DCC falls short of goal

Blair’s overcrowding will remain unchanged next year

By KRISTINA HAMILTON

Because of its overwhelming popularity among eighth graders within the downcounty region, Blair will remain overcrowded next school year, with an expected enrollment of 3,350 students, six fewer than the past September’s 3,356.

The school will acquire 91 more freshmen than initially predicted in March, according to recent Downcounty Consortium (DCC) numbers. The bigger freshman class results mainly from the accommodation of a large number of eighth graders who selected Blair as their first choice.

Principal Bruce Crispell confirmed that although Northwood High School will be reopened to help displace students from Blair, Blair’s population will be higher than last fall’s prediction of 3,225 students for 2004-2005, which erroneously omitted

Grading policy delayed

By SAMIR PAUL

The Board of Education (BOE) decided on May 11 to move forward with implementation of MCPS’ new grading and reporting policy for grades one through eight but to delay implementation for high schools.

The policy, which was originally slated to begin in fall 2004 for all grades, will now take effect for high schools beginning fall 2005. MCPS, in collaboration with the county’s 25 high-school principals, will develop the plan for the policy’s implementation in high schools.

New report cards corresponding to the policy and its new learning skills will take effect in fall 2008 for high schools.

The move to delay implementation was made by MCPS Superintendent of Schools Jerry Weast, who received a letter of position from MCPS’ high-school principals that contained their suggestions about implementation, regulation and interpretation of the policy.

On April 30, Blair teachers were introduced to provisions that will disallow awarding group

Healthier vending

Nutritious snacks and drinks to be sold

By BRITTANY MOYER

Beginning next fall, beverages and snacks sold in MCPS vending machines and school stores will meet new nutritional standards set by the MCPS Board of Education (BOE) in March. The BOE action follows a national pattern among schools to combat increasing child obesity by replacing junk food in vending machines with healthier options.

The new BOE vending machine directive may create significant financial losses for Blair and broaden the impact of a BOE decision last December that restricted the hours of operation of vending machines with “minimally nutritious” items like sodas and unhealthy snacks. Principal Phillip Gainos indicated in December that Blair could lose tens of thousands of dollars because of those restrictions.

Blair uses revenue from the machines to fund several needs not financed by MCPS, including the purchase of computers and payment of AP or SAT test fees for students unable to afford them.

Significant financial losses have not occurred yet, and Blair has continued to receive an annual payment of $55,000 under an exclusive contract with Pepsi for the sale of Pepsi drinks in school vending machines. Upon the contract’s expiration in three years, Blair will renegotiate with soda companies in hopes of receiving no less than the current payment, according to Business Manager Anne Alban.

Continuing with life after death

By SHERRI GENG

Every year around May 19, junior Paul Wong buys flowers. Then, he and his mother make the trip up Georgia Avenue, driving until they see the gold fence and the large, green stretch of land enclosed within. They park the car along the street, walk a few minutes out on the road and then silently cross onto the grassy grounds; flowers in hand, feet brushing softly against the earth.

Wong’s destination is in the back. As he approaches, he spots the bronze plaque that marks the spot where he has come each year, for as long as he can remember.

Then, he unwraps the flowers and carefully lays them down upon the bronze grave marked for his father, “Tso Sang Wong.”

Within the “Gate of Heaven” burial grounds in Silver Spring, Wong and his mother join hands in front of his father’s grave and in unison bow nine times. Then a
An ode to the forgotten
Giving meaning back to a memorial

In a nation obsessed with designer makeup, hundred-dollar shoes and mass consumption, we have lost track of what is really important to this country. As Memorial Day approaches, we don’t see events commemorating our nation’s heroes; instead, we see advertisements for J.C. Penney’s annual Memorial Day sale.

Memorial Day is dedicated to those who have died while serving our nation. The holiday was officially proclaimed on May 5, 1968 and first observed on May 30 of that same year. In 1971, however, Congress passed the Holiday Act mandating that the National Memorial Day be celebrated on the last Monday in May in order to ensure a three-day weekend for federal holidays.

Because many people spend this day shopping and in pursuit of leisure activities, most Americans have forgotten or even lost track of the traditions of Memorial Day. Few people recognize—or are even aware of—the National Moment of Remembrance, which in an act signed by Congress in December of 2000, designates 3:00 p.m. local time on Memorial Day as the time for Americans to pause from whatever they are doing for a moment of silence or listen to Taps. For those who are busy taking advantage of Memorial Day sales, this moment of respect might be easy to forget while tracking down those items that are marked 50 percent off.

And it is not just our generation of teenagers and young adults who fail to recognize this important day in our nation’s history; even most of those who grew up during World War II and the Vietnam War no longer pay tribute to this day of remembrance.

“Everybody’s forgotten,” says Moorin, a Blair alumnus and Vietnam War veteran. “The younger generations learn by the examples of the older ones.”

Moorin, like many war veterans, feels that his contributions to this country have been left behind as our nation plunges forth into a future of instant, self-centered trends. A Poland Hall resident says Moorin. “Even as tough as the world is today—with our trips to Starbucks, a place to call home and our judiciary system—[these were] all bought and paid for with blood, courage and heroism. If you or your grandfather, your uncle or your aunt died in a war, would you go out and buy a blouse in their name?”

Now, more and ever, we need to reserve our respect and gratitude for those who have sacrificed their lives for our country, both past and present. If we are taught to be patriotic, but when Memorial Day rolls around this year, only a handful of Americans will remember to honor the nearly 800 soldiers who have died in the War on Terror.

So on May 31, while you’re shopping for that big-screen TV, take a break from your spending frenzy to honor the National Moment of Remembrance and give our nation’s heroes the respect they most certainly deserve.

Fading ethics in the world of journalism

Is this real? This is a question usually asked about a movie’s special effects or a brilliant display of athleticism. But, due to recent events, it is a question you now have to ask about the news.

A disturbing trend of fabrication in journalism has shocked the nation. Reporters like Jayson Blair and Jack Kelley have all been seduced by the glamous world of celebrity. But this celebrity comes at a price—a few unethical reporters in search of their 15 minutes of fame have put money above the institution of journalism.

Fabrication is not just a problem in professional newspapers and magazines; fabricated stories have also surfaced in a local high school newspaper, revealing that the epidemic of journalistic fraud is tricking down to the local levels. A student reporter for Common Sense, the Thomas W. Peters High School newspaper, recently fabricated four stories in the paper’s last two issues. “I don’t only put words into people’s mouths, but I invented mouths to put them in,” read the student’s May 7 retraction.

Now there is more pressure than ever for journalists to create good stories and compete not only against other newspapers, but also against the entertainment industry. Courtney Kube, associate producer of the NBC news program Meet the Press, believes that the pressure to be successful leads to shortcuts. Reporters want to be assigned the biggest stories to gain the respect of their editors and boost their resumes; their editors often leads them to cut corners.

For a reporter who constantly turns in hard-hitting articles, editors may ignore the warning signs of fabricated sources and stories. This is an unacceptable trend that is perpetuating inside the newsroom. A newspaper’s integrity should take precedence over generating publicity.

Daily newspapers are needed to restore the public’s trust in journalism.

While some competition is healthy, letting that competitive spirit develop into unhealthy pressures to outshine the opposition by any means necessary destroys the very essence of journalism. Christopher Hanson, assistant professor of Journalism Ethics at the University of Maryland’s Phillip Merrill College of Journalism, describes the new attitude of journalists as “getting famous is more important than the work you do to get there.” This is not only unacceptable but unethical.

Newspapers owe their readers fair, honest and balanced reporting. Anything less is not worth reading. To achieve truthful reporting, editors and advisors must develop better safeguards against fabrications. All sources and information pertinent to a story must be checked and verified.

In professional journalism, a reporter found fabricating an article is fired, and their credibility is destroyed. It is just as important to punish dishonest reporters from high-school and college newspapers. If dishonesty is brushed off at the high-school and college levels, it will give the impression that fabrication is acceptable.

Any reporter found falsifying a story should receive the same punishments—being removed from the newspaper and facing possible action from school administrators. Clearly understood rules and consequences will help raise journalistic standards and demonstrate that reporters and editors are serious about delivering a true account of real events.

Editors who turn a blind eye to potential ethical problems within the newsroom are stepping down a slippery slope that erodes the public’s trust.

There is no point in having freedom of the press if the beneficiaries of this freedom, reporters and newspapers, do not use the power responsibly. The news is not required to be salacious or titillating, but rather what every newsroom should promise to deliver: the truth.

Letters to the editor

A breaker’s take on the ban

On behalf of the Urban Dance Movement, I would like to address the current ban placed on breakdancing. The administration’s reasoning behind the ban—that we rarely have a sponsor—is understandable. Unfortunately, the club often practices three times a day, five days a week; this often conflicts with any willing staff member’s schedule.

Breakdancing is our lives, but we cannot just impose that on a sponsor and expect them to make it theirs. If safety is the administration’s main concern, then it’s not unreasonable for each participant to sign a waiver no longer holding the school responsible and at the same time not binding a sponsor to our actions. Practicing in the wrestling room could be one way to address this concern.

Quoting from the Silver Chips Online discussion forum, there was a time when “the goal was to keep kids off the streets, not push them out onto them.” The school should look for ways to support positive student activities, not hinder them. The Washington Post Magazine recently featured the breakdancers, representing and celebrating Blair’s diversity. A ban shortly after this article is not the right attitude. Blair was designed to be a welcoming facility, and the administration’s decision is contrary to that spirit.

-Junior D. Sanford Halser

To read the complete letter, go to http://silverchips.mrhs.edu.
Should the draft be re instituted for Iraq?

In the upcoming presidential election, many national issues, including the draft, have taken center stage in the debate between President George W. Bush and Democratic candidate Senator John Kerry. Supporters of the reinstatement of the draft believe that it will bring the right attention back to the war in Iraq, while opponents of the draft argue that it will only force conscripted Americans to fight a war they don’t support.

Kedamai Fisseha says YES: A draft will promote peace

The disturbing reality in the United States today is that the public is more interested in rising gas prices than the war in Iraq, a war that is steadily deteriorating. The passage of the compulsive service bill by Congress is needed only militarily; it is also needed to raise the public’s involvement in the war effort. Only after realizing the enormity of this war can the U.S. as a whole adopt the good judgment and wariness necessary to keep from hastily inciting such conflict ever again.

Although it seems contradictory, the U.S. public must support a draft for this war in order to promote peace in the future. In a report to the House of Representatives last September, the director of the Congressional Budget Office reported, “The Army lacks sufficient active duty forces to maintain its current level [of activity] beyond spring.” As summer approaches, however, the situation in Iraq grows more dangerous and unpredictable. Daily reports from CNN and other news agencies describing the guerilla tactics of Iraqi resistance forces show that the real necessity in Iraq is not troop numbers, but troop strength. A draft will give the military enormous leeway to increase forces in Iraq and complete its mission more quickly and efficiently. This would in turn make the subsequent reconstruction of Iraq faster and more permanent.

The activation of a draft is also an opportunity to address existing problems of misrepresentation in the U.S. Army. According to a Feb. 2003 Washington Post article, the Army is 45 percent minority, compared to the 29 percent minority in the general population. A 2001 Department of Defense study further showed that the bulk of recruits in the armed services come from the middle and lower-middle classes. This data is the result of the existence of the Army as a sort of “last resort” for the disadvantaged. While this is tolerable in times of peace, war brings a situation in which the poor and minorities are dying at rates disparate to their percentage in the population.

Last year hundreds of thousands of people protested the war in Iraq. They were unsuccessful in swaying the government’s decision, and the U.S. sent troops to the Middle East in the face of great resistance. Today, those protestors have the opportunity to make U.S. government officials understand the horrible implications of war. To be most effective in their objection to this war, protestors must influence decision-makers to realize the destructiveness of war not only today, but in upcoming generations. A draft can fulfill that goal.

President George W. Bush and the legislators of the U.S. Congress must be willing to send their own children to the same battlefields where they have sent the children of thousands of other families. They must do so to show that they are fully aware of the consequences of their actions, both domestically and internationally. If they fail to institute the draft, they will fail to legitimize this war in the eyes of the world and worse, in the eyes of their own public.

American military was abandoned in favor of an all-volunteer military, in response to the nationwide negative reaction to the Vietnam War. Recently, however, President George W. Bush added $26 million dollars to the budget of the 2004 Selective Services System (SSS) to prepare a military draft that could start as early as June 15, 2005. This year, Congress has brought forth the Universal National Service Act, which would force participants, including women and college students, to perform military or civilian service to strengthen “national defense and homeland security, and other purposes.”

The success of the draft hinges on the fact that an overwhelming majority of Americans support the war in Iraq and the “enemy” in the form of “terror.” However, in a national poll conducted by ABC news stations and The Washington Post in April 2004, only 51 percent of Americans thought the war in Iraq was worth fighting, and 45 percent approved of Bush’s handling of Iraq. Not only would the draft force Americans to fight a war they do not support, but it would also cause the loss of more American lives. Newsweek magazine estimates that 3,466 Americans have been wounded in action in Iraq since the beginning of the war, and by the end of April nearly 800 soldiers had died. Since the invasion, there have been more military casualties than in all the years after the Vietnam War combined.

To fill these growing gaps within the volunteer services, the draft plans to support the SSS’s high-school registrar program to put volunteer registrars in 85 percent of high schools across the nation. However, high-school students are still young and inexperienced, and their lack of maturity and discipline could get them killed.

According to the military newspaper Stars and Stripes, 49 percent of soldiers stationed in Iraq say they don’t intend to reenlist, despite an offered $10,000 bonus. Although the reinstatement of the draft could recruit more soldiers, if nearly half of these draftees opposed the war in the first place—as national polls state—the U.S. government officials understand the great resistance. Today, those protestors have the opportunity to make U.S. government officials understand the horrible implications of war. To be most effective in their objection to this war, protestors must influence decision-makers to realize the destructiveness of war not only today, but in upcoming years as a way to force Americans to fight a war that they do not support.

In 1973, forced conscription to the Army was unpopular; the draft was abolished in 1973. In the upcoming election, the people must vote against the current administration, and that means voting against the reinstated draft.

One's duty to one's country. Citizens’ obligation to their government. The responsibility of Americans to the goal of “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” Despite all of these vague descriptions about the benefits of the draft, its reinstatement would only serve in the upcoming years as a way to force Americans to fight a war that they do not support.

In 1973, forced conscription to the Army was unpopular; the draft was abolished in 1973. In the upcoming election, the people must vote against the current administration, and that means voting against the reinstated draft.

Roxana Hadadi says NO: Fighting shouldn’t be forced

Senior Byron Knight: “No, it shouldn’t be brought back because there are already enough people who want to go.”

Sophomore Lisa Dupree: “No, if there’s not enough people, that shows how people really feel about the war.”

Sophomore Michael Zeisser: “No, because the people who don’t believe in the war should not be forced to fight.”

Sophomore Lindy Buthelez: “No, too many people have died already, and we don’t need any more lost.”

Sophomore Phil Hoyle: “Yes, if it gets really bad, we’re going to need a draft.”

Senior Crystal Santos: “No, it is just like Vietnam all over again.”

Kedamai Fisseha says YES: A draft will promote peace

Freshman Michael Zeisser: “No, because the people who don’t believe in the war should not be forced to fight.”

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Photos and information compiled by Adam Schuyler
Blazers sound off on school issues

Do you support the draft? Why or why not? ▶ see pro/con, page 3

No, I don’t support the draft because I feel that no one should be forced to kill another person. Going to war should be based on the willingness of the people being sent. The draft forces many young men and women to fight for a cause that they don’t believe in. It will just make people’s support for the war even less.
-freshman Tshikuna Muankanke

I most certainly support the draft. It is unfair for the vast majority of soldiers who had to join because they couldn’t go to college. All of the rich people and government officials can send their sons and daughters to college where they can avoid the responsibility of defending their country.
-sophomore Ben Green

What is your ideal summer vacation?
▶ see story online

My perfect vacation is going to Jamaica and lying under a palm tree drinking an exotic drink. I would go scuba diving to explore under the ocean, jet ski, visit sites and, most of all, relax and not have a care in the world. I want to experience the different foods, socialize with the locals and go to the beaches with the white sand, clear waters and jumping dolphins.
-sophomore Garfield Chung

For my summer vacation, I want to go to summer school so I can get credit for my classes and not have to worry about it before I graduate.
-sophomore Mayra Ramos

My ideal summer vacation would be somewhere in Montana or Colorado. It would be at a cabin in the wilderness with a hunting guide. I would bowhunt for elk, mule deer and moose. Fly fishing in western Montana all summer would also be a dream vacation. I could hone my skills, enjoy the environment and catch a lot of fish.
-junior Patrick Brice

My ideal summer vacation is to go to El Salvador and sleep in a hammock under a mango tree. I want to eat all the pupusas, tamales, mangos and chicken I can. I would also go to some beaches and pools and have fun under the sun.
-sophomore Merlyn Torres

Do you think Blair’s SGA effectively represents the student body? ▶ see story, page 7

Yes, the SGA is a good representation of Blair’s student body. The SGA is elected by students and therefore represents the opinions of the students.
-freshman Lea Savard-McNicol

I do not think that the SGA effectively represents Blair’s student body. I don’t know what the SGA has done for the student body. All I’ve heard about the SGA was that they sponsor dances. When election time rolled around to vote for SGA president, I wasn’t sure after I voted for a candidate if I would ever hear the word “SGA” again for the rest of the year. After my first year being here at Blair, I am not satisfied with what the Student Government Association has done for Blair and the voices of all Blair Blazers.
-freshman Genesis Davison

Has our society become too dependent on communication devices? ▶ see story, page 9

Yes, our society has become too dependent on communication devices, but I feel that they are necessary. If I did not have a cell phone, I could not communicate with my friends at all, especially the ones who are never home. Part of the reason is because I’m never home either. They are very useful and necessary because often when I’m lost and need directions I can call my parents. They also come in handy for emergencies, like a flat tire on the road.
-junior Elaina Alperstein

Society has not become too dependent on communication devices. People still spend a lot of time talking face-to-face, and although most people have cell phones, they are not necessary.
-sophomore Alice Li

Do you think ethics in journalism become a problem? ▶ see story, page 2

I don’t think that ethics in journalism have become a problem. There have always been reporters like Jayson Blair from The New York Times who fabricate stories, so isolated incidents do not show an overall deterioration of journalistic ethics. I believe that journalists are a really important part of our democracy and should be allowed to abandon some ethics in order to disseminate accurate, timely information to the populace.
-sophomore John Silberholz

Ethics in journalism is a problem because people are starting to write whatever they feel [like writing]. That’s just not right. This needs to be stopped or else the true news will never reach the public. We need the truth because the media is the balance against corruption in the government and other powers in society.
-senior Jeremiah Quartey

What part of the issue

“..."“I didn’t plan this, but you got to take what you got. I’m not a terrorist; I just want to work hard.”
▶ see “Undocumented Blazers,” page 11
Vending machines to sell healthier snacks
County makes new standards for snacks, promotes nutritious choices in school machines

Blair overcrowding continues

New policy to take effect in fall 2005
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GUIDANCE CORNER

Resource Counselor Karen Hunt reminds students of the following upcoming dates:

- May 31 — No school; Memorial Day
- June 3—5 — Sat/Ill administration
- June 7—7 — Review day (Periods 1–8)
- June 12 — ACT administration
- June 8–11 — Semester exams
- June 15—End of fourth marking period
- June 28—Report cards mailed home

HONORS

- Five senior Blazers won corporate-sponsored National Merit Scholarships: Aditi Bhaskar (geophysics), Christian Brown (model design/animation), Patrick Conrad (computer science/robotics), Michael Price (undeclared) and Minghui Yang (journalism).
- Several Blair teams placed high in the 2004 Envirothon county competition. First place went to seniors Maria Choi, Daozhong Jin, Rebecca Pass, Valerie Shen, Emily Tsui and Paula Wang. Juniors Sherri Geng, Kevin Kahn, Randy Li, Eric Ma and Renee Park won second place.

NEWSBRIEFS

New after-prom restrictions to take effect

Juniors and seniors will only be allowed to bring a guest to after-prom, which will take place on May 30 from 1:00 a.m. to 5:00 a.m., if they also bring that same guest to the prom dance. Last year, juniors and seniors who did not attend the prom were permitted to bring a guest from another grade or school, provided that both students showed identification. The PTSA After-Prom Committee changed the guest rule this year because “last year [there were] probably 100 to 200 kids who stood outside the door and just waited for a junior or senior to let them in,” according to PTSA After-Prom Committee Chair William Ramsey. Blair’s after-prom is free for all juniors and seniors. Food, activities and contests are also free, and this year, prizes will be given out every hour. To give the prize lottery “more substance,” after-prom attendees will wear new wristbands with specific lottery call numbers, said Ramsey. Students must enter after-prom before 2:30 a.m. and must show a wristband and ID at the door. After-prom has a zero-tolerance policy for the use of alcohol and drugs. No bottles or cans will be permitted, and once a student leaves the event, he or she may not re-enter.

Gainsin wins education award

Principal Phillip Gainsin received the Dr. Edward Shirley Award for Excellence in Educational Administration and Supervision for his 20 years of service at Blair and over 30 years as an educational administrator. A May 6 MCPS Press Release stated Gainsin was recognized for his “leadership style, which fosters creativity and innovation, focuses on students’ abilities to succeed and extends a commitment to the Blair community that goes beyond the walls of the high school, along with a commitment to elementary education and professional involvement.” For more information, visit http://silverchips.mhmsb.org/inside.php?aid=3528.

Last day of school returns to June 15

Although Hurricane Isabel caused two missed school days last September, the last day of school for MCPS students will be June 15, as originally scheduled. According to an April 15 MCPS press release, a state waiver for the two days “recognizes the good faith effort by the school system to schedule as many days as possible to ensure sufficient instructional time this year.” Montgomery County built four emergency weather days into the school calendar for a total of 184 instructional days for students instead of the state-required 180 days. Schools have been closed a total of six days this year; two were due to Hurricane Isabel and four were due to snow. Even with those six emergency days taken, Montgomery County has still met the state’s requirement for 180 instructional hours for elementary and middle schools and 1,170 hours for high schools this year. Exams will proceed as outlined in the planner.

Breakdancing banned

Blazers were banned from breakdancing on school property for the rest of the school year following a dispute between one breakdancer and a building services worker. The incident that prompted the ban occurred on April 13, when a breakdancer refused to leave the gym because another student was present, violating the rule that students must be supervised by a staff member after 3:00 p.m. Principal Phillip Gainsin will allow the breakdancers to resume during the next school year, provided that they have a sponsor at all times. For more information, see the complete story on Silver Chips Online at http://silverchips.mhmsb.org/breakdancing.

Volunteer tutors needed for summer program

The MCPS 2004 Summer Adventures in Learning program is seeking volunteer tutors for July 6 to July 30 for four hours each weekday morning. The program, according to the MCPS web site, is designed “to engage students in meaningful activities that children know and provide a head start on learning for the upcoming year.” Students being tutored will enter kindergar-
ten through fifth grade this August. Those interested in volunteering must participate in a two-hour training session on June 3 or June 10 and should contact MCPS Volunteer Coordinator Marissa McKee at (301) 279-3100 or Marina_N._McKee@mcpsmd.org.

By Renee Park

Sophomore Sebastian Johnson, Blair Student Government Asso-
ciation (SGA) President-elect for the 2004-2005 school year, has begun implementing several changes to address problems of SGA organization and student body awareness as he prepares to assume presidential duties begin-
ning June 1.

The SGA is already laying out the schedule of events for the next school year, expanding the stu-
dent government and revising its Constitution, according to Johnson, and seeks to strengthen its relationship with the student body as part of the overhaul of changes that will affect the student body starting next year.

“As the two biggest problems this year were the organization of events like the pep rally and the perception that the student body has of the SGA,” explained Johnson, who served as SGA Parliamentarian this past year.

This year, Johnson formed a committee that began rewriting the SGA Constitution, which has not been revised since 1995. He felt the outdated Constitution was vague and unsuitable to Blair’s current population, which is far larger than its population a decade ago. He will continue its revision next year and expects it to be completed by late 2005 or early 2006.

Within the Constitution, Johnson said he was concentrat-
ing on improving governance by writing new by-
laws, which outline officer posi-
tions, departments and commit-
tees, and adjusting the Bill of Rights to better protect students’ rights and responsibilities.

Meanwhile, he has revived the judicial branch of the SGA; he has nomi-
nated justices for the Review Board, which oversees the actions of the President.

Johnson is optimistic that his proposal of enlarging the SGA to include positions such as the Press Secretary and Communications Director will be effective in help-
ing the student government reach out to the student body.

Also, this year the SGA established a “solid relationship” with the Blair administration, said SGA Sponsor Rondai Ravilious, and seeks to strengthen its relationship with the adminis-
tration by writing new by-
laws, which outline officer posi-
tions, departments and commit-
tees, and adjusting the Bill of Rights to better protect students’ rights and responsibilities. Meanwhile, he has revived the judicial branch of the SGA; he has nomi-
nated justices for the Review Board, which oversees the actions of the President.

Johnson is optimistic that his proposal of enlarging the SGA to include positions such as the Press Secretary and Communications Director will be effective in helping the student government reach out to the student body.


NEWSBRIEFS

Some upperclassman courses will be transferred to portables during the 2004-2005 school year because of the plan to create a freshman wing. For the most part, only senior classes will be moved to the portables, but some junior classes may also move. As of now, three social studies classes, one English class, one math class, one foreign language class and one ESOL class will be relocated next year, but the decision is not yet final. Photo by Charlie Woo

By RENEE PARK

“Principal [Phillip] Gainsin wants to hear the voices of the students,” explained Ravilious.

The PTSA also hopes to rees-
tablish a stronger formal bond with the SGA and encourage SGA members to attend monthly PTSA meetings, according to PTSA Co-President Betsy Scroggs.

Johnson said that this year the SGA organized two successful blood drives and was more sup-
portive of extracurricular activi-
ties by allowing new clubs to be created year-round. However, he stated that despite their accom-
plishments, the SGA still has much ahead of it before it can reach all its goals. Johnson aims to restore the organization “back to the days when the SGA meant something,” explained SGA President senior Denise Sylla.

Currently, Gainsin sees the SGA’s progress as “a significant turn of a corner” and foresees that it will “exert some strong leader-
ship.” Yet he said the student gov-
ernment still has far to go in mak-
ing itself visible to the student body and informing the student body of what their SGA is doing for them. “They need folk to see who they are,” explained Gainsin. “Right now, they get voted on and disappear.”
Sophia + Steven, we’re gonna miss you a lot. To the girls in the crew- we need to start cheating, too! Mad love, MUAH, Camila, Edra and Diana.

You’re hot POS!! CVSJREXT 05! Yeah! Halla back!

Emma, happy belated birthday! We’re both 17! Love ya lots!

Seniors: 05 —Kristina

Congrats to all Seniors, from your Silver Chips staff.

Big-up to our car chasin’ adventure, y’all! Next time we’ll catch that bamma. Love ya

Yasmin + Shewit!

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I’m graduating, and you are not. I wish school would be over with already. Ewwww. Too many days of school left.

Class of ’05 is now officially SENIORS! And we will be showin’ mad senior pride next school year...haha unterclassmen...you have soooo much more school left....

Marcus bear, congratulations... have fun in Russia! Yay Caitlin for pretty dresses! —Tiffany

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Ana    Abi
Kathy  Tencia
Phyllis  Min
Lydia  Jessica

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welcome 2 the wired world

Booming communication craze keeps students constantly connected

According to The Washington Post, about one-third of teens own cell phones.

Photo Illustration by Charlie Woo

18: the number of pages of the longest cell-phone bill that junior Aynalem Geremew has received. Two hundred: the cost, in dollars, of that same bill. Thirteen: the most people that sophomore Nick Billhimer has talked to on AOL Instant Messenger (AIM), a free service that allows people to chat on the Internet, at the same time.

Communication-loving Blazers such as these are part of the rapidly expanding, technology-intensive social network in which cell phones and Instant Messaging programs are major recreational forces. According to The Washington Post, 25 percent of AIM's 36 million active screen names belong to people under 17 years old, and about one-third of 11- to 17-year-olds own cell phones. With cell-phone and Internet companies offering a seemingly continuous stream of new communication features, many Blazers are finding it easy to get lured by and hooked on contemporary means of keeping in touch.

“I think in today's society, people tend to be very insecure about losing touch with their friends,” says Billhimer, who sees AIM as a great way to stay connected with friends. Since people using AIM can talk to multiple “buddies” at one time, Billhimer sees Instant Messaging as a convenient alternative to the less-communicating phone.

However, Billhimer has also noticed that when using AIM, there is a fine line between maintaining relationships and destroying them, which he says people often cross when they “talk about everything there is to talk about,” and the relationship fizzes out. “There is such a thing as too much contact,” Billhimer says. “You have the potential to actually kill a relationship before it develops.”

While Billhimer considers AIM-induced communication frenzies to be detrimental to relationships, sophomore Zack Rothman sees an AIM user's inability to convey relationships before it develops. “There is such a thing as too much contact,” Billhimer says. “You have the potential to actually kill a relationship before it develops.”

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According to Cox, such features are sometimes so enticing that students are reluctant to relinquish their phones during school hours, despite Blair policy that prohibits cell-phone use before 3:00 p.m. Students who violate the policy may have their phones confiscated.

Nevertheless, senior Scott Nguyen, who sends an average of 120 text messages per month and peaked at 174 last month, some of which he sent during class, remains unphased by the school's cell-phone policy because Blair teachers have also noticed a change in many of their students' writing as a result of Instant Messaging. Anne Cullen, who teaches English 9 and Communicating Arts Program (CAP) Journalism, says some of her students spell words phonetically and use abbreviations in formal writing, such as writing "2 good 2 be tru" instead of "too good to be true."

Cullen believes that today's "MTV, fast-paced culture" is the culprit of the disintegration of proper syntax. "It's like we're living in a society of vanity license plates," she says.

For Gamber, one troubling implication of the "constant communication" craze is that today's communication-dependent culture fosters a certain degree of paranoia, in which people assume that if someone is not always plugged in, something is wrong. Thus, "you're always in a place of ready distraction," Gamber says. Some students admit that this state of being frequently preoccupied sometimes interferes with schoolwork. "It gets addictive, and it's a good way to procrastinate on your homework. When I finally disconnect myself, I usually have to start my homework at ten or eleven," says junior Idara Aquaowo. On a "good day," starting homework late often keeps her up until midnight; on a "bad day," she might not retire until 2:00 a.m.

"I think in today's society, people tend to be very insecure about losing touch with their friends," says Billhimer, who sees AIM as a great way to stay connected with friends. Since people using AIM can talk to multiple “buddies” at one time, Billhimer sees Instant Messaging as a convenient alternative to the less-communicating phone.

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In the world of AIM, the laws of grammar are often lost in translation. Dr. Cayo Gamber, Assistant Professor of Writing at George Washington University, sees in her students a shift to more informal writing that she attributes to online communication. “They use shortened words, no capital letters, a more informal tone,” she says.

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Nevertheless, senior Scott Nguyen, who sends an average of 120 text messages per month and peaked at 174 last month, some of which he sent during class, remains unphased by the school’s cell-phone policy because although teachers have asked him to put away his phone, they have yet to confiscate it. He compares in-class text messaging to passing notes and says he is but one of many Blazers who uses their phones in class. “Almost everyone I know keeps their phone on during school and puts it on vibrate,” he says.

Once out of school, Cox eagerly takes advantage of her free, post-9:00 p.m. minutes by spending three to four hours on her cell phone each night. She considers herself addicted.

“And I say that with an exclamation point and capital letters,” she adds.
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Coping with the loss of a loved one

Blazers walk the painful road to recovery as they learn to deal with the death of a parent

Blazers left behind in the wake of their parents’ deaths, the result is an aching void that has been neither simple to accept nor easy to fill. "I couldn’t even cry"

According to MCPS Psychologist Brenda Barbour, the initial reaction that accompanies the sudden death of a parent is often shock. Then, the child will go through the five-step Kübler-Ross “grief cycle”: denial, followed by anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance.

Sophomore Hannah Thresher’s denial period lasted over a month; when Thresher’s mother suddenly disappeared in May 2000, she immediately spiraled into shock. After dog searches, dive searches and extensive interviews with friends and family, police still had no lead on where her mother was. This lack of closure made it difficult for Thresher to fully comprehend the reality of her mother’s disappearance, and only when her aunt brought home a newspaper clipping did Thresher suddenly realize her mother was gone. The last line of the article read, “She left behind two children, Hannah and Sam.”

One week after he died, I was so taken aback, I couldn’t stop crying for three days. Later, when a new detective was assigned to her mother’s case, he declared it a suspected homicide, sending Thresher into a second round of violent emotional breakdown. “Even though I wanted that closure, it was too much at the time,” she says. Today the case remains unsolved and open, but “there’s so little evidence that [detectives] can’t go anywhere from here,” Thresher explains.

Several veterans of what it meant to be illegal, especially for college, she says, "I couldn’t deal with being around people, because it was really tough for me to just be around myself.”

Penney’s grief also came with a powerful fury at fate for not intervening to spare her father his life. For Penney, unlike for Yen or Thresher, the loss of her father was avoidable. "It was an accident! It was preventable!” she explains bleakly. "I couldn’t deal with being around people, because it was really tough for me to just be around myself.”

Sophomore Hannah Thresher sits on a bench commemorating her mother, who disappeared four years ago. Thresher visits the bench often to honor her mother’s memory.

Academic future uncertain for undocumented Blazer

By ELENA CHUNG

A phone in one hand and a clicking mouse in the other, senior Denise Sylla taps her foot and scans FastWeb, a scholarship search website, while she waits on hold with admissions officers from Wellesley College at the computer in the Student Government Association (SGA) office during lunch on All 30.

Like many seniors, Sylla is looking for money to pay for her college education. But Sylla is in a unique situation. Sylla, born in Vietnam, is an undocumented immigrant. As the school year winds down, Sylla constantly worries about her future. For now, she plans to attend Montgomery College Honors and transfer to another college if she renews her visa. “I didn’t plan this, but you got to take what you got. I’m not a terrorist; I just want to work hard,” she says. "And I can’t even do that.”

penning, and heartbreaking crash into finality. Penney’s father was hit by a car on his bike on Sligo Creek Parkway on Jan. 10, 2002; he died on impact. Penney, who was home sick that morning, was the last to see him alive. "It was a big, big slap in the face,” Penney recalls. "The first week after he died, I was so taken out of everything, I sat up in my mom’s room and drank soda and watched TV and read books.

Penney found dealing with other people overwhelming and kept to herself among the crowds of people surrounding her who hoped to help. "I couldn’t talk to anyone. There were a million people over at my house, and I just couldn’t talk to any of them," she says bleakly. "I couldn’t deal with being around people, because it was really tough for me to just be around myself."

Penney’s grief also came with a powerful fury at fate for not intervening to spare her father’s life. For Penney, unlike for Yen or Thresher, the loss of her father was avoidable. "It was an accident! It was preventable!” she explains bleakly. "I couldn’t deal with being around people, because it was really tough for me to just be around myself.”

Penney said that her lack of documentation would create many obstacles. "I realized the magnitude and scope of what it meant to be illegal, especially for college,” she says.

Current legislation like the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act in the Senate and the Student Adjustment Act in the House might assist undocumented students by providing in-state tuition and other benefits, says Jon Estralla, a senior policy associate at the American Immigration Lawyers Association.

Such federal laws would help Blaziers like Sylla continue on to their dream school—a possibility still out of reach for them now. "Many schools would have accepted me if it had been feasible [that] I could pay. I received letters from Barnard [College] saying that because of my financial and legal status, they were unable to accept me,” says Sylla.

In May 2003, Governor Robert Ehrlich, Jr. vetoed a similar version of the DREAM Act for the state of Maryland. Thus, even as a high-achieving student, student body president, active gymnast and diver, Sylla still may not be able to attend her dream university because of her legal status, she says. "I’ve worked my butt off in Blair, and other kids who have lower grades can go to [college], But I can’t because the prices are astronomical!” she claims.

As the school year winds down, Sylla constantly worries about her future. For now, she plans to attend Montgomery College Honors and transfer to another college if she renews her visa. “I didn’t plan this, but you got to take what you got. I’m not a terrorist; I just want to work hard,” she says. "And I can’t even do that.”

For many children, a haunting effect in the aftermath of death is the parent who “never came back” who suddenly begins reappearing in dreams, nightmares, empty rooms and phantom memories.

Sophomore Hannah Thresher sits on a bench commemorating her mother, who disappeared four years ago. Thresher visits the bench often to honor her mother’s memory.
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Memorizing numbers is as easy as pi

Blazers adopt unique hobby while trying to break into the national and world record books

By YICONG LIU

Three, he begins, fading into a trance, eyes squinting in intense concentration as he chants in a heavy, steady rhythm. Three point one four one five. He stands in front of an awestruck audience in room 346 while the numbers roll effortlessly off his tongue. Nine two six five three five eight three. They build into a steady, continuous stream, nine seven nine three three two three... In less than five minutes, he has recited the first 800 digits of pi from memory.

**Why pi?**

Pi, defined mathematically as the ratio of the circumference of a circle to the diameter, is a classic number used in various mathematical memorizations because it has an infinite number of digits and lacks any sort of pattern in its sequence.

Ly’s hobby stems from sixth grade when he won a contest for successfully memorizing and reciting 123 digits of pi, topping each of his classmates by at least 100 digits. Realizing his own potential, Ly began memorizing more of the sequence, driven by hopes of ultimately achieving an 800-mark and earning a title in the world rankings.

All the pieces of pi

Math teacher Paul Grossman, who witnessed Ly’s official recitation, describes his amazement at the feat. “He rattled off 800 like he was saying his cell phone number,” he says. “We all sat there with our mouths open.”

Eight hundred digits can be difficult to swallow, but pi is more easily digested in slices, a technique known as the grouping of numbers to facilitate memorization—according to AP Psychology teacher Julia Smrek.

Ly says he follows this process as well, pointing to the blocks dividing up the digits on his sheet. He looks for palindromes, repeated numbers, sequences that rhyme or any other patterns that suit him. To commit the numbers into long-term memory, Ly recites pi to himself for several nights in place of counting sheep.

Sophomore Rachel Kirsch, who recited 400 digits on the same day as Ly and would rank 31st internationally, says the memorization is neither particularly difficult nor immensely time-consuming. Kirsch spends only about five minutes per ten digits; to reach 400 digits then, she explains, would take a cumulative effort of under four hours.

Nonetheless, memorizing several hundred digits of pi is not as easy as pie: It is more than just challenging—more so, memorizing language “because language lends itself to pictures and images,” says Smrek.

Both Kirsch and Ly agree that successfully memorizing so many digits comes down to perseverance. “I believe anyone can memorize 30 digits of pi given they are of reasonable intelligence,” says Kirsch. “Once you get to 30, it starts getting fun, but people usually don’t believe me—they think I’m special,” she says, grinning.

For the love of pi

Despite having memorized 800 digits of pi, Ly is still a great deal away from the current world record of 4,159 digits held by Hiroyuki Goto of Japan since 1995. Ly doesn’t mind though. Conceding for Guinness-book fame is not his top priority, and his sharpened memory skills as the result of extensive practice with pi-digits have given him an edge in academic classes.

“Mr. Bundaz asked us to memorize the first 30 elements of the periodic table,” he says. “He gave us two weeks, but I finished in two days.”

Kirsch, however, admits minor side effects of memorizing so many strings of extraneous numbers. She often finds herself thinking, “Oh my God, these digits are in pi,” when she recognizes familiar sequences still fresh in her mind from the night before in every-thing from clock digits to room numbers at school. And rather than drawing cartoon characters during a tedious class, Kirsch can now find scribbling the digits of pi, which, she explains, “make for convenient doodles.”

For next pi day, March 14, 2005, Ly has still more plans for expanding the number of pi-digits committed to memory. He points to his printed copy of pi and to the solid line, an indication of his goal for the next year: the 1000th digit.
Getting a splash out of water sports
As summer approaches, students desert the indoors and rush to the sea with boats in tow

Senior Kate Eaton cleans the boat that she and her family built together. Photo by Sebi Brown

By OLIVIA BEVACQUA

Sophomore Jocelyn Dowling has one thing on her mind as she fights her way through the Potomac River’s raging rapids in July 2003: staying afloat. Capsizing could mean the loss of three days’ worth of food and supplies tied loosely to the seat behind her. Water sprays across her face as she maneuvers through the whitewater, edging past jagged rocks that dwarf her red canoe.

From Viking ships to Royal Navy submarines, humans have always shown an interest in exploring Earth’s waters. This interest has recently manifested itself in the popularity of water sports: Over 71 million Americans participated in recreational boating in 2002, and there have been almost 13 million boat registrations as of Dec. 1, 2001 for the U.S. and its territories, according to the National Marine Manufacturers Association. Whether crashing through whitewater, skimming the glassy surface of a lake or sailing across an ocean, water-loving Blazers share a universal reverence for the natural element that drives their fun.

The rush
Choosing between the claustrophobic classrooms of Blair and a world defined by walls and a ceiling of sky is a no-brainer for senior Sarah Robinson. Instead of balancing homework and testing schedules, Robinson’s mission is to stay balanced on the ocean’s surging waves while in the nature world. While Dowling braves whitewater in canoes and kayaks, Robinson’s weapon of choice is a surfboard.

There is nothing like the thrill of riding a wave, according to Robinson, who tries to frequent Ocean City every other weekend in the summer to surf. “You’re gliding and flying across the water, with the whitewater right behind you, pushing you forward. It’s a giant rush.”

Dowling, who kayaks and canoe- zes with her summer Quaker camp on the Potomac and Antietam rivers, identifies with this state of euphoria. Rushing through a set of rapids, a canoe can tip and jam into rocks, sometimes sending the boat spinning off its course amid the whitewater.

For some athletes, cutting through whitewater is more than an occasional thrill; it is a lifestyle. Three-time Olympian and 23-time World Cup medalist Davey Hearn has built his life around canoeing and whitewater kayaking. “You challenge yourself, competing with and against the power of nature on a moving playing field, a whitewater river,” says Hearn, who paddles the Potomac River for over 35 years. “Paddling and canoeing offer me the opportunity to explore the world from a different perspective.”

Building a dream from scratch
Some people rent their boats, others buy and still more borrow. Senior Kate Eaton builds.

For about the past 12 years, Eaton and her family have built boats in their garage; their achievements include the 12-foot Cat’s Paw and 18-foot Wendy Ann, as well as a small kayak. Eaton has braved the ocean waves in all of her boats, some of which took several years to complete.

On some outings, Eaton has been caught in “terrifying” storms while navigating her homemade creations. “Sometimes you sink down below, with all your waves, so you’re surrounded by walls of water. It can be scary because none of the boats have motors,” she says.

During these storms, Eaton says that the wind can be so fierce that the boat tips over far enough for freezing water to begin spilling over the sides. “If our neighbors are along for the ride, sometimes they have no idea what I’m thinking!” Eaton exclaims. “But I think that I’m doing this.”

Regardless of project size, Eaton says that the best part of the entire process is taking the maiden voyage on a newly completed boat. “It just feels so good seeing every little part that you’ve worked on come together,” she says. “You might spend weeks on one car, and finally you get to row it!”

Water world
Slicing her paddle through the swirling waters, Dowling works her way out of the set of rapids. She and her friends are three days into their river journey, and they have five more hours of paddling before they reach their camp. Like Robinson and Eaton, Dowling views her relationship with the water as a combination of love and fear. “The sun glints off her boat as she fixes her eyes on the river ahead.

Desegregation over the years

Diversity

Celebrating the integration of black and white

A County policy that labeled Blair as “racially imbalanced.” As a solution, Gainous helped bring the Magnet (1985) and the Communication Arts Program (CAP) (1988), respectively, to Blair to get more white students to the school.

The plan worked. Currently, the Magnet population consists of 202 Asians, 190 whites, six blacks and two Latinos. Similarly, CAP consists of 230 whites, 31 blacks, 19 Asians and three Latinos.

Teachers at Blair are also of different races and are able to teach about different cultures, points out junior Rose Dorval. “We don’t just learn about white cultures or black cultures,” says Dorval. Dr. Dolores D’Angelo, coordinator of CAP for 12 years and an English teacher, says that CAP has incorporated an 11th grade multi-cultural unit for students to learn about other cultures.

Not separate but still not equal
With the new programs fostering a greater cultural balance, the microcosm of different cultures begins to stratify on an academic level as mostly white and Asian students file into honors and AP classes while blacks and Latinos enter on-level courses.

At Blair, 92 percent of white students and 80 percent of Asian students take at least one honors or AP course a year compared to the 45 percent of black students and 28 percent of Latino students who sign up for the same classes. The division of students in classes may be one reason why some Blair students self-segregate. Junior Thomas Meyer can name a few friends who are of a different ethnicity but admits that most are of his own race. “Now that I think about it, I seem to naturally have friends that are white,” he says.

Junior David Crawford, a magna cum laude, says that self-segregation and the lack of integration in Blair are historical. “We are a public school,” Crawford points out. “We cannot just say ‘we want to integrate,’ and suddenly it will happen.”

The separatism among races seems to be forgotten at the end of the day. The 2:10 p.m. bell rings, and kids rush out of non-level students. They are a part of a school that is steadily working toward the promise of educational equality for all ethnicity but they will be leaving goodbye to one another, file out of the school doors, doors that are no longer racially selective.

Graphic by Fidan Kerimova
**Living through the aftermath of death**

**from COPING page 11**

ease the pain. “It comes and goes; it’s hard to say whether one day I’ll be upset or not,” she says.

Penny threw herself into her schoolwork after her father’s death and came home that quarter with straight A’s. She confesses that while she was never perfect, she didn’t ever feel, “It’s better to just listen.”

“I didn’t even get a chance to say goodbye.”

For Penny, charting the waters to acceptable performance was “so heavy and so full,” she says. “I’m still dealing with it, but I didn’t really feel any better; I still felt like crap.”

She was constantly plagued by regret, especially when confronted by the fact that her father would not see her develop into adulthood. Amid the flood of regrets was guilt and blame. “I used to think it was my fault that he was gone. I used to constantly haunted, even now, by the times that she and her father argued.

Yen, like Penny, is haunted by guilt; she wonders, if she had gone home earlier, would she have been able to save her father’s life? Even more, she was unprepared for the sudden loss. “I was angry at myself, angry at something, because I didn’t even get a chance to say goodbye,” she says.

Yen also had to deal with practical issues that lingered on after her father’s death—finances, taxes, finding rides to school—the broken aftermath of a storm that had ripped through their lives and the cut-throat competition to get into the top colleges.

The pressure factor

Though Marzullo is an extreme case, testing anxiety is very common among high-school and college students, according to Evelyn Joy, a clinical social worker and counselor for a federal agency. Senior Julia Fass passed a mild case of testing anxiety last year because of pressure from four AP classes and the impending college process.

Blair counselor Jennifer Taylor says that students approach her seeking advice to overcome their mild to severe cases of testing anxiety. Joy cites the main causes contributing to general testing anxiety as the increasing pressure for students to perform well in school and the cut-throat competition to get into the top colleges.

One of the factors that contribute to Marzullo’s testing anxiety is a pressure from her family to do well. She is an only child and will be the first member of her family to go to a full-time college.

Fear of failure can be generated by students’ constant worrying of not living up to expectations established at home, at school or within their own minds. People suffering from severe testing anxiety also tend to exaggerate the impact of an individual test on their future.

Joy says that students must find the cause of their anxiety and learn to “put it aside” by replacing their negative thoughts with positive ones in order to successfully conquer their testing anxiety. “Students need to remind themselves to step back and relax; an individual test will not make or break a student’s future,” she says.

Working it out

Carr recommends that students with severe cases of testing anxiety should receive therapy in order to find the root causes of anxiety and “work it out.” Despite the different levels of severity of testing anxiety, Joy says that students can take control of their testing fears by practicing good time management skills, utilizing effective study habits such as studying days before a test and developing a resistance to stress by eating properly, exercising regularly and taking care of their bodies and minds.

With her senior year and a round of college applications and SATs coming up, Marzullo must continue to trudge on. “Pressure is crazy,” she says. “Pressure sucks.”

If you believe you have a case of testing anxiety, talk to a trusted adult. For more information on how to combat testing anxiety, check out http://www.freedomfromfear.org

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**Seeking solutions to testing-stress**

Despite long hours of preparation, students left frustrated from battling exam anxiety

**by STEPHANIE NGUYEN**

As junior Alyssa Marzullo stares at her first-period Precalculus test, her heart begins to pound curiously, her stomach is sick with butterflies, her body temperature begins to rise and thoughts start to flood her head: “I need to pass this test. If I don’t do well on this, my grades will go down, I won’t go to college, I won’t have a good future.” And then, her mind goes completely blank.

Though most high-school students experience little to moderate testing anxiety before a test, Marzullo is one of the many students in the U.S. who exhibit signs of a severe type of testing anxiety that hinders her ability to think and perform well on exams.

Blanking out

According to psychotherapist Elizabeth Carr, mild testing anxiety is normal and even necessary to keep students alert during testing. However, when testing anxiety begins to debilitate a student’s performance, it becomes an anxiety disorder or a phobia.

Lack of preparation, which can easily be overcome by practicing and applying stress strategies, is the most common cause of severe testing anxiety, according to the University of Iowa web site. In a testing situation, Marzullo says that she experiences many of the physical and emotional signs of testing anxiety, such as sweaty palms, nausea, feelings of panic, negative thoughts and memory lapses. Test preparation courses, extensive studying and help from friends and family members have failed to calm her anxieties. “I just used to sit there and go over the material over and over and over again, and I would know the material like the back of my hand. But it wouldn’t matter,” Marzullo says. No matter how much she prepared or how easy the test was, she would just “blank out.” However, once the exam was over, she could clearly recall the correct answers.

Marzullo sought support from family and friends. She explains that what helps the most is often what people do the least: listen. “Saying ‘I know how you feel... well, you might have similar feelings, but you don’t have to feel this way,’ she explains. “It’s better to just listen.”

“I didn’t even get a chance to say goodbye.”

For Penny, the hardest days are those of remembrance, when she can feel the impact of her father’s death so keenly that it is difficult for her to get up or function. “It’s those days where I wake up, and I really feel like something is wrong; something is definitely out of place. And then it hits me: well, my dad’s not here anymore. It just sticks in my mind all day, and I just really can’t deal with anything else,” she says.

When Penny does get up, however, she will see the white roses—her father’s favorite flower—that always sit on her dresser, a tribute to her father’s memory and an everyday reminder of who he was. And she will remember him as she loved him, but she will also accept that he is gone, she knows, but never forgotten.
Surrounded by the mauve mushroom of my imagination, I gravely give a glance to the galloping gorges. Then I am transferred to Ithaca where I live out the rest of my life partially dead.

Seniors! Want to keep up with the events at Blair after you graduate? Subscribe to Silver Chips by visiting Room 158.

Hey people. This is Los a.k.a. Caim sayin’ hey to my people. Love ya Baby (Karina R.) just cause Lisa Mao came next to me I’ll give her a short. Again I love you Baby Karina Robledo.

I hate cicadas!!!!!!!

I just wanna say to all you Colombians out there that I’m proud of you and El Salvador, Colombia tu papa ha ha ha dat why we won. Yeah!


I’m a miss you guys from lunch (Sophia, Stephanie, Edra, Camila, Diana, Oscar, Yasmin, Irma, Raquel, Elizabeth) and class. We had good times and I’m always going to remember them. With love, Steven.

FOR MORE SHOUT-OUTS, SEE OTHER ADS PAGES.
On the road, under the influence

Teens risk serious injury and even death as they cross the line from sobriety to intoxication

By ALEXA GABRIEL

Where only first names appear, names have been changed to protect the identities of the sources.

Having three drinks within one hour puts a 170-pound male at an approximate 0.04 blood alcohol content (BAC) level. His vision is now impaired, his attention divided and his coordination significantly reduced, according to the Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) website. By the time he takes the wheel nearly every weekend, Chris, a senior, has had nine drinks.

Chris’ regular drinking habits put him well over the legal limit of 0.08 BAC for driving, not to mention four years below the legal drinking age and in violation of Maryland’s zero-tolerance law for underage drinking and driving.

According to an informal Silver Chips survey of 100 people conducted on May 11 and 12, 47 percent of Blazers have either driven under the influence of alcohol or been a passenger in a car with a drunk driver. This dangerous habit puts them at risk of death or serious injury, a risk that only increases during prom season, says Susan Katz of Outside the Classroom, a national youth alcohol-education organization.

“It’s not because they like the taste”

Pressures to meet the Maryland provisional license curfew of 12:00 a.m., parents’ curfews and friends in need of rides home are all reasons why Chris and others choose to take the wheel inebriated, regardless of the possible dangerous consequences.

According to Katz, underage drinking emerges mainly in group settings. Teens use alcohol to be “more attractive and relaxed in social situations,” she says. “It’s not necessarily because they like the taste.”

Kids tend to shrug off the dangers of drunk driving, developing a certain “invincibility” complex toward the risk of death or serious injury in an alcohol-related crash, she says.

Blazers claim the lack of other options can often be a strong factor in a teenager’s decision to drink and drive. Jennifer, a senior, describes one rainy night at the end of April when she was riding in a friend’s car on the Beltway while both were under the influence of alcohol and marijuana.

The driver was not only drunk but also speeding, talking on a cell phone and writing directions on the windshield of the car. Jennifer says she couldn’t get out of the car because she was staying with her friend for the night. Earlier that month, Ashley, a senior, drove a car full of friends home from a club in Washington, D.C., after a night of heavy drinking. With no sober person in the group, Ashley says she was chosen to drive because she had drunk the least and had driven drunk before, despite the fact that she only had her learner’s permit.

Chris, too, has felt a similar obligation to drive drunk. “If you’re drinking at somebody’s house, and you get kicked out, you have to go somewhere,” he says. “What else are you supposed to do?”

But Katz maintains that teens do have a choice about drinking under the influence. She encourages teens to walk and stress the idea of calling home if no sober ride is available. “Any parent or adult would want you to call them if you were worried about getting in a car,” she says.

Too drunk to drive

Despite the documented negative effects of even small amounts of alcohol on driving ability—50 percent of 16- to 20-year-olds killed in alcohol-related automobile crashes had BAC level of less than 0.05, according to the National Council Against Drunk Driving—Blair teens claim a certain amount of responsibility in their drunk driving practices. Jennifer says her friends would never let each other drive “really drunk. We always ask people, ‘Are you OK to drive?’ before they leave. You can tell if you’re too drunk to drive,” she says.

But under Maryland’s zero-tolerance law, drivers under the age of 21 with as little as 0.02 BAC can be arrested, be fined $500 and have their license revoked or suspended, according to the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA). For Maryland teens, just one drink an hour before driving is “too drunk to drive.”

Even a small amount of alcohol can mean the difference between life and death on the road, regardless of the amount of caution that the driver takes. After two drinks in one hour, an average-sized female with a BAC level of 0.05 is 11.1 times more likely than a sober woman to suffer a fatal injury in a vehicle, according to MADD.

Because of teen drivers’ relative driving inexperience, the detrimental effects of alcohol on driving ability can be amplified in teens, says Blair health teacher Nan Martin."The compounded impact of impaired judgment from alcohol and a small ‘knowledge base’ about driving can add up to serious problems, she says. “The more times you get lucky, the fewer times you’ll be safe.”

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“The more times you get lucky, the fewer times you’ll be safe.”

For junior Margarita Acosta, getting caught driving drunk has never been and will never be a possibility. Two years ago, Acosta’s cousin, now a high school senior in Ohio, was in a car that was hit by a drunk driver.

The impact killed the driver and hospitalized Acosta’s cousin and the two other passengers in the car. Acosta’s cousin remained in the hospital for several months because of severe internal bleeding and punctured organs.

“He looked so weak for such a long time,” Acosta says. “I would never want that to happen to me or anyone close to me.”

Her cousin’s near-death experience is Acosta’s reason for refusing to ever drive drunk or travel in a car with a drunk driver. But many Blazers aren’t willing to give up their dangerous habits, even when they are aware of the consequences. “I guess we’re just waiting for a wake-up call,” says Chris. With one person injured approximately every minute in an alcohol-related car crash, according to the NHTSA, opportunities for wake-up calls are countless.

Avoid poison ivy: When entering the woods, wear pants and long-sleeved shirts. Know what poison ivy looks like and avoid it. If you do come into contact with poison ivy, quickly wash your skin with soap and water to prevent a rash.

Stay nutritious: Maintain your energy level by eating less fat and sugar and more carbohydrates, fruits and vegetables.

Information compiled from Michael L. Ramsey, MD and James R. Wappes
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you will always live
in the van down by the river
of our hearts

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Hanks falls in love with, and you’ve got the formula for a sensitive and entertaining summertime drama. (June 18)

**The Village** (PG-13) — M. Night Shyamalan’s The Village centers around a romance between Joaquin Phoenix (a Shyamalan veteran) and Bryce Dallas Howard (daughter of director Ron Howard), two residents of an isolated 19th century town that is troubled by a race of mythical, wood-dwelling creatures. (June 28)

**The Frog** (R) — Sigourney Weaver and Adrien Brody fill out this internationally significant story. The Majestic’s marquee heralds the much anticipated opening of downtown Silver Spring’s newest theater. Photo by Adam Schuyler

New theater offers comfort, excitement, 20 screens and more than a little old-fashioned entertainment

Newman and senior Audrey Tornblom. Courtesy of Ms. Newman

Act I: Kelly Newman is a tiny, golden-haired child already testing her acting prowess in her living-room production of The Frog Prince. Act II: As a college fresh- man, Newman takes her first steps onto the stage at Catholic University. Act III: Newman combines her love of theatre and teaching as the drama instructor at Blair. Now, as Act IV approaches, Newman plans to take a sabbatical from teaching to reprise a role she has always loved — being a student. “It’s not something that just came out of the blue,” she explains of her plans to leave her job and attend the Shakespeare Institute in England for one year before returning to Blair. Despite her love for teaching, Newman hopes to use her break to study costume design for Shakespearean productions.

Developing the character
Newman’s first rendezvous with drama came as a girl when she directed her friends in plays. She directed a few productions during her high school years, an experience that compelled her to try her hand at acting. When she finally turned to acting, she played Anne Sullivan in her school’s production of The Miracle Worker. Newman realized that the entire play was about education. The seeds for her love of teaching had been sown.

It was not until her freshman year in college that Newman was inspired to consider teaching as a career. A Shakespeare buff since age eight, Newman was eager to take a course studying the Bard with a professor known for “really making [Shakespeare] come alive.” The instructor’s spirited teaching style fueled a sense of purpose within Newman. “She was what made me think, ‘Now I want to teach in high school so I can get people interested in Shakespeare,’” Newman recalls.

The Montgomery Blair Players present…

Newman’s effect on Blair theatre is apparent in each costume design, each performance given by the students and the magnificence of each production.

Her theatrical prowess has enabled Newman to put together a list of impressive plays that she has directed and produced. West Side Story may have been the play that touched the greatest amount of people on an emotional level, Newman speculates. “Teachers were coming up to me in tears after the teaser,” she says.

The power of the goddesses notwithstanding, Newman says she prefers comedies. “It’s more challenging, and you need a tight touch,” she explains. “It’s such a joy to make people laugh.”

Role reversal
After seven years of being Blair’s woman behind the curtain, Newman will again be a student. “I’ve been teaching for ten years, and I feel like I really need a break,” she says.

What’s in store for Acts V and beyond? “Doctor Newman!” she exclaims hopefully, thinking of her future college degree. She lists the other options on her fingers. “Maybe I’ll be a published author… or, I could look toward teaching college,” she ponders. Either way, “I’m still learning,” she says, “and I make new discoveries all the time.”

For Newman, the curtain isn’t closing any time soon.
Sorry I couldn’t play girls. I love you! Girls lacrosse rocks my socks! #20

SENIORS! We made it! Have fun! Best wishes to all! Be good! All ya stayin’...good luck @ Blair! Luv, Julizza

Shout-outs to my friends—you know who you are. Happy Independence Day to my Azerbaijan sister and my peeps.

Showing love 2 my girls, Monique, Sherri, Tracey, and Angel the lunch crew. Y’all know who y’all are...Anitra

Farewell to thee of the sea.

Hey hee (my sweet lil sis). Thank you for always being here for me. Happy Sweet 16th Birthday. I won’t be here with you for the next two years. But my love will always be here for you. You will always, always be the only baby sis in my heart. Good luck for your upcoming years. I will see you in UMCP in two more years. Always love you, your big sis Shawty.

Sophia + Steven—I miss ya’ll so much after you graduate so KIT. To the lunch crew—we gotta go to the beach...without the guys! Represent for DRI, Yasmin.

FOR MORE SHOUT-OUTS, SEE OTHER ADS PAGES.
May Crossword
by Katherine Zhang

Across
1. a helper (abbr.)
5. prefix meaning “three”
8. Beverly Cleary character
14. units of money in Albania
15. is central, or a pig
16. acts in a play are divided into these
17. a solo vocal piece, such as an opera
18. a very long time
19. what squirrels, birds and some insects live in
20. “____ on the wall” (two words)
24. calculus derivation; change in time
25. “they have” in French: “les____”
26. Egyptian cat god
27. filled with tears
28. between south and east (abbr.)
29. only half-sweet
33. President Lyndon B. Johnson’s wife (two words)
36. ____ the Wonder a musical
37. state whose nickname is Land of Opportunity (abbr.)
38. not applicable (abbr.)
39. “is or not to is?” (one word)
40. the Netherlands (abbr.)
41. ____ below: lowest tides in a lunar month
43. Beethoven’s sixth symphony: the____
45. the area under the windshield of a car
46. cry of pain
49. about 28.35 grams
50. street (abbr.)
51. seated
54. as opposed to down
56. decorative stitches on a canvas
58. the knight’s move: ____ man
61. one if you’re in Spain
62. without light
63. in the ____ line (two words)
69. a solicitor, town crier
66. what the Californians called the Joads
67. across ____ Milano
68. Earth Systems Science (abbr.)
69. substance recently found in MCPS water fountains

Down
1. “Remember the ____!”
2. a species of European finches
3. girls’ summer swim wear
4. Russian king
5. as opposed to here
6. what sailors call a “compartment”
7. lit on fire
8. railway station (abbr.)
9. David Duchovny, Nicholas Cage, Brad Pitt, Matthew Perry, to name a few
10. Blair’s 2004 spring musical: The ____ (two words)
11. the WB drama ____ Tree Hill
12. want
13. saw 1 across
21. in the Bible, the prince of Midian, who was defeated by Gideon
22. rapid eye movement (abbr.)
28. From the New World, Pathétique, Eroica, Jupiter, to name a few
29. Spanish version of Mrs.
30. on the way: ____ route
31. Sicilian volcano: Mt.____
32. what you sometimes pay on a highway
33. “___ of liberty, of thee I sing…”
34. length x width
35. Blair a cappella group: ____ Nation (two words)
39. not good
42. Shakespearean comedy: ____ You Like It
43. an introduction to a musical piece
44. Dorothy’s dog
46. “Good day” in Spanish: ____ dias
47. actual completion date
48. ____ tides: lowest tides in a lunar month
49. Beethoven’s sixth symphony: the ____
50. street (abbr.)
51. seated
52. upper chambers of the heart, above the semilunar
53. make “oh, 16” sounds
54. southern California university (abbr.)
55. daytime talk show host: Dr.____
57. concludes
58. Fox reality series: American ____
60. whichever
64. do, in, my____

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Torneo de fútbol entre estudiantes

Juegos de fútbol de sala después de la escuela crean una alternativa positiva para algunos

Por Ria Richardson

Ndjip Armand del undécimo grado, corrió de un lado del gimnasio al otro entre defensores del otro equipo hacia el gol. Al llegar, Armand engancharía al portero y sin esfuerzo, patearía la pelota dentro del gol.

Con ese gol el equipo de Armand, los Hustlers lograrían ganar uno a cero contra los Rockers. Este juego es uno de los muchos que constituyen el torneo de fútbol (fútbol de sala) que está tomando lugar ahora.

Su comienzo

Aunque este torneo parece ser nuevo, fue empezado en el 1999. Según José Segura, un oficial de seguridad y organizador del torneo, él que estaba encargado del proyecto se fue y dejó hacerlo por dos años. Segura y Charles Wang, un profesor de ESOL y el otro organizador, revivieron el torneo después de hablar y conseguir el apoyo del director de la escuela Phillip Gainous.

Su incentivo para volver a iniciar los juegos era para proporcionar una alternativa positiva para estudiantes después de la escuela. “Una de las razones principales fue que veíamos a muchas actividades relacionadas a las pandillas en la escuela”, dice Segura.

Al principio querían crear torneos de fútbol y de baloncesto para los estudiantes pero no los respetos del director para ejecutarlo. “Inicialmente la visión era para hacerlo con el baloncesto y el fútbol, pero necesitábamos voluntarios”, comenta Segura.

¿A jugar?

El programa, como los organizadores querían, es un evento de estudiantes que se esperaran después de la escuela. “Sólo para salir de la escuela y jugar, es como un ejercicio rápido,” dice Armando Blanco del décimo grado y del Latin Squad.

Otros como Yenikah Fon, del grado once y de los Brothers United, le gusta jugar en el ambiente creado en el torneo. “Me gusta la vivacidad y la pasión con la que los muchachos compiten y su ambición es para ganar”.

La participación del departamento de ESOL ha creado un ambiente cómodo para muchos. Fon dice que la gente se siente más relajada porque para muchos de los atletas, el ambiente es conocido por ellos. “Es bueno porque uno puede relacionarse con ellos, especialmente si puedes hablar otro lenguaje”, expresa Fon.

Segura atribuye el alto porcentaje de estudiantes de ESOL porque vienen de “países que juegan fútbol” y que “ellos son a los que les gusta el fútbol”. También se dice que a los participantes no les importa el ambiente y que sólo quieren jugar.

¿Y las mujeres?

En todo el torneo, no existen equipos femeninos. “Yo conozco a muchachas que pueden jugar bien. Había un equipo de muchachas pero no tenían éxito”, comenta Blanco.

Fon es de la opinión que de las muchachas quizás tenían miedo a la competencia masculina. Para aliviar este problema, algunos quieren tener en el futuro un torneo de fútbol especialmente para muchachas.

Tensiones

Como muchos juegos, hay tensión entre algunos equipos. Blanco dice que los problemas se quedan en el campo y que “después todos se dan las manos”.

Una rivalidad que Segura ha notado es la que existe entre los Hustlers y los Brothers United. Segura dice que los dos equipos consisten de atletas talentosos. Se empezó cuando los Hustlers ganaron contra los Brothers United tres a cero. Su segundo juego resultó en un empate.

Con el campeonato acercándose, el 28 de mayo, Segura hace sus predicciones. “Yo creo que los Hustlers van a ganar. Ellos tienen un talentoso futbolista, Ndjip, es un buen jugador,” expresa Segura.

Hay muchos deseos para el futuro del torneo. Muchos como Segura y Fon son visionarios del juego y creen que el torneo va a llegar a un nivel en que los equipos dentro del condado pueden competir.

Nuevos estándares nutritivos

Blair sobre poblado el próximo año

El próximo año escolar, Blair estará sobre poblado por un promedio de 100 estudiantes, según el “Downcounty Consortium” (DCC). El alto número de estudiantes se debe a la popularidad de Blair entre los estudiantes del octavo grado en la zona del “downcounty”. Aunque Blair tendrá menos estudiantes en el noveno grado para el próximo año escolar que en este año, la población crecerá a 3.348 estudiantes. Este aumento es debido a que la clase del noveno grado consiste de más estudiantes y los del undécimo son más que los del duodécimo. Muchos de los estudiantes en el DCC obtuvieron su primera opción para venir a Blair y hay alrededor de 100 estudiantes esperando para ser aceptados en la escuela, según la vice presidenta del PTSa Kathi Yu. Yu agregó que la oficina del DCC no fue estricta con muchos estudiantes porque las zonas escolares han cambiado. Como resultado, se cree que el año que viene Blair va a tener 500 estudiantes sobre su capacidad de 400. Otras escuelas participando en el DCC son Einstein, Kennedy, Northwood y Wheaton. La meta del DCC es reducir las poblaciones en Einstein y en Kennedy y proporcionar diversas academias escolares en cada escuela para que los estudiantes puedan enfocar sus intereses. Según Bruce Crispell del DCC, cuando Northwood lake adquiera más estudiantes la población de Blair va a reducirse a alrededor de 2.000 estudiantes.

Nuevos estándares nutritivos

Según la nueva política creada por la Junta Directiva de Educación del condado de Montgomery (BOE), empezando en el otoño del 2004, las bebidas y meriendas vendidas en las máquinas expendedoras tienen que alcanzar los nuevos estándares nutritivos. Esta nueva acción del BOE está siguiendo el patrón nacional en el que las escuelas tratan de proporcionar comida más saludable para sus estudiantes. Este nuevo incentivo podría resultar en una pérdida de fondos para Blair porque las horas de operación de estas máquinas con meriendas y bebidas poco saludables han sido reducidas. Blair usa las ganancias de las máquinas para proporcionar dinero a los estudiantes necesitados.

Desde que la política del BOE fue implementada, las ganancias de la tienda escolar han bajado entre un 15 y un 20 por ciento. Bajo las nuevas reglas, las meriendas tienen que contener no más de siete gramos de grasa, dos gramos de grasa saturada y 15 gramos de azúcar. Las únicas bebidas que van a ser vendidas durante las horas escolares tendrán no menos de 20 por ciento de jugo de fruta, o bebidas isotónicas como Gatorade.

Por Ria Richardson

Las Noticias

La Esquina Latina includes translations and stories for the Latino community. Translated stories can be found at http://silverchips.mhsb.edu.


Fútbol de sala 2004

Los tres mejores equipos

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Vikings reject softball’s playoff bid

Strong start and valiant late-game comeback can’t compensate for fifth-inning mistakes

BY LUKE BOSTIAN

MAY 14, WHITMAN—

Tears flowed freely at the end of Blair’s heartbreaking 6-5 loss to the Whitman Vikings in the first round of the county playoffs. The loss was all the more painful because the Blazers, who had mercy-ruled Whitman earlier in the season, seemed to have the game in their grasp.

Despite a recently modified and untested lineup, Blair played a nearly flawless defensive game, missing only a fly ball that fell between seniors Rebecca Feiden and Marianne Epstein in right-center.

Offensively, however, the team seemed unable to hit into the gaps, with almost every strong hit going either foul or straight to a Whitman player. Coach Louis Hoelman traced the Blazers’ inability to produce runs early on to rough breaks at the plate. “Early on, when we had runners on base but we couldn’t get them across the plate, it wasn’t because of bad at-bats. It was just some tough luck,” he said.

The Blazers’ strong defense balanced out its shaky hitting early on, and Blair held a 3-0 lead by the start of the fifth inning. The Vikings went on a roll during the fifth, however, scoring all six of their runs in that inning. Freshman pitcher Michelle Linford suddenly fell out of her rhythm, allowing two runs and walking in a batter. Whitman also had three solid hits that, unlike the Blazers’, fell between fielders.

The score remained 6-3 through the sixth despite a double by freshman Anne Denenberg, but the Blazers began to come back in the seventh. Leadoff hitter and co-captain Amy Ernst walked and then sprinted to third on Feiden’s bunt. The next two batters struck out, but junior catcher Emily O’Brien walked and senior Katherine Epstein hit a double to score Ernst and Feiden. Suddenly it was 6-5, and the game seemed in reach, but freshman Shanté Henderson ground out to third.

Standing among his tearful players after the game, Hoelman expressed his pride in his team. “As a coach, all you can expect out of your players is that they give it their all,” he said. “They worked and tried so hard; the only sadness I feel is that it’s over, and that we’re too good for it to be over.”

“Vikings reject softball’s playoff bid”

Strong start and valiant late-game comeback can’t compensate for fifth-inning mistakes

BY LUKE BOSTIAN

MAY 14, WHITMAN—

Tears flowed freely at the end of Blair’s heartbreaking 6-5 loss to the Whitman Vikings in the first round of the county playoffs. The loss was all the more painful because the Blazers, who had mercy-ruled Whitman earlier in the season, seemed to have the game in their grasp.

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Basketball legend says good-bye

Two decades after leading girls’ b-ball to a state championship, coach retires from the court

Lindsey with his championship girls’ basketball team from 1982. Photo courtesy of William Lindsey

Indoor Soccer

May 13, Blazer Stadium—

When the horn sounded signaling the end of the game on May 13, the boys’ lacrosse team walked off of the field tired, angry and defeated. The Blazers lost 11-5 in their first-round playoff game to the Sherwood Warriors, marking the end of a disappointing season.

Despite ending the regular season with a 4-8 record, Coach Robert Gibbs was relatively pleased with the team’s performance level, saying that he had expected to have a poor season after losing a lot of key players in the attack and midfield to graduation last year. “Looking at the season as a whole and the talent of the team, we accomplished to the level that we could accomplish at,” said Gibbs, adding that the 4-8 loss to Magruder on May 4 could have gone either way. The season, which was plagued by inconsistent play in the defense, the inability of the offense to score and a number of mid-season injuries, was also characterized by a fair amount of smart play. “I think that at times this year, we moved the ball as well as we have in six years,” said Gibb of the team’s progress since the program started in 1998.

Regardless of the inconsistencies, Gibb did find one player on whom he could rely. Goalie junior Andrew Helgeson had the best game of his career against Sherwood, taking on 38 shots and saving 29 of them. According to Gibbs, Helgeson served as the “backbone” of the team all season because of his “willingness to win” and “intense determination.”

While Helgeson will return next year, the team will be losing seven seniors, among them, lead scorer and co-captain Josh Gottlieb-Miller, who finished the year with 31 goals and eight assists. Even though the seniors will be missed, Gibbs remains optimistic about the talent of next year’s team. “This season is about this season, but it’s also about next season,” said Gibb. “I think in that regard we were quite successful.”

Bittersweet close for boys’ lax

TEAM (AS OF MAY 24)

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Junior Josh Gottlieb-Miller passes defenders in the playoff match against Sherwood on May 13. The season ended 4-9. Photo by Adam Schuyler
Baseball out in second round

By ZACH MILLMAN

MAY 17, BLAZER STADIUM—

After a successful 13 win season, the Blazers ended their 2004 campaign on a low note, losing to a tough Sherwood team in a mercy-rule-shortened game, by a score of 12-2. The loss followed an 11-2 slaughter of Churchill on May 14. While the loss was unfortunate, it marks only the fourth time in eleven years of playoffs that the baseball team has advanced to the second round.

The Blazers claimed an early lead against the tough Sherwood team before losing control of the game. Senior co-captain Sam Boone, after a strong first inning, seemed to be a different pitcher in his second trip to the mound. He was not helped by his defense in the inning either. There were six Warrior runs in the inning, despite the fact that Boone only gave up one hit.

Boone was replaced by senior Jonas Wilson at pitcher. Wilson also struggled, going 2.1 innings allowing six hits and four runs. Senior Grant Staking finished the game.

Because the Blazers didn’t close the 10-run gap, play was called after the fifth inning.

Boone felt that Blair underperformed this season and is sad to be leaving the team and its players. “We’re a lot better than our record. We work real hard and we should have been better,” he said. “It was a good group of guys and I’ll miss playing with them.”

Coach John Macdonald believes that with the good combination of newcomers and veterans, the team may be successful next year. “I have high hopes for next season. We have a good crop of JV players coming up. We have six or seven returning players who are hard workers so they’ll be working over the summer,” he said.

Girls’ lacrosse leaves playoffs early

By JULIA PENN

MAY 13, BLAZER STADIUM—

In their first round playoff game, Blair’s girls’ lacrosse team failed to exact revenge on the Wootton Patriots, who beat the Blazers 11-8, ending the Blazers’ post-season after only one game.

The team struggled in the past few games, ultimately failing to equally talent opponents in several close matches. Although this year’s team was expected to be one of the strongest the program has seen since created six years ago, the loss put the Blazers at a 6-7 losing record for the season, not representative of the team’s talent.

In front of an enthusiastic crowd, the Blazers took on the Patriots for the second time in the week only to lose again in another closely-played match.

The lead flip-flopped several times during the game but Wootton came out ahead “controlling the tempo of the game,” according to coach Mike Horne.

Unfortunately, the loss went down as Blair’s last game of the season. “I’m sure we’ll see some of those seniors again,” Horne said.

Girls’ varsity basketball
Coach William Lindsey’s office walls are plastered with photos. Smiling former and current Blazers beam widely, harkening back to the earliest seasons of Lindsey’s 24-year career at Blair, a career which will draw to a close this year, as Lindsey ends a long and decorated chapter in the history of Blair athletics.

Lindsey, a guidance counselor at Blair, will retire from coaching basketball this year to the disapproval of players, students and fellow staff members alike. Lindsey’s career has garnered great success for Blair, including, perhaps most memorably, a 1982 State Championship.

Strong beginnings

Lindsey was born and raised in the Washington, D.C., area, attending D.C. public schools before graduating from Howard University. As a student at Howard, Lindsey played football and baseball and enjoyed basketball recreationally. The former college athlete got his start as a coach through work with a women’s recreational team and a girls’ church team. After several years with the D.C. government, Lindsey moved to Pennsylvania, where he spent two years working in a special admissions program at the Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

Lindsey came back to the Washington area looking for a job and was quickly hired by MCPS. He spent his next two years in an outreach program at Blair before becoming a guidance counselor. During those first two years, Lindsey coached football and girls’ track. In 1980, he switched to coaching varsity girls’ basketball. Lindsey chose to coach girls over boys because of previous experiences he had coaching teams of both sexes. “I had the experience with girls’ track,” he says, adding, “I’ve always felt, and I still feel, that young ladies are more open to coaching.”

It was a good combination of newcomers and veterans, the team may be successful next year. “I have high hopes for next season. We have a good crop of JV players coming up. We have six or seven returning players who are hard workers so they’ll be working over the summer,” he said.

Looking back on a legendary career

Coach Lindsey retires after 24 years coaching girls’ basketball team

By ELLIE BLALOCK

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