Merry Almost Christmas (that’s a temporal reference, not a pc thing). As is normal, things at Mercyworld are shaking. For the department one of the causes of that is that we are knee-deep in the hiring process for the new faculty position associated with the new Mercyhurst Center for Applied Politics (M-CAP). There are some very strong candidates in the pool which is encouraging but which also makes the job more difficult.

Speaking of difficult jobs, we are nearing the end of year one of the Obama Administration and no matter what your political leanings are I suspect you can agree with the observation that regardless the quality of his BA in International Relations from Columbia University or JD from Harvard, the past year has been an educational one for the new President. (Admittedly, he’d have been better prepared if he’d taken Comparative Politics of Asia from Dr. Ripley, State and Local Politics from Dr. Morris, Political Theory from Dr. Federici, Professor Surzhko-Harned’s class on the Politics of Russia, or Geopolitics from your humble editor.)

Toward that end, whether working in the home, the White House, in the House or Senate, in a think tank or for a public contractor, in the media, education, the private sector, state and local government, military, the non-profit sector, volunteering, or still in graduate or law school (and collectively you’ve been doing all of those things)– you’ve certainly had a busy couple of years in terms of utilizing your poli sci major or minor to analyze the “goings-ons” and – in some cases – to try to affect outcomes.

Between the international relations realities of Afghanistan and Iraq (not to mention China, Copenhagen, Iran, Russia, Burma, North Korea, Turkey, Sudan, Kenya, et cetera); and the domestic politics maelstrom including the economic crisis (hopefully ameliorated and -- knock-on-wood -- turned around), health care, budget battles; and the intermestic issues like trying to shut down Gitmo and trials in NY; even without all of the action in state legislatures, city and county government and communities.

Here’s to a New Year of peace and prosperity, success and charity, family and friends, continued learning and the sharing of talents. Keep on seizing the moment/day. Carpe Diem! And, thanks for staying in touch.

Finally, while the newsletter has helped facilitate quite a bit of networking, we have been wondering, are were recently encouraged by an alum, to ask if it would be helpful to provide alums in a future issue with the chance to include Twitter names, Facebook links, or Linked In profiles. Or???? If you have an idea, or thoughts on this, please let me know.
WHO’S DOING WHAT: (ALUMNI UPDATES)

Frank Kostic, Jr. (Major ’03) Dr. C: I have no idea when the last time I wrote, which means it
has probably been too long. So after 16 months of Iraq I was assigned to the Army's Trial
Defense Services at Fort Riley and have been doing criminal defense work for about 7 months.
Defending those who defend America as the slogan goes has been yet another interesting
experience. I have had a number of big cases and jury trials. Some fun and interesting other like
rape and child-pornography fairly repugnant. I just keep telling myself that the Constitution
guarantees certain rights and that is what I am upholding in my duties. I recently got new orders
and will be heading the Washington D.C. for an assignment at the Government Appellate
Division (GAD). This is where the Army does all the appeals work....writing briefs and arguing
cases to judges etcetera. I am looking forward to the change of pace, being closer to home, and
possibly making it to that Hurst cocktail hour/ dinner I see e-mails about. Alison is also doing
well and will graduate this Spring with her Ph.D. I expect she will do some post doctoral work
in DC. Hope all is well.

Elise Yablonsky (Major ’07) graduated from City and Regional Planning as their American
Institute of Certified Planners Outstanding Student for 2009
http://www.planning.org/awards/outstandingstudents/2009/index.htm). I also decided to accept a
position in Columbus as a Policy Analyst, formerly called the Project Coordinator (working
title) with the Columbus Downtown Development Corporation. I am going to be doing grants
management, working with their Washington lobbyists, working on project feasibility, etc. I will
be working under two very talented people (both with MPAs from Ohio State) and getting a lot
of mentoring. I have been doing some really interesting things at my internship at Franklin
County Economic Development and Planning, which will end next week. I helped to draft
accessibility/universal design and green/energy efficiency standards for the Neighborhood
Stabilization Program funds for both Columbus and Franklin County. I have also been crafting
new Commercial Design Standards that will have requirements for pedestrian and bicycle access
and infrastructure in their commercial areas.

Ramona Ramos (Major ’05) All is well in Cleveland. I was hired by the Defense Financial
Accounting Services, which is a part of the Department of Defense, in the retired annuity
department. I basically ensure disabled retired vets are getting the proper benefits they are
entitled to. I have been there for over a month now and so far so good. I have been learning a lot.
This past week I finished my last classes for my Masters and now working on my last paper. By
the end of the week I will have finished my M. A in Nonprofit management from John Carroll
University. I hope everyone has a merry Christmas and a very happy New Year.

Randy Hilliard (Double Major ’99) Doc C. I am writing from the warmth of a Caribbean breaze
in Haiti - where the December nights dip into the mid 70's. It is warm, no doubt, and the
upcoming Haitian Senate elections in the spring and Presidential election planned for November
2010 will make for hot times here in the political tinderbox of the western hemisphere. This is
by far the most interesting assignment that I have had to date, although watching the Mauritanian coup in 2005, the Kenyan Presidential elections and fall out in 2007 and a noteworthy year in Afghanistan after that, do make for good competition and dizzying cocktail conversation. Liz and the kids are along for the ride this time, with Julianna (8) in the third grade and the twins Alex and Emma (6) in first grade at a nearby international school. So while the two years ahead may not be quite the Caribbean experience we all dream of, it will be fascinating none the less. Wishing the Department and alum "un Joyeux Noel et une bonne annee!"

**Ryan Moton** (Major ’04) Since graduating from the ’Hurst, I went on to study Student Affairs in Higher Education at IUP, graduating May 2007. I am currently a Community Director at the University of North Carolina at Asheville, Asheville, NC, since August 2007. [Ed. Note: Also had a nice surprise visit from Ryan this Fall. Always good when the alums come back home.]

**Tomas Ayuso** (Major ’08) I write to you from the newest coup-ridden state in our battered hemisphere. Its been quite the summer let me tell you. Ive swallowed enough teargas to last me a lifetime. The overwhelming insecurity issues have now been compounded by a perilous institutional meltdown that, as of now, has no end in sight. I wrote an article regarding the events leading up to and immediately after Zelaya's ouster if you'd like to read it (http://is.gd/2naEE). I was a research fellow at the Council on Hemispheric Affairs for a year after graduation. There I was part of the House Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere's testimony for their opening session on what direction should the new administration take in Latin America. I was also cited in a Pentagon report on organized crime written by General Barry McCaffrey. Other than that I appeared a number of times on CNN, Al jazeera, El Pais, BBC, Xinhua and others as a talking head discussing Latin American issues such as DTO violence, governance issues and trade! And I was part of the three billion people at the inauguration. The next step is graduate school at the New School in New York City for a masters in International Relations: Security, Conflict & Governance, which I begin this fall.

**Jen (Kraus) Bach** (Major ’94) In January, I came back to the "Hill" to work as project coordinator for the Erie Together poverty initiative. Erie Together is a collaborative between Mercyhurst College Civic Institute, United Way of Erie County and the Greater Erie Community Action Committee. "Erie Together is a grassroots initiative focused on economic well-being. It is not a program being brought to a community. It is an effort to bring community residents (who know best about their community) together to determine what they want to do to improve the quality of life for all, and specifically for those with low incomes. The aim is for residents to develop a vision and then an action plan that will positively impact the well-being of individuals, families and the community as a whole. In addition to involving community members in creating a thriving community, Erie Together works with families who are living at or below the poverty level to assist them in creating lifelong goals. These families are matched with community partners, or volunteer mentors, who offer extra support and act as resources to move toward sustainability and prosperity. As this project moves towards the end of its first year, many successes in the community have been acheived and looking forward to making Erie a
better community to live, work and play." While the project may not be directly political, there are many things to be remembered and applied from the teachings Doc Clemons and Dr. Federici (sorry to the others on board in the department, but I have a degree in Clemons, as Jule Gardner used to say!). In the free time, I enjoy spending time with the family (Logan is 3 and Travis is 19 months). Merry Christmas to all!

**Phyllis Roman** (Double Major ’07) I am now officially halfway done with my lawschool career at DePaul University in Chicago. I have also just started working part time at Lipkin & Higgins a plaintiff's injury firm in the loop. I am also eagerly awaiting baseball season since the Bears and Jay Cutler were beyond disappointing this season.

**Brooke (Emmerick) Kirchner** (Major 01) It has been far too long since I sent in an update, my apologies. Life has been extremely busy for me the last couple of years. In May 2008 my fiance Jeff (now husband) and I moved from Arlington, VA to Orange, CA (Orange County). He is a software engineer for an experimental economics group which is run by Vernon Smith, the 2002 Nobel Prize winner in economics. The group was formerly with George Mason University and in January of 2008 accepted an offer from Chapman University for the entire group to move. So we found ourselves moving, en mass, across the country almost two years ago now. I can't believe how quickly time goes by the older one gets! My husband and I were married at my families home in Vermont on June 6th of this year. It was an excellent party! So between our move across country, planning a wedding and starting a new job in the last two year, life has been a bit on the hectic side! I have also been working at Chapman since our move and am currently serving as the Budget Manager to the Dean of the College of Sciences. He is part of the Physics and Computational Science team that also defected from George Mason about two months after my husband's team left. Suffice it to say, George Mason doesn't care a whole lot for Chapman. The thought of continuing on for a Ph.D. in Poli. Sci. or History is never far from my mind and have recently started thinking more seriously about it again now that the craziness of the last few years has calmed a bit.

**Adam Hammer** (Major ’09) In the fall, I was appointed to The Amherst (town in which I live) Solid Waste Committee (appealing name for a committee :) As a committee member, I work with fellow members to advise the Town Board on all aspects of solid waste. Such issues that arise include methods of recycling, waste stream reduction, household hazardous waste and rodent control. My experience so far has been positive and I look forward to continued service on the Committee. In November, I campaigned for local Republican candidates. I participated in general campaign work, such as going door-to-door and literature drops. For my work, I was granted membership on the local Republican Party Committee. I plan to be active in local politics for the foreseeable future. Sometime in the near future, I plan to attend graduate school. Where I will attend and when is still to be determined, but I will make a decision when the time is right. Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, Carpe Diem!
JoEllen Taylor (Minor ’06) Unfortunately the Pennsylvania government decided to eliminate funding for the Governor’s Schools, so my employment position was terminated at the University of Pittsburgh. Consequently, I have had to put my PhD studies on hold until I can find another funding opportunity. Meanwhile, I decided to take the time to pursue other professional development opportunities. I was in D.C. from August-December interning for U.S. PIRG and St. Mary’s County Department of Economic and Community Development. U.S. PIRG, the federation of state Public Interest Research Groups (PIRGs), which stands up to powerful special interests on behalf of the American public, working to win concrete results for our health and our well-being. I assisted on a variety of lobbying endeavors and spend a majority of my time working on efforts for financial reform. I was on Capital Hill virtually every day and attended numerous Congressional hearings and press conferences. While their ideas are a little left of my political ideology, it is always interesting and beneficial working with people who do not share the same perspectives as you in the spirit of bipartisanship. I also interned with the St. Mary’s Department of Economic and Community Development with the Economic Coordinator. I worked on marketing strategies for small, local businesses and in compiling data to present to prospective businesses.

Since April, I have been interning with the International Bureau of Education’s (part of UNESCO) journal, Prospects. I have copy edited some manuscripts and prepared some manuscripts for external review. This will conclude at the end of December. I am flying out tomorrow to Turkey to conduct some research with a colleague from Pitt about the philosophies of education held by faculty members at a prominent university in Turkey. I will be there until January 7. When I land in Pittsburgh, I don’t know what exactly I will be doing, as I am still looking for fulltime employment. I do have an internship lined up for Congressman Laturette’s office. Give my best to the other professors!

Ellen Koenig (Minor ’08) Happy Holidays to everyone, wherever you are! Since graduating in May 2008 I spent over a year teaching and traveling through Eastern Asia. I have since moved back to the States and took a job as an analyst for the lovely Federal Bureau of Investigation, Miami Division. Currently there is torrential downpour outside, and we have not had weather below 70 degrees in about 2 weeks. I was in the process of unpacking boxes of books into the new house when this e-mail came in. I think it's about time for a re-read about the Global South. Cheerio.

Rob Vescio (Major ’96) Well it’s December 18th and that means 6 more days until I start Christmas shopping. Life has been busy. My two boys (ages 1 and 3) are growing up fast, developing their personalities (tempers) and creating chaos. Work is busy (that’s a good thing). I continue to spend half of my life in Harrisburg. In September, I was promoted to Director of Pennsylvania State Government Affairs for GSP CONSULTING. It has yet to be determined if
the extra workload is worth the effort. I am amazed how much of my day is dedicated to personnel matters. It has been a real challenge lobbying this year. Harrisburg has been rattled by an extensive public corruption investigation. The PA Attorney General indicted two former Speakers of the House, a Dept of Revenue Secretary, a Majority Leader and numerous staff members on public corruption charges. It may only be the tip of the iceberg. Leadership positions have changed, senior staff continues to turnover and legislation has stalled, leading to a budget that was 101 days late. Part of the budget agreement included $250 million of revenue from expanding gaming in Pennsylvania to include table games. As of this moment, the legislation to permit table games has yet to be passed. 2010 will continue to be a challenge. We are expecting a $5 billion budget deficit and more indictments of public officials. On the political front, Senator Arlen Specter is up for a tough re-election, Pennsylvanian’s will elect a new Governor and all of the PA State House and half of the state Senate is up for re-election.

Happy Holidays to everyone.

Andrea Hashim (Minor ’04) Greetings to you and the rest of the Mercyhurst Poli Sci department from the land of John McCain and Sheriff Joe Arpaio! All is well in the wild west. I continue to live and work in Scottsdale, Arizona. I spend the majority of my time working in Development for the Scottsdale Center for the Performing Arts, while also teaching at Scottsdale Community College and dancing with a professional modern dance company- Scorpius Dance Theater. I never would have thought I would have remained in Arizona this long, as I intended to move back to the east coast once graduate school was completed. Four years since graduate school, I find myself looking forward to the desert winters and incredible springs. Yes, the summer is HOT, but thats what swimming pools and air conditioners are for! :) All in all, everything is truly wonderful. I have great intentions of making it back to the Mercyhurst Homecoming next year!

Dana Hyland (Major ’05) Sorry for the delay on my submission. Things are unusually busy for me lately (which is saying a lot!). This is my last full week of working at the White House, then it's back to EPA, so lots of wrapping things up and getting organized. I'll be heading back to the Office of Air at EPA, but I am still figuring out the details of what exactly I'll be working on. I am so grateful for the opportunity I had to work in this Administration- it's been an amazing 8 months that really flew by. There's not much else new on my end. I had a great summer- went to Italy and Greece on vacation for two weeks, which was heavenly and HOT! I went home for Thanksgiving and will make another brief jaunt back to Rochester for Christmas next week as well. I'm hoping for a White Christmas so I can see some real snow! Although we got some snow here in DC the other week, it was short-lived. [Ed. Note: followed by a blizzard!]

Emilio Colaiacovo (Minor ’98) Things are the same as life is constantly changing. I remain a Partner at the Bouvier Partnership and was recently elected as one of the Managing Partners of the firm. This is an added responsibility that is very taxing, in spite of Pres. Obama's taxing recovery plan (had to throw that in there). I remain Legal Counsel for the Erie County Republican Party. This summer I handled more election law trials, appeals to the NYS Appellate Division,
and even submissions to the Court of Appeals, the highest court in New York. It was a very busy summer. However, the most exciting news is that my wife and I are expecting our first child. All is well with mom and baby, who will begin his journey with our family in late May. While we think it’s a boy, as long as he or she is healthy (and a good Republican) we will consider ourselves blessed. Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

**Mike Jones** (Minor ’01) After wrapping up 3.5 half years as the Communications Director for Harvard Law School's Human Rights Program, I will be starting a new job in January 2010. Count me among the lucky ones who will now get to work from home, in his pajamas, tapping away at the keyboard on his laptop. I'll be joining change.org, a social media start-up out of San Francisco. Change.org is a social entrepreneurship venture, originally launched in 2007 but relaunched last year, that seeks to be a central platform for activists looking to engage in a range of causes for social change. Imagine Facebook, mixed with Idealist.org and your favorite political blogs :) I'll be taking editorial duties for their Gay Rights and Human Rights causes (among others to be added later). For me it's a great opportunity to continue to explore my writing, while still engaging in the social justice work that began for me as a social work major and poli sci minor back at Mercyhurst. Where can you find me nowadays? Well, here (www.twitter.com/michaelajones), and here (www.facebook.com/mikeajo) and here (www.change.org). And in my personal life, I'm very much looking forward to spending the holidays with my partner, Joe, who will be returning to Boston after finishing his semester at grad school.

**Albert Veverka** (Major ’05) Greetings from a stunned City of Champions. As our Steelers hopes appear all but dashed there are still a great many thing to be merry about this holiday seasons. I am still Judge Emery's law clerk and in March it will be the start of third year. Our Courtroom has seen two very interesting medical malpractice cases recently and I feel as though I have learned so much from those experiences. I have started to become active one of our Bar Association's programs which takes me to area high schools to talk about responsibility on the Internet, as well as, personal responsibility in terms of contracts (student loans/rental or lease agreements). I have really enjoyed the experience and it looks like I will be continuing my participation in the program through the new year. Everything else appears to be the same. I am looking forward to the slow down of the end of December so that I can try to take stalk of where I have been and what has happened this year. Otherwise I don't think I have much more to report. I wish everyone at the Hurst the best! Stay warm through the frigid winter!

**Billy Byrnes** (Double Major 2002) Hope things are well at the Hurst. I watched the Extreme Makeover last Sunday and saw the beautiful story of that woman in Erie who brings so much joy and hope to young children in Erie. I was proud Mercyhurst began a scholarship in her name. It was a very touching episode. As for the update: I got MARRIED!! Kristin and I got married on November 7. She is a graduate of Santa Clara University and is originally from Yakima, WA (which you knew). The day was beautiful. My two roommates, Scott Quivey and Justin McCabe, were groomsmen in the wedding. We will be going on our honeymoon over Christmas
break to Belize. We will be volunteering with Sustainable Harvest International the first week, and then going to Ambergris Caye the second week. We just got the photos from our photographer and the link to the slide show he put together is here: http://brunkblog.com/darkroom/share/?n=Kristin_and_Billy_Wedding. I am working as a campus minister at Bellarmine College Prep in San Jose, and she works as a campus minister at Archbishop Mitty High School in San Jose. I moved from San Francisco back to San Jose in September, which was bittersweet. I miss living in the city, but was able to move in with Kristin. I went to the annual Ignatian Teach In at the School of The Americas in Ft. Benning, Georgia in November and I ran into a few Mercyhurst students which was inspiring. We were protesting for the closing of WHINSEC and voicing our dissent of the current foreign policy that keeps leading us down the path of war. Merry Christmas and may everyone have a blessed New Year!

Zach Smith (Minor ’05) Life is going well for me both personally as well as professionally. I have been traveling frequently between Virginia and Florida in an effort to ensure that the government organization I am working for meets the needs of the warfighters who are pursuing WMD on a global scale. Both fortunately and unfortunately I am being thrust into more of a management role within Booz Allen. I say fortunately because I am gaining more control over my future and the possibilities that I can pursue, but it is unfortunate because at times it takes me away from the work that I truly enjoy. I was just recently married in November. There were several familiar names in the crowd including Kristen Hudak, Lindsey Kole, Mike Foglio, Stacey Basile, and Brady Hamady. My wife (that is still weird to say) and I are settled back into the house we bought in Vienna this past spring and are now starting the endless cycle of home improvements which I am sure will keep be busy for as long as the house is ours.

You routinely ask for advice or bits of insight through this newsletter and usually I have nothing to contribute. However because of my current efforts dealing with designing a new tool for the Counter WMD community and having to moderate divergent expectations I have learned quickly the power of interactive data. For those of you who have watched CNN election results (and knowing my audience I expect everyone of you to have) you have probably seen the large multi-touch projection TVs that are beginning to popup around news rooms. They are effectively an iPhone in a 72+ in TV. The organization that I support has several of these are we are in the process of integrating them into the multitude of databases that we use. The power of being able to interact and essentially physically touch data is astounding when you compare it to the traditional keyboard and mouse approach. I don’t know how I would suggest to current students that they go about pursuing this I just want to emphasize the fact that there are more ways to use data and information then reading and writing it, and usually those innovative ways are the most powerful. Hope you and yours and everyone at the Hurst have a wonderful Holiday. Cheers.

Erin (Lloyd) Hromada (Minor ’98) With the help of some great tech folks, the Office of the Clerk, Office of History and Preservation is pleased to announce the launching of the official Oral History of the U.S. House of Representatives Web site! http://oralhistory.clerk.house.gov/
Melissa (Poliseno) Burke (Major ‘03) All is well in Buffalo! I am still working at my firm downtown and doing my duty to attend various events with fabulous adult beverages...I have become a loyal Univ. of Buffalo fan as Shawn is now coaching the Womens Soccer Team there so it’s fun to be back in the college environment!  Hope you have a great holiday!! We will be back in Erie for the soccer alumni weekend in May that Shawn plans so I hope to see you then! Melis :-)

Casey (CJ) Kilroy (Double Major ’03) Hi!  As you know (Ed. Note – I did)....I am currently in the United Arab Emirates performing near Dubai in the Sharjah Water Festival.  I am with "Sesame Street Live!" and I am playing Zoe, the orange monster who is best friends with Elmo and loves Jewelry and wears a tutu.  She was created in 1996 to have a more female presence on Sesame Street, and I love the fact that I am the face of Sesame closing the gender gap :)  After this show closes in mid-December I'll be back to the states looking for my next adventure, for now being half-way around the world is cool enough!  Peace,  CJ

P.S.  I also find it interesting that 2 days before we arrives the financial economy here went crashing down!

Gretchen Ulery (Major ’95) Hey Doc!  How are you? Sounds like you had a good Thanksgiving holiday. Mine was great and, as always, too short.  So my big news - I have been relocated by IBM to the San Francisco Bay Area. I'm picking up another retail customer here and so far it's been crazy! It's nothing like my Walmart experience because I'm mostly focused on domestic initiatives. I'm right in the middle of moving my car and household goods with everything showing up here December 22nd. So much for the holidays..... Happy Holidays!

David A. Wiest (Minor ’03) I am still living in Toledo with my wife. I am still at the same job at the Autism MODEL School, although this year I moved into a classroom for students with the disability of autism.

Rich Wagner (Major ’96) Happy holidays :) The website looks great, I spent some time on it today.  Since last we chatted, we (well, my wife actually) gave birth to two (yes, twins) girls: Elizabeth Grace and Rachel Natalie.  They were born on September 11 at noon and have kept us running in circles since.  On the same day (September 11) we closed on our new house (nothing like multi-tasking) and now live in Stone Ridge, Virginia - just outside the beltway. I still work at Paragon Systems and still own a portion of the research company Brand Informatics (www.BrandInformatics.com). Nothing else all that new - same ol same ol.  Best

Amy Kovach (Minor ’96) [Editors Note: I called her out in the last newsletter and got this reply] I’m employed at THE Ohio State University. Seriously, on campus you have to stress the “THE” or random men dressed and grey will hunt you down and make sure you know how to respond to the “O-H”…”I-O” cheer (arms must be raised overhead in the appropriately formed letters). j/k.
In honesty, I don’t get the passion around it or the football team, but it is the way of life at the largest university in the nation. I wear many hats--- administrator/lab coordinator/instructor for the second course in an Intro Bio sequence. The more time I spend in front of 400+ students in a course every quarter, the more I miss Mercyhurst. The more I’m in Columbus, the more I miss a small city. I’m in a can’t be happier relationship (other than having to spend a bit less time clearing medical texts and papers off the dining room table) with a fella who is finishing up his third year of DO school. Finally, I’m also the often challenged owner of a wacky shelter rescue border collie mix. He is too smart and too neurotic for his own good. Down time spend doing the usual...soccer, hiking, gardening, volunteering...blah, blah, blah. I second your selection of “The Omnivores Dilemma” for a summer read….get your gardening tools ready after that one. Cheers!

**Jule (Gardner) Banville** (Contract Major ’95) The Year of Change continues. In addition to moving 2,300 miles from Washington, D.C., to Missoula, Mont., this year, I've become someone I barely recognize: "Professor Banville" and, even weirder, a mom. I gave birth to a 6-pound girl, Kate Gardner Banville, while my News Editing students at the University of Montana Journalism School were taking their final. It's possible the day was more memorable for me than for them. Kate is our first and as my mother put it, "I never thought this would happen for me." Now one of us in the family is a native Montanan and, therefore, a bit of a badass. As an adjunct professor, my future with the U is slightly up in the air, but I'm hoping to continue to teach and I think I sufficiently bribed my students to give me positive evaluations. None of them, Doc, let me know that "group work sucks." I'm sure this tasty feedback will come at a later date. In addition to teaching and after my years as Asst. Managing Editor at the Washington City Paper, I'm also in touch with Missoula's alt-weekly, The Independent, and am working on a cover story for them for the spring. Until then, I continue with my mammalian duties and send all good wishes for 2010.

**Janet (Strukely) Dziak** (Minor ’04) was married to Joshua Dziak on Sept. 12, 2009 in Elyria, Ohio. She heads the Kids in Motion program in Northeast Ohio, bringing dance education to elementary schools in underprivileged communities. In addition to her work with children, she is dancing professionally with Ohio Dance Theatre and recently came back to Erie to perform as a guest artist at Mercyhurst Dancers' 35 Year Celebration concert in November.

**Tammy (Duke) Connelly** (Major ’00) THE BEST news I have to share right now is my husband returned safely from Afghanistan, Sunday, December 6th after a 7 and a half month deployment! It is so wonderful to have him home, especially right before Christmas and New Years :) We will also be celebrating our 1st anniversary in our home December 24th! I'm taking time off from work here and there to enjoy him over the next month while he readjusts to life back in the US. We will be taking a 10-day vacation to Hawaii mid-January to make up for our anniversary we missed this past June. We celebrated 8 years this year!
It's a very merry Christmas in the Connelly household this year!!! I wish everyone a safe & happy Christmas and New Years as well! A VERY grateful, Tammy [Ed. Note: I had a delightful visit with Tammy and sister Chandra about four months ago.]

Kristen Brown (Contract Major ’03) Happy belated Turkey Day! Did you have a good one? Did you do the Turkey Trot? Ry and I did and we saw Dr. Livingston, Dr. Tobin, and Dr. Magoc all down there. Pretty fun!! I have nothing new to report. My classload at the gym has increased to about 6 per week, and it is really fun. I currently teach Step, Kickboxing, and an endurance-based weight lifting class. I am going to get certified in a dance aerobics in January and in BOSU and spin in February. Other than that, still at Railpower. We are trying hard to sell something but still being stymied by the economic conditions. Hopefully that will be picking up. I was recently asked to develop a training program for our locomotives, so I have been engrossed in doing that and juggling my regular work duties. The final product is pretty cool, so I am just doing costing this week and then plan to roll the quotes out to existing customers for a little extra revenue generation before year close.

Brian M. Maurelli (Minor ’05) I am currently a Battle Captain overseas in Afghanistan in an Engineer Brigade. It is amazingly beautiful here and would recommend anyone to visit it.....once the centuries of war ends. I completed my Master's in May in Educational Administration at the University of Scranton and yet to touch a book or write a paper since! I met the Minnesota governor at the farewell ceremony for our unit and he is considering running for President with me as his Vice-President. Ok not really, but I heard that he is a possible candidate, so we shall see.

Catch All (some): Though some of you are reluctant to send in updates regularly (to say the least for some of you), some of you who did not send one in this time did show up either in person, in short emails or phone calls along the way, emails to my colleagues, etc. So, for example, we find out things such as: Brad Thompson (Major ’04) is stopping his career as a hotshot firefighter and is getting ready to start work on a Masters at Medill (a top five journalism school). Lindsey Weber (Major ’05) graduated from University of Michigan Law School and is now working in Washington DC as a lobbyist/lawyer at Patton Boggs LLP. Barb Deleo (Major ’97) is leaving the Mediterranean region (State Department) and will be doing a rotation at the UN. Allison Moore (Major ’07) is still working in DC and is finishing up her Master's in Political Management this December from GWU. Bruce Snead (Minor ’01) received his MFA in Dance from the Univ. of Oklahoma in 2006 and is now performing in various shows and parades at Walt Disney World Resorts. Chuck Will (Double Major ’08) is doing well and still very busy with his business and extensive volunteer work as a firefighter. Ray Jones (Major ’02) who finished his MBA at St. Bonaventure University and was heading to the University of North Texas to start a doctoral program in business. Rachel Falkenstein (Major ’07) started a Masters of Urban and Environmental Planning at UVA. Carlo Garofalo (Major ’04) who finished his Masters at St.Johns University in Italy. And, even that list leaves out people such as Margaux,
Anna, Quinn, and Caitlin who the editor heard from along the way, but who didn’t send in an update.

Calling ‘em out: Updates expected for the May/June Newsletter from Karen Petho, Sherrie Weldon, Diane (Ashmore) Dean, Caroline McGrath, Jessica Krueger, Danae Patterson, Mike Foglio, Chris Jurisik, Ann Bula, Sarah Lelle, Liz Kolojek, Sue Kukovec, Sarah Hoppe, Amanda Bhame, Jill Bucceri, Harley Ellenberger, Anna Patrick, Neal Hammill, and a whole host of others e.g. Jody, Brian (both of you), Kristen, . Some alums are currently “lost” because they have changed emails and didn’t let us know, others just “inactive” in the files. Whatever the situation, if you are in touch with someone from the department and haven’t seen their name for some time, get on their case.

FACULTY NEWS:

Dr. Federici is on sabbatical for the Winter 2009-2010 Term. He is working on a book manuscript, The Political Philosophy of Alexander Hamilton to be published by Johns Hopkins University Press. Dr. Federici presented a paper on Hamilton at the APSA (American Political Science Association Meeting) in Toronto in September. He taught a new Freshman Seminar, Enduring Questions, with Drs. Brown (philosophy) and McFee (Religious Studies) in the Fall Term. He will be teaching another new course, European Roots of American Government, in Ireland during the Spring 2010 Term.

Dr. Ripley continues to divide his time between his faculty responsibilities and his work as the Senior Academic Advisor for the Office of Academic Affairs. In the latter capacity, he was thrilled to preside at the Freshmen Convocation and the Dean’s List Ceremony during the fall term of 2009. He is currently at work on a couple of research projects, to be reported on in a future issue of the alumni newsletter. Dr. Ripley has just accepted an invitation to join the Editorial Board of International Studies Perspectives, a journal focused on policy and teaching in the field of international relations, published by the International Studies Association (the largest academic organization devoted to international affairs).

Dr. Morris accompanied nearly two dozen students to DC during Spring Term. The students toured the nation’s capitol and had an opportunity to meet several Mercyhurst graduates who are living and working in the area. He is presently developing a new concentration for political science majors that focuses on campaigns and elections. Dr. Morris and his wife, Leanne, are expecting a baby boy at the end of June, so his summer will be spent close to home. He and Alexis de Tocqueville are looking forward to State and Local Politics in fall.
Dr. Clemons greatly enjoyed teaching a Political Novels seminar this Spring (along with a section of geopolitics wherein the world went “boom” quicker than ever). In the last month he revised a co-authored article under review for a public policy/public administration journal (JPAE) and reviewed an international relations manuscript for the journal Perspectives on Politics, so the last half of May and the first part of June have been very busy. Like Dr. Ripley (Urbanology) and Dr. Federici (Enduring Questions), he will spend part of his summer preparing to participate in one of Mercyhurst’s new team-taught interdisciplinary courses in the fall (Exploring Law: Ideas with Teeth). Luckily, since one of the blessings (and curses) of this profession is the fact that you can take your work with you, much of that work will be done out west where there are real mountains (e.g. ones with snow on them in July).