Campus Happenings

WS Students Secure Second and Third Place at the Russian Olympics

By Carrie Stevens '12
Herald Contributor

Before competing in the Olympic Games, an athlete can usually be spotted warming up and mentally preparing for the biggest competition of their life. The annual Russian Olympiada, held on April 25, is no different. As Russian cartoons play in the background, competitors from Binghamton, Syracuse, the US Military Academy at West Point, and our own HWS quietly recite poems, mumble through monologues, and even play Scrabble – with Cyrillic letters – before the games begin.

Julie Boardman-Brann, Chelsea Hudson, Belinda Littlefield, and Tom Luly traveled to SUNY Binghamton for the annual competition representing Hobart and William Smith in the Olympiada. Competitors were required to memorize a poem and prepare a three to four minute monologue, in addition to sight-reading a Russian passage. The first-year students, Hudson and Luly, also took a ten-minute grammar test.

Currie Stevens/Photographer

"I prepared for the monologue portion of the competition by speaking with one of my Russian friends on the phone for thirty-minutes once a week of so." Luly said. He confessed that, out of all the components of the competition, he was the most concerned about the monologue. "The test is just a piece of paper, and as far as the reading goes, you really can't study for that. My heart was pounding before reciting my monologue, but I think I did a good job." Luly took fourth in his division of the monologue competition.

Littlefield, too, believed the monologue was the toughest part of the games, "At the second level, you get four potential topics that you may have to speak about for 3-4 minutes in front of two judges. The topics were free time, when I was little, Russia and I, and travel." she stated. Although Littlefield was presented with the tough topic of free time, she still finished second.

At the reading portion of the competition, Hudson and Luly finished first and third, respectively, in their divisions; Littlefield and Boardman-Brann took second and fifth. "I was really worried that the stresses wouldn't be marked," Boardman-Brann started. In the Russian language, emphasizing specific syllables is a crucial component of correct pronunciation. " Luckily, they were, which was a huge relief."

Russian Area Studies Professor David Galloway served as one of the two judges of the reading competition. "The text the students had to read was comprised of a narrative, followed by a dialogue. As a whole, this part was the hardest for students; most didn't make it through the narrative in the allotted time (of two minutes). Chelsea read the passage first (in the lower-level division), and her flow was great. It really set the bar for the rest of the competitors. And Tom's pronunciation was near perfect."

As first-year competitors, Hudson and Luly, were expected to recite poem consisting of twenty-lines, while Boardman-Brann and Littlefield's required line count was thirty-six. With help from Alla Sadovaya, the Russian Fulbright Scholar, Littlefield took second in the poem recitation. "I met with her here on campus twice a week outside of class for about an hour each time. We went over readings and I recited the poem."

The final event was the grammar test, deemed the "easiest part," by one of the students from West Point. Seated in a classroom with the other participants, the competitors had ten minutes to correctly put phrases into the present tense, past tense, genitive, dative, and accusative cases. Although there was no penalty for leaving questions unanswered, students were encouraged to complete as much of the test as possible. Hudson scored the highest on the test in the lower-level division.

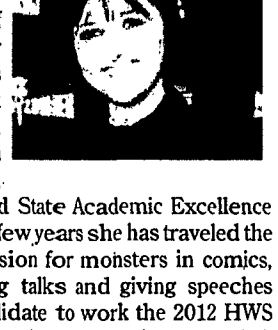
In the overall competition, Hudson won third place while Littlefield secured second. Littlefield attributes her success to Sadovaya's help. "She has been amazing and helped me correct my American pronunciation as well as enabled me to have more confidence in my speaking ability."

Jilian Burcar: The Woman Behind the Final Fisher Center Presentation

By Erin Meehan '12
Herald Contributor

Most students on campus have heard of the Fisher Center's "Animation" lecture series for Spring 2009. On Wednesday April 22nd the Fisher Center predoctoral fellow Jillian Burcar gave the final presentation entitled "(Re) Animating The Cyborg". In her piece she posed numerous questions about what animates the narrative of a cyborg and how does this relate to gender and reproduction. The topic is as interesting and unique as the woman herself.

Burcar earned her B.A. in English with a focus on literature and an extended writing minor from University of Southern California. Just last week she was awarded the Continuing Fellowship for Literature and Creative Writing at University of Southern California for 2009-2010. Her other honors include: The Mildred Fox Hanson Award in 2007 and 2008, the 2006 Virginia Middleton Summer Award, the 2003 and 2004 Maryland State Academic Excellence Award and others. The past few years she has traveled the country discussing her passion for monsters in comics, manga, and anime. Leading talks and giving speeches has made her an ideal candidate to work the 2012 HWS Freshman Class. Her Freshman Seminar entitled, "Zombies, Witches and Cyborgs: Animating Gender and Monstrosity", was a big factor in her decision to work at the colleges.



(Re)Animating The Cyborg

One of Burcar's greater overall goals in her work is to help, "bridge the gap between the popular culture consciousness and critical theory". She believes the study of monsters, gender, comics and film can extend beyond just the world of academics. Burcar describes one of her most unique experiences thus far, "I was singled out of an audience of about 2000 people at Comic-Con International San Diego last year to make the appearance. I attended the Scream Like a Girl panel in a costume of Chi from Chobits I made, and the producers of the Scream Awards liked my style. My award was to present the Mastermind Award Trophy alongside Neve Campbell to Wes Craven, one of my personal heroes." It is safe to say that the producers were more than thrilled when they learned of Burcar's interests and extensive knowledge.

Burcar's plans for the summer include giving a talk for Comic-Con International in San Diego entitled "(Dis) Memebering the Body: Dissecting Gender in The Walking as part of Confrence". She is even more excited about this endeavor because she is going to be involved in the "programming" of Comic-Con as well. However, the rest of the year will be spent using her fellowship to finish her critical and creative dissertations.

When asked about her feelings towards HWS and her time spent here she replies, "I think of this year as a stew". The pinnacle of which she says was her Fisher Center presentation. The success she has been blessed with this year would not have been possible without the help of the faculty and students at the Colleges. Burcar exclaims, "This year I was blessed with top quality ingredients for my stew, such as the intellectual generosity of Professor Betty Bayer. I was also blessed by my students this year, both in FSCT 201 and FSCT 301. In addition to the colorful and lively class discussions, the quality of the work produced in both classes has been phenomenal. Betty and my students have given me a lot to think about and to chew on as I set out to write my two dissertations."

Burcar has been an amazing contribution to the campus this year and will be greatly missed once she moves on. When asked about her own feelings towards the direction her life has taken she decided to answer with a haiku:

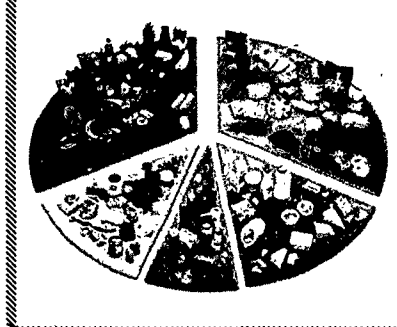
"Sing a song for the
cyborg, she smiles just for
you: answer in space."

Finals Survival Tips

By Erin Meehan '11
Herald Contributor

Exam period is fast approaching, or for some of you it has already begun! At times it can be hard to focus while thinking about going home and sunning yourself at the beach, or working 9-5 at a minimum wage job of your choice! For those of you who struggle with time management and procrastination, here are ten tips to help you reach the end of the year, and if you're a senior, these will help bring you that much closer to graduation and saying farewell to Geneva winters for good.

1. GO TO CLASS!
It sounds simple but for many of us it is harder than you might believe. Especially when the sun is shining and your favorite new jam is blasting at the quad. Seriously, attendance is half the battle when it comes to being successful in class. The only way to know what is going to be on the exam or paper topic is to pay attention when the professor is reviewing. Many times they also will drop hints as to what may be on the exam and if you're not there to hear them, you're already behind.



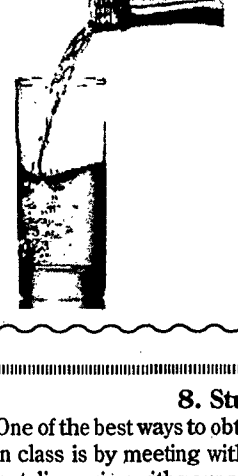
2. Maintain normal eating habits.
Do not skip meals or snack on junk food all day. Instead, eat three solid meals a day and feel free to have snacks in between. A well nourished body and mind is more likely to perform better.

3. Go to office hours.
If you do not understand a certain topic or just need clarification, the best way to receive help is one on one with a professor. Most likely you will also receive brownie points for seeking a teacher outside of the classroom as well!

4. Take breaks.
If you study or write 3-4 hours each day, there is no doubt on Friday and Saturday nights you will be able to spend time with your friends! Even throughout studying, take a break every hour and half to get something to eat or be in the sun. Spending time away from your work will help you concentrate when studying.

5. Exercise.
While keeping your mind fit in the library, do not forget your body. You will sleep better at night and be able to focus when working if your body is properly worked as well.

6. Do not procrastinate.
Studying or writing long papers seems much less terrifying if you break it up into small sections each day. Make flash cards for one chapter a day, or commit yourself to writing 2-3 pages a day. Taking anything step by step is a great way to keep yourself from becoming overwhelmed, and it enables you to focus on the task at hand.



7. Drink water NOT caffeine.
Although everyone seems to think that all-nighters are only achieved through cups of coffee and cans of Red Bull these substances can make you nauseous or jittery, making it difficult to concentrate. Instead, stay hydrated throughout day by carrying a water bottle with you at all times.

8. Study in groups.
One of the best ways to obtain information you may have missed in class is by meeting with your fellow students. Reviewing or just discussing with your peers is also an easy and fairly painless way to study.

9. Relax.
When the time comes for the exam remember to just breathe in deep and take each question one-by-one. Most teachers allow more than enough time to complete a test. Thus, take it slow, and do not try to be the first one done. Instead check over your answers... maybe even twice!

10. CELEBRATE!
You deserve it! Go to Ports, go to the chicken barbeque in the parking lot of Staples, jump in the lake! You worked hard and your great grades are just icing on the cake! Plus if you can see the light at the end of the exam tunnel it will make it much easier to work and make it to summmmerrrrrr!!