



Zombies vs. Vampires



A political view of zombies and vampires

Campus Safety notes



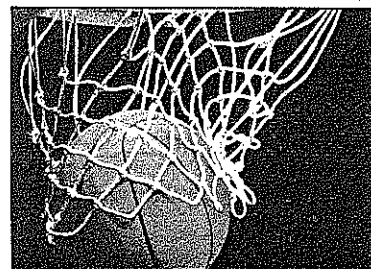
All the mayhem and mischief that occurred on campus

Merrily We Roll Along



A look at this year's musical

NBA lockout



A fan's disgruntled view of the NBA lockout

Russian and International Studies students see Gorbachev speak at Lafayette College

By DEBORAH WARD News Writer

Mikhail Gorbachev, the former head of state of the Soviet Union, spoke to over 3,600 people at Lafayette College last Wed., Oct. 19th. Tickets to the event were free but in extremely high demand, disappearing soon after becoming available. In addition to those at the live speech, hundreds attended internet streaming events held coast to coast and in Mexico. Among the 3,600 people at Lafayette were 80 members of Muhlenberg's Russian and International Studies programs.

Gorbachev was asked to speak at Lafayette to celebrate the creation of the College's Center for Global Education. Daniel H. Weiss, President of Lafayette College, stated that the goal of this new center was to "connect the classroom to the world outside." Who better to talk about global connections than Mikhail Gorbachev? At 80 years old, Gorbachev has had much experience in global relations. The General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union from 1985 to 1991, and President of the Soviet Union from 1990 to 1991, Gorbachev was awarded the 1990 Nobel Peace Prize for his outstanding efforts to end the Cold War. In the 1980s, during one of the lowest points in the Cold War, when relations between the East and West were very tense, Gorbachev initiated arms control talks, ended the Soviet War in Afghanistan, and released Soviet control over communist states in Eastern Europe. Gorbachev coined two important words, recognizable in all languages of the world - *perestroika* (governmental and economic restructuring) and *glasnost* (political openness) and began the revolutionary political

and economic reforms which these two new words symbolized.

The first half of Gorbachev's speech was a reflection on his reforms in the former Soviet Union. "The moment came when we needed to conclude that the small steps that we had been taking were not producing the expected results, were not allowing people to move forward... At that time we needed to do something bolder... We understood it was necessary to change the system." The latter half of the talk was focused on the present and the ways in which Gorbachev feels the collapse of the Soviet Union has shaped the current global landscape. Gorbachev does not believe the world situation has evolved properly; instead he believes we are facing a crisis. The environment, food shortages, poverty, "all of these problems are because we don't have a system of global governance. I must say I have been disappointed over these past years by many developments we have witnessed," he argued. Throughout the course of his lecture, it became clear that Gorbachev believes it is time, again, to do something bold and change the system.

When Gorbachev and his contemporaries began to enact change, they were the 'new generation.' He told us that it had been their responsibility to "act for security and the sake of the Russian people." In America, this 'new generation' is ours. Gorbachev expressed his belief that any change to come to the world is going to come from the students and ordinary people - not from the individuals already in power. He told us that he is saying the same thing to the people of Russia: "Those who want

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Muhlenberg Russian and International Studies students group together while waiting for Gorbachev.

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to build a future of democracy and freedom, where poverty is no more, where the human is the center; those people will win, I'm sure... The new generation is coming - I see them sitting here."

After the talk Russian Studies students at the College reflected on how Gorbachev's speech connected their classroom experiences and the global stage. Sarah Levitin '14, an International Studies major and double minor in Spanish and Russian, has been learning about transitional states in her Comparative Government course. In her textbook there are discussions of Russia as an example of a transitional state in addition to the analysis of Gorbachev and his nation-changing policies of *perestroika* and *glasnost*. On Wednesday night she was able to see her textbook come alive - literally.

Sydney Yonak '13, an International and Russian Studies major, has been watching a Russian film about the war in Afghanistan (1989 - 96) in her Russian Conversation and Composition course. "Gorbachev spoke a lot about the Cold War and the tension between America and the Soviet Union. It was very interesting to hear his Eastern perspective on the Cold War... We are so used to hearing the Western perspective," she said. Many of the courses within the Russian Studies program - Russian Culture and Civilization, Russian Conversation and Composition, 19th and 20th Century

Russian Literature - focus on the Eastern perspective on the world.

Through films, novels, examination of art and architecture, and the study of history and political systems, these courses teach students how the world is viewed through the eyes of the people of Russia - a culture than many in the West do not realize is so different from our own. Parts of Gorbachev's speech exemplified the existence of these differences. Next semester, Yonak will get the opportunity to study abroad in St. Petersburg, Russia. She is excited to have classes on Russian Culture and History actually taught in Russia, "I have seen what the U.S. opinions have been on the Soviet Union and Russia, and I am very interested to see the Russian people's opinions."

Connections between the classroom and Gorbachev's speech were even found by beginning students in Russian Studies courses. Elementary Russian I students had a unique educational experience, being able to listen to a speech by an extremely prominent native speaker of the Russian language. "It was fun to try and recognize some of the words he was saying!" said Elementary Russian I student, Kelly Toner '15. Toner summed up the Muhlenberg students' and faculty member's feelings regarding the event quite well: "It was such a privilege to see and hear someone as prominent as Gorbachev... It was definitely a once in a lifetime experience."