

## Honors Students Head West

Sarah Kiser, Associate Editor

This week 70 students, one Honors alumna, nine faculty members and one staff person set out for Asheville N.C. for the annual Honors Fall Trip. They left Sept. 23 and returned Sept. 25, having explored Asheville, the Biltmore Estate, and a variety of topics across all disciplines.

The overall importance of the honors trip is "being more well-rounded," said Meredith senior Katie O'Dell. "You get to find something you're passionate about and explore it, but also you get to learn about things you wouldn't typically learn about."

After their arrival on Friday last week, the group took a tour at the Biltmore Estate. Saturday morning was spent with faculty in mini-courses. Every year students do reading beforehand, then conduct research with the mini-courses and make a presentation to share on that Sunday morning, so they get to see all the research that's been done that weekend. Saturday afternoon small groups ventured out to explore downtown Asheville and the surround-

ing mountains. Some went to Chimney Rock, and some to Maggie Valley.

Students could choose from nine mini-courses in topics such as tuberculosis sanatoriums in 1900s Asheville, homemade Appalachian yogurt, conservation and ecological restoration, or literary adaption of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, to name a few.

"Usually I go for the education ones... but they had one this year that was so interesting I couldn't not pick it because it's studying the movie *Dirty Dancing*," said O'Dell. The 1987 classic film was partially filmed nearby at Lake Lure.

This year is O'Dell's fourth and final time attending the fall trip, and her first year on the planning committee. She helped to plan the activities, especially what students could do in their free time on Saturday afternoon. She came up with mostly free options like a walking tour of architecture, museums, and a thrift shop with an in-house museum on ghost paraphernalia, different ways to explore the city.

"I like how we have free time to go ex-

plore on our own because that's when most of the adventures happen. I remember when we went to Charleston S.C. we stumbled upon this festival that there's no way we could have known about otherwise."

Meredith sophomore Catherine Jones participated in the biology/chemistry mini group with Dr. Powell. It was "about yogurt making and how it applies to being in the Appalachian area where everything is self-sufficient especially in older times," said Jones. They learned about the bacterium and chemical processes that go into making yogurt. "Because," explained Jones "bacterium make acid with what's in the milk itself."

Jones also described her visit to the Biltmore Estate. "It was huge; it was gorgeous," she said. "What stuck out with Biltmore was the fact that someone had at some point that much money. Walking into even their dining room there was this...mantel piece. It's just a mantel but it reached all the way up this 20 foot ceiling and there was a

carving of a war scene in it."

Jones, along with others, explored downtown Asheville. "There were a lot of interesting people." She laughed.

"This guy had a parrot on his arm. I have no idea why. He was just walking by and the parrot was just bobbing its head, a beautiful brightly colored parrot. Another guy was painted all bronze like he just came from pretending to be a statue. There was someone dressed like Avatar. I don't know what was going on, a lot of interesting characters." As an extra activity on Friday night, the honors students had a hoe-down with folk music. They learned several square and line dances along with the waltz.

In addition to learning new dances, the Honors Trip is also an opportunity to meet more honors students. "The two big opportunities to meet people in the honors program are the honors downtown meet up and then the Honors Trip," said O'Dell.