When she signed up for the Honors Spring 2020 Day Trip, biology junior Sarah Wolff had no idea she'd be traversing a retro theater, uncovering strange rooms.

“My friends and I had a fantastic time on the trip. Particularly, we enjoyed exploring the theater a bit and getting scared to death when we opened a weird closet in the bathroom,” Wolff said in an email.

What she did sign up for, though, was a play, and luckily despite the detours Wolff got to see one in the end. 25 Honors students (including Wolff) traveled to the Kalita Humphreys Theater Feb. 22 for the Spring 2020 Day Trip, where they watched a stage performance of Little Women.

Little Women, originally a book about four sisters growing up, was performed for the students as a play, and the day included a conversation with the cast as well. Accounting and finance junior Anushka Shrestha said that she joined the trip because she had recently seen the movie adaptation and wanted to see it live. The experience was good, she said, and the thing she remembers most about the day was having lunch with
her friends and the group discussion with the cast members. There were a lot of things to learn from the show, Shrestha said, which is why the experience stood out to her.

“It showcased the show in [a] different perspective than what I had while watching the movie,” Shrestha said in an email. Like Shrestha, Wolff said that she also attended because she had seen the recent movie version of the play. “I decided to go with my friends a couple of weeks before the trip took place,” Wolff said in an email. “We were all very excited because we had loved seeing the recent film adaptation of Little Women.” Wolff said that the performance was lovely and the discussion was informative, but what she remembers most happened off-stage. “My friends and I crying at the end of the play was probably the most memorable thing that happened,” Wolff said. A true testament to the quality of the performance, Wolff said she appreciated her time. “The play itself was wonderful,” Wolff said. “I think our students really enjoyed it.”
PHOTO BY MARTIN R. SMITH

Honors College Game Night, was not only where she had fun but got to meet new friends. At the game night, Cachay and her friends got to play a multitude of games ranging from Monopoly to Jenga and it was here where she met her now-close friend. After beating her own friends at Sorry, she challenged Faith to an all-out Jenga Battle. After Cachay meticulously defeated her challenger, it allowed them to get to know each other more and become the close friends they are now. They even found out that they only lived four doors apart from each other and were in majors in the same college!

While many students were beating their friends at Uno, others were busy expressing their creativity by playing the piano. As the night continued and the room filled up, she had difficulty finding a seat. Apart from the awesome games, the event had food options including a baked potato bar.

When people think about the Honors College, many believe that it only helps students expand their experience at UTA by providing research opportunities, challenging classes, and leadership options. But according to Cachay, the Honors College is much more than a stamp on your diploma or an achievement on your resume; it’s a chance to get to know people and expand your knowledge beyond the classroom.

As Cachay so concisely put it, “The Honors College is a special place where people from all different majors, groups, and backgrounds can come together to socialize and just have fun! Even though it does look great on a resume, it has greatly enhanced my freshman experience and I am so glad I joined!”

Jacqueline Hernandez (freshman, architecture) agreed. “Yeah. I really do love coming to these events. While the events seemed kind of lame from the outside, once you get in and start getting to know the other Honors students, it’s super fun. The food isn’t too bad either.” Her friend, Bernise Basio, had similar thoughts, “The Honors College lets people get out of their comfort zone and know one another. For example, when I came to UTA I didn’t know anyone and after only two months in the Honors College I have made some great friends that I’m getting an apartment with next year.”

The Honors College game night is just one of the many, many socials that the college hosts and by the looks of it, it seems like the tradition will be continue for years to come.
Home Work: Honors College Staff During COVID-19

by Madison Ray | Across: Ms. Bobbie Brown

During the COVID-19 pandemic, both Honors students and Honors staff are working from home - including Assistant Director of Undergraduate Research Bobbie Brown, who has been working diligently with Honors students while off campus. Her work consists of assisting students with starting and finishing their Senior Projects, as well as advising, overseeing the Honors contracting system, and putting the Honors Research Symposium together at the end of each fall and spring semester. This semester, however, feedback on senior projects, HRS, and workshops all have to be conducted online.

“I have been reluctant to move undergraduate research to a virtual environment, but this semester it was necessary,” Brown said. Though she said her duties as Assistant Director of Undergraduate Research haven’t changed much, there has still been a lot to learn about how the Honors College functions online.

“I have learned new things and as with anything we do for the first time, I have also learned what works and what could work better, should we need to do this again,” she said.

Communication between Honors staff also hasn’t changed much other than moving online, she said, and all of the staff stays in touch over text, email, and Microsoft Teams. Working at home for so long has presented UTA students and staff alike with new, unique challenges, on top of the challenges we all face from COVID-19 (social distancing, keeping our environments clean, etc.).

Brown, who is homeschooling a 10-year-old while working from home, emphasized the importance of having patience, and taking a break when things become too overwhelming. “I have also had to dig deep in my memory for helping out with math homework — adding, subtracting, and multiplying fractions,” she said about homeschooling her child.

“Remarkably, I managed to remember most of it, but Google and YouTube definitely help!”

Though there may be some frustrations surrounding the homeschooling process, there are still lights in the darkness to be found at home for Brown — including a miniature pit-bull. “We walk more now than ever, and we adopted a 10-month-old shelter puppy,” she said. “Anyone who knows me knows I love my fur-babies, so she is quite spoiled already.”

Above all, Brown looks forward to seeing her students once UTA resumes class on campus. “I miss seeing and chatting with our students, getting to know what and how they are doing, the super-excit ing opportunities, as well as the struggles...I really miss all of it,” she said.

Her desire to see students again is born out of the community in the Honors College; Brown refers to it as a family. “We tend to regard life as an individual type of experience, but it is not, especially in the Honors College,” she said. She has some words of advice to students during the pandemic, including staying flexible when life throws you curve-balls, as it has for everyone at UTA this semester. “Lean on each other, stay strong, take it one step-at-a-time, ask questions, and be willing to ask for help when you need it.”