

University Honors Program News

February 26, 2016

Georgia Southern University

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Recommended Citation

Georgia Southern University, "University Honors Program News" (2016). *University Honors Program News Blog*. 18.
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Adventures in Independent Journal Publishing

February 26, 2016



(L-R) Aleyna Rentz, Kristen Flippo, and Devan Pride compose a new issue of *Moonglasses Magazine*

With hundreds of literary magazines in circulation and thousands of writers peddling their prose and poetry, sometimes writing can feel like shouting into an echo chamber. Short stories languish in obscure magazines; journals go under a month after their conception. While breaking into the literary scene can be a daunting expedition, four Writing and Linguistic majors, three of them Honors students, joined creative forces to found a publication with potential staying power. Over Christmas break, Ben Baker, Devan Pride, Kristen Flippo, and Aleyna Rentz created [Moonglasses Magazine](#), a bimonthly online journal devoted to humorous, experimental writing.

“It all started with Ben,” Flippo (‘16) said. “He’s one of the funniest, most talented writers in our department, but all his fiction is so weird that it doesn’t quite fit the traditional aesthetic of most literary journals, so we thought, why not fill that space by creating our own journal?”

After coming up with a clear focus for the magazine, the students were eager to begin working on it right away.

Pride (‘17) said, “When we first threw around the idea of starting a publication, I was really excited for the chance to contribute to something that will last, something that will give us a chance to break into the publishing world. It’s a learning experience for all of us.”

Getting *Moonglasses* off the ground involved meticulous planning; its founders had to decide on its aesthetic, submission guidelines, and publication dates, among other details. Writing and Linguistics professor Jared Yates Sexton provided guidance and feedback during the process of creating the magazine.

“It’s valuable for students to be involved in projects like this,” Sexton said. “It gives them the opportunity to see the other side of publishing and learn firsthand how literary journals function. I’m proud of the initiative these guys took, and I can’t wait to see where *Moonglasses* goes next.”

After a few weeks of intense work, including web design and writing content for the website’s masthead and about sections, *Moonglasses Magazine* was ready to accept submissions. With listings on Duotrope, *Entropy*

Magazine's "Where to Submit" list, and the support of several other literary journals and writers on Twitter, the magazine found contributors almost immediately.

"As soon as we opened submissions, we got tons of writing right away," said Rentz ('17). "We did not expect such a massive response in such a short amount of time."

Reading through so many short stories and poems and choosing which ones were suited for publication proved challenging, according to Flippo.

"The hardest part was choosing who gets accepted and who doesn't. We received lots of great work, so it's hard to pick, especially because humor is subjective. Also, lots of times people will submit things that are beautifully written but not our style, so it's hard to reject them."

Another difficulty in running a journal while balancing schoolwork is time management. Reading submissions, updating social media, and keeping the website running smoothly requires hours of hard work each week, a time commitment Pride says is ultimately worth it.

"You just have to set aside certain times for getting things done," Pride said. "This is something that has the potential to break into the literary world, so we need to devote ourselves one-hundred percent to it."

Their hard work paid off: On February 1st, the first issue of *Moonglasses* was released, featuring the work of several established writers.

"I was so excited for our first issue," Flippo said. "It was just a few days before my birthday, so it was like an early birthday present for me."

Rentz said, "This just proved to me that if you want to do something, all you have to do is commit yourself to it and go for it."

With several pieces lined up for their next issue, due out in April, the editors are optimistic for the future of *Moonglasses*.

"I can see us really expanding in the future. I'd like for us to start accepting artwork, maybe eventually run a print edition," said Pride.

"Working on this magazine with my friends has been such a fun, rewarding experience," said Flippo. "I just want *Moonglasses* to bring as much joy to our readers as it brings to us."

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Alumni Update: Andres Montes

February 26, 2016

In Statesboro, hundreds of poverty-stricken individuals receive free and life-saving healthcare at the Hearts and Hands Clinic, a place that would not exist were it not for an idea that struck Honors Alumnus Andres Montes ('10) when he was only a college junior. He recently returned to campus to speak to Honors students not only about this project, but also about the positive impact studying humanities can have on pre-med students. Montes himself majored in philosophy while at Georgia Southern, a course of study he did not choose until later in his college career.

"I actually entered college as a business major," Montes said. "It took me a while to figure out what I wanted to study, but I've always enjoyed philosophy, so I decided to make it my major."

Even with a minor in chemistry, Montes' decision to focus his studies on a liberal arts subject while pursuing a career in medicine might seem unorthodox. However, Montes quickly dispelled the false notion that a liberal arts background cannot contribute to a pre-med student's education in a meaningful way.

"Having a background in the humanities makes you a better communicator, which in turn makes you a better doctor," he said. "When you focus exclusively on science, it's easy to see patients as

just numbers instead of people. Philosophy has helped me see something beyond that, to really empathize with the people I work with."

This compassion and understanding for others undoubtedly catalyzed Montes' desire to provide free healthcare to Bulloch County's medically-uninsured citizens, an idea also inspired by the 2008 presidential election.

"Because our country was involved in a huge conversation about healthcare, my friends and I wondered if there was anything we could do around here to help. A free healthcare clinic seemed like the best way to go," said Montes.

Opening a nonprofit is no easy feat, especially while balancing a rigorous college career, but through diligent planning and help from the community, Montes was able to make his dream a reality within a little over a year. Individuals from all over the county—professors, community leaders, lawyers, accountants, and students, among others—combined their unique talents and specialties to help bring the Hearts and Hands Clinic to life.

"We were fortunate to have so many experienced people on board," he said. "The really beautiful thing about it, though, was how many students got involved. They really wanted this project to succeed."

After several months of hard work, the Hearts and Hands Clinic opened during September 2010 at the Son's Light Fellowship Baptist Church on Highway 301. The clinic proved to be such a positive force in the community that it quickly outgrew its original space; it has since moved to downtown Statesboro. For six years, it has provided free primary health services for citizens of Bulloch County who are medically uninsured and have an income at or below 200% of the federal poverty guideline, cultivating hope and empathy along the way.

Currently, Montes is an M.D. candidate in the Mercer University School of Medicine ('17) and is completing an outpatient family practice rotation in Statesboro with plans on pursuing a residency in Obstetrics and Gynecology. Not only that, but he also sits on the Board of Directors for the Coastal Georgia affiliate of Susan G. Komen®. Montes stepped down as chair of the clinic's board at the start of medical school, and remains inspired by the current clinic leadership as he stays engaged as an emeritus board member.



Andres Montes

“We’ve heard amazing stories from patients. For example, many of them had illnesses detected early at our clinic and were able to prevent them from getting worse,” said Montes. “It’s incredible knowing that we’re actually changing lives.”

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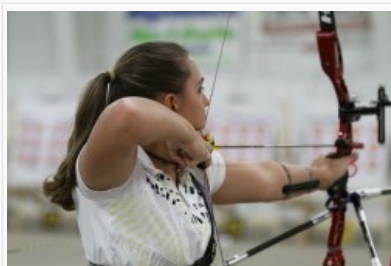
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Focused on the Target

February 26, 2016

Cassy Pelton knows that she needs to keep her eye on the target whether she is working on research for her Honors Thesis, training at the Shooting Sports Education Center at Georgia Southern, presiding over Georgia Southern's Archery Club, or preparing for the World Indoor Archery Championship this month in Ankara, Turkey.

Pelton (biology/pre-med '18) first fell in love with archery the summer before her freshman year of high school. After returning from Germany to Georgia, she stayed with her grandparents in Florida while her parents looked for a house near Fort Stewart. One day, her grandfather handed her a bow and arrow, and she was hooked.



Cassy Pelton shows off her archery skills

"I completely fell in love," said Pelton, "but I didn't consider shooting with a team until I attended a local wildlife festival. The 4-H Club had an archery booth, and after I shot an arrow, they told me I should join the high school archery team. The rest is history."

Since then, Pelton has progressed rapidly, going all the way to the World Indoor Archery Team Trials in Lansing, Michigan recently, where she won a tiebreaker for third place.

Pelton said, "I was under the highest pressure I'd ever felt, but that just made my victory even sweeter."

In competing on the international level against archers from all across the globe, Pelton hopes to prepare for her main goal—competing in the 2020 Olympics.

"I think the competition in Turkey is a great stepping stone," she said. "Lots of athletes who eventually compete in the Olympics start at international competitions like this one, and it would definitely be helpful to have archery experience outside of the United States before going to the Olympics."

Maintaining a strong academic record, especially while on the pre-med track, and training for a major athletic competition both require focus, something Pelton applies to both archery and research.

"Many of the projects in the lab right now are dealing with altering genes in the brains of zebra fish and observing how the fish develop," said Pelton. "Even though we're still in the beginning stages of research, I'm excited to see how this research develops and relates back to my studies."

For anyone who wants to watch Pelton in the Archery Championship, the competition will be streamed online at archery.tv February 29 through March 7.

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Math, Measles, and a Computer Simulation

February 26, 2016

Many students have opportunities to present research to their classes and peers in local settings, but Valerie Welty (math '16) took her work to the other side of the country. Welty, a College of Science and Math Council of Undergraduate Research Scholar, presented thesis research at the Joint Mathematics Meetings that took place in Seattle, WA this past January.

Of the 6,000 professionals attending this year's conference, Welty was one of only 300 undergraduates to attend. She presented a poster on her research entitled "Mathematical Models for Infectious Disease Epidemics, With an Emphasis on Measles and Computer Simulation."

"For my thesis, I created a program that simulates a measles outbreak based on such factors as self-quarantine, contact rates, and vaccines," Welty said.

This Java-based computer program allows one to input different variables to determine various methods for preventing the spread of measles. Welty, for example, used this program to look at how much vaccination is needed to keep a measles epidemic from worsening. Her preliminary results suggest that vaccine percentages above ninety make the chance of an epidemic low, and that contact rate has a huge influence over the likelihood of an outbreak.

Creating this program required Welty to familiarize herself with programming, a field with which she was initially only slightly familiar.

"I had to teach myself more programming beyond what I had learned in an introductory course," said Welty. "It was definitely a learning experience."

In addition to navigating more complex programming, Welty also had to prepare herself for another first—her first research conference. She did not let this fact intimidate her, however.

"The poster presentation went very well, and I received positive feedback from the judges. It was great to have the set attention of three professionals in my field, especially because they were able to give me perspectives on my research outside of just mine and my mentor's."

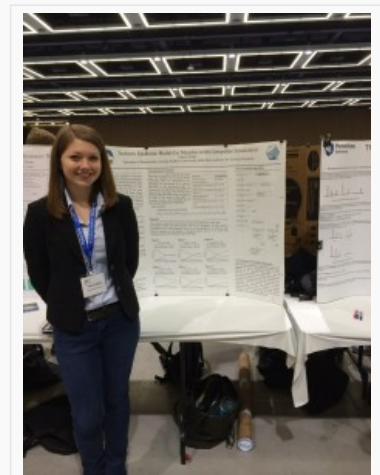
Welty was able to take this feedback and incorporate it into her Honors Thesis, preparing for her next presentation at the Spring 2016 Honors Research Symposium in April. Not only did this experience give Welty valuable criticism for her thesis, but it also gave her the chance to network in her field.

"I was able to attend so many talks from math professionals and hear other really interesting presentations," said Welty. "It was an awesome experience."

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Welty presenting her findings at the Joint Mathematics Meeting in Seattle, Washington



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Winning an Award, Earning a Job

February 26, 2016



Taylor Yancey (second from right) shares a moment with international designer Tory Burch.

Marketing and logistics and intermodal transportation double major Taylor Yancey ('17) was recently awarded the National Retail Foundation's (NRF) Rising Star Scholarship, winning an all-expense paid trip to New York City, where she attended the NRF's Gala, an exclusive party kicking off the BIG Show event for its corporate members.

"It was pretty intimidating being in a room full of important people; everyone in that room was a CEO. I even got to meet famous designer Tory Burch!"

Yancey first heard about the scholarship from Dr. Trey Denton, Honors Coordinator for the College of Business, who recommended her for the award.

Dr. Denton directed her to Dr. Kathleen Gruben, who helped her complete her application, which consisted of an essay about how Yancey saw herself going into retail in the future. The plans she outlined in that essay have quickly become a reality.

Yancey attended a career fair while on her trip to New York and had the opportunity to speak with Ryan Foster, the Senior Director of Replenishment at Walmart. He spoke in front of a large group of students, but Yancey knew she was only one of two students in attendance who had a focus on logistics and made a point to introduce herself directly. That initiative opened up a new opportunity for her.

"He was very excited and we talked for a minute before he said that he knew he needed to interview me. We set up a time, went through the interview, and he hired me after one interview," said Yancey. "I will be traveling to Bentonville, AK this Spring Break to tour their facility and finish up some paperwork. I will be starting June of 2017. I'm very excited for this opportunity."

Yancey feels extremely grateful to already have a job lined up after graduation.

"I'm nervous but excited," she said of this opportunity. "I can't wait to see what this new adventure will bring!"

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