



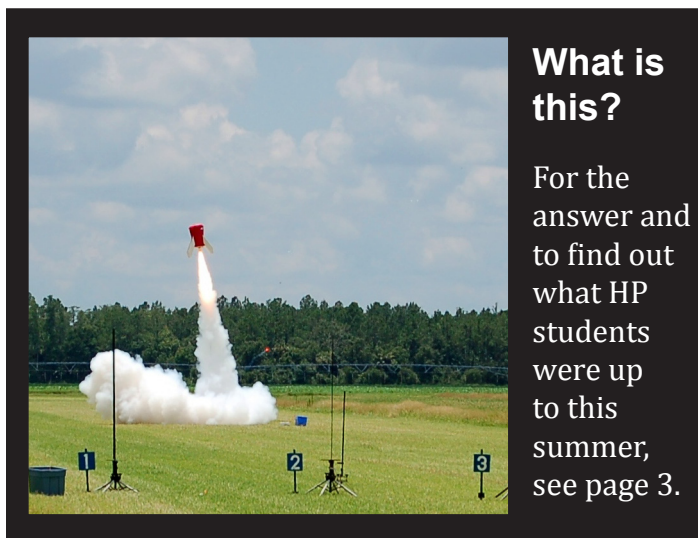
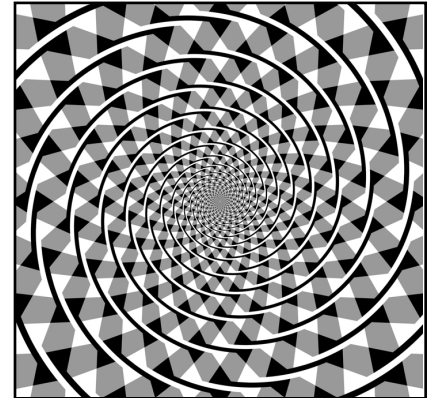
Honors Program

September 2009

THE VIEW FROM HERE

BY DR. MONICA HALKA

Whether we were ready or not, the new academic year is stepping on the heels of summer once again. Each year about this time, distinctly different attitudes and emotions seem to characterize various groups of students. Freshmen: nervous, but excited. Sophomores: stressed. Juniors: blasé, possibly wavering about their choice of major. Seniors: incredulous (how did I get here?), concerned about the future. But what about the faculty? We're fixtures. Not much changes for us, right? A few new faces, maybe a new building appears on campus, higher parking rates. That lackluster scenario may be true for a number of faculty members—I recall teaching the same General Physics class over and over every fall in previous employment. (Believe me, very little has changed in General Physics in the past few centuries. I personally know physics professors who haven't changed their course notes in decades.) Fortunately for me, things are different now. The Georgia Tech Honors Program special topic courses offer professors the opportunity to explore ideas and questions that may not fit within the confines of a particular discipline. I am thrilled to be able to teach "Optical Illusions" this fall—a result of a long interest in light and its perception by humans and animals. "Teach" is not the right verb to describe my role in the class, however. While I may have a decent understanding of how light interacts with matter, when it comes to interpretation of images by the brain I am way outside my element. (I still think I see spirals in the image above, for example.) So the students and I will investigate together. We'll invite guest speakers, read Jonah Lehrer's essay on Paul Cézanne and the process of sight, and visit the High Museum to explore perspective, perception, and art. Professors from across the campus are enjoying similar and even stranger explorations. You can check out the full list of special topic courses playing this semester on page 2. Envious yet?



What is this?

For the answer and to find out what HP students were up to this summer, see page 3.

Informal Conversations with...

- Tuesday, Sept. 15: President G.P. "Bud" and Mrs. Valerie H. Peterson
- Thursday, Oct. 15: Mr. William Stanley (Arch '72) and Ms. Ivenue Love-Stanley (Arch '77)
- Thursday, Nov. 19: Mr. Dan Radakovich, Director of Athletics

Location of all Conversations is in Brittain Rec. Hall on East Campus near the dining hall.

Honors Program Special Topic Courses for Fall 2009

BIOL 4740	Biologically Inspired Design	Dr. Jeanette Yen
COE 3002	Microelectronics & the Nanotechnology Revolution	Dr. John Cressler
CHEM 3803	The Art of Talking Science	Dr. Paul Houston
HTS 2803	Semester in the City: Engaging English Avenue	Dr. Greg Nobles & Andrea Ashmore
INTA 4340	Latin American Identity and Politics	Dr. Kirk Bowman
LCC 3823	Thoreau's House	Dr. Hugh Crawford
PHYS 4803	Optical Illusions: A Study of Light and Perception	Dr. Monica Halka
PHYS 2030	The Physics of Music	Dr. Galina Grom

SAVE THE DATE

Sept. 19 - 20th
is the annual
Honors Program
Freshman Retreat

Can't wait to see you there!

Georgia Tech
Honors Program
FRESHMAN RETREAT



Parul Kapur plays a game with other incoming freshmen at the 2008 Honors Program Retreat at Indian Springs.

Have an interesting story idea?
Want to be published?
BECOME A HYPE WRITER!

Email Dr. Halka at
monica.halka@gatech.edu
if interested.

Student Activities

Here's a quick look at what some of our Honors Program students were up to this summer.

"What is this?" (from page 1)
Matt Jacobson's garbage can rocket!



Kenny Taylor's shadow on Moxie Bald, Maine, while hiking the Appalachian Trail. Kenny hiked 950 miles of the AT this summer.

PHOTO BY KENNY TAYLOR



PHOTO BY ALEXANDRA ARTUSIO-GLIMPE

Katalina Keilhauer soaring during her NASA Internship, where she did everything from meeting astronauts to performing wind tunnel tests.

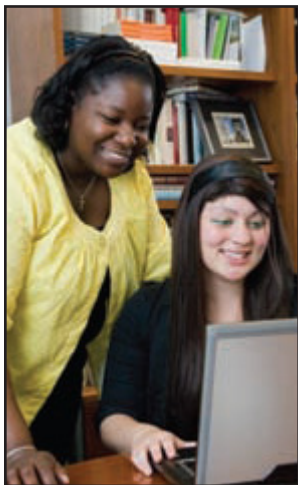


Martha Lesniewski (center) with research group members on Boston Harbor Island with the city in the background. Martha did research at MIT this summer with funding from an "NSF Research Experiences for Undergraduates" grant.

Advising Corner – Bienvenue!

BY NICOLE LEONARD

Greetings and welcome back from the Honors Program Advising Office! For all incoming students, this is the start of a very new and exciting phase in your life. For all second and third year students the saga continues. And finally, for the fourth year students, this is the final countdown as you tie up loose ends to figure out your cap and gown size.



Before I give the fourth years a heart attack, I want to update everyone on a few of the things that the advising office has in store for the upcoming academic year. For those of you who cannot make it to the Honors Program office, a satellite office has been set up on the zero floor of Field Residence with the following hours: Wednesdays and Fridays, 8 a.m. to 12 noon. Another exciting program being introduced this year is the GT Honors Program Student Advisory Board. The selection of second, third, and fourth year students is currently underway. First years interested in being a part of GTHP SAB will have the opportunity to join during spring semester. In addition to the satellite office and advisory board, every month I will host a series of lunches featuring a major academic advisor. The list of featured major advisors will be available in the next few weeks, so be on the lookout for those events. Again, I want to welcome everyone to (or back to) the Honors Program. Remember that my door is always open.

Culture Confusion

BY LINDSAY ANGLIN

“You’re going to the Flemish land? Well then let me tell you a few jokes now. You certainly won’t hear any during the rest of the day. The Dutch, they do not have humor.” These were the words that greeted me upon announcing to my French-speaking, Belgian host father that I would be taking a bicycling trip into the Flemish countryside one sunny June morning. It was Saturday, which, as any study abroad student knows, is synonymous with a free day. On past two- and three-day weekends, I had left my host home in the suburbs of Brussels for various cities throughout Belgium: Antwerp, Ghent, Bruges, and the coastal wonder that is Oostende.

This particular weekend, however, a friend of mine—a self-proclaimed beer connoisseur—wanted to take a trip in search of the world’s best beer. According to multiple sources he had spent his spring researching, this beer could only be found at the Trappist Abbey of Saint Sixtus in the Flemish town of Westvleteren. This monastery only makes a select amount of beer on certain days of the week that must be ordered months in advance and, not surprisingly, my friend could not reserve a case in time. His predicament left us with only one option: go to the abbey ourselves and sample the beer on-site. Being that none of us was over 25 years old or had enough Euros to pay for a rental car, we took a train to the nearest town, Poperinge, and rented bicycles to go the next ten miles to the abbey.

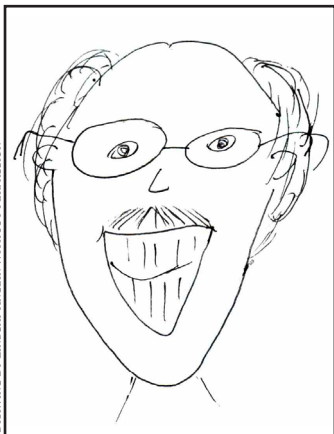


As we got off the train and passed Dutch signs, I began to understand what my host father had jokingly alluded to. The French-Dutch divide in Belgium seems like the North-South divide that existed (and to some extent still exists) in the United States. Only in the case of Belgium, the barrier is a result of not only culture, lifestyle, and traditions but also language and history. It took me some time to adjust to the disconnect, like for instance, remembering to say “vergeving” instead of “pardon” when in Dutch cities, but I also learned the benefits of having a multicultural and multilingual society. While I cannot say for certain that the Westvleteren beer is the best in the world, I can say that the Flemish beer appealed to me much more than my host father’s French wine, which he did not find humorous at all.

Message from the Director

Continuing the Conversation

BY DR. GREG NOBLES



It was a good and gratifying feeling to see a hundred-something students and more than a dozen faculty and administrative friends at the Honors Program reception in the first week of the term. This fall marks the first time the Honors Program has had students in all four classes, and I was especially happy to see the some of the “old” HPsters

mixing it up with the first-years. What a fine way to start the semester.

This reception was the first event in a series called “An Informal Conversation With . . .”, in which the blank will be filled in with various movers and shakers in the Georgia Tech community, including President and Mrs. Peterson on Tuesday, September 15. (Save the date, and for a complete listing of future “Conversations,” see the schedule on page 1.) The idea behind these events is to give Honors Program students a regular opportunity to interact informally with people in positions of influence, both at Tech and in the larger Atlanta community – “responsible adults,” I call them. At a major research university like Georgia Tech, students often feel that senior administrators and other prominent people seem inaccessible, insulated from undergraduates and too busy to be approached. This “Conversation” series seeks to challenge that by demystifying some of the major players and helping students get to know them as human

beings, people with stories to tell and a willingness to listen.

That willingness to listen should be especially on display this year, when President Peterson will be taking Tech through a strategic planning process. Good ideas and fresh perspectives are always welcome, and you’ll have several opportunities to offer yours, beginning on September 3, when there will be an open public discussion of the planning process in the afternoon, following President Peterson’s investiture that morning. Our “Conversation” meeting with the Petersons on September 15 will give us another excellent time to talk about where Tech is going in the future.

The present, of course, has its problems. It’s news to no one that Georgia Tech, like all colleges and universities, is facing considerable financial challenges. We suffered budget cuts last year, and we’ll see some more this year. That doesn’t mean, though, that we’ll stop acting like a university. The Honors Program, above all, remains committed to continuing, even expanding, the opportunities we’ve always offered, from innovative classes to interesting speakers to informal social events. We’re also committed to seeing that the Student Challenge Fund remains a critical resource for supporting student initiative and imagination.

I’ve come to believe that the Honors Program delivers more bang for the buck than any other entity at Georgia Tech. We might be working with slightly fewer bucks for a while, but with you, all four years of you, we have the ability to make the bang even bigger. Here’s to another great year.

GT eT HyPed

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