



The Valley Voice

A publication of the USPA developed by parents and staff to provide information of interest and import to US families

Heard in the Valley *by Michael Obel-Omia*

For the past few weeks, we have been blessed with a number of talented speakers who have shared their passion for life with our community. The faculty returned in early January and heard Dr. Abigail James, a fellow teacher and author, whose book, *Teaching the Male Brain*, is a practical guide to explaining why males learn differently and helping teachers differentiate and employ strategies to help boys succeed in the classroom. Dr. James spoke to the entire US faculty and then to the Hunting Valley faculty, allowing them to focus on issues that are relevant to our boys.

We all returned to school the following day and were greeted by Mr. Andy Taylor, the headmaster of the Maru a Pula School in Gaborone, Botswana. He painted for us a stirring picture of his country and his school, which was one of the first integrated schools in southern Africa and is well known for its academic excellence. Andy fell in love with Africa as a young student--not much older than your sons--and he continually returned to it during his college years at Wesleyan and during his professional life as a teacher. He has finally landed and is at home in Botswana, teaching and administering at one of the best schools in all of Africa.

Later that week, Mr. Carl Williams was the guest speaker for the Political Essay Contest. He challenged the boys to investigate issues and to think critically. Discussing America's penal system, Mr. Williams gave frightening statistics that suggested that our present form of capitalism competes globally in large part due to our exploiting prison labor. He suggested that since America has one of the highest prison populations in the industrialized world, we have to be careful that we are locking up men and women in order to protect our society, not to create inexpensive labor.

In order to celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King's life, we invited Dr. Peter Temes, Founder and President of I L O Institute. An intellectual, Dr. Temes has served as president of the Great Books Foundation and as president of Antioch College's New England Graduate School, and is the founder of the Great Books Summer Program. That is how I met him, for he and I teach in that program, and we hope to have some of your sons in it this summer. He is the author of many articles and a number of books, including *The Power of Purpose: Living Well by Doing Good*; *The Just War: An American Reflection on the Morality of War in Our Time*; *Against School Reform (And in Praise of Good Teaching)*. Without a note, he made relevant Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech, connecting it to the messages that we are hearing today from our candidates for President. Dr. Temes' compassion, integrity, and intellectual fire burn brightly, and when he visited English classes that morning, he wowed everyone he met.

Our keynote speaker for our Race Awareness, Cultural Education (R.A.C.E.) Day was Reverend Robert H. Thompson, the Phelps Minister at Phillips Church at Phillips Exeter Academy. Also without a note, but with a deep, spiritual voice, Reverend Thompson shook the foundation of our assumptions about race and challenged us to care for one another and to see one another as individuals. One senior approached him after he spoke and told him that he had never heard such loud and sustained applause from the audience.

Finally, Mr. Joe Ehrmann, who spoke as a member of the Center for Excellence Speaker Series this past autumn on the Shaker Campus, came to our campus and asked our boys what does society tell them what a man is and what is a true man. A true man is not someone who is athletically superior, sexually promiscuous, or financially influential, which are the messages boys receive daily. No, a man is someone who understands that the two most important aspects of life are our relationships with one another--what kind of son, brother, father, friend, or neighbor are you--and our ability to live a meaningful and purposeful life. You could have heard

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Future Dates

Tuesday, February 26

- Sherman Prize Speaking Contest
- All spring sports OHSAA mandatory parent meeting, 7 p.m.

Saturday, March 1

- SAT 8:30 a.m. (other sites)

Friday, March 7

- Faculty Work Day - No Classes
- End of Interim III
- ACT registration deadline

Monday - Friday, March 10 - 14

- Ohio Graduation Testing for Sophomores

Wednesday, March 12

- Winter Sports Dessert 7 p.m. (Stouffer Dining Hall) - by invitation

Friday, March 14

- Spring Break Begins After Last Class

Monday, March 31

- Professional Development Day (HV) ~ No Classes

Tuesday, April 1

- Classes Resume

Thursday, April 3

- Freshman & Sophomore Parents Curriculum Preview Meeting 7 p.m. (Wean Library)

Tuesday, April 8

- Cum Laude Investiture ~ Guest Speaker Mr. Arnie Holtberg, Headmaster, St. Mark's School, TX

Wednesday, April 9

- USPA General Meeting 7:15 p.m. (Lecture Room) Topic: Course selections and AP class entry

Saturday, April 12

- Parent/Sponsor Conferences 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
- ACT test (other sites)

Monday, April 14

Guest speaker Richard W. Durst, President of Baldwin-Wallace College (assembly)

Tuesday, April 29

- Service Day (no classes)

Friday, May 2

- Last Day of Classes for Seniors

Saturday, May 3

- SAT I & II (other sites)
- Junior/Senior Prom

Community Service Day

According to Terry Lipford, Community Service Coordinator, the format of Service Day this year will be similar to last year.

Each house will participate in its own unique service project from approximately 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. House prefects and housemasters are responsible for researching service opportunities and identifying the project for their house.

Students should plan to report to school at the regular time (8 a.m.) for donuts/bagels and house meetings. All houses will depart school around 8:30 a.m. for their project destination. Boxed lunches will be served on site. The day will likely end early as most houses will arrive back at school around 2 - 2:30 p.m.

Projects for the day have not yet been established. Last year's projects included repacking and sorting donated goods at Cleveland Food Bank (Anderson); outdoor projects in preparation for summer camp at Highbrook Lodge, Cleveland Sight Center (Cruikshank); outdoor projects at the National History Museum (Goodwillie); Habitat for Humanity (Hawley); outdoor landscaping at Murtis Taylor Multi-Service Center (McCarragher); cleaning and preparing The First Tee, a golf course in Slavic Village which coordinates tutoring and golfing programs for inner city kids (McKinley); Citizens Academy (Peters); and Cleveland Clinic Children's Hospital, Autism Center (Pettee).

Trees Donated to Children and Family Services

It seems like a long time ago that we were decorating our homes for the holidays. However, it's never too late to update our readers about something worthwhile our US community does for the larger community in which we live. This year, all trees not purchased during the tree sale were donated to Cuyahoga County Department of Children and Family Services (CCDCFS). The purpose of CCDCFS is to assure that children at risk of abuse or neglect are protected and nurtured within a family and with the support of the community. CCDCFS offered the donated trees to foster and kinship care families. The Kinship Care Unit of CCDCFS provides community-based support to families and individuals caring for the children of relatives. Additional information about the organization can be located at its website: www.cfs.cuyahogacounty.us.

Update on Spring Trips

Mr. Obel-Omia reports we shall be sending two young men to Maru a Pula School in Gaborone, Botswana. They will leave University School in mid-March and will stay there for almost three weeks. While there, they will attend classes, perform community service, learn about local history, economy, and lore, and go on a safari. Peggy Wielenberg, our Dean of Faculty, has graciously agreed to travel with the boys. The two young men will return at the beginning of the spring term, arriving in Cleveland with two boys from the Maru a Pula School. Those young men will attend classes and learn about University School and Cleveland during their nearly three-week stay.

We are in the process of securing visas and completing forms and are grateful for the good work of Mr. David Wright in our business office.

Mme. Arnoult reports that U.S. boys will be going on a trip to Honduras for 1 week over spring break. There are 11 boys from grades 7-12 who are participating and the faculty chaperones are Mr. Mark Kreiger and Mrs. Lisa Carroll.

The Costa Rica trip was canceled for this year.

The 1:00 Jazz Ensemble will be going to New Orleans with Mr. David Kay on March 14-16. They will perform at Preservation Hall. The ensemble will also be working an extensive shift at the Musicians' Village Habitat for Humanity, which was created by Harry Connick, Jr. and Branford Marsalis. This project aids area musicians whose homes (and lives) were irreparably wrecked from the impact of Hurricane Katrina.

Class of '35 Political Awareness Essay Contest

A special morning assembly on January 11 honored the six finalists in the 23rd Annual Class of 1935 Political Awareness Essay Contest.

First-place winner Jared F. Jones '08 was honored for his consideration of U.S.-Iraq relations in an essay entitled "The Most Dangerous Game: How the U.S. Should Confront the Threat of Iraq". Noting what he considers to be the startling lack of strategic foresight in U.S. foreign policy, Jared's decision to write on this very complex subject was in part motivated by the strategic difficulty posed by it and by the diplomatic balancing act that results when the U.S. seeks to constrain a hostile state without sacrificing stability or inflaming tensions. Jared received a monetary award and will have his name engraved on the commemorative Revere bowl in the Administration Wing.

Second place winner Zachary H. Herak '08 focused his essay on the Patriot Act while third-place winner Joseph E. Glynnias '10 pondered the problem of nuclear proliferation treaties, observing that even the most effective bilateral treaties cannot be expected to accomplish the controls that could be implemented through a comprehensive treaty that was enforceable on a multi-lateral, global basis.

Also honored at the assembly were the three runners-up: Joshua M. Adler '10, who considered the legalization of physician-assisted suicide, Michael K. Perloff '08, who dealt with the rise of the Republican Party in the 1970's, and Alexander J. Wolf '10, considering the problem of overdiagnosis of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

Mock Trial Team

The US Mock Trial Team competed in the state district meet at the Justice Center in downtown Cleveland on February 1. Thirty students, making up four teams, took part. Each team won one trial and lost one. All students gained a better understanding of our legal system, and improved their analytical and communications skills. Additionally, everyone had fun. The judges recognized seniors Sam Eisele and Justin Wedell, along with juniors Matt Rothfusz, Todd Siegal, and Seth Udelson, as outstanding individual performers. The faculty sponsor is Mr. Cate.

USPA Wants You!

Now is the time to start thinking about volunteering for the University School Parents Association (USPA) next year. Consider working once a month in the Prep Shop, editing *The Valley Voice*, being a class parent, working on After-Prom or the International Dinner or decorating the school for holidays. There are jobs that last all year, and those that are a one-time commitment: some are evenings only and others happen during the day. We are looking for people to chair committees, as well as volunteers. Volunteering for USPA gives you an excuse to be in the school and maybe see your son and his friends in their academic environment. It is also a great way to meet other parents!

There is a sign-up form with this mailing. Please fill it out and return it to Mrs. Kalman at the front desk or mail it to Betsy Stueber. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Betsy Stueber at stueber4@aol.com.

Parent/Sponsor Conferences

Parent/Sponsor Conferences will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Saturday, April 12. The deadline to schedule an appointment for a half-hour time slot is Wednesday April 9 by the end of the school day. (Call the sponsor directly if you have missed the deadline).

Call or email Mrs. Kalman, 216-831-2200 or jkalman@us.edu

Race Awareness and Cultural Education Day

Hunting Valley students devoted nearly the entirety of their first day back after semester exams to a broad range of activities marking Race Awareness and Cultural Education Day. This year's program was developed in its entirety by Mr. Lipford and Mrs. Crough, with ongoing input from Mr. Obel-Omia and with the assistance of the entire HV faculty.

The day's events were begun with an extraordinary presentation by The Rev. Robert Thompson, the Phelps Minister at Phillips Church, Phillips Exeter Academy who set the stage through conversation and song for the boys' further inquiry into matters of race, creed, sexual orientation, national origin, and class. The boys then met with their cohorts in self-selected affinity groups, later participating in cross-cultural discussions and joining their houses for discussions about their US experience facilitated by house leaders. A significant part of the afternoon program was devoted to courses independently developed by members of the faculty, each of whom was given an opportunity to bring his or her own experience to the issue of diversity or, as Mr. Obel-Omia put it, a chance for faculty members to "tell their own personal stories." A vast selection of courses resulted, including the experiences of minority members in the military presented by Mr. Cate, Mr. Pla's experience as a political refugee coming to the U.S. from Cuba, Mrs. Steeber's inquiry into advertising's impact on gender equality, Mr. Paik's consideration of the challenge of religious diversity, and the serious issues raised by the idea of "historical truth" by Mr. Murray.

For Mr. Obel-Omia, one of the most extraordinary parts of the program was "Stand Up/Sit Down," in which the boys were called upon to literally "find their place" in groups that represented particular cultural attitudes. Mr. Obel-Omia was very pleased with what he characterized as the enormous respect shown by each boy for the views and concerns of his housemates and classmates and was particularly impressed with the seriousness with which the boys addressed the issues and each other. The day's activities revealed, in Mr. Obel-Omia's view, that an attitude of acceptance prevails at US, and he and the faculty plan to build upon the success of the day by actively creating more opportunities for the boys to express themselves and engage their classmates on these issues.

The Count Down to Prom Begins

With approximately 1680 hours (about 70 days) until Junior-Senior Prom Weekend, the After-Prom Committee members are gearing up for the final stretch.

Donations of gift cards and college gear are still a very high priority and can be left with Mrs. Kalman at the reception desk, though questions concerning these donations should be directed to Gail Bowen, 440-893-9110.

Parents and family members are also reminded to register their Giant Eagle cards by visiting www.gianteagle.com where they need to navigate to "Community Events" and click on "Educational Support." Registration requires use of the school code, which is 5216.

Now is the time, also, to note that the After-Prom Committee and US request that no other events be planned. After-Prom parents and families are asked to support that

ANNUAL "FUND" FACTS

Annual Fund participation from US families is currently at 45%.

A gift from you today will move us that much closer to our goal of 100% participation!

If you haven't already done so, please make a gift today.
Because we value our teachers...

view. US After-Prom is the official post-prom event, and the boys are expected to take their dates directly home following After-Prom and then to go directly home themselves.

All junior and senior boys are invited to After-Prom even if they have not attended Prom, which requires a date.

Senior Section

Wednesday, April 9

- Senior class lunch with Mr. Murray (student only)

Thursday, April 10

- Senior Doughnut Break

Thursday, May 1

- Senior dinner 6 p.m. (tentative date)

Friday, May 2

- Last day of classes for seniors

Thursday, May 8

- Mother's Luncheon, location to be announced

Thursday, May 22

- Senior Breakfast. (student only) Need parent volunteers, contact cmartin86@aol.com or 440-349-2021.

Tuesday, June 3

- Senior/Parent Barbeque

Sophomore Section

March 10 -14, Monday - Friday

- Ohio Graduation Testing for Sophomores

Thursday, April 3

- Parents curriculum preview meeting 7 p.m. (Wean Library)

Freshmen Section

Thursday, April 3

- Parents curriculum preview meeting 7 p.m. (Wean Library)

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a pin drop during his forty-minute talk. He also spoke to parents and coaches during the day, reshaping his message and sharing strategies to help us help your boys understand what it is to be a man.

In addition, of course, we had a number of seniors share their personal perspectives, and their speeches have also been well crafted, well delivered, and well received. One of the great unifiers of our community is our assemblies, where we come together, listen to one another's voices, and share our news, our dreams, and our passions.

These many diverse and passionate voices have impressed our students and, more important, have inspired your sons. Many have clamored for their return, and we will look to have them speak again, in part, because of the immense generosity of the USPA. In fact we have already begun conversations with Dr. James and hope that she will be available to the students and to you sometime next autumn. But, even as we invite these speakers to return, we will also continue to invite other speakers who will similarly provoke and inspire our boys to reach for their best selves and become the kind of men who will contribute richly and meaningfully to the world that they will inhabit and serve.

Strategic Plan Advances

We continue to push forward on a number of fronts regarding the Strategic Plan initiatives. In addition to offering expanded external opportunities for our students, we are hosting two students from Nairobi again next year in addition to two Chinese students (please see the adjoining article in this issue). We are also making good progress on a number of other initiatives:

Initiative #1: Steadily Improve the Consistency and Quality of the Overall Experience

In an effort to increase communication between the school and parents, freshman and new parents were contacted by their sons' sponsors within the first four weeks of school (rather than at the end of the first interim) regarding performance, adaptation to school, and related topics. Additionally, as you read in last month's issue of *The Valley Voice*, the new website promises to improve communication and the ease of which parents may obtain school information.

Initiative #2: Enhance US's Stature as a Leader in Boys' Education

Our US Center for Excellence Distinguished Speaker Series has met with excellent reviews. One of the speakers, Joe Ehrmann, recently returned to speak separately with the boys, coaches and parents less than four months after he spoke to the parents about turning boys into good men in the first of the Series. The 2008-2009 Distinguished Speaker Series is already in the planning stages and promises to be equally as thought provoking as was this year's.

Initiative #3: Invest in Facilities

In an effort to be sure the teaching spaces are as good as they can be and to honor the central importance of the work our teachers do day in and day out, a thorough reconsideration of how space is used in the building has begun. We need state-of-the-art science labs that help to inspire awe and wonder. We need outstanding arts and performance spaces that meet the remarkable talents of our boys. We need to have inviting seminar rooms where boys can interact with each other and with their teachers in thoughtful discussion.

Some of the improvements are simple and basic. They include adequate space to hold a discussion in a circle around a seminar table. They include natural lighting and views of the beautiful outdoors. They also, of course, would involve giving teachers the tools which are required for a first-rate 21st century classroom such as Smartboards and state-of-the-art lab equipment.

University School has retained Centerbrook Architects and Planners, LLC of Centerbrook, Connecticut to assist with our space reassessment. Centerbrook has received wide recognition for its work. Its institutional experience spans academic to civic buildings and includes art centers, museums, libraries, event centers, research and academic laboratories, offices, and religious buildings (the Park East Synagogue in Pepper Pike among them). Much of Centerbrook's work has been for academic institutions, large and small. They have done more work with regard to classroom design and school renovation, while staying closely within the budgets of those institutions, than any other of the world-class firms which were interviewed. Projects have included the full range of needs for colleges, universities, and secondary schools and have resulted in designs nationally recognized for their innovation. Some of their academic clients have included Amherst, Bard, Brandeis, Colby, Colgate, Dartmouth, MIT, Williams, Yale, Choate, Phillips Exeter Academy and Promfret School, to name a few. They have shown extraordinary enthusiasm for all of their projects and are excited to work for US.

Updates on other strategic plan initiatives will be forthcoming.

If you got this far and you have not responded to our survey, we want to hear from you. Go to website www.us.edu, go to the Parents link on the top of the navigation bar, and click on the survey link. You will be able to fill out the survey online.

Strategic Plan Initiative:

Expand External Opportunities for Students

One of the six initiatives of the Strategic Plan is to provide expanded external opportunities to students. Taking part in exchanges in China is one example of the way students can be engaged in learning experiences beyond the walls of the campus. As part of that approach, we are hosting six teachers from Xi'an, China from April 6 - 12. They are all teachers in the middle school (equivalent to a high school in America) attached to Jiao Tong University and are coming to observe classes as well as learn about the structure of an American high school's curriculum and extra curricular activities. The teachers will stay in the homes of HV faculty and will participate in several cultural activities in the Cleveland area. These teachers will then be the lead teachers in hosting our own students who will have an extended stay in Xi'an in the spring of 2009. In addition, we will be hosting several of their students for five weeks in the fall of 2008.

Spring into the Prep Shop

Don't forget the Prep Shop in planning your spring break attire! Whether you are going to sunny climes, snowy slopes, or just relaxing at home, the Prep Shop has what you need to be the picture of sartorial eloquence. New hats, t-shirts, and the ubiquitous sweats are just the things for staying warm, or just vegging out.

Summer Classes

University School will offer a variety of academic classes for students entering grades 8-12. Summer session begins on June 16 and ends on July 18, with academic classes scheduled between 8:30 a.m and 12:15 p.m. Summer brochures have just been sent out so if you do not receive one shortly, feel free to pick one up on either campus or download it from www.us.edu.

Spring Sports

There will be a varsity spring sports parent meeting on Tuesday, February 26 at 7 p.m. Please note that these meetings are by invitation only. Families that need to attend will receive an invitation from the athletic department. Parents of freshman JV athletes need not attend.

- JV and Varsity Lacrosse teams start February 25th.
- JV and Varsity Baseball Pitchers and Catchers start February 26th. Full squad workouts start March 10th.
- Freshmen Baseball starts March 10th.
- Track and Field starts March 10th.
- JV and Varsity Tennis starts March 10th.

The Valley Voice

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