
* THE HONORS NEWSLETTER *

ISSUE 1, Vol. 1

October, 1984

+++++

HONOR STUDENTS VISIT WINERIES
by Tony Sapienza

On September 30, students from the Honors Program visited two rather well-known wineries near Keuka Lake in the Finger Lakes region: Bully Hill and Taylor and Great Western wineries.

The wineries are quite different from each other. Bully Hill, owned by Walter S. Taylor, makes up in character for what it lacks in size and sophistication. Mr. Taylor takes pride in the fact that his operation only makes wines that are as natural as possible. From vine to bottle, the grapes are grown and processed without any extra additives and in the safest manner in this small wine center. The tour brings one from the fields where the grapes are grown to where the juice is extracted, right over to where the wine and champagne are bottled, labeled and aged. Being an artist, Mr. Taylor does all the artwork for the labels of his wines, and all the paintings and drawings seen on the premises are of his own doing.

Just down the road from Bully Hill is the Taylor and Great Western Wine Center, now owned by Seagrams. Taylor differs vastly from Bully Hill with respect to size and character of the winery. When inside the plant, one can see tremendous vats, where the wine is kept. Much of the bottling is done in the tradition of modern

bottling plants. The winery enlists the use of high-tech machinery in the making of its wines, champagnes and sherries.

One of the more enjoyable aspects of the winery was the wine-tasting segments at the end of each tour. At each of the wineries, students had the chance to sample the final products of Bully Hill and Taylor. At Bully Hill, the wine-tasting was done on a bar which overlooked Keuka Lake and the surrounding hills, a most scenic atmosphere. The Taylor wine-tasting segment took place in a dimly lit wine cellar, which added to the effect of the wine itself. All in all, the trip was one that anyone could appreciate and definitely should experience.

Newsletter Announces Contest

If you are not intrigued, amused or enthralled by the title of this newsletter, then you should definitely continue reading.

The staff of this newsletter is sponsoring a contest to choose its title. Any student in the Honors Program is eligible to enter. To do so, leave your name, address, telephone, and title suggestion with Belle Hopkins in the Science Center, Room 410. Enter as often as you wish, but please have your entry or entries in by Monday, November 5, 1984. The winning entry will be used as the title for all subsequent newsletters.

If you don't have a phone, and if you don't have a chance to drop by and see Belle, you may also enter via computer! Just send a mail message to the Honors Program Newsletter by mailing to "HONORS" and

leaving the required information.

If you are feeling creative one day, why not give the contest a try?

Update on Science

by Stephanie Phillips

The Science and Pseudoscience seminar has read and discussed in great detail Worlds in Collision by Velikovsky and Scientists Confront Velikovsky, edited by Donald Goldsmith. Immanuel Velikovsky believed that close encounters between the Earth and the planets Mars and Venus are responsible for many of the catastrophic events described in the Bible and other ancient writings. With the help of Scientists Confront Velikovsky and Drs. Davis and Sass, we have analyzed and criticized Velikovsky's theories.

UPDATE ON THINKING

by Teri Gluck

Upon entering the McNamara room at the campus center Wednesday evenings, one might be surprised to walk into a room full of students who appear to be asleep. Appearances can be deceiving, as Dr. Roger Straus is not boring the students in Honors 103 so terribly that they fell asleep. In reality, Dr. Straus is helping us to relax and understand our minds. Every Wednesday evening from 6:30 until 8:10 p.m., twenty-six students in the Honors Program break down their preconceptions about thinking and view the world through the eyes of

Gregory Bateson in his book Mind and Nature: A Necessary Unity. After discussing thinking, the class usually takes a break (which is necessary after Bateson). We return put our books away and prepare to go over the exercises and examples for the week in Dr. Straus's book Strategic Self-Hypnosis. This part of the class session is a welcome break in the hectic lives of Alfred University Honors students. It is a chance to clear your mind, imagine a fantasy, and recapture a memory. We do this part of the class in a workshop approach with Dr. Straus as the leader of the group. Each student is responsible for keeping a journal, which is directly related to our mind-work exercises done in class. Strategic Self-Hypnosis aids us by presenting a purpose, a method, and a script for each experiment. These journals will be handed in at the next-to-last session. At our last meeting, each student will be obligated to lead the group in short mind-work exercises. In addition, a paper discussing one's own idea of the "pattern which connects", a subject discussed in Bateson and Chuang Tzu: Basic Writings (translated by Burton Watson), will be handed in at th last class.

The class is of interest to ceramic engineers and art majors alike, making us think and use our minds in ways we have never conceived of before.

An Interview with Dr. Straus by Bonya Redden

Dr. Roger Straus is the professor for the Honors Seminar "Thinking," held on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 p.m. We thought that we should let you know a little about him.

Dr. Straus was born and raised on Long Island and attended Great Neck South High School. He was eager to finish school and discover the world, so he applied for early admission to Antioch University in Yellow Springs, Ohio. Dr. Straus remained there for two years. Wanting a change, he left for New York City to attend a school for social research. He stayed there for one year and then took a five year break to spend some time "experiencing" life. He sold wire equipment in Los Angeles for awhile and then decided to go back to school in 1972. Dr. Straus said, "People didn't care how much I knew; I discovered that I needed a certificate of proof."

Dr. Straus went to Humboldt State University in the Redwoods of California. He was an East Asian Studies major (a sort of mixed social sciences). He went on to graduate school at V.C. Davis to obtain his Masters and Ph.D. He was interested in sociology and studied cults and religious diversion.

Straus had been trained in field research, and he got a job at V.C. Davis as a director of a hypnosis clinic. He felt that it was interesting, and he wanted to get involved in the in the life-change process. Dr. Straus went into practice and gave public workshops on hypnosis. He based his book, Strategic Self-Hypnosis, on his actual experiences. He is using his own book in the Honors Seminar.

Dr. Straus has enjoyed his seminar so far. He likes it, because he feels that that it it gives himself and his students a chance to learn something in a fun and beneficial way. He is a people-loving person and likes to meet his students. His office hours are from 2

p.m. to 4 p.m., Monday to Thursday, in case you would like to drop by and say hello.

Dr. Straus has written another book that should be in print by next semester's seminar. Keep your eyes open for it.

A General Plea

Beginnings are difficult. This newsletter is the first of hopefully many newsletters. With time and patience, this newsletter should become an integral part of the Honors Program at Alfred University. Hopefully, it will serve as a colligative device, while it gives honor students a chance to be heard by other honor students.

To make this newsletter a complete success, we need your thoughtful input and fresh ideas. This is your newsletter. If there is any news item or feature that you would like to see, please contact your representative on the staff. In the Science and Pseudoscience seminar, see Stefanie Phillips. Those in Thinking may contact Joe Keddle. Let us hear your thoughts and opinions.

You may send a letter to the editor of the newsletter by dropping it off at Belle's office in the Science Center. If you have an account on the computer, you may "mail" your letter that way. "Address" it to "HONORS."

Anyone interested in writing one or two articles for the newsletter should feel most free to do so. The next staff meeting for the newsletter will be in the Science Center, Room 405 on Thursday, October 25, at 12 noon. Feel welcome to attend.

DIRECTOR'S CORNER: The Honors Ideology

by Prof. Larry Greil

Over the past year and a half, I have been to three Honors Conferences. At these conferences faculty, students and administrators get together to discuss the Honors programs at their schools. One thing that has become clear to me as I have participated in such discussions is that the word "Honors" connotes more than just an enriched curriculum; "Honors," rather, is a code word for an educational ideology that differs in some basic respects from the ideology that prevails at most institutions of higher education.

The central element of the Honors ideology is that learning should be active rather than passive. Seminars, where students take partial responsibility for their own education, are preferred to lectures. Most Honors programs try to give students an active role in determining the shape of the Honors program and of Honors courses. Requirements for Honors courses usually emphasize creativity and insight rather than memorization and mastery of some specific body of knowledge.

Honors programs are often "undisciplined." By undisciplined I mean that they try to break out of the traditional disciplinary boundaries of academia in order to divide subjects up in new ways. The Honors ideology says that learning should be playful. The traditional view that knowledge is best gained in a predetermined and orderly progression from sample problems to more complex ones is challenged by an experimental attitude, that holds that there is an

infinite number of ways to put ideas together. The Honors ideology holds that the learning process is more important than the content presumably being mastered. While it would probably be exaggerating to say that innovation is valued for its own sake, I think it is fair to say that people's eyes light up when someone talks about an unorthodox approach to instruction.

Another element of the Honors ideology is the idea that education should be personal and personalized. In many large universities, Honors is seen as an oasis of personal relationships and small classes in a desert of lecture halls and television monitors. Many of the things that large schools created Honors programs to accomplish happen at Alfred University as a matter of course. We already have small classes and personal relationships between students and faculty; we do not need Honors to supply such things. At a school like Alfred, the mission of Honors is more related to those aspects of the ideology I listed previously.

We try to inject an element of playfulness into the learning process and to give students greater control of their own learning. Students tell me on occasion that they regard their Honors Seminars as "vacations" from their "regualar" courses. That's the way it's supposed to be. The Honors Program is designed, not to burden students with more work, but to provide them with an alternative educational experience alongside their more traditional courses.

THE IDEA OF A UNIVERSITY

by Richard Campanella

I recently noticed a friend of mine appearing very depressed and sullen. Upon my asking what was the matter, he told me that he had received a "C" on a paper which he had written and I had proof-read. The essay, in my opinion, deserved an average grade, but the amount of knowledge my friend had put into it and received from it more than offset the disappointing grade. Yet he was devastated by it, saying that if he continued to get mediocre grades, he would have a difficult time getting employed. Is this a contradiction? Is the ultimate value or purpose of a University education a paycheck, or is it to produce a well- rounded, learned individual?

The top priority of an institution of higher education is relative to the students it encompasses. If a pupil is attending for the sole reason of pursuing knowledge and becoming a more learned, cosmopolitan human being, then that person is a student of a legitimate, true University. If one attends an institution so as to qualify for a better job and more money, then that person is a student of a vocational school. No matter how mandatory earning tens of thousands of dollars may be these days, the true purpose of a University remains the pursuit of knowledge, not the pursuit of a paycheck.

In the words of John Henry Newman, too many people "argue as if everything, as well as every person, had its price; and that where there has been a great outlay, they have a right to expect a return in kind," as if knowledge itself is a useless tool when not accompanied by a financial reward.

Perhaps we as honor students should keep this in mind in our pursuit of goals.

HOT NEWS FLASH

The seminars for next semester have been selected; titles and descriptions follow.

The Crisis in Central America - Dr. N. Robinson

A discussion of the current social, economic and political problems of the area. Historical background, American involvement and possible solutions will be explored. Emphasis will be on the current crisis in these countries as modified by current events.

Fiction into Film - Dr. L. Greiff

Our course will involve a comparative study of six works of 20th century fiction and their film version. The intent of such a study will be at least two-fold: first, to reach an understanding, through close analysis, of the individual books and films; then to draw some conclusions about the process of "translation" or transformation from an artwork formed of words to one formed primarily, of images. The seminar will also take up the relationship between elite art and popular art in the present age.

Dr. Ben Howard
Seldin Hall 0014