

Ampersand &

UIC Honors College March 2005

12th Annual Ball a Smashing Success!

by Judy Liu

The Twelfth Annual Honors College Ball was held on Saturday, March 5th, 2005 at the Millennium Knickerbocker Hotel, just east of Michigan Avenue. The evening began with the silent auction and cocktail reception in the Continental Room and Prince of Wales room, accompanied by the beautiful music of the string quartet. After guests were "chimed in" by hotel staff, dinner was served in the breathtaking Crystal Ballroom, with tables under giant crystal chandeliers, many surrounding an illuminated dance floor and others in the balcony.

The annual Honors College Ball was again another great success. However, the Ball's success this year was especially meaningful to me for a few reasons. This year the Honors College Advisory Board consisted of an

all-new cast of members (I was the only veteran!). HCAB worked with a different advisor, Executive Dean Janet Madia, and a new business manager, Assistant to the Dean Kathy Stauffer. This year's Ball was particularly rewarding on several levels. Most of the current members of HCAB had never attended an Honors College Ball before. HCAB as a whole worked very hard to choose the perfect location, and spent countless hours publicizing the event. We also worked with many local businesses to secure donations for the silent auction. All of these combined efforts helped make the entire evening the success that it was.

This year's event also boasted record-breaking attendance. Though tickets originally sold out more than two

weeks prior to the event, the size of the wait list and demand for tickets forced HCAB and the hotel to make special arrangements to accommodate more than 450 guests. This large attendance, the crowd-pleasing music, and the glowing dance floor all contributed to the lively atmosphere inside the ballroom...so much so, that even many of the faculty and staff were dancing the night away! Whether inside dancing in the ballroom or out in the lobby martini bar listening to a jazz pianist and mingling with others, all who attended enjoyed a very fun and memorable evening.

(cont'd. on page 3)



HCAB members Zina Alkafaji, Monica Shroff, Izabela Kaczorowska, Kristin Toranzo, and Derrick Barwacz greet Ball attendees.

Announcements

Interested in Neuroscience?

Check out the new neuroscience major
Information Seminar

Date: Thursday, March 31st

When: 4 p.m.

Where: Honors College Quiet Study Room
(lower level)



From the Honors College Front Desk

As the year quickly comes to a close, we at the front desk want to give you a few important reminders:

Your Completion Form must be turned in by 4PM on Friday, May 6 (Finals Week). You'll need your professor or supervisor to sign this, but not your fellow (unless they are your direct supervisor.) Failure to turn this form in on time will result in an incomplete grade on your transcript and/or probation status. If for some reason you are unable to have it turned in by that deadline, please email one of the deans explaining your situation!

Your registration ticket is available online; while it only shows that it is for summer registration, it is actually for both summer and fall semesters! Remember to get advising at least a few days before that time so you have the best chances at getting into the classes you would like.

Remember to congratulate your fellow students who will be graduating: and from us, best wishes for a great and successful journey through life.



Need some extra help?

With only 5 weeks left in the semester visit....

Honors College Tutoring

Monday-Friday: 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Burnham Hall, Rm 220

Check the website for a schedule of subjects offered
<http://www.hc.uic.edu/tutoring/tutoringschedulespring05.mht>

Sixth Annual Undergraduate Research Symposium (URS)

Are you engaged in research with an advisor or simply went ahead on your own? Then the URS is for you! The **sixth annual Undergraduate Research Symposium (2005)** will be held on **Friday, April 15**.

Come and share your ideas with other great minds at UIC for a chance to win cash awards. URS is open to all undergraduates conducting research in any discipline. Research work is to be presented in poster-format. This year we are honored to have **President B. Joseph White**, the new U of I President, as our keynote speaker.

Deadline to submit an abstract is March 31st. Visit <http://www.uic.edu/orgs/urs/index.html> for more information, or email: uic_urs@yahoo.com



Calling All Writers! JPHAS Announces its Essay Contest

The Journal for Pre-Health Affiliated Students (JPHAS) is looking for entries for its annual essay contest. Submit an essay and you could win \$100! Winning essays may also be published in the summer 2005 JPHAS newsletter (with author's consent).

Essay Contest Rules:

*Essay must be between 500 and 750 words, typed, and in size 12 Times New Roman font.

*Essay can be on a topic of your choice, but it must be related to the health professions. The essay should be thoroughly researched and have an attached bibliography as necessary (not included in the word count). Essays will be judged on the basis of content and style.

*Essay must be submitted via email to jphas@yahoo.com by Friday, April 15, 2005 for consideration. Winners will be notified the next week.

Questions or Concerns? Contact jphas@yahoo.com for more information.

FIRST PLACE WILL RECEIVE \$100!
JPHAS encourages you to take advantage of this exciting opportunity!

Honors College Students in the News

* Honors College student Brianna Arrington (senior, biological sciences), was recently named a recipient of the 2004-2005 Martin Luther King, Jr. Scholarship. Congratulations!

*The following students were selected to receive an Honors College tuition waiver for the spring 2005 semester:

Katie Albanos, Barath Badrinathan, Rachel Catrambone, Victoria Anne Church, Heather de Guia, Julie DeMoor, Danae Deppert, Michelle Dorich, Megan Dragonuk, Christine Dutton, Damoon Forouzi, Ramil Francisco, Sarah Gersdorf, Olga Giteman, Maria Elisa Hernandez, Kathryn E. Hovany, Joyce Joseph, Izabela Kaczorowska, Susan M. Kaiser, Joanna Kardas, Edward Hyun Lee, Joanne Lerman, Tzofit Moskovich, Fariyal Pervaiz, Ana Petrovic, Megan Riley, Liat Shetret, Lesley Skousen-Chio, Yevgenny Strashnov, Elizabeth Tieri, Mark Tulewicz, and Holly Waidanz.

Congratulations to all!

*Honors College junior political science/mathematics major Yelena Shagall has been named a 2005 Truman Scholarship Finalist. The Truman Scholarship is awarded to students planning on a career in public service. Congratulations!

*Senior political science major (and University of Illinois Student Trustee) Natalie Garcia has been selected to be the student speaker at the Honors College convocation ceremony on Wednesday, May 4th. Congratulations!

Don't Forget Your DARS!

Just a reminder: All students should have a DARS report run once a year, just to make sure they are fulfilling their degree requirements and are on the right track towards graduation. Just fill out a DARS report request form at the Honors College front desk. Within a few days, you will receive an email notifying you that your DARS report is ready for you to pick up at the front desk. It's that easy!

Phi Eta Sigma Inducts Honors Students: Awards Scholarships



Several Honors College students were inducted into Phi Eta Sigma, the national freshman honor society. The ceremony was held on Monday, March 28th, where Biological Sciences professor (and Honors College fellow) Dr. Paul Malchow gave the keynote address. Additionally, three scholarships were awarded to Honors Colleges students: Alaine Kalder (sophomore, psychology); Megan Riley (senior, anthropology), and Liat Shetret (sophomore, political science).

New Phi Eta Sigma inductees include: Alvin Baetiong, Bhavna Balaney, Daisy Bentley, Victoria Burdett, Ellen Chang, Solomon Cherian, Nicholas Chuh, Caitlyn Costello, Andrea Crivolio, Aaditi Dubale, Effie Gatsinos, Gina Gaudio, Sofia Gavas, Gina Giglio, Iman Hassan, Leigh Hellman, Giselle Hernandez, Arthur Hong, Jessica Huang, Lauren Jennings, George Kannankeril, Suchal Karkera, Deanna Khalil, Bilal Khan, Laura Kim, Tal-Or Kohn, Kristopher Kubaczyk, Samuel Lin, Ada Lu, Brandon Lutz, Jee Eun Nam, Victor Nekrasov, Mary Neu, Erin Olsen, Emma-Leigh Pearson, Ryan Pearson, Geetha Pedapati, Ashley Polikoff, Tahreer Shatad, Ashutosh Shelat, Rahul Sheth, Mattisyahu Shicker, Sarah Spell, Megan Stokes, Robert Swanson, Tian Tan, Maria Vargas, Jose Veloso, Jr., Jing-Joe Wu, Andrew Wu, Lisa Yee, and Michael Yip.

Congratulations to the new initiates and the scholarship winners.

HCAB raised over \$2,600 with the silent auction, the proceeds of which will benefit Project ESTEEM and the HCAB scholarship fund. Pictures are now available for viewing on the Ball website at <http://www.hc.uic.edu/2005Ball/gallery.html>

Focus on a Fellow:

Dr. Rhonna Cohen

by Zina Alkafaji

While sipping Earl Grey tea, Dr. Rhonna Cohen and I chatted at a round conference table in a meeting room outside of her office at the UIC College of Dentistry. Many years ago, she attended this institute as the only woman in her class of one hundred dental students. Since then, Dr. Rhonna Cohen has made it a long way in developing her career and field concentrations. She is now a faculty member at the Center for Molecular Biology of Oral Diseases, a dedicated Honors College Fellow, and the founding advisor of the UIC Pre-Dental Club. In addition, she is doing NIH-funded research that focuses on the relationships and interactions of the immune system with the skin and the immune system with the nervous system. The aforementioned academic and leadership-based accomplishments are not able to fully capture Dr. Cohen's passion for science.

As a young undergraduate student, Dr. Cohen had several interests including early childhood education, biology and genetics, and clinical dentistry. Many of us now find ourselves in this same boat as we grapple with trying to decide which fields we really find appealing. Dr. Cohen was able to eliminate one of these fields by working for the Chicago Board of Education when she realized that she did not want to commit to the job full time. She was then counseled by her college advisor to pursue Dental School instead of immediately starting graduate school. Dr. Cohen reasoned that she would obtain a more clinically oriented background in research. A week after taking her boards and getting her license as a dentist, Dr. Cohen began graduate school in pathology because of her interest in diagnostic pathology. Although she thoroughly enjoyed working with patients in her private practice, she jumped at the opportunity to take a job as a full-time faculty member at the UIC College of Dentistry.

Dr. Cohen's multi-faceted nature makes her a wonderful Honors College Fellow. I, myself, have requested to meet with her several times so that I could try and soak up some of her wisdom and knowledge, not to mention gain access to her

valuable advice. Her passion for advising young students is evident in her willingness to make time in her overwhelmingly busy schedule to meet with them, as I have personally witnessed on numerous occasions.



After carefully considering the question of what advice she could give to Honors College students, she urged that taking time to get to know yourself and your interests is essential. She added that it's important to ask questions and for help from your mentors, advisors, professors, and friends. Independence and individuality are characteristics she stressed in searching for a career. Putting thought and time into investigating and studying a prospective career can pay off in the long run in her opinion, because there are many possibilities and different ways to incorporate your strengths into a career. Cohen emphasized that you should do what you want to do and not only what your family or friends feel is right for you. By coming to the realization that you've got a long life ahead of you and that it can change at any given moment, should alert you to the fact that you can find other areas of your profession to be involved with, as Dr. Cohen herself has done. She stressed that to love what you do and to give your career all you've got is key, and now is the time to develop that passion. We are adults and we should select a profession that gives us pleasure.

In terms of time management, Dr. Cohen feels that by understanding how you learn and finding what works most effectively for you individually, you can eliminate a lot of wasted time. She suggests studying well in advance for an exam, and giving your brain time to consolidate the information. When you reach the point that you can teach the material to someone else, this is an indication that you know the material.

with an intellectual discussion of recent books we had both read, good movies we'd seen, and how an Earl Grey tea differed in taste than Lady Grey due to a hint of orange blossom. Dr. Rhonna Cohen is a priceless asset to the Honors College and if you are lucky enough to meet her, you may benefit from her insight - no matter where you are on the journey through your education.

Honors Students Head for One of the Great Cities: London

The following Honors College students have been selected to participate in this year's Great Cities London Study Abroad Program: Escobar Gonzalez, Economics; Nadia Halim, Bioengineering; Michelle Jung, Prepharmacy; Ana Kadkhodayan, Biological Sciences; Esther Kim, Biological Sciences; and Liat Shetret, Political Science.

The Great Cities London Program gives 20 UIC students the opportunity to compare and contrast urban issues in Chicago and London. The participants, a mixture of graduate and undergraduates, are selected on a competitive basis. Once selected, they attend several orientations in Chicago, during which various experts discuss with them local urban issues. It is at this time that students are broken into research groups, based on similar interests such as health care, education and crime.

Students then go to London for five weeks, where they once again meet with local experts to discuss urban issues through field trips and lectures - student often get to meet Members of Parliament in Parliament, tour countless neighborhoods in London, and visit locations such as Bath and Stonehenge. At the completion of the program, students submit a paper and conduct a presentation based on their comparative research.

Sophomore political science major Liat Shetret is planning on researching poverty amid affluence in both Chicago and London. She feels that the Great Cities London program is "an outstanding opportunity to participate in a customized program that is tailored to my interests, a chance to sharpen my teamwork skills, analytical proficiencies, and explore a marvelous city." She continues, "Chicago is a marvelous metropolitan city with a serious homelessness problem. Does London suffer from this weakness as well? Who are the urban poor in both cities and what does government do for these people to help break their cycle of poverty?"

Shetret also hopes to "undergo what I call the "sponge effect." Immerse myself in the culture, language, nuances, arts, politics and the humanistic issues of London, basically to be exposed to as many situations and experiences I can possibly feel, hear, smell, taste, learn and ultimately internalize."



A BIG Thank you to HCAB from Project ESTEEM!

The Honors College Advisory Board donated \$500 to Project ESTEEM (Enrichment of Science Through Exposure of Experimental Models), a UIC volunteer organization that goes to Children's Shelters and makes science fun, exciting and interactive. Project ESTEEM wishes to thank all of the HCAB members for organizing the Silent Auction during the Honors College Ball. We are very grateful for the donation - they will go towards supplies that are used during scientific demonstrations and experiments THANK YOU AGAIN!

www.projectesteem.org



Giving Back is its Own Reward

It's amazing how much we can achieve in this world, if we don't worry about who gets the credit." -Anonymous

With the recent earthquakes, mudslides, and tsunamis around the world, we are becoming more and more aware of the vulnerability of human existence. But, this fragility is always complemented by the unwavering strength of a human bond; the compassion of others never ceases to amaze. However, it should not take a natural disaster to bring volunteer forces to arms. Here in the United States, there are plenty of people who deserve an equal amount of attention and support.

For those who wish to volunteer in smaller, domestic projects, Alternative Spring Break (ASB) offers trips every winter and spring that are dedicated to community service. This spring break, two trips were sent out: one to Advantage Ranch in Blacksburg, Virginia, and another to the White Earth Reservation in Ponsford, Minnesota.

Advantage Ranch is an organization that uses equestrian therapy to help children. Using the "Equine Interactive Counseling" method, the therapy utilizes a teamwork approach using horses, parents, volunteers, and certified coaches. A horse's walking gait, interestingly, is a natural simulation of human movement—this helps to stimulate muscles, improve balance and coordination, build concentration and instill confidence in the rider. ASB will be working with underprivileged children from nearby Fieldstone Church. They will be assisting the therapists and the children, and taking care of the horses and helping with farm maintenance.

The White Earth Land Recovery Project has a different purpose than Advantage Ranch. The organization works to recover the original land of the White Earth Reservation (only 9% is still owned by the tribe), to retain Native American customs, and strengthen cultural and spiritual practices.

Also a non-profit organization, the project aims to restore local food systems using syringing operations that endeavor to reintroduce traditional foods to the community. The founder of WELRP, Winona La Duke, writes: "Each year we work to recover more of who we are as a people and to ensure that that knowledge is shared in our community." Inhabitants of White Earth are some of the poorest in the nation, but no doubt there is an enormous wealth of culture, history, and tradition from which volunteers may draw appreciation for their way of life. Students will be helping to gather sap and package food products for the reservation.

Community service does not need to be on a large scale to be valuable. Jennifer Kosco, faculty advisor to ASB, hopes that trip participants "realize the importance of giving back to various elements of society, and that others are not as fortunate. Many organizations depend on volunteers as a vital necessity."

ASB vice president and site leader Glen Nool agrees, "Going on these trips is like opening a window to something new. The hands-on learning that ASB promotes immerses you deep in the social issues affiliated with each trip so that you can't help but come out of these experiences being 'smarter' about things. At the same time, and more importantly, you get the opportunity to bring a little extra light to those in need."

Whether you are digging wells in Sri Lanka or serving food at a local kitchen, giving up a vacation is but an inconsequential sacrifice. Rather, as the action implies, it is a gift—a gift to the people around you, a gift to the world.

For more information about Alternative Spring Break and this semester's work sites, feel free to browse the following websites:

Alternative Spring Break

http://www2.uic.edu/stud_orgs/service/asb/

Advantage Ranch Center for Equine Interactive Concepts

<http://www.advantageranch.com/default.html>

White Earth Land Recovery Project

<http://www.welrp.org/>

Campus Advocacy Network

by Kathy Stachowicz

MYTH: If the abuse was that bad, the victim would just leave.

FACT: Victims stay in abusive relationships for a variety of reasons. Some of these reasons include fear for physical safety, having no place to go, no access to money, hope that the violence will stop, etc. Some studies show that victims leave an average of seven times before they leave for good, and that victims are more likely to be killed or seriously injured at the time of their departure."

The myth and fact is from UIC's very own Campus Advocacy Network's website. The Campus Advocacy Network, CAN for short, assists UIC students, faculty, and staff who are victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and hate crimes. Do not feel alone if you are a victim of any of the aforementioned crimes. It is not your fault. Seeking help from CAN is completely confidential. The staff serves as your advocate - they show what options are available to you and offer aid. CAN also provides crisis support; they are located in University Hall room 802. They can be reached at 312-413-1025.

CAN assists with many affairs from filing an order of protection to anonymously reporting a crime, even if no further action is taken. Check out the website; it has extensive information about services and facts www.uic.edu/depts/owa

MYTH: Most sexual crimes are committed by strangers.

FACT: Despite the over-representation of stranger rapes in the media, the vast majority of sexual assaults occur between people who know each other. Research reports that from 62% to 92% of rapes are committed by known assailants (U.S. Department of Justice-National Crime Victimization Survey 1993-2000). Sex offenders are often partners, spouses, friends, or acquaintances of the victim."

Want to learn more of the facts? Consider taking Gender and Women's Studies 294 - a class that teaches UIC students to be peer educators regarding domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and hate crimes. Because what you know, may change or save someone's life. Empowerment through knowledge is essential.

MYTH: Women falsely claim rape to get even with men.

FACT: Nationwide surveys of police departments indicate rape is one of the least falsely reported crimes, reporting a rate of 2%. Rape is also one of the most underreported crimes, with only 1 in every 10 assaults being reported to the police. Women who do report rape face a long and difficult process of continuous disclosure and questioning of their character"

The Ampersand is the monthly Honors College newsletter. It is produced by members of the Honors College Advisory Board. Submissions from all Honors College students are welcome and encouraged. All submissions should be sent to: ampersanduic@yahoo.com If you have any questions, please contact Jalene Lanter at: jlantel@uic.edu
Thank you and we look forward to hearing from you!

News from the Office of Special Scholarships Programs

Rhodes, Marshall & Gates-Cambridge Scholarships

Are you a graduating senior or will you be a graduating senior next year who is interested in earning a graduate degree in the United Kingdom? Are you a demonstrated leader with at least a 3.7 GPA who is active in organizations at UIC and/or within the outside community? If you answered yes to both of these questions, the Rhodes, Marshall, and Gates-Cambridge Scholarships may be exactly what you have been searching for to enrich your academic career. The Rhodes, the Marshall, and the Gates-Cambridge Scholarships award graduating seniors or students who have already graduated the opportunity to study in the United Kingdom. These awards are among the most prestigious scholarships in the country, and also the most competitive.

The Rhodes scholarship provides direct payment of all tuition, fees and a monthly stipend for two years study at Oxford University, though some one year awards are given as well. 32 scholarships are assigned annually to the United States. The Marshall Scholarship covers tuition, fees, books, and the cost of living and travel expenses for two years of academic study at an institution in the United Kingdom. Up to 40 scholarships are awarded each year. The Gates-Cambridge scholarship provides expenses for studying at Cambridge for 1-4 years. Approximately 35 new U.S. scholars are selected annually.

Regarding eligibility for the Rhodes and Marshall, applicants must be U.S. citizens. There is no citizenship requirement for the Gates-Cambridge. Generally, applicants must have at least a 3.7 GPA, extensive community and campus involvement, demonstrated leadership, service, and the potential to lead and serve others. Research and other academically related activities are a plus. Candidates should have a good rationale for their study in the UK, and must have completed their bachelor's degree by the beginning of their study. For the Rhodes, applicants must be between the ages of 18-24 on October 1 of the year in which they apply. For the Marshall, candidates must apply two years or less after completion of their bachelor's degree. For the Gates-Cambridge, applicants must be under the age of 30.

For more information on the scholarships, please consult the websites at www.rhodesscholar.org, www.marshallscholarship.org, and <http://www.gates.scholarships.cam.ac.uk/>. The UIC deadline for the awards is April 1, 2005. The national deadlines will be in October 2005. Candidates must be nominated by UIC, and may not apply directly. UIC students interested in applying should contact the Office of Special Scholarship Programs for more information about the application process.

Announcing the Ampersand Baby Picture Contest !



Can you guess who that baby
is in the picture above?

Hint: She works at the Honors College.

- 1) Submit a cute baby picture of yourself whatever way is convenient for you:
 - a Email your photo (jpg, please) to: ampersanduic@yahoo.com
 - b Submit a hard copy photo or a photo CD to the H.C. Front Desk with your full name & email attached
- 2) Photos will appear in the next edition of The Ampersand
- 3) Deadline for photo submission is Wed., April 20th
- 4) Identify all the babies and WIN!

New Neuroscience Degree: Another Step Towards the Future

by Jalene Lanter

Since the 1980's UIC biology and psychology faculty from the east and west sides of campus have been collaborating in neuroscience research. The study of neuroscience examines information storage and transfer within the brain, nerve tissues, and cells. This pathway is also studied to determine its connection and control of actions such as decision-making and movement. These biological mechanisms are then correlated to traditional psychological ideas of learning, memory, and even consciousness. This multi-departmental interest in neuroscience prompted the formation of the Laboratory of Integrative Neuroscience (LIN) to more easily pursue combined research goals. It didn't take long for the faculty's interest in neuroscience to spread to the student body. The formation of a new major, one in neuroscience, was a logical outgrowth.

Sponsored by Dr. John Leonard of the Biology Department and Dr. David Witshafter of the Psychology Department and with the help of Mary **Wais**, the planning of a neuroscience major began. While the last six years have been filled with paper work and curriculum planning, the new major is now available for students to take advantage of. As with the advent of any new program, it has generated numerous questions from both students and faculty. Dr. Steve Kelso of the Biology department, the new director of the program and multi-departmental committee, helped answer many of these questions.

The first of these may be how common is this degree and can undergraduates easily apply it to additional schooling or careers of their choice? The University of Illinois at Chicago is the only school in Illinois to have a neuroscience degree, despite the fact that many schools offer neuroscience classes. Students can use this interdisciplinary program, encompassing biology, psychology, chemistry and philosophy, in many different ways. In addition to allowing undergraduates to focus their neuroscience degree into their choice of the four concentrations, it also allows students to pursue graduate school and

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research in the sciences, specifically neuroscience, medicine, or other areas. This degree is not merely designed for those on the pre-medical curriculum, as Dr. Kelso mentioned, "...broad enough for students to become educated citizens." Once undergraduates in neuroscience reach the upper levels of their study, faculty advisors help plan research and class work based upon the concentration of choice and the student's post-graduation plans.

For students who are interested in more details regarding this program, it is similar to a biology degree with the addition of philosophy and psychology classes. The neuroscience program also has a few requirements before the major can be declared. Specifically, a cumulative 3.00/4.00 GPA is required for entrance along with completion of either Physiological Psychology (PSCH 262) or Biology of the Brain (BIOS 286). Dr. Leonard, the director of the LIN, provided the reasoning behind the higher entrance GPA. Neuroscience faculty want to ensure that students possess a basic understanding of the fundamentals in bioelectricity, including electric potential, which is crucial for nerve impulse transmission throughout the body. Once enrolled in the neuroscience program, in addition to the basic requirements and core classes, Neuroscience I and II serves as a capstone course unifying all neuroscience majors. Faculty from all four departments designed this yearlong team taught course, along with the outline of basic requirements and neuroscience core classes. Seminars from the Laboratory of Integrative Neuroscience provide supplementary information for students

The ease with which an interested student can transition to this major depends largely upon their previous studies. For example, students who are currently pursuing a double major in psychology and biology would have a smoother transition than students in other IAS departments or colleges. Because of the large number of participating departments, there is the potential that some students could be slowed by additional class requirements. Dr. Kelso noted that it might take several semesters to determine what the demand will be for the neuroscience major. But, in response, the Biology, Psychology, Philosophy, and Chemistry departments would try to increase course offerings and add faculty.

Read any good books lately?

According to recent researches on the reality of university students' reading habits, the results were very disappointing. It showed that students do not commonly read books, even though they are aware of the importance of reading. These days there have been increasing worries that not enough readings are recommended to students and that students are just not interested in any books. A survey of Public Participation in the Arts, conducted by the Census Bureau in 2002, indicated that only 41% of students read everyday. According to numbers crunched by Veronis Suhler Stevenson, a New York-based investment bank that specializes in media companies, Americans spent 106 hours a person a year reading consumer books in 2003. By contrast, television-watching took up 1,679 hours of our time in 2000.

Considering that it is an important developmental time of their life, these undesirable reading habits of university students shows a serious flaw in university society. So to speak, if the goal of today's universities is to offer an education that provides society with well-rounded students, presently it does not meet that goal at all. How many times have you just sat through a conversation knowing you had more to say, but just didn't know how to phrase it or strengthen your argument? How many times have you been able to think of something, but then just lost it? Reading doesn't necessarily improve your memory, yet it definitely expands your horizons from the experiences and ideas in those pages. It can improve your communication skills by increasing your knowledge of and how phrase it.

Some say that there isn't any time to pay attention to reading in this quickly moving world. Also, the society we live in today is filled with temptations such as the internet, television, videos, and many other technological activities to enjoy. In a survey, book reading ranked last in list of what university students do during their free time.

Instead
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they do other things to relieve stress or to have fun. This is evidence of what little interest students have in reading. Another survey reported that 39% of students do not have the time to read books because of other reasons than studying. Some even answered that they didn't have any books they wanted to read. This illuminates another serious problem among students these days. They should at least recognize that reading is indeed for their own knowledge making it somewhat of a priority. Sir Richard Steele summarized it in his famous quote, "Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body." Putting everything aside, we should remember the past when people thought reading was a virtue, a sign of culture and the most important part of the education. Obviously book reading isn't the only way to acquiring the information we need. Everybody knows that we can use other media. But nothing can take the place of reading a book. Reading a book, exercises different parts of the mind and includes more than just general information.

As we read a book closely, we can achieve more than we can imagine through the process of reading.

But, you don't have to read because it's educational, good for the soul, or horizon expanding.

This spring, grab a book and read just for the fun of it "New Neuroscience Degree" Continued from Page 9



Thus far, the program does not foresee limiting the enrollment, and predicts that roughly 50 students might declare in the first year with increasing numbers in the years following.

Further information will be offered at an informational meeting hosted by Dr. Steve Kelso in the Honors College Basement on Thursday the 31st of March at 4PM. Information such as the specific course requirements and prerequisites, where and when the major can be declared, and who will be responsible for advising will be provided.

The LTN website offers additional information about the neuroscience major at:

www.uic.edu/las/LTN/integ8.htm

My Stay in Saddam's Palace: Personal Reflections A report on Dr. Yaas Alkafaji's Presentation

by Tara Brennan

Dr. Yaas Alkafaji, Associate Professor of Accounting at Northeastern University, is a dual citizen of both the United States and Iraq, and has done much to impact higher education in both countries. In fact, from January to June of 2004, Dr. Alkafaji was appointed by the US government to serve as the Director of Finance for the Ministry of Higher Education in Iraq, through which he sought to decentralize the administration of Iraq's twenty universities in order to increase their autonomy and credibility. And on February 21, 2005, he took more than fifty UIC students on a picture-guided tour of his stay in Saddam's Palace in Iraq.

Throughout the duration of Dr. Alkafaji's stay, he lived in the former Baghdad Palace of Saddam Hussein, but getting there was a dangerous endeavor. First, Dr. Alkafaji was shipped to a US military staging station in Kuwait. Then, he was flown to Baghdad in a small military plane, which was forced to descend abruptly and violently in order to avoid being shot down. Next, Dr. Alkafaji had to traverse Baghdad's ten-mile "Death Road" before arriving at Saddam's palace.

Saddam's palace, Dr. Alkafaji recounted, was built almost entirely out of expensive marble during a time when his country was in complete devastation, when many of his people were starving and without homes. Both the palace and the streets of Baghdad were home to various tributes to Saddam throughout his reign. Currently, however, Baghdad is littered with defaced pictures and statues of their former dictator.



Dr. Alkafaji spent time with American troops

As an American, Dr. Alkafaji opposes the war in Iraq, because he does not believe in the pretense of invading another nation. As an Iraqi citizen, however, he is excited with the potential outcomes of the occupation, as he recognizes Iraq's need for outside intervention in the aftermath of Hussein's reign. Currently, the country is in dire need of political, economic, and environmental rebuilding.

Bombs have destroyed schools and playgrounds. There is no electricity in the area. And since there is no garbage collection in Iraq, waste is incinerated on the banks of the Tigris River, resulting in massive pollution and water contamination issues.

During the question and answer follow-up session to his presentation, Dr. Alkafaji noted that 25 million people risked their lives to vote on January 30, 2005 elections in Iraq. And when asked about the general emotions of the Iraqi citizens in response to the war, he reported that while many are scared for their safety, most are filled with a sense of hope from their new-found freedom to stand up to their government and demand change. He noted that his own relatives left their houses together on the morning of January 30th to vote, but not without informing their children of the whereabouts of their wills and other valuable possessions. Their demonstration of independence was moving, and immortalized by a symbol that has come to represent both universal suffrage and freedom: purple-painted fingers.



Dr. Alkafaji explains the significance of purple-painted fingers

Plenty of Room at the Hotel Rwanda

by Vivas Kaul

What do you get when you recast the part of Oskar Schindler in *Schindler's List* with Don Cheadle, replace the factory with a prestigious hotel, and replace the Nazi's with the Hutu tribe? What you get is a film that appears to have been swallowed by a tide of very viable Oscar nominees. Despite its lack of actual awards at this year's Oscars, *Hotel Rwanda* accurately and poignantly depicts the battle between the Hutu militia and the Tutsi rebels in the early 90's.

The story of *Hotel Rwanda* begins with hotelier Paul Rusesabagina (Don Cheadle, *Ocean's 12*) traveling by car to his food and beverage supplier. During his trip the audience hears the radio report the early stirrings of the Hutu and Tutsi tensions in Rwanda. Eventually the hotel becomes Rusesabagina's haven for over 1000 refugees being hunted by the Hutu militia at the height of the conflict. From this early point in the movie, the intensity quickly increases and that knot in your stomach begins to tighten as we witness one of the largest mass murders in recent history.

As terse as that plot outline is, it is important to remember that this film follows chronologically, in much the same slow building of plot as most movies depicting mass murder, or genocide. Unlike its predecessors (*Schindler's List* and *The Pianist*) though, it does a good job of relating the story of horrors of this conflict without focusing on the gory aspects of the incident. There are numerous times in both *List* and *Pianist* when there is an almost excessive (though believable) amount of death occurring on screen. *Hotel* does this very effectively by allow the viewer to actively imagine many of the killings from the descriptions and depictions offered by the characters. The movie, however, is not without its moments of intense on screen action. There are several moments of excitement depicting Colonel Oliver (aka Nick Nolte, *Mulholland Falls*) trying his hardest to help the refugees. The movie though, focuses on the love story between Paul and

Tatiana with the African genocide as the background. This makes the movie more memorable by including a more easily relatable human aspect, however it sometimes seems to weaken the story telling by the repetition of the romantic moments.

The film features both excellent direction and well portrayed characters. The cast of predominantly African actors tells the story as though experiencing it first hand. From the initial scene, it is obvious why Cheadle was nominated for an Oscar. *Hotel Rwanda* was unfortunately unable to compete effectively against the other nominees at this year's awards, unlike *Schindler's List*, which took home seven Oscars including Best Picture and Best Director the year of its nomination. One could argue that as a film depicting a true story, its main competition was only other films that were historical or biographical in nature. Unfortunately, the film was released during a year when biographical movies were studio priority. The other competitors were *The Aviator* (the story of eccentric millionaire Howard Hughes), *Ray* (the story of musician Ray Charles), and *Finding Neverland* (the story of author J.M. Barrie).

All in all the film is definitely worth a look. However, the real question is what will be the consequence now that the film has been released. Personally, I would not be surprised if, in the near future, people were talking about Don Cheadle in reference to this movie as opposed to *Ocean's 11*.

Rating: *** (out of 5)

