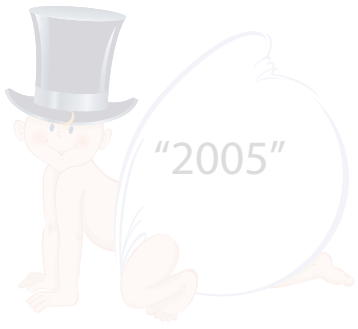


First Baby



We're still looking for the first baby of 2005! Notice of the birth should be made to our office as soon as possible to declare a winner. Participating businesses donating gifts include Peter's Bros. Meat Markets, Alexanders' Jewelry, Leibensperger's Card & Gift Shop and the *Item*.

Fink well-known



After putting in 43 years as a pharmacist at Hamburg's Adams & Bright, you could say most people probably know David A. Fink. He knows them too, and what ails them. If you haven't already, meet him on page 8.

Panther power



Schuylkill Valley boys basketball lost five of their top eight players from last year, but don't call them a rebuilding team. The guys currently boast a winning 8-4 record and hope to win the division. For more, see page 5.

Today's Weather



Partly sunny and warmer. High 55.
Illustration: Sara Williams
Upper Bern Elementary, grade 4.

Winning paper



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Published by: **Berks-MONTL**
Newspapers

Using science skills

By Mandy Zerr
Item Writer

Rockets blew up, towers were destroyed and planes crashed. But it was all in the name of science.

Students from 14 Berks County high schools put their physics, chemistry and biology knowledge to work at the Berks County Science Olympiad, held on the Kutztown University campus Jan. 6.

It was a day of learning, but sometimes participants learned the hard way.

Hamburg seniors Joe Jurgielewicz and Kenny Freeman competed in the Bottle Rocket event, but their bottle rocket didn't exactly follow the plan.

"Wanna see the video?" Jurgielewicz asked. "It (the bottle rocket) blew up."

"Everything that was glued on fell off," Freeman explained. "It was New Year's Eve in New York; all this confetti came down."

It was actually all a part of their strategy, they joked. The idea of the event was to keep the rocket in the air the longest. While other rockets went straight up and came straight down, their's went up, blew up, and then came down.

Tulpehocken's tower-building team had similar luck. For the Tower Building event, students had to build a light, but efficient tower, dividing how much weight it holds by its own weight.

"Efficiency? Phhhhtp," senior Bryan Schartel said, sticking out his tongue and giving a thumbs down.

"We didn't do very well," added senior Michael Sweigert, holding a broken square tower. "Next time,

See Science page 2.



Item photo by Mandy Zerr

HAMBURG HOPEFULS. Pictured, L-R, with their balsa wood construction, are Hamburg Area High School students: (Front) Kenny Freeman, Joe Jurgielewicz, Joe Heckman, Mitch Furnanage, (Back) Andrew Weber and Brandon Williams.

Longtime mailman retires

By Mandy Zerr
Item Writer

The car David Bond uses for work has been through quite a bit over the years.

As a rural carrier at the Kempton Post Office, Bond drove with the steering wheel on the right for about 55 miles a day in his Subaru. It's been through snow drifts higher than it is and once, a deer jumped over it.

But on Dec. 30, after 33 years of federal service and 25 years of accident-free service, 55-year-old Bond and his car hung up their hats.

"My car's the reason I retired. It started to show the miles," he laughed. "Nelly's starting to scream a little. But duct tape is a wonderful thing."

Bond, a graduate of West Point Military Academy and an Army veteran, began as a part-time rural carrier in 1979. The Kempton native delivered mail on the same route that he eventually took over when he became a full-time carrier in 1993. He served 422 families.

He and his wife Deborah were also owner-operators of Wanamaker's General Store for 25 years, and as such, Bond already knew quite a few of the people on his route.

See Retire page 3.



Pictured above is a photo by Kempton's Lincoln Fajardo as printed in a poetry book authored by Kutztown's Harry Humes entitled, *Pennsylvania Coal Town, The Girardville Poems*.

For Kempton man, photos speak loudest

By Kristin Baver
Item Correspondent

For 30 years, Lincoln Fajardo has been pursuing photography as a hobby and an art form.

With shows in Chicago, Ill. and at the Banana Factory in Bethlehem, Northampton County, and some of his work traveling with a Smithsonian exhibit on infrared photography, it's not surprising that Fajardo made photography his full-time career two years ago when he retired from Agere Systems.

Stonehouse Studios in Kempton prides itself in providing professional quality portraits, however, Fajardo's passion and skill continues to exceed the constraints of portrait photography.

In November of 2003, Fajardo was approached by long-time friend Kevin McCloskey of Kutztown to participate in a book project. Local

author Harry Humes wrote a series of pieces for his book *Pennsylvania Coal Town, The Girardville Poems*, an exploration of his childhood hometown seen through his memories of youth. "Harry's poems recollect his childhood," said Fajardo. "They describe what the town used to be like."

The only thing missing was a visual peak at the declining town, a once booming economy that dried up when the mines closed down and fewer jobs were left for the townspeople.

Through several trips with Humes, Fajardo ventured in and around Girardville.

"I was trying to capture a sense of being in the past and in the present," said Fajardo. With photographs of the town's buildings, row homes that once belonged to miners and their families and an abandoned coal cracking facility, the images show what's become of Girardville today while the text

recalls its past. "In my mind," said Fajardo, "the black and white photographs capture the mood of coal and of the poems. They give you a sense of recollection."

Fajardo achieved this effect by holding his camera instead of using a tripod. The end result with a long exposure time is a softer image.

"I did it so you can see the shake in the camera and the images aren't so crisp," said Fajardo. "Most of my early work was black and white so it was nice to go back to it in this project."

Although this is his first inclusion in a book of poetry, Fajardo's work has also been featured in a book for the Smithsonian's infrared exhibition. His pieces included several landscapes from his birthplace, Puerto Rico.

Fajardo is currently honing

See Photos page 2.



Item photo by Mandy Zerr

HANGING UP HIS HAT. After 33 years with the Kempton Post Office, rural carrier David Bond decided it was time to retire Dec. 30. Kempton Postmaster Julie Weiser presented him with a service retirement award and jacket for 25 years of accident free service.

Science event scores with students

Science, from page 1.

I would make the whole thing different with more angles.”

But with 22 events to choose from and try, there was always another chance for each high school team to find success. And each did.

Schuylkill Valley won first place for the Health Science event, where students identified diagrams of glands, hormones and parts of the respiratory and urinary systems.

Evan Bohnenblust, a senior, was on the winning Health Science team, but also participated in Disease Detective and Cell Biology events.

“Health science was my favorite,” he said. “Because I knew what I was doing!”

Schuylkill Valley also had a second place win in Fermi Questions and a third place spot in Forensics.

Hamburg came back with two first-place finishes in two events, Dynamic Planet, won by Ellen Grim and Megan Wicks, and Practical Data Gathering, won by Jennifer Faust and Liz Clay.

The Hawks also took third place in Chemistry ID, won by seniors Ashley Long and Nik Stasulli. It’s a promising start

for the partners, as both plan to take on a science major in college.

Tulpehocken took third place for Disease Detectives and second place for Storming the Castle, where students build the most accurate and farthest-flinging catapult they can.

Sophomore Aaron Stupp, who helped build his team’s catapult, was confident about the results.

“We’ll be in the top five,” he guessed. “We were about a half-meter from the target. That’s about what everybody else was doing.”

The Olympiad is not a requirement for school, but it’s a popular event for science-loving students.

“It’s all volunteers,” said Gerald Weiss, physics teacher and Olympiad coach for Hamburg. “Nobody’s twisting their arm. They do it because they’re interested in science and math. It’s a true extra-curricular activity.”

It also looks good on a college resume, as Schuylkill Valley sophomores Jennifer Sweitzer and Krystal Gamez pointed out.

Not to mention:

“You get out of school,” said a group of Tulpehocken boys. (Many other students from the other two schools agreed that missing class didn’t hurt the Olympiad’s popularity.)

“No,” said a serious Stupp. “It’s for our love of science.”

Contact Mandy Zerr at mbzerr@berksmontnews.com.



Item photo by Mandy Zerr
TULPEHOCKEN TEAM. (L-R, back) Greg Stull, Evan Keeney, Chris Light, (Kneeling) Aaron Stupp and Dirk Behney took second place in the Storming the Castle event, where students build the most accurate and farthest-flinging catapult they can.

Campus News

Marc Bucks, son of Benjamin A. Bucks of Leesport, and a student at Kent School in Kent, Conn., was named to the Honor Roll for the fall 2004 term.

Matthew Glass of Hamburg was named to the Dean’s List for the 2004-05 fall term at Johnson & Wales University.

Glass is pursuing a bachelor of science degree in Culinary Arts from the College of Culinary Arts at the Providence, R.I., campus.

To receive Dean’s List status, a student must earn a cumulative grade point average of 3.4 or higher.

Practicing photography

Photos, from page 1.

his craft with digital photography, a technique he prefers to chemical processing photographs because of the level of control digital media can give him.

“I can control colors and subtly adjust them to highlight what I’m focusing on,” said Fajardo. “But I don’t tend to go overboard; I like to keep pictures close to the original. A lot of people distort their photos. I’d rather present things clearly, but in a puzzling way.”

Fajardo works with paradox to create “clear but mysterious” photos. His show at the Banana Factory, “Thinking about

Thinking” allowed him to explore conceptual photography, tricking the viewer to focus on certain parts of the photo while ignoring others. “There were pictures of marbles that acted as lenses so you would focus on certain area of the photograph and not pay attention to others,” said Fajardo.

Fajardo’s photos of contemporary Girardville are his latest foray into paradox, dismal, contemporary scenes to accompany boyhood ruminations. [Pennsylvania Coal Town: The Girardville Poems](#) is available at Saucony Books in Kutztown, the Kutztown University bookstore and at Border’s bookstore in Wyomissing.

Printed by
Journal Register Offset
 390 Eagleview Blvd., Extlon, Pa. 19341 610-280-2295
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