

# Litapalooza

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On Thursday, April 7, during common hour, English professor Dr. Adam Sorkin and the English department hosted the Fifteen Annual Litapalooza in the Tomezsko Lounge. The guest speaker for this event was poet and Monmouth University professor Michael Waters.

In the northern part of the lounge, Sorkin stood at the podium introducing the multitude of both faculty and students to the event. During his introduction, Sorkin said, "It's time to celebrate everything creative on campus." Following the introduction, the podium was open to any student.

Sara Caroma was the first student to read her poem entitled, "My Welcome to the Lion's Cabin." Student Adam Sharpless followed, reading "A Nightmare Retreat," which can be found in the new *Penn in Hand* book. Kala, with an undefined last name, read her poem, "The Beach House." Christina Orlando read her poem "For the Kids," written in the tricky style known as a villanelle. And Robert Ripson read his poem "The Fireplace" in the first leg of student poetry reading.

After the students read their respective poems, Sorkin introduced Waters. Waters gave a brief speech, which included his gratitude toward Penn State and the faculty. In this leg, Waters read the following poems: "The Mystery of the Cave," "Horse," "Shepherd Boy," an unnamed poem, "Commerce," "Morpho," and "Parthenopi."

After Waters read, there was a brief lunch break. Then the new *Penn in Hand* literary magazine was distributed. Afterwards, the *Penn in Hand* writing contest winners were announced.

The magazine's editor-in-chief Mary-Therese Capaldi won first place for her poem "To Myself;" she won a \$75 Barnes & Noble gift card. One of the magazine's senior editors Andrew Shaner won second place for his poem, "Diyu;" he won a \$50 Barnes & Noble gift card. Adam Sharpless won third place for his poem, "A Nighttime Retreat;" he won a \$25 Barnes & Noble gift card. And the other magazine senior editor Andrew Dombalagian won the prose award for his short story, "The Poisoner's Sister;" he won a \$50 Barnes & Noble gift card. Overall, there were 41 poems and 2 prose entries were submitted to the magazine. Adam Sorkin and Elaine Gilbert judged the poems.

After the lunch break, more students read their respective poems, including the prizewinners mentioned previously. Then, Waters returned to read more poetry.

Sorkin shared how much planning is involved for this annual event.

"I try to remember to choose the date late spring or by fall, reserve the space and the minimal equipment (a microphone, a podium), then begin to think about, if not arrange for, a guest writer/reader," he says. Sorkin also adds that he applies for Student Activities funding for both the reader and for refreshments, with the ongoing support of the English faculty and the *Penn in Hand* student literary magazine, which the editor tries to have finished, printed, and ready for distribution at Litapalooza.

Once Sorkin is granted his budget, final arrangements such as refreshments and the guest reader to be at the bookstore on campus with some of his or her books are taken care of.

Sorkin also says that care is taken when considering guest readers and he tries his best to ensure that the reader who comes to campus meshes well with classes that are currently being offered.

"Sometimes I have in mind inviting a reader who will fit with English courses, such as Reading Poetry or the 400-level modern American poetry course, or with Women's Studies, but that doesn't always work out. I draw on a lot of friends for the readers," he says.

Sorkin adds that April is National Poetry Month, so it's a fitting time to do Litapalooza.

In case you missed this event, be sure to be here next year and pick up a copy of the new *Penn in Hand* in the writing center in the Vairo Library. The magazine contains your fellow students' work in poetry, stories, photographs, and art. If you want to be apart of next year's literary magazine, submit all entries before the end of this year.

