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# ONEIDA MOUNTAINEER

Education for Time and Eternity

A bi-monthly newsletter of Oneida Baptist Institute

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## OBI competes at state level in two spring sports

The 2009-10 school year ended with two Oneida tennis players making it all the way to the state contest in Lexington, May 27-28.

Our girls' team finished second in the region. Senior Miriam Waslewski (right) earned the regional first-place title. Freshman Anna Davidson (below) won a playoff match to determine the second state contestant from our region.

Both Miriam and Anna have played tennis since the sixth grade. This was Miriam's fourth time to compete at the state level and Anna's second time. Last year both girls advanced to state with our whole team when the team placed first in the region. In 2008 Miriam earned the opportunity to compete in the state contest as an individual, and in 2007 she went as part of a doubles team.

"Tennis is one of my favorite sports," Miriam said. "It's really fun to play." Anna agreed, saying, "I love tennis."

Miriam's parents, Cindy and Mike Waslewski, were the tennis coach and assistant coach, respectively. Mrs. Waslewski recalled that Miriam greatly improved her game three years ago and has been a strong player ever since. "She overcame her unsureness and improved her mental game," Waslewski stated. "She was more relaxed this year." By contrast, "Anna improved a lot this year," according to Waslewski, "especially in serving. I want to do a better job of tracking her improvement next year."

Anna gave much of the credit for her own improvement to Miriam. "A big part of my going to state was Miriam," she said, "because I've gotten to hit with her all these years. I thank God, too."

Waslewski spoke not only as a coach, but as a parent. "I'm so glad Miriam had the opportunity to play tennis at OBI," she stated, "because that most likely would not have happened at any other school." Miriam speculated, "If I'd been somewhere else I might have had more challenges, but I probably wouldn't have gone to state. State is fun -- and scary!" She remembered feeling the stress of state competition and then being delighted when her former coach, Ken McCain, turned up to watch her match. "I just started crying!" Miriam said.



Anna admitted to being happily surprised that she won the regional playoff match. She found going to state as an individual different from going as part of the team. "As individuals Miriam and I had a bigger responsibility to represent the school because it was just us," she explained.

Waslewski had some 30 students on the team this year--at different levels of ability--and only four practice courts. She had to start a "Saturday League" for newcomers to allow the more experienced players enough practice time. "I tried to encourage each one individually in their progress," she said. ■



Our track/field team was also proud to send one of its athletes to state competition.

Melissa Swaar, (below) a freshman from Illinois, represented Oneida at the state meet at the University of Louisville on June 5. She qualified to compete in the 3200-meter run by placing second at the regional race.

"Melissa was consistently our top-scoring athlete," said coach Sheri Nutter. "She started the season strong and stayed strong."



This was Melissa's first year at OBI, but her second year to compete at the state level in track/field. "Last year I did the one-mile," she explained. "This was my first time to run the two-mile."

What was it like to go to state? "Awesome!" Melissa said, smiling. "It

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## Meet some of our Most Outstanding and Most Studious

Every spring OBI faculty, houseparents and school administrators meet to decide on the recipients of our major student awards. They vote on a boy and a girl from each grade for both Most Outstanding and Most Studious. The Most Outstanding students are judged on character, attitude, academics and conduct. Most Studious students may not necessarily make the best grades, but are recognized because they work hard to achieve. We would like to introduce you to three of these special young people who were honored for their achievements during the 2009-2010 school year.



**Gayah** was awarded the title of Most Studious boy in the eighth grade. This was his second time to earn a major Oneida award.

Gayah was our Most Outstanding sixth grader in 2007-2008. He is from Pennsylvania.

He came to OBI when his older brother enrolled. "It took time to get used to it," Gayah admitted, "but I've made a lot of new friends."

Gayah's grades back home had dropped in the fifth grade, but he has been on the academic honor roll since starting sixth grade at Oneida. "I have to work hard sometimes," he said, "especially in math and Bible." His favorite class is English. When asked why he thought the faculty might have voted him Most Studious, Gayah replied, "I give my best."

Emily Kelley was one of Gayah's teachers. "I was impressed with his enthusiasm during simulations," she recalled. "He was a leader in his group and encouraged enthusiasm from other group members. I have seen a lot of leadership qualities in him."

When studies aren't keeping him busy, Gayah works on a cleaning crew. He has played basketball and plans to go out for the soccer team next year. ■



**Lindsey** was our Most Outstanding sophomore girl. She is a day student, and has been at OBI since the eighth grade. "I didn't like public school," she explained. "The classes were too big." Lindsey has enjoyed our smaller

class sizes, and added, "Everybody here is always so nice."

"I like the fact that I can go to chapel every day," Lindsey continued. She mentioned former Campus Minister Michael Spencer. (Story on page 3) "His sermons always spoke to me," she said. "He was a big inspiration to me."

Lindsey has done well at OBI. She typically makes A's and B's. She worked on the farm until an injury made it unsafe for her to do so. "I have a lot of friends," she said. "Most of my friends are dorm students." She was surprised to be named Most Outstanding, though she had gotten this award as an eighth-grader.

Teacher Jonathan Barnes said, "Lindsey is a sweet girl and a bright student. It has been a joy to have her in class over the course of the last couple of years. She has a wonderful sense of humor and is a hard worker academically."

When asked if she plans to graduate from OBI, "Most definitely!" Lindsey said with a smile. "Everybody here is part of my family now." ■



**Chan** was named both Most Outstanding and Most Studious for the freshman class. He is one of our international students and came to OBI from South Korea in August 2009. "I didn't like the educational system in Korea," he explained. "I went to school from 6:00 A.M. to 10:00 P.M." Chan quickly discovered he liked the independence of a boarding school. He got involved in co-curriculars, participating in pep band and tennis.

His grades are mostly A's and B's at Oneida, but Chan said back home they were somewhat lower -- C's, B's and an occasional A. Chan was genuinely surprised at receiving the awards, particularly Most Studious. He did say that he studied hard for the TOEFL and SAT exams, and he guessed the faculty and staff must have known he worked hard in those areas. He credited that study with improving his English vocabulary, which in turn helped him with his school courses. Chan's favorite subjects are math and science.

Cindy Waslewski was Chan's teacher and tennis coach. She remarked, "Chan has always been very attentive in class. He worked hard to accomplish an A in Physical Science. His hard work has continued on the tennis courts also, where we have seen speedy progress. He has been a pleasure to teach and coach this year." ■

## Living out a call to missions at OBI



This spring freshman English teacher Debbie Winters was recognized for 30 years of service to OBI. In addition to teaching English I, Winters is a cashier in our campus grill. Her husband, Mike, manages the grill, and was awarded the same day for 25 years at Oneida.

Winters came to OBI from Campbellsville College. "I answered a call to missions at age 14," she explained. "I felt this would be yielding to that call."

Winters has been quite versatile in her Oneida career. She started out in our Tutoring Lab and then supervised school-day study halls. Soon she took on the drama program, and later became the high school secretary. After marrying Mike she began working in the grill and taught theater classes. In 2002 she gave up drama to become an English teacher, still working in the grill after school.

Asked what she likes about being on staff at OBI, Winters said, "The family atmosphere, and having the opportunity to work with Mike in the grill. I also enjoy hearing from former students. I have students now whose parents I worked with when they were enrolled here."

What has kept Winters here for 30 years? "God's call," she answered. She never imagined she would stay here this long, particularly after she and Mike married. "But now when people ask me where I'm from, I say 'Oneida.' This is home." ■

## Michael Spencer: unique vision, unique gift

On April 5 our longtime Campus Minister, Michael Spencer, succumbed to cancer after a four-month struggle and went home to be with the Lord he had served all of his life.

Spencer grew up in Owensboro, Kentucky. He graduated from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville. He had a 13-year ministry career in Kentucky Baptist churches before coming to OBI in 1992.

Spencer and his wife, Denise, came to us with their children, Clay Spencer (OBI '06) and Noel Spencer Cordle (OBI '03). He was in charge of our daily chapel services and had a unique vision for the many opportunities to work with our young people.

His presence became a significant influence on campus. A new Campus Ministry Center finished in 1995 provided a wonderful opportunity for students to experience Christ, many for the first time. The large porch was filled to capacity many evenings with students eager to learn more about Jesus at the feet of one who knew him very well--Michael Spencer.

I believe he also had a unique gift to share the gospel from the pulpit. Spencer was a skilled preacher. He had a gift to share the message so young people could understand how God's word applied to their lives.

Teaching Bible and English classes gave him yet another opportunity to impact the lives of young people. When students did not readily accept all what was being taught, Spencer patiently shared the Word in a way that eventually even the most skeptical student could see and understand.

Spencer was loved by his students. He clearly understood and touched the lives of countless young people. ■ -- Dr. W. F. Underwood, president (OBI '63)



## Track/Field (continued)

was so exciting. There were tons of people. They had a huge scoreboard with everyone's names on it. When we finished the race our names would light up."

Since our school year had ended, Melissa's parents brought her back from Illinois for both the regional and state meets. "Parental support is really important," Nutter noted.

She added that the girls had a very good season overall. "We had a really young team with lots of middle school and freshmen girls," Nutter explained. "They were so willing to try new things and go outside their comfort zones."

Taylor TerBurgh just began jumping hurdles this year and placed in a major meet. Sierra Simpson was initially a fielder. "She decided she wanted to sprint," Nutter said, "and she became one of the fastest on the team. So I put her on the relay team."

Nutter said this was overall the best season she had ever had in terms of the girls' behavior and attitudes. "We also had very few injuries," she added.

Since the 2010 team was so young, Nutter is hopeful for the future. "I'm excited about the young ones who are coming up," she said. "This year we had a lot of individual successes plus growth as a team. It was a great season!" ■

## Want to contact us?

Phone: (606) 847-4111

To schedule a tour: ext. 248

Fax: (606) 847-4496

Web: [www.oneidaschool.org](http://www.oneidaschool.org)



ONEIDA BAPTIST INSTITUTE  
PO BOX 67  
ONEIDA KENTUCKY 40972-0067

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## Goodbye, graduates



*Our 2010 class of 50 included 39 graduates who earned advanced diplomas, or 78% -- the highest known percentage of seniors to receive advanced diplomas in the 111-year history of the school. Congratulations!*

## A work in progress



*Work continues on Anderson Hall. The historic building will be 100 years old next year, and we hope to have the renovation completed by Homecoming 2012. Last summer at one point all that was left of the original structure were the four walls, the dirt floor in the basement and the roof. Dozens of volunteer groups have worked on the remodeling in the past three years.*

## Second OBI staff member obeys call to Haiti

Following the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti, staff member Missy Nichols (OBI '93) became the second person from OBI to obey God's call to go and work in the devastated nation. Nichols could not help but shed tears as she related her experience.

"I just really felt burdened for the people of Haiti. I don't even know why, except I think it comes from God to have a burden for people you've never even met," Nichols said.

She and her husband have spent 15 years in ministry to teens at Oneida Baptist Institute. Missy and Dan ('94) met as students at OBI. They were married in 1995 and have three children. They are members of Manchester Baptist Church and a Bible study class taught by their pastor, Ken Bolin, who has made 30 ministry trips to Haiti in the last 11 years.

Nichols said, "When the earthquake hit, I called [Bolin] and told him I had a great burden to go." Six weeks later, she was in Haiti with a mobile medical team which saw 2,500 patients at five locations in one week.

She added, "Normally I get homesick easily but I never did in Haiti. God gave me a peace that passes all understanding."

Her primary job was to watch children whose family members were being seen in the clinic. She also spent one day in an orphanage.

"It was mind-boggling to see that love is truly a universal language. The children would fight for your touch, your kisses and smile. There were actually children who didn't know what it was like to have regular human touch. As a mom and a day care director, I definitely noticed things like very few



toys and only three beds for 15 children. They would just go to sleep on the floor..." Nichols said.

At the clinics during the day, the team's four pastors prayed with each patient. Each night, they preached at services that would last for hours.

"The worship was so sweet in Haiti and so different [from worship in America]...The people would show up at church ready to worship and expecting to meet God," she said.

When Bolin asked her to sing the first night he preached in Haiti, she had a moment of panic. "There was no power, no CD player...I had to put things into perspective. It's not the music—God is glorified in the words," she said.

She sang a capella at her home church when she returned. "That's not something I would have ever done before this trip," she noted.

"There is not one area of my life that has not been forever affected by this trip," Nichols said. "The need is just so great. Yes, I am just one person, but it's not my place to underestimate how God is using me but simply to obey." ■