The College recognizes the rights of those who choose to use tobacco and does not prohibit the use of tobacco products." There's a head-scratcher. "The college complies

with some state Acts..." blah, blah, blah. "Smoke free entrances for employees and students with respiratory and other conditions affected by exposure to smoke..." blah, blah, blah. "You can smoke in the athletic areas of campus..." blah, blah, and more blah.

I can live with the statistics about people who make the conscious decision to smoke, knowing the health hazards. I can't live with the fact that 53,000 innocent Americans, who made the smart choice, die from second-hand smoking; 12,000 of those are helpless babies. (secondhandsmokesyou.com) I don't even want to think about all of the innocent little children that develop asthma and lung cancer because their parents couldn't smoke outside and had to pollute the inside of their homes.

In this senseless world, inhabited by smokers and nonsmokers alike, there are smoking-related illnesses that cost the nation of the United States \$15 billion each year (*BBC Health*).

We've examined and rebutted the answers of smokers to the question "Why do people smoke?" And, we looked at the death statistics of smokers and their innocent victims. Now, I ask you, "How many more people will have to die for smoking to be illegal?"

Forward (continued from page 2)

College will be the first of Illinois' 48 community colleges to offer a four-year program. The plan is to offer bachelor's degrees in such fields as specialized teaching, nursing, dental hygiene, and applied technology. For more information on this topic, go to www.harpercollege.com and click on "Bachelor's Degree Initiative."

Meet the Master

By: Allison Riggio

As members of the Honors Program we all take an important role in enhancing the environment of Harper College. Perhaps we take Honors level courses simply so we may engage in classroom discussions that will enrich our minds and the minds of others. Maybe we attend Honors Society meetings and participate in society sponsored events. Some of us even take it one step further, by becoming an Honors Program Officer or Chairperson. Honors officers and chairs are the leaders that have chosen to guide us through the school year. Sure, you may know their names, but do you really know who they are? Fear not, your faithful *Challenger* staff will deliver!

Meet your new Honors Program webmaster, Kristin Kowynia. Kristin is a second-year Harper student, graduating from nearby Conant High School in 2003.

She was offered the title of web site coordinator this year by Honors Program director, Mr. Andrew Wilson. Kristin currently works part-time with Mr. Wilson in the Liberal Arts Division Office, whereupon he was able to observe that she would be the perfect candidate for this year's Honors webmaster. Her new responsibilities include: maintaining upkeep of the site, posting meeting minutes from the Honors Society meetings every Wednesday, and posting activities and course information pertaining to the Honors Program.

When Kristin isn't getting down to business with her Honors responsibilities, she's...still getting





down to business. She's a recently decided Business Administration major, with hopeful transfer options for next fall including Northwestern, Northern Illinois University, and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Kristin chose Harper College as her first school for a few reasons. First of all, she's the recipient of the Distinguished Scholar Award. This entitles her to up to 60 credit hours of free tuition based on her high school GPA and class ranking. This writer has the same scholarship, and has to agree it's hard to turn down two years of free college education. However, this wasn't the only reason for her decision. Kristin also chose Harper College because of its proximity to home. "I wasn't ready to leave my house yet," she stated, "but now I am."

When she's not wrapped up in scholarship requirements and the Honors Program, your webmaster

also takes part in Phi Theta Kappa. Additionally, she is an American Heart Association CPR instructor at Conant High School. This is one busy girl we've got here, and she admits to not having much free time for additional hobbies. We all know how that goes!

When asked if she had any last thoughts or advice that she'd like to share with her fellow Honors Program students, Kristin came up with a few words that I'd agree we should all keep in mind as college students. "Never carve your options in concrete," she said. "Things change!"

If you would like a peek at Kristin's craftsmanship, you can access the Harper College

Honors Society web site at: harpercollege.edu/cluborgs/honors.

Writings (continued from page 2)

gently and steadfastly, as they face one of contemporary life's most important transitions. I have genuine respect for my English Department colleagues - Kris Piepenburg and Barbara Njus, for instance - who regularly teach Harper's Developmental Writing courses; it is hard to teach writing, and it is *really* hard to teach struggling writers to write well, and yet it is necessary and essentially democratic to try and try. This is what Professors Piepenburg and Njus (and others) do: they keep trying, sometimes to the point of heroic but unheralded success. But in a community college as diverse as Harper clearly is - as filled with truly bright, academically ambitious students as Harper is - it

seems to me that there is also room for a program featuring smaller classes that move at a (slightly) accelerated pace. There is room for a program that brings together students who take learning seriously, who appreciate the diversity of cultures and ideas that have existed and still exist across the world, and who possess something like a hungry intellectual curiosity. There is, at Harper, room for a program for lively students who want to learn not for the sake of their grade point averages but rather for the sake of knowledge itself, and room for a program that embraces argumentative students who enjoy a debate held in the spirit of a free and frank exchange of ideas. American culture, I am sorry to say, sometimes (too often?) casts intellectualism as pretension or snobbery, but this is inaccurate, unfair, and dangerous; and this, of course, is also 101% disproportionate to the unpretentious, unsnobbish spirit of the Honors Program at Harper. Here, then, is why I lobbied to become the Honors Program Coordinator at Harper: to continue in the vein of Professor (Emerita) Betty Hull, the founder of Harper's Honors Program, and Professor Trygve Thoreson, who coordinated the program for nearly ten years (until 2003); to make certain that *all* of Harper's students - including its inquisitive, academically inclined and ambitious students - continue to have a challenging, stimulating, label-free, safe environment in which to learn.

It is unlikely that I, out of the more than 200 wonderful full-time faculty members at Harper, am the most qualified to serve as the college's Honors Program Coordinator, but I am happy and honored to have the opportunity.

Challenger Staff:

Editor

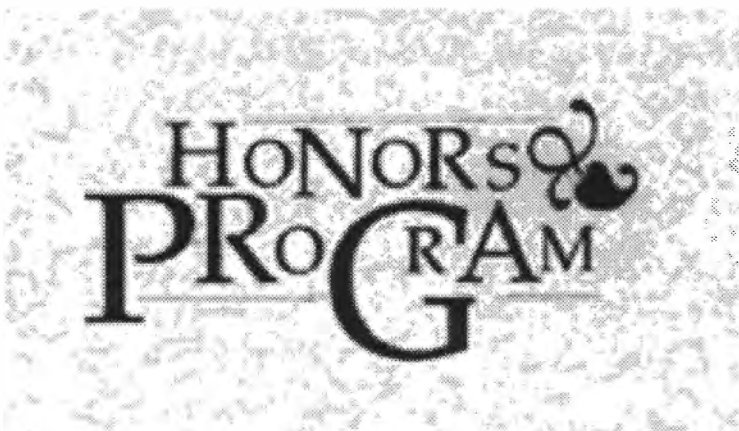
Margaret Brigham (also photographer)

Contributing Writers

Mustafa Bhikapurwala

Nicole L. Ejzak

Allison Riggio



Discussion Topics:

November 17: "Pizza with a Professor": the guest professor this semester will be Charles Brown, from Harper's Philosophy Department

November 24: "Food and Fun" (our day before Thanksgiving party)

December 1: Animals and Ethics/Ethics in Animal Research

December 8: The Separation of Church and State

The Honors Society Meetings are held from 3:30pm-5:00pm on Wednesdays in L329. Discussions begin at 4pm and all (Honors and non-Honors alike) are welcome to join in.

Honors Officers 2004:

President: Brian Rosenberg

Vice President: Scot Laudenbach

Secretary: Nicole L. Ejzak

Treasurer: Anna Veverka

Publicity Chair: Jamie Herold

Office Manager: Margaret (Maggie) Brigham

Events Coordinator: Nicole L. Ejzak

Archivist: All Officers

Technology/Website: Kristin Kowynia

PTK Officers 2004:

President: Laura Bergeson

Vice President: Scott Lanctot

Secretary: Allyson Cerami

Administrative Secretary: Nicole L. Ejzak

Treasurer: Pavel Popek

Editorial Policy

The *Challenger* is the Honors Newsletter / Independent Study course, taught by Dal Harris. As the editors, we are allowing Honors Society members to contribute to the *Challenger* if they so choose while we maintain the right to edit and/or omit work presented to us as the *Challenger* staff. This is with the understanding that the great majority of the *Challenger* is our own original work as a staff.

Consequently, we identify the *Challenger* as a publication of the Honors Society and for the Honors Society. By doing this we will include schedules and information regarding discussion topics, Honors activities, the work of Honors members, as well as interviews of elected officers.

Our definition of "outside submissions" is work of those other than the *Challenger* staff so we may allow variety within the publication. Proposed topics may be subject to change; however, here are the deadlines and proposed topics for future issues:

Issue 3: "Human and Animal Rights"

Outside submissions due Oct 25

Issue 4: "College Student Opportunities/Opinions"

Outside submissions due Nov 15



Written materials must be submitted to the editors' mailboxes in the Honors/PTK office (L-334) to be considered for publication in future issues.