

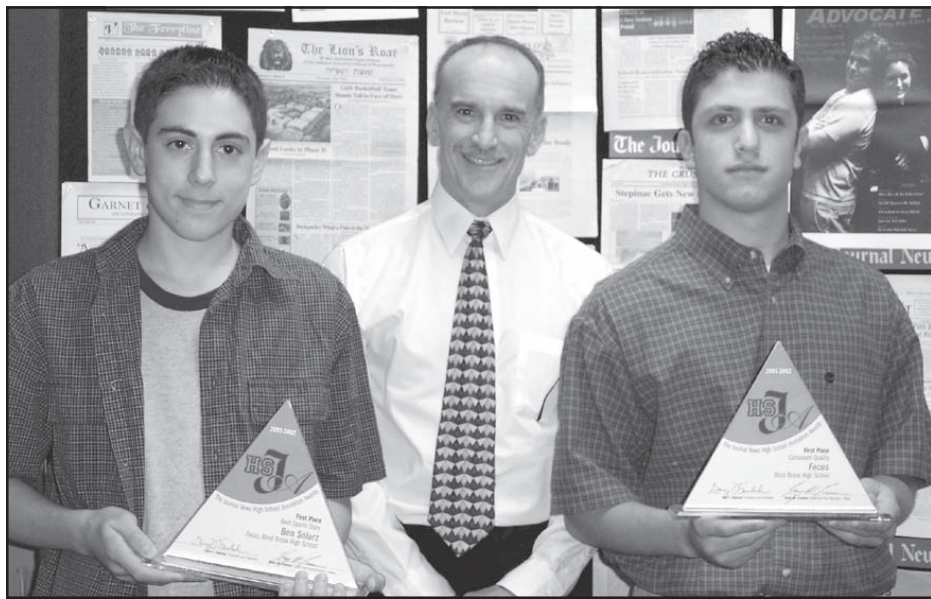
FOCUS

A Blind Brook High School Student Publication

June 2002

News Editor: Craig Bergman

News Section



Sports writer freshman Ben Solarz (far left) pictured with FOCUS adviser Del Shortliffe and News editor junior Craig Bergman at the Journal News high school journalism contest.

FOCUS Named Top High School Paper in Contest

By Craig Bergman, News Editor

On Thursday, June 6 at the 12th annual high school journalism contest run by *The Journal News*, FOCUS was awarded first place for best consistent quality among twenty-two papers from Westchester County. Although FOCUS has on past occasions received lesser honors in the overall category, the first-place award is a personal best for the long-running paper. Joe McDonald, deputy managing editor for administration at *The Journal News*, who made the selection along with Rockland Metro Editor Amy Vernon, said that “the newspaper does a great job covering the school, offers clean writing, good headlines, crisp layouts and a solid mix of news and features.”

Said high school English teacher and veteran FOCUS adviser Del Shortliffe, “It’s a tremendous honor for FOCUS and a very big deal for the school to win this award...It’s a reflection on the hard work and dedication of the FOCUS staff.”

Senior and Editor-in-Chief Francesca Pomara commented, “The entire staff has done a great job all year, and I’m glad that everyone’s efforts have been recognized with such an honor.”

Also honored by the judges from *The Journal News* were the individual achievements of FOCUS staff members Gillian McBride, Ben Solarz, Ariel Page, and Craig Bergman.

McBride, who is a senior and the Arts and Entertainment Editor, was the re-

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New Plan Regains Student Access to IBM Lot

By Mark Harris

One mid-May morning at 7:45 AM, scores of upper-classmen arrived at Blind Brook in dismay—the IBM parking lot was closed. The lot, lying adjacent to the school and used by many student drivers since early 2001, had been purposefully closed by its owners due to excessive litter and reckless driving.

Assistant Principal Michael Mitchell had informed students at numerous Town Meetings that they were in danger of losing the lot. “I thought the problem was solved,” he commented, “but in reality, trash kept piling up. One day it [the IBM lot] just was not open – IBM was trying to teach a lesson...I spoke to all of the high school students at the [next] Town Meeting and explained IBM’s position. It was up to them to design a proposal that was



Student cars parked at the IBM lot.

Photo by Mark Harris

acceptable to all concerned parties.”

In response, juniors Sarah Wolff and Janine Bucci proposed a plan to Mr. Mitchell. The proposal read as follows: drivers are expected to clean up after themselves and put the trash in a garbage can; drivers will be assigned a day where they will have to monitor the parking lot and pick up any extraneous trash that may have

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Principal Unveils Design for Renovated Commons

By Carrie Schmelkin

At the start of the semester next September, students will be greeted by the sight of the newly-renovated commons area. The revamped commons will serve as a second seating area for the cafeteria as well as a place where students can eat, study, socialize, and relax during the day. After many meetings and much discussion about creating a more practical commons, this new plan was formed with the goal of alleviating the problem of limited eating space within the cafeteria.

Creating additional space in the cafeteria has continually been a topic of discussion at Blind Brook High School. One of the first ideas was to expand the cafeteria outwards towards “The Rock.” However, necessary funding for this costly proposal was unavailable. The current plan for a shared cafeteria/commons area turned out to be less expensive because no physical expansion of the building was involved.

The needed extra space will be created

by the removal of the central staircase. The new commons will be designed to be similar to a “college-style student union,” says Principal Robert Chlebicki, who explains that there will be various seating arrangements separated by walls of different heights with benches on either side of the walls. These dividers will have windows and “unique geometric shapes” to make the commons appear more spacious and user-friendly. In doing so, several partially-secluded alcoves will be created, allowing students to eat in semi-privacy. In addition, there is a proposal for a senior lounge at one end of the commons.

Student representatives to the School Congress will take part in choosing furniture and designs for this newly renovated area, which will have a tile floor rather than the current carpeting. Existing locker areas will be modified as well. Seniors, and most likely juniors, will probably move to the downstairs lockers, while freshmen and sophomores will move upstairs.

Board of Ed Tackles Elections, Budget Vote, Faculty Tenure

By Emily Redmerski

On Tuesday, May 21, Blind Brook School District voters cast their ballot on two issues: the selection of two Board of Education members, and the 2002-03 district budget. The night before, at the May 20 Board of Education meeting, eleven faculty members in the district were granted tenure. In preparation for addressing the district’s interests in the plans to build the Stanwich School, a new private school to be located on King Street, the Board of Education has hired a lawyer. Such issues to be explored are effects on taxes and King Street congestion to the district community.

Incumbent Rosemary Matthews and newcomer Lawrence Engle were both victorious in this uncontested Board of Education election. Matthews, who received 623 votes, is a teacher with three children in the district. Her second term will begin on July 1. Engle, the recipient of 575 votes, is an attorney who has four children in the district. Engle said that the one thing he most anticipates during his term is participating in the creation of a school curriculum. His main goal for the community is “to see the middle school become a unique entity independent of the elementary school and the high school, which would be excellent for the development of middle school kids.” According to Engle, the fact that he is a parent of children in the Blind Brook school system will be beneficial to his decision-making. Speaking on this issue, Engle said, “It is important, because it helps you to better understand the needs of students as well as the teachers.” Engle serves on several community committees,

including the position of co-chairman of the Blind Brook-Ridge Street PTA Civic Affairs Committee.

The 2002-03 budget of \$23.6 million was passed with 566 in favor and 252 opposed. This year, the budget included a

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Has Anyone Seen the Board of Ed?

By John-Michael Grzan

Two years ago, the Blind Brook School Congress was established by the Student Senate in partnership with high school Principal Mr. Robert Chlebicki. It is a representative body with the mission to "ensure that all constituencies of the school community have a voice in shaping the life they live together in Blind Brook High School" and to "improve communication and relationship among all members of the school community." (Congress Constitution)

In order to achieve this goal of greater sensitivity to all members of the school community, Congress consists not only of student representatives but also of members of the faculty, staff, PTA, the principal, and a Board of Education member. The percentage of representatives for these different constituencies parallels the size of those groups within the school. The Board of Education worked with us in the establishment of this organization, supported our cause, and signed on to be a member of this parliamentary body. However, after a couple of Congress meetings, the Board of Education abandoned us.

They have done so through their continuous absenteeism from our meetings. Last year, the Board representative, Monroe Haas, was seldom present. This year, board members have not attended one meeting thus far. Mr. Haas says that he sent a letter to Mr. Chlebicki and Spanish teacher Marsha Arest, who was last year's adviser to Congress, stating that he would no longer attend meetings.

Early in the year, I had the privilege of having a long conversation with Monroe Haas about the issue. He raised several points, some of which I understand, but others with which I disagree.

He began to support his absenteeism by first questioning how many other schools have a Board of Education representative on their legislative bodies. I, of course, did not know but assumed that his point was that very few or none actually do. What other schools do, however, should not set the guidelines for what Blind Brook does. We all know very well that Blind Brook is like no other place. Few other schools have 3-wall classrooms, a carpeted Common's area, and couches where a student can sit down with the principal and talk. Our school system should base its actions upon our own individual needs, not upon the ways that other schools function. If Scarsdale High School jumped off the Brooklyn Bridge, would Blind Brook also?

Another argument that he gave was that the Congress deals with issues that do not demand his attention. He gave an example of the school cleanliness issue that Congress had struggled with and tried to remedy for some time. He said he had no business discussing the topic. Granted, school cleanliness might not be the most important topic of

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A School Year in Review:

Mr. Mitchell Looks Back

By Kyle Wirshba

Transitions are rarely easy, and the appointment of Mr. Michael Mitchell to the assistant principal slot left vacant by the departure of long-time administrator Susan Shirken was no exception. Taking the helm at the start of what would prove to be an extremely eventful year, Mr. Mitchell was faced with challenges right from the start. In an exclusive interview, Mr. Mitchell looked back over the past nine months. "September was all about finding my way," said Mr. Mitchell. "I did have some pre-conceived notions," but they went away after a short time. Mr. Mitchell worried about encountering a bunch of "snotty kids," but instead found a much different student body, consisting of a bunch of "normal...nice kids." Added Mr. Mitchell, "having candy on my desk sure did help." After only a few days on the job, however, Mr. Mitchell had to deal with a major catastrophe. September 11 struck hard and unexpectedly; the day itself was a horror, but the repercussions were even worse. "Luckily, I didn't know anyone who was there," said Mr. Mitchell, but "I felt greatly" for all the students who did know victims of the attacks. Then October came around and in came the first town meeting of the year. Mr. Mitchell said he was very impressed and "enjoyed seeing students governing themselves." He had never seen a totally student run meeting and said it was very interesting and a great idea. At the end of the month came Halloween with the seniors dressed in costumes. "I loved the kids dressing up," he said.

In November, Mr. Mitchell had the opportunity to participate in the Human Relations Weekend, which he called "extremely cool." Mr. Mitchell explained that the trip was the first time when he was positive that he had made a "good decision in deciding to come to Blind Brook." "The kids were phenomenal," he said of the small group that went on the trip, and Mr. Mitchell maintains that it is one of the best traditions at Blind Brook.

Another great tradition came in January when the High School Senate sponsored Homecoming. Mr. Mitchell said that he, along with the rest of Blind Brook, had a great time at the event, which went smoothly despite advanced worries by the administration about potential substance abuse by student attendees. From there it was smooth sailing until February when controversy arose at Blind Brook over the traditional Senior Service Auction. In March 2002 issue of FOCUS, Mr. Mitchell was quoted as being against the event for two prominent reasons: the offensiveness of a person's being "sold" for any reason, and the possibility of students' feelings being hurt by comparatively low bids. Despite spirited opposition by students, Mr. Mitchell decided not to allow the Auction to go on the way it did this year, leaving the current junior class to suggest a change that everyone could live with. Recently juniors Sarah Wolff, Sarah Powell, Lauren Levinson, and Janine Bucci put together a plan that was approved by the assistant principal. The new auction will be based on students being put on the "block" solely for the services they offer rather than for their personal characteristics. Also, there will be the option for seniors to choose a silent auction, in which bids are made in writing rather than aloud. In March, the Blind Brook Trojans took home the Class C State Championship in basketball, turning the town into one big school spirit frenzy. During the team's playoff winning streak, the

atmosphere at Blind Brook became more and more filled with school spirit. A stunning array of colorful banners and high-action basketball photographs dominated the school grounds. Mr. Mitchell, who attended numerous games, admitted that he "had never seen school spirit like there was during the championship."

He even went so far as to say that he was proud to wear his Blind Brook Basketball shirt.

April found Mr. Mitchell in a raft with sophomores holding on for dear life. The white water rafting trip, which is organized by biology teacher Janet Lobdell, has become a sophomore tradition. Mr. Mitchell said he could only describe the experience in one-way: "had a ball, almost drowned." He recounted almost falling out of the boat, only to be helped back into the raft by sophomore Alissa Stein.

In May, Mr. Mitchell had a great time on the Junior Class trip to Boston. Junior Craig Bergman noted that "Mr. Mitchell was a great chaperone and really bonded with the class." According to Mr. Mitchell, the hotel manager where the group stayed said that the juniors were the best group of kids they had ever

seen. Mr. Mitchell said he was very appreciative of that and thanked them for behaving so well.

In addition to these monthly highlights, Mr. Mitchell's first year also included a number of more ongoing issues. For one, Mr. Mitchell was the advisor to both Student Senate and School Congress.

Recently, Mr. Mitchell was involved in the revision of the school cell phone policy that was eventually approved by the administration and enacted by Congress. Mr. Mitchell said that he "was glad that it passed," and that, most importantly, "Congress proved they could do something."

Congress also proved effective in passing a new Attendance policy, which will be implemented at the start of next school year. The policy mandates a maximum amount of "seat time" during which a student must be in school regardless of his grade. It also allows students to miss class for things like medical appointments and illness, provided that they can show proof of where they were. The policy was worked out by a congressional Attendance Committee that included Mr. Mitchell. Another prominent aspect of the Blind Brook school year was the yearlong construction. Despite difficulties, the construction deadlines were largely adhered to, and as Mr. Mitchell put it, "Construction Joe did a good job." The whole project should be completed by late August, and Mr. Mitchell said that he "will be glad when it's over."

Another major situation that demanded Mr. Mitchell's attention was the rash of vandalism that plagued the newly constructed middle school bathrooms. At several points during the year, Mr. Mitchell was forced to close down one of the bathrooms. According to Mr. Mitchell, one of the most unfortunate aspects of the situation concerned "poor Rosario," our matron who was stuck cleaning the mess for hours on end.

As a whole, Mr. Mitchell said, "It was a good year." And while, "I was scared at first," it was like being on "a new team playing a new game." Mr. Mitchell credits much of the success of the 2001-2002 school year to the students, saying that "most kids only care about themselves whereas the majority of the students at Blind Brook care about each other."

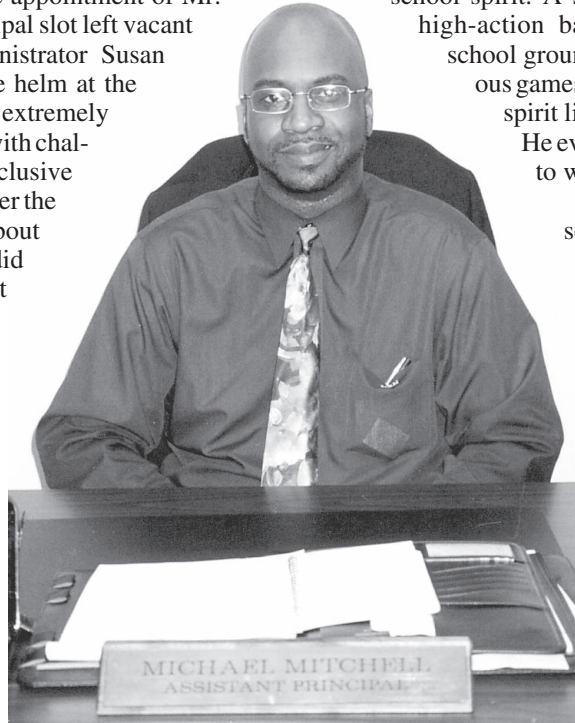


Photo by Mark Harris

New Plan Regains Student Access to IBM Lot Continued from page 1

been left there.

The IBM managers accepted the idea, and the plan became operative on May 22, 2002. "Everyone, including IBM, is very happy with the results; there have been no complaints since," said Wolff.

Junior Jeff Licitra agreed, "It's unfortunate that it took them closing [the parking lot] for a day for people to change, but the place is so much cleaner now."

Said junior Craig Bergman, "Having to clean the parking lot is a tremendous pain, but I guess it's worth it if we keep the lot open."

If all goes well, the plan will become permanent and Blind Brook students will retain access to the lot. In future years, Mr. Mitchell hopes that the class officers of each grade will be in charge of creating a list of drivers and of making a calendar outlining the student cleanup rotation. He is optimistic about the future of this issue.



Juniors Bond in Boston: Annual Class Trip a Success

By Keith Hanauer

After a rigorous academic year, the Blind Brook junior class relaxed together for a weekend away from Rye Brook. Starting on Thursday, May 16 to Sunday, May 19, the majority of the eleventh grade was on the junior class trip to Boston, Massachusetts. With many fun stories and lasting memories, everyone had a great time on what proved to be an extremely successful trip.

Junior Lauren Tillem was largely responsible for the organization and plan-

ning of the trip. She headed the Trip Committee that consisted of classmates Logan Romm, Rachel Fischer, Loren Fishkind, Matt Gordon and Alex Sedler. First they chose the destination, then planned a variety of activities that included a mix of recreation and education. For example, they visited the Freedom Trail, a tour of Boston that included many historic sights that they had studied in American History.

The students all agreed that they got along very well, even on the four hour bus

rides to and from Boston. In fact, some cited the bus as the best part of the trip; Melissa Rosen commented, "My favorite part was the bus rides. They were fun and entertaining, mainly because of Leo's [Cohen] 'sing-a-long' and [Michael] Fuchs."

Leo Cohen's list of songs predominantly consisted of Billy Joel hits. The songs boosted morale and brought the kids together. Michael Fuchs and his usual antics provided great entertainment as well, explained Rosen. Fuchs commented, "Billy Joel was good, but my favorite part was during the Blueman Group performance when Marta [Ducak] ate Twinkies with them. I was quite proud of her." The Blueman Group show, which featured a trio of blue-painted mimes, was a hit with all the juniors and many enjoyed the end when the crowd was covered in toilet paper.

Another hit was the Boston Duck Tour on the Charles River. On an amphibious vehicle, the students were driven through the streets and into the river. Many found it both educational and entertaining. About the Duck Tour, he commented, "It was great; the tour guides were fantastic, full of both humor and historical information." Junior class advisor and biology teacher Janet Lobdell cited the Duck Tour as her favorite part of the trip.

Lobdell had a great time with this year's class, as she commented, "I've been on many [class trips] and this was one of the best groups I've ever been with. I didn't have to raise my voice once." High School Assistant Principal Michael Mitchell felt similarly, stating, "The students were fantastic. There were no problems at all." The group also stopped at Six Flags New England on the trip. Junior Jordan Lutsky found it the best part, commenting that the Superman roller coaster was great. In contrast, Citron found the Six Flags visit to be the worst part of the trip. He explained, "Six Flags was the worst because I couldn't go on really nauseating rides. I got to watch people pretend they weren't sick, but secretly they really were sick."

Many found the juniors' visit to Lowell, an old factory with industrial history tours, to be the least successful leg of the trip. Unbeknownst to the trip planners, the program at Lowell was geared toward elementary school students and was not stimulating for the juniors.

Everyone agreed that Boston was a great choice, if not the best choice, given the circumstances. Since September 11, student trips have been limited, and the juniors were not allowed to fly anywhere or to leave the country.

Top High School Paper Continued from page 1

recipient of the third place award in the headline category for her headline, "Dear State of New York, Please Return My Diet Coke." It appeared in the February 2002 issue of FOCUS in an editorial about the effects of state legislation on high school cafeterias.

Senior and Features staff writer Ariel Page also won third place honors for her article entitled, "How to Get Around the Cell Phone Policy," which appeared in the November issue of FOCUS.

Junior and News Editor Craig Bergman received an honorable mention in the editorial category for an October editorial entitled "The Things We Can Control," which

dealt with student fear in the wake of September 11.

Freshman and Sports staff writer Ben Solarz took first place honors in the sports writing category for an October article entitled, "BB Football Players Left on the Side Lines." The story covered the loss of the football program this year.

Commented senior Sports editor Frank D'Angelo. "It's a really impressive award for such a young writer. A first-place award for a freshman is virtually unprecedented. FOCUS should be proud of Solarz, for of all its winners for that matter. Great year for the paper."

Blind Brook Upperclassmen Honored

SENIOR CLASS AWARDS

Faculty Awards

Participation John-Michael Grzan, Allison Schultz, Heath Ward
Service Mara Adelsberg, Spark Nakamura, Francesca Pomara
Leadership Frank D'Angelo, Matthew Stolzar, Emily Ware

Departmental Awards

English Jason Pollens, Francesca Pomara
Valerie Weimar Memorial Award for Poetry Jeffrey Gnerre
Pati Sherlock Creative Writing Award Matthew Stolzar
Math Tom Reistetter Award Sang-Min Lee, Matthew Stolzar
Computer Education Tsubasa Ishigure, Lee Russell
Science Brett Konner, Matthew Stolzar
A.P. Biology Francesca Pomara
Social Studies Amy Barish, John-Michael Grzan, Brett Konner
Jean Hurley Memorial Award John-Michael Grzan
French Francesca Pomara, Elana Shapiro
Spanish Frank D'Angelo
Italian Marc Migliozi
Music Instrumental Spencer Howard, Tsubasa Ishigure, Emily Ware
Vocal Shani Ackerman, Spencer Howard
The George Trautwein PTA Scholarship Award Spencer Howard
The Kyle Frand Memorial Award Jill Diamond
Art Gillian McBride
Photography Jessica Nanus
Film Brett Konner
Business Education Jared Feldesman
Building Community Bridges Award William Keane
Spirit for BBHS Award Allison Schultz, Jason Stein
Service & Concern for the Blind Brook School Community Lynne Desmond
BBHS Outstanding Senior Athlete Jason Stein, Samantha Tager
Rye Town Hilton Scholarship Award Heath Ward

Community Service Award in Memory of Mrs. Barbara Sitner
John-Michael Grzan, Gillian McBride, Francesca Pomara

Port Chester Teachers Federal Credit Union Future Teachers Award
Leah Blank

The Nicholas Peter Ciccone/CYP Memorial Scholarship
John-Michael Grzan, Jason Stein

2002 American Academy of Neurology and Neuroscience Creativity Award
National Finalist
Jeffrey Gnerre

The Bruno M. Ponterio Scholarship Awards
Spark Nakamura, Matthew Stolzar

Ted Reed Memorial Scholarship Awards
John-Michael Grzan, Emily Ware

Ciba-Specialty Chemicals Education Foundation High School Science Award
Christopher Lee

Geraldine and Charles R. Gevertz Human Relations Memorial Award
Frank D'Angelo, Dean Kaplowitz

Wilson-Starck-Klein Scholarship Award
Sponsored by Sound Federal Savings & Loan Association
Jared Feldesman

Rye Brook P.B.A. Sgt. Mark Bottali Criminal Justice Scholarship Award
Frank D'Angelo

PTA Scholarship Award - Lee Russell

Lower Hudson Council of School Superintendents Achievement Award
Frank D'Angelo, Matthew Stolzar

2002 Principal's Leadership Award
Frank D'Angelo

Sound Shore Community Fund, Inc. Award
Mara Adelsberg, Abra Bacchioni, Kristin Bassett, Elana Shapiro

State of New York Office of the Attorney General Triple "C" Award
William Keane, Jessica Levine

Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship
Frank D'Angelo, Brett Konner, Matthew Stolzar

Consolidated Edison Westchester Scholastic Award
John-Michael Grzan, Jason Stein

Port Chester/Rye Brook Rotary Club Individual Achievement Award
Nancy Gruenfelder, Christopher Lee

40/40 Club Scholarship
Rachel Kaplowitz, Ariel Page

New York State Scholarship for Academic Excellence
Stephanie Gentile, John-Michael Grzan, Francesca Pomara

New York State Lottery Award
Mara Adelsberg

JUNIOR CLASS AWARDS

Junior Book Awards and Departmental Awards

Cornell University Award for Excellence
in Academics and Activities Matt Gordon
Columbia University Award for Excellence in Social Studies .. Brett Zuckerman
Yale University Award for Outstanding Personal Character Rachel Barbarisi
Award for Overall Highest Academic Achievement in English Craig Raphael
University of Rochester

Honorary Science and Environmental Award Jeff Licitra
University of Pennsylvania Award Michael Fuchs
Harvard University Award for Overall Excellence Craig Bergman
Brown University Award Blair Mosner
Wellesley College Award Rachel Fischer
Award for Excellence in Humanities and Social Sciences Melissa Matles
Homer S. Pace Medal Stephanie Vasile

Sports

Sports Editor: Frank D'Angelo

Girls' Soccer Team Exceeds Expectations

By Lisa Hamilton

The girls' team finished off the season with a respectable 7-6-1 record, but failed to defend last year's League Championship. Seeded 15th in Class C going into Sectionals, the Trojans faced off against Rye Neck, the #2 seed, and was defeated in the first round.

Senior Mara Adelsberg said, "We knew it was going to be a really big challenge." Her co-captain, Abra Bacchioni added, "In the past we had played them and had lost by 3 or 4 goals each time. While we didn't expect to win, I don't think that we expected to lose so badly. They dominated the game from the start and through a series of miscommunications by our team, they were able to score one goal after another. It hurt to be beaten so badly but at the same time, we weren't expecting much so it wasn't a major defeat."

This Sectional defeat to Rye Neck was actually the second for Head Coach Joseph Pomeryn this year. His Boys' Varsity Soccer team also fell to Rye Neck in the Sectional Semifinals after completing a 10-3 season.

The Lady Trojans, although losing in Round 1, did accomplish their initial season goal of finishing out the year above .500. Coach Pomeryn and his veterans hadn't expected much from a team that had lost six quality seniors and had to bring up four eighth-graders and one freshman to fill out the roster.

So according to the Trojans, the season wasn't a disappointment; conversely, it was much better than they anticipated. One of the season's few disappointments, however, came against rival Haldane. The two teams split that series 1-1.

Bacchioni explained, "Our one loss to

them came after a close overtime in which our goalie had been hit and had to be taken out. This was all after a series of bad calls, two of which allowed Haldane to score on free kicks. It was a let down."

Behind the leadership of Bacchioni and Adelsberg this year, Jessica Stein and Lauren Piccolo have developed into even better players. Stein, a junior, and Piccolo, a sophomore, have been an integral part of the team's past two seasons.

Bacchioni elaborated, "While we all played well together and were able to communicate and run the game, Jessica [Stein] scored many of our goals as did Lauren, but at the same time she stayed back to help me on defense. Lauren is by far the most skilled player on the team. She dominates the field from the middle, constantly in control of the ball."

Adelsberg added, "Jess and Lauren

always kept going. Even when we were faced with defeat they never gave up and always kept trying. That sense of determination goes for everyone—nobody was ever willing to give up."

Next year's team will be losing six seniors once again, three of which almost always started. Bacchioni and Adelsberg, in addition to Emily Ware, Tarynne Goldenberg, Amy Barish, and Gillian McBride, will leave the team behind next year.

Junior Sandy Schnur concluded, "This year was a rebuilding year for the team, moving up to Class C and all. It will be hard next year when we lose all those seniors, but a lot of the younger players on the team have great potential, and their experience will help us have a more successful season next year."

Briarcliff Ends Blind Brook's Baseball Season

By Ben Solarz

They came. They saw. And they nearly conquered. But Briarcliff's Bob Blevins stood in their way like a police blockade. Coming off a respectable season and a first round playoff win, the Blind Brook Trojans varsity baseball team had every reason to be feeling good about what they had accomplished. But no matter how well they played, they couldn't chalk another one up in the win column to earn the right to compete further into the tournament.

"We played our best defensive game all year, but we just couldn't buy a hit off Blevins," marveled junior outfielder Alex Sedler.

Acually, fellow junior Matt Gordon could afford a hit—he had the Trojan's only hit of the game in the 7-0 loss. Blevins held the rest of the Trojans hitless, and stopped their playoff run en route to a Briarcliff tournament championship.

Gordon's standout hit was representative of his masterful season. He led his team in batting with a .468 average, and flirted with .500 toward the end of the season. He also finished with 18 RBIs.

In the tournament's first round, Bronxville, the Trojan's first opponent,



Trojan players in action, preparing for a pitch. Photo by Hillary Berkowitz

couldn't boast an ace of Blevin's caliber. The result was an 18-6 blowout ending. In sharp contrast to the Briarcliff loss, Blind Brook picked up quite a few hits and 18 runs in this game. But this was to be the Trojans' first and last win of the Sectional tournament.

Said sophomore Frank Santoro, "Al-

though we had a respectable year, we just couldn't come through big in tournament games."

Although Santoro wasn't able to overcome Blevin's 80 m.p.h. fastball and unexpectedly slow curve, he provided the winning spark in the Bronxville game. Santoro just missed hitting for the cycle

in that game as he amassed a double, triple, and grand slam home run for the Trojans. Santoro ended with 7 RBI, and the Trojans managed to tack on 11 runs in the top of the sixth inning in a fine come-from-behind victory.

But this was the Trojan's only bright spot. They entered the playoffs with a number 9 seeding, and, after defeating a #8 seed, were destined to take on the #1 team in Class C.

"We lost some crucial games in the regular season and had a bad seeding in the playoffs. Had we done better in the regular season, we probably could have competed further into the playoffs," reflected sophomore Tom Wethington on his team's relative success and its 11-11 record. Wethington, although getting off to a sluggish start, did contribute much to the Trojan's 11-11 effort. He finished the season with a .394 batting average and an impressive 27 RBI.

Head Coach Greg DePaoli echoed, "We could have done a lot better. A few losses made the difference between a 4th place or a 9th place seeding, and we ended up seeded ninth. We showed a lot of heart, however, to come from behind and defeat Bronxville."

BB Golfer Competes in Sectionals, Fails to Qualify for States

By Leah Citrin

The Golf Sectional tournament is unlike any other post-season for high school sports. In golf, the players' scores and records are calculated for the entire year, based upon a formula that produces a number from the scores and records. After this, all the coaches attend a meeting to compare their players' numbers. The top 36 players then meet for the first round of the Sectional tournament.

This year, Blind Brook had two golfers included in the top 36. On May 13 at the Sunningdale Country Club in Scarsdale, New York, senior Robert Frank and junior Adam Rosenzweig played a round of golf on the par 36 course. Rosenzweig shot a 43 and subsequently was included in the top 8 who advanced to the next round, held at Fenway Country Club, also in Scarsdale.

The Fenway round also included 36 golfers, but this time from all over Westchester, in addition to Putnam and Rockland Counties.

When the dust settled at Fenway, Rosenzweig's score just wasn't enough to put him among the top 9 that would continue the long playoff stretch. Still, golf Coach Marcello Marcoccia had nothing but praise for Blind Brook's top golfer. "Considering the tough competition, Adam did very well."

Rosenzweig, however, was not pleased with his performance. "I really wanted to get to States," he stressed.

"Blind Brook always gets to this stage," explained Coach Marcoccia, "but we have not gotten past it yet." Rosenzweig is not the only great Blind Brook golfer who has

come just short of the goal. He joins the ranks of John Aughavin, Jason Askinasi, Anthony Criscione, and Robert Frank.

For his efforts this year, Rosenzweig has been honored as his team's MVP, as named by Coach Marcoccia at this year's Athletic Dinner. He also won the Blind Brook Championship with a score of 82. Rosenzweig also has another year left of Varsity Golf to make his coveted State run.

"Next year my goal is to definitely move on to States and I hope I can win them too," asserted Rosenzweig.

If he plays as well as he did for most of this year, everyone, including his coach, believes that is a strong possibility.

Concluded Marcoccia, "On any given day Adam has what he needs to win States; he just has to play that way all the time."

Sports In Brief: Varsity Softball

By Ryan Pearson

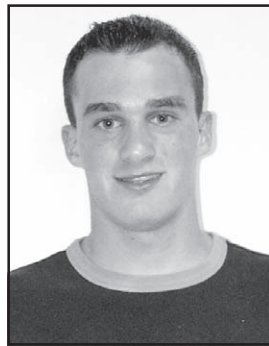
The varsity girls' softball team finished their season with an overall record of 8-8 and entered the Sectionals as the 8th seed in their conference. The lost their first playoff game, though, to the #9 seed, Bronxville. Said Lauren Redmerski, the sophomore second-baseman, "It was upsetting to lose in the first round because we all knew we were a better team than that." Sophomore Arielle Fredman led the team with 25 hits, and junior pitcher Loren Fishkind chipped in 21 hits for the season. Next year, the team will have to face the rest of Class C without their graduating senior veterans, catcher Jill Diamond, infielders Shani Ackerman and Jessica Nanus, and left-fielder Lauren Morabito. Fredman added, "The seniors this year provided a lot of leadership and encouragement. We will be missing a huge part of the team next year."

Sports Editor: Frank D'Angelo

Sports Section

Ask Blind Brook Compiled by Jeffrey Kaplow • Photos by Hillary Berkowitz*What will you miss the most about the 2001-2002 sports season at Blind Brook?***Kayla Shaoul**
(10th Grade)

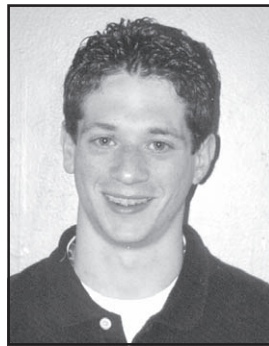
What I will miss most is the cheerleading squad. Our squad bonded as the basketball season progressed, and I can never see the squad being the same. We were with each other all the time and we were like family. I will also miss the success of the basketball team, and hopefully Blind Brook can duplicate that success in the near future.

**Matthew Stolzar**
(12th Grade)

I will miss the overall enthusiasm because the fans this year were more devoted and spirited than they have ever been. The fan following for all the teams was also great. The team I will miss most is the varsity soccer team and this year's 12-4 season.

**Wendy Heimann**
(Faculty)

I will miss the graduating seniors and all the excitement surrounding the basketball team. I hope it won't be too long before the next time Blind Brook has this type of success in all sports. I try to attend all the games, and I am most proud of basketball team's success this year.

**Kyle Wirshba**
(9th Grade)

The thing I will miss most is the JV soccer team, our overall record of 2-12, and our scoring all of 4 goals. I will also miss the opportunity of going to the varsity basketball games when we made it to States.

**Lauren Tillem**
(11th Grade)

I will miss my close guy friends that were on the basketball team who are now graduating. I will also miss seeing Alli Schultz at the basketball games cheering and getting the crowd into the games. I hope our team will replicate this year's success in the future.

Students Awarded for Athletic Accomplishments

At the Blind Brook Athletic Dinner held on Tuesday, June 12, 2002, the following individuals were honored by Westchester Country and by Blind Brook High School for their athletic accomplishments this year.

Volleyball

Tarynne Goldenberg All-League
Emily Ware All-League

Boys' Soccer

Rodrigo Carvalho All-League, All-Section
Tsubasa Ishigure All-League, All-Section
Robert Frank All-League, All-Section Honorable Mention
Kevin Aughavin All-League
Matt Stolzar All-League
Jared Feldesman All-League
Spencer Howard All-League

Cross-Country

David Erner All-League
Lauren Piccolo All-League
Katie Lynch All-League
Angela Criscione All-League

Skiing

Evan Foxx All-League
Stacy Grossman All-League

Boys' Basketball

Jason Stein All-League, All-Section, All-State First Team
John-Michael Grzan All-League, All-Section, All-State Fifth Team
Kevin Aughavin All-League
Chris Greco All-League
David Stockel All-League Honorable Mention

Girls' Basketball

Sammy Tager All-League, All-Section, All-State Third Team
Frani Geiger All-League
Yasmine Harik All-League
Tori Quaranta All-League Honorable Mention
Janine Bucci All-League Honorable Mention

Ice Hockey

David Erner All-League
Adam Chwick All-League
Chris Otness All-League Honorable Mention

Baseball

Spencer Howard All-League, All-Section Honorable Mention
Matt Gordon All-League
Tom Wethington All-League
David Stockel All-League Honorable Mention
Stevie Gross All-League Honorable Mention
Frank Santoro All-League Honorable Mention

Softball

Loren Fishkind All-League, All-Section
Jill Diamond All-League, All-Section Honorable Mention
Lauren Morabito All-League
Ariele Fredman All-League
Shani Ackerman All-League

Girls' Soccer

Lauren Piccolo All-League, All-Section
Jessica Stein All-League
Mara Adelsberg All-League
Abra Bacchioni All-League
Emily Ware All-League Honorable Mention
Carter Niles All-League Honorable Mention

Golf

Adam Rosenzweig All-League, All-Section
Robert Frank All-League

The following are special Senior Awards, given annually:

Senior Sportsperson: Tsubasa Ishigure, Frani Geiger

Ted Reed Memorial Award: John-Michael Grzan, Emily Ware

Outstanding Senior Athlete: Jason Stein, Sammy Tager

Athlete of the Month: Spencer Howard

By Laura Willig

As the senior pitching ace and captain for the varsity Blind Brook baseball team, Spencer Howard had his work cut out for him this season. Although it was disappointing for Howard to see his last high school baseball game end in a one-hit shut-out loss to the #1 team in Class C, his individual performance this season was far from disappointing. It was, in fact, commendable.

Howard hit .373 on the season, and amassed a superior 6-3 record with a 2.60 earned run average. For his efforts on the mound, he was voted by the Westchester Coaches Association as "Outstanding Se-



nior Pitcher" for Class C.

But even with the individual records, Howard was not satisfied. He recalled the season's emotions. "Even if I was upset, I tried to keep everyone positive, help whoever needed to focus or improve their mechanics."

In a leadership position such as his, Howard filled the shoes of those senior leaders before him and outgrew them.

In the first Sectional game versus Bronxville, Blind Brook, down five in the sixth inning, battled back to win the game. Freshman star Stevie Gross said, "Spencer really stuck with it, even though we were down five runs."

David Stockel, who was behind the plate for most of Spencer's pitching performances this season, confirmed, "He's always been like that, and you want to have a guy who never gives up playing for you. You especially want him on the mound."

This season in particular got off to a late

start, since Head Coach Greg DiPaoli was involved in the prolonged varsity basketball season. Howard, who worked tirelessly on his strength, stamina, and location during the last leg of that basketball season, was a key in bringing the baseball squad together when things got started.

In addition to that late start, Blind Brook also had to deal with a promotion from Class D to C. Noted Coach DePaoli, "To get into the Sectional tournament, the team really had to earn their way."

The team did enter the tournament, and they did so as a #9 seed with an overall record of 11-11. During this year's .500 season, Howard batted third in the offensive powerhouse of a lineup.

But according to Howard, more fun than the team's 11 victories, comeback playoff win, or offensive displays were the daily practices—the interaction with his teammates and friends. "Those guys really made

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Leaving This For You Guys

By Jason Stein

In my six years at Blind Brook, I have quite obviously been very involved with school athletics. Now, in my last few weeks at Blind Brook, I have some questions on issues which are important to me—issues that will effect the future of Blind Brook sports. The following have been discussed by many students and community members. It is my hope that this will motivate those who will follow our graduating class so that they may attempt to address these questions.

Why is there no track field on the Blind Brook premises?

If you build it, they will come. A growing, affluent community like ours needs a track—a place where local residents can go to exercise at night and on weekends. And, of course, our track and field teams would no longer have to go to Rye Neck for practices and meets. The Cross Country team would not have to run the streets of Rye Brook for practice, dodging traffic and stray dogs. It may additionally help improve the poor physical shape that many Blind Brook students are in, including many of the athletes. I cannot think of any one of the many schools in the county I have visited that does not have a track.

Why is there no scoreboard on the soccer and baseball fields?

An anonymous donor offered to purchase a scoreboard for the school at the beginning of the school year. After the offer was initially declined by the superintendent in September, Dr. Miles changed his mind and said it was going to be put up. It was not.

Is there a gym in the new middle school building?

There is an area designated a "gym." However, the only thing anyone has used it for is classroom instruction. If it is going to be used as a gym, the carpet should be taken out, as well as the dividers for classrooms and bars on the ceiling. It should also have 10 feet added to each side so fans can sit in bleachers while watching games. The gym is too small to hold varsity games, and as of now it seems one may only watch a game from the small second-floor window in the hall between the classrooms.

Why is there such little light in the high school gym?

I know the answer to this. When lights were put in the gym, they were installed in sets of three. However, at some point in the past several years, two of every three were taken out to save money. This left Blind Brook with the dimmest gym in the county.

Why are only seniors on varsity sports teams exempt from gym class?

On most teams, underclassmen play as big a role as the seniors. And even if they do not, they go through the same tough practices daily. They should not be forced to play "hocker," a mix of hockey and soccer, nor should they have to run the mile on the day of a practice or a game. Gym class make athletes more fatigued and less able to play their sport. Additionally, the athletes run the risk of an incurring an injury during a silly game like "hocker."

Why was Coach Charney fired?

Just like the question, "How many licks does it take to get the center of a tootsie roll pop?" The world may never know.

Features

Features Editor: Matt Stolzar

Fourth Science Symposium a Hit

By Jeff Gnerre

Tuesday, May 28 marked an exciting day in Blind Brook science: the annual Science Symposium. The Symposium was a gathering of Blind Brook's finest scientific minds. After 9 months of arduous researching and fact-finding, Blind Brook students were ready to present their findings to the public in this Science Symposium.

The Symposium, the culminating event in Mr. Jerry Citron's science research class, gives students the opportunity to present to their parents and teachers their creativity and diligence in pursuing scientific research.

The Independent Science Research course is different from any other class offered at Blind Brook High School. Once

you walk in to the classroom, there are no desks or textbooks; there are only students' interests and the endless resources that the Internet and the library have to offer. In the class, one must choose a specific area of science, form a hypothesis based on previous research done in the subject, and report what progress he or she has made on the topic throughout the year.

Stated senior Matt Stolzar, "It's a very innovative class that Mr. Citron brings a wealth of experience and knowledge into. I know I couldn't have gotten as good a mentorship as I did if not for Citron's dedication. He is a great teacher, and hopefully he will remain in Blind Brook for a long time so other students can gain the experience that I did. Without Citron, who knows where the program would be?"

Many of the students pursue their research outside the walls of Blind Brook. Mentorships allow students to pursue their ideas in a laboratory environment.

All of the work that the students have put in this year paid off Tuesday night when the Science Symposium went off without a flaw. This night was particularly important to the senior members of the class because they had to present the culmination of their research over the last four years, whether it was through different teachers, mentors, lab experiences, or peers.

The Symposium was filled with fascinating new discoveries and modern advances in science. The evening opened with senior Spark Nakamura's presentation on the modern advancements and usefulness of telomeres and telomerase.

Spark comments, "Being a member of the authentic Science Research class since my freshman year made the science symposium of 2002 an especially meaningful experience for me. Throughout the four years of the class, I connected with elements of science that I was never able to do throughout my lessons in earth science, biology, chemistry, and physics."

Following Spark was junior Adam Brackman who discussed the characteristics of galaxy clusters in the universe. "The evening went well, the presentations were interesting, but I was disappointed that there weren't more people in attendance," commented Adam.

Following Brackman was Matt Stolzar, whose presentation was titled, "Detection of Male Cells in Various Tissues of Female Rattus norvegicus Transplanted with Male Bone Marrow Stem Cells." Matt pursued this research at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, where he worked with some of the leading liver research scientists, Dr. Petko M. Petkov and Dr. David Shafritz. Matt commented, "I thought the symposium went well, all the kids did a good job with their presentations, and a lot of the research was very fascinating. I was just a little disappointed in the showing that we

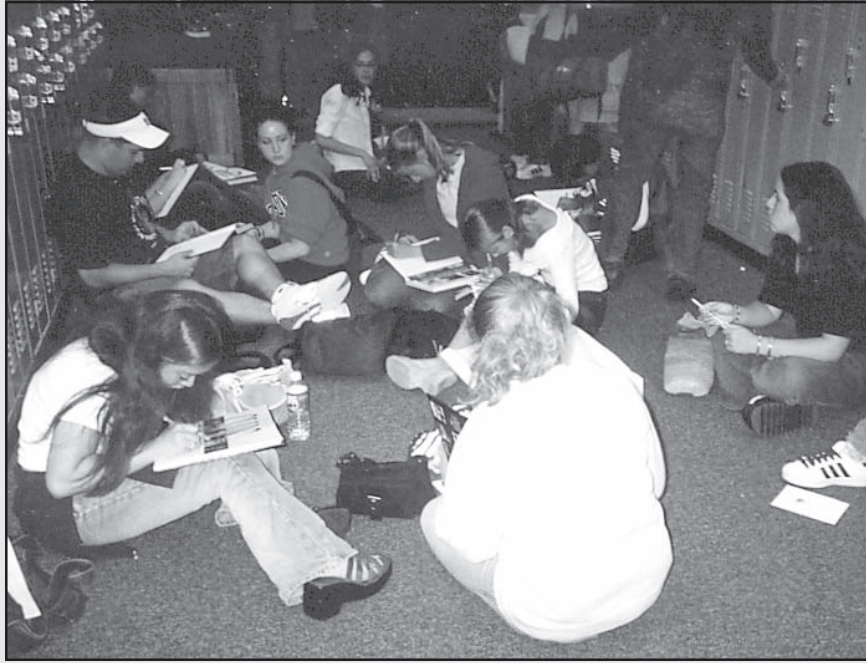
received from the faculty and administration."

Junior Jon Foster presented his research on Species Specific Food Webs of Harbor Seals and the American Lobster. "The symposium is a great opportunity for the science research students to share their knowledge and excitement on the topics that interest them and that they have chosen to research in depth," commented Foster. Senior David Weiner presented research on the neurological basis of Lyme's disease. His work discussed how Lyme's disease, or *Borrelia burgdorferi*, was actually a neuropsychiatric illness.

Some presentations discussed discoveries, however new, that would be very beneficial to the world. Such is the case with senior Chris Lee's presentation. He presented his research of laminar flow which is a major development in the technology of flight. Laminar flow is the attempt to maintain smooth, non-turbulent airflow over the entire width of the wing, resulting in increased efficiency due to decreased drag, thus decreasing the amount of fuel burned and reducing harmful upper atmosphere emissions.

Two seniors have even won regional and national acclaim for their independent studies. Matt Stolzar was the winner of the Westchester Council of Superintendents Science and Engineering Award and the Westchester Progenics US Military Award. Senior Jeff Gnerre was the winner of the American Academy of Neurology's Neuroscience Creativity Prize. Jeff presented his research on the link between the chemical brain and human behavior.

Some of the finest minds in Blind Brook High School presented their fascinating scientific discoveries to the town. Although the turnout wasn't as high as the students would have liked, the event was an overall success. Stated senior Matt Stolzar, "This is a group of kids who like what they learn in class so much that they've pursued it outside in the real world. This is the way that education should be."



On Friday, May 14, the last day of classes was celebrated at the Student Senate sponsored party. With music and plenty of free food, students sat together signing yearbooks as the 2001-2002 school year came to a close.

Photo by Gillian McBride



Dear Blabby

By Ariel Page

Graduation Jitters

Dear Blabby,

I've been having this recurring nightmare: the school year is almost over and I've never attended any English classes. I have a Euro paper due but I don't remember where the classroom is. I've forgotten my locker number and have lost most of my textbooks. I feel so unprepared - what do you make of this dream?

Dear Nightmare,

This is no dream - you must be a senior.

Dear Blabby,

I've been having an excellent school year - until today. I just received a notice from my college that they expect a copy of my final high school transcript! I thought I was finished with all that stuff... can they still change their minds and not accept me?

Dear Almost Graduate,

You still have two weeks left to salvage the year. Contact your safety schools and tell them you've changed your mind!

Dear Blabby,

I just learned that I've been awarded a \$2,000 scholarship. Eligibility included New York State residency, an average of 3.0 and above, and membership in the Orange County Pig Farmers Association. I figured two out of three was a good start, so I quickly joined the club and the rest is history. Now I have to read my essay, "Why I love Breeding Pigs" at the awards ceremony. I hate public speaking - any advice?

Dear Ms. Piggy,

You have swindled the swine lovers and made a hog of yourself! Give up the grant and find a better way to "bring home the bacon."

Seven Teachers Leave BB and So Much Behind

By Rachel Barbarisi

While the Blind Brook school district continues its radical reconstruction into the next school year, its faculty will also undergo a massive change as seven of the high school's veteran teachers retire. Before they depart for life after Blind Brook, Mrs. Stepanovic, Ms. Lobdell, Mr. Dockwiller, Mrs. Pejkoivic, Mr. Charon, Mrs. Arest, and Mr. Tibbs hope to shed some light on Blind Brook's past and their own futures. The teachers represent a combined total of 190 years of teaching at Blind Brook, spanning such periods as 22 years for Ms. Lobdell, 23 years for Mr. Dockwiller, 29 years for Mr. Tibbs, and 33 years for Mrs. Pejkoivic.

When asked the reasons for their decision to retire this year the teachers gave various answers. Several mentioned that a retirement benefits incentive was offered for retiring teachers at the beginning of the year.

The teachers also took the opportunity to reflect upon some of their more memorable experiences with the students and each other during their years of teaching. Mrs. Stepanovic fondly recalled, "I remember one individual who threw a chair at me one year,

and then later he attended my wedding."

Mr. Charon laughed as he retold one of his more creative endeavors, "One year, when we still had homeroom, I promised the senior class that I would buy them donuts if we had perfect attendance for five days. Although they never reached that goal, on the days we did have 100 percent attendance one of the boys would run into the main office and announce it to the rest of the school. At the end of the year awards ceremony I spray painted a bagel and handed out a few 'Golden Donut Awards.'"

Mrs. Arest reminisced about the year she began an activity program to teach students about leadership. She recounted, "It brought about some real change in Blind Brook. Before the program students joined activities because it looked good on their transcripts. But that year we said to them, 'you have to make this school different,' and they took it upon themselves to begin new workshops and clubs that really improved the school."

Mr. Tibbs stated, "I'm just glad to have seen this school develop over the past 29 years into what it is now. At one time we were

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BB Feels Secure with Dave Centofanti

By Jessica Levine

While many members of our school prepare to leave the community for college and retirement, Blind Brook welcomes a new member to its staff, Dave Centofanti, the new security guard.

Centofanti is very familiar with the Westchester area, as he grew up alongside two siblings in Northern White Plains and graduated from Valhalla high school. After graduating, Centofanti went straight to work at General Motors where he stayed for 11 years. He has also owned a stationary store for five years and driven buses for kids for 8 years. Working with kids has always been a passion of Centofanti.

This is the precise reason why he decided to join the staff at Blind Brook. Stated Centofanti, "Everyone here is very kind and respectful. I have learned a lot from this environment." Centofanti said that his favorite thing about working at Blind Brook is getting to talk to and meet all the students. His least favorite part of the job is chasing around sophomores trying to sneak

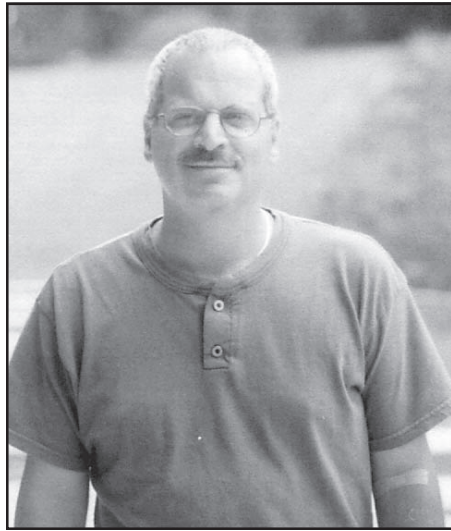


Photo by Eric Bernbaum

off campus.

During his free time, Centofanti loves to play golf and play with his two step-grandchildren. Centofanti has been married for five years and has two stepdaughters. Blind Brook is very glad to welcome this late edition to the district.

Habitat for Humanity Club: Looking for a Brighter Future

In November of 2001, the Blind Brook High School Habitat for Humanity Campus Chapter was officially established by senior John-Michael Grzan and recognized by Habitat for Humanity International. It was the first step in what would be a successful year for the first-year club.

Habitat for Humanity is a global non-profit organization founded in Georgia on a mission to end poverty housing throughout the world. With the motto, one family at a time, Habitat for Humanity has (over the past 25 years) built shelter for over half a million people throughout the world, from inner cities of the United States and Europe to remote villages in Tanzania and Papua New Guinea.

Founder and president, John-Michael Grzan explains his enthusiasm for the cause stating, "It's a very hands on type of service in which you actually get to team up with the people you are helping and get to witness the direct results of your volunteerism."

He explains his goals in starting the chapter saying, "I had worked with Habitat for Humanity during the summer for several weeks and had had such a rewarding experience. I wanted to create an opportunity for members of the Rye Brook community to share in that same excitement of helping others by creating a more efficient and yearlong method of doing so."

Living in a society as affluent as Westchester, we can be deceived into thinking there is little to no poverty. However, right here in our own county there are over 80,000 people living in substandard housing. It keeps them trapped in poverty, their physical and emotional well-being is undermined, and their meager resources are spent on maintaining what little shelter they have.

As a result, after the summer, Grzan got to work on officially establishing a chapter. Usually, it takes close to a year for a chapter to become registered; the Blind Brook chapter, however, was able to accomplish this in only 3 months.

Grzan then teamed up with fellow students Stephanie Gentile, Matt Gordon, Jeff Licitra, Logan Romm, Allison Schultz, and

Alex Sedler to form the chapter's first executive board. In addition, the chapter received a good deal of support from the rest of student body, helping to establish the school's first Habitat Club.

However, the first-year was not without adversity. Like in any first-year club, it was often hard to attract students and gather together as a club consistently when people already had so many other commitments. It was difficult to establish a reliable meeting time that would not interfere with all the other clubs in the school. "As a result, we functioned more as a club on the run, meeting whenever and wherever we could and often having to function through word of mouth," explained Grzan.

Grzan expresses his hopes for the future: "I hope that Habitat for Humanity can become one of Blind Brook's signature clubs like Human Relations or Yearbook so that we can have a more convenient and reliable time slot for our meetings and not have them interfere with other commitments."

Despite this obstacle, the chapter was able to work around it and have a very successful year. Blind Brook's Chapter has contributed to all the areas of volunteerism—community education of Habitat's history and mission, aid in the construction of a home, and much needed fundraising to purchase tools, land, and building material. The members have gotten information about Habitat for Humanity out through newspapers and radio. They have given up Saturday and Sunday morning sleep to work on houses in towns ranging from Bridgeport, Connecticut to our neighboring town of Port Chester.

The chapter was extremely successful in fundraising as well. Battling through the cold and rain on an early Saturday morning, several members of the chapter participated in a Walk-a-thon through Yonkers to raise money for the construction of two homes in the area. The cause was especially important because it helped raise money to build a home for a Yonkers family whose 2-year old child had just been killed by a bullet during crossfire.

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Rethinking our Educational System

By Brian Rosenberg

It seems to hit you sometime during sophomore year, like a Bugs Bunny-style anvil or piano. You have to get into college. That's when you start getting the tingling feeling at the end of your hands, or the feeling of ice water down your back. Because you soon realize just how hard gaining admission to a decent college will be.

I just finished my sophomore year and already I can feel the heat. Friends in the grade above me say I haven't seen anything yet. Suddenly, the two-month summer vacation seems an awful lot shorter than it did before.

For after it, I, like all of my peers, must trudge, stumble, and sometimes crawl through the gauntlet that is called 11th grade. Already I've taken and studied for a few SAT IIs, and let me tell you, adding studying time to my already hectic schedule of sports, extracurriculars, homework, and sleeping is virtually impossible. Can you guess what buckles under the strain?

Sleep, of course. Ask any junior or even sophomore how many hours of sleep they get per night and you will be appalled at some of the answers. Seven, some say, unless they have a big AP American essay due the next day. Five, say others, because of SAT tutoring. Another great indicator of this problem is the amount of coffee that students drink at night to stay awake and in the morning to wake up.

In today's educational environment, it seems that getting into college is a no holds barred demolition derby, in which the cars are the students. All through high school, and sometimes before, students build themselves into the strongest, indestructible car in the arena, according to what their whims, talents, gut instincts, parent's advice, or \$100 per hour college advisors tell them. Do colleges want me to be the well-rounded scholar-athlete or the sharply focused amazingly-good-at-one-thing virtuoso? More often than many realize, the car collapses of its own weight. Kids care more about what they are supposed to be instead of what they want to be.

Come to think of it, I've never really even thought twice about going to college, or what it means. I wouldn't be surprised if many other students like me have the same experience. It's just been the thing to do; almost everyone around me will or has. Sometimes I catch myself wondering if college is really worth the agony of high school. And from what I hear, is getting a graduate degree really worth the torture of college? Worth the sleepless nights? The stressful striving to get a decent grade? And what happens when I reach the light at the end of the tunnel? I get to work at some 8 to 5 job that I might not even end up liking? What's the point?

Only the naïve or the blindly ideal (or those with commencement, inspirational or other speeches to make) really believe in the idea of a pure education, one in which students learn for the sake of learning. But even so, our educational system, in the pragmatic world we live in, is becoming so goal oriented and progressively less learning oriented.

If you ask many high school students why they take on the challenging AP courses they do, they won't answer that they take it out of a love of the subject. If you ask the same group why they are members of so many clubs they won't answer because they enjoy writing Model United Nations resolutions, or they love to do Math Meet problems or they like enriching interpersonal relationships. And only the most ingenuous idealist or a complete societal hermit would think that students enjoy helping their community out while completing their compulsory community service requirement.

No, upon being asked why he embarked on such an ambitious course, the typical high schooler will say he did it for college.

There is something wrong with our educational system when preparation for a single test (SAT) has created an exponentially swelling, billion-dollar industry and the companies that administer them (Princeton Review, Kaplan, ETS, the College Board) have become household names. There is something wrong when a student feels compelled to take a course far beyond his capacity, when he could take a course at his level in which he could learn more. The pressure from parents, colleges, and indirectly, our society (of course in Blind Brook's egalitarian idealism, everyone is just as capable of the next) must change; teenage students can only take so much.

APs, SATs, ACTs, RCTs, Ibs, the list of exam acronyms that have invaded the high school student's life goes on and on. They can map out one's secondary school career. The list of requirements for college is almost as long as the list of exam acronyms: community service, extracurriculars, the college essays, and of course, grades.

High school has often been compared to a juggling act; one cannot drop the ball. But today, the balls have become more and more unwieldy. Especially the one marked grades. Homework, one of the most hated institutions by students, is all too often copied from others, long term projects left to the last minute, and studying done in late night cram sessions by students crumbling in the face of stress they have never before encountered. It seems that many teachers think that their students only take one class... theirs. Very few students have the self-discipline and time management skills to keep all of the balls in the air for long. So something drops. Sometimes it is grades sometimes it's outside activities, and sometimes it's something else. But instead of resulting in less stress, it just creates more, as the student worries that his performance isn't as good as his peers, he dropped more than others, or that he's the only one going through it.

Also adding to the worries of already harried students trying to get good grades is the problem of grade inflation. In most schools across the United States, Blind Brook definitely included, average grades have sky rocketed. It is no longer acceptable, for many students, to get a B, a grade considered very good in times not so long ago. Colleges have a major role in grade inflation. Increasingly, the best require higher and higher grade point averages for entrance, as 4.0s become more ubiquitous. Even the best colleges themselves are not immune to this phenomenon, including the most prestigious, such as Harvard University. The effect of grade inflation on high school students is painfully obvious (sometimes literally).

While grade inflation is a problem, even more overbearing in the minds of high school students is the SAT or ACT tests. Although the College Board intends to revamp their test to examine more closely the extent of a student's knowledge and aptitude, it is ludicrous for colleges to base their admissions, even in part, on a single test. Indeed, we must ask ourselves how our education system developed in such a way that one or two bad test scores can drastically change the course of one's life? Slowly, colleges such as the University of California are starting to come to their senses and throw out the SATs as a valid tool to measure the aptitude of students. Their decision will go a long way to relieving or increasing the pressures of high school students nationwide.

Features Section

Features Editor: Matt Stolzar

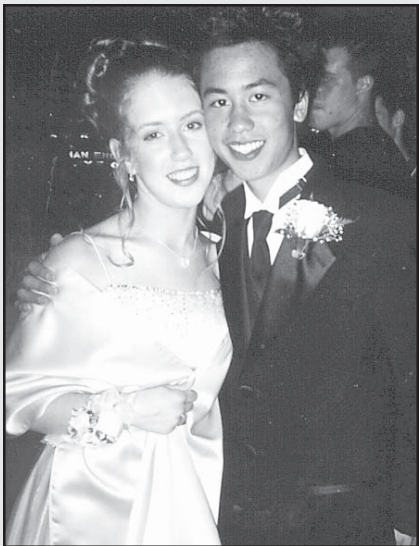


Blind Brook High School's Senior Prom

"An Evening of Elegance"

Thursday, June 6, 2002
at The Fountainhead

Photos by Hillary Berkowitz



Seven Teachers Leave BB and So Much Behind

Continued from page 6

going to merge with another school district because the student body was so small. But to see the school grow to the point where we have to build a new middle school is very rewarding."

Ms. Lobdell, who mentioned memories of helping start the Human Relations Club and her first rafting trip, also added, "I remember one day the heat in the building all of a sudden went up to about 90 degrees and as we were all dying from heat exhaustion Mr. Charon took off his shirt and continued teaching."

Mrs. Pejkoivic, the teacher of the seven with Blind Brook the longest, remarked, "I remember starting to teach at Ridge Street and we all helped the architect design the present high school building, and now to see this new middle school being built is just fantastic."

Unlike the majority of people in Blind Brook today, the retiring teachers have a unique perspective on our school and the extent to which it has changed over time. "The teaching quality here has always remained high," said Mr. Dockwiler, "however, there used to be a daily element of spontaneity and fun that has thinned over time and created a more serious environment. At one point in Blind Brook, an open, upbeat, imaginative atmosphere was encouraged much more than it is now. The mindset proved contagious to many teachers, who were at the time young and therefore had more time to dedicate to school-related activities, as well as the student body. In addition, when Blind Brook was first started there were practically no four walled classrooms. Students and teachers were able to hear from both sides of their classroom what was being taught around them and how the kids were responding, you would laugh at their jokes and vice versa. The faculty loved teaching in that kind of environment where there was an ongoing flow of actions and ideas."

Ms. Lobdell also agreed with Mr. Dockwiler in saying, "I loved the open classrooms. I remember one day my bio class was dissecting fetal pigs and Mr. Shortliffe was walking by and he stood there in awe as some of my students began explaining the lab to him. It's a shame the students won't be able to see that type of adult interaction as much after the new school is completed."

Mrs. Stepanovic added to Mr. Dockwiler's comments by saying, "When I first started teaching here Blind Brook had a very close knit faculty, but with the changes in the structure of the building it's really created a lack of unity. The students as well seem much less motivated than they were when I started teaching here which can be connected to an overall downturn in the overall society, not just in Blind Brook."

Still others see more of a difference regarding student teacher relationships like Mrs. Arest. "Although the kids are just as creative and bright as they've always been, we used to have a much younger staff here who could have more of an intimate connection with their students. I remember students who used to come to my house for dinner, play instruments together, and even cut each other's hair, but when you get older it's harder to maintain that type of a relationship with your students," remarked Arest.

When asked what they will miss the most about Blind Brook, the retiring teachers all agreed that the daily interaction between Blind Brook students and faculty is the hardest thing to say goodbye to. Mrs. Stepanovic commented, "I'll miss the students who come back and tell me that because of the course they took with me they're pursuing a science career. I'll miss those who struggle with the

material all year and then I see them pass their final exams, and I'll miss those students who I can joke with the most and build friendships with."

Mr. Dockwiler added, "It's a huge loss to me to know I'll never have the opportunity to teach some of the students I've made friends with over the years. I'll miss working with talented, motivated teenagers which has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my career."

Mr. Charon stated, "I've always been active in organizing faculty parties, and get together, and I'll miss that opportunity as well as the opportunity to be creative and exchange jokes with the other teachers."

Mrs. Pejkoivic described, "I'll miss everything about this school but most of all I'll miss the day to day dealings with the students."

Yet what's in store for these ambitious educators: everything from riding motorcycles to hiking in the Adirondacks and writing novels. "I'm planning on writing children's books," said Mr. Dockwiler. "I'd like to explore different controversial issues in writing. I'll most likely get involved in justice issues somehow. I'll continue to read a lot of course, and somewhere down the line I might become involved in teaching again."

Mrs. Stepanovic lamented, "It's a sad time to leave Blind Brook now because of all the exciting new changes. However I have been in school over 50 years in total and I am looking forward to seeing what else I can do with my life like learning to play piano, and spending more time with my children as they grow up."

Mrs. Arest, who will be moving to Arizona, stated, "I want to continue working at a university part time and start teaching other teachers, and in my spare time I'd like to play golf and spend time in my boat." Mrs. Pejkoivic also hopes to stay involved in teaching, possibly at the college level.

While many of the retiring teachers will continue to educate elsewhere, others plan on returning to the Blind Brook for frequent visits. Mr. Tibbs exclaimed, "I'm looking forward to flying my model airplanes, riding my motorcycle, and especially coming to visit Blind Brook during sporting events and such."

Echoing this sentiment, Lobdell stated, "Although I am planning on doing a lot of traveling, I am going to continue to be the senior class advisor for the current juniors."

As they leave Blind Brook and all their memories behind, each teacher offered a piece of advice to help the incoming faculty enjoy Blind Brook as much as they have over the years:

Mrs. Arest - "Listen to the students. They always know what they need and if you give them an opportunity to talk they'll tell you. If you're too frightened to hear them you'll never establish a good working relationship."

Mrs. Stepanovic - "Take a deep breath before every class and be grateful for the opportunity you've been given to influence the lives of your students."

Mr. Charon - "Ask your colleagues for help if you need it, almost everyone here is willing to help each other with anything."

Mr. Dockwiler - "Let yourself grow with the students, don't be afraid to make mistakes and then admit them. And no matter what, don't become a stagnant and boring teacher."

Mr. Tibbs - "Treat the students like human beings"

Ms. Lobdell - "Treat the students and their families justly and you will receive that same kind of treatment in return."

Mrs. Pejkoivic - "Always remember to be flexible and open minded."

Why McBride No Longer Wears Flip Flops

By Matt Stolzar, Features Editor

Gillian McBride, once Blind Brook's favorite sandal showcase, has put on her last flip flop. But this, ladies and gentlemen, is no fashion statement. It is instead an act to commemorate a sad day in the history of road kill.

On Saturday June 1, Gillian McBride was walking down Rockinghorse Trail when a chipmunk presented itself. McBride remarked to her friend Amy Barish how much she loved chipmunks, and then continued walking. The chipmunk, possibly upon hearing McBride's remark, dashed towards her in a fit of excitement. McBride, unaware of how to respond, tried to run away. But she didn't get very far. And neither did the chipmunk.

As McBride lifted her flip flop covered foot in the air and then thrust it back to the ground, she stepped on this poor creature, fracturing the chipmunk's right leg. She flipped as the chipmunk flopped.

After a few seconds the chipmunk stood erect again, but had a noticeable limp. McBride proceeded to run to the

closest house, which just happened to be my house, in need of a shoebox to try to save the chipmunk. With the help of a stick, we got the chipmunk into a shoebox, and pondered what to do next. Little did we know that wisdom was just around the corner.

I squinted my eyes to see none other than Sr. Marcoccia driving his car down Rockinghorse. He got out of the car and examined the situation and told us the only thing to do was to put the chipmunk out of its misery. Acting optimistically, we ignored Marcoccia's advice, and decided to try and save the poor critter.

After calling several veterinarians and wildlife organizations, none of whom were available that day, it appeared that Marcoccia was right. We let the chipmunk back into the wild, with grim hopes that somehow it would survive. So next time you see McBride walking through the hallways, you can expect to see tightly laced sneakers covering her feet.

I know I'd be wearing sneakers if I were in her shoes.

Arts & Entertainment

A & E Editor: Gillian McBride

Local Foreign Restaurants: Little Known but Notable

By **Melissa Matles**

In and around Rye Brook, there simply is not enough to do. Sure, you can go to the bowling alley or pool hall, check out the mall, or catch a movie, but there is a true wealth of only one thing: food, glorious food. Thus we eat.

Unfortunately, we tend to dine at the same places day in and day out. We frequent Xando's when in the mood for a sandwich on some of Cosi's famous bread. We go to Castleview and Purchase Delis for a lunch-time fix. We often visit Frank's for anything Italian. Sometimes we make our way over to Hubba's to chow down. Why all this routine? Why not delve into the unknown?

When you are in the mood for a feast, Port Chester is the prime place to go, with its variety of restaurants that serve brilliant

regional cuisine. Among them is the highly recommended Café Brazil, located on Main Street. The buffet is superb and well-priced. Although Café Brazil's environment is nothing to brag about, in this warm summer weather you can always sit outside. Plus, if you have a sweet tooth, Café Brazil has quite the mouth-watering display of desserts.

Another great place to eat is Frankie and Louie's (formerly Luigi's) on Willett Avenue in Port Chester. It serves delicious Italian food to rival Frank's. While the restaurant is quite the typical, cramped "hole in the wall," you can always order take-out. Besides, the portions are filling and the prices more than reasonable. At Frankie and Louie's one will always leave equipped with a doggy bag full of Westchester's finest food.

Then, located on Boston Post Road, Port Chester Coach Diner-Restaurant is a always the crowd-pleaser, though not as often frequented by today's Blind Brook crowd. It serves everything, including "Diet Delights," a perfect match for Rye Brook's more health-conscious crowd. At Coach, even the pickiest eaters won't go hungry. The food there is consistently scrumptious and inexpensive. Open 24 hours a day, it's a great place to visit when you have the nighttime munchies. For Rachel Barbarisi it's a place "where you can eat cheaply at all hours of the night." Seldom do you have to wait to be seated and your order comes out promptly. According to junior Michael Fuchs, "At PC Diner there is a lot to choose from, and the staff members are usually attentive." All in all, at the Port Chester Coach Diner-Restaurant you cannot go wrong.

Differing from Coach is the reputable Route 22 in Armonk. You might have to wait a while for a table, but once you sit down, you can enjoy the friendly surroundings that include an old car suspended from the ceiling, an occasional vintage gas pump, as well as kids meals served in paper cars. Senior Lynne Desmond said, "Although sometimes you have to wait a while to be

seated, Route 22 is a fun theme restaurant. It's the type of place you would find in the city, but closer to home." When asked if he had ever eaten at Route 22, Barry Finder replied, "No, but I want to. The food is supposed to be amazing." And, the food *is* amazing, even if on the pricey side.

With so many restaurants around us, do yourself a favor and explore all their delicious food. Take advantage of your resources. Make a point of going to new places. Look into Café Brazil, Frankie and Louie's, Port Chester Coach Diner-Restaurant, and Route 22. Then make your way to other places. Check out Mezzaluna in Rye, where the employees seem to know their customers. Go to T&J's in Port Chester, which, according to Tiffany Schaen, "is parent-approved and child-loved." Or perhaps Coyote Flaco across from the Pathmark supermarket in Port Chester or El Tio, located across from the Port Chester Train Station, will satiate any cravings for Mexican food, especially with their low prices and great selection. Finally, you can stop by at Centro in Greenwich, where you can draw on the table in crayons while waiting for your meal.

Wherever your hunger may lead you, in the words of Scott Schaen, "Bon appetite."

Your Guide to the Cinema

By **Diana Landes**

If the boredom Blind Brook students endure through winter, spring, and fall in Rye Brook is at all indicative of the summer here, then I am so glad to be getting out for a while. For those stuck here, I offer my solace and this guide of summer movies. At least you'll have an activity for those monotonous summer nights; otherwise, you can just save your hard-earned nine bucks, but I promise you, you'd be missing out.

This summer, Hollywood is spewing out sequels of hit movies from the past. Producers of "Stuart Little 2" and "Spy Kids 2: The Islands of Lost Dreams" hope these children movies will prove as successful as their previous counterparts. For the older audience, there's "Austin Powers in Goldmember," the third of the highly successful string of Austin Powers comedies. Mike Myers will resume his many roles as the beloved spy Austin, Dr. Evil, and Fat Bastard in addition to a new persona—the villainous Goldmember. You can expect more of the '70's era comedy from the first two movies, plus Destiny's Child lead singer Beyonce Knowles as Austin's new object of affection (apparently she can sing, dance, and act—a real triple threat!). Sophomore Keith Hanauer is excited for the July 26 release because "it's been a while since a good comedy has come out."

Audiences are also sure to enjoy "Men in Black II," starring Will Smith (another artist dabbling in multiple aspects of the industry) in his return as Agent Jay, a gun-toting secret agent out to rid the world of evil aliens all the while looking good in Ray-Bans. Rejoining him as his partner is Agent Kay, played by the great Tommy Lee Jones. "The Practice's" Lara Flynn Boyle stars as a seductive (but—watch out—still evil) alien and Johnny Knoxville of MTV's "Jackass" will be featured in a supporting role. But wait, there's more! Michael Jackson will also make a cameo (though surprisingly not as an alien) and Biz Markie, "the human beat box," will translate Alien tongue. Again, if you're still craving more of those rappers-turned-actors, you can catch Lil' Bow Wow in "Like Mike" and Busta Rhymes in "Halloween: Resurrection," both to be gems, I'm sure.

Of all the sequels out this season, "Star Wars: Episode II—Attack of the Clones" was probably the most highly anticipated. (Though is it actually a sequel? It's the second part of a trilogy? I've heard the term prequel thrown around. I don't know—I've never been a big fan.) Anyway, "Episode II" promised romance between Anakin

Skywalker (Hayden Christensen) and Princess Amidala (Natalie Portman) as well as some new villains, namely bounty hunter Jango Fett. "Episode II" has made \$232 million to date, but sales at the box office have not been staggering considering the anticipation and buzz preceding the epic series.

"Spider Man," based on the Marvel comic of that same title, was an undoubtedly huge success in the box office since its release. Tobey Maguire stars as Peter Parker, a nerdy high school student bitten by a genetically engineered spider taking on superhuman powers to become Spider man, the super hero with human problems. Among them is romancing Mary-Jane, played by Kirsten Dunst while fighting off the evil Green Goblin (Willem Dafoe). Just a side note: James Franco, formerly of the TV show "Freaks and Geeks," is in this movie—reason alone to see it.

This summer, Tom Cruise will star in the much hyped Steven Spielberg film "Minority Report," a futuristic action/sci-fi thriller. The basic premise: it is the future in Washington, D.C. when people can see the future and take the task of predicting and thereby preventing murders. Cruise plays a cop sent to arrest would-be killers, but things go awry for him when he finds himself the target. Though the combination of big names like Cruise and Spielberg could draw in a crowd, buzz surrounding movies like the aforementioned "Star Wars" and "Spider Man" might overshadow this thriller.

It hasn't been heavily publicized like some of the other movies mentioned, so you probably haven't heard of the new film "Road to Perdition" with Tom Hanks. A 1930's mobster, Hanks is seeking revenge after the murder of his wife. Along the way, his teenage son finds out the secrets of his father's career. Sam Mendes of "American Beauty" fame directs, Jude Law plays a supporting role, and Tom Hanks wears a funny mustache throughout the film. That could be worth the money for the ticket. But perhaps not all agree. As sophomore Kelly Tachdjian declared, "After seeing ONLY [Hanks] for 2 hours straight in "Castaway," I never want to look at him in a movie again."

"The Fast and the Furious" was an unexpected hit last summer, this summer it's breakthrough star Van Diesel who will play lead in the action movie "XXX." This time though, instead of cars, he'll race motocross bikes as a secret government agency spy. If you were a fan of "The Fast and the Furi-

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Summer's Hottest Tours

By **Melissa Gentile**

1. The VANS WARPED TOUR

Encompassing some of punk rock's preeminent bands such as Bad Religion, Mighty Mighty Bosstones, the Damned, and sixty-five others, the Warped Tour is the place to be this summer. It's known as the collaboration of group bands, extreme athletes, and intrepid bystanders. Aside from rocker-vibe and tricks you won't see anywhere else, the mere twenty-dollar admission fee is matchless. The tour gears up June 21 in Nampa, Idaho, and winds down August 18 in Detroit.

2. The Smokin' Grooves Tour

The tour features the flamboyant OutKast, Lauryn Hill, Cee-Lo, Roots, Jurassic 5, and DJ Shadow. Unfamiliar with Jurassic 5? "They're one of the last rap groups that can really display the art of harmonizing," said Root's Ahmir Thompson. A particular point of interest: OutKast is tentatively performing debut material from the "Scooby-Doo" soundtrack. "I'd love to see Lauryn Hill because she's a great performer with a unique sense of style," said freshman Jessica Feldesman. Grooves launches on July 18 in Mountain View, California, and culminates August 7 in Atlanta. Pricing is said to be reasonable and as musician Ahmir Thompson would put it, "it'll be worth the cash money, brutha."

3. The Anger Management Tour

Now we'll digress from mellow R&B to its stark antithesis—hard core rock/rap. The Anger Management tour (not your conventional array of music) features Papa Roach, Ludacris, Xzibit, Xecutioners, and the highly controversial Eminem—you know, all the groups that parents shake their heads at and therapists are baffled by. Nevertheless, this tour embarks July 18 in Buffalo and ends September 13 in Michigan. The

tour warrants a superfluity of anger and very limited management. To appeal to hip-hop lovers, Papa Roach plans to cover classics like the Pharcyde's "Passing Me By." Ticket prices vary from \$15-55.50, which is comparatively cheap for such an infamous and popular show. Said freshman Mike Valiantis, "I might go to see Anger Management because Eminem, Xzibit, and Ludacris are particularly great performers with songs you can really bounce to."

4. The AREA 2 tour

A follow-up to last summer's highly praised Area: 1 tour, it offers a diverse lineup comprised of Moby, David Bowie, Busta Rhymes, Carl Cox, and John Digweed. Bearing in mind that Rhymes and Moby are two of the most high-energy and oddly eclectic animate performers, fans are stoked. Area 2 fires up July 28 in Washington, DC, and ends August 16 in Seattle. David Bowie devotees must treasure what may be his ultimate large-scale road show. This show is said to be more pricey than others but reflect on what you're getting—a spiritual guide, a bodacious rapper, and an 80's male-icon.

5. Jeep world outside festival

The festival includes artists like Sheryl Crow, Train, Ziggy Marley, and O.A.R.. Featuring latest hit, "Soak Up the Sun," Sheryl Crow is the rare contemporary rocker with transgenerational appeal. People of all ages can appreciate her musical style. Train, a recent winner of two Grammy awards, has earned the august reputation of being one of the hottest live bands in the country. Ziggy Marley, a recipient of two Grammys as well, fruitfully integrates Reggae with contemporary music. Ticket prices are in the vicinity of \$40. The tour extends from July 10 in Charlotte, N.C. to August 17 in Boston. My guess is the mundane name of the tour belies the fun to be had.

The Stars of Prom and What They Wore

By Lauren Levinson

Yes, prom is about reflection, friendship, and one last chance for seniors to come together. But still, we all know that there is another reason that prom is such a big deal. It starts about five months before the eventful night with the endless shopping and appointment-making, and it leads up to the two hours where promees will parade around someone's lawn, like movie stars in front of the entire village of Rye Brook. Welcome to pre-prom. It is this event that is centered around fashion, dresses, hair, makeup shoes, bags, tuxedos, flowers, colors, and every other superficial but super fun aspect of prom. And to honor the enormous effort made by those who got all dolled up for this year's festivities, I'd like to present a few awards. (Drum roll please.)

Best Coordinated and Accessorized

Mizuki Tanaka, for her simple but stylish black dress with matching black flowers in her hair, around her neck, and on her strappy black sandals.

John-Michael Grzan, for his shiny, black patent leather shoes

Best Color

Sandy Schnur, for her simple, bright and dynamite hot pink tube dress.

Leo Cohen, ready for some tea and crumpets in his elegant gold vest and tie.

Best Hair

Allison Schultz, for her long locks put half up with tiny braids in a unique twist.

Brett Konner, who undeniably made the ultimate prom statement with his legendary silk, black tuxedo visor.

Best Dressed Underclassmen

Sophomore Leslie Steinberg, for her exquisite lavender beaded gown with a scoop neck, matching purple Prada handbag, and glittery eye makeup.

Junior Jonny Winter, for his classy black and white tux, superb hair, and great smile.

Best Dressed Alumni

Blythe Niles, who, at her fourth Blind Brook prom, knew what she was doing. Her vibrant pink-flowered dress went perfectly with the pink flower in her hair and her dangly pink earrings.

Both Matt Effler, who always stands out in a crowd, and Vinod Nambudiri, for his stylish black and white checkered vest.

Most Traditional

Jill Diamond, who could not have been classier with her black gloves, black dress, and matching conventional handbag.

Frank D'Angelo, for his simple clean-cut tuxedo and hair.

Most New York

Jodie Goldberg, for pulling off the sleek black tube dress and black sandals.

Laurence Katz, for his all-black suit, jacket, shirt, and vest.

Cutest

Jessica Schultz, who looked beautiful, tan, and (as always) petite, in her slinky white strapless dress, loose hair around her shoul-

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Are the Standards in Film on the Decline?

By Melissa Rosen

What is your favorite movie? Come on, pick one. Why did you happen to choose that specific movie? Did it have amazing acting? Did it make you laugh? Cry? How about the visual effects or lighting? Or was it the overall package? Today it seems the answer to this once simple question has become, well, complicated. How can one possibly decide what their favorite film is with today's deteriorating standards for a quality film? Back in the day, films that did well at the box office were generally the best quality films as well. Now it seems that studios are creating absolute garbage without concern for quality, and, believe it or not, it sells. Sad but true, the art of filmmaking has been limited to only a handful of films each year (if we're lucky!). What ever happened to good taste?

Let me begin by addressing the technological aspect of films today. (Ohhh.) I understand that technology has advanced leaps and bounds in recent years, but that doesn't mean films need to use special effects every opportunity they get. Not only are they often unnecessary, but they

also soak up half of the feeling in a film.

A great example of this is the recent "Star Wars" movie. "Episode Two" was filmed completely with a digital camera and almost all of the scenes contain several special effects, ranging from blue screen to full-out computer animation. Now, is this new edition into the Star Wars family even half as good as the originals? No. It could be because George Lucas's dialogue took a nose dive, but I think part of the reason is that half of the feeling is gone. Everything is false. Now even Yoda has gone digital. Not even the divine being that is Ewan McGregor can put the life back into this one.

Although being a perfect example of technology taking over, *Star Wars* is nowhere near being the only film to overuse technology. Oh no, it seems that in the production of every film out today directors are deciding to spend that extra million or so on digital explosions, creatures, or who knows what else. What happened to the good old fashioned model and explosions? Has everyone become digital junkies? What about that irreplaceable feeling

you get from watching real gritty film? I guess my age is showing. (Ha.)

Actually, since this is my article, I think it is only right to delve into my vast knowledge of filmmaking. When one learns how to become a filmmaker, one must first look deeply into the other mediums that came before. Film students are often told to go to art museums and examine and study paintings. If a particular artist can tell a story in one frame, a filmmaker should be able to keep that beauty and tell the story in many more frames. Lighting, set design, and costumes are just among the many things that help to properly paint a filmmaker's picture. One of the few filmmakers that still possesses this appreciation for the art form is Ridley Scott. Coming from an art background, Scott sketches each frame before he films it. Pause a Scott film on your DVD player, etc. (oh, you all know you have DVD players) and observe a perfectly lit painting. The same was true with Stanley Kubrick's films, but he was always underappreciated because of his odd and sometimes controversial subject matter.

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THE LEGENDS OF NINJA NATE

by Jeff Gnerre

A & E Editor: Gillian McBride

Arts & Entertainment

A New Model Mix Tape

By Blair Mosner

I can still vividly remember discovering Jimi Hendrix and The Who in my basement. I was 12, and my best friend and I sat on blow-up couches facing each other, 20 feet from my Mom's turntable. Between sides, we discussed how much cooler we were than the rest of Blind Brook. Judgmental? You have no idea. I spent most of 7th and 8th grade huddled around my Smashing Pumpkins albums and silently cursing the Top 40. At 12, I was convinced that I was one of only a select few Blind Brook students to have ever heard anything but the Backstreet Boys. I had K-Rock, and I was clearly better than my Z100-listening peers. I wasn't right then, and I would most certainly not be right now.

Currently, Blind Brook has a diverse collective ear of which I am proud to be a part. On Blind Brook students, I have seen Dave Matthews Band sweatshirts, Radiohead pins, and Pink Floyd T-shirts. In Blind Brook cars, I have heard Bob Dylan, No Doubt, and DMX. Impressive as I think that mix is (I'm especially partial to Dylan and DMX), I haven't heard nearly enough Hanson. What follows is a small sampling of music (more often than not my own favorites) that perhaps isn't getting enough play in the BB circuit.

Hanson

When the two of us were in 6th grade, Jessica Stein asked me if I had ever heard of Hanson. I hadn't, but if Jess knew about them, then it was absolutely imperative that I know about them too. Shortly thereafter, I bought their 1997 Mercury Records release entitled "Middle of Nowhere" and listened to it, non-stop, all summer. 10 weeks of "Thinking of You" left an impression, and I have been a Hanson fan ever since. I bought Hanson's 2000 release the day it came out. "This Time Around" completely de-bunks the "Hanson is too bubble gum" argument I know people like to use against them. The album is incredible. I urge you to give them a chance in the face of the risk of becoming a Hanson fan. They're amazing; give a listen to either their old stuff or wait for the album due out next fall.

The World/Inferno Friendship Society

Last February, I saw my first ever World/Inferno show at the Knitting Factory. I was baby-sitting a friend by the bathrooms during the set change, and by the time I made my way back upstairs to see World/Inferno take the stage, the Factory was packed—this 9-piece Brooklyn-based punk rock cabaret draws awesomely large crowds at its New York shows. David Bilmas is the king of sweetness, as well as my gate into the world of The World/Inferno. He offers this advice, "When attending a World/Inferno Friendship Society show, be sure to dress in layers. Not only because the turnout is overwhelming, but also because pyrotechnics are embodied into the band's performance." David mentions the live show as opposed to the studio records because, although all of them are stellar, the full WIFS flavor can only be experienced live. David also offers this description of WIFS's sound: "Tom Waits as the ringmaster of a circus in the Rocky Horror mansion." With five 7's and three full length albums to their name, the Inferno has come a long way since they started as a piano/vocals duo in 1994, playing parties for minor celebrities. Currently, the band has Jack Terricloth, the punk rocker extraordinaire who knows everybody, on vocals. Lucky Strano, the high school dropout who steals drinks for the band from the Sweetwater Tavern, plays guitar. Semra is the stand-up percussionist with the perfect armpits, and Benji Kotch is the Jewish heterosexual hailing from Eve's Plum on drums. The horn section is home to Maura Corrigan, Rudeboy Hess, and one Texan—Dan Baily. Then there's Yula, the Israeli model here to escape the army. She's been assimilated by the Inferno to play bass. Finally, the newest member is Mr.

Franz Nicolay on the accordion. The rest of the band can't figure out how Franz got involved, but David's sure it's the handle-bar mustache. World/Inferno will be playing in NY all summer: on July 3 at the soon-to-be-shutdown Brownies, on July 19 at North Six in Brooklyn, and on August 10 at Randall's Island as part of the Warped Tour. (I know some Blind Brook folk will be there.) Then, they'll be at CBGB's on August 16 with the Brimstones (another band you really ought to check out.). So, everybody go!

Tori Amos

I have to tread carefully with this one. Several close friends regard Tori as a demigod, and should I not give her all the respect she deserves in the lines to follow, I risk sudden death. Tori has been in the background of my life since as far back as 7th grade; friends loved her, and so I just knew her sound. Then, after a truly terrible day at the beginning of this year, I took the next step and borrowed "Under The Pink" from a friend to accompany me in an hour-long shower. Understandably, I didn't exactly feel better post-Pink, but I felt spent and drained in that good way that you get after a really good cry. My own misery truly loved the company of Tori's piano as well as her voice, which I still have not found the proper words to describe. Then there are her lyrics (my favorite being, "they say you were something in those formative years"), which are sometimes cryptic, sometimes blunt, but always in a message. I love Tori Amos, but I wouldn't call myself a true-blue Tori addict. Although she's never really gotten a ton of air play, Tori has an enormous web-centered fan base filled with people who are truly obsessed with everything Tori. Bootlegs of live Tori shows (which I hear are quite intense) are a big thing among fans. Me? I'll stick to her 6 albums and end this with a word of caution: Tori Amos is not for the faint of heart; she has been the center of many controversies, not the least of which is a photo appearing in the liner notes of "Boys For Pele" in which she is nursing a pig.

Talking Heads

This past March, the 4-piece chunk of musical history that has been broken up since the late 80s reunited to play 4 songs together as they were inducted (finally!) into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. VH1 broadcast "Burning Down The House" and "Life During Wartime" for all the fans who are so rightfully crazy for the brilliant group, originally made up of David Byrne, Tina Weymouth, her husband Chris Frantz, and Jerry Harrison. I've been crazy for their sound since before I can remember, but in all that time I've never had the opportunity to see them live. I have, however, been blessed with a live set from Tom Tom Club, Chris and Tina's band since 1981. I banded together with some fellow Tina-lovers who I did not know, and the only thing better than when all 10 or 12 of us screamed out, "Tina, we love you!" (and she heard us) was TTC playing "Genius of Love," which you may recognize sampled in almost every song ever, live. This was on a stage 15 feet from me. There are no words. Talking Heads has 10 albums—my favorite being "Naked"—and all the members have side projects, all of which I would recommend. People call them new wave, people call them post-punk, and I call them terrific. And so, so arty. Catch Chris and Tina at the Summer Stage in Central Park on July 26, or go to Europe and see David Byrne on his Look into the Eyeball tour in someplace really funky like Dublin.

The Weakerthans

Aie! Aie! The Weakerthans are another gift to from the above-mentioned David Bilmas, who played me "Asside" off their most recent release "Left and Leaving." My favorite thing about the self-proclaimed "power pop" band from Canada is not that

Please turn to page 12



Senate's Showtime a Hit

Friday afternoon on June 14, Blind Brook students convened in the new auditorium to watch fellow classmates perform. Photos by Gillian McBride



The Stars of Prom and What They Wore

Continued from page 10

ders, and natural-looking makeup. Add her date Leo Cohen to her side and one can't help but let out an "awww!"

Heath Ward, who never stopped smiling and looked quite charming in his tuxedo.

Hottest

Ashley Vespia could have stopped traffic in her red-hot gown and crimped hair.

Spencer Howard showed some sexy skin by eliminating a shirt and tie from his ensemble.

The Cinderella and

Prince Charming of the Ball

Kristen Bassett looked like a priceless princess in her sparkly lilac gown and tiara of flowers in her golden locks.

Matt Stolzar could have easily been a prince in his silvery bow tie and vest.

Most Amazing Dress

Golden, puffy, and gorgeous, Tarynne Goldenberg turned heads with her stunning dress. Her up-do with little flowers in curls and gold, diamond necklace complemented the outfit perfectly.

Most Creative Couple

This black and white cookie, Jessica Novick and Eric Diaz matched in every way, with her black and white dress and his black suit, but white shirt and vest.

Best Overall Couple

Not surprisingly, Stephanie Gentile and Jason Stein looked fabulous. Stephanie's white beaded gown was simple and incredibly elegant. Jason Stein added color and plaid to his tux with his trendy Burberry bow tie and cummerbund.

Your Guide to the Cinema

Continued from page 9

ous," you'll probably enjoy the fast-paced action of "XXX." Plus, Samuel L. Jackson plays a government official and Eve, yet another rap artist to delve into film, plays a supporting role.

Mysterious appearances found in cornfields led M. Night Shyamalan to conjure up the scenario for his new film, "Signs," with Mel Gibson. Shyamalan is the brains behind such eerie hits as "The Sixth Sense" and "Unbreakable," and his new project promises just as creepy and intriguing an ending. Gibson plays a widowed minister who lives on a farm with his brother (Joaquin Phoenix) and child (Macauley's little brother, Rory Culkin). One day, the group discovers puzzling signs in the cornfields and surely supernatural activity ensues.

Mysteries of a different type will be uncovered in the upcoming "Scooby Doo," starring Sarah Michelle Gellar, Freddie Prinze Jr., Matthew Lillard, and Linda Cardellini. These actors will assume the roles of the established characters from the animated series as well as a digitally enhanced crime-solving pup, Scooby Doo. The movie may answer a few of the undying questions Saturday morning cartoon viewers were left pondering. For example, are Fred (Prinze) and Daphne (Gellar) hooking up? Is the gang a bunch of drugged out hippies? (There were several references in the early cartoons.) What is in those Scooby Snacks that leave Scoob so hungry? Producers are hoping we'll see the movie to find out, meanwhile the celebrity status of Prinze and Gellar will surely help.

Author, Rebecca Wells released her book "Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood" in 1996, the best-seller has been adapted into a film starring Ellen Burstyn, Sandra Bullock, and Ashley Judd. Both the book and the movie depict the relationships of southern mother and daughter Vivi and Siddalee. Vivi and three of her friends comprise the Ya-Ya sisterhood, women who never shied from a few drinks and a good time. Her daughter Sidalee once grown, is given her mother's scrapbook titled (wouldn't you know it?) "Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood." It is through her mothers' clippings and the help of the Ya-Ya girls that Sidda can learn to forgive her mother after an extremely turbulent childhood. Sophomore Ali Dubrow is excited for this movie, having said, "The book was amazing; I want to compare it to the movie."

Some lesser-known films out this summer might also be worth checking out. "Igy Goes Down" starring Kieran Culkan (another of Macaulay's brothers) is a dark comedy about a dysfunctional Manhattan family. Culkin's ailing mother is played by Susan Surrandon, Ryan Phillippe plays his snobby older brother, and his girlfriend is played by Claire Danes, of "My So-Called Life" fame. Jennifer Aniston diverges from her role of Rachel on "Friends" in the dark comedy "The Good Girl." She plays a check-out girl frustrated by her marriage and driven to have an affair with a 19-year-old cashier. The film did extremely well at this year's Sundance Film Festival and looks promising.

Board of Ed Tackles Continued from page 1

9.8 percent tax rate increase. Some factors behind the raise from last year's budget are the increase in enrollment and debt service on the construction bond. Superintendent Dr. William Miles, who was instrumental in the development of the budget, was pleased but not surprised, because there didn't seem to be much controversy regarding the budget, and "people seem to have known and expected the enrollment increases and bond costs." Dr. Miles expects the greatest financial challenge to lie in the district's tax base or lack thereof. He explained that "taxes in the future will be taxing the same base and not a growing base," due to the lack of new housing developments after the Red Roof and Belle Faire additions. Another area in which Dr. Miles anticipates difficulty is special education, for which the budget doubled recently.

Eleven faculty members were given tenure—a benefit of job security and a great accomplishment, resulting from at least 2 or 3 years of hard work on the part of the teacher. "Teachers are monitored by their fellow teachers and then evaluated by the administrators fairly stringently over the course of 2-3 years," explained Dr. Miles, who was an active participant in the evaluation of these teachers. Charlene Decker, who teaches the accounting and marketing courses at the High School, was one of the eleven who received tenure. She began working at Blind Brook nine years ago and worked part-time for seven years before moving to a full-time position. In response to receiving tenure, Mrs. Decker said, "I don't feel any different, because I have

been here for so long, but it's a good feeling to know the community has embraced me." The other school district faculty members that received tenure were psychologist Roberta Bass, elementary teacher Karen Johnson, physical education teacher Steven Forzaglia, art teacher Terry Saglibene, school media specialist Petra Bova, music teacher Gregory Dimiceli, school counselor Jean Nugent, special education teacher Penny Leis, English teacher Cher Treacy, and mathematics teacher Lori Vandemark.

At the May 7 Board of Education meeting, the decision was made to hire an attorney to represent the interests of the Board in their conflict with the Village of Rye Brook regarding the plans to build the Stanwich School, a new private school to be located on King Street. This location is an undeveloped portion of the Reckson Executive Park. The Board of Education is concerned about the tax implications of removing a large tract of land from the tax rolls. They are also questioning the impact of the additional traffic on the already-congested King Street corridor. Finally, they are seeking clarification as to whether the school district will be obligated to provide any services to a private school located within district boundaries. To represent the interests of the school district, the Board of Education has hired "out-of-county" attorney Ingerman Smith. According to Dr. Miles, the fact that he is not from Westchester County will give him a fresh perspective on the situation. On May 28, representatives from the Stanwich School stated their case to the Rye Brook Board of Trustees.

Has Anyone Seen the BOE? Continued from page 2

debate, but the Congress has also dealt with the Drug and Tobacco Policy, Cell Phone Policy, and Student Attendance Policy. And although these may also not seem to be vital topics, the Board of Education had to review and approve each of them before Congress's decisions were put into action.

I suggested to Mr. Haas that he could help Congress by bringing his ideas, insight, and leadership gained from all his years of experience to Congress meetings. These are the same insights, ideas, and experience for which he was put on the Board of Education. He disagreed, stating that we had a principal on the Congress. I had a lot of difficulty understanding this point. Of course Mr. Chlebicki is a vital member of our Congress, and he consistently comes to the meetings and provides us with needed insights and leadership, but no two people are interchangeable. Their thought processes differ and so does the help that they can offer. Therefore, regardless of whether or not he believes it to be true, Monroe Haas's absence is a loss for the Congress and for the school.

The point made by Mr. Haas for which I had the most sympathy was that the Board of Education representatives have to work during the day. This is very true; people need to work to support themselves and their families. However, I think this has only been an excuse.

During the course of the interview, Monroe Haas stated that he usually does not work on Monday, the day on which Congress met last year. In fact, that was one reason the Board originally sent him as the representative. Still, a 55 minute meeting once every two weeks was still too hard to make. Due to the change in our activity periods' scheduling, the meetings have been moved to Wednesdays, the same day that Board President Dr. Richard Buzin does not work. However, we still have no Board

of Education representative.

There are five Board of Education members. Board members are non-voting so we do not need the same one at each meeting. Any member would do as long as the Board is there to listen to us and share its perspectives. If the Board members shared the responsibility, each would have to come for only 55 minutes 4 times in the span of 10 months. This is not an overbearing task.

In response to my concerns about the Board's not being able to make the meetings, Mr. Haas wanted me to quote him saying, "Monroe Haas busts his chops." This is very true. As a Board of Education member, one always has many things to do and one cannot be everywhere. Haas is nearly everywhere from basketball games to entire Spring Concerts. So I guess he should be given a break.

I also understand that people must work. I even see his point in another one of his arguments that having a Board member on Congress could set a bad precedent if someday the Board could send no one. In response to this, however, I believe that Congress is constituted of capable people with the ability to understand when attendance at a particular meeting is impossible for Board members. However, the bottom line is that attending these meetings is currently not out of reach. In actuality, the Board is absent because Congress is viewed as unimportant; that's why the effort is not being made.

Congress, however, is important. Congress is a chance for the Board to hear school issues discussed right from the mouths of by its daily inhabitants. It is a chance for the Board to learn more about our daily lives and what our needs and desires are about making the school a better place. It is a chance for the Board to take advantage of a valuable opportunity. I suggest and urge them do so.

A New Model Mix Tape Continued from page 11

they are from Canada, although the fact truly does give them an edge, but that their lyrics really get to me. From "Asside:" Rely a bit too heavily on alcohol and irony/get clobbered on by courtesy/In love with love and lousy poetry/ And I'm leaning on a broken fence between past and present tense/ And I'm losing all these stupid games that I swore I'd never play/ and it almost feels okay. Now, as the owner of both albums, the Weakerthans' lyrics continue to captivate me. Still, the Weakerthans are not for everybody. If you are one who is seriously annoyed by whining, lead singer John K. Samson (former bassist for legendary punk band Propagandi) may tick you off—his voice occasionally borders on whine—but he just sort of reminds me of Neil Young. The Weakerthans are touring this summer, but the farthest east they're getting is Illinois. Go to <http://www.theweakerthans.com> or www.theweakerthans.com for tour dates if you'll be out west and want to see them.

Poi Dog Pondering

This is truly where you FOCUS readers need to listen up and take my advice. Please, I implore you, try out Poi Dog Pondering. If you've ever even thought quietly to yourself, "Hey, I sort of a little bit like that band moe./String Cheese Incident/Dave

Athlete of the Month: Spencer Howard

Continued from page 5

it fun to practice. I never dreaded going after school; practice was my favorite part of the day."

Howard, probably the best pitcher Blind Brook has seen since Iona alumnus Brian Baltz, hopes to continue playing ball at NYU.

Concluded Howard, "I've had a great run here at Blind Brook, and I really hope I can stay in touch with some of these guys. I hope I've helped some of my teammates along the way. I'll be watching for them later on."

Are the Standards in Film on the Decline?

Continued from page 10

Fabulous lighting and frame work aren't the only aspects of filmmaking that have gone haywire. Nowadays it seems a good script is as hard to find as a band that writes their own music. It used to be that if you were watching a movie with a horrible plot at least you could enjoy some of the dialogue, but now even that bit of hope has been ripped away. Today, sadly developed characters scuttle through pointless scenarios while spitting out disastrous one-liners (dramatic, I know). Finding an original script is worthy of mass celebration. Too often screenplays are pieced together from bits of others. Yawn.

Matthews Band/any band ever," then go out and try PdP. If you need me to, I'll make you a Poi mix. Hell, if you need me to, I'll feed and house you for a night if it means that maybe you'll become a Poi fan. Poi came to me as a complete coincidence. For \$1.99, I bought the self-titled album from the bargain bin at Coconuts because I liked the cover art, band name, and font. What a gift! I was and still am completely in love with their mix of Hawaiian music and more modern stuff. They're soulful, they're catchy, they're funky, and their music is beautifully layered (as it should be, with 11 members). PdP history is long and interesting, but in a nutshell it goes a little something like this: Frank Orrall starts band in Hawaii, band leaves Hawaii and plays street-corners and the like in North American for a year, band settles in Texas and releases 2 Eps on Texas Hotel Records, band signs to Columbia Records and releases 3 albums ("PdP", "Wishing Like A Mountain/Thinking Like The Sea", "Volo Volo"—my 3 favorites), band leaves Texas for Chicago and founds own record company, Plate-tectonic records, band releases a couple more full-lengths and a few live albums, band finds its way to Blair's CD player, the entire Blind Brook community buys Poi albums, band comes to Rye Brook to play concert. All right, so maybe those last two pieces of PdP history are just me wishing, but if you'd take my advice then maybe it could happen and I would finally get my chance to see Poi live. Poi Dog Pondering rarely plays all together, and they hardly ever tour, but small versions of the band do perform side projects like Frank's 8 fat-fat 8, which plays gigs nearly every weekend in Chicago.

I could go on for hours, naming one act after another, but I will stop here with a promise: I'll make you a mix tape including Hanson, World/Inferno, Tori Amos, Talking Heads, The Weakerthans, and Poi Dog Pondering if you ask nicely and promise to keep an open mind to all the different sounds these musicians and bands have to offer.

Don't even get me started on teen movies. Of course every now and then there are some sparkling gems such as "Memento," "Pulp Fiction," "Rushmore," "Fight Club," "Trainspotting," or "A Life Less Ordinary"...amongst others.

Honestly, I could go on for hours, but frankly I don't want to. I have places to go and pillows to sleep on. (Oh, and the World Cup to go watch!) So I will sum this baby up: No one cares about quality films anymore, and those who do are few and far apart. (Cry me a river.) It makes you wonder if it you should spend that ten bucks, or just wait until video. Thank you and goodnight.

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Editorials

The More Things Change?

By Craig Bergman, News Editor

Evidence of construction abounds; Blind Brook has recently taken on a whole new look. We can take stock as this monumental project approaches its home stretch and see that two schools now stand where one once stood. Blank white walls and tiling have replaced carpeted corridors emblazoned with school posters, ads, and projects; imposing metal fences and monstrous construction machines now stand guard where a broad front lawn once invited students to sunbathe on pleasant spring afternoons and to play catch before baseball practice. Yes, it would be difficult to deny that physically Blind Brook has changed. But the real question is: Does this new look carry with it a new persona? Has the character of Blind Brook evolved right along with its size and shape? Do the physical changes, as many students claim and keep claiming, necessarily bring with them an end to the traditions and values that have defined our school?

I don't have the answer; indeed no student does. We may love Blind Brook and we may expound passionately on lost values and broken traditions, but the fact of the matter is that the school does not belong to us, and only those to whom it truly belongs can provide real insight into its changing character.

So to answer this question we turn to those few men and women who have been here since the beginning, who established Blind Brook, watched it grow, and stood with it through every bump in the road. And with the seven prominent members of our school's core faculty heading into retirement this summer, now seems an opportune time to absorb all of the folklore from them that we can. If we can seize the opportunity to really learn about the traditional Blind Brook culture that we so passionately defend, then just maybe we can more effectively strive to preserve it as our school dives headfirst into a new era.

"Blind Brook is a wonderful place to learn, and it's wonderful for the same reason that it always has been," said Spanish teacher Marsha Arest, who has just completed her twenty-third year at Blind Brook. "Blind Brook's greatness is in its willingness to allow for experimenting in education and then for support for all those who experiment regardless of the outcome... We at Blind Brook have always maintained the mentality that when something isn't right, we need to do something about it."

But not all support Arest's thesis that Blind Brook's guiding principles have remained unchanged. Explained twenty-two year veteran English teacher Michael Dockwiler, "Blind Brook's mood has changed. The school has become less spontaneously creative over time... Instead, it's less open, less free-flowing, and more restrictive... Its evolution now takes place more through linear, step-by-step 'progress' than through creative dialogue."

Twenty-eight year chemistry teacher Pat Stepanovic also noted differences in the Blind Brook environment and attributed the differences, as Dockwiler did, in part to the literal and figurative loss of openness that has taken place in the school. "The open classrooms could certainly prove distracting at times," commented Stepanovic. "And constantly overhearing other classes in session sometimes presented a problem, but there was a certain welcoming feel about it. Teachers and students all knew what was going on in all different parts of the building, and there was an intimacy about it... It also helped Blind Brook teachers to really create a sense of community within the school, which in turn led to breaking down boundaries and sharing curriculum. That sort of thing is harder now."

On the other hand, physics teacher Zac Charon, another twenty-eight year veteran of the science department, contended simply, "I've taught in many different schools and the fact of the matter is that open classrooms really don't make that much difference. If anything, the distractions have been minimized by this new structure. I love this wall."

Countered Dockwiler, "I think it's very telling that the open classrooms, the commons—they probably would not have been built today. Those giant open spaces where everyone and everything could get together with everyone and everything were once central to Blind Brook. As society continues to change and those changes are reflected in Blind Brook, this may not be the case anymore."

Interestingly, Janet Lobdell, biology teacher of twenty-two years, didn't peg the open classrooms as a major source of change one way or the other. Instead, Lobdell pointed to a marked shift in certain Blind Brook relationships as the true heart of the evolution. "It's not the same community or school," said Lobdell. "Everything is much more separate than it was in the past. It's almost a feel of everyone for themselves... Parent-teacher relationships have become very different. I'm one of the only teachers that still makes phone calls home at night. That used to be the way things worked in Blind Brook. Teachers used to have much more personal, open relationships with parents." Indeed it seems that according to Lobdell, even student-teacher interaction has been altered since the early days. "A lot of the contact between students and teachers that was special around here has been eliminated," contended Lobdell. "I've always been big on hugging, playfully punching, but I don't really get the chance to anymore... In general, teacher involvement with students has declined." "At one prom many years ago, forty-five faculty members and spouses of faculty members attended with the students," recalled Lobdell who has attended every prom since her first

year at Blind Brook. "This year, only four faculty members came with us."

Marsha Arest was also able to look back and recall a time in Blind Brook history when relationships between students and faculty extended into a social world. "Students and teachers played baseball or basketball games every year," said Arest, who remembered having her earliest students at her house at times and hanging out with students after school. "There was a real warmth and partnership between the young teachers and the students."

But twenty-nine year technology teacher John Tibbs didn't discern the same wave of change in Blind Brook that some of his long-time colleagues did. "There are no big changes," stated Tibbs. "Some people consider different groups of kids big changes, but I don't notice any big differences. The kids are basically the same, my job is basically the same, the school is basically the same."

Michael Dockwiler held the opposite viewpoint. "We're looking at two different points in history," explained Dockwiler. "America in the 1970s [the decade in which Blind Brook was built] was still riding a wave of creative rebelliousness. Society is hugely different now

in a whole host of ways, not the least of which is the evolution of the federal government since Carter's administration ended and Reagan was elected. School culture is derived from society and from its community. Blind Brook will be different, because it has to be."

And not all are so sure that it shouldn't be. "The old Blind Brook can't be recaptured nor should it be," said Pat Stepanovic, who attributes a lot of the school's change to increased numbers of two-working parent families. "There are new people with new needs in a very dynamic community. A new Blind Brook must be forged."

"You need young people in a school system," stated Marsha Arest. "And if the younger teachers can learn and if the older teachers can remember what openness is, it will continue... Change is not something to be afraid of but something to strive for."

"The bottom line is that Blind Brook is a family and will remain a family," continued Arest. "It's the kind of family where we don't rely on 'Daddy'—the administration—to solve problems. The Mommies, and sons, and daughters—the students and teachers—all get involved too. That's very valuable—and very unique—in a school system."

My Final Word

By Gillian McBride, A & E Editor

Ah jeez, the last editorial of my high school career... what to say? Shall I write up a real half-page, offering my teachers, friends, and family an emotional adieu (complete, of course, with the occasional shout-out)? Or perhaps I ought to avoid the cheesy farewell and pretend this isn't really (gasp) good-bye? Well, first of all, I must establish that although a certain Matt Stolar may try to convince you otherwise (see "Why McBride No Longer Wears Flip Flops" on page 8), I didn't see the chipmunk coming, and I'm really a genuinely nice person. On a further note, dead or dying animals have henceforth haunted me each time I take a walk, freeload a ride, or even sleep. I swear to God, it's a living nightmare. But I digress.

That bizarre feeling of finally leaving a place you've for years considered your home (or Hell itself, depending on your own experience) can only truly be understood by the senior class and the several veteran teachers retiring this year, so my own explanation would be mostly pointless. Many can't wait to

blow this popsicle stand, while others are a bit hesitant about taking that next step, so really I couldn't possibly generalize. But what I can do is use this soapbox to finally get a few things off my mind, namely towards the underclassmen actually reading this. So I composed a list.

You really should get to know the people in your grade, not just your social group, because as passé as it sounds, you'd be surprised by the cool people you'll find.

Dedication to academics is, of course, key, but when applying to college, remember that nothing is definite.

When you're eating or doing homework in the commons/cafe, don't forget to pick up after yourself, it's just rude to Rosario.

Seniority is important—try to maintain it. Make friends with the teachers, but just don't eat lunch with them every day.

Prom is a hassle. It's just one party—a few hours long, so definitely look nice, but just don't drop a grand over it.

The morning music wasn't so hot this year;

try to fix that.

If you're ever locked out at the area between the middle school gym and the high school gym, if you reach to the top of the tall black door to the old gym (specifically the last one on the right), you can still pull open the door.

Ninth grade girls don't have to dress sexy. It's just... wrong.

Although AP courses are now open to everyone, half of you signing up for these classes aren't aptly prepared, are just doing it for your transcripts, and, in the end, destroying the quality of the class.

Ah. Well, that's just about all I have to say for now. I applaud those who've managed a whole year of my long-winded tirades, namely my mother. Thanks, Mom. This year has been... good, really. Great, even, and if you're wondering which category of senior I fall into, you'd be surprised to know that I'd probably go with the latter. Yeah, I'll miss it here, but it's finally time to move on. Congratulations, Class of 2002, and good luck out there.

KONCEPTS by Brett Konner



Editorials

Slackers Beware: BB's 10 Toughest Classes

By Frank D'Angelo, Sports Editor

Each year at Blind Brook, students are faced with the task of choosing a schedule to their liking. They must balance course requirements with electives, and they must choose a multitude of courses which will benefit them come college admissions time. In this selection process, they often consult friends, teachers, and guidance counselors so that they may weigh the difficulty of their many courses and those courses' respective homework, projects, tests, etc.

In my four years here at Blind Brook, I've gained a great deal of knowledge about the many courses offered here. Many I've personally taken, but those which I have not I've learned about through discussions with teachers and my friends who have taken them. After much thought and consideration, I concluded that it would be both helpful and amusing if I were to list Blind Brook's 10 most difficult courses.

I've done my share of homework on these courses, and I am confident that these descriptions are fair and accurate. In fact, this list may be more accurate and more helpful than actually speaking with the course instructors. Some teachers, especially AP teachers, boast massive course loads and low grades, but many of these teachers overestimate the difficulty of their courses. One must also note that, since a number of teachers will be retiring at the end of this year, the difficulty of these courses and others will likely change.

At the end of my junior year, when I sat through five AP course introductions, I laughed boldly in the face of four of them. Ms. Lobdell, on the other hand, managed to successfully scare me away from AP Biology. And I thank her for doing so. Kudos, by the way, to Lobby—she's got 2 courses on the top 10. So does Mrs. Curto. These ladies run a tight ship. It may also be worthy to note that each of those pairs of courses are really just extensions of each other (i.e. Bio and AP Bio).

Let me also say that these ranking are comparative, not absolute rankings. This means that we must examine each class in the context of its year. For instance, while AP English is certainly a harder class than ninth grade Global Studies, that Global class is probably a more difficult class for a freshman than AP English is for a senior.

So, in the spirit of US News and World Report's rankings, here are the 10 most difficult courses in Blind Brook, each with a brief description and an analysis by a current student:

AP American History (junior year, Mrs. Jacobson): This course has unanimously taken the top spot. It is the first AP class any student here can take, and students are usually unprepared for the immense course load. But the real reason this course took the top spot was its placement in junior year. Students must balance AP American with college visits and preparation for the SAT I and SAT IIs. The only solace in this class is that there are no tests. Instead, classes are filled with discussion—which means, if you didn't read, you'll look like a fool.

"AP American is such a shellshock. It's the first AP course you take, and going from a 10th grade Global class directly to a college-level course is really difficult. Literally, almost every week, there is an essay or a DBQ or a research-based simulation that you have to do. And Mrs. Jacobson, in particular, is a tough teacher. She expects a lot from you and you really want to win her respect."—Loren Fishkind

AP Biology (senior year, Ms. Lobdell): AP Bio is widely considered the scariest senior course, and probably the scariest AP course in Blind Brook. Labs are probably just as hard as tests, and the dissections are like none other. At the end of the year, you will dissect a whole cat. And as Lobby has stressed before, you can't senior slump in this class. The work just keeps on coming.

"I never put as much effort into a course as I did in the first two quarters of AP Biology. Exams are challenging and frequent, and by the end of the year you make it through 1200 dense pages of material. The unit exam questions are harder than the AP exam questions, which serves well in the end because it makes the AP seem less difficult. And if you put in the immense amount of work that is expected of you, you will probably succeed."—Matt Stolzar

AP Calculus BC (senior year, Mrs. Klinger): This is extreme math. Some of the topics in Calc BC are ridiculous, and just when you think you've completed the most difficult unit of the year, you discover you're wrong. This was the first time in recent years the math department offered BC instead of AB. Basically, Calc BC is everything in Calc AB, plus another four units. Our BC class was finished with AB material in January—that's like fitting two AP courses into 9 months of learning. And like a college class, the only basis for your grade are the three tests per quarter. Thankfully, you have one retest option

for the year. In any case, this course was so hard that the department is reverting to Calculus AB for next year. But I'd say Calculus AB would take the #3 spot if BC weren't here.

"In AP Calculus BC, the mathematical concepts are difficult, and they really just get harder as the year goes on. Also, everything you learn in that class is cumulative. You have to remember what was on the Unit 3 test when you take the Unit 7 test. And since there's more material than the AB program, the course is accelerated to an unbelievably quick pace. You just wish there were more time to learn the material."—Spark Nakamura

Physics (senior year, Mr. Charon): Physics was hailed as the most difficult non-AP course. "Why?" you ask. Simple. Seniors taking a non-AP class don't expect to work as hard as they have to for Physics. But Mr. Charon's class requires you to learn a great deal of material on your own, so seniors are forced to be self-sufficient and resourceful. Beware of calculus principles.

"In Physics, you go over half of the material in class, but the other half you really just have to learn on your own. And after you teach yourself so much, you have to take tests that basically consist of your entire year grade. With labs, they're not really graded—you just get your average lowered if you miss any."—Dean Kaplowitz

Social Studies (freshman year, Mrs. Curto): Mrs. Curto's 9th grade European History class has been referred to as an underclassman's nightmare. And, incidentally, it is ranked higher than her senior year AP Euro course. A student in this class must tackle current events presentations and a number of interactive projects which, although helpful and fun, are nevertheless hard. The final exam consists of a current events essay, an essay on seniors' art presentations, and a lengthy multiple choice and short answer section.

"We always had a lot of work in Mrs. Curto's social studies class. Out of all the freshman courses, everyone definitely devotes the most time to hers. Whether it was nightly homework or regular essays, there was always something to be done. Also, the way the final exam is structured, with current events, paintings, and more essays, it's really demanding."—Emily Redmerski

AP European History (senior year, Mrs.

Curto): It's her 9th grade class magnified a thousand times. But seniors are usually more apt in this course because many of them have previously taken AP American and all students have elected to take the class, and not been required to take it. One must recall prior knowledge of European History and continually augment it. The reading material can seem really overwhelming at times, and lectures are frequent.

"In AP Euro, the work is constant and it seldom feels like we have a night off. There are so many countries, eras, leaders, wars, and religions to master, and you have to do it all by May. There are also 2 novels integrated into the course, so when you're not writing essays, you're either reading those or the massive textbook. And don't be fooled when the AP exam comes and goes, because after that, it's time for painting presentations."—Robert Frank

Biology (sophomore year, Ms. Lobdell): The only 10th grade course on the list, it boasts new and difficult concepts (think Punnet Squares) and a variety of sections. The course doesn't just cover reproduction, evolution, and your typical biological studies, but it also deals with molecular biology and ecological studies. This course also introduces students to material which they may encounter on their first SAT II test.

"Biology is challenging because in preparing for the SAT IIs and the Regents, we had to cover a cornucopia of material in a small time. All the different systems, life processes, and anatomies had to be learned. Also, while I enjoyed the dissections, many other students couldn't deal with cutting up dead animals and it made the course that much more difficult for them."—Keith Hanauer

Chemistry (junior year, Mrs. Stepanovic): There seems to be a pattern of natural sciences on this list, and Chemistry is the final one. While many think of Chemistry as a fun world of colorful, smoking liquids in beakers, these individuals fail to recognize the endless equations and formulas involved. In fact, a handful of students regard Chemistry as a more difficult junior year class than AP American. Lecture classes are frequent in this course, and sometimes students are treated with a double lecture. No matter what the day, there's always a chapter check-up or a lab worksheet due.

"By far the hardest class all junior year is Chemistry. If you thought any other science classes were hard, then forget it! All the material and formulas build on each other and you need to know them all. So if you falter in one unit, you may not grasp the others. And some of the logic and concepts you learn in Chem seem so alien, like Sig Figs and Moles."—Alex Harik

(tie) AP Spanish/AP French (senior year, Mrs. Arest/Mrs. Mele): These courses are the Mecca of Blind Brook language studies. The summer work for each of these classes is greater than that of any other course in the school. By the end of the year, you will be fluent in a second language, whether you like it or not. You will write, speak, and even think in Spanish and French. Most importantly, you will read novels and stories in your chosen second language.

"As fun of a course as AP Spanish is, it still is difficult. As is French, I hear. You need to have a lot of confidence, especially in your speaking skills, since class revolves around discussion. The rules you learn about grammar and vocabulary from previous years come rushing back to haunt you in AP. A class like this can sometimes make you realize that you might not be as good at speaking a language as you thought you were."—Lori Freundlich

AP English (senior year, Mr. Shortliffe): While this course, according to this list, may be the "easiest" AP, it is by no means a walk in the park. In AP you will be introduced to canonical literature and the dreaded 10-page research paper, which, unlike other senior English classes, must be about language. What may make it the "easiest" AP is that, if you like reading, writing, and discussion, you will love AP English.

"AP English is a difficult course because it requires one not only to read the many texts in that class, but also to independently draw meaning and understanding from those texts. Students have to then express that comprehension and analysis effectively through class participation and essays. And while essays may be infrequent, that means they are weighty as well."—John-Michael Grzan

College Admissions Formula from a Senior Who's Experienced it All

By Matt Stolzar, Features Editor

As I prepare to leave Blind Brook, I've been thinking a lot about the last four years. The knowledge I've learned in the classroom, my special relationships with teachers and administrators, and the friendships I've kept through the years; the coaches and club advisors who gave me valuable guidance and the contributions I, in turn, gave back to the school. Yet, much of my time this past year was occupied with "applying to college." When it comes to the college admissions process, I've seen it all: rejection, acceptances, deferral, and wait lists. So I thought I would use this editorial as a forum to convey what I've learned through experience and to give advice to all you juniors, sophomores and freshman out there who want to improve your chances of getting into college.

Before I get into the specifics of the process and the mathematics of how to improve your chances of getting accepted, let me give one piece of advice. Apply somewhere early. I'm not necessarily saying apply early decision. If you aren't sure where you want to go, don't apply early decision. But apply either early action or rolling admissions. Applying early improves your chances of acceptance and, if you're accepted, narrows the number of schools you need to apply to. It also may give you the reassuring feeling of knowing that you are going to college.

One word sums up college admissions: crapshoot. It is the most unpredictable, inexplicable process in the world (besides love). Nothing is a sure thing. Safeties aren't always so safe. Based on my own experiences and those of my friends, I've found that you might end up on a safety school waitlist or into a reach where

someone with better stats got rejected. So how do you react to something so random? Probability tells us to apply in bulk.

Applying to a lot of schools may be tough. For starters, it requires additional work. Trust me though, going to a college where you know you will be happy is worth a busy Christmas vacation. It also requires additional money, as most schools charge for applications. But if you are applying for financial aid, applying in bulk might increase your chances of receiving better aid offers and a few extra dollars in the application process may save you a lot later on.

How do you determine where to apply? Talk with guidance counselors and admissions officers, visit schools, explore college websites, read statistics, (this will give you a basic idea of which schools you may be able to get into). Don't let the applications frighten you; become organized. Think creatively. Match your academic interests with your schools. Figure out if you like the city or the country, the sun or the snow, the dorm or the frat. From there, find two safety schools. As I said before, nothing is a sure thing, so the smartest thing to do is apply to two safety schools. But two is enough! Having a lot of choices is a good thing, but it's not good when you don't like your options.

Now on to the toughest choices, your middle level and reach schools. Where do you go from there? Let's define these two words. In my opinion, a middle level school is one where you basically have a 50-50 shot of getting in. Your SATs and GPA are at least at the 50th percentile at these schools, maybe a little higher. The school has a reasonable acceptance rate. A reach is a school that you have a less than a 33% chance of getting into.

Your SATs or GPA are equal or a little lower than the average at that school. You're hoping that something on your application really impresses that school, and that you have a little bit of luck.

Now everyone wants to get into a reach. But in order to get into a reach, you must fight the odds. You have about a 1 in 3 chance of getting into a reach. So mathematics tells us that if we apply to three schools that we have a 1 in 3 chance of getting into, we'll probably get into one of them. My advice is apply to at least three reasonable reaches. I applied to five reaches, all of which I really wanted to go to, and was accepted to two (and wait listed at two).

That leaves us with the middle level schools. I applied to five middle level schools and was accepted to three of them and wait listed at two. If you have about a 50% chance of getting into this level of school, applying to two of these schools should mathematically get you into one. But I say play it safely. Apply to four and you should get in to at least one.

So here is the admissions formula I advise you use:

Stolzar's Formula: 2 Safety Schools + 4 middle level schools + 3 Reaches

This is the best logical approach I can think of for combating such an irrational process. But remember that applying to this many colleges requires diligence, organization and creativity, (especially with those college essays) at a time when your schedule is packed with challenging coursework, and demanding extra curricular activities. Begin early in the senior year, maybe even the summer before. And listen to what your guidance counselors tell you. They know a lot more about this process than I do.

Editorials

"You'll Never Get to Sleep in the Back Seat Again."

By Francesca Pomara, Editor-in-Chief

It would be wrong to say that I hated high school. However, I will not wax nostalgic about times and routines I cannot pretend to have loved. So, as predicted, I've fallen into the trap of trying to make sense of the years past, presuming—condescendingly, perhaps—that I might have anything wise to "pass on" to younger Blind Brook students.

Forgive me for perilously balancing on the edge of cheesy metaphors of growing older.

I have been told that I should be sad yet anxious to leave Blind Brook. And sabotaging graduation in an effort to thwart the ultimate end to my childhood would be unhealthy. Adults have constantly reassured us that whatever we are feeling is normal. Ahead of us, we see the culmination of all our experiences and the proof that our childhood has been slipping away for some time now. In that one night, we come to realize our changes—all the things we've lost and all we have to gain. How could anyone say that one night is *the* change that will push us into a new phase of our lives? To us, rather, it marks the end of something that has been constantly changing; graduation represents the things we can't go back to and those we await in the future.

Charles Schultz had it right. Sitting underneath a tree together, Peppermint Patty poses a question to Charlie Brown to which he gives a very telling answer. "What do you think security is, Chuck?" "Security? Security is sleeping in the back seat of

the car... When you're a little kid, and you've been somewhere with your mom and dad, and it's night, and you're riding home in the car, you can sleep in the back seat... You don't have to worry about anything... Your mom and dad are in the front seat, and they do all the worrying... They take care of everything... But it doesn't last! Suddenly, you're grown up, and it can never be that way again! Suddenly, it's over, and you'll never get to sleep in the back seat again! Never!"

We will not be returning to Blind Brook next September. Yet, while confronting new experiences, we will take the lessons we've learned here over the past 6 years. I don't expect a cataclysmic epiphany to occur this June 25; but the experiences and lessons represented by the diploma I will receive will all be in my mind that night and in the future, as they have been throughout my high school years.

I have also been told to thank the individuals who have influenced and taught me. Teachers' encouragement and praise of my efforts are not the most important thing I'm thankful for. I don't mean to say that I do not value the way these adults have helped me pursue my goals with confidence. No one had to acknowledge my work, and I know that because adults did, my life was made easier. Emotionally, I wasn't beaten, nor were my abilities doubted. But what I am most thankful for is my education on human nature. Watching students cheat, individuals gossip behind supposed

friends' backs, teachers giving a student a rough time because of preconceived notions—my reaction to each of these situations has provoked a change in who I am.

I'm not trying to gripe about the injustices of the world and the way Blind Brook has tainted my faith in humanity, any more than I want to romanticize my high school years. The knowledge of

humanity acquired as I leave my childhood security will determine my success at surviving in the world. For all the things I've enjoyed and despised, I've changed to become the person writing these words. I anticipate greater hardships and sweeter joys in the years ahead of me. Whatever they may be, I am sure the truths I've learned here will prepare me for the changes to come.

Next Year's Editors

As the 2001-2002 school year winds down, I would like to thank the entire FOCUS staff for its work all year. You have made my job a pleasure. News editor incoming senior Craig Bergman will be leading FOCUS next year as Editor-in-Chief. The News section will be guided by incoming junior Brian Rosenberg. Incoming junior Keith Hanauer will be in charge of Sports. The Features and Arts &

Entertainment sections will be led by incoming seniors Rachel Barbarisi and Lauren Levinson, respectively. The 2002-2003 FOCUS staff will undoubtedly continue covering Blind Brook events and bring greater success to the paper. A special thank you to Frank D'Angelo, Gillian McBride, Matt Stolzar, and all the other senior staff members. May success find you wherever you go. Thanks!

Habitat for Humanity Club:

Looking for a Brighter Future Continued from page 7

Sophomore Ariele Fredman shared her enthusiasm for the Walk-a-thon saying, "Although the weather was not in our favor, it was a great experience. We had the opportunity to see the houses in Yonkers we were helping to build as well as the community we were trying to improve. We also had the chance to meet some of the families we were helping."

For all its accomplishments, the Blind Brook chapter was chosen as one of three high schools in Westchester to be recognized at the Annual Habitat for Humanity of Westchester Award Banquet. Grzan hopes the positive contribution will not stop here. "This year we had many younger members who gave consistent contribution. I hope they will give strong leadership to the chapter in these upcoming year's

and firmly establish it in Blind Brook."

Next year the torch is passed to Co-Presidents rising senior Jeff Licitra and rising junior Ariele Fredman, along with rising seniors Matt Gordon, Logan Romm, and Alex Sedler, who will repeat their service as chairmen of the chapter.

Chairman Logan Romm explains his excitement and ambition stating, "We were able to have a very successful first-year, however, as a first-year chapter we were still limited in many ways. I hope to expand and broaden our chapter's contributions into not only building, fundraising, and educating, but also getting involved in other functions of Habitat, such as tutoring the children for whom the homes are being built and hosting college students who have traveled to New York to contribute."

Letter to the Editor

The Meaning of Words

By Spencer Howard

It's scary to think how powerful words are. They have driven people to anger, love, life, and death. It's an even scarier thought how even the best intentions can go awry. Sometimes we mean to say something that just doesn't come out right, and people are hurt because of it.

I'm writing this as a formal apology and explanation for what I said at, a recent town meeting, about the guidance department. I tried to impart some advice to the students who will soon be facing the difficult times of applying to college, but unfortunately, my words came out as more of a stab at the guidance department here at Blind Brook. I made them seem like they didn't know what they were doing by explaining how even though it was expressed to me that it's not likely that I will get into NYU, I got in despite that fact.

I want to clear the air about what I truly meant to express, and how, in fact, the guidance department deserves many thanks from everyone, including myself.

What advice I intended to bestow upon the high school population was to not give up on your dreams. There will be times that you feel like the fight is hopeless. You may be afraid that the odds are against you. Part of the guidance department's job is to make sure your goals are realistic. They want to see you succeed. They want desperately to brace you for any disappointments that may come from overestimating your potential. But all they can do is offer their expert advice. If you truly believe in yourself, and you

let your dreams fall to the wayside, who knows what regrets you may have to live with? With a 6.4% acceptance rate to the NYU program I applied to, chances were that I was going to fail. Guidance made sure that I was ready to deal with that possible outcome. But when I assured them that this was my choice, they backed me 100%. So, to our upcoming college applicants: "Shoot for the moon. Even if you miss, you'll land among the stars." - Les Brown

My guidance counselor, Mrs. Nugent, was a lifesaver. Without her, I wouldn't have had a clue as to where to begin applying. Mrs. Nugent sat through dozens of revisions of my college essay, she wrote recommendation after recommendation, and she made sure that I wasn't my usual forgetful self when it came to getting all of my forms in on time. She did exactly what she was supposed to do; she guided. I was constantly being worked with to see what grades I had to pull up and what courses I should take to maximize my chances of getting into NYU. I feel absolutely horrible that I hurt Mrs. Nugent in any way. Sadly, the words I used during the town meeting WERE interpreted as hurtful. They weren't meant to be that way. But that's the way they came out. I can only hope that this serves in some way as an apology and deserved recognition for all that Guidance does.

To all upcoming college applicants: Don't take what guidance does for granted. They are here to help you. And they genuinely want to help. Let them, because they are fantastic at it.

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Blind Brook Diaries



Past Time Player

By Matt Gordon

Nine months of the year my name is Matt; the other three months I am known as Gordo. I am not sure how I got stuck with that name, but Gordo is what I have been called when playing baseball for my entire Middle and High School career. Last year as a sophomore on Varsity Baseball, the name really got stuck with me. "Gordo go get the water," I would hear everyday. Gordo this, Gordo that. Well those days are over.

Last year I held my ground fairly well as one of the more diminutive players. I was 3-1 as a pitcher and had a respectable batting average for a bench player. More impressively, my arms didn't fall off from carrying all the equipment. However, I learned a lot about the skills it takes to compete on the varsity level, as well as the camaraderie between players that is needed to be successful.

One of the most terrifying experiences last year came in the last game when I was pitching. All season my coach and teammates had told me to wear a cup, but I never did. By the end of the game, I was hit in the foot and thigh by batted balls. Although a cup would not have been needed in those situa-

tions, I learned that my reflexes were not as sharp as I had thought. Ouch.

This year is a brand new season, I am a veteran who gets to do some bossing around.

It is true that most of the kids are my height or taller, but I have the attitude that gives me the power. Maybe not the domineering demeanor that some others possess, but the silent didactic example that I set is what makes me different. However, when game day rolls around, I am the loudest fan at the field. Many of the innocent young athletes have yet to see the 180 I make in voice level. Every pitch, play and minute of the game I have something to scream to my teammates, mostly positive things. On a normal day I can be compared to a small puppy; on game days I am the most ferocious animal in the kingdom.

This baseball season is a toss up; we can be either really good or really bad. Now as a veteran, I will be able to cherish this season no matter what the win loss column says, as opposed to going with the flow of a disappointing season last year. If there was one thing that I have learned that I can pass on as leader, it would be to wear a cup.

The Performer

By Laurence Katz

I'm an actor, I'm an artist, I'm a singer and a dancer, and the hours of hard work that go into mastering a part or character are not seen by many. I feel people not involved don't understand how hard it is to keep a whole cast of high school kids quiet while learning a harmony. I feel people not involved don't understand how many times you have to run a scene to really feel comfortable with yourself.

Being the lead is just as hard as being any other part in the show; it just comes with a little more responsibility. More hours of rehearsal and more lines to remember. Its great to say you are the lead but sometimes I feel I am conceited saying it, like there is something wrong. "Why am I the lead?" I ask in my head. I don't like saying I can perform well and I never feel comfortable with it.

I love being a lead of course, but just as long as I am in a show I enjoy I am a happy camper. For instance if I were the lead in a show I hated or a chorus member in a show I loved I would rather be the chorus member. I just love having fun up there.

When I am onstage, it is such a challenge just to stay in character. Anybody's move-

ment shows a person's character just like in life. If someone misses a cue or if you forget a line it is a very stressful thing. You try your best to quickly go to the other line or make up something in the general words of what you have to say.

In rehearsal you get used to performing to an empty auditorium. When you see a full crowd out there of people you know and want to impress, your energy goes through the roof. It is so exciting to see your parents, or best friend laugh or clap for you. It's a feeling I wish I could just bottle up.

Backstage life is basically what makes an experience for a show. Showing up an hour before show time to get your costumes ready and put your make-up on and warm up. It is such a bonding time when I get to know a lot of people. It's like one big family. The guys are especially close since there aren't so many and we all get along. The guys have a ritual before going on stage. It would start with Brett Weisblum screaming "It's time for me to go to work y'all. What kind of work?" "HARD WORK, HUH," we respond. Then anyone of the guys yells out "WHOLETTHE DOGS OUT?" "WOOF WOOF WOOF WOOF." Now it is time to hit the stage and try to give the performance of our lives.

A Driver Short of the Fairway Highway

By Alex Sedler

I am the worst driver in Blind Brook. Two road tests, two failures, a net total of 100 points. Not even the basketball team can score that high. Nine months and two road tests later, I still don't have my junior license. OK, so I waited until mid-January to take the first road test. That should be ample time to learn how to drive well enough to pass the test. That's like seven months from my birthday; given I was away over the summer and didn't drive, but I still had 5 months to master a simple skill. Or at least what should be a simple skill. I left school a bit early, and my mom drove me down to New Rochelle. I sat in line for a good hour, and for what? 5 minutes later I was back where I had begun, scoring 55 points. Let me inform you that a driving test is similar to golf. The lower the score the better, and you need no higher than a thirty to pass. I almost doubled the passing score.

So I went home and scheduled the next date. I was sure I would be well prepared for the next test. I had no doubts that this time

I was going to pass. I got a date in Carmel that was less than a month away, and I practiced a good deal for the next test. I had almost mastered parallel parking, and my turning was perfect. So the day came, and we ventured past cows and horses into the town of Carmel. My mother and I waited for fifteen minutes, and then I went out for my second try. All was well until we got onto the main street. There was a woman jaywalking in the street, and I wasn't planning on letting her cross in front of my car. The tester had different plans and yelled at me to stop. In front of my car the woman passed; unfortunately I did not. This time I scored a 45... a decent golf score for nine holes.

Here I sit writing this at an age of 16 $\frac{3}{4}$ and the only way I get to drive is with my parent in the car. Some kids pass the test after like a month yet I await my third (hopefully last) test. By the time I succeed in getting my license, most of the sophomore class will be driving as well. But I guess it's too bad for them because my bike is certainly better exercise than driving a car.

Help?

By Rachel Fischer

I am an avid math-help visitor. It's not that I enjoy spending the majority of the week's activity periods in math help, but it's just what has to be done. I didn't really need the little check on my interim that indicated, "Seek help during activity periods" to know that I needed help. Nevertheless, it drove the point home.

I wish I understood math. But it makes no sense at all. None. It's just hard to learn something that I know I will never need to know. I stand firm in my decision never to become involved in anything that even remotely resembles a math profession. So why do I have to learn it? The class should absolutely be optional.

As I enter the new gym during activity period and make my way to Mr. Mills' corner room, I prepare myself for half an

Subway Series? (I hope not!)

By Justin Gottlieb

I live in a place where your friends are only your friends from October until April. I live in a place that has 28 World Series titles between two teams, of which 26 belong to one. I live in a place where Mets fans are considered the minority. This place is called Rye Brook, New York.

What many people throughout the world don't realize is that its very difficult being a New York fan if you live anywhere in New York other than Queens. I, for one, have to suffer for 6 months with constant ridicule and teasing, because I am not a Yankee fan. I am very proud of the fact that I am a Mets fan, but I think that if I were a Yankee fan, life would be so much easier.

For example:

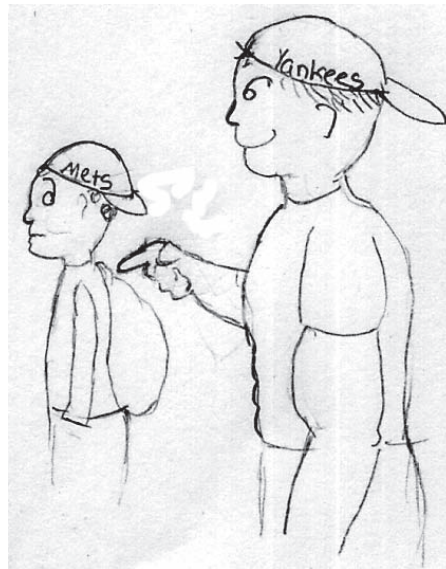
"Hey, Justin. What do the Mets and lawn furniture have in common?"

"I don't know."

"They both get put away until spring!"

That's some of the ridicule and teasing that I get from all my friends that I could live without. It's not easy rooting for the team that chokes when it counts the most, or has only won 2 World Series titles (I wasn't alive for either of the 2), and the team that all your friends like has won 26 (including 4 in the past 6 years.)

In all of Westchester County the ratio of Mets fans to Yankee fans is about 1:3. That's a pretty large number of Yankee fans compared to Mets fans. In our grade, in Blind Brook, the ratio of Mets fans to Yankee fans is probably somewhere around 1:2, so there are about twice as many Yankee fans as Mets fans in the freshman class at Blind Brook. I think that the Mets fans are considered the minority in the 9th grade in the state of New York.



Although the baseball season is now underway and is a very promising season for both New York teams, the Yankees of course are the favorites to win the World Series (AGAIN!). The Mets don't get nearly as much credit as they deserve in this state.

A couple of years ago when the Mets and Yankees played each other in the World Series, it was heaven for the Yankee fans and hell for the Mets fans. Of course the Yankees won in 5 games, but the point is that it gave the Yankee fans more of a reason to tease me, because it proved that the Yankees are so much better than the Mets. I think I speak for all Met fans when I say that another Subway Series would be dreadful.

If there happens to be a Subway Series and the Mets lose or the Yankees have a better season and get further than the Mets do, I will never hear the end of it until the next season starts in April.

CONGRATULATIONS
to the Class of 2002