

# Muhlenberg

THE MAGAZINE OF MUHLENBERG COLLEGE



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# Muhlenberg

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# Gifts

Muhlenberg College Baccalaureate Address • May 19, 2007

President's  
MESSAGE

*"Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone."*

-Corinthians 12:4-6

Over the past months we have talked a lot on this campus about the senior year. You already know that there are many types of senior year experiences. Some of you arrived here knowing just what you wanted to do with your lives and have spent the last four years acquiring the education you need to do it. Others thought you knew what you wanted to do, but then ran into organic chemistry – or its equivalent – and began exploring other paths. Some of you were delightfully ambushed by philosophy, psychology, anthropology or some other unexpected intellectual passion that set you upon a surprising new course. Others are still wondering what path you are destined to follow - and you're getting darned tired of people asking you about your plans!

Whichever category you fall into, I have good news for you. You are richly (and I believe divinely) endowed with important gifts that are uniquely yours. It is natural at this moment for you to be envious of your classmates – their talents, good looks, family wealth and job prospects may seem intimidating or even depressing. But you must believe me when I tell you that they are also envious of you. They see talents and potential in you that they do not have – and that you yourself may not have yet discovered.

So here is the most important thing I wish to tell you this evening: your life's work is to discover your gifts and to use them in ways that enrich your life and make the world a better place for those less fortunate than you.

Let me tell you about my cousin George. We have always been close, closer than many brothers. He was the country cousin. I was the city kid. He could drive a tractor at the age of 10, owned a mule he named "Beautiful" and once ate an entire ant colony. (When his mom rushed him to the pediatrician, the doctor observed: "They don't seem to have done George any harm, but I can't imagine it was very good for the ants.")

George was handy and self-confident. He could build just about anything and delighted in taking things apart to see how they worked. When I was 7 he convinced me to wallow in an irrigation ditch with him, until we both came home covered from toe to crown with a slimy coat of mud.

At the age of 12, George decided he wanted a swimming pool and picked up a shovel. By the time his parents discovered what he was up to, he'd dug a crater about 30 feet wide and 10 feet deep up behind the barn, and knocked together some two-by-fours for the lifeguard's chair.

Even in those days I was shy, bookish and averse to physical exertion if it could be avoided. Frankly, I was not too crazy about myself – but I was in awe of George's self-confidence, his practical skills and

his sheer physical strength. By the time we both finished college, George had bought a house and was fixing it up. I was still reading books, writing papers and wondering what I would do with my life.

It took me a lot longer than George to discover my gifts. It will take some of you longer than others to discover your talents. Some of you will exercise one set of gifts for the next several years (or decades) only to discover other gifts later in life when you become bored or frustrated by your first career, or sidelined by misfortune. Some of you will need more time, as I did, to wander, explore, experiment. Despite what others say, life is not a race. Late bloomers are just as valuable to the world as prodigies – and often happier and more fulfilled for having sampled life more broadly.

Whatever path you choose, have faith that your gifts are real and remember that you were given a rare opportunity to discover and develop them here at Muhlenberg. Four years ago I told you that the kind of education available to you here was an opportunity granted to less than 1% of the 18-year-olds on the planet. Your parents, your professors, the Muhlenberg staff and I have invested our time, our energy, and our hope in you because we believe you are worthy of that opportunity. Now it is time for you to prove us right.

You might wonder what ever became of my cousin George. Well, believe it or not, he went into the swimming pool business. He built a successful company that now employs his children, nieces and nephews and dozens of others who build swimming pools throughout Kentucky. He is building himself another house – on a farm even further out in the country. And he is volunteering more and more time each year in Guatemala where, as a leader in his church's "Living Waters for The World" project<sup>1</sup>, he uses his knowledge

and experience to help villages design and build simple, sustainable water filtration systems that improve the health and quality of life of hundreds of people he has never met. I am still in awe of him.

Tomorrow you will graduate. We will send you out into the world to live, to thrive, to do well and to do good. God, your families, and Muhlenberg have blessed you with rich gifts. Even if you haven't discovered them yet, they are there, and you will. And when you share those gifts with the world, you will understand why you are on this earth – and why we believe in you. Safe travels, and Godspeed!



Randy Helm, at age 5



cousin George

Peyton R. Helm  
President, Muhlenberg College

<sup>1</sup> Living Waters for the World is a mission of the Synod of Living Waters, PCUSA.

# Door to **DOOR**

NEWS FROM  
MUHLENBERG  
COLLEGE

## 'Berg Named a *Best Buy* by Kiplinger's

Muhlenberg College has been named one of the best values in private institutions across the country by Kiplinger's. The College is ranked 34 out of 50 and is one of eight Pennsylvania schools listed. Others included: Swarthmore College (1), Lafayette College (14), Bucknell University (19), Haverford College (22), Bryn Mawr College (39), Franklin and Marshall College (45), and Dickinson College (47).

When compiling its data, Kiplinger's began with data on over 1,000 private colleges (provided by Peterson's) then added its own reporting. To determine the rankings, the following criteria were considered: admission rate; SAT/ACT scores; student/faculty ratio; four-year/five-year graduation rate; total costs; costs after need-based aid; aid from grants; costs after non-need based aid; and average debt at graduation.

For eight decades, the Kiplinger organization has led the way in personal finance and business forecasting. Founded in 1920 by W.M. Kiplinger, the company developed one of the nation's first successful newsletters in modern times. The Kiplinger Letter, launched in 1923, remains the longest continually published newsletter in the United States. In 1947, Kiplinger's created the nation's first personal finance magazine. ■



## College Approves African American Studies Minor

'Berg faculty members recently approved the addition of a minor in African American Studies to the curriculum. The interdisciplinary minor, which draws courses from the departments of English; theatre and dance; media and communication; music; anthropology; history; sociology; political science; and languages, literatures and cultures, reflects the College's commitment to liberal education and increasing student and faculty interest in this area.

The program will be a part of the fall 2007 curriculum. Charles O. Anderson, assistant professor of dance, will serve as the program director. While the proposal for the minor was created by Anderson and Mary Lawlor, program director for American Studies, the program's creation has been supported by many on 'Berg's faculty.

"I am honored to serve as the inaugural program director of the African American minor," says Anderson. "It is my hope that with the aid of my colleagues and the support of the student body, the program

will flourish and make a unique imprint upon the field of African American Studies."

African American Studies is an interdisciplinary study of the history, culture and socio-economic experience of African-Americans. The program fosters knowledge and research methods drawn from several academic fields, with the goal of enabling students to enhance their understanding of African-Americans' unique social circumstances and heritage.

Prior to the addition of this minor, Muhlenberg offered a concentration in African American studies. With the inclusion of the minor, students will have a department to go to for consultation that will help them choose courses that have meaningful pairings within disciplines.

"The new minor in African American Studies complements the College's recently opened multicultural center," says Provost Marjorie Hass. "We recognize that diversity is both an issue of intellectual breadth and access. We look forward to these new programs sparking lively and engaged dialogue between students and faculty from a variety of disciplines."

African American Studies is the first new minor at Muhlenberg since the addition of the public health minor, established in fall 2006. ■

## National Science Foundation Awards Grant to 'Berg

The National Science Foundation (NSF) has awarded Muhlenberg \$370,000 over the next three years to support the project "RUI: Genetic Analysis of the *C. elegans* Tailless Gene *nhr-67*," which is overseen by Dr. Bruce C. Wightman, associate professor of biology, and Dr. Elizabeth R. McCain, associate professor of biology.

Participants in the project are studying how a gene called tailless, which functions in the development of neural stem cells in vertebrates, coordinates the development of the uterus in the microscopic worm *Caenorhabditis elegans*. This study helps the group understand how individual genes control the formation of complex organs.

"Continued support from the National Science Foundation

advances undergraduate education and provides opportunities for students to make genuine contributions to advancing scientific knowledge," says Wightman.

Muhlenberg is dedicated to continuing to build upon its already strong science curriculum. The College recently erected a new 40,000 square foot science center and is currently renovating the lab space, classrooms and offices in its other science facilities.

Offering students research opportunities with faculty members is an important part of Muhlenberg's science curriculum and a core part of the research program. Students at Muhlenberg receive broad intensive training in biology and allied subjects throughout their course work. Direct research experience beyond the class-

room is also a vital part of the program.

"With the assistance of the NSF and other foundations and agencies that fund scientific research at undergraduate institutions, Dr. Wightman and his colleagues are able to offer an inquiry-based curriculum that prepares students as scientists and as citizens, with the critical thinking skills to understand scientific discovery and its social, ethical, and political ramifications," says Dr. Marjorie Hass, provost of the College. "Support for science education and research within the context of the liberal arts is very important."

The NSF is an independent U.S. government agency responsible for promoting science and engineering through research programs and education projects. ■

## PRESIDENT HELM SPENDS QUALITY TIME WITH MULE



Recently, 'Berg President Randy Helm paid for his popularity – by planting a kiss on the College's mascot! Students bestowed on Helm the honor of canoodling with the Mule (actually a donkey!) by contributing the most money to a jar with Helm's photograph on it for a fundraiser sponsored by the College's student-run EMS group.

Other potential Mule-kissers were: Marsha Baar, professor of chemistry; James Fritts, campus safety officer; Karen Green, dean of students; Paul Meier, assistant professor of biology; Charles Richter, professor of theatre; Ted Schick, professor of philosophy; and Donald Shive, professor of chemistry.

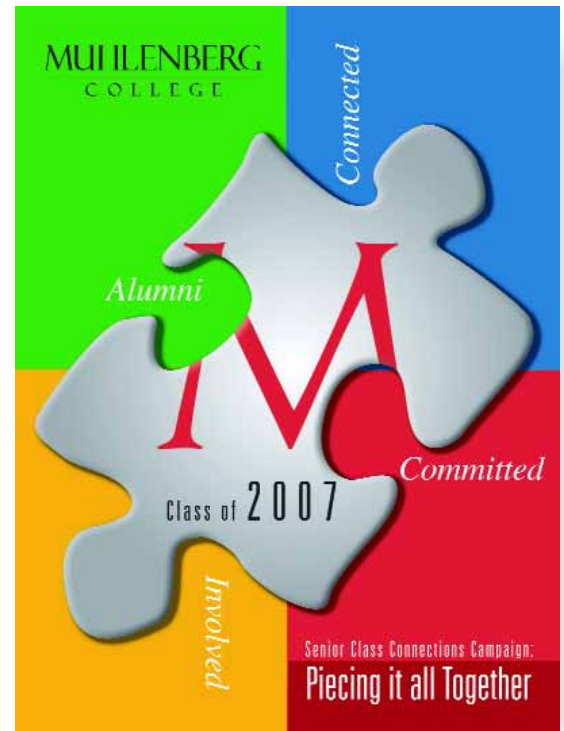
After being selected as the winner, Helm and the mascot met on the College's front lawn on the afternoon of April 20. ■

## Senior Class Connections Campaign Raises the Bar on Participation for Class of 2007

By Stacey Prohaska  
 Director of Communication  
 & Campaign Marketing

As the most recent class to become Muhlenberg alumni, the Class of 2007 has demonstrated remarkable loyalty to the College this year by raising the bar on participation in the three key areas of the Senior Class Connections Campaign: events, the online community and fundraising. To date:

- **Class attendance at each of the four Senior Campaign events ranged from 30% to 80%;**
- **More than 88% have joined the online community, myMuhlenberg.com;**
- **And 42.2% made a gift to The Muhlenberg Fund – nearly 4 percentage points over the Class of 2006's effort last year.**  
 (For the Class of 2007, each percentage point equals five students).



Members of the Senior Class Connections Campaign Executive Council  
 Back Row (l to r): Rory Rosenwald '07, Christi Razzi '07, Elizabeth Klein '07, Erica Smith '07  
 Front Row: Lindsay Galvan '07

Now in its third year, the Senior Class Connections Campaign (SCCC) was developed to strengthen the students' ties to Muhlenberg before they become alumni and to educate them on the importance of giving back to the College.

"We are thrilled at the level of involvement the Senior Class has demonstrated this year," says Traci Falco '92, director of alumni relations. "Our goal is to keep their connection to 'Berg strong, and to let them know that their relationship with the College doesn't end with Commencement."

As the above percentages show, most students were happy to join their classmates online or attend an event. But tipping the Class of 2006's senior fundraising participation rate was a much tougher goal to achieve for the SCCC Executive Board and its network of 18 agents.

Senior giving started out strong in the fall, according to Elizabeth Klein '07, chair of the SCCC, but volunteers had to work to stay motivated in the spring. In large part, this is because seniors are focused on exams, papers and post-graduation plans. In the midst of all the excitement, class agents had to work hard to convince their peers that giving back is important, no matter what size the gift.

Students may not realize it, but the price of tuition, room and board only covers about 85% of the actual annual cost of educating each Muhlenberg student, which means that every student receives some level of subsidy regardless of whether he or she receives financial aid.

Gifts to The Muhlenberg Fund from alumni, parents and friends that help bridge this 15% gap are frequently referred to as the "Silent Scholarship."

"The College's alumni participation rate is a very important component of Annual Giving," says Kim Anderson, director of The Muhlenberg Fund. "It counts for 5% of the College's ranking, and helps to determine how much money Muhlenberg receives in grants from corporations and foundations. Most importantly though, a higher percentage rate means we can provide more resources for our students."

The seniors who volunteer for the campaign "have only a short amount of time to create a culture of philanthropy within their class, which is a very difficult task," says Rodwin Lowe, director of Phonathon and staff advisor to the SCCC.

According to the Class Agents, the reasons why seniors say they don't give back is varied. "Many said, 'Well, my parents just spent thousands on my education, so why should I give more?' or 'I need to find a job' or 'I'm applying to graduate school, so I just don't have a lot of money to give,'" says Rieko Takahashi '07, an SCCC Class Agent.

"This is why it's important to convey to students (and alumni) that every gift, no matter what size, counts toward our participation goal and therefore, makes a big difference on campus," says Anderson. "If we can educate students on giving back before they are alumni, we hopefully lay the groundwork for good participation in years to come."

Christi Razzi '07, who serves as gift chair for the SCCC, says many students are motivated to make their gift in honor of a professor, parent or friend. "We tried to reach out to every student from the Class of 2007 to help them reflect on their time at Muhlenberg and encouraged them to honor those who made a significant impact on their education."

"When I first stepped on Muhlenberg's campus I said to my mom, 'This is where I want to be,'" says Klein. This, she says, is the best reason to give back, "so that other students will have the same great experience I did."

The Class of 2007's fundraising participation rate rivals that of almost all other alumni classes and is an important step forward in growing the campaign, which already has volunteers from the junior class ready to take the reins. The goal is to grow the program each year, says Lowe.

"The SCCC volunteers worked very hard to make the 2007 campaign a success," he says. "They've shown diligence and self-motivation, and I am very proud of them."

Anderson agrees. "We are very grateful to all the seniors who made a gift, and to the volunteers for their hard work this year." Adds Falco, "And we hope that their relationship with Muhlenberg stays strong in the years to come." ■



Daniel Klinger '07 with President Helm in the bell tower atop the Haas College Center

## SCCC: Highlights from the Year

### Lindsay Scott '07 Challenge

Senior Lindsay Scott challenged her classmates to top her gift of \$200. If any senior gave more than \$200, she promised to increase her gift to match that senior's donation. Two seniors met her challenge with gifts of \$400 and \$500.

### The President's Bell Tower Invitation

More than 200 seniors made a commemorative gift of \$20.07 or more, which entitled them to tour the famous Muhlenberg Bell Tower with President Helm.

### Young Alumni HMMS

Twenty-two members of the Class of 2007 contributed at least \$100 and are recognized as Young Alumni Henry Melchior Muhlenberg Society (YAHMMS) members.

### The Ultimate Senior Pledge

This year, 5 seniors made a gift of \$200 or more and were recognized both as Young Alumni HMMS members and life members of The Alumni Trust Fund.

### The Chairman's Challenge

If the Class of 2007 attained 60% participation, Chairman of the Board Richard Brueckner '71, P'04, P'09 promised to match up to \$5,000 of the monies raised, dollar for dollar.



## Muhlenberg Community Saddened by the Death of Linda Bowers, Technical Services Head of Trexler Library

Linda L. Bowers of Allentown, died March 25, 2007 in St. Luke's Hospital, Allentown.

Born in Reading, Pa., she was a daughter of Emilie F. (Warmkessel) Bowers and the late J. Leroy Bowers, M.D. She received her bachelor's degree from Albright College and her master's degree from Drexel University.

A librarian, Linda had been employed at Muhlenberg from 1968 to the time of her death. Most recently, she served as head of technical services at the Trexler Library. She was a member of both the Pennsylvania and the American Library Associations and was the Trexler Library liaison to the Lehigh Valley Center for Independent Living.

She is survived by her mother; brother, John; nieces and nephews; and her Muhlenberg family. ■



## College Mourns Death of Frank McVeigh, Emeritus Professor of Sociology

Frank J. McVeigh, Ph.D., 75, professor of sociology emeritus, died on April 14, 2007, following a brief illness while on vacation in Florida.

McVeigh was a professor of sociology/anthropology at Muhlenberg College for 32 years until his retirement in 1998. He received his bachelor of science degree from La Salle University in 1957; his master's degrees from Loyola University, Chicago, and Marywood College; and his Ph.D. from St. John's University in 1970.

McVeigh served in the Marine Corps during the Korean War. He was an active member of the Lehigh Valley community, serving on many organizational boards as a sociologist in support of justice and equality for men and women. In addition, he served in many ministerial capacities, such as prison ministry, with Compeer, community action programs and Daily Bread. He also served as a Eucharistic minister in nursing homes.

Born in Hi-Nella, N.J., he was the son of the late Frank J. and Viola (Richmond) McVeigh. He was the loving husband of Marie A. (Pollits/Davitt) McVeigh for more than 15 years. He was a member of St. Thomas More Catholic Church in Allentown.

He is survived by: his wife, Marie McVeigh of Allentown; daughters, Linda Sell of Coopersburg and Evelyn DiSante of Thorndale, Pa.; stepson, Francis J. Davitt of Leesport; stepdaughter, Marla (Davitt) Hinkle of Melbourne, Fla.; brothers, Paul of Westmont, N.J., and Edward in Florida; sister, Mary Lundbeck of Blackwood, N.J.; and 11 grandchildren. ■



## Member of the Class of 2009 Awarded St. Andrew's Scholarship

Muhlenberg student Emma Bartholomew '09, of Maplewood, N.J., recently received the McFarland Award, the top endowed scholarship in the St. Andrew's Society for her study at the University of Edinburgh.

Bartholomew is an English and philosophy double major, a Muhlenberg Scholar and a resident advisor. Her proposal for the award included a discussion of her interest in philosophy and music, specifically a comparison of Heidegger's term "attunement" to the musical reference "tune."

The St. Andrew's Society scholarship was created by The Foundation of the St. Andrew's Society. The Society was established in 1958 as a non-profit corporation "to promote understanding between the United States and Scotland by awarding scholarships to carefully selected men under 35 years of age to attend institutions of higher learning in Scotland." It became open to women in 1981.

Annually, 18 colleges and universities within the Philadelphia region are invited to submit a candidate for study in their junior year at one of the four universities. A candidate must be a full time registered student, a U.S. citizen and in the upper quartile of his or her class. The Scholarship Committee selects the scholars by screening and interviewing in March of each year. Currently, each scholar receives an award of \$15,000, which covers a majority of their expenses. ■



## Blend Grant Encourages Leadership in Greek Life

by Corinne Julius '08

The Zeta Chi chapter of Alpha Chi Omega sorority, and the Penn Iota chapter of Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity are the first of the Greek organizations at Muhlenberg College to be awarded funding in the newly developed Blend Fraternity and Sorority Leadership Grant.

The Blend Grant, which was established earlier this academic year, is a gift to the College from Trustee and alumnus John Blend '68. The grant serves as a means for Muhlenberg's Greek organizations to receive up to \$500 in funding in order to attend leadership conferences and further build upon the skills needed to be successful within their chapters.

Earlier in the semester, Alpha Chi sent its president, Elisa Vicari '08, to the Alpha Chi Omega Leadership Academy, a weekend-long seminar in Indianapolis, Ind. The program, a national conference open to all presidents of the sorority's chapters, builds a better appreciation of the organization and instills a greater understanding of sisterhood early within a president's term of office. "I had the time there to plan out goals for myself [and] for the chapter, and to think about the legacy that I want to leave behind when I am done with my time in office," says Vicari.

Similarly, Sigma Phi Epsilon sent executive board members Ryan Chapoteau '08, Douglas Wayne '08, Todd Goldstein '08 and Zach Bills '09 to the Carlson Leadership Academy. This two-day program enhances members' skills in the areas of leadership, recruitment and management of resources. Attendees talk with other executive members and meet with the fraternity's National Board of Directors to have their questions answered.

"It was very beneficial to have the opportunity to interact with fellow executive board members from other chapters at schools similar to Muhlenberg," says Chapoteau, president of Sig Ep. "We all automatically realized that we share a lot of the same obstacles. Brainstorming how to combat these problems together led to more effective solutions, instead of trying to do it on our own."

### GREEK WEEK 2007 • APRIL 9 - 13, 2007 • RESULTS

	SORORITIES	FRATERNITIES
1st Place:	Alpha Chi Omega	Sigma Phi Epsilon
2nd Place:	Phi Sigma Sigma	Phi Kappa Tau
3rd Place:	Delta Zeta	Alpha Epsilon Pi
4th Place:	Phi Mu	Delta Tau Delta

# Alumni NEWS

Traci (Luckenbill) Falco '92  
D I R E C T O R

Sarah Roach  
A S S I S T A N T D I R E C T O R

Desirée Sedehi '08  
P R E S I D E N T I A L A S S I S T A N T

A MESSAGE FROM THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT

## Another Strong Year

By Louis R. Lessig '93

It has been anything but a quiet year for your Alumni Association, especially your Executive Council. Your elected officials have worked diligently in so many areas. I am proud to serve with them, and we should all share in their success. The year has seen a new group of deserving individuals – and even a team – inducted into the Athletic Hall of Fame. In fact, this year the Alumni Trust Fund expanded the size of our Hall of Fame space to allow us to continue to honor deserving athletes for years to come. The dedication of Alumni Court this year was also a defining moment for the Association, as well as a true mark of how important the growth of the Alumni Trust Fund is to our continued success.

Our Career Services Committee has worked diligently to support the College's efforts to provide diverse opportunities for undergraduates throughout the year, and has done an excellent job. The Regional Club Support Team...well, their success is nothing short of astounding. I could tell you more, but it would take the rest of this article, so I will direct you the article "Connected, Involved, Committed: Strengthening Muhlenberg's Alumni Communities" by David Garbe '98 on the next page and to [myMuhlenberg.com](http://myMuhlenberg.com) to learn more on this exploding initiative.

The alumni achievement awards committee once again recognized alumni who can unquestionably be described as some of the best, brightest and most committed – to both Muhlenberg and the world. (Ken Friedman '57, Harvey Stein '57, Carl Schnee '57, Eileen Collins Neri '87 and David Garbe '98.) I am always humbled by the achievements of these individuals.

I am also proud to report that we have finally succeeded in amending our Association's Constitution and, for the first time, adopting a formal set of By-Laws. The acceptance of these governing documents will allow your Association to continue to do great things for undergraduates, alumni and the greater Muhlenberg community we serve throughout the world. Some of those changes will become very apparent to everyone. For example, this will be the last time you read an article referring to your governing body as the Executive Council, because their name has been changed to the Alumni Board.

Additionally, our nominating committee worked long and hard to enhance the Alumni Board by providing a slate of officers and general members to start terms on July 1. I know that I speak for everyone on the Alumni Board when I say that we look forward to the new members joining us this fall. Joining me as officers for the next term are: Bob Buzzard '62, President-Elect; Jennifer Tran '93, Treasurer; and Eileen Collins Neri '87, Secretary.

Finally, I would like to thank those members whose terms are expiring on the Board: Liza Bertini '93, Keith Bildstein '72 and Rob Richard '74. It has been an honor to serve with each of you.

I am excited for the new term and encourage all alumni to get involved, stay involved and continue to support our alma mater in any way that you can. ■



2006 Athletic Hall of Fame Inductees  
Back Row (l to r): Frank Scagliotta '72, Sam Beidleman '63,  
Lauren Buyyounouski Barnicle '98, Jeff Tipping  
Front Row (l to r): Joe Staudinger '49, Leo Martini '50,  
Al Rubbert '51, Frank Borrell '50



Louis Lessig '93 and President Randy Helm (with assistance from Cardinal Key Aaron Smith '08) cut the ribbon at the dedication of Alumni Court during Homecoming Weekend 2006.



Muhlenberg offers many ways for alumni to stay involved. Heidi Kunsch '01 and Dr. Richard Neisenbaum, chair of the biology department, reconnect at the Alumni in the Classroom Week biology department luncheon.



Shannon Solheim '05 and Sun Lee '05 pose for a photo during Hoops & Hockey Hysteria 2007. Both serve as leaders for New York's Regional Alumni Club.



Club leaders at the Regional Club Leadership Summit in March 2007.

## Connected, Involved, Committed: Strengthening Muhlenberg's Alumni Communities

By David Garbe '98

At the end of March, for the third year in a row, a group of dedicated alumni volunteer leaders from up and down the east coast gathered at Muhlenberg College for a weekend of leadership development training, team building, event planning and a little bit of fun! Approximately 20 representatives from Philadelphia, New York, Baltimore, Washington D.C., Boston, and the Lehigh Valley generated new goals and initiatives for the coming year in a continuing effort to strengthen alumni clubs and to create novel approaches to fortifying the connections between local alumni, regional alumni clubs and the College.

Throughout the weekend, numerous valuable and constructive topics were discussed including "Improving Alumni Events," "Strengthening Clubs and Contacts," "Connecting with Our Alumni Base" and "Developing Inter-Regional Cooperation and Communication." Additionally, alumni leaders shared best practices for their individual regions in hopes of cultivating stronger, more vibrant clubs and building a collective vision for the future. As a result of this leadership summit, many innovative and exciting ideas were developed including:

- An October 2007 series of events called "A Taste of Life after Muhlenberg," designed to welcome young alumni to several regions around the United States.
- A nationwide "Muhlenberg Cares" month of community service events planned for next spring.

At the end of the weekend, volunteers enjoyed a celebratory dinner with Cardinal Key liaisons at Salvatore Ruffino's restaurant in Allentown, and participated in a Senior Class Connections event, where Christina Coviello '02 gave an energetic speech encouraging upcoming grads to get involved with the regional clubs. The enthusiasm, commitment and dedication that our alumni leaders possess are remarkable; with their help, Muhlenberg continues to shine around the country and in the lives of so many people. Please keep your eyes open for future alumni events and don't forget to get involved.

For more information on Muhlenberg's regional clubs and volunteer opportunities, visit [www.myMuhlenberg.com](http://www.myMuhlenberg.com). ■

You can contact the Office of Alumni Relations at 2400 West Chew Street, Allentown, PA 18104

Phone: 800-464-2374 • Fax: 484-664-3545 • E-mail: [bergalum@muhlenberg.edu](mailto:bergalum@muhlenberg.edu)

## Alumni Association Honors Two Members of the Class of '07



Kimberly Nguyen

**Kimberly Nguyen**, of Telford, Pa., graduated with a major in media and communication, and a minor in environmental science. Nguyen immersed herself in all aspects of the campus community, from work as a resident advisor and resident liaison, to giving tours to prospective students, to acting as the student

representative to the College's Board of Trustees.

Over the course of her four years at Muhlenberg, she was selected to serve on the curriculum committee, the President's alcohol task force, the President's campus greening committee and the search committee for a new dean of students.

She worked with EnAct to organize and lead the largest environmental demonstration on campus and raised awareness of environmental conditions, both on campus and globally.

Nguyen spent one night a week on call as a member of MCEMS, the College's student-run emergency medical services. She served on the social and academic judicial panels, worked with area youth on Jefferson Field Day and participated in mock Shantytowns to raise homelessness awareness on campus.

For three years, Nguyen served as a class representative on Student Council and was student body treasurer from 2004 – 2006.

In the Allentown area, Nguyen has volunteered at the DaVinci Discovery Center, worked with the Boys and Girls Club and was a campaign volunteer for State Representative Jennifer Mann.

She has represented Muhlenberg in Malibu, Calif., as the regional representative for Sodexo's student board of directors, and in Nevada, as a volunteer for Americorps.

In addition to these activities, Nguyen worked as an office assistant in the College's dean of students office.

Nguyen has been honored with many awards and distinction during her time at Muhlenberg. She was selected for Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges, was inducted into Omicron Delta Kappa, the leadership honor society, and participated in the media and communication honors program.

Over the years, she has received numerous Henry

Awards, including: Rookie of the Year (2003-2004), People's Choice Student Leader of the Year (2004-2005, 2005-2006 and 2006- 2007), Trailblazer Award (2004-2005), Unsung Hero (2005- 2006) and Resident Advisor of the Year (2006-2007).

**Matthew Loesch**, of Halifax, Pa., graduated with dual degrees in psychology and business administration. Though he has been involved in a great number of college activities, Loesch made the greatest impact as an athlete and through student government.

Loesch was a two-sport athlete in varsity wrestling and football. He was captain of the wrestling team for two years, leading the team to two of the program's best seasons. His career record against Centennial Conference opponents was 40-0. He reached the NCAA national semi-finals three times and is a three-time NCAA All-American, only the second athlete in Muhlenberg history to accomplish that feat.

In addition to his athletic endeavors, Loesch devoted much of his time to Student Council, serving as class president his freshman year and as a class representative all four years. His senior year, he was elected student body executive secretary.

He was chair of the technology committee, where he worked with the office of information technology to extend wireless internet access to more areas on

campus, and to prepare students for the new e-mail system. He served on the dining committee, where he worked with dining services to bring innovative new offerings to students. Loesch also created the communications committee of Student Council, a group that worked to initiate and enhance interaction between council, students, faculty and staff.

Loesch was a member of the church choir and founder of the Catholic organization, Students In Newman, a group that works to mentor underprivileged youth, set up aid for those in need, and offer opportunities for those who want to live their faith through good work. In addition, he tutored peers in both macro and microeconomics and hosted prospective students as a campus delegate.

Loesch has earned numerous awards, including: NCAA Division III Scholar All-American (2005, 2006, 2007), NCAA Division III Wrestling All-American (2005, 2006, 2007), the Sidney G. Weikert Sophomore Athlete of the Year Award (2005), the Henry Award for Muhlenberg Athlete of the Year (2005), and the prestigious NCAA Postgraduate Scholarship.

He was a member of the Psi Chi National Honor Society in psychology, the College's RJ Fellows Scholars Honors Program, and made the Centennial Conference Academic Honor Roll in 2005, 2006, and 2007. ■



Matthew Loesch



## PROFILE OF Susanne (Hobbis) Meixsell '91, Superintendent of the Northwestern Lehigh School District

By Jillian L. Lowery '00, Director of College Communications

When she entered Muhlenberg as a freshman, Susanne (Hobbis) Meixsell '91 had no idea that she was interested in pursuing education as a career. It wasn't until her roommate started talking about how much she enjoyed her elementary education courses that Meixsell entertained the idea of becoming a teacher. On a whim, she decided to sign up for some classes with her roommate for the next semester.

And, just like that, Meixsell was hooked.

She enjoyed and excelled in her academic coursework, and before she graduated with a degree in humanities and a certificate in elementary education, she was offered a job to begin teaching second grade in the Northern Lehigh School District, where she had

completed her student teaching.

Meixsell taught kindergarten, second and fifth grades in the same district before moving on to the Carbon Lehigh Intermediate Unit #21 as an educational consultant, providing technical support for special education classes. She also worked as the coordinator of professional development for CLIU #21. In November 2000, she was hired by the Northwestern Lehigh School District as the middle school assistant principal. In June 2003, Meixsell began serving as the director of curriculum and instruction for the district and worked in that capacity until she became the assistant superintendent in August 2005. She was then appointed superintendent in February 2007.

"I was always drawn to elementary students," she says. "But I also really enjoyed the work that I did with professional development for adults. I wanted to find a way to integrate the two. Working in administration for the

school district has allowed me to do exactly that."

Though she admits that she misses having a class of her own "every single day," Meixsell loves her current role. "I feel that, as superintendent, I can have a huge impact on the students through my work with the faculty and the surrounding community. I also try to spend a lot of time in our buildings with the students; I need to be able to interact with them directly."

As if her various jobs in the field haven't kept her occupied enough, Meixsell has kept busy as a student herself. After graduating from 'Berg, she continued her education, earning a master's in elementary education from Kutztown University and completing administration certification courses at Penn State. She is now hard at work finishing her Ed.D. in educational leadership at Lehigh University.

"Though my own education didn't end at Muhlenberg, I felt that the

*continued on page 22*

## SPOTLIGHT ON BECKY RICHMOND '04

By Jillian L. Lowery '00, Director of College Communications

"I love to learn, and I love people. I always enjoyed being in school, so I figured, 'Why leave?'" says Becky Richmond '04, a ninth-grade English and reading teacher at Plymouth Whitmarsh High School in Plymouth Meeting, Pa.

Richmond, who graduated with a major in English and a certificate in secondary education, credits some of her 'Berg professors with helping her to make the decision to pursue education as a profession, particularly Dr. Barri Gold, associate professor of English; Dr. David Rosenwasser, professor of English; and Dr. Jill Stephen, professor of English.

Though she's still at the beginning of her career, Richmond has jumped right in and immersed herself in the culture of the school where she works. In addition to her classroom duties, she is also the coach of the freshmen girls' basketball team, the ninth-grade class sponsor and the leader of the ninth-grade team. She also served on a committee that writes curriculum, and a course that she helped to develop has recently been implemented.

Richmond takes her position very seriously, and is committed to help shape the lives of the young people with whom she works. "I love watching students develop into thinkers," she says. "I am able to watch them mature and grow."

Admittedly, there are challenges. "Students, especially high school students, live in a very demanding world. It is difficult to relay the value of education, especially reading and writing, to students who have grown up in such a tech-savvy world," says Richmond. "They are constantly looking for

instant gratification, and education is a process that takes time ... The traditional high school structure does not support this, and as a result, it becomes more and more difficult to engage them each year."

Richmond takes it all in stride and realizes that each challenge could yield a reward. "I am challenged every day with the things that come with working with adolescent students: bad attitudes, criticism, failures, apathy, anger, frustration and ill wills. As an educator, I expect these things and work to improve students' states of minds," she says. "I will not always 'get through' to my students, but when I am able to change the attitude of one, it makes me feel like I am making a difference. Maybe not to the world, but I am improving, and in some cases, saving a person's life ... When it happens, it is by far the most incredible thing about teaching."

With her strong drive to impact her students and her realistic outlook on the potential difficulties of teaching, Richmond is poised for success in the field – and poised to help the young people with whom she works to succeed in achieving their own goals.



“Thank you. I’m here to say that I am alive.” Jonathan Franzen’s opening remarks of the campus interview following the publication of his new memoir, *The Discomfort Zone*, indirectly reveal the importance of a course like Living Writers. His comic irony raises an interesting question: how often in an academic setting do students have the opportunity to read and analyze the work of contemporary writers? Many scholars are quick to dismiss current writing as a lesser form compared to the classics, and yet writers like Jonathan Franzen are making history. Living Writers gives Muhlenberg students the opportunity to interact with this history and be a part of it.

Offered every three years, Living Writers is a course that focuses on the work of well known contemporary writers who visit campus. Over 60 students were enrolled in the course taught by Professors Alec Marsh and Grant Scott in Spring 2007. In it, they read plays and poetry, fiction and non-fiction, and for six Mondays of the semester, they were privileged to hear each of the writers in person. The authors conducted a Q&A session with the class in the afternoon and then in the evening gave a public reading.

The following excerpts are taken from the WMUH radio interview with Franzen conducted on February 12, 2007. Readers interested in the full transcript are invited to contact Dr. Grant Scott (Scott@muhlenberg.edu). Many thanks to Sarah Sidoti ’09 for transcribing the interview.

# DISCOMFORTABLY YOURS:

An Interview with Best-Selling Author

## JONATHAN FRANZEN

By Dr. Grant Scott, professor of English, Sarah Sidoti ’09  
and Dr. Alec Marsh, associate professor of English

**ALEC MARSH:** I was wondering if you could say a few words about fiction, the novel and why the written word matters to you, especially in an age dominated by cinema and the digital image.

**JF:** I guess we’ll get to the hard questions later, the really hard-to-answer questions. I would start with a feeling that the faith I have in literature is like any faith, which is it’s not something that gets planted in your brain, and then you’re fine for life. It’s something that has to be examined and wrestled with. It’s something you are constantly losing, especially in a world that has relegated the written word increasingly to the sidelines. Nevertheless, having chosen to be a writer, I have a kind of ghetto mentality about it where I’m going to do my best to “dis” and discredit what I perceive to be the enemies of the novel and talk some trash in terms of what we can still do. That continues to be a major energizer for me when I go to write fiction. I want to show what

the novel still can do. I want to tell you about some people that can still bring it, and I want to tell you about what they can do that nobody else can do in any other form...

I feel one of the reasons my new book is called *The Discomfort Zone* is because the whole province of personal disclosure fills me with discomfort. I am much, much happier, and better defended, if I’m putting fiction out there. There are reasons I decided to do this book, and I think there are things you gain by doing memoir but by and large when it comes to the really, really complicated, interesting stuff, it helps, first of all, to be able to invent and it helps not to have that obtrusive sense of, “Oh, this is Jonathan Franzen, we’ve seen his picture” – not to have that image hanging over every page and interfering. Ultimately, non-fiction becomes this kind of pole that hangs over a text and prevents you from fully engaging and sympathizing and identifying with the character. I mean, if you work at it and you have some

skill, you can make the memoir work sort of like a novel if you’ve got some good stories to tell. But unless you were with Stalin at Yalta, you don’t have that many stories to tell.

**AM:** That’s the odd thing about non-fiction narrators. Your relationship to the truth is much different than a narrator in a novel, I think, and you’re bound in your unwritten contract with the reader to be truthful, otherwise it makes no sense to write non-fiction.

**JF:** Yes.

**AM:** On the other hand, I get this distinct sense from the way you’re talking that a fictional narrator actually has more access to the truth, paradoxically, because that truth is made up or invented.

**JF:** Yeah, this was something my mom never got. The happiest day of my writing life for her was when I finally published a piece of journalism, and then she could finally let it all out and say, “I just don’t see why anyone would want to read novels. It’s just lies, it’s just lies.”

**AM:** A very Protestant viewpoint.

**JF:** Yes [chuckle]. She claimed to prefer histories and biographies. I didn’t see her reading too many of those either. But I’m not dissing my mom—she had a hard life in many ways and we got along great toward the end in ways I recount in this book... There are no problems that people are facing that novelists before them, playwrights before them, poets, haven’t been wrestling with for 2800 years plus. There isn’t anything really new under the sun. You go back and you look at Aristophanes, one of the Greek dramatists. Basically, you know, there was nothing zany done in the sixties in any medium that the Greeks weren’t trying out in rebellion – those stuffy, old tragedians.

**GRANT SCOTT:** Lysistrata.

**JF:** Yeah, Lysistrata certainly would be a touch point there. Maybe you actually can be truer in fiction than in non-fiction.

**GS:** What Alec said about an ethical obligation to the reader in a memoir—that doesn’t mean that you haven’t shaped your memoir in some way, does it?

**JF:** I think the truth in memoir functions the way meter and rhyme do in poetry. You're playing within certain parameters and the good poets are getting away with a lot of funny rhymes. They're not necessarily perfect rhymes, the meters aren't perfect, but you can't really call them on it because it does rhyme and the meter more or less works, and that's the way I felt about the non-fictionality of this book. I'm not going to lie to you. I'm not actually going to tell a falsehood because it makes a better story. But that doesn't mean I have to tell you absolutely everything. I don't have to give you certain facts that might make it a more boring story.

**GS:** I wonder if we could talk about your process of writing and revision. If you reread *The Corrections* now, for example, would you be tempted to tinker, add or delete specific words or scenes?

**JF:** There are a few little things. I'd been writing for 15 or 20 years when that book was written. I wrote most of it in the year 2000. I'd been out of college for 18 years and had written two long novels already and a fair amount of non-fiction as well. So there was less line-by-line in that book that I would want to change...For me, it's almost binary: either the thing is living and creaking along, or it's not. And almost nothing I ever try is living. It always feels derivative or dead or unrealized, like there's not real intention there. I don't really know what I'm doing. I'm not engaging with the thing that's really upsetting me. I'm close, but I don't have it yet. The dialogue is not the conversation in my head that really gets the anguish and the humor of what I'm living. So, once the thing finally comes into focus – it's actually very much like focus – once it's crisply in focus, it can't get more crisply in focus. Either it's in focus, or it's not. If it's in focus, that's where I am now. For the first five years out of school, everything was just constant, constant rewriting of the same pages over and over because it takes a long time to find your voice and to learn to recognize when something's work-

ing and when it's not.

**GS:** Do you show your writing to other people and ask for their advice?

**JF:** I've learned to do that with the non-fiction pretty well. I even show it when it's not done because I have a really good editor at the *New Yorker* and some good friends. I used to be too terrified of people making fun of how bad I was to show them anything, but I've learned to trust to show things that aren't complete just because it saves a little time.

With fiction, mostly if something is not done and I show it to someone, it's because I know it's bad and I'm just looking for confirmation. If I have it by the scrotum, then I basically write until I have some finished chunk and all I'm looking for is the rubber stamp. Even if I don't admit it to myself, I know when it's bad.

**GS:** Do you write in streaks? Or do you approach your writing like a nine-to-five job and crank out ten pages a day no matter what?

**JF:** I don't take a – well, all of the above. It's chaotic and ugly. I'm no one whose example should be followed.

**GS:** Writing on napkins at Starbucks?

**JF:** Oh, when it's all moving along, yeah. For a few months, everything's great and I'm turning out pages, but most of it is no good. Most of it is a feeling of, there's something here, and I can't find it, and I'm going to die – it's going to kill me because I can't find it, and how badly you write when you don't have it. Like, "Wow, I've never written an interesting sentence in my life," and I go back and open up one of the books I've written and I just say, "Who wrote that? That is nobody I know. That is nobody I will ever be again." That's how it feels.

**GS:** Now when you say you throw things away, do you *actually* throw things away, or do you stick them in drawers just in case?

**JF:** Oh yeah, I pile it up in drawers, but I shouldn't do that. The temptation is to go back and try and include some page that was pretty good, and then you bend things all around to include this one thing that you



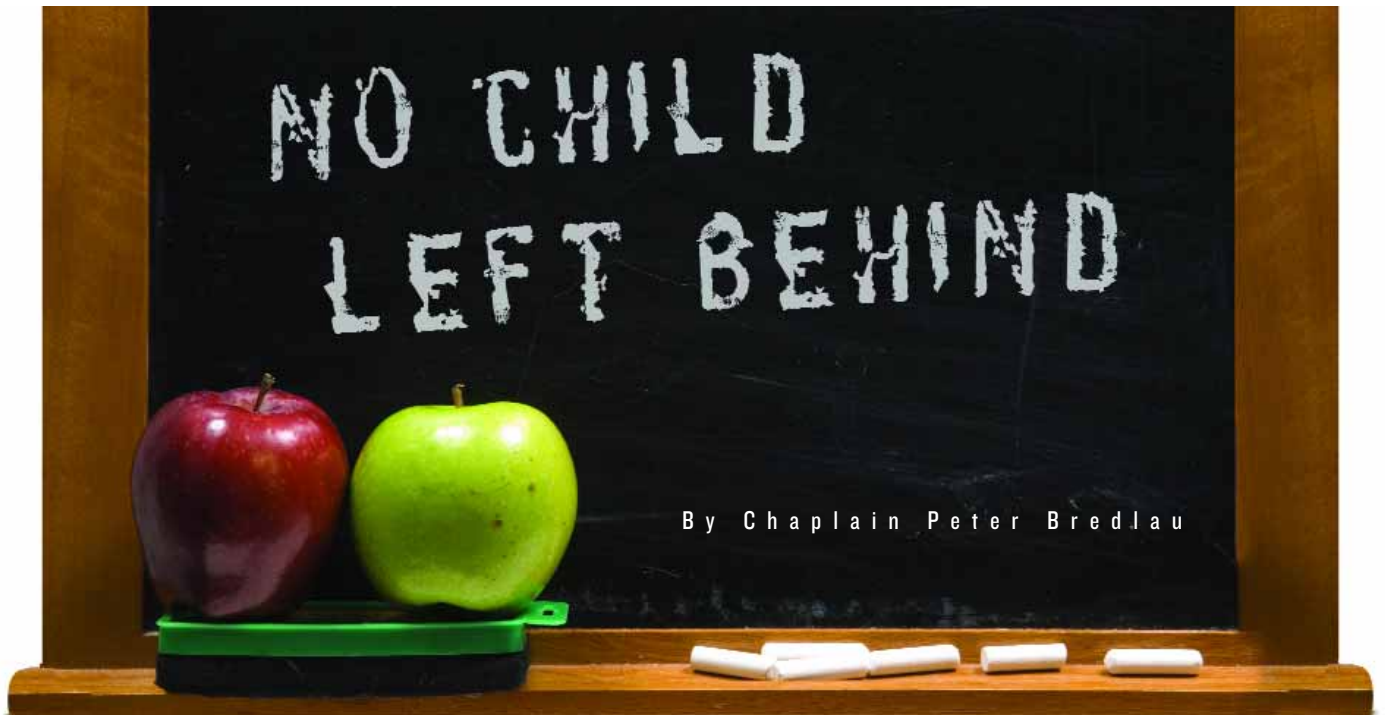
thought was pretty good, and the next thing you know, you've lost three weeks. And you wake up at four in the morning and realize, "I know why this isn't working. It's because I tried to use that page from the old thing," and you know, it's like, shhh...[frustrated grunt].

**AM:** You're smiling when you're saying this but you're nonetheless expressing real, artistic torment here. And I'm just wondering, at the very beginning of our interview, you talked about choosing to be a writer, but the way you talk, it sounds like being a writer chose you.

**JF:** Well, I was lucky. I figured out very early on what I was good at, and have been lucky to be able to pursue that. Lucky in a sense. There's a notion out there that artists are

*continued on page 30*

## 'Berg's Department of Education Rises to the Challenges of



By Chaplain Peter Bredlau

**S**ay the words “No Child Left Behind” to an educator, and you’re likely to get an animated response. The No Child Left Behind Act, signed into law by President George Bush on January 8, 2002, radically changed the landscape of American education and teacher preparation. College departments of education are required to train teachers according to strict guidelines that encourage what the Department of Education calls “accountability” and “proven education methods.”

That puts departments like the one at Muhlenberg in a tough spot. How do you preserve a proven liberal arts curriculum and experience in an environment that is proscribed and restrictive? You do it with creative thinkers and professors who are committed to teacher education.

In the words of Dr. Michael Carbone, the chair of the education department, “The education of a teacher is a complicated mix of practice, value formation and ethical responsibility. It requires the energies and focus of the entire department to work collaboratively to fulfill the department’s mission.

The mission statement of the Muhlenberg College education department begins, “We believe that teaching is a professional and intellectual endeavor based in the liberal arts.” Later the statement adds, “As professionals, they [students] will possess a specific, sophisticated and research-based body of knowledge and use that knowledge to analyze events, frame prob-

lems and make decisions in planning, implementing and assessing instruction in accordance with state and national standards.”

No Child Left Behind has changed the way the department does business in courses. The syllabus for most courses in education is determined by state standards, which makes becoming a teacher quite a challenge. Teacher candidates are subject to increasing requirements, in the college classroom in academic preparation and in the fieldwork classroom in practical preparation. At a liberal arts institution like Muhlenberg, that leaves little room for electives.

“I have had a fairly good experience in the education department,” says Meaghan Byrne ’09. “It’s difficult sometimes, especially during scheduling because we need to make sure that we have all the classes we need for all the requirements we have. We don’t have much of an opportunity to take any electives because there are so many classes that we need to take, especially in elementary education. But if teaching is what you really want to do, having the chance to get out into the field is a great opportunity.”

Despite these challenges, in the last 20 years the number of teacher candidates has grown from three to nearly 65 student teachers each year. What accounts for the precipitous growth, especially as requirements are becoming stricter?

According to Carbone, two factors feed the growth in teacher education. First, teaching provides an opportunity for socially meaningful work. Student teachers get a chance to make a difference in the lives of youth across a breadth of age groups. Second, teaching still provides some economic certainty. In an era of downsizing and decreased corporate loyalty, the stability of the teaching life is attractive.

Muhlenberg’s education department endeavors to balance the heavy load of state and federal mandates with intellectual rigor and the breadth of the liberal arts experience that Muhlenberg is known for. As a result, graduates feel prepared to teach in any setting. This echoes the department’s mission, which remains consistent that students grow to see themselves as teachers of all students. Through the students’ participation in the community schools, they work in urban and suburban settings, special education and across grade levels.

“The education department prepared me to teach in any district,” says Kate Custance ’04, who teaches in the Allentown School District. “When it came time to apply for a job, I was able to reflect on my varied experiences and apply to the districts that best suited my interests and needs. I found myself drawn to the Allentown School District because I felt I would make a difference and my



talents would be put to good use.”

The department does not just train undergraduate teachers. Faculty and staff engage regularly in community outreach through professional development programs and work with children in the areas of science, math, literacy, and the arts. For example, experienced teachers also benefit from the professors and facilities at Muhlenberg College. Even a brief conversation with Dr. George Bonekemper, the director of professional development studies and teacher appreciation, reveals the depth of commitment shown by the department.

Bonekemper is responsible for Muhlenberg’s close relationship with local schools, especially the Act 48 continuing professional education that Muhlenberg offers to teachers in the region. Act 48 requires 180 hours of continuing education for teachers.

A hallmark of this program is the Governor’s Academy for Urban Education. For the past five years, this academy brings urban teachers to campus each June. The teachers participate in workshops and networking opportunities designed to further their competencies as teachers in urban settings. Originally located at Muhlenberg on a trial basis, the Academy is now regularly hosted by the College, in large part because of the exceptional work of the education department and Bonekemper.

It is this transformative work that attracted Dr. Pearl Rosenberg to the education department. Trained as a social psychologist, she emphasizes that students in the education department are learning how to be leaders and advocates in their school communities, as well as teachers in their own classrooms. “In our program, preparing to be a teacher becomes a collective experience that entails learning how to navigate a variety of borders across cultures, among peers and within the self.” As faculty advisor to the student-run Education Society, Rosenberg works toward empowering student initiative.

Students in the education department heap high praise on their professors and supervisors. “My favorite thing about the education department at Muhlenberg was the faculty. My professors were a wealth of knowledge – they truly were experts in their field,” says Custance. “They presented information in a meaningful way and always connected research-based concepts to real-life classroom situations. They provided time for us to reflect on our own fieldwork and student teaching experiences in connection with our work in class at Muhlenberg.”

Independent thinking is a central goal of the liberal arts education and can be seen in the education curriculum. Independent thinking is essential for teachers who are being trained to work in a highly regimented education environment, the kind of environment teachers have found themselves in since the enactment of No Child Left Behind. It is independent thinking from both faculty and students that makes working with the variety of organizations possible.

All departments at Muhlenberg focus on teaching, research and living up to the



Dr. Louise Shive (center) and her Elementary Science Curriculum class enjoy a lesson outside.

standards of their professional organizations. The education department has many additional responsibilities, including the standards and expectations of the Pennsylvania Department of Education, the State Board of Education and local teachers and administrators. Because of these relationships, the department occasionally gets involved in efforts to lobby lawmakers to improve the level of education in Pennsylvania and the U.S.

Recently, Carbone and Professor Cathy Kim lobbied Pennsylvania lawmakers on an issue of certification. The state of Pennsylvania is considering changing the certification parameters for elementary school teachers, grouping the lower elementary grades into one certification, and the upper elementary grades with middle school certification. If this happens, Pennsylvania will be out of step with surrounding states. Such a move would not only impact the curriculum at Muhlenberg, but would also impact the recruitment of students to Muhlenberg who wish to be certified in states other than Pennsylvania.

Ultimately, in the words of Kim, the education department seeks to create “critical thinkers, who are successful, skilled teachers, and are concerned for social justice.” At a time when teacher education and certification are increasingly restrictive, this is a noble task, and one that the Muhlenberg College education department does with grace and substance. ■



Dr. Pearl Rosenberg, professor Cathy Kim and Dr. Michael Carbone (back row, far right) with Rosenberg’s Educational Psychology class.

# COMMEN

Though the weather forecast was threatening, the sun came out halfway through Muhlenberg's 159th Commencement on May 20, 2007. Five hundred and sixty-three students crossed the stage and received their diplomas, ending their experience as students and becoming the College's newest group of alumni.

*Doonesbury* cartoonist Garry Trudeau delivered the Commencement address and was awarded an honorary doctorate of humane letters. Others who received honorary degrees were Ruth Abram, The Honorable John E. Jones III (whose daughter Meghan graduated with a degree in English) and Dr. Edmund Pellegrino. Benjamin Shaw '07 delivered the address for the Class of 2007.

At the ceremony, two faculty members were honored for their exceptional contributions to the College. Dr. Lora Taub-Pervizpour, associate professor of media and communication, was awarded the Paul C. Empie Award, honoring excellence in inspirational teaching, and Dr. Mohsin Hashim, associate professor of political science, was given the Christian R. and Mary F. Lindback Award, recognizing that his distinguished teaching makes a profound contribution to the intellectual growth of his students.



*“While Muhlenberg encourages you in countless ways to look through unprejudiced eyes, it has been no less insistent that you keep your eye on prejudice. Indeed, the whole point of a liberal arts education – of your studies of civilizations and cultures through their language, literature, history, art and science is to help you see how things connect, to create a broad understanding of – and an appreciation for – the world as people other than you experience it.”*

*– Garry Trudeau  
in his address to the Class of 2007*



# CEMENT 7



# STATE OF THE ARTS

Robert J. Wagner



photo by Aron Kallen '07

Kate Thompson



photo by Aron Kallen '07

## Muhlenberg's dance professors inspire their students, one step at a time

by Ken Butler

When Kate Thompson and Robert J. Wagner arrived on campus in Fall 2003, neither intended to be a dance major. Thompson thought she might continue a "hobby," but didn't think she'd do anything significant with dance. Though Wagner intended to study tap with Shelley Oliver, he'd never even seen an evening of concert dance.

Both graduated in the Class of 2007 on May 20 with double majors: Thompson in psychology and dance; Wagner in theatre and dance. Last spring, Thompson's "unheard dissonance," a solo work she choreographed and performed, was honored by the professional adjudicators at March's Northeast Region American

College Dance Conference by being selected as only a handful of works to appear on the Conference's Gala Concert. Wagner appeared in a duet work choreographed by another senior, Christopher Shepard, which was also selected for the Gala Concert. This was a real triumph for Muhlenberg's dance department; it is extremely rare for two student works – or for any two works from the same institution, for that matter – to be selected for the Gala Concert.

Both Thompson and Wagner have danced in the Muhlenberg Dance Association's annual faculty-choreographed concert, and both have danced and choreographed for the twice-yearly student-choreographed concerts. Both also choreographed and performed solo works in the dance department's first Senior Solo Concert held off-campus at Allentown's Theatre Outlet in April. Thompson moved to New York City after graduation to pursue a career as a dancer and choreographer, while Wagner will be performing for the coming year in The Enchantment Theatre Company's touring educational production of *The Velveteen Rabbit*. So, what happened?

The answer to that question can be summed up in five words – Karen

Dearborn and Charles Anderson. The power of these dynamic teachers and their colleagues in the theatre and dance department made a profound difference in these students' lives as creative artists and scholars. "They really push you," Thompson observes.

"We're taught performance and we're taught technique, but we're also taught critical thinking – to explore what it is we're doing, and why. We are responsible for the art that we're making, and not only are we responsible, we're confident at making it," Wagner says.

Thompson continues, "A conservatory or any other school can turn out a competent technician. But this department turns out really intelligent dancers, which is more valuable."

"We make smart work," Wagner adds. He went on to note that the professional adjudicators at the Conference stated during Thompson's adjudication that the two Muhlenberg pieces were the "hippest" student works on the program – that is, they were the most in tune with the kind of work that's being created in dance centers like New York and Philadelphia. "We're immersed through Dearborn and Anderson] in an understanding of what it means to make intelligent work. That's what people in the real world are doing," says Wagner.

One of their first experiences of making work in the real world was last April's Senior Solo Concert. Dr. Beth Schachter, associate professor of theatre, is also the producing artistic director of downtown Allentown's Theatre Outlet, a not-for-profit performance company dedicated to the production of alternative theatre, solo shows, media, music and dance. She and Charles Anderson, assistant professor of dance, had spoken about Anderson bringing his professional theatre company, dance theatre X, to the Outlet for a spring concert. Schachter had also contacted Corrie Cowart, lecturer in dance, and her

husband Tim about their company, Co-Art Dance Company, performing a concert some time during the year, as well. When Karen Dearborn, professor and director of dance, had a conversation with Anderson and Cowart, she realized that adding a concert of solo work choreographed by seniors during the week, book-ended by the professional companies' performances on the weekends, would create a week-long celebration of dance, an idea embraced by Schachter.

Dearborn wanted the seniors who would be involved in the solo concert to have a culminating performance experience, and to get a taste of what it will be like in a professional venue, should they decide to produce work without the security and resources of the Muhlenberg academic department. Her aim was to compel the students "to create portable work," she said, "work that didn't rely on a great deal of technical support. We also thought we should put them out into a real community, beyond the campus." Six students responded to the challenge, creating seven pieces for public performance. Dearborn was also insistent that the students serve as their own producers for the concert: in addition to choreographing and performing, students wrote the press release, created the advertising campaign, designed the lighting for the pieces, and served as stage managers and technical staff for the concert. The department provided artistic direction and box office support. The concert series was a success and Dearborn hopes to repeat the Senior Solo Concert in the future.

Wagner relays the challenges of creating work outside his comfort zone – literally. "While I was choreographing, I found myself thinking about surfaces. We're used to working on the marley [a rubber floor covering that comes in rolls and is laid out and taped together to provide a smooth and even dancing surface] and the Theatre Outlet has a hard-

wood floor. I found myself having to keep thinking, 'I need to remember that I have to be able to do this on any surface.'" He began to generate movement for his piece that would be malleable to whatever surface he was working on at the moment. Consequently, when he finally rehearsed his piece on the Outlet's floor, "my piece started fitting the new space I was in, in totally unexpected ways. My piece actually changed itself on the hardwood floor."

Thompson and Wagner both credit Dearborn and Anderson with their growth as creative artists. Thompson's "unheard dissonance" began as an exercise in her Beginning Dance Composition class. She confesses, "It was Karen and Charles who said, 'You should look at that exercise and develop it.' At the time, I didn't know what I had begun to create, but they did." She adds, "I think that's what makes the dance program here so special – the close relationships that we are allowed to form with the faculty. It's because of those relationships that we've been able to come so far."

Thompson and Wagner also credit their peers. "We are a family," Wagner says. "We support each other, cheer each other on, and can critique each other's work in a non-competitive way."

Says Thompson, "We've learned to value each other, each other's opinions and work, instead of criticizing."

Wagner adds, "We also know how to talk about dance. We don't just say, 'I liked that' or 'I didn't like that.' We can say, 'I see this in your movement' or 'You should think about this.' I respect everyone's opinion. It's nice being surrounded by people you respect." ■

*Ken Butler is executive assistant to President Randy Helm. He worked with Robert J. Wagner and last fall in the MTA's Urinetown: The Musical, and has collaborated with Karen Dearborn on over a half-dozen musical theatre projects since 1996, including Brigadoon, West Side Story and Oklahoma.*

An accomplished goalie at Muhlenberg, Kayla Boisvert '07 led the Centennial Conference with a 0.69 goals-against average in league games. In addition, she earned the Carl. E. Grothehen Jr. Memorial Award for Excellence in Psychology as a senior.



Muhlenberg's 2006-07 athletic teams boasted twice as many Phi Beta Kappa inductees as last year and saw 11 others recognized for academic achievements at Honors Convocation.

# Playing it SMART

By Stephanie Plotino, Assistant Sports Information Director



Matt Loesch '07 graduated from Muhlenberg as the most successful wrestler in school history with a 90-16 career record. His school work wasn't too shabby either, as he became one of just 29 winter sport male athletes in the country to earn an NCAA Postgraduate Scholarship. He also holds three All-American Honors.

Choosing between athletics and academics has never been easy for Muhlenberg College graduate Kristen Amore '07. That is, after all, why she enrolled at Muhlenberg. A bright student and talented athlete, Amore came to the NCAA Division III, liberal arts-oriented campus to play golf and study chemistry.

"If I wanted to go somewhere and play golf full-time, I would have chosen a Division I school where golf became my life," Amore says. "But Muhlenberg really emphasized being able to do both."

The dedication she showed to both sides of her college experience paid off, as she played a key role in the women's golf team's Centennial Conference championship – the only conference crown won by a Mule team in 2006-07 – and was also inducted into the prestigious Phi Beta Kappa honor society.

With her induction into  $\Phi$ BK, Amore contributed to the already large number of student-athletes selected for the honor each year. Phi Beta Kappa admitted 10 Mules over the last three years and added another six in 2007.

Each year at Muhlenberg, the local  $\Phi$ BK chapter – called Pi of Pennsylvania – accepts eight to 10 percent of the College's graduating class, based on the nominees' grade-point average and letters of recommendation, according to media and communication professor Dr. Jefferson Pooley, who also acts as the secretary and treasurer for the Muhlenberg chapter.

The organization – which officially slated its name as The Phi Beta Kappa Society in 1988 – is the oldest undergraduate honors organization in the country and was established in 1776 at the College of William and Mary.

The society currently houses 276 chapters in colleges and universities across the country and – according to the  $\Phi$ BK web site – accepts scholars on the basis of the motto, "Love of learning is the guide of life." And because the organization originated as a secret society, freedom of inquiry has always been a cornerstone.

This year, of the 46 Muhlenberg students inducted, 13 percent played a sport in 2006-07, and 22 percent were recruited to the school as athletes.

So why do such a large number of athletes make the cut each year? The student-athletes themselves couldn't pinpoint a reason, but they were able to offer some suggestions, most of which seemed to fit in with the ideals put forth by the NCAA's recent ad campaign.

The commercials and advertisements state the following message: "There are over 380,000 student-athletes, and just about every one of them will go pro in something other than sports."

Former Muhlenberg softball pitcher Nicole Washburn '07 concurs with the undertone of the message, stating, "I don't think getting inducted into Phi Beta Kappa was a goal of mine. The requirements for induction were a goal. I always wanted to have a high GPA. It opens up a lot more opportunities for you."

## Opportunities Off the Diamond

Although she jokes, "I'll be the star of a football team," upon graduation from Muhlenberg, Washburn actually plans to further her academics and attend a Ph.D. program in cell and molecular biology at the University of Connecticut.

Similarly, former Muhlenberg soccer player Peter Palomaki '07 – who is not a member of Phi Beta Kappa, but who did earn recognition at this year's Honors Convocation – plans to attend graduate school at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute next year and understands the importance of balancing school work with athletics. Palomaki also started for the College's hockey team, a club sport.

"From what I've heard, a lot of places like to hire athletes because they work well with people, and they know what it's like to be a team player and a leader," says Palomaki, a chemistry major. "It's harder to keep up your grades, but in the long run it's beneficial to be a student-athlete because it can help you. I just wish more people would be able to see that."

What Palomaki alludes to at the end of his statement was the stereotype that student-athletes are nothing more than dumb jocks.

"I hate that," he says. "I've had to deal with it before. It's surprising to people that you're good in academics as well, which I don't think it should be."

But a big name in professional football is helping to dispel that myth.

Most people have heard of Peyton Manning, the defending Super Bowl champion quarterback for the National

Football League's Indianapolis Colts. What most people may not know, however, is that he was inducted into Phi Beta Kappa at his alma mater, the University of Tennessee, in 1998.

"That makes me feel so much better about my life!" says the always-spirited Washburn. On a more serious note, however, she adds, "It's funny because you see a football team and you don't really know who they are, and you hear stuff like that [about Manning] and you think, 'Wow, it's more than just football.'"

At Muhlenberg College, it's always been about more than just football, more than just softball, more than just soccer.

Michael Tenenhaus '07 – who battled at the 125-pound spot for the Mule wrestling team – says, "I didn't see that stereotype at all in my four years at Muhlenberg. A lot of the athletes, a lot of my teammates, have a lot of high achievements. So I don't find that stereotype to be true at all, especially here on a Division III campus."

Regardless of whether the stereotype exists, the student-athletes who deserve recognition are getting it. In addition to Amore, Tenenhaus and Washburn, Phi Beta Kappa also welcomed women's basketball player Emily Wright '07 and women's track and field athletes Lauren Carballo '07 and Kim David '07 this year. Palomaki and 10 others were honored at the Honors Convocation for academic achievements in fields ranging from psychology to physics, and one was named Student Advisor of the Year.

Furthermore, 87 student-athletes with at least sophomore standing and a GPA of 3.4 or higher landed a spot on the Centennial Conference Academic Honor Roll this year. Five Mules – Kayla Boisvert '07 (women's soccer), Lauren Boyle '09 (women's basketball), Maura Hendsey '08 (women's soccer), Matt Loesch '07 (wrestling) and Stephen Montalto '07 (football) – earned ESPN the Magazine's Academic All-District II College Division honors. Loesch was honored again when he became the 12th NCAA Postgraduate Scholarship recipient in Muhlenberg history and the third in the last two years.

As smart a group as these young people are, there was one question that nearly stumps Amore: Which was more thrilling – winning the Centennial Conference golf championship or being inducted into Phi Beta Kappa?

"That's a tough question. I don't know," she says. "Winning the Centennial Conference was pretty exciting. Right now, I feel like that was a great way to end my career because it makes it a little less sad to leave, to go out on a high note. But Phi Beta Kappa is something that

Emily Wright '07 graduated from Muhlenberg after a successful senior year in which she ranked among the nation's leaders in three-point field goal percentage and grade-point average, leading her to Scotty Wood MVP and Phi Beta Kappa honors.



## Providing Education to Ensure a Brighter Future: Stephen '69 and Toni Krajcar Fund School in Africa

by Michelle Yost '08



The Krajcars at the school in 2004

Stephen Krajcar '69 and his wife Toni were initially drawn to Africa because of the many wild animals indigenous to the continent. While planning a safari in 2001, Tanzania – which is home to more animals than any other African country and was the site of Jane Goodall's studies on chimps and The Great Migration – seemed the obvious destination. However, once they arrived, Stephen and Toni found that their interests shifted to the country's people – particularly the children.

Before their departure, Toni had heard from friends who had traveled to Africa that school supplies and non-electronic toys would be a hit with the local children. They brought items like pencils, erasers, coloring books and rulers with them on their trip, and asked their tour guide to take them to a local school where they could distribute them.

The children were thrilled with their new supplies, but the Krajcars were haunted by the condition of the school. There were no windows, chairs or blackboards. Flashcards were made from cardboard, glue and sand. Paper came in tiny sheets and was nearly translucent.

After their tour guide mentioned that there were plans to build a new school, the Krajcars quickly decided to donate \$1,000 to help. They were shocked when they heard that was enough money to buy all of the land needed on which to build the school – quite a difference from the astronomical price of land in northern California, where they reside.

At the airport on their way home, the Krajcars discussed their experience at the school and made a decision. In that

moment, they became much more than your average tourists and animal enthusiasts: they made the decision to fully fund the building of the school for 41 children in the Usa River area of Tanzania.

"Tanzania is one of the oldest democracies in Africa, and we felt that education was very important in improving their standard of living and continuing freedoms they have," says Stephen, who majored in psychology and minored in math at Muhlenberg. "We also thought of ourselves as ambassadors for the United States and that we should show them what Americans can be."

Over the course of a year and a half, the Krajcars contributed the \$12,000 necessary to make the dream of a new school a reality. After two years, the project was completed. The Upendo (which means "love of mankind" in Swahili) English Medium Pre & Primary School is the only building in the area with a foundation.

Since their initial visit in 2001, Stephen and Toni have been to Africa a total of seven times and have visited the school six times. Since the school was first built, there have been many additions, including a playground, library and kitchen. The Minister of Education approved it as a primary school in 2006, but the Krajcars hope to also add a second building in hopes of one day expanding the school to students through grade 12 to offer more educational opportunities for older children.

The two trips that the Krajcars will always remember most fondly are when they attended the dedication of the school on February 14, 2003 (also Toni's birthday), and when they returned for their 25th wedding anniversary trip on July 4, 2005. The entire village was on hand to show their support and gratitude for the Krajcars and their continued support of the village and the school.

The Krajcars completely fund the school themselves so that they know their money is always used just to benefit the school. The village and allows them control of their contributions.

Stephen and Toni Krajcar will continue to help with the development of the school as they value their experiences with the Usa River community very much.

Stephen explains, "We have been very fortunate in our lives and have always felt honored and proud to live in America. This idea gave us the opportunity to show what people from America are capable of doing. In today's environment, it is critical to show the world that we are truly a power for good and not evil. The people in Usa River have learned this firsthand and, hopefully, will be able to build upon the foundation we have given them." ■

*Profile of Susanne (Hobbis) Meixsell '91, continued from page 11*

College prepared me very well for all of my endeavors after graduation," says Meixsell, who served on Student Council for four years, was a resident advisor, a head resident and a tour guide – as well as working in the admissions office, library and the Career Center. "In addition to excellent academic opportunities, my other activities at Muhlenberg taught me to be a good process thinker and team player, and helped me to establish a strong work ethic. I always say that I owe my success in my career to my parents and to Muhlenberg."

So what advice does Meixsell have for people who are interested in

making a career in elementary education?

"I'd advise people to keep their expectations in check. Teaching can be one of the most rewarding experiences – but prospective teachers must always remember that public schools deal with limited resources and are laden with regulations. It can be frustrating at times, and it's hard work that goes beyond the hours in the classroom. But when you're explaining something to a class and they 'get it,' or when you know you've done something that touches a student or enhances a child's life ... there's no greater feeling in the world." ■



# CLASS Notes

## 1949

**General Julius Becton**, who attended Muhlenberg in the late 1940s but was recalled to active duty, has been selected to receive the 2007 George Catlett Marshall Award from the Association of the United States Army (AUSA). Previous recipients of the award include Presidents Truman, Eisenhower, Ford, Reagan, and Bush as well as Senator Dole and Secretary of State Kissinger.

## 1957

**Jon LaFaver** recently retired from Penn State's Dickinson School of Law, and the faculty opted to establish the Jon F. LaFaver Outstanding Adjunct Faculty Award, an annual honor that will recognize others who share LaFaver's commitment to teaching and to the Dickinson School of Law.

## 1961

**Edgar P. Nace** co-authored the book, *Patients with Substance Abuse Problems: Effective Identification, Diagnosis, and Treatment*, a brief, reader-friendly guidebook for all clinicians who need to deal with patients with substance abuse problems.

## 1967

**Carl D. Buchholz III** has been appointed by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court to the Disciplinary Board of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania for a three-year term. He is currently a senior partner at Rawle & Henderson, LLP in Philadelphia.

## 1973

**Gail (Whitaker) Wright** writes, "After a more than 10-year process, I was ordained by the United Church of Christ Sunday, January 28, 2007. My former Muhlenberg roommate **Linda Gleason** and her husband **Larry DeMilio** came up from New Jersey to be part of the congregation and the celebration. I am the associate pastor/minister of Christian education at the Congregational Church, UCC, of Littleton, Mass."

## 1978

**David Wiesner**, now a practicing psychologist in Raleigh, N.C., recently was awarded the President's Award from the North Carolina Psychological Association. The award was given "for his outstanding work over many years as the steward of NCPA's finances and as an active voice on behalf of psychology."

## 1980

**Karen (Meyer) Campbell** has been invited to become one of a limited number of bylined contributors to a new blogging website. In addition, the National CFIDS Foundation Forum, Media Watch section, has noted – and quoted – two published letters that she wrote. One was in a local publication, *Sacramento News & Review*, and the other was in *Ms* magazine. You can read the complete text of the latter on her website, [www.CFSfacts.org](http://www.CFSfacts.org).

## 1981

**Dr. Lynn Vogel Koplitz** and **Dr. Kurt Birdwhistell**, professors of chemistry at Loyola University New Orleans, along with five other chemists from Tulane University, co-authored a recent peer-reviewed article in the *Journal of Vacuum Science and Technology A*. Lynn has been a member of the chemistry faculty at Loyola since 1988 and is credited with reviving the University Honors Program in just two years, overcoming the obstacles that Hurricane Katrina and a canceled fall semester posed. In 2005, she received the Honors Professor of the Year Award and the University Senate Award. She has published in many scientific and scholarly journals and has co-authored numerous books.

## 1988

**Edward S. Thompson** is the principal of Glen Rock Middle School in Glen Rock, N.J. He is joined on his staff by fellow alums and teachers **Regina Scotti '93** and **Andrea Colettis '98**. His wife, Kathleen, is at home with sons James, 5, Danny, 3, and Matthew, 1.

## 1997

**Lori Grohs** and **John Padgett** became engaged over Christmas. They are planning an August wedding.



John Padgett and Lori Grohs '97

## 1999

After spending seven years in the Arizona desert, **Hary Block** moved back to the east coast to



Damon Bennett and Andrea Zurbruegg '97

attend the Georgia Institute of Technology's master's of architecture program. ■ **Andrea Zurbruegg** and **Damon Bennett** became engaged in August 2006. The couple is planning a fall 2007 wedding at Sheldrake Vineyards on Cayuga Lake. Andrea completed her master's degree at Syracuse University and is working as a social worker at SUNY Upstate Medical University in Syracuse, N.Y. She also serves as a board member for the Alzheimer's Association of Central New York. The couple resides with their dog, a Westie, in Syracuse.

## 2000

After two years and 20 trials (including two homicides) with the D.C. Office of the Attorney General, **Scott Burke** has joined the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia. ■ **Melissa Catalanello** is pleased to announce her marriage to **Justin Pasquariello**. The couple was married on September 30, 2006, and celebrated their reception at The Oheka Castle. The couple had a bridal party made up of 26 people! Muhlenberg alumnae who were in the bridal party included **Katie Mattis**, **Carolyn Nurnberg**, **Larissa**



Justin Pasquariello  
Melissa Catalanello '00



Margie Laub '00 and Garret Pachtinger '01

(Poveromo) Noto, and Maria (Catalanello) Kalonaros '87. Other Muhlenberg alumni who attended the wedding were Nick Noto '01, Sara (Monaco) Scipioni and Jenny (Dickerman) Rich '99. The couple resides in Hoboken, N.J. ■ **Matthew Hittinger** has won the 2006 Spire Press Chapbook Award for his chapbook *Pear Slip*. The publication date is forthcoming, but you can check out Matthew's website ([www.matthewhittinger.com](http://www.matthewhittinger.com)) for updates and news, including recent publications in the *Michigan Quarterly Review* and *DMQ Review*. ■ **Margie Laub** and **Garret Pachtinger '01** are happy to announce their engagement. Currently, Margie is working in pharmaceutical sales for Abbott Pharmaceuticals. Garret is a resident in emergency and critical care at the University of Pennsylvania Veterinary Hospital. The couple currently resides in Yardley, Pa. ■ **George A. Saitta, Jr.** CPA, CIA, CFE, Dubinsky & Company forensic accountant, has achieved the coveted certified fraud examiner certification. Provided by the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners (ACFE), which is a 36,000 member global association dedicated to providing anti-fraud education and training, the certified fraud examiner (CFE) designation denotes proven expertise in fraud prevention, detection, deterrence and investigation.



Logan Thompson and Jarad Benn '01



Patty Boger '01 and Todd McCallum '99

## 2001

**Heather Petersen Allen** graduated from Rutgers University School of Law in May 2005 and works as an associate at Lowenstein Sandler PC, in the firm's bankruptcy, financial reorganization and creditors' rights group. Her practice centers on large corporate restructuring litigation, including cases such as Pliant Corporation and R & S Strauss Discount Auto. Heather resides in Montclair, N.J., with her boyfriend, Jack, and their dog Brooke (she's like a member of the family!). ■ **Jarad Benn** recently became engaged to Logan Thompson of Upper Dublin, Pa. The couple is planning a November 2007 wedding. In other news, Jarad writes, "After spending the last two years toiling away at Villanova, where I will receive a master of arts degree in theater in May, I am so proud and humbled to report that I will be continuing my education at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio. I will be a part of their Professional Actor Training Program, and will receive an MFA in acting in 2010. I am very excited to delve full-on into actor training and to find out just what my acting chops are made of!" ■ In April of 2006, **Patty Boger** became



Tracy Smith and Becky Carnrike '01



Ben and Stephanie (Thorpe) Holbus '01



David and Sara (Stern) Neal '01

engaged to **Todd McCallum '99**. They currently reside in West Chester, Pa., with their two beautiful Bernese mountain dogs, Maggie and Tucker. They are planning to be wed on July 21, 2007. ■ **Becky Carnrike** became engaged to Tracy Smith on September 15, 2006. The wedding is planned for September 8, 2007, in Egner Memorial Chapel. The engagement photo was taken on the couple's 13-acre property, by the amazingly talented **Lisa Daly**, who is a professional photographer in Galway, Ireland. ■ **Stephanie (Thorpe) Holbus** writes, "Ben and I returned from Japan in March 2007. We are in the process of buying our first house in Chesapeake, Va., and are trying to get settled with our year-and-a-half old puppy, Hemi. Ben will be an instructor for the E-2C Hawkeye in Norfolk, and I will start my job hunt once we are in the house. We miss Japan, but are thrilled to be living Stateside again!" ■ **Sara (Stern) Neal** and David Neal were married on December 2, 2006 in Medford Lakes, N.J. The reception was held at The Racquet Club of Philadelphia. Alumni in attendance included: **Andrew Cooper**, **Patty Boger**, **Todd McCallum '99**, **Jessica McCourt**, **Bob Cherry**, **Pam (Imperiale) Banta '02**, **Lindsey Walker '02**, **Miruna (Lovin) Stadler** and **Brooke Kranich**. Sara works as the events manager at *Philadelphia* magazine and David works for Cardinal Health in Piscataway, N.J. They reside in Merchantville, N.J. ■ In November 2006, **Janet Ober** became engaged to Brian Berman. Janet currently works at Temple University Hospital as the assistant director of perinatal genetics and practices as a genetic counselor. An April 2008 wedding is planned. ■ **Adam Weil** and **Meredith Rose '02** were mar-



Alumni at the wedding of Adam Weil '01 and Meredith Rose '02

ried on October 14, 2006, at the Inn at East Winds in Wading River, N.Y. They currently live in Morristown, N.J. The following alumni were in attendance: **Kevin Twomey '98** (best man), **Christopher Quigley '00**, **James Walsh '02** (groomsman), **Courtney (Bradner) Walsh** (bridesmaid), **Christopher Foulds '00**, **Christopher LaMastra '00**, **Katey Lewis '02** (bridesmaid), **Matthew Pompile '00**, **Carissa Illig '02**, **Jeanine (Jacobson) Becker '00**, **Ben Lewis '00**, **Elyssa Chernock '02**, **Robert Pomento '02**, **Elizabeth (Pomento) Benson '00**, **Brian Bonanno '98**, **Jennifer (Bergen) Spreen '00**, **Lori (Blanchfield) Zrebiec '02**, **Rich Zrebiec '02**, **Cory Myers '02** and **Derek Damiano**.

**2002**

**Dave Jenning** writes, "I am knee-deep in the bad bush - a small village called Shiraro in the Tigray Province of Ethiopia near the border with Eritrea. I and eight other United Nations Military Observers from Ghana, Croatia, Denmark, Germany, Romania, Nigeria, Ukraine and Austria are attempting to maintain the peace between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Unfortunately, this mission will probably be dismantled by November of this year. In the



Dave Jenning '02

meantime, we are enjoying all of the luxuries our mud huts have to offer. Anyone interested in coming to visit us, we have a few spare huts as well as plenty of camel and goat meat." ■ **Christina Rein** of Glen Rock, N.J., and **Bill Holsinger** of Pennsburg, Pa., were married on July 15, 2006 in Clinton, N.J. The wedding party included: **Amanda (Switzer) Kacuba**, **Adrienne Pugh**, **Christina (Wilkinson) Noguiera**, **Erin (Provost) Ferguson**, **Adam Horner**, **Christopher Lee '01** and **Joe Salerno '03**. The couple honeymooned in St. Lucia and then came back to settle in the Lehigh Valley. Bill is an accountant for Miller, Bahr & Wills, P.C. in Allentown. Christina works for the East



Alumni at the wedding of Christina Rein '02 and Bill Holsinger '02



Dayna Penchansky and Josh Sacks '02

Penn School district and is also a realtor for Remax Lending Edge in Allentown. ■ **Josh Sacks** became engaged to Dayna Penchansky on February 24, 2007. Josh is an executive recruiter and Dayna is a fourth-grade teacher. They live together in Jersey City, N.J, with their psychotic dog, Reggie. No wedding date has been set as of yet. ■ **Kate Schooley** became engaged to James Bernardinelli on December 22, 2006. They are currently living together in Brooklyn, N.Y., and are planning to marry on June 30, 2007. ■ **Christina (Garretto) Slowik** and Steve Slowik were married June 11, 2006, on Long Island, N.Y. Many alumni were in attendance. Christina is a family medicine resident at St. John's Hospital, and Steve is an internal medicine resident at St. Louis University. They traveled to Jamaica for their honeymoon and now reside in St. Louis, Mo.

**2003**

**Victoria Cioce** and David Gambardello were engaged on July 27, 2006. Victoria has been working at Owens Group Limited, Inc. in

*continued on page 28*



**1972**

Jean and **Vernon Christian Wehrung** are pleased to announce the birth of their second grandchild, John Davenport (Dave) Wehrung, on February 24, 2007.



The Cox Family

**1987**

**Michele Cox** writes, "On Feb. 14, 2006, I gave birth to a beautiful daughter, Sarah Marie Kitchen. She is the joy of our lives and is a precious gift."

**1990**

**Michelle (Sager) Gracey** writes, "We had a baby boy, Aidan Robert, on March 4, 2006. He was one week early and weighed in at 10 lbs, 3 ounces! He joins big sisters Abigail, 9, and Olivia, 7 1/2. ■ **Ellen Keiter** and her husband Jordan Kern are proud to announce the arrival of their son Eli, born February 20, 2007. Big sister Malina (age 6) is enjoying her little brother immensely! The family resides in Goldens Bridge, N.Y. Ellen will return to her job as curator at the Katonah Museum of Art in June. ■ **Todd '92** and **Elaine (Duffy) McNamara** celebrated their 10-year anniversary with their sons Charlie, age 6, Will, age 4 1/2, and Jimmy, age 2. The family lives in Ridgewood, N.J. ■ **Alicia and Mark Sprow**, of Shillington, Pa., write to announce the birth of their daughter, Alice Sprow, on November 13, 2006. She joins big brother Lucas, born March 18, 2004.



Aidan Robert Gracey



Will, Charlie and Jimmy McNamara

**1991**

**Pamela (Loftus) Marthins** and her husband Todd are proud to announce the birth of their fourth daughter, Megan Grace, on April 12, 2006. Megan joins big sisters Abby, 4, Katie, 3, and Julie, 1. The family lives in Haddonfield, N.J.

**1992**

**Steve Turi** writes, "Nicole and I are expecting our 'second set of twins' in September or October 2007. Our first set, Stephanie and Nicholas, will be 4 this summer."



Zoe Rose Cimo

**1993**

**Brian and Stacey (Polsky) Fisher** are happy to announce the birth of their second daughter, Kaley Brooke Fisher, born on Dec. 28, 2006. Kaley joins big sister Ashley, who turned 2 years old on January 17, 2007. ■ **Scott and Jessica (Heller) Tzorfas** proudly announce the birth of their third son, Jeffrey Robert, born on January 13, 2007, weighing 8 lbs. Also sharing in their happiness are Jeffrey's big brothers, David and Matthew, both 5 years old. Jessica is enjoying being a full time mom to her boys. The Tzorfas family resides in Swainton, N.J.



Samuel Harrison Croopnick



Maxwell, Elisabet and Hanna Miles

**1995**

**Chad Cimo** and his wife **Kate (Hamilton) Cimo '97** are very excited to announce the birth of their daughter, Zoe Rose! She was born on October 2, 2006, which also happened to be their eighth anniversary. Chad still works as a manager of software development at Ceridian Corporation in



Michael John Rooney

M U L E S

Exton, Pa., and Kate has taken this year off from teaching fourth grade to stay home with Zoe. ■ **Sarah (Casey) Croopnick** and her husband Dr. Jonathan Croopnick welcomed their first son, Samuel Harrison Croopnick, on September 15, 2006. He weighed 8 lbs, 7 oz and measured 21 inches. He is a very happy baby. Sarah and Jon reside in Boston, Mass., where Sarah is a senior human resources generalist at the Hebrew Rehabilitation Center, and Jon is completing his medical training as an oncology fellow at Boston University Medical Center. ■ **Tina (Tangen)**



Reagan Mary and Logan David Robinson

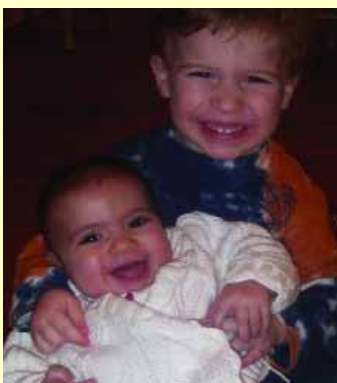
**Miles** and her husband David would like to announce the birth of their daughter, Elisabet Ivy, born May 24, 2006. Elisabet joins twin brother and sister Maxwell Albert and Hanna Malena, who are 3 years old. ■ **Mike Rooney** and his wife Kris (McGurrin) Rooney had a baby boy, Michael John, on March 5, 2007.

1996

Jim and **Becky (Basch) Christman** welcomed their third child, Eli Samuel, on December 18, 2006. Eli, who was 8 lbs, 11 oz and 22 inches long at birth, joins siblings Tyler, 4, and Emma, 2. ■ **Kristin (O'Keefe) Robinson** and her husband Glenn welcomed their daughter, Reagan Mary, to the family on September 3, 2007. Big brother Logan David, 4 years old, loves his sister. Kristin enjoys being a stay-at-home mom. It has been and continues to be the most rewarding experience of her life. The children are constantly teaching her something new. Glenn is an associate vice president of financial planning and analysis for Moody's Corporation in New York, N.Y. They currently live in Mercerville, N.J. ■ **Todd and Wendy**



Robyn Bella Wachtel



Ellie Samantha and Ethan Samuel Werner

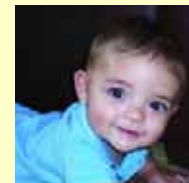
**(Katz) Wachtel** are thrilled to announce the arrival of their second child, Robyn Bella Wachtel, born March 8, 2007 at 8:40a.m. She was 8 lbs., 1 oz and measured 19.5 inches long. ■ **Dean and Dana (Glaser) Werner** are proud to announce the birth of their second child. Ellie Samantha Werner was born on September 18, 2006. Big brother Ethan Samuel, almost two and a half, is absolutely crazy about his little sister. He spends every day making Ellie laugh and teaching her about tricks. Dean and Dana feel incredibly blessed to have the love of these two precious people!

1997

**Stacey Munsky Acquaro** and her husband Paul are pleased to announce the birth of their daughter, Jordan Elise Acquaro, born on December 12, 2005. ■ **Beth Rogers-Ho** writes, "My husband Van and I welcomed our first child just after New Year's 2006! Reid Paul Thành Rogers-Ho was born on January 2. He weighed 7 lbs, 3.2 oz and measured 20 inches. He is the light of our lives!"



Jordan Elise Acquaro



Reid Paul Thành Rogers-Ho

1998

Kadence Peri was born September 22, 2004, and is the child of **Paul and Sarah (Miner) Peri**, who currently live in Massachusetts. ■ **Michael '97 and Wendy (Chuplis) Wojtaszek** are pleased to announce the birth of their third child, Alexa Naomi Wojtaszek, born on May 10, 2006. She weighed 9 lbs, 6 ozs and was 21 inches long. Older brothers Logan, age 5, and Lucas, age 3, are enjoying their baby sister. Alexa has added so much joy and love to the family, and Wendy is enjoying being home with them.



Alexa Naomi Wojtaszek

1999

Rich and **Jamie (Hollender) Cariddi** welcomed their first child, Harrison David, on March 9, 2007. Harrison weighed 8 lbs, 2 oz and was 20 inches long.



Harrison David Cariddi



Alumni present at the wedding of Christina (Garretto) Slowik '02 and Stephen Slowik were: Matt Frye '04, Diana Garretto '04, Nick Crognale '02, Melanie Ongchin '02 and Sophie Pizem '02



Richard Cocco and Andrea Radicsh '03



Kristin Cintron '04 and John Kirby '06

*continued from page 25*



Victoria Cioce '03 and fiance David Gambardello



Giulio Musso and Christina Petrozza '03



Alumni present at the wedding of Jessica Freund '04 and John Wolff '04 were:  
back row: James Banko '04, Aaron Weakland '04, Luke Tominelli '04, Steve Woolery '04,  
Rob Terrio '04 and Will Friedman '04  
front row: Giselle Aerni '04, Freund, Wolff and Angela (Liu) Friedman '04

Englewood Cliffs, N.J., since June 2003. She began as a life and health insurance coordinator and is now doing marketing and senior office administration for the firm. Dave grew up in Bucks County, Pa., and graduated from Temple University. He is now an account executive for Fremont Investment & Loan in the Philadelphia area. The wedding will be held on September 8, 2007, in Bergen County, N.J. ■ **Christina**

**Petrozza** became engaged to Giulio Musso on February 14, 2007. A wedding date has not been set. ■ On March 31, 2006, **Andrea Radicsh** became engaged to Richard Cocco. The couple now lives in his hometown, Jackson, N.J. Their wedding will take place in her hometown July 21, 2007. Andrea teaches math at Shore Regional High School in West Long Branch, N.J. ■ **Abby Thompson** writes, "After leaving



Alumni at the wedding of Jessica (Gottfried) Wolff '04 and Aaron Wolff are:  
back row: Amanda Kokie '04, Melissa Belof '04, Kristan Slotterback '04 and Adam Schwarz '04  
middle: Rachel Oster '05, Jeffrey Slotterback '04 and Stephanie Melka '04  
front row: Aaron Wolff, Jessica Wolff '04 and Michale Fau '09

New York City and a career in publishing, I returned to New England to get my master's degree in library and information science at Simmons College. In March 2007, I accepted a full-time job at the Harvard Business School Baker Library, and officially graduated from Simmons with my MLIS in May. I love being in Boston and back in the heart of Red Sox Nation. Go Sox!"

2004

**Kristin Cintron and John Kirby '06** recently became engaged and are planning for an August 22, 2008 wedding. John is currently working on the Triborough Bridge as a supervising engineer for Koch Skanska, and Kristin is currently working as the director of a contemporary art gallery in Manhattan. Many thanks to Muhlenberg for



Members of the class of 2005 at the wedding of Jacinda Caras '05 and Jason Ojeda '05 were:  
back row: Jessie Hittinger, Kimberly Zafran, Kyle Speck, Jason Ojeda, Jacinda (Caras) Ojeda, Michelle Hein, Diana Robillard.  
front Row: Emily Yedowitz, Zachary Weiss, Alberic Rogman.

bringing us together! ■ **Jessica Freund and John Wolff** were married on June 24, 2006, at Muhlenberg's Egner Memorial Chapel. Jessie is a tax accountant at Untracht Early, LLC, Certified Public Accountants in Florham Park, N.J. John is a financial specialist with Merrill Lynch in Pennington, N.J. After a cruise to Bermuda, the couple returned to Belle Mead, N.J., where they reside. ■ **Jennifer Gitto** trained to participate in America's Most Beautiful Bike Ride on June 3 in Nevada (Lake Tahoe) as a member of the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's Team In Training. She and her team raised funds to help stop leukemia, lymphoma, Hodgkin lymphoma and myeloma from taking more lives. She completed this event in honor of all individuals who are battling blood cancers. ■ **Jessica Gottfried and Aaron Wolff** were married on November 5, 2006, in Livingston, N.J. The couple became engaged in the Serenity Garden on campus. Jessica and Aaron currently reside in Cedar Knolls, N.J. ■ **Karen Trainer** recently accepted a position as a reporting specialist with the Election Law Group at Bryan Cave LLP. She will be providing advice to political committees and other groups on compliance with campaign finance, tax, ethics and lobbying laws.

2005

**Jacinda Caras and Jason Ojeda** were married on July 22, 2006, in Saco, Maine. The couple now lives in Philadelphia, where Jacinda is an admissions officer for the University of Pennsylvania, and Jason is a student at Penn's medical school. ■ **Michael Harhay** recently completed his master's degree at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine and will be working with the department of economics at the Universidad de Chile in Santiago, Chile, this summer as part of a global health fellowship also from Penn Med.

2007

**Heather Lenz** became engaged to **Greg Adams '05** on a trip to San Diego, Calif., on February 3, 2007. The couple plans to be married in June of 2008 at Muhlenberg's Egner Memorial Chapel.



Greg Adams '05 and Heather Lenz '07

*Discomfortably Yours, continued from page 13*

these rather frail people who suffer, and who are able to write to sort of address some of the terrible suffering. And that's, I think, almost entirely hogwash, to use one of Dick Cheney's new favorite words. Hogwash.

In fact, I came from an okay family. I'm something of an anomaly among my friends in that there was no raging alcoholic. There was no certifiably mentally ill person. There was no tragic death in my immediate family. But with many of my friends, there would be a family of people who are suffering and largely not doing very well, and there will be that one person who got out and is okay. And the person who got out and is okay is the person who actually has the personal resources to go and try to make art out of it. And the suffering comes because instead of going home and having a couple of beers and watching six hours of TV, the person who's trying to write something comes home and goes directly to the most painful moments in their life and sits down at the computer and tries to open up that can that everybody else in the family and everybody else in the street is trying desperately to keep a lid on. And that's the job description. You wake up in the morning and the first thing you think is global warming is real and this world is going to be transformed, mostly in terrible ways, and let's try and write about that. And that's the cheerful one. And I personally am probably going to die and be unpleasantly sick before then. And what's more, I really let my mom down. And now let's go write about that.

**GS:** Did you get a flood of letters after *The Corrections* flap with Oprah Winfrey?

**JF:** There was some hate mail about the Oprah thing, but even then there was an equal weight of positive stuff. I still hear a lot about *The Corrections*.

**AM:** It was a good book.

**JF:** People told me they burned it, but they mean it in a nice way. ■

1930 **Stanford L. Eschenbach** died on April 15, 2007. He is survived by his son, Robert.

1931 **Phares "Pete" Dinger** died on April 8, 2007. He is survived by sons Frederick and Harry. He is predeceased by his first wife, Virginia, and his second wife, Anne.

1936 **Dr. Edward T. Horn, Jr.** died on February 28, 2007. He was predeceased by his wife, Alberta. He is survived by his wife Eleanor; six children; six stepchildren; and brother, Laurence '49.

**Dr. Joseph S. Keiper** died on January 13, 2007.

1939 **Dr. Richard D. Williams** died on January 30, 2007. He is survived by a brother, Dr. David Williams '44.

1940 **Richard L. Suck** died on March 25, 2007. He was predeceased by his wife, Joyce. He is survived by his daughter, Bonnie Suggs.

1942 **Clayton H. Musselman** died on December 9, 2006.

1945 **Dr. John R. Healy** died on February 11, 2007. He is survived by his wife, Patricia; daughter, Alison; sons, Bennett and Brian. He was predeceased by his daughter, Diane.

**Charles J. Mahoney** died on January 22, 2007. He is survived by his wife, Mary; sons, C. Timothy, Mark and Keith; and daughter, Barbara.

**Frank W. Trinkle** died on November 8, 2006. He is survived by his son, Frank; daughters, Monique, Melanie and Veronica; stepson, Bruce; and stepdaughter, Stiring.

1947 **Harold W. Helfrich, Jr.** died on March 4, 2007. He is survived by his wife, Anna; daughters, Joanne Van Winkle and Linda Avery; and son, David.

**Dr. Clifford F. Wright** died on February 21, 2007. He is survived by his wife, Louise; sons, Clifford, Geoffrey, John and Patrick.

1948 **Robert L. Parry** died on March 4, 2007. He is survived by his wife, Elaine; daughter, Brenda Dunleavy; and sons Keith and Douglas.

**James W. Wiggins** died on January 26, 2007.

1949 **George G. Hill** died on March 7, 2007.

He is survived by his wife, Marcia; son, George Jr.; daughters, Betsey Schechter, Joanne Molter, Carolyn Franca and Nancy Rosenthal.

**Bruce N. Handelong** died on December 20, 2006. He is survived by his wife, Jean; daughters, Nancy and Pamela; and son, Bruce.

**Donald Hoover Woodworth** died on January 13, 2007. He is survived by his wife, Elvira; two sons, Donald and William; and three daughters, Frances Weinbaum, Nanette Bronzino and Vera Rubeo.

1950 **Frank D. Bittner** died on January 31, 2007. He is survived by his wife, Janet; and daughters, Tracy and Katherine.

**Oscar Cherney** died on April 19, 2007. He is survived by his wife, Audrey; and sons, Keith, Jon and James.

**Alan M. Feinberg** died on February 3, 2007. He is survived by his wife, Rochelle; sons, Gary and Greg; and stepsons, Michael and Richard.

**Robert C. Lonergan** died on October 17, 2006. He is survived by his wife, Joan.

**Paul Kondravy** died on April 10, 2007. He is survived by his wife, Genevieve; and daughters Carol Barker and Paula Trickett.

**Russell P. Strait, Jr.** died on February 21, 2007. He is survived by his wife, Marie; and daughter, Nancy. He was predeceased by his son, Russell Strait III.

1951 **John Cerbus** died on March 22, 2007. He is survived by his wife, Louise; son, John; and daughter Caroline Bresnahan.

**James J. Perez** died on February 16, 2007. He is survived by his wife, Evelyn; son, James; and daughter Jean.

1952 **Charles H. Hubbs** died on February 24, 2007. He is survived by his daughter, Jane; and his son, Jim.

1953 **Clement Ferdinand Heverly III** died on April 7, 2007. He is survived by his wife, Marilou; daughter, Erica Campbell; and son, Paul.

1954 **Erich Lachmann Jr.** died on January 28, 2007. He is survived by his wife, Christa-Louise; son, Erich; and daughter, Elizabeth.



# Muhlenberg

## CLASS NOTES FORM

### YOUR INFO

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Maiden Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Graduation Year \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Employer \_\_\_\_\_  
Location \_\_\_\_\_  
Job Title \_\_\_\_\_  
Industry Type \_\_\_\_\_  
Business Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Please do not include my news in the online edition of the magazine.

### YOUR SPOUSE/PARTNER INFO

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Maiden Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Graduation Year (if Muhlenberg alum) \_\_\_\_\_  
Employer \_\_\_\_\_  
Location \_\_\_\_\_  
Job Title \_\_\_\_\_  
Industry Type \_\_\_\_\_  
Business Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

News \_\_\_\_\_  
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*News that appears in this issue was received by the editor on or before April 15, 2007. If your news arrived after that date, it will appear in the next issue. News for the next issue must have arrived to the editor by July 13, 2007.*

*News arriving after that date will appear in the following issue.*

*All digital photos submitted must be at least 300 dpi.*

*All submissions may be edited and are subject to space restrictions.*

*Photos with a name and address on the back will be returned.*

*Mail to the Alumni Office, 2400 West Chew Street, Allentown, PA 18104, or e-mail your news to [bergalum@muhlenberg.edu](mailto:bergalum@muhlenberg.edu).*

*Class Notes can also be posted online through the alumni community [www.myMuhlenberg.com](http://www.myMuhlenberg.com).*

*Alumni can find their constituent I.D. number for first-time login to [myMuhlenberg.com](http://myMuhlenberg.com) above their name on the address portion of the magazine.*

1955 **Hon. Frank V. Sproviero** died on February 22, 2007. He is survived by his wife, Rachel; sons, Scott '80 and Robert '83; and daughter, Nancy Salerno.

1956 **Donald A. Lathbury** died on March 3, 2007. He is survived by his daughter, Sue Kientz; son, Donald Jr.; stepsons, Sean and Brandon Labadie; and stepdaughter, Ginny Labadie.

**Robert R. Roehm, Jr.** died on March 18, 2007. He is survived by his sons, Robert III and James; and daughter, Elizabeth.

1957 **Roy L. Tiley** died on April 2, 2007. He is survived by daughters Judith Hornberger and Donna Brown. He was predeceased by his wife, Dorothy.

1961 **Franklyn R. Gergits** died on March 29, 2007. He is survived by his wife, Mary Anne; son, Dr. Franklyn R. Jr.; and daughters Michelle Krueger and Kasha Struble.

**Dr. Gary G. Nicholas** died on January 22, 2007. He is survived by his wife, Dorothy; and his children, Jonathan, David and Heather '94.

1962 **Dr. Carl E. Anderson** died on March 23, 2007. He is survived by his wife, Patricia; son, William; and daughter, Malissa Chapdelaine.

1963 **Judith B. Busch** died on January 2, 2007. She is survived by her sons, Benjamin and Nicholas '95.

1966 **Harry W. Meck** died on February 22, 2007.

**John B. Miles** died on March 21, 2007. He is survived by his wife, Marilyn.

1968 **Edgar H. Simmons** died on December 1, 2006.

1970 **Richard F. Bennett, Jr.** died on January 4, 2007. He formerly worked in the College's office of admission.

**Peter F. Iacovoni** died on January 10, 2007. He is survived by his partner, Frank Powell; a brother; two nieces; two nephews; two aunts; and several cousins.

**Rev. Patricia Ann (Harrington) Ramsey** died on October 14, 2006. She is survived by her husband, Rev. J. Christopher Ramsey.

1971 **George C. Martin** died on February 8, 2007. He is survived by his wife, Janice; and daughters, Katherine Quarforth and Jane Shire.

1975 **Jeannette L. Tobing** died on February 2, 2007. She is survived by her husband, Barry A. Johnson; and children, Louise, Pia and Justin.

1976 **Wayne R. Adkins** died on July 7, 2006. He is survived by his mother, Elaine M. Adkins.

1977 **Dr. Lauren Angstadt** died on February 2, 2007, in a plane crash that also killed her husband, Peter Karoly Esq. and pilot Michael Milot.

1978 **Nancy L. Huffnail** died on March 3, 2007. She is survived by her father, Donald; stepmother, Patricia; brother, Mark; sisters Cindy Moore '74 and Carol Rule. She was predeceased by her mother, Avis.

1983 **Natatcha Estebanez** died on March 15, 2007. She is survived by her husband, Claudio Ragazzi; and daughter, Gabriela.

1991 **Steven R. Everett** died on March 19, 2007. He is survived by his wife, Karen; and daughters, Hannah and Hally.



**Sarkis Acopian**, friend and benefactor of the College, died on January 18, 2007 in his home. He is survived by his wife of 59 years, Bobbye Seitze Mixon Acopian; sons Gregory and Jeffery; sister, Miriam Bradley; six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. Acopian was awarded an honorary degree at last year's Commencement. The College's Acopian Center for Ornithology is named for him.

**Dr. Robert Boyer**, professor emeritus, died on January 30, 2007. Before his retirement in 1981, he served the College as chair of the physics department. The Dr. Robert A. Boyer Scholarship is given annually in his name to an outstanding senior physics student. He is survived by his wife, Eleanor; and children, Stephen and Patricia.

**Grace M. Frounfelker** died on December 9, 2006. She was a former assistant registrar for the College. She was predeceased by her husband, Dr. George Frounfelker '41.

# The Last WORD



By  
Benjamin Shaw '07

*The following is Shaw's address  
to the Class of 2007 at this year's  
Commencement ceremony.*

Let's talk about the elephant on the lawn this morning: a lot of us are scared.

Here's what I fear:

Cuisinart coffeemakers, subzero refrigerators, global warming, studio apartments, J-date, being let go from my family cell phone plan.

And I fear expectations that I have no interest in meeting. I fear that even though graduation means a new beginning, the next phase, I am going to begin settling down.

I fear that I'm going to end up committing to a life that I didn't necessarily choose, but that I fell into.

I fear that I'm going to do it because everyone else was doing it and "that's just the way things are."

When I arrived on Chew Street in 2003, it felt a lot like Pleasantville – the manicured grass, the perfect red paint job of every door on campus. Conversation in classes was safe and uncritical. Instead of provocative lectures, the weekends brought sand-art to the Student Union.

Twice a week, however, I attended a First Year Seminar that I had almost dropped out of, in which a group of 14 hesitant students sat around a table led by a professor whom we addressed by first name. With a fresh skepticism, the course asked us to look critically and deeply at the construction of gender.

Why is it that the first thing we want to know when a baby is born is if it's a boy or a girl?

Why do baby boys arrive wrapped in blue and girls in pink? Why do people feel threatened when walking down the street they see a person whose gender isn't clearly visible through a haircut, clothing style or way of walking? Why must you check either "male" or "female" on application forms?

This was provocative to a group of 18-year old students. And it was empowering, because amidst our anxiety – I remember one student panicking aloud: "How do I know if I'm actually a girl!" – we discovered a new way of understanding a world which we had taken for granted: One, we saw gender as a fundamental constructed form of categorization, a way to maintain a system. And two, we began to learn how easy it was to deconstruct a system just by questioning it.

Combing through four years worth of class notes, I discovered this quote in the margin of a loose-leaf paper: Your Art is Your Weapon. This is a complicated idea. Acknowledging the need for a weapon is to acknowledge that we are in the midst of a war. There are violent wars in which bombs and guns are the primary weapons. And there are also far more subtle wars – conflict emerging from doubt, struggles over medical ethics, over value systems, over the decision to sign a contract, over standards for the communities in which we want to live.

There are tools for these struggles too – we need not be passive bystanders in the world.

"Your Art is Your Weapon."

My art has been cultivated in both writing and performance. For the past two years, as an extension of my work for the Muhlenberg Writing Center, I have been a co-creator and performer of a documentary theatre project exploring issues relevant to writing at the college level. The play explored issues of plagiarism, procrastination and, in general, the lack of direct communication between professors, students and administration.

A month ago we performed the piece for a final time at a high school training session for teachers from a local school district.

"Is there a solution to the problems you presented on stage?" was the first question that began our routine post-performance talkback. No one had ever asked that

before. And I guess the answer is "yes" and "no."

The issues presented are not clear-cut, solvable problems; they are problems of communication, of power and of structure – abstract ideas. Part of the solution, I think, is the performance; we are exploring the problem by creating a piece of art. We, as performers, become part of the reality expressed to in the play's text. The audience, too, begins to "try on" the conflicts and feelings expressed in the dialogue.

Unable to offer a compelling answer to the audience member's question, I felt frustrated; but also, I was reminded of why the struggle is important – even when the weapons don't seem to work. I was reminded that "my art is my weapon" all the time. After four years in the safety of a college environment, I had forgotten what it was like to move beyond it. In that high school, I realized that doing the work is necessary because what I have to offer and what I have learned at college is something that doesn't exist on its own.

It is the act of struggle – especially in the face of unanswerable questions, because the doing, the struggling, is the important part. What are the tools we carry as people equipped to struggle, to question, to make choices and to re-imagine ways of being in the world?

Dear Classmates:

We have spent time crafting, reading, writing about and discussing articles, books, ideas, experiments – not always steeped in the practical – but one thing I have learned is that I have the authority and the tools to ask questions. I am not a slave to the system when I don't like it; I can criticize it, question it and be skeptical of it. I can disagree and still get the job done, or if I feel strongly enough, I can disagree and refuse to do the job at all. But to adhere to a set of standards without questioning them, without wondering how things got to be the way they are, is to give up my responsibility to see beyond the status quo.

The one injunction that I think we've got to abide by is to challenge the standard; examine it, puncture it, embrace it, and if it doesn't hold up under analysis – do something about it.

Our tools come in the form of art, in the form of critical thinking, writing, political

advocacy, conscientious thought – four years of education.

We're about to go out into the world. Using our tools in effective ways is going to get even tougher.

But we have a responsibility to carry tools to bring into battle.

We are not sweatshop laborers in Guatemala. We are not running from burning villages in the Sudan. We are not hiding in community centers that double as bomb shelters.

Those are not our immediate struggles – but art is one way to bring those struggles responsibly into our lives in meaningful and vulnerable ways.

We have the freedom to be innovators, to do whatever we want – it is difficult work and it is a profound privilege.

A month ago, my First-Year Seminar got together at for the first time in 3 1/2 years; it was a little bit like an awkward family reunion. Our professor posed a question for the group: "What would you change?" Not what did you learn or what was best or worst? But what would you change? This was a group who began a change together four years ago – that class was a wonderful, destabilizing experience. That his question focused on change reminded me how that destabilizing experience joined us as a group and continues to resonate. We asked questions to deconstruct a system:

What happens if you make the choice that has not been prescribed? What happens if you are provocative for the sake of shaking things up? What happens if you work for change?

I fear the unknown because I don't know exactly what it looks like – but perhaps ambiguity is powerful because it means there is room for possibility, to invent, to question and to change.

"Let them remember that every deed counts," Jewish philosopher Abraham Joshua Heschel replied when asked about his message for young people. "That every word has power, and that we all can do our share to redeem the world in spite of all frustrations and all disappointments. And above all, let them remember to build their life as if it's a work of art." ■

# Meet the PRESS



# How Does Muhlenberg's Annual Giving Compare With Other Colleges?

In Fiscal Year 2005-2006, unrestricted gifts to The Muhlenberg Fund surpassed the \$1.7 million goal in unrestricted support by more than \$17,000 (\$1,717,884.25) and posted one of the highest percentage increases in unrestricted giving (19.5%) among small liberal arts colleges.

Despite reaching these milestones, Muhlenberg currently lags considerably behind our peer institutions in annual giving. For example, last year:

**Franklin & Marshall College** received \$5.1 million in annual fund gifts.

**Gettysburg College** received \$3.1 million in annual fund gifts.

**Dickinson College** received \$5.1 million in annual fund gifts.

**Lafayette College** received \$6 million in annual fund gifts.

As a result, these schools had the capacity to provide more opportunities and resources for their students. The generosity of alumni, parents and friends who make a commitment to annual giving will strengthen Muhlenberg's capacity to respond to student and faculty needs as rapidly and effectively as other colleges.

But we need *you*.

Help us by taking the first step and making a gift this year. Then make a commitment to give back every year. *Thank you.*

Please make your check payable to Muhlenberg College and mail it to 2400 West Chew Street, Allentown, PA 18104, or make your gift online at [www.myMuhlenberg.com/muhlfund](http://www.myMuhlenberg.com/muhlfund).



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