

# Sublunary Life.

ALFRED UNIVERSITY'S NON-PAREIL, ORIGINAL AND UNPARALLELED, BIGGER AND BETTER THAN EVER, PANJANDRUM GENERATED HONORS PROGRAM NEWSLETTER. ONE LONG LAUGH. EVERY PROMISE MADE FAITHFULLY KEPT.

This year's freshman class is the biggest (42) ever. A vibrant and accomplished group--there are 16 National Merit Scholars and 15 valedictorians/salutatorians--they write well, too, as these snippets culled from admissions essays attest. Trust me.

"Since the beginning of recorded history, Mankind has labored towards one, final, ultimate goal. He has toiled, suffered, and bled to produce one complete expression of his vast knowledge. He has sought to make his dreams reality and change his style of life by realizing his finest contribution to the universe. THE AUTOMOBILE.

Yes, I'll admit it: I'm hooked on cars. Even the most scholarly have their hobbies, and mine has been lusting after combustion engines. It hit me during my sophomore year of high school, and has been with me ever since.

I amassed veritable mountains of automobile magazines, immersing myself in both the superficial and technical aspects of these marvelous machines. While I had always been a good student, I had to admit that I was stumped. Overhead dual combobulators? Blown manifolded whatsis discrumulators? It read like so much nonsense. I decided on a plan of action. First acquire an automobile, then figure out why and how it worked.

After several months of psychological torture, I was able to get my generous father to assist me financially. We looked briefly at a friend's battered vehicle, then drove over to the local used car lot to see if we could do better. I say this only because, the entire time we spent prior to entering that lot, I could hear her calling me.

Nestled among the used Buicks and Oldsmobiles was a vision in bright red: "Baby," a 1984 Pontiac Sunbird. Dad was eyeing a wagon of some sort. "This would be great for taking stuff to college," he said with vigor.

"The red one," I mumbled.

"Lots of cargo space." It was dark blue. Very dark blue.

"The red one. Please, have mercy, oh Paternal Icon of Eternal Wisdom!" I don't recall getting on my knees. I may have.

I have very fond memories of that car, from late summer to fall. Its life span under my care was about three months. I learned an important lesson in physics: never take on a full-sized Oldsmobile with any car you would like to keep. (I still have the defroster switch from the dash -- it landed in my lap with my heart.) At least Baby took a few thousand dollars of body work with her. She went out in a blaze of glory.

We were back at the land of used cars two days later. Still in shock from Baby's loss, all I could think of were scenes from Mad Max and The Road Warrior. In a few days I was driving the biggest car they had -- a Chevrolet Caprice Classic, in stunning two-tone green on gray.

I still have that car, and admire its ability to withstand my abuse. Formerly owned by a retired couple, I have forced it to suffer the ignominy of fuzzy dice and smoking tires. With this car I have come to regard mechanics as minor deities. I will share with you a recent conversation I had with one.

"Well, Mr. Elmore, your oil light was flickering because you needed four quarts of oil."

"Really? I check it every week."

"That's the automatic transmission fluid, Mr. Elmore."

"Really? Say, just out of curiosity, how bad would it be to pour a quart of oil down there?"

If you have never seen a cartoon character's eyes literally burst out of its head, you cannot understand my mechanic's reaction.

I continue to eat, sleep, and breathe automobiles. I look forward to graduating and getting a totally impractical, tire squealing, rumbling automobile that will go faster than I'll ever dare drive it.

And I want it to be red."

--Phil ("Phil") Elmore



Andrea Gill writes that when "challenged in an argumentative fashion on a subject such as religion, I like to play the devil's advocate and rip, perhaps with an annoying smirk, into every side of the discussion; it is easy and amusing to be against everything. I don't tend to commit myself too readily, or to slide too far toward (m)any ideals. For instance, although I like greenery, intricate combinations of all kinds of life, etc., I can't always feel that all oil refineries or factories are ugly; in fact, most decaying structures, regardless of their former purposes or sins, are extremely interesting. "Ugly" is a gut call, and apparently my gut doesn't care. Intricacy is beauty, and from my perspective there isn't much difference between a rusting oil refinery on the Monongehela and that hot, buggy section of forest by the side of a dirt road. Both are products of nature, both are complicated and pleasing to look at, neither is kind or gentle, and neither will survive long enough to be worthy of much notice. Thank God for the fossil record; it shows us our pipsqueak selves from a planetary point of view....I hate Heinlin's so-called "noisy box," almost with desperation: television has hooked me, shortened my attention span, and gutted my creativity. It is impossible to keep from staring till my eyes turn red at all those pretty people. I swear I'll never waste money on a television. Really. I work at a radio station."

Lincoln Young had this to say about tv. "I was talking to my physics teacher last week, and he told me that the average person watches seven hours of television every day. Seven hours of television would make anyone average....When watching television, how much does a person move? They do not. The arm moves to get the junk food, or change the channel with the remote, but the body never moves. The eyes do not even have to refocus! I happen to believe that movement is one of the things that distinguishes if a person is dead or alive."

By that definition, Heather Thorp is alive: "Basketball. Softball. Volleyball. Ping Pong. The Los Angeles Lakers. The New York Yankees. Magic Johnson. Don Mattingly. Sports!! Sports are intertwined with every part of my life. I love to play basketball in all forms: 1 on 1, H-O-R-S-E, twenty-one, pick-up games, organized competition. You name it, I'll play it."

Nell Whitman likes "people who are self-reliant, thinking and compassionate. I also like good writing, dogs, cats, and freight trains. Therefore, my idea of heaven might be to be sitting next to a good friend in a moving boxcar or gondola, accompanied by a tramp-dog or tramp-cat, reading a good book."

Jennifer Ferrara has a "rather offbeat sense of humor, which I share with most of my friends. Of course, some of my less jovial acquaintances do consider me somewhat tasteless, but I don't lose much sleep over these opinions. I never, ever, play practical jokes, but I undoubtedly laugh at them, as long as no one is hospitalized or killed in the process. My favorite joke, if it can be called that, was the one that was played on my mother by the car door. It inadvertantly closed as she was exiting the car, and she became stuck, half in, half out. The look on her face, which was misshapen due to the window in her cheek, was of complete incredulity. I laughed hysterically when it occurred, when I recounted it at Denny's with my friends, and I do believe I am beginning to chuckle, chortle, and guffaw right now."

Shelley Lovelace, who transferred to Alfred from UC Santa Cruz, sent along a "Dictionary of Reflections." Heres' a sampling:

--Feminist: a person, usually a woman, who believes women are people.

--Language: largely random code which delimits, structures, and presumes to communicate our experience/ideas. Ha!

--Insomnia: an inadvertant lifestyle of unknown origin with the dubious side effect of facilitating poetry.

--Morning: euphemism for hell.

Heather Roffe wrote "For as long as I can remember, I've wanted to be a ballerina (if you don't count the years when I was sure I wanted to be a princess)."

The last word goes to Amy Gallagher: "Finally, I just want to add that, above all, I like to be myself. Not necessarily different from everybody else, just to be myself."

I had really hoped to hold our Death by Chocolate reception in Park Place, the new Honors house, but wasn't sure all the furniture would be there in time. As it turned out, with 120 plus in Honors now, we can't all fit in there at one time anyway. Besides, Alumni Hall is such an elegant space it's nice to meet there, tho I was a bit worried as I watched the piranha-ish activity around the truffle topped chocolate-amaretto brownies. Some freshmen got a running head start on their "freshman fifteen."

Sometime soon the Honors Advisory Committee will meet (with the current residents of 8 Park). The sole agenda topic: how to get the best out of Park Place. This year's committee has Mini Georgekutty, Dawn Haney, Melissa Hirshson, and Marianne Lyons as its student reps. Please pass along any suggestions you might have for Park Place to me, Bev, its residents, your student reps. We'll be holding the freshman pizza dinner there, and (probably) have a cookout for everyone in Honors. PP will also be used as a nesting place for outstanding high school "prospectives" who want to stay overnight on campus. If their parents come with them, I suppose they can stay just across the street at Broadway. Anyway, the committee will have to discuss the best way to utilize its rooms, ie, what's the optimum number of residents, which should be the study room(s), do we want to use both downstairs rooms for seminars, etc. The study room (with its VAX hookup and printer) is open to anyone in Honors--if you get there before 11 (after that the front door may be locked) you can work on the VAX or just have a quiet place to study as late as you want.



Having a quiet place to study seems like the right kind of thing for Honors to be sponsoring. While we're on that topic, let me draw your attention to "Perks and Extras," which is attached to this edition of Sublunary Life. The most popular "perks" involve library privileges at Herrick and Scholes. At Herrick you get automatic renewal of books, and are allowed to check out journals; at Scholes you get to stay on and study (and use the journals there, which don't circulate) after the usual closing time. To get these privileges you need a "professional courtesy card" for Herrick and a "permission memo" from Scholes--see "Perks and Extras" for details of these and other niceities.

Here are a few things freshmen might like to know. Friday is a big day in Alfred, for on Friday fresh bagels and challah are available at Kinfolk, Alfred's best (and only) "natural food" store. Stop in and shoot the breeze with Eliot and Jessen, its literate and worldly proprietors. Watch the expression on Jessen's face when you tell her your idea of a good meal is a trio of Unidogs, vegetables that were sprayed with Iraqi insecticides, and grapes from Chile for dessert. But before you do that, go to the Alfred Alternative Cinema on Thursday night. For two bucks you can see such classics as De Sica's "The Bicycle Thief," Kurosawa's "Seven Samurai," or Bergman's "Wild Strawberries." Then there's Dr. Ohara's non-alternative cinema, in McLane on Fridays and Sundays, where you can see "Sex, Lies, and Videotape," "My Left Foot," "The Hunt for Red October," or "Pretty Woman," for two and a half bucks. I should also mention that each year I send Admissions a list of students I think would make good tour guides. This is such a big freshman class I probably won't get to know all of you right away, so if you're interested in tour guiding, go up to Admissions and make yourself known. Along those lines: each spring I match up big brothers and sisters with incoming freshmen, and each fall a few upperclassmen/women ask how come they weren't chosen. Well, here's your chance. If you want to be a big brother or sister, please tell Bev, and next year you'll be assigned a younger sibling. Finally, in addition to this panjandrum generated newsletter, there's the student publication, the Honors Envoy. This year its editors are Susan Kelleher and Melissa Hirshson, both of whom live in Park Place. They've already sent out a memo asking for submissions; you can make them happy by giving your stuff to Bev, or delivering it to 8 Park, or sending it thru campus mail (to "Park Place"), or sending it via EMail. In past years we've had the inimitable Chris Moore's movie reviews, not to mention cartoons, recipes, and essays on such things as vegetarianism and yuppies.

Here are a few things upperclassmen would like to know. The mailing on theses has already gone out. The first hurdle is to return the "Statement of Intent" to me by the due date in December, along with the required signatures. I've met with many of you to discuss projects, committee members, etc. If you haven't seen me yet, please do.

Kate Loomis is back from her co-op in Washington DC, as is Mike Karb who spent last spring in Spain. Steve Reis is in New Hampshire on co-op (we ran into him and his parents in Boothbay this summer). Two alums dropped in last week--Chris Miller will be finishing his MS at RPI, and Valerie Colavito is working on her Ph. D. in psych down in Florida. There's a bevy of Honors engineering grads at Cornell--Steve Tinkler and Mike Mallamaci are rooming together; Joe Keddie is close to finishing there, as is Tom Conlon, who should be a JD (lawyer) soon.

Tradition, as Tevya liked to say, gives us stability and a sense of connection with the past; that being the case, let me remind you of a very important part of Honors tradition. Say it with pride:

"Our Motto"

Time flies like an arrow  
Fruit flies like a banana.

Paul Strong  
9/90





## --ROAD TRIPS--

Road trips are meant for students in Honors; not surprisingly, some of you have wanted to bring a roommate or friend. Such requests will be handled as follows: until a week before the performance, tickets will be sold only to those in Honors. If places are left a week before showtime, you may buy a ticket for anyone you please. RPO trips are \$15 this year; theatre trips (Jane Eyre and The Phantom of the Opera) are \$20. For this you get chauffeur service to Rochester (moi), dinner out, and tickets. Trips leave at 4 or 4:30, depending on curtain time, and we usually get back to campus by 12:30 am. To sign up, see Bev Saxton in 224 Myers.

Thursday, October 4: JANE EYRE, THE MUSICAL, at the Geva Theatre. Dinner at Mamasan's, a Thai restaurant. Geva describes this as "a musical version of Charlotte Bronte's timeless classic...the adaptation by Ted Davis has all the mystery and romance of the novel you read in high school, but it's more. It's set to music! Lyrics by Ted Davis. Music by David Clark."

Thursday, October 11: National Touring Company of THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA, presented by the Rochester Broadway Theatre League. Dinner at Rochester native Sarah Richter's favorite Chinese restaurant.

Saturday, November 3: ROCHESTER PHILHARMONIC trip; dinner at India House, a superb restaurant. The RPO program is called "Knight Errant." The notes say it will "open with the overture from an opera about knights, courtly behavior and the romance of chivalry. "Il distratto," the subtitle of Haydn's sixtieth symphony, means "the madman," and this is certainly reflected in the madness of the music! Chivalry and madness, of course, meet in the famous character of Don Quixote, whose adventures are so graphically depicted by Strauss. (Look out for a passing flock of sheep, and even a windmill)."

And you can look forward to this spring's trip to the Eastern Regional meeting of the National Collegiate Honors Conference someplace in Delaware.

--DINNERS--

Lunches or dinners with visiting speakers are at Manhattan West, and are free (to you). I'll send specifics as soon as I can nail down names and dates, but right now it looks like we may have dinners with Lester Milbrath, a visiting environmental scientist, the cast of Oil City, and perhaps visiting pianist Leon Bates.

This year's traditional PIZZA DINNER FOR FRESHMEN will be held in Park Place (8 Park Street), Monday night, September 24, at 6 pm. 6 kinds of pizza and a bucket of wings from the New York Pizzeria. Free. Come schmooze around with your fellows.

COMING SOON!!!!!! ON A CAMPUS NEAR YOU !!!! the first annual, non-traditional, OUTDOOR HONORS BARBECUE, date to be announced by the residents of Park Place.



## Perks & Extras

Honor students who pass four seminars, graduate with a 3.2 grade point average, and write and defend an Honors thesis will have the designation "Alfred University Scholar":

1. printed on their transcript
2. printed on their diploma
3. published in the Commencement Exercises Booklet

Theses will be bound and become part of Herrick Library's Special Collections. Additionally, at Honors Convocation, each student who is expected to graduate as an AU Scholar will be called to the stage to receive an award.

### At Herrick Library

If you wish to use the special services listed below, you must complete a "Professional Courtesy Card" application form (available at the library's Circulation Desk). It needs to be signed by Dr. Strong and by Lana Meissner, University Librarian. A special library card will be issued to you which will bear the designation "Honors." This card must be renewed each year. It will entitle you to:

1. Automatic Renewal of Library Materials: This privilege applies to all circulating library materials with the exception of videocassettes, compact disks, periodicals, and reserves. When you bring materials to the desk to be checked out of the library, show your courtesy card and sign your name, address, student number and "honors" on each check-out card. These items will be automatically renewed UNLESS they are requested by another patron. All library materials are due the last Tuesday that classes meet before the end of the semester.
2. Checking-out Magazines, Journals, Periodicals: With the exception of certain high-use items such as Time and Newsweek, journals may be signed out of the library by honor students for a two week period unless a particular title is requested by another patron. Show your courtesy card to the staff member at the Periodicals Desk and fill out two request slips. Once an item is signed out, bring it to the Circulation Desk to be desensitized; otherwise you will set off an alarm as you leave the building.
3. Special Collections: Honor students are eligible for special privileges granted on an individual basis by the University Archivist.

### At Scholes Library

1. Honor students "will be allowed to stay in the library at closing time, as are graduate students. Each student who wishes to use this privilege must request a 'permission memo' from the Library Director's office which he/she will need to show the security guard who checks credentials after hours."

### Funding for the Honors Thesis

1. Funds will be available to support Honor Thesis research.

### Visiting Speakers

1. Honor students will have the opportunity to dine with visiting speakers and artists; if a performance is not sold out, honor students who have dined with a visiting speaker or artist may buy two tickets for the price of one from Matt Dubai.

## The Honors Program at Alfred University

### Policies

1. Honor students are required to take four 2-credit honor seminars. During the first year a seminar is required each semester; students must then take two during the three semesters which follow.
2. It is sometimes necessary for honor students in Business, Ceramic Art, Liberal Arts, or Nursing to register for more than eighteen credits in order to fulfill their major requirement and attend an honors seminar. Should this circumstance arise, they are not to be charged for the two extra credits, as long as 1) they are enrolled in an honors seminar, 2) their total number of credits does not exceed twenty. Since public and private sector engineers can register for up to twenty credits without incurring an overload charge, when taking an honors seminar they may register for up to twenty-two credits at no extra charge.
3. AU students (with the exception of those in the School of Engineering) are permitted to take one course a semester on a "pass/fail" basis. Honor students are permitted to take an honors seminar plus one other two or four credit course per semester on a "pass/fail" basis.
4. Students in the School of Art and Design may count Honors courses in the academic elective and free elective categories. Students in the School of Engineering may count Honors courses in the Humanities elective or technical elective category, depending on the nature of the Honors course, in consultation with the adviser.
5. To graduate as an Alfred University Scholar, a student must have a 3.2 grade point average, successfully complete four seminars, and write and defend an Honors thesis.



## "Death of a Journalist"

by Melissa Hirshson  
October, 1990

He won't make it past the summer, my mother had said.  
We've seen the results--the cancer has spread.  
Impossible, I laughed. He's not going to die.  
We are immortal together, he and I.  
He was the one who taught me to be free,  
To write a story, sail a ship, read a book. Yippie!  
Watch a silly program. Tell stupid jokes.  
And watch the reactions of the stuffy other folks.  
He loved going to bars, in spite of mom's hate,  
But I could never go with him till it was too late.  
He did what he wanted, nothing bothered him at all  
Except maybe the fact that he wasn't very tall.  
Helplessly I watched him slip away  
There were so many things that I wanted to say.  
I desperately wanted to ask about flying  
And he wanted to answer as he lay there dying.  
But it happened! Not the man I love,  
The man whom I constantly think of.  
People would make me so utterly mad  
When they would repeatedly ask, "How's your dad?"  
How do you think he is? I wanted to shout  
You've seen him too, of his death there's no doubt.  
But I was barely heard; swarms of people came  
But comforting mom, not me, was their aim.  
My crying matched hers, it was just as loud  
But I'm just the daughter, lost in the crowd.  
Two days before school started, he died  
The doctor couldn't save him--they hadn't lied.  
His grave is simple; it says "newspaperman"  
I'm going to be the best writer I can.  
Why did it happen? I'm not even full grown!  
I'll have to continue solely on my own.  
It doesn't make sense! After this year  
College will be over. Real life is too near.  
I no longer believe in heaven and hell,  
But wherever he is, I hope he is well.  
Every night in my room I look all around  
And cry in despair but can't utter a sound.  
I throw things against the wall, I scream  
Hopelessly wishing it's only a dream.