Calendar:

May 6: Last class day of Spring 2011 semester

May 20 - 21: Spring Graduation ceremonies

June 6: Summer Orientation for new LAH students begins

August 23: LAH Kick-off Lunch

August 24: First Class Day

November 1: Last day an undergraduate student may, with the dean’s approval, drop a class or change a class to pass/fail

November 24-26: Thanksgiving break

December 2: Last class day

December 3-4 Fall Graduation ceremonies

From the director’s desk:

We in the Liberal Arts Honors Program just completed the happy task of awarding $80,000 in scholarships to help defray the costs for 28 LAH students who will be studying abroad this coming summer and fall semesters of 2011--Damascus, Syria; Alexandria, Egypt; Beijing, China; Santander, Spain; and Córdoba, Argentina; among other destinations. Last October we were able to award $40,000 to students currently studying abroad. Soon will be providing as many as twenty $1,000 scholarships for those students engaged in unpaid internships this summer. This is the good news. The challenging news is that we would like to be able to open these opportunities to all LAH students. We have, moreover, little scholarship money to offer incoming freshmen or to sustain our sophomores, juniors, and seniors as the cost of tuition and living expenses at U.T. Austin continue to rise. In 1990 when LAH began, a fulltime student at U.T. Austin living on campus paid some $6,000 a year. This year, as we turn twenty-one, that figure is $20,000. Faced with these growing demands, we look forward in the near future to unveiling a formal campaign for LAH. We will need your help. As you read about what our students are doing in this newsletter--Tony Gutierrez’s study in Japan, Jennifer Dietz’s Costa Rica adventures, Lauren West’s spring internship with Teach for America, Brian Boitmann’s new internet company, and much, much more—you will agree, I think, that in keeping trust with our students--past and present, their accomplishments and aspirations--it is vital that LAH have robust and ongoing sources of financial support. I welcome your comments, suggestions, and questions (carver@austin.utexas.edu).

Best wishes,

Larry Carver
A Sibling Rivalry

In everyday existence, the distinction between good and best is a trivial one. Good hangs around on the billboard charts for a few weeks or a month and is on the prom playlist at high schools across America. Best is the record played over and over again, no matter how scratched it gets. Good is a fixed point on a graph, readily attainable to anyone who puts forth enough effort. However, best exists on another plane altogether. The difference is usually negligible, but is always present.

Good and Best have the same last name, similar backgrounds, but strikingly different personalities. It’s as if Best is the precocious and adorable younger sibling, while Good becomes the sullen, older child. Good’s early years were spent as the center of attention in the close-knit family of three. Christmas cards featured Good wearing a silly hat, Good enjoying his first snowfall, Good petting the family dog. Because of all the attention lavished on Good by his parents, he took his place as the center of attention for granted. The only child had no one to compete with for the sole possession of his parents’ affection.

Upon learning his parents were expecting their second child, Good was not sure how to react. They reassured Good that he would always remain their baby boy, their firstborn. Good took their words at face value. However, as soon as Best was born, the spotlight focused on her. Best was born prematurely and with underdeveloped lungs. She required around-the-clock intensive care the first week of her life. Doctors were bleak with their prognoses, but Best’s condition steadily improved and the hospital released her into the care of her worried, overprotective parents. They had their hands full keeping her healthy and happy through the first tumultuous months of her life, but she survived and quickly thrived. Good watched as all the attention normally devoted to him was diverted toward his baby sister. He recognized the gravity of her condition, but at the same time longed to return to the time when he had been the sole center of attention. Nonetheless, he was happy to see his sister regain her health and become a precocious, young toddler.

As time went by, Good gradually became jealous of Best. Good had played soccer when younger, but never scored so many goals as Best did. Good had learned to read at a young age, but Best finished Great Expectations at the age of five. In high school, Good was well liked, and graduated tenth in his class. Best was homecoming queen her senior year, and graduated valedictorian. The siblings got along, with the inevitable disagreement every now and then—but Good couldn’t shake the feeling of being cheated. Cheated of what, he wasn’t exactly sure, but surely he deserved a greater share of the prestige than he currently had. Best didn’t ever seem to notice a gradual souring in their relationship. In her view, they both did well at the things they cared about. She shone a little brighter, but not for the purpose of casting a shadow on Good.

The two siblings coexisted. Best was unaware of the strain her continual surpassing of Good’s achievements placed on the relationship between the two. Good suspected Best of plotting against him. The perceived slights on his character did nothing to improve the state of his psyche and confidence. Tired of living in her shadow, Good became obsessed with usurping Best.

No matter what Good did, he was never able to harm Best’s reputation. The petty sibling rivalry erupted into a full on conflict when college acceptance letters came home—Good was accepted to the University of Southern California on a partial scholarship to study film. Good was completely satisfied with his college choice and career plans, until it came time for Best to apply. Best received a full ride to the Harvard Business school. Prior to hearing the news, Good had never considered a career in business. He had no desire to put himself through the pressure cooker that is business school. After Best’s acceptance, Good began to doubt his decisions and self-worth. How had Best so easily outdone him? He had been content with his choices, but no matter what his younger sister managed to make him question his progress. As the years passed, tensions between the two abated. Both recognized their unbreakable bond as siblings, especially after the passing of their parents. The deaths brought them closer, their relationship now unmarred by competition for the approval of their parents. No matter their subtle differences, they were family.

It is easy to see the differences between good and best personified, but the distinction is less noticeable in everyday life. Of course, we widely recognized the difference between good and best on the public stage: good teams go to the playoffs, but only the best team wins the championship. Good movies are nominated for the Academy Awards, but there is only one Best Picture. The two are enemies insomuch as siblings are enemies. Fights erupt over who gets the lion’s share of the parents’ attention. Conflicts arise over the amount of space afforded each in the back seat of the car. Best tends to outshine Good, may have the top grades and an outstanding job, but at the end of the day they sleep under the same roof.

- Seve Kale, Humanities, Government, and Spanish/Liberal Arts Honors
LAH Student Council

The LAH Student Council had another great semester and is already making preparations for the next incoming LAH class! This spring, LAHSC hosted five academic/social events for the LAH community: The Ransom Reading Groups, Game Night in the Quad, Glow Night at the Capitol, the Honors Quiz Bowl, and the Quad Waterfest. In addition, LAHSC worked with LAH entrepreneur Brian Boitmann to create an exclusive online sharing network for LAH on ActsOfSharing.com. To date, there is over $4,000 worth of books, movies and games available for LAHers to share for free, and every day the number keeps growing! Furthermore, in keeping with the LAH spirit of service, LAHSC volunteered to help run the LAH booth at Explore UT and helped weatherize a house in South Austin. Lastly, as soon as the summer starts, the LAHSC mentoring committee will be hard at work pairing incoming freshmen with seasoned LAH mentors so the new LAHers can make a seamless transition to UT.

- Juan Salem,
LAH Student Council President

LAH Alumni,

Please keep in touch with us by joining the LAH Alumni facebook group: LAH Alumni.

You can also send updates for future newsletters to Linda Mayhew at lmayhew@austin.utexas.edu

We’d love to hear from you!

Echo

Dear Liberal Arts Honors colleagues,

Looking for an opportunity to publish your prose, poetry, or photography? Echo will soon be soliciting original material for its 2011-2012 issue, and we would love to consider your work. Send anything and everything our way to echolitmag@gmail.com. Feel free to encourage fellow students in your English and Rhetoric classes to do the same.

Additionally, we are always looking for more staff members to help review submissions and work on design and layout. If you would like to be a part of Echo, please email us at the aforementioned address and we will happily add you to our staff mailing list.

Yours sincerely,
Echo staff

LAH Pre-Med Society

The LAH Pre-Med Society is a student-run organization focused on combining the world of Liberal Arts and medicine. Our goal is to provide avenues of resources that will ultimately benefit students who are pursuing a career in the healthcare field but are currently majoring or focusing on a degree in the Liberal Arts arena. Some of the things we have to offer are links to internships around the Austin area, volunteer opportunities at local hospitals and clinics, access to Kaplan and Princeton Review’s MCAT preparation classes, and guest speakers who have gone through the process of balancing Pre-Med with liberal arts and can give us insight into how they worked it in. However, it’s not all academic and work. We have social outings and get-togethers so we can vent and let off some steam. After all, it’s not easy being a Pre-Med student! For more information, contact Nazia Hussain at naz_338@yahoo.com.

LAH Music Ensemble: The Amorous Paulharmonic

Do you play an instrument or sing? The LAH Music Ensemble is looking for anyone and everyone to join this fall! We are a group of LAH students that meets once a week, working to put on a few shows each year. We’ve played at Honors Day, Explore UT, and we always have a holiday concert. We’ve played pieces from almost every musical genre and we are open to anything that our members want to put together. We always need singers and instruments of all kinds (strings, guitar, woodwinds, horns, percussion, etc.). We are also looking for a conductor! If you are interested in songwriting, composing, or performing, then the ensemble would love to have you! My email is Jklingshirn89@gmail.com if you have any questions or are interested in joining. Hook ‘em!

- Jenny Klingshirn
Tony Gutierrez (Government and Asian Cultures and Languages/Liberal Arts Honors) spent almost six months in Japan. He studied abroad in Nagoya at Nanzan University, where he enrolled in Japanese language, literature, translation and creative writing classes. He also traveled to many places in Honshu (the largest island in Japan), including Tokyo, Osaka, Hiroshima, Miwajima, Nara and Yoshino. He had a fantastic time learning about new cultures, traveling around Japan, but most importantly, making many wonderful friends.

Just in for Spring 2011

Senior Juan Salem receives the Patricia Heard Outstanding Student Educator Award.

Junior Janette Martinez receives the Marilyn Heimlick Scholarship for Orientation Advisors.

First Year Students Olivia Applegate and Eric Nikolaides win the Texas Revue with a set including their version of “Ain’t No Sunshine” and “My Favorite Things”.

Congratulations to all our LAHers on their accomplishments!
LAH Abroad:
San José, Costa Rica

As I stepped out of the airport the culture shock set in. This couldn’t be the right country. I didn’t see any monkeys, butterflies, or beaches. I did see lanes of traffic, sidewalks littered with garbage, and an alternating pattern of graffiti-covered cement and barbed wire. This couldn’t be the right country.

Since that first day in San José, Costa Rica, I have come to appreciate and even love this place. Costa Rica struggles with high rates of poverty and crime. The trash collection system doesn’t function. They don’t use street names or numbers, and often give directions based on buildings that once existed but were torn down 20 years ago. Issues like these bogged me down in my first few weeks here. The change came gradually and gloriously; the more Ticos (Costa Ricans) that I got to know, the smaller the country’s faults became. Ticos have an international reputation of kindness, but I argue that it doesn’t come close to describing the truth. One Tica took me on a tour of her city and brought me home for lunch with her family; this was after we met once and talked for 15 minutes. An elderly Tico rescued my friend and me not once, but twice, when we were stranded on a dirt road miles from anywhere (don’t ask how we got stranded twice). One generous Tica made enough gallo pinto, the national dish, to feed over 40 college kids at a student organization party. These aren’t isolated events, they are everyday occurrences, and the beauty of San José is not in its appearance but in its people.

However, the beauty of the countryside is in its appearance as well as its people. I’ve been to four beaches, two volcanoes, and a few national forests. I’ve seen parrots, toucans, monkeys, strange insects, iguanas, butterflies, and crocodiles. This place is breathtaking, and with each sunset Psalm 19:1 echoes through my mind: “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.” I look forward to one more month of travel before the rain comes in May. Costa Rica has two seasons, summer and winter, defined by precipitation rather than by temperature.

Although it might appear otherwise, I do go to class here also. The University of Costa Rica has about 30,000 students and is the largest and most prestigious university in the country. Students start at age 17, and usually take five to six years to get a degree. Most Tico students live with their parents until they graduate, get a job, and get married, so UCR is a commuter school with few student housing options. I go to each class one time a week for three hours, which is difficult coming from UT, where the maximum amount of time that I had to sit still was an hour and 15 minutes. That being said, the professors here continue to surprise me with their relaxed view of time. “Tico time” is in practice throughout the country and extends into the classroom, which means that everything starts late and moves slowly. I am taking two history classes and two government classes. The coursework is challenging, and I spend many hours a week deciphering Spanish political science terms. The time spent in studies is worth it when I go somewhere like Cartago, the country’s oldest city, and see the buildings that the history books talk about.

I don’t have conclusions yet; my time here isn’t over. I’m so excited for three more months of this adventure. I look forward to the people I will meet, the places I will go, and the things that I will learn in school and in life.

- Jennifer Dietz, History/Liberal Arts Honors
Where in the world are LAHers? Summer 2011 Plans

Stefan Berthelsen (Humanities 2013) This summer I will be studying abroad in Antigua, Guatemala, focusing on Second-Language Acquisition in practice and theory.

Allie Besing (2013) I am working as an intern for Rolling Stone Magazine in New York City this summer. Aside from being an avid Rolling Stone reader, I am very excited to learn more about the publication business (as it is a field I’m very interested in for the future) while having the opportunity to live and explore the City!

Caroline Corcoran (2014) I will be guiding a six week outdoor rock climbing trip at the Red River Gorge, just outside of Lexington, Kentucky for the summer!

Jennifer Dietz (2013) I am currently studying abroad at the University of Costa Rica in San José, Costa Rica. My semester won’t end until July, so I’ll be here for the summer! It’s quite different from UT, and I’m learning a lot.

Elisabeth Eikrem (2013) I will be interning on the defense team for former Serbian President Radovan Karadzic at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in Den Haag, the Netherlands.

Kate Erwin (2013) I’ll be working at the Pacific Conservatory of the Performing Arts in Santa Maria, CA as an Assistant Stage Manager.

Madison Estes (2014) I will be staying in Austin and will be interning at the Hotze & Runkle, PLLC Law Firm downtown!

Katy Eyberg (2013) I’m sticking around Austin to attend summer school, bicycle around the city, volunteer with LAH, and work on the Micah 6 ESL Project.

Mary Hausle (2013) I will be interning with the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage. Every summer they put on a Folklife Festival for a week where they feature three different “exhibits” on the national mall. This year they are featuring Peace Corps, Rhythm and Blues, and Colombia. For each exhibit they bring in 100 “participants” --people who are specialists in each area. For example, in the Colombia unit, the theme is “La naturaleza de Colombia,” Colombia’s nature and ecosystems. So the Smithsonian will be bringing in Colombians from 7 different ecosystems like the Andean Highlands, urban centers, or the rainforests among others.

For each different unit, the participants will display different aspects of their culture. For example, in the Colombia unit—which is where I will be working—they will be displaying traditional music, foods, or specialty crafts from each of their ecosystems. As an intern, I will be working closely with Colombian Participants, making sure they are comfortable, serving as a sort of middle man between the participants and the visitors (every year they get about a million visitors over the week!), and just sort of making sure everything runs smoothly in the participant’s booth/area. It should be really hectic and really exciting!

Catherine Hernando (Humanities 2013) This summer I am teaching lessons at 26-Music School and am holding a strings summer camp and workshop for all of my students.

Jamie Hill (2014) I will be an Orientation Advisor this summer!

Michelle Lawrence (2013) This summer I will be studying abroad in Rome, Italy through the Rome Study Program affiliated with UT. I will have the opportunity to stay with a host family in Rome and

Damir Ljuboja (Humanities 2013) I will spend my summer interning at the Harvard Stem Cell Institute in conjunction with Harvard University, its medical school, teaching hospitals, and research centers. Specially, I will be working in the Orkin lab on employing engineered mice to dissect the genetic pathogenesis of two forms of leukemia with distinctive biology. I plan to take a few summer courses through either UT Extension or the Harvard Summer School program. Lastly, I have arranged to participate in the Riverside rowing camp during my time in Cambridge with members of both the Harvard Crew and the National Men’s Lightweight team. With any extra time I will focus on volunteering at nearby hospitals and preparing for the MCAT.

Blake Meyer (Humanities 2013) I’m studying abroad in Barcelona, Spain for 6-7 weeks then probably volunteering at the Texas Civil Rights Project for the other part :)”

Landen Moody (2013) I will be interning with PepsiCo this summer as a sales intern.

Sam Naik (2013) I’ll be studying Spanish in Córdoba, Argentina in the UT Faculty-led Summer Abroad program.
LAH Study Abroad Scholarships

Applications will be due Monday, November 1, 2011 at 5 pm for students planning to study abroad in the Spring 2012 semester. Students must plan on studying a foreign language while abroad in order to be eligible for funding.

Apply online: http://utdirect.utexas.edu/student/abroad/globalassist.WBX

Charles Nwaogu (2013) I will be studying abroad with the Arabic Overseas Flagship Program in Egypt this summer at Alexandria University (Alexandria, Egypt).

McLean Rabb (2013) For the summer I’m going to be interning at the Barton Warrnock Visitor Center of Big Bend Ranch State Park. The internship is classified as a State Park Management Internship. I’ll be working all the different facets of the state park. I’ll be living in a mobile home provided by the park in the middle of nowhere. Sounds great to me!

Steven Xie (2013) I’ll be working here at UT as an Orientation Advisor this summer.

Words of Wisdom

My advice would be to not overload yourself. Don’t feel like you have to sign up for everything, because the people you surround yourself with and the relationships you develop are a lot more important than what you do (and the Quad is a great place to find that community)! - Becky Dobyns

Take advantage of what UT has to offer - through and outside of LAH. Don’t hesitate to join clubs, special departmental programs, or study abroad. These experiences will allow you to connect with students and faculty. Without these experiences, I, for one, would not have loved my undergraduate experience nearly as much.

- Lauren Ayers

My advice for incoming LAHers would be to take advantage of the seemingly endless opportunities that UT has to offer. There are so many clubs to join, internships to apply for, cool classes to take, programs to participate in, essay contests to write--the list goes on and on. I would also recommend that everyone study abroad at least once, and preferably for a semester or a whole year.

- Nicole Craig

Try to spend every summer at a highly competitive internship so that you can graduate with a marketable skill set. - Juan Salem

Don’t be afraid to explore other disciplines. - Carrie Bohls

My advice is to take advantage of all of the opportunities LAH provides and to make as many connections as possible with your professors and peers. All of the major successes I have had in my undergraduate career have been connected in one way or another to my experience in LAH.

- Molly Wahlberg

My wisdom would be to pursue summer programs, travel opportunities, and attend conferences. They’re super fun and you can learn a lot through them.

- Kim Jennings

If I had to offer freshman a piece of advice...the first thing that comes to my head is take professors, not classes! A good professor can make all the difference in the world! I took several classes on topics I had no interest in (for example, Russian Politics), but the professors made the information both accessible and interesting, making those classes enjoyable.

- Lauren Buchanan

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From left to right: James Lamon in costume for Explore UT; and LAHers Armen Hazarian, Shau-Huan Huang, Nolan Oldha and Stephanie Marret at the All Honors Formal.
Professor Harry Middleton’s course LAH 350: The Johnson Years, taught since 2004, remains one of the most popular classes that LAH offers. Mr. Middleton, who served as a White House speechwriter during Lyndon Johnson’s presidency, first Executive Director for the LBJ Foundation and was Director of the LBJ Library for 30 years, offers his students an inside perspective on US politics in the 1960’s.

The course covers the legislative activity that formed the basis of Johnson’s “Great Society” and reviews the ever-widening decisions that led to the trauma of Vietnam. Professor Middleton spends several classes looking at activities inside the White House. Middleton also invites several guest speakers, who are experts in their field and part of the Johnson experience.

Through the course, students are introduced to the process of research using the LBJ library archives. The Library archivists meet with the students to discuss available materials and students will then select the topics they will research for their primary paper.

Another required component of the course is a trip to LBJ’s ranch in Johnson City. The 2011 trip is pictured above. During a unique guided tour, students see LBJ’s home, office and Presidential JetStar airplane. The LAH class members also have the opportunity to speak to Brigadier General Jim Cross, LBJ’s pilot, Bess Abell, his White House Social Secretary, and Shirley James, former Assistant to Ladybird Johnson, when visiting the ranch.
Class of 2011 Post-Graduate Plans

Lauren Ayers Immediately following graduation, I will take a much-needed break and travel to Europe with friends. I am waiting to hear back from the Peace Corps. If everything goes to plan, I will leave for Central America in August to teach conservation methods. Upon my return, I hope to attend graduate school.

Devon Beavers I, like many, am on the verge of making a grad school decision. At the moment, I’m looking to get a Master’s Degree in History at either Georgetown University in D.C. or DePaul University in Chicago. One thing I do have planned is a trip to London after graduation! Other than that, I’ll be working to save up money for school.

Carrie Bohls I will be attending Stanford University under the Stanford Teacher Education Program (for an MEd and teacher certification).

Lauren Buchanan I will be moving back to Dallas after graduation to join a program called Texas Teaching Fellows to teach elementary bilingual education.

Nicole Craigen After graduation I will be moving to Helsinki, Finland for one year to work and study. I have accepted a one year deferment from UCLA Law so I will be starting there in Fall 2012.

Becky Dobyns I’m going overseas to study Mandarin for two years.

Kim Jennings I’ll be starting my Ph.D. in Psychology at the University of California - Berkeley next fall!

Will Hausle I will be moving to Chicago in June to teach elementary school (K-8) with Teach for America.

Amanda Kocis I have my post-graduate results in. I was accepted to four graduate school programs, including: University of Virginia Master of Arts in English and University of Chicago Master of Arts in the Humanities. I will be attending either Virginia or Chicago but have yet to decide between them.

Marci Luedtke I’ll move to Washington DC in July to start work for the US Government!

Kristina Pekkala After Graduation I will be working for the French Consulate in Reunion Island teaching English for a year.

Juan Salem Full-time position as a Human Capital Analyst with Deloitte Consulting in Washington D.C.

Molly Wahlberg I will be attending the Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies at UT-Austin to pursue a master’s in the field. I have also been awarded a FLAS Fellowship to learn Brazilian Portuguese.

Robbie Woods I will be moving to Chicago with my wife-to-be, where I will attend law school at the University of Chicago.

Words of Wisdom

Three tips for college...
1) Figure out what you love to do – in school, socially, and for other people – and do it to the full. This is what college (and life) is all about.
2) Network with your fellow LAHers even if LAH is not your main social outlet. There are so many interesting, helpful, and incredibly smart people. You won’t regret it.
3) The LAH advisors have your back.

- Robbie Woods

Don’t be afraid to try new things. The university is a great resource for pursuing opportunities that you might not be able to otherwise. It is important to take advantage of the 4 years you have because the time goes by really fast. Every experience, whether it be good or bad is a valuable and critical to personal growth.

- Kristina Pekkala

Get to know your professors, they can help you refine your academic and professional interests and may have research that they need help with. Plan ahead and make sure you save time for studying abroad!

- Will Hausle

I don’t know how wise I am...but as cliché as it sounds in college I’ve learned how critical it is to take the time to find out who you are – to really take inventory of your values, beliefs, interests, etc. Also, the classic importance of balance – balancing friends and school and work and relationships – the quicker you figure it out the happier you’ll be overall. I’d tell the freshmen to go DO things! Go and do fun Austin and central Texas things while they’re here – take pictures and enjoy your friends because the time really flies! Make a bucket list and get busy checking off the items.

- Marci Luedtke

I certainly learned quite a bit, both in academics and about myself, during these past four years. My best advice would be to always be open to new experiences and ideas. Sometimes the best memories or most influential events happen when you step off the defined path. Take classes outside your major that let you explore new things, join a club that offers something new for you, and take advantage of how much diversity UT has to offer. And if you get the opportunity to study abroad, even for a few weeks, do it. Hook ‘Em!

- Devon Beavers
Spring Break is a chance for refreshment and renewal in the life of a college student. The semester has been going non-stop for about eight weeks, and the next eight or so weeks are going to be even more exhausting as professors begin readying for finals. My chance for refreshment came in a different form than the usual. I had the chance to participate in Alternative Spring Break with Teach for America at one of their charter schools in Chicago, Illinois.

Many of my fellow classmates thought I was a little crazy to wake up earlier than I ever need to during the semester to volunteer at an underprivileged school during the time I was supposed to be sleeping in and lying around catching up on the newest season of “The Office”. Even the teacher I was volunteering with said I was “a better person than her.” However, I did not participate in the trip purely out of the goodness of my heart. This opportunity was exactly what I needed to put my life into perspective and be renewed in a different sense of the word than what most of my classmates would be experiencing.

Another young woman and I had slightly different experiences from the rest of the group while in Chicago because we had offered to be placed in permanent positions for the week while the rest of the group floated between two schools. Another stark difference was that they were on the south side of the city, which is predominantly African American, and we were located in the Hispanic southwest side.

This situation allowed me to truly engage with the students of the 7th grade at an UNO charter school. My first exposure to the disparity of wealth in the city was our first drive to school Monday morning as we slowly faded away from the high rises of downtown to the crowded streets of lavanderías and Mexican bakeries. The teacher I was assisting informed us that charter schools were increasingly popular because the public school system in Chicago was so terrible. Her school had just opened this past fall, so all of her students had previously been in the public school system or home-taught and were all adjusting to the rigid structure of the charter system.

What was most interesting to me was that after eighth grade, where the charter school stopped, these kids were going to have to apply to a public high school that was considered acceptable in order to even have a chance at going to college. I was there the last week of their ISAT testing, Illinois Standard Achievement Tests, and was informed that the students’ performance on those exams in the seventh grade greatly impacted their ability to be accepted into a satisfactory public high school and eventually a college or university. The pressure put on these students was so much to bear when some of them were barely even reading at a first grade level.

The experience was so wonderful that I had to hold back the tears on my last day as I answered questions about college for them. Their desire to succeed in school and make a better future for themselves was so evident, but I could not help but wonder if these kids were going to be given the right opportunities to progress along such a path. I might not have been sleeping in every day and I might not have made a huge impact on the lives of the students I worked alongside all week, but I was definitely refreshed during my Spring Break with a new vigor to accomplish all of my goals at the University of Texas because I was given the opportunity that so many of these kids desperately wished to have one day.

- Lauren West, International Relations and Global Studies/Liberal Arts Honors
LAH Thespians:  
*The Country Wife*

LAH’s Theatre Troupe *Foot in the Door* performed the seventeenth century Restoration comedy *The Country Wife* by William Wycherly. Christopher Barton directed with Christopher Pish as Horner. Students performed the play over two weekends to a full house nearly every night.

Fall 2011 productions and a call for auditions will be announced in September.

Photos courtesy of photographer Brandon Hernandez. Upper left shows Grace Worm as Mrs. Pinchwife and Andrew Pish as Horner. Lower left shows Christopher Lew as Sparkish and Kirk Van Sickle as Harcourt. Lower right shows Grace Worm as Mrs. Pinchwife and Virgil Shelby as Mr. Pinchwife.

Giving to Liberal Arts Honors

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Of course, we welcome the opportunity to meet with you and seek your guidance in assisting the College. If you would like to make a donation, please mail your pledge for Liberal Arts Honors to:

Kathleen Aronson, Director of Development and Alumni Relations  
College of Liberal Arts  
The University of Texas  
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Austin, Texas 78712

You may also e-mail Kathleen Aronson at mcaronson@mail.utexas.edu or call 512/475-9763 to receive more information.
LAH Alumni in Action:  
Brian Boitmann

I finished up my undergraduate degree at UT in the Spring of 2008, and proceeded directly into graduate school in Asian Cultures and Languages department here at Texas. As I was finishing up school that May, I had been helping out my college ministry put on some different events, and had a somewhat regular experience that launched me onto a slightly different road than I had planned. Going by a friend’s house to put up, of all things, a dry erase board, I noticed once I was in his living room that, sitting underneath his TV, were 5 movies I had rented that semester from I Luv Video, and proceeded to make a joke that he should have been a friend and let me borrow them instead of me going out and spending money on them. “Well you’re a friend of mine,” my friend, Josh, said. “You should have asked me, I would have let you borrow them.” It was a Catch 22 moment. He had what I was looking for, and would have let me borrow the films, but I wasn’t aware that he did. Had I known I might have saved $30, maybe more with late fees, and probably had some good conversations about the movies with Josh as well.

I continued thinking about the idea throughout the summer, wondering how best to establish a network which would be the access point for friends to see what was available to them before they decided to purchase something. I was blessed to come across a course at the LBJ school, called Social Entrepreneurship (which I encourage everyone to take), that would allow one to build out an idea for a social venture as though they were taking it to get investment. Through that class I was encouraged by my professor to make ActsofSharing.com a reality, and instead of going back to India for another summer studying Urdu, I decided to take my plan to investors, and was able to raise the initial seed money to create Acts of Sharing, which had a soft launch on Earth Day last year, right as I was finishing my Masters in South Asian Studies. Recently Acts of Sharing was named an SXSW Interactive Finalist, and we were able to participate at SXSW in the Trade Show and received publicity and accolades from companies and individuals who want to bring AOS to their communities. As well, since December, I’ve been working at Lake Hills Church as college ministry director, allowing me to live out my passion for ministry alongside working full-time on Acts of Sharing. This has been a real blessing, as I’ve been speaking to groups both at church and through Acts of Sharing, and I’ve often learned something in one place that I can use in the other. Similarly the message of loving your neighbor is generally valued in circles religious and not, so work on Acts of Sharing never really stops, which is actually very exciting.