

Lusher Charter Newsletter #5 – Late April 2008

Lusher Literary Festival

As participants and organizers of the first annual New Orleans New Writers Festival, April 10-12, Lusher creative writing students experienced master classes and small workshops with many outstanding writers, including Tom Perrotta (*Election, Little Children, The Abstinence Teacher*), Loida Maritza Perez (*Geographies of Home*), and Reza Aslan (*No god but God, How to Win a Cosmic War*). Events on Thursday and Friday, including the upper level Certificate of Artistry students' spring reading, were held in the Lusher library, with NOCCA's writing students and faculty as our guests. Saturday's events took place at NOCCA|Riverfront. Each master class was co-moderated by one Lusher and one NOCCA student, including Ben Long (Tom Perrotta), Cora Parsons (Loida Maritza Perez), and Samaneh Khoshini (Reza Aslan). Congratulations to all of Lusher's creative writing students and to their teachers, Mr. Brad Richard (creative writing department chair) and Mr. Eric Flynt (creative writing instructor). There was a terrific write-up of the Festival in the Wednesday, April 16th Times-Picayune book section.

Awards and Honors

Tavis Smiley Foundation's National Youth Advisory Council

Another Lusher junior, Taylor A. Yarbrough, has been selected to serve on the Tavis Smiley Foundation's National Youth Advisory Council (NYAC), based on her application, letters of recommendation, and essay statement demonstrating her commitment to upholding the Foundation's ideals of leadership, scholarship and service. A key component of Taylor's membership in the NYAC is helping to plan the annual Leadership Institute. In preparation, the Foundation has flown Taylor to Los Angeles to attend a Leadership Retreat Orientation Weekend.

National Geographic Bee

On Friday, April 4th eighth grader Dillon Bender went to Baton Rouge for the state level of the National Geographic Bee. Dillon qualified for the state competition by winning the Lusher school competition and having one of the top 100 scores in the state of Louisiana on the written qualifying test. The state level consisted of an oral competition with 8 rounds of questioning on topics ranging from physical geography and landforms to cultural and political geography. Dillon finished in the top quartile of the contestants.

National Spanish Exams

Receiving Bronze Certificates were Jeanette deVeer (Level 2), Daniel Valencia (Level 2), Lydia Nichols (Level 3), and Leo Olivares (Level 3).

Receiving Honorable Mention for Level 2: Andrés Adams, Alerion Angelin, Kaytlynn Bourgeois, G. Maris Jones, Max Katner, Kara Kennedy, Bradley Nzinga, and Rebekah Smith.

Receiving Honorable Mention for Level 3: Martin Masakowski, Meredith Madden, and Jorge Rodas.

Receiving Honorable Mention for Level 4: Michael Greenberg, Yasmin Mzayek, Gabriel Pinto, and Alexandra Wallace.

Literary Rally Results

Leo Olivares, American History, 4th place
Hannah Brower, English III, 5th place
Susannah Albert-Chandhok, French II, 3rd place
Ana Treffinger, French IV-Speaking, Excellent
Jalisa Roberts, Journalism I, 1st place

Presidential Scholar Competition

Lusher senior Tim Clayton has advanced to semi-finalist status in the national Presidential Scholar Competition. He is one of only nine Louisiana semi-finalists.

Jennifer Trumble Award

Each year, the outstanding parent volunteer at Lusher receives the Jennifer Trumble Award. The Award is announced at the Crawfish Boil each year, and it is given in memory of 1980s parent volunteer and perennial Crawfish Boil chair Jennifer Trumble. This year's recipient is Anne Eckert, who has almost singlehandedly started the Lusher Sports Boosters club and has managed the concessions operation at all Lusher sporting events. Anne's service to Lusher has been extraordinary.

National Honor Society

The Lusher Chapter of the National Honor Society (NHS) has elected its first set of officers : President Jason Wong, Vice President Hannah Brower, Secretary Yasmin Mzayek, and Treasurer/Historian Alex Ates. New inductees were "tapped" for membership on April 15th in a 7th period ritual which involved current NHS members entering classrooms, announcing the name of the student being tapped, and bringing the honoree to the classroom of Ms. Bowling, Lusher's NHS advisor. The official induction ceremony was held the evening of April 24, 2008. Congratulations to Lusher's newest National Honor Society members:

Susannah Albert-Chandhok, 10th grade
Kaytlyn Bourgeois, 10th grade
Jade Cooley, 10th grade
Jemila Dunham, 11th grade
Ryan Gilbert, 10th grade
Kaitlin Guerin, 10th grade
Anna Iosipiv, 10th grade

Maris Jones, 10th grade
Caroline Kain, 10th grade
Samaneh Khoshini, 11th grade
May Mzayek, 12th grade
Cora Parsons, 10th grade
Rebekah Smith, 10th grade
Rui You, 10th grade

Summer News

Lusher 11th grade students Adam Gnuse and Bradley Nzinga received scholarships from the Ruth Fertel Foundation to attend the prestigious Kenyon Young Writers program at Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio. Sean Bensinger has been accepted into several summer writing programs, including the Sewanee Young Writers program and the Lake Forest Writing and Thinking Workshop. He has decided to attend the Sewanee program at the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee. Emma LeBlanc has been accepted into Loyola's summer writing program.

Sports News

District Baseball Stars

Coach Steve Volo reports that Lusher senior, Matt Czerniak, has earned All-District Honors in baseball. Lusher 10th grader, Tim Smith, has earned honorable mention district honors for baseball.

Fencing

Fencing director Jonathan Cohen reports that Lusher's beginners have made great progress. Their movements have become more liquid and their strike speed has improved. Practices are ending in small bouts, and by the start of the school year this group, if they practice during the summer, will be ready for electric fencing. A small beginners' tournament will take place on May 10th in the Lusher gym.

Fencing practice will continue over the summer, with a new beginners' group forming. Details will be provided soon.

Arts News

Middle School Drama Troupe's Spring Production, "Full of Smith"

Thursday, May 8th – there will be 2 matinee performances for the 7th and 8th grades, and a 6:30 pm performance for families and community.

Friday, May 9th – there will be two matinee performances for the 6th grade and for Willow Street students, and a 6:30 pm performance for families and community.

The members of the middle school drama troupe are:

6th Grade: Ferando Casey, Dylan Fall, Diana Issakson, Corinne Williams, Meryl Hahne, Madeline Andrews, Devin Minix, Drew Bowling, Elise Gancarz-Davies, Sam Kohler, Connor Webre, Kendrick Royal, Keaton McNamara

7th Grade: Britney Washington, Brett Davis, Therese Tate, Katherine Hogan, Haley Rowe-Kadow

8th Grade: Abby Digeorge, Nysa Loudon, Laine Korn, Mina Walker, Najah Dunham, Nyjah Miller, Angela Massey, Kendra Mitchell, Marcelle Dupuy

Visual Arts Exhibition

Lusher's Visual Arts Certificate of Artistry (CA) program will present its second annual exhibition with an opening reception on Friday, May 9th from 6 to 8 pm. The exhibition will include drawing, painting, sculpture, printmaking and digital imaging. Students from all levels of the Visual Arts CA program have participated in the preparation and mounting of the exhibition. Works will be on view in rooms 208 and 212, the Nashville Street stairwells, and the 3rd and 4th floor Freret Street hallways. The exhibition will run through May 20th.

Lusher Students Doing Neat Things!

A group of very creative Lusher High School students has posted two wonderful short videos on YouTube. Just go to www.youtube.com, type banjofilms, look for "Wrong Wardrobe" and "Elevator Operator," and enjoy!