

The Observer

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Muhlenberg High School, Laureldale, PA

May 2006

Special points of interest:

- Baccalaureate, June 6, 2006
- Graduation, at the Sovereign Center, June 7, 2006
- Last day of school, June 7, 2006
- Last day to make schedule changes, June 23, 2006

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Justo Lamas Sings and Dances at Muhlenberg

By Jamie Reed and Kevin Fry

On April 27, 2006, Justo Lamas, an Argentinean musician who performs at schools all over the country for Spanish students, visited Muhlenberg High School. His goal for these concerts is to send students that are taking Spanish courses an important message about life. MHS students from Spanish I, II, III, and IV, as well as students from other schools, were lucky

enough to see Justo Lamas sing and dance.

Many of the Muhlenberg students got to participate with the Justo Lamas concerts. Lots of students made T-shirts welcoming Justo Lamas, fourteen students from Spanish II and Spanish III had the

chance to dance

See *Justo Lamas* on **page 6**.



From left to right: Katie Dietrich, Justo Lamas, and Jamie Reed

Global Studies Visits NYC

By Kevin Fry

There are many different ways to learn about Global Studies and Art History and the students learned this on their much anticipated trip on April 20, 2006 to New York City.

The trip started off in the earlier morning hours, and the students were excited to be visiting the Rubin Museum of Art and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. On the trip were Global Studies students, Art History stu-

dents, and their teachers, Mrs. Adams, Miss Taylor, Mr. Snelling, and Mrs. Martin.

The day started off at the Rubin Museum of Art where the students were

See *Global* on **page 4**.

American Studies Travels to Washington

By Paige Cooperstein

All across the horizon, on April 19, 2006, the American Studies students saw the epitome of the best neoclassical architecture in the country.

See *American Studies* on **page 4**.



Left: Michele Tartaglia and Pat Foster at the National Gallery of Art

Society for Academic Achievement

By Jenna Youse

The Society for Academic Achievement is given to students who excel in academics. In order to receive this honor, a student must have a minimum of 125 points or grades. The grades are calculated from a seven semester period after the last semester of their junior year. Points are awarded for the classes that meet five or more periods per week. For instance, an A earns 4 points, and a B+ earns 3.5 points. The semester grades are determined by averaging the quarter grades. Only the top 10 percent qualify for this award. Congratulations to Michael Aquiline, Christianna Berg, Katy Boone, Linzy Breneman, Michelle Campbell, Ashley Clay, Katie Dahlberg, Katie Dietrich, Jessica Focht, Traci Frymoyer, Diana Gordillo, Megan Grim, Luke Hagen, Roberto Hernandez, Amy Hoelscher, Brittany Huey, Daniel Law, Jantzen Linn, Sarah McGinley, Travis Petsch, Shawn Potteiger, Patrick Quire, Michael Rathman, Jenna Reedy, Kylie Sargent, Bradley Schaefer, Alison Schroeder, Ashley Short, Katrina Smith, Sarah Snyder, Lauren Swavely, and Matthew Wagner for earning this esteemed recognition.

Band and Chorus Visit NYC

By Jenna Youse

On March 8, 2006, the chorus and band journeyed to New York City to see a Broadway musical entitled "The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee". It was an amazing musical about the participants in a spelling bee. Each speller had his or her own little story to tell. Some of the members were even chosen to be a part of the musical for the time while they were there. Unfortunately, no one from Muhlenberg was chosen.



Image courtesy of images.amazon.com

April's Student of the Month: Amy Hoelscher

By Brad Mease



Amy Hoelscher is a very involved student here at Muhlenberg High School. She is involved in soccer, cheerleading, winter track, Renaissance Club, Spanish Club, Prom Committee, Concert Chorus, mixed chorus, Camerata, and concert

band. Also, she was the lead in the school musical, the Student Council Vice President, the Leo Club Vice President, the Science Club Treasure, the Volunteer Club Historian, the SADD Secretary, the Class of 2006 Secretary, and she is the President of mixed chorus.

She is a very passionate person, however she is quite anal-retentive, but that can be a good thing, because she views herself as a very hard-worker. Her advice to underclassmen is "try everything."

She is attending Albright College, and plans on majoring in Criminal Justice and Spanish. She also plans to participate in soccer and possibly music.

Women's Conference at Millersville University

By Jamie Reed

On April 4th, four Muhlenberg girls including Miss Smeltzer traveled to the *19th Annual Glenna Hazeltine Women in Mathematics & Science Conference* at Millersville University. They attended various sessions about topics ranging from Geophysics to Computer Science to Zoology. Each session offered an insight into various occupations in both the science and math fields. At the end, students could choose an opportunity to either talk with students who currently attend

Millersville who are majoring in math or in a science and ask questions about their majors and what they like about the university, or take a tour of the science and mathematics facilities.

Teacher Feature: Mr. Anthony

By Lindsay Byrne



Mr. Anthony, English teacher

Mr. Anthony is one of the most respected and busiest English teachers at Muhlenberg High School.

Throughout his childhood, Mr. An-

thony was what he called “a dangerous altar boy”. He survived 13 years of catholic school, and he grew up on top of a mountain in Schuylkill Valley. It actually took him one and a half hours to get home from school everyday.

Mr. Anthony did his undergraduate studies at Albright College, and his certification and masters at Kutztown University. While in college, Mr. Anthony was involved in many activities. He was head of the college radio station, part of an actors group, and wrote music reviews for the school newspaper.

More recently, Mr. Anthony was

teacher of the month in 1998. Currently, he was involved in a censorship meeting at Albright College on March 27, 2006.

His favorite thing about teaching was being immortal. He said that anything he says or does could impact a student’s life forever; making his words/actions live on forever.

In the future, Mr. Anthony hope to finish writing his memoir and eventually have it published.

El Club de Espanol Esta Aqui

By Kevin Fry

MHS has a Spanish Club under advisor and Spanish teacher, Sra. Padilla. The club meets at 7am in room A206. La presidenta is junior Andrea Sauer, and the vice-president is junior Molly Berger.

On March 23, 2006, the club met at the Mexican restaurant, Cocina Mexicana, on Kutztown Road, for a get-to-know-you dinner of great



Mexican food. In attendance were students from all levels of Spanish classes and our school’s Spanish teachers, Sra. Padilla, Sra. Balthaser, and Sr. Olexy. The next event for the Spanish Club is their annual soccer game against the German club.

College Fair at Alvernia College

By Jenna Youse

On March, 14, 2006, a college fair was held at Alvernia College, and students from Muhlenberg attended. It was during school and students got out of class to learn about many opportunities for their future. It was helpful for many of the students that attended because there was several universities and

colleges there that students had never heard of before. All the colleges and universities had representatives there to answer any questions the students had. Students could ask the representatives anything, and that helped many students understand about education after high school. It was a learning

experience for all that attended. It opened up students’ eyes to what is available to them after high school. Many students left the college fair with encouragement for their future.

American Studies continued from page 1

American Studies students followed the sweet morning breeze as it guided them to the steps of The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The exhibits were very detailed in every form of multimedia imaginable. There were survivors narrating stories in a listening booth. The most memorable part at the Holocaust Museum was the candles that were continuously lit to keep the memory alive.

After the Holocaust museum, the next stop was the National Gallery of Art in the Smithsonian. The tour guide gave students an art history lesson and an explanation of modern art. The cylindrical room filled with wire mobiles and stabiles by Alexander Calder was a favorite, especially due to the shadows that



An Alexander Calder wire sculpture

his wire sculptures created on the walls.

The statue theme was carried over while walking through the Mall area and a park of public sculptures. There were many odd sculptures there ranging from the cool to

the odd to the just plain bewildering in the park. The next part was most interesting to many. Students were given an art assignment to compare and contrast reactions to the Vietnam and Korean War Me-



The Korean War Memorial the American Studies students saw in Washington, D.C.

National Honor Society

By Kevin Fry

Being inducted into the National Honor Society is a tremendous honor; one that deserves recognition. On March 30, 2006, these honored students got their deserved recognition at the 2006 Induction Banquet at Kararas Hall of Wyomissing. After a welcome by National Honor Society advisor, Mrs. Spohn, and principal, Mr. Schwenk, dinner was served. Afterwards, the current officers of the National Honor Society explained what each of the four criteria mean to them. President, Lauren Swavely, described character. Vice-president, Nicole Rubendall, described leadership. Treasurer, Michael Rathman, described service, and secretary, Daniel Law, described scholarship.



Members of the National Honor Society

Next, the new members of the National Honor Society were inducted by assistant principal, Mr. Mish. After the induction, assistant principal, Mr. Kyper, presented the current members of National Honor Society. After some insightful comments from Mr. Schwenk, the ceremony closed with a flood of camera flashes.

Global continued from page 1

eager to see Asian art which they had previously studied. They learned more about Buddhism through art than they ever could have in class. The day concluded with the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The Global Studies students had a short essay to write while in the museum on Renaissance art which they had been studying at the time. The Art History students had the AP exam to prepare for. Students not only got to see the Renaissance art, but also Roman art, other European art, Egyptian art, and some American art.



From left to right: Amy Kleinsmith, Andrea Sauer, Jamie Reed, Patricia Christman, Marissa Lattanzio, and Allison Fies.

Censorship in Schools: What Books are Appropriate?

By Kevin Fry

About one year ago, a 16-year-old Muhlenberg student complained about the content of a book she read in her English class. Following the complaint, Adam Rapp's *The Buffalo Tree*, a novel set in a juvenile detention center and narrated by a 12-year-old boy incarcerated there by a graphic account, was voted to be removed from the school's curriculum by the Muhlenberg school board. Following this incident, heated debate from the teachers, students, and parents both for and against the book followed at school board meetings. In the end, the books was reinstated under the condition that a rating guides of all of the books to be reading English classes would be sent home at the beginning of the school year. However, the topic was closed.

On Monday, March 27, 2006, at Albright College's Memorial Chapel, Albright's Graduate Program in Education presented "Censorship in School: What books are appropriate for our children?" During the event, there was a presentation of *The Buffalo Tree* with a discussion on the impact of censorship in schools by the author, Adam Rapp, Albright College graduate dean and moderator, Dr. Sarel P. Fuchs, former superintendent of Muhlenberg School District and professor in education, Dr. Joseph Yarworth, professor and chair of Albright's English department, Dr. Albert Cacicedo, member of the Muhlenberg School Board of Directors, Mr. Otto Voit, chair of Muhlenberg's English department, Mr. Michael Anthony, and featured columnist for *The Reading Eagle*, John Forester. Also in attendance were current and former Muhlenberg High School teachers as well as Muhlenberg Middle School teachers. Current and former Muhlenberg students were in attendance, as well as many members of the community.



Muhlenberg graduate, Mary Isamoyer, and

Mr. Rapp started the presentation by telling the circumstances in which he wrote the book. He also spoke of the struggle he had to face to get it published and then noted that he never wanted his book to cause this kind of conflict. He did, however, note that the book brings up many important issues.

Next, Mr. Forester spoke on the effects he saw in the community from this incident and described his experience of writing the articles for *The Reading Eagle*. Dr. Fuchs and Dr. Yarworth spoke of their views on the topic in relation to their teaching experiences at Albright.

Mr. Anthony first identified his belief that the decision to remove the book from the curriculum was made out of fear and he also explained the book's usefulness in the classroom. In fact, Mr. Anthony said that over the past four years, about 50 students chose to read *The Buffalo Tree* during reading workshop during their own freewill.

Dr. Cacicedo spoke out on his belief that censorship is pointless because it takes away from the true meaning. While he noted that he, himself, would not have taught the book to his classes, he respects the right of a teacher to choose to teach it. Dr. Cacicedo said that he wished that his son had a teacher like Mr. Anthony at Reading High School who would teach him in the same way.

Mr. Voit defended his decision by saying it was made on the basis of the community. However, he said that he has realized how useful the book is in teaching special education and career English classes since many of these students have been in similar situations that they can relate to. Mr. Geddio's speech last year, he said, is what convinced him of this.

After all those on the panel spoke, questions were taken from the audience. Those who asked questions were college students from Albright, former teachers, former librarians, and even a man that worked in a juvenile detention center in Berks County. 2005 Muhlenberg graduate, and current English major at Kutztown University, Mary Isamoyer, asked Mr. Voit why he does not think that college and honors students should read the book as well, since there are many troubled students in those classes too.

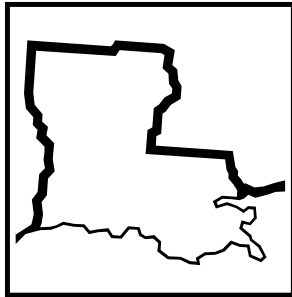
Afterwards, copies of *The Buffalo Tree* were sold, and Mr. Rapp sat to answer questions, take comments, and sign books.

A Fellow Student Helps Those in Need

By Jenna Youse and Tiffany Whitt

Tiffany Whitt, a junior here at Muhlenberg High School has recently been involved in an incredible experience. Tiffany went to Slidell through a church mission's trip. The point of the trip was to help people fix their homes that were ruined in Hurricane Katrina. The house they worked on had asked the church for help because they could not do it themselves.

Tiffany went to Slidell, Louisiana, which is about two miles away from New Orleans. There was a



group of 25 there to help. Tiffany did not expect to be as devastated as she was when she actually saw the remains of the houses. Whole communities were wiped out, block after block. It was sad to see how much trash was still lying around, eight months after the hurricane hit. Tiffany learned to appreciate her life more because these people lost so much of their lives.

The fun thing about Tiffany's trip was getting to see the faces of the people they helped. It was rewarding to know that they appreciated what they were

doing for them. The lady whose house Tiffany worked at told them that she thanked God for them everyday. It was definitely an experience Tiffany will never forget.

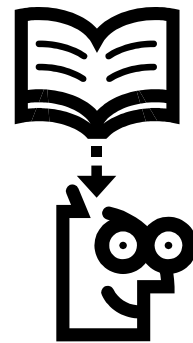
Know-it-alls Master the Spring Knowledge Master Open

By Jamie Reed

This year's Academic Challenge team competed with schools across the country and the world on April 25. Questions ranged from American and World History to Useless Trivia and Fine Arts. Each question is multiple choice and is timed. The faster they answer the question, the more points they score. After the competition is finished, they send their scores in to be ranked by the

size of their school, the state, and overall.

Muhlenberg finished 56th out of 79 teams in the state, 130th out of 175 in their size, and 579th out of 774 overall.



Teacher Feature: Ms. Kusant

By Jenna Youse

What do you teach?

I teach 9 career, 11 career and 12 college English.

How long have you been here?

This is my second year teaching at Muhlenberg. I student taught though in 2004, too.

Where did you graduate from?

I graduated from Tulpehocken High

School in 2000, and then went to Kutztown University, where I graduated with honors in 2004.

What do you do for fun?

I love going to concerts! I enjoy all types of music and especially love to dance to ska, punk, and swing.

Why do you like English?

English, literature, writing—it is all

about expression. I love to write and I love to read my students' thoughts.

Who influenced you to be an English teacher?

I had not one bad English teacher throughout all my educational career. They've all inspired me. Plus, I love to read.

Senior Survey

By Jamie Reed and Kevin Fry

A survey was recently passed out to various seniors asking questions about what they remembered from the past and what they think now.

What was the biggest fad you remember? How about now?

“Playing with Yo-Yos. Old stuff, you know, back in the day.”

-Adam Lush

“The biggest fad I remember from when I was younger is Furbies. Everyone wanted a Furby when they first came out and waited in line for hours for them. Recently a fad has been iPods. Everyone wanted one and now pretty much everyone has an iPod or mp3 player.”

-Laura Hain

“The biggest fad I remember is when everyone wore the jelly bracelets. The fad now that I know of is everyone having an iPod.”

-Monica Kissinger

What was the most popular TV show while growing up? How about now? Why?

“I guess *Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*. Now it’s *House*. It is such an awesome show. Everyone in my Anatomy class talks about it.”

-Jenna Lenich

“When I was growing up one of the most popular TV shows was *Full House*. Now one of the most popular TV shows is *The O.C.* or *Laguna Beach*.”

-Laura Hain

What was your favorite gadget when you were younger? How about now? Why?

“Most definitely my tamagotchi. Now, my mp3 player and my car—I love them both.”

-Alison Schroeder

“Skip-it. Me and my neighbor would always try and see who could skip the most. It was fun. My cell phone. I cannot go anywhere without it, it is a part of me.”

-Jenna Lenich

What was the most memorable event you have before the Millennium? After 2000? Why?

“Vacation in Disney; Europe Trip. I was in the third grade and had always wanted to meet Pooh Bear. I was also excited to get to fly on an airplane, something I had never done before. The Europe trip was memorable because it was the longest I had ever been from home and the first time I left the country. For three weeks I had a blast hanging with friends and experiencing different cultures.”

-Emily Reitenauer

“The Olympics during the Cold War when the Americans beat the Russians. After the Millennium it was the incident that happened on 9/11.”

-Monica Kissinger

What was one thing your parents wanted you to do that you were reluctant to do? How about now? Why?

“Clean my room [and] clean my room. And I still don’t do it.”

-Alison Schroeder

“My parents used to always make me go to all my brother’s sporting events and I absolutely hated it, especially baseball. Now I constantly argue about curfew. They always seem to win though, and I have to come in earlier than I want.”

-Jenna Lenich

Contributing Writers

Jamie Reed

Kevin Fry

Jenna Youse

Paige Cooperstein

Brad Mease

Lindsay Byrne

Tiffany Whitt

Photos Courtesy Of:

Jamie Reed

Kevin Fry

Paige Cooperstein

Mrs. Young

Justo Lamas continued from page 1



Justo Lamas serenades the audience.

with Justo Lamas, and Tiffany Fasig, Taylor Reber, and Kylie Sargent were able to sing a quartet with him.

Throughout the concert, massive amounts of energy filled the auditorium and people

went crazy over Justo and his songs. Some of the crowd favorites were “Baila conmigo (Dance with me)”, “Te toca a ti, me toca a mi (It’s your turn, it’s my turn)”, “Siempre por siempre (For always and always)”, and “Eres tu (You are)”. Also, his wife taught the students to mambo and salsa and it turned into a competition with the winners receiving a picture of Justo and then were able to be the first ones to meet him and receive his autograph.

After the concert, students had the opportunity to meet Justo and get his autograph and have a picture taken with him. Justo Lamas wanted to make sure that the students left with the important message that “every problems has a solution. Nothing is impossible.”

What Did You Do Over Spring Break?

By Jamie Reed

“I worked”
-Kaitlin
Dietrich



“Went to Florida to visit my mom,
worked, and bowled.” -Patricia
Christman



“I went out to eat and saw a movie.”
-Andrea Sauer

