



BLAZER

Volume 8 Issue 4

February /March 2003

Dear Parents, Guardians, Students, and Other Members of our Blair Community:

The second semester of the 2002-2003 school year is well underway. This is a good time to take a minute and reflect on where we have been this year and to look at our goals for the rest of the school year. Seniors are making decisions about their futures and enjoying their last semester at Blair. Juniors are working hard at their courses and taking many tests! Sophomores are deciding how they want to spend the next two years at Blair and what they have to do to maximize their high school experience. Freshman should feel more comfortable at Blair and hopefully are adjusting to the work and the expectations of their teachers.

Registration is underway for next fall and parents are encouraged to help their students take a look at their choices. It is a good idea to find out as much as possible about the class selections now.

The Blair Parent/Teacher/Student Association (PTSA) chose to emphasize four areas this year. Progress is being made on all these areas, but can be hard to measure. The areas, with the progress to date, are as follows:

Academic Achievement: Are all our students learning what they will need to know in order to succeed after high school? Are students taking responsibility for their education-by attending school, completing assignments, participating in class and asking for assistance when they need help? New processes, curriculum changes and different teaching strategies are all in place. The School Improvement Plan includes measures to assess these changes. Data should be available later in the year.

Outreach and Communications: How can we involve more families in school activities? How can families find out school information? The PTSA listserv is a great communication tool, but only reaches 500 families. The PTSA has about 500 members. That is only one-sixth of our families. We can do better and would appreciate any help or suggestions.

Safety: How can our streets and sidewalks be improved to protect students? How can parents learn the safe way to drop off and pick up their students? Can drivers be made to obey traffic laws? The committee chaired by Prof. Harold MacDougall is identifying pedestrian safety issues. The appropriate state and county agencies are involved. Safety coordinators are in every cluster school and an education campaign is planned.

Respect: How can we all help create a school climate that is based on mutual respect between students, staff and parents? We think school climate improving, but would like your comments. Join our PTSA email list by sending a blank message from your computer to: blairptsanet-subscribe@yahoogroups.co or email Marilyn at shoefel@cais.net.

Parents have raised concerns about some other issues over the last few months. For example, "freak dancing" has occurred at school dances. The Student Government Association, PTSA, and school administration are producing guidelines for behavior and dress that will be given out when tickets are purchased for the next school dance.

The Counseling Advisory Committee is working with the Counseling Department to best ensure these services for all students. There will be a special PTSA meeting on April 3rd to ensure that parents of juniors get college application information from the Counseling Department.

The Downcounty Consortium is getting closer to reality. There are two pieces: first are the academic

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Montgomery Blair High School on the Web at www.MBHS.EDU

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programs that will be available at Blair, Wheaton, Kennedy, Einstein and Northwood (2004). The 9th Grade Academies continue to evolve and smaller learning communities will help engage and motivate all students. **Susan Ragan** can answer questions about Blair's academies sragan@mbhs.edu

Questions continue to be raised about our existing programs. Early in the process we made it clear that the Communications Arts Program and the Math/Science/Technology Program were totally separate from other programs developed and that they would maintain their current admission process and academic program. We hope that this will continue to be respected.

The second piece of the Downcounty Consortium is geographic: which elementary schools will be assigned to each high school's base area. An MCPS Facilities Committee has been meeting since January. The members are mostly representatives of each elementary school in the Blair, Einstein, Wheaton and Kennedy clusters. Middle and High Schools are not represented on the committee. Since the entire process was put in place to alleviate overcrowding at Blair and Einstein, it is expected that some Blair cluster elementary schools will be assigned to Northwood

HS. The public information meeting is on March 26, 2003, at Montgomery Blair HS, 7:30 pm, in the SAC.

Information on the Downcounty Consortium is on the MCPS webpage: www.mcps.k12.md.us/schools/downcounty

Other notes-remember the PTSA meetings are on the third Tuesday of every month at 7:30. Please come.

Our biggest fundraiser is coming up fast. The PTSA Silent Auction will be held during Blair Fair on April 25th and donations are needed. See page 5 for the donation form. The culmination of the year is the After Prom. We sponsor a late night party at Blair for students after the Prom. It is wonderful. Please put the date on your calendar: Saturday, May 24, 2003.

A limited number of yearbooks will be on sale after delivery. If you want one, the best way is to preorder. Forms are available from **Mr. Lee** in Room 146. The 2003 yearbook will be all color and is expected to sell out quickly.

Please remember - your participation in life at Blair is very important to our community and to your child. We hope to see you soon.

Marilyn Shoenfeld and Valerie Ervin, PTSA Presidents

Dear Parents,

Does your child ever come home with a tale or comment about a situation that happened at school that makes you wince when you hear it? Do you find yourself wondering whether you should investigate its truth, or just ignore it? There is the old adage, "the truth will set you free." The principal and his administrators urge parents to call and find out if there is more to the story. Each grade level has an administrator, every student has a counselor, and every department has a department head (also referred to as the resource teacher). If something is bothering you or you are unsettled by something related to high school, make that call. The school and your child will be well served by your openness and candor.

Linda Wanner, Assistant Principal

Senior Named Intel Science Talent Search Finalist

Senior **Anatoly Preygel** has been named a finalist in the 62nd annual Intel Science Talent Search. He is the only finalist in Maryland. He is among 40 national finalists in the talent search, in which high school seniors entered papers on their independent research projects in science, engineering, mathematics and computer science.

Preygel was named a finalist for his mathematics project, "Computation of Quandle Cocycle Knot Invariants." The project reported on his study of knot theory, which examines closed curves in three dimensions. The study of mathematical knot theory is the subject of increasing academic interest because of possible applications in physics, chemistry and genetics.

The finalists were selected from a group of 300 semifinalists, who, in turn, were chosen from among 1,581 applicants representing 47 states, the District of Columbia and the Virgin Islands. Blair HS had twelve semifinalist this year. See page 11 for additional article on the Intel Semifinalists.

The 40 finalists will travel to Washington, D.C., March 6-11 to attend the Science Talent Institute, where they will participate in final judging and other activities. The complete list of 40 finalists and their biographies are online at www.sciserv.org/sts/62sts/finalists.asp.

Blair Instructional Council Works Toward Improved Achievement for All Students

In a continuation of instructional efforts that began several years ago, Montgomery Blair's Instructional Council will spend second semester studying, researching, and discussing achievement and rigor for all students. By May 2003, the groundwork will be laid for our three focus areas for student achievement: instructional strategies, interventions, and relationship-building. Final decisions and implementation procedures will be determined during Instructional Council Week in mid-July.

Instructional Council started this process in January, when each council member chose an article to read on student achievement, and prepared to bring the salient points to our mid-year planning retreat later that month. Three study/work groups on student achievement will emerge from our January retreat: Instructional Strategies, Interventions and Personal Relationships.

Four instructional council meetings during the course of second semester will be devoted to additional study and planning in these three areas. We will ask teachers to join the three groups, and then include parents and students in these study/work groups.

Suzanne J. Harvey, Staff Development Teacher

Academy News

The first semester pilot of the freshman Connections course is complete, and student feedback is being used to make changes in the course for second semester. Through CX-Bridges software, career panels, academy-based projects, and college information, the students learned which courses at Blair would prepare them for their chosen field. For their culminating project, they developed presentations detailing their plans for the future.

During the registration process for next year, students will receive information about the new academy courses so that they may include these classes in their schedules. These courses will serve as preparation for on-campus and off-campus internships in the student's area of interest. Partnerships with community businesses, organizations, and post-secondary education institutions are being expanded in order to offer more students real-world experience in activities that will help them prepare for their future.

To learn more about the academies, contact **Susan Ragan** at 301-649-2880 or visit <http://academies.mbhs.edu>.

AOL Aspirations Grant

Montgomery Blair High School has been awarded a \$10,000 grant from America Online, Inc. that will be used to support Blair's Computer Giveaway, Diversity Workshop, Super Leaders and Home Base advisory programs during the 2002-03 school year. Blair is one of 12 high schools and middle schools in Maryland, Washington D.C. and Virginia to receive one of the inaugural AOL Aspirations Grants, which were designed to nurture the lifetime career aspirations of economically disadvantaged students, according to AOL officials. AOL announced the awards in December at a ceremony on Capitol Hill.

Blair will use the grant money to expand two well-established programs and to launch two new ones. The Computer Giveaway program, which last year provided Internet-ready computers to 80 needy families, will use the funding to purchase modems and other peripherals for up to 300 computers being donated to the program by Marriott, Inc. The Diversity Workshop, a program that seeks to dispel negative racial and ethnic stereotypes and provide leadership opportunities for all groups, will be able to train more leaders and conduct the workshop in more classes. The Super Leaders program, a student-to-student mentoring activity, will apply the funds toward a variety of enrichment opportunities for its students. The Home Base advisory program, which is being piloted with selected students this year, will use its funds to support the development of the program. Overall, these programs will reach up to 900 students. For more information about this year's grant recipients, visit www.AOLAspires.org.

Saturday Tutoring Program

Students are invited to join the Saturday Tutoring Program at Blair. Students can enroll as a student or as a tutor. The program is from 8:30 to 11 a.m. each Saturday, with the exception of MCPS holidays. Tutoring is free. Students bring materials in whatever subject they need help, and work under supervision with tutor assistance.

High school student volunteer tutors receive service learning hours credit. Please call **Cherie McGinn**, Social Studies Resource Teacher, at (301) 649-2852 for further details about enrolling or volunteering.

The Montgomery Blair PTSA Blazer

Printed by OmniPrint

Parent Volunteers:

Lani Sinclair
Leslie Goldstein
Janice Browne
Carol Lindeman

Next Deadline: March 15, 2003
Send copy to Kinglin@aol.com

Highlights from the December PTSA Meeting

Announcements

The new operating budget calls for position cuts. We need everyone's support in order to keep all the current positions at Blair.

The Base Area Study Process for the Down County Consortium will get underway in January.

The PTSA has \$12,692 in checking and \$16,636 in savings. Membership has exceeded its financial target at over \$11,000. The Citrus Sale grossed over \$9,000. Congratulations and thanks to **Chris Simpson** on this outstanding effort.

School Safety

Monica Ettinger, County Pedestrian Safety Representative, gave an update on pedestrian safety issues, the Safe Routes to School Program, and the process for making improvements, from hiring engineering firms to petitioning neighbors for change. The program hopes to train at least one person from each cluster school in order to expand the Safe Routes to School Program. It would also like to see speed limits lowered and additional signage and traffic lights around schools. We need to educate parents about the dangers of dropping off kids in the middle of the street instead of following the proper drop-off procedures.

Officer Joy Patil from the Montgomery County Police Department updated parents on school safety, police visibility, and the enforcement campaign to slow down traffic. She also discussed some of the recent incidents around the Blair community involving crimes against teens and steps we should take to ensure their safety. She emphasized the need to keep an open line of communication with our children, talked about safety issues regarding the Internet, and stressed the need for parents to be good role models for their children. She presented statistics on the increase in teen smoking, alcohol, and drug abuse when kids are unsupervised five days a week after school.

Elsie McGuire, Secretary

PTSA e-mail list and BEN

To subscribe to the PTSA discussion group, send a blank message to blairptsanet-subscribe@egroups.com. For *information only* messages posted by the PTSA presidents, send a blank message to: blairptsapresident-subscribe@egroups.com.

For Blair Education Network (BEN), go to BEN from the school web page at www.mbhs.edu. Fill out the on-line request form to receive a pin to join BEN as a Blair parent. If you have BEN questions, e-mail BENhelp@mbhs.edu.

2002-2003 PTSA OFFICERS

President	Marilyn Shoenfeld shoenfel@cais.net	301 587-6197
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	Karen Fishman	301 588-9691
Volunteer Coordinator	Carolyn Packer c_henrich@pta.org	301 681-0873
Web Master	Judy Scott opatik1@aol.com	301 445-4795

SILENT AUCTION DONATIONS

Our Annual Silent Auction will be held on Friday, April 25, in conjunction with Blair Fair and we need your donations. Your contribution doesn't need to be expensive or exotic (but if you insist, we don't mind). Would you be willing to donate lessons - computer skills or dance, music, voice, or sewing lessons? Maybe your professional services, or an item from your inventory? How about a weekend getaway at your cabin/beach house? Ever heard of re-gifting (the art of passing on those unwanted gifts that you received for the holidays)? Now that you've got the idea, you can contribute to the success of Blair's Silent Auction. Need more suggestions? How about gift certificates; tickets to sports events/shows; handmade crafts; movie passes; gardening; pet sitting; or a theme basket. Whatever you have to offer, we can use to help our school. Donation information received by March 31 will be included in the auction catalog and all contributors will be acknowledged at the auction. Please use the form below to make your contribution, or contact Elsie McGuire at (301) 587-0510 (home); (202) 496-7541 (work) or by email: emcguire@mckennalong.com to arrange your donation or for more information.

**Montgomery Blair High School
Parent-Teacher-Student Association
Silent Auction Donation Agreement
Friday, April 25, 2003**

Name of Donor _____ Phone _____

Parent/grandparent/friend of _____

Blair Student

Address _____

Description of donated Item(s)/Service(s) _____

Value of item(s)/service(s) _____

This offer is valid from _____ through _____
Date *Date*

Unless the donated item (tickets, gift certificates, etc.) is enclosed, this signed form will be considered the official document for redemption. Donation enclosed? (CIRCLE ONE) **Yes** **No**

The undersigned agrees to donate the above mentioned contribution to the Montgomery Blair High School Parent-Teacher-Student Association. This donation will be used at the silent auction on April 25, 2003. A complete list of donors and their contributions will be listed in the auction program.

Signature of Donor _____ Date _____

**RETURN COMPLETED FORM TO: MONTGOMERY BLAIR HIGH SCHOOL,
ATTN: PTSA SILENT AUCTION, 51 UNIVERSITY BLVD E., SILVER SPRING, MD 20901-2451**

From the Parent/Community Coordinator...

Now that the second semester is underway, I'd like to remind parents of the continuing importance of being involved in their children's schools.

Give your children 15 minutes, and you can change their lives. That's the message that Maryland schools are sending to parents through a program called "Take 15 for Family: Building a Lifetime of Learning." The state's education department is working with libraries to increase awareness of the importance of parent involvement, and asking parents to spend just 15 minutes a day talking about school. We know parents' schedules are busy, but one thing every parent can do to help increase student achievement is a simple activity that won't take more than a few minutes.

Parents each day can ask their child one question about school that cannot be answered with a simple yes or no. Who was your favorite character in the book? Why? Tell me an interesting fact you learned in social studies. Parents can promote learning even if they didn't finish school themselves. The key is to make these 15-minute sessions a daily habit. When children see that their parents care about their schoolwork, they soon reflect that concern. If they believe no one cares about how they do in school, they stop caring.

The next Hispanic parent meeting at the Long Branch Community Center will be April 9 — mark your calendars. Mrs. Charlain Bailey, one of our counselors, will address your concerns about preparing your child for life after high school, whether it is for college or the work force. Emphasis will be placed on juniors preparing for their senior year.

Beatriz Mendoza (301)649-2821

Ahora que ya ha comenzado el segundo semestre quiero recordarles la importancia de continuar participando en las escuelas de sus hijos.

Dele a sus hijos 15 minutos y puede cambiar sus vidas. El estado de Maryland está comenzando un programa llamado "Dele 15 minutos a su familia: Construyendo una vida de aprendizaje" y está colaborando con las bibliotecas para educar a los padres sobre la importancia de su participación en la educación de sus hijos. Los padres pueden dedicarles 15 minutos al día para platicar sobre la escuela. Sabemos que los padres pasan muy ocupados y su tiempo es limitado, pero algo que pueden hacer y no toma mucho tiempo es hacerles una pregunta sobre la escuela que ellos no puedan contestar con un simple sí ó no todos los días. ¿Cual es tu personaje favorito en el libro que leíste? ¿Por qué? Dime algo interesante que aprendiste en historia. Los padres pueden promover la educación aún cuando ellos no terminaron la escuela. Lo importante es hacer estos 15

minutos un hábito diario. Cuando los hijos ven que los padres se interesan en sus estudios, ellos también demuestran interés. Si ello creen que su trabajo de la escuela no le importa a los padres ellos dejan de interesarse también. Poco a poco los padres pueden ayudar a sus hijos a entender la importancia de una buena educación.

La próxima reunión para los padres hispanos en el Centro Comunitario Long Branch, será el 9 de abril. La Sra. Charlain Bailey, una de las consejeras, explicará como preparar a los estudiantes del grado 11 para su último año escolar. También contestará preguntas sobre la preparación para la universidad o trabajo después de graduarse.

New Grading Policy Proposed

On January 14, the Board of Education tentatively approved a revised grading and reporting policy. The revisions are directed toward making grades consistent across the school system, and bringing them into alignment with new Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) curriculum and state assessments. The policy and accompanying regulations encompass a variety of areas including weight of the final exam, interims, attendance, components of a grade, and feedback to parents and students.

The revised policy is based on four broad goals:

- Grades should be consistent across classrooms, levels, courses, and schools.
- Grading practices should provide useful information to teachers on instructional decisions and include frequent and meaningful feedback to parents and students.
- Grades should be descriptive rather than punitive.
- Grades should align with the curriculum.

Community meetings have been scheduled during the 60-day public comment period. Staff members from the MCPS Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs and Office of Shared Accountability will provide information on proposed changes for parents, students, community members, teachers, and other school staff.

The meetings are scheduled from 7:30-9 pm Wednesday, February 12 at Gaithersburg High School and Thursday, February 13 at Montgomery Blair High School.

For more information on the proposed changes, go to the MCPS web site at: www.mcps.k12.md.us/cfms/departments/info/pressreleases or contact **Jody Silvio**, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, at 301-279-3522.

New Enrollment Areas for Downcounty High Schools

In preparation for the reopening of Northwood High School in fall 2004 and to relieve overcrowding at Blair and Einstein High Schools, the Downcounty Consortium Base Area Advisory Committee began meeting in January to study and evaluate options for revised high school enrollment areas. The high schools involved in this study process include Blair, Einstein, Kennedy, Wheaton, and Northwood. Committee representatives were selected by the PTAs at each elementary school that advance to the four existing high schools. The middle and high schools do not have official representation on the committee, so Blair and its three feeder middle schools will be represented by committee members with older children and the cluster PTA coordinators.

At a January 15 meeting, the committee brainstormed and consolidated criteria to be used in evaluating the base area options, which will be formulated by MCPS staff. The criteria included: balance demographics for all high schools, don't split elementary service areas among more than one high school, maximize walkers and minimize use of MCPS transportation, don't split communities, and have contiguous base areas. The "building blocks" that will be used to put together the base area options will be based on current elementary school service areas. Paired schools, such as Montgomery Knolls and Pine Crest, will be considered one building block. Elementary and middle school boundaries will not be changed.

The Base Area Committee meetings are open to anyone who wants to attend, but only official representatives are allowed to participate in the main discussion. Questions and comments from observers are taken at the end of the meeting and on a written feedback form. The meetings will be held at E. Brooke Lee Middle School (off Kemp Mill near Arcola Avenue) from 7:30 to 9:30 pm on January 29, February 19, March 5, March 12, and April 2. A public information meeting will be held on March 26 at 7:30 pm at Blair High School in the Student Activities Center (SAC). The base area options will be presented and there will be an opportunity for audience questions. Participants will be encouraged to submit written comments, which will be compiled and included in the committee report to Superintendent Weast.

Information on the proposed base area options and on the base area process is available on the MCPS web site at: www.mcps.k12.md.us/departments/planning/communityinfo.htm. In addition, information will be posted on the Blair PTSA listserv and discussed at monthly Blair PTSA meetings. For additional information, contact Sally Taber, Blair parent and cluster coordinator, at 301-270-0131 or sataber@mindspring.com.

PTSA Donations Approved *Parent donors can give thousands to specific schools*

Jared Sagoff, Silver Chips Managing News Editor
(Reprinted from Silver Chips)

The Montgomery County Board of Education (BOE) passed on Nov 21 a modified version of a controversial resolution that will allow parents or corporations to make private donations to MCPS schools. The BOE voted 6-1 to pass the measure, which it believes "establishes ground rules" for private donations to individual schools, according to BOE President Pat O'Neill.

Supporters of the policy believe it will give schools an additional source of revenue aside from the MCPS budget, while opponents fear the resolution will increase the inequalities in funding between schools in more affluent and in poorer areas.

Prior to the vote, no BOE guidelines regulated private donations to public schools for physical improvements. The previous policy banned only donations used for such purposes as raises for teachers, funds for purchasing new textbooks and money for electronic equipment that would give one school an educational advantage over others.

The new policy will allow individuals or corporations to provide funds for physical improvements that qualify as "capital investments," according to the MCPS website. These include such items as sports equipment but not new classrooms. Gymnasiums may be funded by private organizations as long as the gyms are available to the community at large. The BOE must specifically approve all projects that involve more than \$50,000 obtained from outside funds.

Northwood High School Update

Planning for the reopening of Northwood High School in fall 2004 will take on a more concrete form in the next two months, as a new principal will be interviewed and hired by early February, with a start date anticipated by early March. A facility design committee has begun meeting to discuss and make recommendations on the proposed renovations to Northwood.

Meetings are currently scheduled at 7:30 pm in the Northwood cafeteria on January 22, February 5, February 18, March 6, and March 19. The meetings are open to the public. If you are interested in participating, please come to a meeting or contact James Song, Northwood Project Manager for MCPS, at 301-548-7542 or James_Song@mcpsmd.org.

Counseling Advice and News

- PSAT results were returned to 11th graders the first week in January, and to 9th and 10th graders in early February. Ask your student for the score report and the materials the counselor gave him or her.

Attention Parents of Seniors:

- By this time, all seniors should have met with their counselors to discuss post-secondary plans. The counselors are able to help students and parents plan for the next steps for college and career.
- Students who have applied to college should now complete the FAFSA form for financial aid for college. Go to www.fafsa.ed.gov or see Mrs. Williams in the Career Center.

Attention Parents of Juniors:

- Second semester juniors should plan to take a standardized college admissions test this spring to help determine readiness to attend college. Registration information for the SAT I, SAT II, TOEFL and ACT is available in the Career Center or online at www.collegeboard.com and www.act.org. Registration deadlines are February 28 for April 5 SAT I, May 2 for June 7 SAT I and II, March 7 for April 12 ACT, May 9 for June 14 ACT.
- Counselors will be coming to classrooms in March to give juniors information about college and career readiness and planning. Students will receive a packet of information to help them begin the process of researching colleges and careers, and make intelligent decisions about their future plans.

Director of Counseling Services - Ms. Karen Hunt
Secretaries - Ms. Haughton, Ms. Gates and Ms. Shub
Registrar - Ms. Waring

Assistants - Ms. Conway, Ms. Wong
and Ms. Sinclair

Special Program Counselors

CAP - Ms. Battle
Magnet - Ms. Wood (A-K) and Ms. Wiseman (L-Z)
Special Ed. - Mr. Lindsey
ESOL - Ms. Ceide

Regular Education Counselors

Grade 9 - Mr. Spears (A-J) and Ms. Carrasco (K-Z)

Grades 10-12

Ms. Taylor (A-C),	Ms. Johnson (D)
Mr. Lindsey (E-G),	Ms. Wood (H-I)
Mr. Campbell (J-Ng)	Ms. Johnson (Nh-Pe)
Ms. Bailey (Pf-Tr)	Ms. Wiseman (Ts-Z)

Counseling Service Department: 301 649-2810

Attention Parents of 9th – 11th graders:

Registration for next year's classes is underway. Counselors are distributing course bulletins and registration information during English classes February 6-12. Students will have about 10 days to review the course offerings. Counselors will then meet with each student to assure that his/her course choices meet the graduation requirements and the requirements for his/her chosen career pathway.

Parents can help by reviewing the course materials and helping students choose appropriate level courses. Recommendations are required for some honors and advanced level courses. These recommendations will be given to the student with his/her registration materials. If you have questions or concerns about recommendations, please call the resource teacher of the appropriate department (see below).

Parents should also be aware that auditions are required for some advanced music courses, and pre-requisites must be met for certain classes. Use the key on the course registration card and follow the symbols to determine pre-requisites. When listing alternate courses, students should list them in order of priority. Alternate courses will be assigned if classes are cancelled, or have filled early; upperclassmen will receive priority. A parent signature is required on the course registration form.

The deadline for choosing courses is February 24, 2003. Please make sure your student has completed the registration form by that date to be ready to discuss course choices with the counselor.

Registration options and information will be discussed at the PTSA Meeting on Tuesday, February 18, 7:30 p.m. in the SAC. Please try to attend.

Further information about the events and programs of the Blair High School Counseling Office may be found at our new web site, just developed this winter. Go to www.mbhs.edu and click on the Counseling links.

Blair's Resource Teachers

Business	Ms. Zinnie Pinckney	301 649-2875
CAP	Ms. Dee D'Angelo	301 649-2854
English	Ms. Vickie Adamson	301 649-2856
ESOL	Mr. Joe Bellino	301 649-2861
Fine Arts	Ms. Janet Matthews	301 649-2843
For. Language	Mr. Joseph Lynch	301 649-2867
Magnet	Ms. Eileen Steinkraus	301 649-8240
Math	Ms. Barbara Hofman	301 649-2869
Science	Ms. Jennifer Kempf	301 649-8246
Social Studies	Ms. Cherie McGinn	301 649-2851
Special Ed	Ms. Lisa Davisson	301 649-2849
Tech Ed	Mr. Robert Hopkins	301 649-2844

Counseling Advisory Committee

The PTSA Counseling Advisory Committee (CAC) is meeting monthly with **Karen Hunt**, head of the Blair Counseling Department. At last month's meeting, the committee agreed to host a Parent Information Meeting on April 3rd, 7-8:30 p.m. in the SAC, for interested parents to hear from Blair counselors and get advice and information on the college application process at Blair.

The Counseling Department and Career Center will be open during Blair Fair on April 25. If you have never visited the Career Center, this is a great opportunity to check out this important resource.

Parents, especially parents of juniors, are encouraged to visit the College Fair on April 22nd, 6-9 p.m. at the Montgomery County Maryland Agricultural Center, (exit 11 from I-270). Students will be given information forms later in March so they can attend the College Fair during school hours.

Parents who are interested in helping in the Counseling Department, please call the counseling office at (301) 649-2810 to volunteer.

Sign up for AP Tests Now

Students planning to take Advanced Placement exams in May must register and pay for the exams in February. Order forms are available in the counseling office. The registration, with payment of \$80 per test, will take place from February 3-14. Forms will only be accepted during lunch or after school till 3:00 p.m. in the school counseling office. Orders for exams submitted from February 17-21 will incur a \$10 late fee; from February 24-28, there is a \$20 late fee. Orders are subject to availability from the AP testing service. Any questions regarding the AP Tests should be referred to Mr. Campbell, AP Testing Coordinator at (301) 649-2810.

Study Skills Program for High School Students

University of Maryland College Park is offering The College-Bound Program, a study skills program for high school students. This program will be held on Mondays, February 24 - May 19, from 4:30 - 6:30 p.m. in Room 2201, Shoemaker Building. The Learning Assistance Service offers individualized programs, developed through one-on-one counseling, and group workshops in reading, listening and note-taking, time management, and other skills needed to succeed in college. The cost is \$250 (\$125 for children of faculty and staff). For more information on this program, call Shirley Browner, (301) 314-7702 or e-mail sb54@umail.umd.edu

Career Center News

Eye On the Future:

Taking a Closer Look at Your Career Pathway

Sharon Williams, Career Information Coordinator

iApply

If you're the parent of a student planning to attend college, you probably want to guide your child as he/she considers different college options, completes applications and makes payment plans. Fortunately, you can help put a college plan into action, even if today's college planning seems like a new world to you. iApply has simplified the process by highlighting the key areas in which you can help. Paying for College; www.iapply.bridges.com/parents/pay_col.htm, Applying to College; www.iapply.bridges.com/parents/app_col.htm, and Preparing for College; www.iapply.bridges.com/parents/pre_col.htm

Weekend Programs for Student Volunteers

Student service learning hours needed but no time during the week? Then check out the Weekend and Evening (W/E) Volunteer Program. The W/E KAN (Kids Action Network) Weekend/Evening Volunteer Program provides supervised group student service learning and community service projects for middle and high school students. All W/E and W/E KAN Volunteer projects are Student Service Learning approved. They are designed for busy people who have a desire to serve their community, but who must fit volunteering into tight schedules. Visit the web site at <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/siteHead.asp?page> to review the calendar of opportunities. If you have any questions about the W/E KAN Volunteer Program, please call Adam Luecking at (240) 777-2621 or via e-mail at adam.luecking@co.mo.md.us.

continued on page 10

PTSA Special Meeting for Parents of Juniors

**April 3, 2003
7:00-8:30 p.m. In the SAC.**

Karen Hunt, Director of Counseling Services will go over the college application process, touching on deadlines, paperwork, and resources. Parents of sophomores and freshmen are also welcome to attend.

Career Center *continued from page 9* Employment Possibilities

Looking for a job? Check out these great web sites:

Montgomery Youth Works at
www.montgomeryyouthworks.com/

Federal Government Student Employment Temporary and Summer Opportunities at www.studentgovernment.gov

Great for finding entry-level jobs.
www.employmentguide.com

Scholarship and Financial Aid Update

Seniors and parents: the Maryland State Scholarship deadline is MARCH 1st. That means your FAFSA must be filed by that date and any state scholarship/grant application must be postmarked by that date. For additional information on state programs such as the Guaranteed Access Grant; The Educational Assistance Grant; and Hope, Senatorial, and Delegate Scholarships visit <http://www.mhec.state.md.us/SSA/progdesc.htm>

You should also check to see if your college or university requires you to file the CSS Profile, another financial aid form type. Visit www.collegeboard.com to see the list and register if necessary.

Scholarship Opportunities

The Bernie Scholarship Awards Program.

The Bernie is a scholarship fund to assist people of low income and moderate income who live in Montgomery County, Maryland, and who receive housing assistance from the Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC) or live in housing owned or managed by Edgewood Management Corporation or by Montgomery Housing Partnership. It is open to residents who have been out of school and seek vocational or academic training as well as for residents currently in an educational program—high school, college/vocational—or who are planning for college. Awards will assist with tuition and/or school related expenses. Total income cannot exceed \$45,000. Deadline: April 1st.

Hope Scholarship Program

Maryland's HOPE Scholarship Program consists of four awards that provide financial assistance to Maryland students who plan to attend an eligible institution in Maryland and study in an eligible program. Students must have earned a cumulative, unweighted 3.0 GPA to be eligible. Students are then ranked by GPA and awards are contingent on the availability of funds. (Last year, the initial GPA cut-off was 3.54 for the HOPE Teacher Award and 3.66 for the General Scholarship.) The general scholarship has a \$95,000 family income limit. Awards range from

\$5,000/year for the teacher scholarship at a four-year institution, to \$3,000/year for the general scholarship at a four-year institution. Application forms are now available in the Career Center. Deadline: March 1st.

Society of Women Engineers

Baltimore-Washington Section (BWS) announce the 2003 Scholarship Program. This scholarship program was developed to encourage young women their senior year of high school to pursue engineering as a career. They offer two different types of scholarships. For additional information go to www.swe-bws.org for the local scholarship (deadline: March 1st) and www.swe.org for the national scholarship (deadline: May 15th).

Dwight Jacobus Scholarship

This is for students who plan to major in education or business and attend a Maryland college or university. Applications are in the Career Center.

"7-11" Education is Freedom National Scholarship Program

These are college scholarships ranging from \$500 - \$5,000 to high school seniors or graduates, age 24 and under. Visit the web site for detailed information at www.educationisfreedom.org

Don't forget to visit the MCPS CIC Scholarship Database for updates at... http://filemaker.mcps.k12.md.us/scholarships/default_home.htm

UPCOMING Visits & Trips

Allegany College of Maryland will again host a "Day at Allegany" for Blair seniors on February 26th. Allegany College of Maryland is a two-year community college in Cumberland, MD. Allegany offers students an opportunity to earn an Associate Degree or Certificate in a variety of career areas with the chance to transfer to a four-year institution. See Ms. Williams for permission slip and guidelines.

Montgomery College will visit Blair on February 10th during A/B Lunches. Seniors considering attending Montgomery College should attend this important meeting in the Career Center for information regarding the application process, non-citizenship issues regarding tuition, scholarship availability and financial aid. Students who turn in their completed MC application to the Career Center by March 1, 2003 will have the \$25.00 application fee waived.

The Vault

Parents may be surprised to learn that there is a bank on Blair Boulevard. The bank is a branch of the Montgomery County Teachers Federal Credit Union and is operated by students through the Business Department. Formerly called the In-School-Branch, the bank has a new name, the Vault. The new name was selected in a school-wide contest and the winner, **Mai-Quyen Huynh**, received a \$25 gift certificate. The Vault is open during lunch, two days a week (Wednesday and Thursday). Through the end of February, students who open a new account at the Vault will receive a \$10 gift certificate from Borders or Starbucks. For more information on the services available from the MCT Federal Credit Union, see the website at www.mctfcu.org.

Student Service Learning

Encourage your student to submit all of his/her volunteer service for their high school SSL record. Every Blair student must perform 60 hours of community service for graduation. Don't worry if the hours submitted do not appear immediately on the report card. There is often a delay of one or even two marking periods for hours to be reflected. Students can determine their current SSL hour totals or get SSL forms by visiting **Mr. Hopkins** in room 120 during lunch. For a list of pre-approved agencies and organizations for future service activities, see the website, www.mcps.k12.md.us/departments/pupilservices/studentsevicelearning/approved.htm. Students who earn at least 260 hours will receive a Certificate of Merit that is noted on their high school transcripts.

Student Government Report

The SGA (Student Government Association) held a November blood drive and a December community service day. The community service event was held on Saturday, December 14, and students from the general student body were enlisted to join the SGA in creating over 100 cards and candygrams for the benefit of Saint Anne's Home and to sing for nursing home residents.

The SGA is holding a Leadership Conference on February 5. This student-run event is designed to encourage Blair students to develop their leadership potential and to become more involved in their community. The SGA is pleased to announce that they have donated \$500 to Children's Hospital. There will be another Blood Drive at Blair in the spring.

Recycle Ink Cartridges

Recycle Ink will give the PTSA \$1 for every empty ink jet, laser printer and fax machine cartridge we collect. Although most cartridges are recyclable, Recycle Ink does not accept Epson and Brother cartridges. Bring or send empty cartridges to the main office during regular school hours.

Athletic Boosters

The Blair Athletic Boosters meet on the first Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m. in the SAC. Interested parents are invited to attend. Parents who can help the Boosters by volunteering to work in the concession stands during home athletic events, please contact **Jill Woo** via e-mail to Jillwoo@aol.com.

Magnet Arts Night

The date for the 14th annual Magnet Arts Night has been changed. A wonderful evening of music, dance, drama, and athletics showcasing some of the amazing talent of our students, this event will be held on Thursday, February 27, at 7:00 p.m. in the auditorium. Admission is free, although donations to the Michael Vaccaro Scholarship Fund will be appreciated. In years past, this has been a standing-room-only event, so be sure to arrive early to get a seat.

Note to Parents

The administrative office staff would like to thank parents for their cooperation. Thank you for not asking us to interrupt class time to deliver messages or personal items to students. Also, please be sure that your students do not have financial obligations (e.g., library fines, towel fees, lost textbook costs, or replacement ID charges). Students with outstanding obligations will not be allowed to buy Prom tickets, obtain student parking permits, or receive their diploma at graduation exercises.

Renaissance Report

The Renaissance Committee continues to award student, staff and teacher-of-the-week awards that are based on community nominations. Blair administrators are awarding "Free French Fries" coupons to students who are "doing well." The coupons are redeemed in the lunch line, and students who put their names on the back of the coupons will be entered in a drawing for a school sweatshirt. The end-of-year Awards Night will be held in May. If you are interested in helping with planning for the Awards Night or in finding out more about the Renaissance Committee, contact **Tricia Anderson** at (301) 649-2851 or via e-mail to Patricia_Anderson@fc.mcps.k12.md.us.

Still Time to Sign up for Giant's A+ BonusBucks

The A+ BonusBucks program is so automated now that it is easy to forget that there is one step still required of us. That step is to register your Bonus card number and designate the school(s) you want to support (Blair's code is 00906), which can be done either at a store or online at www.giantfood.com. It is a good idea to double check to see if you are signed up. Then just remember to present your card whenever you shop at Giant. At this time, we only have 376 donors and \$1,544 in our account. The program continues until April 5, 2003.

News from the Band Boosters and Instrumental Music Department

Our student musicians have had a very busy fall. Jazz Band B and the Concert Band performed at Blair on January 7 to a very satisfied audience. In December, Jazz Band A competed in the MCPS Jazz Festival and scored the highest rankings. Jazz Band A will participate in the second annual Maryland Jazz Conference on January 31 and February 1 at William McDaniel College.

Congratulations to the following students who were selected to the Maryland All-State Band and/or Orchestra: **Janice No, Kristin Hoven, Adedeji Ogunfolu, Kurt Schewe, James Gao, and Elizabeth Kim.** They will be performing at the Baltimore Convention Center on February 23 at the Maryland Music Educators Conference. Special congratulations go to **Kristin Hoven, Elizabeth Kim, and Kurt Schewe,** who were selected to the All-Eastern United States Band and/or Orchestra. They will be performing in Providence, R.I., on March 9. Congratulations also go to **Lena Yoo, Kristin Hoven, Greg Jukes, Samantha Hong, and Janice No,** who made the MCPS Honors Band and/or Orchestra. The Honors Bands and Orchestras will be performing a Gala Concert at Wootton High School on February 8.

A free concert will be held in the Band Room at Blair on February 20 at 7:30 p.m. featuring Blair students who are participating in the MCPS Solo and Ensemble Festival. The MCPS Solo and Ensemble Festival will be held on February 28 and March 1. The next first Thursday concert of the month at Blair will be moved to Tuesday, March 4th. It will feature the Orchestra and Symphonic Band.

A reminder — the Band Boosters are meeting on the second Wednesday of each month.

Dance Down Memory Lane

Saturday evening, April 26 is the annual Band Booster fundraiser! Look for details on the PTSA list-serve or contact **Susan Crawford** at Susancrawford@aol.com

Japanese Educators Visit Blair

*Annie Peirce, Silver Chips Online Managing Editor
Reprinted from Silver Chips Online*

Nine delegates from various schools in suburban Tokyo visited Blair on January 9 to learn about the United States' methods of encouraging student community service and individual motivation for learning.

The delegates were shown around the school by seniors **Matthew Yalowitz, Annie Peirce,** and Japanese-speaker **Fumino Tamaki.** Only two of the delegates spoke English, so the rest relied heavily on Tamaki and the delegation's professional Japanese translator Risa Marbarg.

The delegation's main goal is to see how American schools encourage students to participate in community service, and then to try to use American techniques to inspire Japanese students.

The Wall of Honor

Purchase a plaque for the Wall of Honor
and commemorate your student's years at Blair!

The plaques are sold by the Blair Spirit Club
and are tax deductible. The funds raised are used to
support Montgomery Blair High School.

There are three sizes available:

small 3 5/8 x 1 3/4: max 3 lines of 25 letters / \$20

med 4 7/8 x 2 3/8: max 3 lines of 25 letters / \$50

large 6 3/8 x 3 3/8: max 4 lines of 25 letters / \$100

For more information
call Susan Madden at 301 649-2831.

Spring Musical

WEST SIDE STORY

March 28th, 29th at 7:30 & 30th at 2:00, April 4th and 5th at 7:30 p.m.

tickets \$4-\$8 -- available at the door

CALENDAR ***FEBRUARY**

- 7 Report Cards Distributed
Montgomery Blair Science Fair
- 11 Early Release day
- 13 9th grade parent meeting; 7:00 PM
- 17 Holiday; Presidents' Day
- 18 **PTSA Meeting;** 7:30 PM; SAC
- 20 Band Concert, band room, 7:30
- 21-22 Wrestling Tournament at Blair
- 27 Magnet Arts Night; 7:00 PM; Auditorium

MARCH

- 4 Band Concert
- 18 **PTSA Meeting;** 7:30 PM; SAC
- 19 NO SCHOOL, Professional Day
- 27 Magnet Research Convention
- 28-29 Spring Musical, 7:30 PM, Auditorium
- 30 Spring Musical, 2:00 PM, Auditorium

APRIL

- 1 End of marking period, Early Release day
- 2 Early Release day
- 3 11th grade parent Meeting, 7:00 PM, SAC
- 4-5 Spring Musical, 7:30 PM, Auditorium
- 8 Maryland Functional Math Test - 2 hour delay
- 9 Hispanic Parent Meeting, 7:00 PM, Long Branch CC
- 10 Report Cards Distributed
- 14-18 NO SCHOOL, Spring Break
- 22 **PTSA Meeting;** 7:30 PM; SAC
- 22-23 Countywide College Fair
- 25 **Blair Fair & Silent Auction**
- 26 Band Boosters Fund Raising Dance

MAY

- 5-13 Advanced Placement Tests
- 14 9th grade parent meeting; 7:00 PM
- 19-23 High School Assessments
- 20 **PTSA Meeting;** 7:30 PM; SAC

Maryland Invites Blair Families to Annual Open House

The University of Maryland, College Park, is opening its doors on Saturday, April 26th, 2003, for the fifth annual Maryland Day. Alumni and their families, parents, and prospective students are all welcome to participate in this free event. From 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., the campus will buzz with activity as visitors join students, faculty, staff and their families for a day where there will be something for everyone to experience and explore. For more information, go to the website, www.marylandday.umd.edu.

Teens have IMPACT

DC IMPACT offers classes for high school students. They teach the basics of self-defense — prevention, assertiveness, limit-setting, and physical skills — tailored to the life situations and needs of today's teens. Each class includes 12 hours of instruction. A coed class will be held February 28-March 2; a class for teen girls will run June 27-29. The classes are open to all students, and will be held at Edmund Burke School, 2955 Upton Street NW, Washington. For more information, contact DC IMPACT at 301-588-0217 or visit the website, www.dcimpact.org.

Contingency Plan

Under Maryland law, the school system is required to have students attend 180 school days. Montgomery County scheduled 184 this year, and already the four additional days have been used for weather emergencies. If the school year is disrupted by emergencies and schools are closed, additional school days will be added to the end of the school year in June. For more information on snow closures, contingency plans, and updates on the school calendar, see the MCPS web page at www.mcps.k12.md.us/info/calendars.html

School Calendar for 2003-2004

The Board of Education approved the school calendar for the 2003-2004 school year. The first day of school for students will be Tuesday, August 26, 2003. The last day of school for students will be Wednesday, June 16, 2004. The calendar includes 13 holidays, including one mandated presidential primary day on March 2, 2004, and a spring break April 5 – 8, 2004.

"Diamonds in the Rough"

A national conference on "Diamonds in the Rough: Practical Strategies for Uncovering the Brilliance of Gifted Underachieving Students" will be held on March 21-22, 2003, at the University of Maryland Shady Grove Campus. More than 50 sessions, including a Saturday program for students, are scheduled. For more information, go to www.diamonds-in-the-rough.org or call (301) 517-5004.

Support the Blair Athletic Boosters

Annual Mulch Sale

It's that time of year again and the Blair Athletic Boosters are ready to deliver bags of hardwood mulch to that spot in your yard. Let us do the lifting for you.

Delivery/pick up dates: **March 28, 29 and 30, 2003**

Type: 3 cubic foot bags
of treated shredded hardwood mulch

Cost: For pick up - \$3.55 per bag
For delivery - \$ 3.75 per bag
(within a 10 mile radius of Blair)

To order by phone:
301-649-2841/athletic office
(Leave a message for Coach Short with your
order, name, phone number, and address)

by e-mail: James_v._short@fc.mcps.k12.md.us

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

NUMBER OF BAGS: _____

TOTAL COST: \$ _____

mail to: Montgomery Blair High School
Jimmy Short / Mulch Sale
51 University Blvd., East
Silver Spring, Md 20901

Please make all checks payable to: Blair Athletic Boosters (Mulch Sale)

Valentine's Dance Planned

Parents who are interested in helping at the Valentine's Day Dance on Friday, February 14th, contact Mr. Short at James_V._Short@fc.mcps.k12.md.us or call 301 649-2849.

Sports News

Mid-February brings the close of a very exciting winter athletic season for the Blazer sports teams that have enjoyed varying degrees of success. The Indoor track season is complete, as are the swim and dive seasons.

The boys' swim team had a great year despite moving up to Division 1, while the girls found the transition to tougher competition a little more difficult. Boys' and girls' basketball comes to an end next week (the end of February), but both teams hope to advance in post-season play. The wrestling team also finishes dual meet competition next week, but Blair hosts the County Wrestling Tournament Friday and Saturday, February 21 and 22.

March 1 marks the beginning of the spring sports season. Baseball, softball, boys' and girls' lacrosse, track and field, boys' and co-ed volleyball, and boys' tennis will all be in action as the weather starts to warm up. Remember that parent permission and health inventory forms are due into the respective coaches prior to the first scheduled practice in order for students to try out for these teams.





BLAZER

Montgomery Blair High School PTSA
51 University Boulevard East
Silver Spring, MD 20901-2451

Non-Profit Org.

U.S. Postage

PAID

Silver Spring MD

Permit No. 191

**Next PTSA Meeting is February 18, 2003.
Silent Auction Donation form is on page 5.**

Support Blair's After Prom

Name _____

Phone _____

email _____

- Enclosed is my check for After Prom 2003!
- I will contribute a door prize or food
- I want to join the After Prom Committee
- I will help chaperone on May 25th

return to: Montgomery Blair High School PTSA
Diane Foley/After Prom Committee
51 University Boulevard East
Silver Spring, MD 20901-2451

After Prom Committee Report

Since 1988, Blair parents, staff and students have hosted an After Prom Celebration for Blair seniors, juniors, and their guests. The After Prom Celebration is a safe, drug-free, alcohol-free alternative to the unchaperoned parties that are so popular after the Prom.

At the celebration, Blair is transformed with decorations, a casino, a money machine, an obstacle course, caricature artists, basketball, a magician, and free drinks and food. This year's celebration will be held very early on May 25, 2003 from 1 a.m. to 5 a.m.

Because hosting a party this size costs around \$15,000 and requires lots of volunteer hours, we are asking the Blair community to help us out by making a donation of money or a prize and /or volunteering to help us on a committee or as a chaperone on Sunday, May 25.

After Prom Committee meetings will be held on alternate Thursdays and will be more frequent as May approaches. If you are interested in getting involved, please contact Diane Foley via e-mail at diane.foley@baesystems.com or at (301) 258-1944.

Make checks payable to Montgomery Blair After Prom.