

AC Plugged In

Faculty & Staff NEWSLETTER

Volume II

Winter 2010

New Signage at Washington Street Campus

Amarillo College's Washington Street Campus received a holiday-time facelift when new signage was installed in mid-December along Washington Street.

Nine triangular aluminum signs were attached to the upper reaches of city light poles on Washington Street, from the Physical Plant to the southern edge of Memorial Park. Each sign is eight feet tall and passersby will see the badger mascot or the phrases "Changing Lives" or "Creating Futures," depending on which side of the three-sided sign is visible from a given point of view.

More such signs, though half as tall, will be installed next fall on light polls in the pedestrian mall at the Washington Street Campus, according to Ellen Green, dean of the Communication and Marketing Division. She also says the possibility of adding similar signage at other AC campuses is something to be considered in future budgetary cycles.

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Contractors picked a crystal clear December day to install nine new triangular signs along the west edge of the Washington Street Campus.

Radiography Students Post Perfect Pass Rate

When it comes to national certification of its radiography students, Amarillo College is picture perfect.

For the second year in a row, AC's Radiography Program achieved a 100-percent pass rate among its students who took the national-certification examination administered by the American Registry of Radiologic Technology.

In all, 23 students fulfilled the requirements for an associate of applied science degree in radiography and qualified to sit for the challenging exam, which they all passed.

The AC program's current success on the national-certification exam is not new because 96 percent of students passed the exam in 2006 and 2007. But the bar has been raised to perfection in 2008 and 2009.

Becky Burton, program director, attributes the recent and successful trend of certification success to a combination of having highly qualified students and dedicated faculty who have stood the test of time.

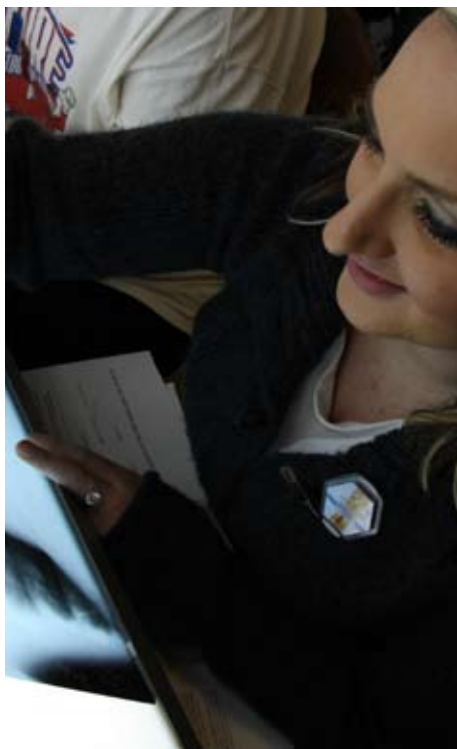
"We have an outstanding faculty that is totally committed to the program," she said. "We still have Bill Crawford

(chair of the Allied Health Division), who started the program at AC, and Ken Woody (associate professor), who has been teaching here for about 30 years.

"These people and others among our faculty have an incredible amount of experience and give us great stability. When you combine a superior faculty with the exceptional students who keep coming into the program, it adds up to a formula for success."

AC's Radiography Program, the mission of which is to prepare competent and professional entry-level radiographers, accepts no more than 30 students each year. They are typically culled through a highly competitive points system from a pool of up to 120 applicants.

"Before they officially enter our program, they will already have taken several general education college classes and received grades of A or B in those," Burton said. "In other words, it takes the entire college to produce a successful graduate of radiography."



New Year Brings Tools to Aid AC's Emergency Preparedness

By Rusty Cornelius
Director of Emergency Management

The New Year brought us three new tools to better enable management of emergencies at Amarillo College. Two come courtesy of Lee Colaw and his staff at Information Technology Services—a classroom intercom system that is being installed first in our newest classrooms, and a campus-wide emergency notification system.

You can see an example of the intercom system in the classrooms/labs in our new Laboratory Building on the Washington Street Campus. The black plates are mounted on the walls and contain four buttons that can be used to contact AC police, the Help-desk, Physical Plant and AskAC. The system also can be used to alert classrooms in the event of an emergency. After the newest classrooms are equipped with these intercoms, ITS will begin adding them to existing classrooms at all our campuses.

The new emergency notification system, which will be operational within a month, also comes courtesy of ITS. It will let us notify the entire AC community—students and employees—of emergencies as they occur via email and phone.



The New Year also brought AC a thumb-locking system for classroom doors, which has already been installed in the new Lab Building by Bruce Cotgreave and his staff from the Physical Plant. This type of lock allows classrooms to be secured from the inside, and turning the handle from inside unlocks the doors. Everyone is encouraged to stop by one of the new classrooms and inspect these door locks so that we can develop a consensus about possibly retrofitting classroom doors on all our campuses in a similar fashion.

The window between the fall and spring semesters is one of the busiest times for emergency management because it is when we inspect and recertify all our fire extinguishers and alarm systems. AC owns a lot of fire extinguishers. This year approximately one third of our fire extinguishers had to be pulled and retested. I have been asked why we wait until the mid-December to mid-January time period to do our inspections. The reason is fairly simple. This way the noise and intrusions into the classrooms do not interfere with instruction and exams. When we test an alarm system we actually activate the system for a short period of time. Those alarms are designed to make a lot of noise and get your attention.

**Emergency
Management**

Math Outreach Center Claims Prestigious Star Award

If prestigious awards keep rolling in for the Developmental Mathematics Program—and they just might—Amarillo College may have to employ an abacus to keep an accurate tally.

The latest accolade is a huge one. It is a Texas Higher Education 2009 Star Award, and goes to AC's Mathematics Outreach Center, which provides tutoring for both developmental level and transfer level math students.

AC received its Star Award Dec. 4 in Dallas at the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) Leadership Conference. Only six institutions of higher education in Texas received the annual honor, which recognizes exceptional contributions to the THECB's "Closing the Gaps" initiative.

"The Star Award is recognition by the state for what we at AC have known for a long time. that our Math Outreach Center is an amazing success."

Other Star Award recipients this year are South Texas College, Texas A&M University—Commerce, Texas Women's University, University of North Texas and University of Texas—San Antonio.

"The Star Award is recognition by the state for what we at AC have known for a long time, that our Math Outreach Center is an amazing success," Dr. Paul Matney, president of AC, said.



On hand to accept the Star Award on behalf of Amarillo College are, from left, Prenis Williams, vice chairman of the Board of Regents; Danita McAnally, dean of assessment and development; Dr. Kathy Wetzel, chair of the Department of Mathematics and Engineering; Edie Carter, coordinator of AC's Developmental Math Program; and Dr. Paul Matney, president.

"What a terrific honor this is. What a great way to wrap up our fall semester."

The Math Outreach Center was established in 2004 to bolster efforts of AC's Developmental Mathematics Program and provide tutoring for transfer classes. Since that time, tutoring sessions at the Center increased by more than 1,000 percent, and developmental students' test grades have increased markedly and in many cases by as much as two letter grades.

Edie Carter, coordinator of AC's Developmental Math Program, and Dr. Kathy Wetzel, who chairs the Department of Mathematics and Engineering, worked together in submitting the nomination for the Star Award. It is not the duo's first award nomination, or the last.

Earlier in 2009, AC's Developmental math Program was named the lone recipient of the John Champaign Memorial Award for Outstanding Developmental Education Program, an annual award made by the National Association of Developmental Education (NADE). It was also NADE that in 2008 awarded AC its highest level of certification (Distinguished

Level) for all its areas of developmental education—math, reading and writing.

Just 14 of the nation's colleges and universities have received NADE's Distinguished-Level certification since 1999, and Amarillo College is one of only two among them to receive the coveted recognition in all three developmental disciplines.

And looking ahead, AC's Math Outreach Center is a finalist for a 2010 Bellwether Award, which is given to a very few superlative educational programs at The Community College Futures Assembly, an independent public policy forum sponsored by the Institute of Higher Education at the University of Florida.

That forum will be Jan. 23-26 in Orlando. The abacus will be standing by.



West Campus Library Unpretentious but Alluring

By Joe Wyatt
Communications Coordinator

Amarillo College's West Campus Library would be unpretentious even if it was on the beaten path, but it is not.

This AC asset has been humbly tucked away in the northeast corner of the Northwest Branch of the Amarillo Public Library since it was constructed back in 2003, and a card-carrying minimalist likely devised the signage because there's not a lot to point you to it.

But what it lacks in fanfare it makes up for in allure, and some 3,022 users made their way through its doors last fiscal year. It handily contains a wealth of valuable resources, plenty of tables and chairs, a spiffy instruction room that seats about 25, and a copier that still takes quarters, dimes and nickels.

"We help many nursing and allied health students," Lil Withrow, library instructor and chief proprietor, said. "Of course we're open to all current academic students who are enrolled at Amarillo College, and we are pleased to assist them all."

By the time AC's library within a library first opened its doors, a stockpile of books related to nursing, allied health, criminal justice, mortuary science, interior design and child development had been transferred from AC's Lynn Library to the new site and shelved among offerings in the public portion of the building. Discipline-specific print periodicals and a bank of computers are housed inside the AC perimeter. Research help and training are avail-



Lil Withrow enjoys helping all Amarillo College students from her post at the West Library.

able in person or on the phone, but the research databases are available 24/7.

"Our purpose is to save students, faculty and administrators time by directing them to the best sources to meet their needs," Withrow said. "We have college-level sources and valid databases—often better than Google or Wikipedia—to fulfill what the faculty expect from their students."

Several regular study groups utilize

AC's West Campus Library, and the instruction room can be reserved during public library hours, by which the AC library is governed.

"We do follow the AC calendar and close the library when AC campuses are closed," Withrow said. "But we also have to follow public library hours because we are located in their building."

"But it's a wonderful collaboration and has been since the building opened."

Ripken Reception Sold Out, But Lecture Tickets Remain

Tickets for the Distinguished Lecture featuring Hall of Fame baseball player Cal Ripken Jr. are going fast but can still be obtained at a cost of \$15 (\$5 for AC students). Tickets for a private reception following the February lecture have all been sold.

The lecture, which is planned and sponsored by the Student Government Association, begins at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 9 at the Amarillo Globe-News Center for the Performing Arts. Tickets can be purchased at the Washington Street Campus Assistance Center or by calling 371-5000.

All proceeds from the Distinguished Lecture will be used to support AC scholarships.

Another way to support the scholarship effort is by purchasing tickets to win one of 10 autographed Cal Ripken Jr. baseballs. Tickets are \$5 each or \$20 for five and are available in the basement of the College Union Building or by calling Heather Atchley at 371-5303. Winning tickets will be drawn during the Distinguished Lecture, but you need not be present to win.



AC Regent Named Woman of the Year by AGN

The *Amarillo Globe-News* singled out two AC mainstays in announcing its most prestigious year-end awards. **Lilia Escajeda**, AC regent and community advocate, was named Woman of the Year for 2009. The paper stated: "Amarillo and the Panhandle are richer because our latest Woman of the Year has come along." And **Dr. Paul Matney**, AC's president and veteran educator, was selected for the Headliner Award, which recognizes newsmakers who made headlines "for all the right reasons."

Bill Crawford, chairman of the Allied Health Division, has been selected by the faculty to be this year's nominee from Amarillo College for a Minnie Stevens Piper Foundation professorship. The foundation will announce the statewide winners in May.

The Renewable Energy/Wind Program at the Moore County Campus received the Dumas/Moore County Chamber of Commerce Vision Award for 2009. Accompanying the award was a flag that was flown over the State Capitol. Members of the team whose

efforts caught the attention of the Chamber of Commerce are **Danielle Arias**, **Kristen Johnson**, **Ron Mashburn** and **Randy Sims**.

Dr. Carol Buse, associate professor of computer information systems, recently completed her doctoral degree. She received a Ph.D. in Education and Human Resource Studies in December from Colorado State University.

AC recently reengaged with the National Institute of Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD) and has selected three of its own to receive NISOD Excellence Awards. They are **Janice Easterday**, administrative assistant I, Music Department; **Courtney Milleson**, advisor, Student Success Programs; and **David White**, web and communications specialist, College Relations. They will be honored June 2 at the 32nd International Conference on Teaching and Leadership Excellence in Austin.

Recent Badger Award winners in Amarillo are **Dr. Bob Banks**, program coordinator and profes-

Amarillo College Accolades

sor of substance abuse counseling—October recipient; and **Dan Porter**, professor of biology—November recipient. Recent winners at the Moore County Campus are **Matthew Goodman**, English faculty—September recipient; and **Greg Lawler**, math faculty—October recipient. Badger Awards recognize outstanding efforts by AC employees to foster student engagement.

College Relations snared a couple of nice honors recently, winning first place for the 2009-2010 Student Handbook at the fall District 4 Conference of the National Council for Marketing & Public Relations in San Antonio. College Relations also captured first place for its print media campaign for the Common Readership Program as given by the Association for the Promotion of Campus Activities at its November conference in Houston. **Stefanie Carruth** designed all the winning pieces.

What's Happening

Ribbon Cutting Jan. 21

Amarillo College will celebrate the opening of its new Science Laboratory Building with a ribbon-cutting ceremony at 3 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 21 on the Washington Street Campus.

Don't miss this milestone event at the corner of 24th and Van Buren.

Birthday Open House

AC's Moore County Campus turns 10 years old this month. To help celebrate the special occasion, MCC will have an Open House from 4-5:30 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 21 that will include refreshments and tours led by Peer Leaders and members of Student Government.

Merely Players

Merely Players will present *The Bear*, *Swan Song* and *The Proposal* at 7:30 p.m. on Jan. 15, 16 and 23 in the Experimental Theatre. AC faculty and staff plus one guest may attend for the student price of \$7 each. For Reservations, please contact Merely Players at 358-6214.

Dolores Arambula: Teen Mom to Doctoral Candidate

By Joe Wyatt
Communications Coordinator

Dolores Arambula, ESL instructor at the Hereford Campus, knows firsthand about some of the obstacles students face on the path to a higher education and cautions that they should not necessarily be perceived as barriers.

When she taught at Hereford High School, for example, she told more than one student that “becoming pregnant and dropping out of high school is nothing to be proud of, but it does not have to end there.”

It certainly didn’t end for Arambula, who first gave birth at age 15, then again at 17, before dropping out of the Hereford parochial school to which she had been exiled after the first baby came along; she is now 39 and working on her doctoral degree at the University Phoenix.

Her turnaround was hardly instantaneous, but at least she had the wherewithal to go back quickly and obtain her GED. That was in 1989. Over the next eight years, Arambula worked full time at a meat processing plant in Friona. She was remarried and had a third child. It was a decent life, but she felt something was missing. At the urging of her mother and a sister, who was attending AC at the time, Arambula decided to think about college.

“I was kind of unsure,” she said. “I wondered if something like that was meant to be, but my family supported me and I decided to give it a try.”

That was in 1996, before AC had a campus in Hereford or offered much in the way of online classes, so Arambula drove to the Washington Street Campus, took a placement test and learned that she would need a bevy of developmental classes—commuting from Hereford—and here again her academic journey might have ended.

“That was very discouraging,” she said of the developmental classes. “I wanted to be an educator, but I also had to be a full-time employee, raise three kids and be a wife.

“I’m not going to say it was easy,” she said, “but it wasn’t impossible, either.”

She took a few classes that AC offered back then at Hereford High School, but mostly night classes in Amarillo filled her time—seven years of her time—until she received her associate degree in May of 2003.

Reaching that end brought her great joy, but she was just warm-



ing up academically. Soon she was working more weekends in Friona, 13-hour shifts, so that she could enroll full time at West Texas A&M University. A year and a half later, she received her bachelor’s degree in education. She parlayed that into a job at Hereford High teaching secondary Spanish.

By 2008 she had completed a master’s degree at WT and joined AC’s Hereford faculty, but even then she had not made the move to what you would call Easy Street; her husband broke his back in 2006 and still undergoes treatment, her middle child joined the Marines and is in the Middle East, and her moth-

er contracted cancer and passed away just last year.

Still, Arambula is presently working on her Ph.D online, while simultaneously pursuing yet another master’s degree at WT. Her motivation is simple.

“I see so many young people with so much potential who don’t pursue their dreams,” she said. “We make mistakes in life, we stumble, but we have to move forward. My thesis will be about what technology programs can we use better or reinvent to help at-risk students and second-language learners, like I was.”

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY



Amarillo College students, faculty and staff—even President Matney—converged on the 2800 block of South Houston Street in late October to participate in a Habitat for Humanity home-building project. Pictured along with Dr. Matney are Deb Avara, instructor of social sciences and faculty sponsor for AC's chapter of Habitat, and Alan Greer, senior accountant at KACV. This day's work was chiefly outdoors and focused on digging post holes for perimeter fencing.

Retirement Decisions the Focus of February Presentation

The Employees Retirement System (ERS) of Texas is going to have representatives at Amarillo College's Washington Street Campus on Friday, Feb. 26 to present, "Ready, Set, Retire!"

The presentation begins at 9:30 a.m. in the College Union Building, Oak Room. It should last somewhere between 60-90 minutes.

You can register for this presentation at www.ers.state.tx.us/calendar/materials.aspx.

What follows is from the ERS website:

Are you a higher education employee with health benefits from ERS and within 10 years of retirement? Attend a Ready,

Set, Retire! For Higher Education Employees presentation to receive information you need to make fully informed decisions about your benefits at retirement. Learn about how your health insurance, prescription drug coverage, Medicare, optional life and dental benefits will be affected when you retire.

The Employees Retirement System of Texas was created in 1947 to oversee retirement benefits for State of Texas employees.

Human
Resources

Holiday Bakeoff

The irony was so thick Dec. 14 at the Marketing and Communication Division's Holiday Bakeoff that you could have sliced it with one of those brushed stainless steel cake-icing spatulas on sale for \$8.95 at Target.

After all, Joe Wyatt was only there because he coveted the cash prize; he entered the Bakeoff because he was short on dough. Jena McFall, meanwhile, who by choice does not own a television, captured one of the non-cash prizes—passes to view the largest TV in town, the one at the United Artists movie theater.

And while most who agreed to participate in the event did so with Vegas-like expectations—what happens in College Relations stays in College Relations—David White startled everyone by broadcasting the Bakeoff live on the World Wide Web. Nine people somewhere actually tuned in to witness for themselves just how our cookies crumble.

Of course it was a half-baked idea from the get-go, a plan cooked up by the rascally Ellen Green who decided that her division needed an excuse to concoct a variegated array of holiday treats for not only judging but for the general consumption that would ensue. Ellen not only reserved the right to make rulings throughout the competition, she craftily entered a dessert of her own.

Linda Pitner took top honors, though, after the panel of 11 fearless judges had sampled at least a smidgeon of all 19 confections, from peach cobbler to eggnog bars to a variety of fudges, cakes and cookies. Lee Proctor snared the second-place prize, while movie-bound Jena produced the third-best recipe.

The judges played a key role and thanks are due them all, put perhaps especially so to Michael Sugden, an avowed hater of chocolate who accepted his dessert-baking contest judgeship with that disclaimer.

No doubt it was the yeast he could do.



The judges played a pivotal role in the bakeoff.



Linda Pitner, Jena McFall and Lee Proctor display their prize-winning goodies.

Creative Mind Lecture Series to Focus on Russia

The Creative Mind Humanities Lecture Series enters its 27th year at Amarillo College with a focus on Russia: Past, Present and Future.

Guest lecturers in January and February hail from the University of Texas, UCLA and SMU.

For the uninitiated, this annual wintertime lecture series is completely free and aims solely to provide cultural and intellectual enrichment on a select topic (last year it was China). The guest speakers share their expertise at day and evening lectures conducted on certain Thursdays during the spring semester.

Everyone—the entire AC community and the general public—is invited to attend these enlightening lectures. For those interested in getting a more in-depth taste of the topic, the AC Humanities Program offers a course that can be taken either for one credit hour or as a continuing education class. Class meetings are from 5:30-7 p.m. on Thursday evenings Jan. 21-March 4 in the Music Building, Room 200. Enrollment usually occurs on the first evening of class.

For those interested in what the special guest lecturers have to offer, the daytime lectures are in the College Union Building, Oak Room, on the Washington Street Campus, while the evening lectures are in the Auditorium at the Polk Street Campus. The schedule is as follows:

Thursday, Jan. 28

Dr. Charters Wynn, University of Texas

12:30 p.m.: Fall of the Romanovs

7:30 p.m.: Revolutionary Russia

Recommended Reading: Bruce Lincoln's *In War's Dark Shadow*

Thursday, Feb. 11

Dr. Dr. J. Arch Getty, UCLA

12:30 p.m.: Stalin: Modern Dictator or Medieval Despot?

7:30 p.m.: "It's Not Business, Sonny, It's Personal": Stalinist Clan Politics

Recommended Reading: Sheila Fitzpatrick's *Everyday Stalinism*

Thursday, Feb. 25

Dr. Stephen Wegren, SMU

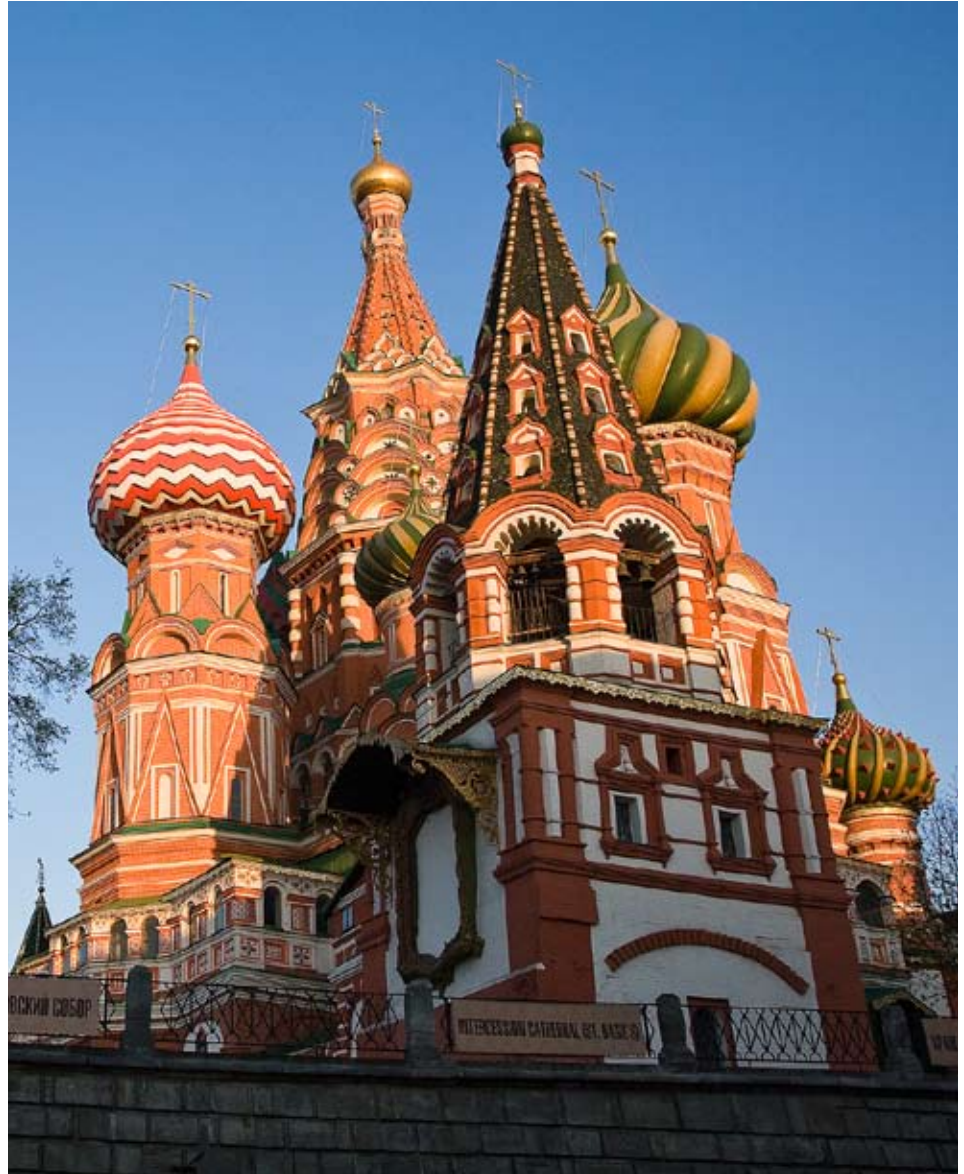
12:30 p.m.: Political Trends in Russia under Medvedev

7:30 p.m.: Social and Economic Trends in Russia under Medvedev

Recommended Reading: *After Putin's Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2010)

Eds.: S. Wegren and D. Herspring

For more information, please contact Joan Urban, humanities program coordinator, at 371-5205 or ejurban@actx.edu.



“Everyone—the entire AC community and the general public—is invited to attend these enlightening lectures.”



Century Art, curated by Dr. Graziella Marchicelli, AMoA executive director will be on view from Jan. 31-April 11 and is sponsored by Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Pool.

The exhibition will celebrate the vision of R. B. Norman, the 1945 principal of Amarillo High School who founded the school's art collection. Norman foresaw an education that included a firsthand familiarity with the arts, no matter the many miles that separated students of the Panhandle from other cities and museums.

The collection is comprised of 91 works of art and represents a variety of movements and styles, such as Barbizon, Impressionism, Tonalism, Realism, and Abstract Expressionism. Artists include Frank Gervasi, John Joseph Enneking, George Pearse Ennis, Chauncey F. Ryder, Walter Elmer Schofield, Ben Foster and Robert Bruce Crane.

Additionally, the collection includes works by founders of the Taos Society of Artists: Eanger Irving Couse, Ernest Martin Hennings, Nicolai Fechin, Eric Gibberd, Gene Kloss, Barbara Latham, Doel Reed and Charles H. Reynolds.

On March 1, 1970, a fire consumed

AMoA

the original building of Amarillo High School. Incredibly, as the fire spread, students, teachers and bystanders ran in and out of the building rescuing artwork, books, trophies and other invaluable objects. Some of the artwork was damaged by water and smoke, but not one painting was lost.

The AHS collection is believed to be the second-largest public school fine art collection in the United States, the art collection of the Cincinnati Public School System being the largest.

The Museum is located on the Amarillo College Washington Street Campus with entrance through the Fine Arts Plaza. Hours are Tuesday – Friday from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m., with extended hours on Third Thursday until 9 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday from 1 -5 p.m. There is no admission charge.

Third Thursdays offer live music, free Starbucks coffee, films, and art activities from 6:30-9 p.m.

Achievements in Art Exhibit Features AHS Collection

Every year the Amarillo Museum of Art honors an art collector with the Achievements in Art Exhibition. The 2010 the honoree is Amarillo High School. The exhibition, *An Uncommon Dream: The Amarillo High School Collection of 19th and 20th*

Plugged In's Winter Photo



Kathy Jones, data management assistant at KACV-TV, swaps affection with the Cookie Monster as folks celebrated the 40th anniversary of "Sesame Street" Nov. 10 on the Washington Street Campus, where cookies were plentiful.