

FOCUS

A Blind Brook High School Student Publication

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News Editor: Craig Bergman

News Section



Blind Brook undergoes radical changes as the new Middle School takes shape. Photo by Mark Harris

Construction Brings Dramatic Changes

By Jeffery Genova

Despite some unexpected delays in the construction schedule, Blind Brook Middle/High School opened on time, much to everyone's relief. Nevertheless, because of the unsettled state of the school, the administration decided to stagger the arrival of students on the first day of school. The purpose, wrote High School Principal Robert Chlebicki in a letter to parents, was to review safety considerations.

The construction, which began in phases midway through last year, has dramatically changed the environment of Blind Brook. Where a sweeping walkway once existed, students must now crowd together on a long, narrow path covered by protective scaffolding to reach a remodeled and extended front entrance. The current entrance will serve as the entrance to the high school's side of the new building when construction is complete.

Other physical alterations include a permanent wall dividing the physics and chemistry classrooms from the other science and math classrooms. Two por-

table classrooms for high school students are now located in a trailer outside of the building. The portable classrooms, which are attached to each other, are spacious and contain their own bathrooms. Students can access them by exiting the main building from the back doors out of the cafeteria. For safety reasons, students may not exit through the kitchen, as was once popular for upperclassmen. "I do not have any reason to be displeased," commented Mr. Chlebicki about student access to these classrooms.

One of the construction delays that most affected students was that the new library was not complete until approximately two weeks into the start of the school year. While the library was closed, students were forced to use the public libraries to obtain research materials. Once opened, the vibrantly painted library has already become a popular lunch hangout for students. Said Junior Jon Winter, "The library is a much more comfortable and appealing than it used to be."

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BB Stays Safe with SAVE

By Hadass Blank

Concerned over rising violence and harassment in the state's school, the New York State legislature recently created Project SAVE (Safe Schools Against Violence in Education), a set of legislation designed to promote a safer and more effective learning environment within our schools. These new laws demand higher expectations of behavior and also include appropriate punishments. They address a broad array, from disciplining disruptive students, to establishing dress codes, to preparing for emergencies within school buildings.

New requirements for each school's code of conduct only slightly changes Blind Brook's existing code with the addition of specifications on student attire.

Given the complexity and breadth of this legislation, the Blind Brook Board of Education has chosen the implementation of the SAVE laws as one of its major goals for this school year. In light of the events of September 11th, this goal seems to be a particularly crucial one.

On July 24, 2000, Governor George Pataki signed these ambitious legislative plans. Pataki, together with a broad representation of qualified individuals from across the state—including students, parents, teachers, school administrators, law enforcement experts, business leaders, mental health professionals and local elected officials—worked to craft the legislation. The common goals were to improve school safety and to ensure that students are focused on meeting high academic standards rather than worrying about their personal safety.

New requirements for each school's code of conduct only slightly changes Blind Brook's existing code with the addition of specifications on student attire. Blind Brook's response has stirred many complaints and discussions among Blind

Brook's students. The code states, "Students are required to attend school in appropriate dress that meets health and safety standards and does not interfere with their own education, distract others, or interfere with the educational process." This entails

from the simple basics of wearing shoes at all times and appropriate protective gear in classes such as Technology to not wearing slanderous or gang-related insignias and covering all undergarments and abdomens. Student attire also cannot "promote/endorse the use of alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs and/or encourage other illegal or violent activities."

If a student violates any part of the code, he/she "shall be required to modify their appearance by covering or removing the offending item and, if necessary or practical, replace it with an acceptable item." A refusal to comply will result in the student's punishment and the notification of their parents—the student would be forced to leave school, to return only after attire has been changed. "Girls should have the right to wear what they feel comfortable wearing," said Lauren Piccolo, a sophomore. "If the opposite sex is going to look, they are going to look at us no matter what we wear. We are no more distracting than they are." "This new dress code is preventing students from expressing themselves, and it limits their creative stand point," said Drew Anderson, another sophomore who opposes the code.

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New Superintendent Takes Charge

By Lisa Hamilton

As Blind Brook kicks off yet another school year, there is a new face among the students and faculty that crowd the hallways of Blind Brook. This is the face of Dr. William Miles, the new superintendent of the Blind Brook school district. Dr. Miles has been in education for thirty-two years, having served as a superintendent in three different districts over the past twenty. Before becoming a superintendent, he worked as an administrator and teacher.

Over the past few weeks, Dr. Miles has been observing classes at Blind Brook and has been very impressed with the atmosphere in Blind Brook's classrooms. "The kids are absolutely wonderful. They're like sponges, and they're anxious to receive and give information and interact. It is a wonderful teaching and learning environment. Educators would give their eye teeth to educate in this environment."

While observing classes, Dr. Miles has



Dr. William Miles Superintendent of Schools

Photo by Mark Harris

been considering possible changes in the Regents program used by teachers at Blind

Brook. "In general, I think we want to take a look at whether we can and should change the (Regents) program and the requirements. Is the Regents program at the right pitch, or should we be doing something different? That's what I have been trying to figure out as I sit in classes." Over the past few years, the Board of Education has focused mainly on the growing size of the Blind Brook population—what to do about it and how to improve the school in order to accommodate it. According to Dr. Miles, "The question of size growth and building has predominated [in Board of Education discussions]. We think that's leveling off, and we want to turn towards education. They are very firmly in the boat of wanting to know the alternatives to the Regents program and are fully confident with the idea that we should be examining alternatives." He added, "We need to know what else is in the box so we can make an informed decision about what we should be

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News Editor: Craig Bergman

News Section

A Costly Patriotism America Must Preserve

By John-Michael Grzan

In the darkness of destruction at the epicenter of evil's earthquake, breaking through the murky clouds of dust that have enveloped the pulse of the world, shines a light of hope. "USA! USA! USA!" vibrantly echoes through the air as rescue workers, policemen, firefighters, and volunteers respond to President Bush's declaration that "I hear you, the world hears you, and the people who have done this will hear you!"

Times of struggle, brought out by the worst parts of the human soul, often bring about the greatest aspects of our human capacity; the attack on our country has evoked our capacity for compassion, generosity, and care for our fellow Americans. A case as tragic as an attack on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, has made Americans finally become united.

Throughout my life I have never felt a true sense of patriotism towards the United States. Although I was born here, live here, and of course fed through my schooling all the great aspects our perfect nation's pure democracy, until this recent tragedy my love for the US and concern for its welfare did not come close to the devotion that some other nationalities have for their countries. I feel other Americans have shared with me in this lack of nationalism.

Perhaps this lack of patriotism is because we have taken so much for granted in America and have lived with a strong sense of security. In the lap of such security, our primary goal has not been to keep our nation and culture alive, but to profit from the opportunities it has given us. For example, unlike Israel, we have never had to fight for the existence of our state. Each morning we have awakened with the assurance that America's political and economic state is still standing.

Perhaps the dearth of nationalism is because our citizenry is so diverse, which has inhibited our country's people from sharing a common culture. For example, in countries like Pakistan, the people are brought together by a common Muslim religion. Although one of America's most truly beautiful aspects is that so many different people live next to each other in peace, this collage of nationalities and cultures has often led to tension within our own boundaries. People can be American, but often be enemies with each other. Throughout our country's history we have had battles between groups, such as whites vs. blacks and Protestants vs. Catholics, and we continue to have these fights. The combination of neither needing to guard our country's existence nor sharing a common culture has often made our thoughtfulness toward fellow Americans, and thus toward our nation as a whole, take a low number in our list of priorities.

I am sure that during other times in American history such as the War of 1812 and World War II, we have had great nationalism. However, my

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Meet Mr. Mitchell

By Brian Rosenberg

Many students, on the first day of school, wondered who Mrs. Shirken's replacement would be. Would he be strict? Would he yell a lot? Would he scour the halls in search of students who had amassed three tardies? In short order we found out who the new assistant principal was—a confident but unassuming man by the name of Michael Mitchell.

Most students have not had the chance to know much more about Mr. Mitchell than his last name—with the exception of those unfortunate souls who have cut a class or were tardy one too many times. However, when one sits down and talks with Mr. Mitchell (preferably when one is not in trouble) he turns out to be a very down to earth guy, and as this reporter found out, he has had some very interesting experiences.

Mr. Mitchell was raised in the Bronx by a lower-middle class family. He graduated from an integrated public high school, and decided to work to earn the money he needed for college. He eventually was accepted to Columbia University where he completed his freshman year of studies. However, because of financial problems, he was forced to go to school at night and to work during the day to support himself. Despite the additional income, Mr. Mitchell didn't have enough to pay tuition at Columbia for a second year, and consequently transferred to Fordham University where he again found it necessary to work during the day. Despite such setbacks, Mr. Mitchell said he came out on top in the long run. "Having to raise money on my own gave me a greater appreciation for education," said Mr. Mitchell. He eventually graduated from Fordham with a major in English.

Although he originally wanted to become a lawyer, Mr. Mitchell decided to go into teaching when he saw that there was a glut of law school applicants, making ad-

mission to a good school difficult. Mr. Mitchell eventually earned a masters degree in teaching. Although he hoped to teach English, his first job was as a computer teacher in the Bronx, the only position available. He got around this setback by assigning English compositions and assignments to be written on the computer. Next, Mr. Mitchell worked in the Yonkers school district where he eventually became chair of the English department as well as administrative intern, which is basically an assistant principal in training. Following his experience as an administrative intern, Mr. Mitchell applied for and was hired as assistant principal at Blind Brook.

Mr. Mitchell has set several goals for himself and the school, not the least of which is getting to know every student's name as quickly as possible. He wishes to improve the curriculum so that all students "graduate with all the tools necessary to lead a productive life." However, his driving ambition is to become the National Secretary of Education. Although this would be no small feat, he is confident, saying, "Whatever I have ever wished to accomplish, I have done."

He projects a bright future for Blind Brook, although he thinks that enrollment will increase as more and more people realize that Blind Brook is a top quality school. Mr. Mitchell also believes that the change to closed classrooms will turn out to be a positive one because it will be less distracting to teach as well as to learn without people walking by. However, he

does like the open classrooms from an administrative standpoint because it is easy to observe classes in session.

Mr. Mitchell has noted many differences between Blind Brook and the other schools where he has previously worked. According to Mr. Mitchell, both schools had strong faculties, but Mr. Mitchell says that Blind Brook is less crowded. He also likes the fact that almost everyone knows everyone else. In addition, he noticed that there are no gangs and much less fighting than in other school districts.

As a community, Blind Brook seems to have taken to our new assistant principal. Said Mr. Mitchell, "Everyone has been very helpful, especially the teachers and Mr. Chlebicki."



Assistant Principal
Michael Mitchell

Photo by Mark Harris

Science teacher Jerry Citron commented, "He is very accommodating and organized, and will be a great addition to our faculty." Mr. Citron and other teachers and students like his open door policy because it allows people to approach him without fear of wasting his time. Said Terry Scelfo, ninth grader, "He understands students' problems."

It seems as though despite the loss of former Assistant Principal Susan Shirken, a long-standing member of the Blind Brook community, the Board of Education has made a popular decision in the selection of Mr. Mitchell as the new Assistant Principal. Students and faculty alike seem to feel that he will do a fine job, and most are looking forward to a successful school year with him. Besides, as Mike Valiantis, ninth grader says, "He has a great jump shot!"

BB Stays Safe with SAVE Continued from page 1

Taking another point of view, other students said they do not mind the new dress code because it doesn't affect their fashion taste. With the usual unbearable air conditioning, sweatshirts and sweatpants will satisfy these students' clothing needs."

Another part of the SAVE legislation of particular interest to students is the requirement that every school district create a plan for dealing with undisciplined students. The law defines a disruptive pupil as "one...who is substantially disruptive within the educational process or interferes with the teacher's authority over the classroom." A violent pupil is defined as "one who knowingly and intentionally destroys school district property or commits an act of violence on a teacher, other school district employee, or fellow student." The laws state that teachers must remove disruptive or violent pupils from their classrooms, consistent with district codes of conduct. This piece of the legislation gives teachers more power in the classroom, continuing instruction without the distraction of students who don't want to learn.

The new legislation also requires teachers who are provisionally certified to take the two hour course required by the SAVE legislation in order to become permanently certified. Training courses are currently underway to teach teachers how to instruct their students in this new legislation.

"Better have it, and not need it, then need it and not have it," said new Vice Principal Michael Mitchell, concerning the SAVE laws. Mr. Mitchell, who previously worked in the Yonkers school system for five years noted, "These laws create a type of prevention for major school disasters, like in Columbine, to occur, and enables students to understand what to do in emergency situations." Many students remember the uncomfortable experience they endured during last year's emergency drill in which they had to remain in specified, enclosed areas, like the girls' locker room or weight room. During the drill, students had to sit on the floor, lock the doors, and remain silent in pitch dark for about five minutes. The school community felt the necessity of enacting the drill to teach students how to act in emergency situations. In some ways, the drill served to foreshadow the emergency safety measures that are now becoming commonplace.

The formation of the District-Wide School Safety Plan was inspired by last year's drill at Blind Brook. Every school district in New York State must develop a comprehensive safety plan that includes policies and procedures for responding to threats and acts of violence. In addition, each district must create appropriate prevention/intervention strategies – such as training for security personnel, conflict resolution, peer mediation, youth courts, and

extended day programs. Preventive measures will also make it easier to contact parents and/or guardians in times of need, enhancing school building security.

Other issues addressed by the SAVE laws include building level emergency response plans, uniform standards for reporting violent incidents, health curriculum, interpersonal violence prevention education, school violence prevention training, court notification, fingerprinting, assaults on teachers, reporting of child abuse, and prohibiting silent resignations by school personnel found to be involved in abusive situations.

New codes of conduct were passed that apply not only to students, but also to the teachers, personnel, and visitors at large. The laws require each school to address specific issues: appropriate dress and language, security, guidelines for a student's removal from a classroom, disciplinary procedures, and policies and procedures for detention and suspension. The legislation also specifies procedures for reporting code violations and imposing penalties, provisions to ensure compliance with state and federal laws relating to students with disabilities, provisions for notifying law enforcement agencies regarding violations (e.g., violent crimes), procedures for parental notification, guidelines for committee review of actions relating to the code, procedures regarding PINS (person in need of supervision) petitions and juvenile delinquency provisions. This legislation also includes procedures for referral to human services agencies, minimum suspension periods for students who are repeatedly and substantially disruptive, and minimum suspension periods for acts that qualify a student as violent.

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News Editor: Craig Bergman

News Section



Mr. Bart Grachan



Ms. Cathy Belisle



Mrs. Julie Malinow



Mrs. Patrizia Varbaro



Jay Riddick



Mrs. Linda Tang

Photos by Mark Harris

New Faces in Our Classrooms and Hallways

By Carrie Schmelkin
and Emily Redmerski

One of the new members of the Blind Brook High School faculty this year is Mr. Bart Grachan. In his first professional teaching position, he is enthusiastic about teaching ninth grade global studies. Last year, he served as a student teacher at New Rochelle High School where he gained useful experience. Mr. Grachan felt very confident coming into Blind Brook, because he had gone through an extensive interview process during which he learned all about the school and community. In addition, he had the added bonus of personally knowing physical education teacher Chris Orphanides, who was a big help in preparing him for what to expect at Blind Brook. When asked what his reaction was to Blind Brook in the first few weeks, he mentioned how

"friendly the faculty and students are," and how much he "loves teaching his students." One of his main goals for this year is to see his students excel on all tests and class work. Furthermore, he added, "I want to establish myself as a full member of the community."

Ms. Cathy Belisle, the new seventh grade science teacher, has made an easy transition to Blind Brook Middle School. Having previously worked as a science teacher in the Stepping Stones Museum in Norwalk, Connecticut as well as a nature educator with the National Audubon Society, she has found Blind Brook to be "another exciting place in which to work." In fact, Ms. Belisle commented, "I find Blind Brook to have a nice environment where everyone is friendly and helpful." When she first arrived at Blind Brook, she was not sure

what to expect. Since she had applied for her position over the summer, she was never able to see the school in session. Three weeks into the school year however, Ms. Belisle is happy to find herself loving her classes and students. She hopes that her students will learn to enjoy and appreciate science this year.

Mrs. Julie Malinow is a welcome addition to the Blind Brook Middle School mathematics department. She comes to Blind Brook armed with five years of teaching experience from the Coventry Middle School in Rhode Island. She is enjoying teaching all of the eighth graders in math and feels that they are "a great group of kids." Mrs. Malinow has made a smooth adjustment to the Blind Brook community because she feels that the school is quite similar to her previous one. She has thus far found that Blind Brook has an easy teaching environment, eager students, and a supportive faculty. Mrs. Malinow hopes that her Blind Brook experience will enable her to "grow professionally as a teacher." She aims to familiarize herself with the math curriculum, the community, and her students during the coming months.

Mrs. Patrizia Varbaro is a new Blind Brook High School English teacher. Her employment at Blind Brook marks her first full time job as an English teacher, having gone straight from undergraduate to graduate school. What really struck her about Blind Brook during her first few weeks was the feeling of family and familiarity that permeates the halls. Mrs. Varbaro explained that every day she "senses sincerity and respect among the faculty and student body alike." During the course of this year, Mrs. Varbaro hopes to become assimilated into the Blind Brook community and to become

part of that "family" that she so much admires.

Although Jay Riddick, Blind Brook's new security guard, has only been working at the school for a few weeks, he has already become a familiar face in the halls. Riddick has had several previous jobs, including employment as a collection agent for an industrial supply company and as a security guard at nearby Ossining High School. In contrast to Jay's previous working environments, Blind Brook is "very laid back" and has a "fun and energetic atmosphere." Riddick's main objective for the 2001-02 year at Blind Brook is to "keep the peace," joining with veteran security guard Harry Malles in making sure everyone follows the rules and remains safe.

Mrs. Linda Tang is our new ESL (English as a Second Language) teacher at Blind Brook Middle/High. Additionally, Mrs. Tang is teaching the seventh grade English SCORE class, which focuses primarily on the improvement of reading skills. Before coming to Blind Brook, she taught ESL in Nanuet, NY and was the school librarian at St. Joseph's School for the Deaf in the Bronx. In her short time at Blind Brook, Mrs. Tang has found the school day "very hectic" but also finds the kids extremely bright. When asked to compare her current position to her previous jobs, she commented, "Teaching ESL is the same no matter where you go." Having worked with younger children in the past, Mrs. Tang is excited to work with older students because, as she says, "at the Middle/High school level, it is easier to teach students, and it is also more interesting." Throughout the year at Blind Brook, Mrs. Tang wants to see her students attain a much higher reading level and hopes to see the ESL students interact more with the American students.

Dramatic Changes Continued from page 1

By the December break, the first phase of construction, which includes the new middle school and gym, should be complete. At that time, the entire student body and faculty will have to be relocated to the new middle school building so that the present high school building can be renovated. The logistics of fitting all of grades 7 to 12 into the new middle school building include the creation of four classrooms, separated by temporary walls, in the new middle school gymnasium. During the renovation, the middle school wing of the present building along with various upstairs high school classrooms will have to be sealed off. This second phase of construction also involves completion of the new auditorium

sometime before the end of the current school year.

For protection of students and staff, the administration has instituted several new safety measures. All construction workers must wear an identification card with their company's name at all times. Deliveries and shipments to the building must be cleared by the administration and by Mr. Ricky Casterella, the supervisor of buildings and grounds.

There are tentative plans for an additional parking lot and for additional seating in the cafeteria. Final decisions on these additions will be made once the main construction is complete and the budget is reexamined.

New Superintendent Continued from page 1

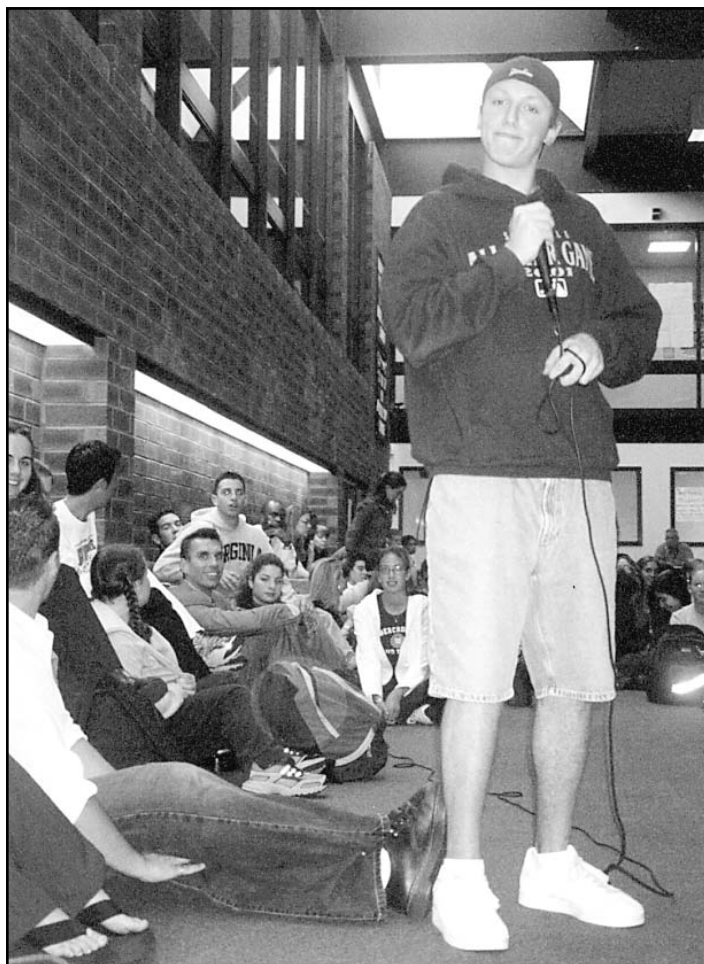
doing; we shouldn't just accept the same old same old."

Among Dr. Miles' other priorities is bringing the district into compliance with New York State's recent SAVE legislation, a set of rules meant to promote a safer and more effective learning environment in state schools. [See News article: "Blind Brook Stays Safe with SAVE."] Said Dr. Miles in reference to Blind Brook's implementation of the SAVE laws, "I think it's good for us to try to think through and to kind of hold [it] out in front of us so that everybody's on the same page in terms of what the expectations are."

The recent acts of terrorism against America, one very close to home in New York City, have provided for a shaky start to the new school year. Dr. Miles recognizes that these acts began to affect Blind Brook on the very day of the incident. He said, "In terms of how we handled the crisis in the Blind Brook Schools, we distinctly took a tact to try and force a 'normal day' in both schools, and also have places and people who could handle crisis or grief counseling." Will the incidents affect Blind Brook in the long run? Dr. Miles believes they will. "In the long run, I fear that we will be at war soon, perhaps for an extended time, and that will raise twin specters of more casualties as well as concern for the rights and safety of the Muslim people in the US. It's a challenging time for all of us."

Getting along with his fellow administrators does not seem to be a problem for Dr. Miles. He is fully enjoying working with Principal Robert Chlebicki and Assistant Principal Michael Mitchell, and the feeling seems to be mutual. Mr. Mitchell says, "I love his sense of humor. I love how I can go to him and ask questions. He is very accessible." Mr. Mitchell and Dr. Miles are both new to Blind Brook this year. Mr. Mitchell comments, "I like the idea of coming into Blind Brook the same year as Dr. Miles. We're both coming in with fresh, new ideas."

There have been a variety of responses from students concerning the new superintendent. Some say that he has not made his presence known, and because of this they do not know enough about him to really comment yet. Sophomore David Millar commented, "I know that he has been around, but he hasn't had a strong presence in the school so far from my perspective. I've only seen him once and many students don't know who he is or what he looks like." However, some students have in fact had the opportunity to get to know him and like what they see. Sophomore Keith Hanauer noted, "I was one of the students who interviewed the superintendent candidates last year, and we all agreed that Dr. Miles was a very friendly guy who seemed to fit Blind Brook perfectly. We were confident in our opinion of him as the best guy for the job, and I'm happy with the school's decision."



Blind Brook's first Town Meeting of the year took place on Friday, October 5, 2001. Senate President Frank D'Angelo mediated the meeting while giving students an opportunity to voice their opinions on the need for longer lunch periods and the Congress proposal on cell phone privileges.

Photo by
Gillian
McBride

Sports

Sports Editor: Frank D'Angelo

BB Football Players Left on the Side Lines

By Ben Solarz

One of the smallest districts in the county, Blind Brook High School doesn't feel it can operate a Varsity or a Modified football team this year. While there is a possibility of a squad team as the school expands its buildings and enrollment, prospective players will have to sit tight

until then, a situation that has frustrated many players and parents.

Without any high school or middle school teams, Blind Brook students are left with no competitive football options until college, since there are no outside alternatives.

Over the summer, Blind Brook failed

in an attempt to find a partnership school. The most recent conglomeration was with Rye Neck High School, but that school canceled the partnership at the end of last season because accepting Blind Brook players would make their team too large for their division. Rye Neck's decision did not give the Blind Brook Board of

Education adequate time to search for other options. The main candidate for this year's partnership was Port Chester High School, but the Board's efforts there were ineffectual.

"Right now there's really not much we can do about it, but my hope is that in the future we can find a school to join with," said Principal Robert Chlebicki.

Rye Neck terminated the partnership to avoid placement in a more competitive division. In effect, the team would be gaining a few players from Blind Brook, but would then find itself "in over its head." The higher ranking would leave the players at a disadvantage, especially since the Rye Neck team would only be gaining a small number of players.

In larger school districts, there is a much bigger pool of prospective football players and, consequently, a stronger team. Therefore, a Rye Neck-Blind Brook team would be competing in a division with not only better teams but bigger teams as well. This would obviously not work well for a team that finished last season with a record of 1 win and 6 losses.

Blind Brook players are disappointed and wish something could be done. "I feel the athletic department should have a meeting about it," said Dom Contegiacomo, a Blind Brook freshman and prospective player. "They say we don't have enough people, but in my opinion we definitely have enough people willing and wanting to play to make at least one team."

The Athletic Department has, however, pursued the issue. Athletic Director Jim Spano and Principal Robert Chlebicki found that Blind Brook doesn't have enough players willing to participate. A letter was sent to the Blind Brook Community stating that future of football relied solely on attendance at a football meeting. Only 8-12 players showed up in grades 7-11, whereas rosters usually consist of, at minimum, 30 players.

Said Spano, "This tells me that right now we have insufficient numbers [to form a football team]."

The problem remains, however, that many students don't recall ever getting such a letter. Players and parents alike have been angered by the situation.

"I think the School Board and athletic director need to pursue options to allow for the kids to play next year and beyond," said John Wethington, father of prospective player Tom Wethington, a sophomore.

Other parents aren't too pleased either. The major discontent, though, seems to be among students who want to play, like Contegiacomo. Tom Wethington, for instance, has been playing for years and considers football one of his major interests.

The district, however, believes it has done all it can. "Eight years ago I initiated the merger process to give our students the opportunity to play football at Blind Brook," said Spano. "I have done, and will continue to do, everything in my power to make sure our students still have this opportunity. The harsh reality is that sometimes circumstances beyond our control dictate decisions that are made."



Boys' Varsity Soccer Team: (from left to right) Top Row Coach Joseph Pomoryn, Senior Captain Rodrigo Carvalho, Jeff Kaplow, Yusuke Kawana, Vinny Cole, Senior Captain Spencer Howard, Kevin Aughavin, Sang-Min Lee, David Millar, Chris Otness, Robert Frank Bottom Row Lee Russell, Senior Captains Tsubasa Ishigure and Matt Stolzar, Michael DiBona, Jared Feldesman, Eric Bernbaum, Marc Migliozi, Brian Rosenberg.

Photo by Tori Quaranta

BBHS Varsity Soccer Aims to Match Last Year's Success

By Elliot Rifkin

The 2000 State Semifinalist Blind Brook Boys' Varsity Soccer team is back in action, led by Coach Joseph Pomoryn and by Senior Captains Rodrigo Carvalho, Tsubasa Ishigure, Matt Stolzar, and Spencer Howard.

Last year's triumph brought on some hardships for the 2001 team. After capturing the League Championship, Regional Championship, and finishing as State Semifinalists, the squad was moved up to the C Division. So far, the Trojans are 5-2. This is a huge improvement from last year's start. In 2000, the team managed a .500 record at 8-8. They would have to drop four straight to fall behind this mark, and that seems unlikely, given how they've been performing as of late.

"This year there will be more and harder teams in the division, and the playoffs will be much more difficult," said veteran Junior, Kevin Aughavin.

Senior Robert Frank countered, "We're more experienced, and everyone has improved. Even though we have moved up in divisions, we will still compete at a high level."

Other than being in the C Division, the Varsity team will have to recover from losing last year's Seniors, Vinny Miata, John Aughavin, and Carl Latella. Miata proved to be a commodity last season, and even got a nod for Athlete of the Month honors.

"Last year we worked really hard and we knew what we needed to do to accomplish our goals. This year we'll be successful because we're putting our hearts into everything we're doing," said Captain Rodrigo Carvalho. Carvalho will be a huge piece to this year's puzzle. He's currently the second-highest goal scorer on the team with 6 by the second week of October. If he can manage to avoid injuries and red cards this season, Carvalho will have a good shot at All-State honors.

This year, the team has not only improved physically but mentally as well. Aughavin added, "We've improved in a lot of ways and our team is more experienced, especially for us guys

who have been together for the past three years."

Newcomers Eric Bernbaum, Jeff Kaplow, Yusuke Kawana, David Millar, Brian Rosenberg, Alex Sedler, Chris Otness, Vinny Cole, and Marc Migliozi should also add some skills and ability to this year's roster. Seven of these nine players will be returning for next season, so the team is simultaneously preparing for the future.

Starting Goalie, Jared Feldesman, added, "If it wasn't for our outstanding defense, spark on offense, and our great coach, we wouldn't be off to a this great start." Defense, in particular, has been a strong point for the Trojans. Aside from a 4-0 loss in early October, the team hasn't given up more than 2 goals in one contest.

Captain Tsubasa Ishigure also said, "We're stronger than last year. I hope we have a better year. We're now 5-2, and we have to win more. I'm hoping to go to the States one more time."

As of now, last-year's success hasn't gone to the team's head. They've stepped up to the challenge, and have handled class C quite well, although in a recent game to Keio, they lost 4-0. It's schools like Keio, Rye Neck, and North Salem that are most likely to give them problems in the future. Last year, the team lost 1-0 to Rye Neck. But Rye Neck, with Brain Mazza, the top player in the county, seems to be more of a threat this season. With the way that Robert Frank, Tsubasa Ishigure, and Rodrigo Carvalho have been playing, it should be interesting.

When Coach Pomoryn was asked what he thought about this season compared to last, he replied, "You can not compare season to season. There are different players, different opponents, and different results. Hopefully this season will be better than last year. But now that we're in the C Division, it is a tougher task, and the level of competition is higher."

"We're going to have a very strong regular season although we'll have a tough road in the Sectionals, if things fall in place, we'll do very well," said Captain Matt Stolzar.

Sports Editor: Frank D'Angelo

Sports Section

Girls' Varsity Tennis Exhibits Youthful Vitality

By Frank D'Angelo, Sports Editor

The Blind Brook Varsity Girls' Tennis team started their season by going an impressive 4-1 with one tie, under the leadership of veteran singles player Loren Fishkind and new Coach Trudy Davis. With only four seniors, the team has used its younger players as a vehicle for success. The loss of four important seniors from last year and a change in coaching hasn't affected the squad in the least. It seems, considering how they've fared against their league competitors, that the team may advance deep into the playoffs.

With last year's coach, Andrew Castellano, moving down to the JV position, a window of opportunity opened for Trudy Davis, Spanish teacher and avid tennis player. Already, the team has exuded a noticeable exuberance and enthusiasm under new leadership that has helped them tremendously in their playing.

On stepping into the coaching role, Davis said, "I figured, I'm a teacher, so I can be a coach. Teaching is coaching and vice versa."

Says Fishkind, a junior and the team's sole Captain, "Mrs. Davis is absolutely great. It's amazing how much she knows about the game, and how she can motivate new and old players alike."

Davis has a good amount of experience under her belt. Although this is her first coaching stint, she played the game in high school and has kept up the sport ever since. Her knowledge is reflected in her outlook of the team.

"Right now, we're mostly working on volleying, getting to the net, and doubles strategy, but the girls didn't need much improvement when I came," she explained. "They're just such a great group of players."

So far, Coach Davis' strategy has worked. The girls have come together to win four of their first six games. Their only loss came to Keio, whereas against Croton they split matches evenly for the tie.

The girls' record in the league is 3-1-1. This should give them some confidence for the upcoming league tournament. On October 11th and 12th, Blind Brook will host the League Tournament for Class C teams. Among those present will be Pleasantville, Dobbs Ferry, North Salem, Croton, and Keio. In this tournament, any team can send singles players, but Blind Brook has usually sent doubles teams in the past, some consisting of normal doubles players, some with singles players pairing up.

With the losses of Alex Hankin, Carly Rubenzahl, Kim Auslander, and Jamie Horowitz, the team has lost some playoff



Varsity Tennis Coach Trudy Davis and Tennis Captain Loren Fishkind

Photo by Tori Quaranta

experience, but Fishkind is not worried. "Last year, Alex [Hankin] and I advanced past Leagues, into the Conference tournament. We lost in the second round there, but I gained some experience along the way," she said. "Rachelle [Tratt] and Lisa [Hamilton] advanced to the first round of the Conference bracket last year, so they know what's involved too."

The team also has some fresh new talent to work with. Freshman Leah Citrin has proven to be an asset this year, playing first doubles beside Senior Lynne Desmond. Sophomore newcomers Ariele Fredman and Stacy Grossman should be valuable in the near future. Working beside veterans Mizuki Tanaka, Akiko Iwanari, Leslie Steinberg, and Jessica Levine, they should be prepared for some big matches.

Says Coach Davis, "I think our chances are good this year. With Lisa and Loren leading us we should be in good shape."

Things are looking up for next year's team. Coach Davis already has her eyes on some "talented" JV players for next season. "The best thing is that everyone's willing and eager to learn," she said. Davis plans on coaching next year, if the players so desire. From there on, she'll be "taking it year by year."



Senior Mizuki Tanaka and Junior Leslie Steinberg warming up before a game.

Photo by Tori Quaranta

Michael Jordan: The Third Coming

By Eric Strauss

On September 25, Michael Jordan announced that he would be coming back for another two seasons, saying, "I am returning as a player to the game I love." By joining with the Washington Wizards, Jordan will be adding another chapter to his storied legacy. Having already "retired" twice before, Jordan should be used to slipping into the league after a career hiatus.

Jordan will make his first appearance on October 30th in a regular season game against the New York Knicks at Madison Square Garden, an arena at which he has shined a number of times over his illustrious career. He will play his first home game against Allen Iverson and the Philadelphia 76ers on November 3rd. Jordan's announcement has already caused tickets sales for the Wizards, and most of the other NBA teams, to rise.

Before he announced that he would be coming back to the league, Jordan was the President of the Wizard's front office and primary owner of the team. Under NBA rules, Jordan will be forced to sell his shares in the Wizards; he will also resign his job as President in the front office.

The big question that fans and professionals have been asking as of late is whether

Jordan will still be great at 38? Many people say that Jordan will simply not be as agile or powerful as he once was. The skeptics have doubted his ability to keep up with a league that has "grown" younger and younger over the past few years.

The Jordan loyalists beg to differ.

Jack Ramsey, basketball analyst for ESPN, said, "I expect Jordan to be very much like himself when we last saw him play in 1998. He will be the same Jordan in terms of concentration, intensity, team play, defensive effort, and his ability to score from just about anywhere on the floor."

Few people are questioning Jordan's abilities on offense. It is clear Jordan is one of the best, if not the best, player ever to step out onto the floor. But as Jay Bilas, college analyst for ESPN, said, "Jordan's biggest challenge will be playing defense."

The NBA has added four new rules since Jordan left the league. These rules, which will make the game faster and more competitive, may or may not have an effect on Jordan's return performance. The rules are as follows:

1. Hand checking will be allowed on defense. This will most likely play to Jordan's advantage, since he likes to use his forearm.

2. Players will only be allotted eight seconds instead of ten to cross half court when bringing up the ball on offense. This could be a disadvantage for Jordan. Although it is doubtful that he will be running the point, the rule change will certainly up the tempo of the game. Jordan, at 38, might not be able to keep up with the faster younger players.

3. There will be no illegal defense rule. Before this year you either had to be within certain distance of the man you were guarding or double-teaming someone else. This season, players will be able to play wherever they want. Rick Telander, writer for ESPN the Magazine, said of one of Jordan's pick-up games, "[He] looked like he enjoyed giving assists more than ever. Jordan's jump shot is flawless and it can't be stopped. Even with the new defensive rules Jordan shouldn't have a problem."

4. Defensive players will be prohibited from remaining in the lane for more than three consecutive seconds without closely guarding an offensive player. This might not have a strong effect on Jordan, since he will most likely be playing a perimeter player. Then again, we should look to Jordan's driving down the lane.

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Patriotism & Football Go Hand In Hand

By Jason Stein

From New England to Cleveland, from Miami to Seattle, from Dallas to San Francisco, the National Football League resumed play last Sunday. The games resumed not as before. They could not. American flags covered fields, fans wept openly in the stands, and players stood soberly at attention. The games resumed but the bonds of patriotism were clear through the sports world. It was unprecedented in NFL history.

The events of Sept. 11 cast an emotional shadow over everything and everyone. Almost two weeks later, most people still had a picture from that day in the back of their heads and a knot tied in their stomach. The week's delay was the first time in NFL history that the league did not play its games on Sunday. Still, with a week off, players were understandably unsure if it were right that they play. They were not focused on getting back work, the same way I wasn't ready to get back working on my college applications. Just like my mom told me it would be best to get back to work and try to move on, President Bush told the players it would not only be best for them, but it would help the whole country. The players competed Sunday with the people of the United States in their hearts.

The season started again, and all of the games were accomplished with class and dignity. And yes, some old-fashioned flag waving. If people needed reminding of what America is and what it can be, they only had to spend their Sunday afternoon watching the football games. Tens of thousands of people came to the football stadiums where they rooted for America first, for their teams second.

Jon Bon Jovi's rendition of "America the Beautiful" was sung in all the early-game stadiums. A version by Lionel Richie and Mary J. Blige filled the late-game venues, and Darius Rucker sang live before the Broncos-Cardinals Sunday night contest. Everywhere, firemen and policemen shared in pregame ceremonies. The most moving was in New England, where Jimmy Andruzzi, one of three firefighter brothers of Patriots guard Joe Andruzzi, participated in the coin toss. Jimmy had fled a World Trade Center tower about a minute before it collapsed.

For the first time, the players weren't the only heroes at these games. Wherever men and women in military uniform moved in the crowds, they were showered with cheering, clapping and well wishes. The same greetings welcomed fire fighters and police officers.

Imagine, Chief fans applauding loudly for the Giants before their game, acknowledging their opponents' link to New York City. No one in their right mind could have predicted that before September 11.

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Varsity Volleyball Deals with Changes and New Coach



Varsity Volleyball players perfecting their moves.

Photo by Tori Quaranta

By Leah Citrin

Last year, the Blind Brook Varsity Volleyball team had a 14-5 record. One would hope the changes to the team this year would be limited, given last year's success. But this is high school volleyball, and changes are inevitable. Key players Natasha Nathan, Karen Schnur, Lisa Berman, and Lindsey Swerdloff graduated, and the team has a new coach, Nancy Neumeister. Despite these adjustments, the players were very optimistic as the season began. But given the losses in their five opening games, attitude has not been enough.

Blind Brook started off a tough season with losses to their two main rivals, Haldane and Dobbs Ferry. Then they added three more losses to Dover, North Salem, and Keio. By the end of September, the team had a record of 0-5, one of their worst starts in recent years. No matter what their record is, coach Nancy Neumeister says she already has seen an improvement in the way the team is playing. This is not to say that the losses and additions of players haven't

impacted other aspects of the team's game.

Senior Emily Ware stated, "It's a big deal; we lost really solid players. But the seniors are stepping in and teaching the new people."

Co-Captain Stefanie Platt added, "We're a strong team. We have the skill despite the losses we had this year."

Co-Captain Senior Frani Geiger has missed the majority of the team's games due to her participation in the Walkabout program. This surely has had an impact on the team's play, especially since Geiger was a main part of last year's line-up. After a year of coordinating with Platt and Tarynne Goldenberg, she's been elusive this year. Goldenberg has picked up most of the slack, and senior Rachel Kaplowitz has had some good playing time as well.

Varsity newcomers include Juniors Sarah Powell, Sandy Schnur, Jessica Stein, and Sarah Wolff.

After ten years with varsity volleyball, Mr. Steve Jones passed the coaching duties to Nancy Neumeister. Although this is Neumeister's first year at Blind Brook, she's not new to volleyball or to coaching. She

coached Valhalla volleyball for eight years, and before that, she played in college. The Blind Brook team shares Athletic Director Jim Spano's opinion of their coach.

Said Spano, "She is absolutely (doing her job), and I think she's doing it very well." Platt agreed, "She's a great addition to our team, and I think it's a good experience to play volleyball with different coaches, especially because she's experienced in coaching."

Coach Neumeister already has a goal for her team this season. Not only are they working on covering the court better, but the team is also focusing on "working together as a unit, not as individuals on the court," according to Neumeister. Right now, she is "hoping for a .500 season." It seems, according to Ware and Stein, that she has been able to get her job done while allowing them to, "have fun and still get things done."

Now, the team is looking for their first win. This year's squad has experience, drive, and talent, but they will not get the recognition they deserve until they can post some big wins.

Sportech Athlete of the Month:

Robert Frank

By Ryan Pearson

After an exceptional season last year, Coach Joseph Pomoryn looks to lead the Blind Brook Varsity Soccer team to a championship this year. That seems realistic right now as they are off to a great start, winning 5 out of their first 7 games. While the team has an array of scorers, the majority of their offense can be attributed to a specific senior: Robert Frank.

Frank has 7 goals and 2 assists in these first few games, and, as of now, he's the team's leading scorer.

Said Pomoryn, "He's an excellent player with a lot of skill, and he's playing really well. I expect him to keep it up this year."

Aside from his superb statistics, Frank is also an excellent leader. Although not a Captain, he still sets the tone for his teammates. "He really helps out the younger, less experienced players on the team," Sophomore Brian Rosenberg remarked. "He's a really nice guy that takes the team and the game very seriously."

Frank has been playing for the school since seventh grade. He has collaborated with players such as Rodrigo

Carvalho, Matt Stolzar, Spencer Howard, Jared Feldesman, Kevin Aughavin, and Tsubasa Ishigure. These teammates have

found a common ground for winning, after playing so many years together.

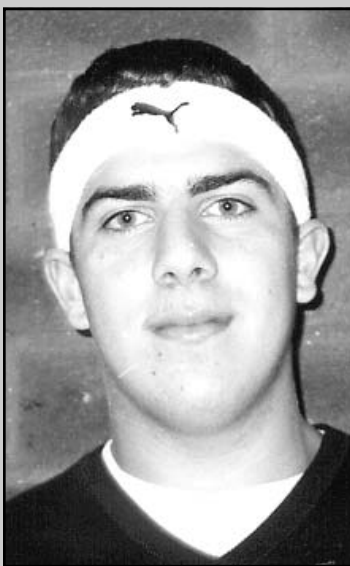
"Rob just happens to play well with everyone," said Sophomore Eric Bernbaum. Because of his athletic abilities, and leadership skills he can simply play well with anyone on the team."

After losing Seniors Vinny Miata, John Aughavin, and Carl Latella, the soccer team had some holes to fill. While

Ishigure and Carvalho have always been the go to guy for the Trojans, Rob Frank has really stepped up to the plate.

"The reason I have played well so far is all because of my teammates, especially Rodrigo and Tsubasa," Rob humbly stated. "They attract so much attention and that allows me to get open. Then they just pass me the ball, and I simply tap it in."

For his individual and team accomplishments, FOCUS would like to congratulate Robert Frank on being October's Sportech Athlete of the Month.



Each month Rye Brook's Sportech will honor an athlete who has achieved highly during the course of the month.

Baseball at Center Stage: A Playoff Preview

By Jason Pollens

It's October, and for baseball fans that can only mean one thing: Playoffs. Although this year's playoffs will have a different tone than those of years past, given the recent tragic national events, the performances by teams around the league still create excitement.

A vast array of ball-clubs contend for playoff spots this year. For instance, early this year, analysts expected the Twins and Cubs to make surprise appearances in October, simply by judging their season starts. Both of these teams the year before were at the bottom of their respective divisions and had very low payrolls. However, each team has made leaps and bounds in improvement this year. The Twins' resurgence, with the lowest payroll in baseball, was done with good starting pitching and defense. With the recent trade of Matt Lawton, their top hitter, they have slumped nevertheless. Adding to this was the injury to their leadoff hitter, Cristian Guzman. The Cubs have built their season around a very strong pitching staff and bullpen. However, their offense collapsed despite Sammy Sosa's efforts.

Although the Cubs and Twins won't make it, eight other teams will contend for the playoffs. In the American League, the teams are pretty much set with the Yankees playing the Athletics and the Mariners playing the Indians. However, the National League still has many teams in contention, each with a shot at a spot.

The Yankees have clinched the AL East with their usual blend of talent. Their starting pitching is very strong with Clemens, Mussina, Pettite, and "El Duque" Hernandez. Their ace, Clemens, is the leading candidate for Cy Young honors. Mussina, though, has actually posted a better ERA than Clemens thus far, and fell one strike short of a perfect game against the Red Sox this year. Pettite has been pitching poorly of late, but he is healthy and a proven commodity. El Duque has been the Yanks' main concern this year but has been pitching very well in September, and is also a proven pitcher in the playoffs. The Yankees' bullpen is still strong even though

they lost Jeff Nelson last season. They now have Mendoza and Stanton setting up with Rivera closing as usual. Their offense has been strong, as well, with Jeter, Bernie, and Tino Martinez all having good years.

The Athletics will be wild card winners this year in the AL. (Only because the Mariners are in their division. Otherwise, they've played magnificent ball.) The Athletics will be facing the Yankees, most likely, in the first round. Their starting pitching is very impressive with Hudson, Zito, Mulder, and Lidle. All four of them are in the top 10 in the AL in ERA. Their one weakness is bullpen pitching, which is not as strong as the Yankees. However, they make up for that with an offense centered around Giambi, Tejada, Chavez, and the recently acquired Jermaine Dye. This is a very impressive team in a small market and a lot of the credit goes to Billy Beane, their general manager.

The Mariners are the top team in the West, and in all of baseball. They are threatening the Yankees 1998 record of 114 single-season wins. They have the most balanced team in the majors from their starting and relief pitching to their offense. The starting pitching has been strong with Freddy Garcia, Aaron Sele, and Jamie Moyer. They have the best relief staff in the majors this year with Authur Rhodes, Jeff Nelson and Norm Charlton setting up and the nearly unstoppable Kazuhiro Sasaki closing. They have a strong offense, even though they have lost the likes A-Rod and Griffey. They have Ichiro Suzuki who is a shoe-in for Rookie of the Year honors, and was top vote-getter for the All-Star Game. Edgar Martinez, Bret Boone, and John Olerud round out this powerhouse of a squad.

Facing the Mariners in the first round will be the Indians, who won the central division. Although their starting pitching has been solid, their dominant offense has taken the most attention. Roberto Alomar, Thome, Juan Gonzalez, and Ellis Burks are all forces to be reckoned with. Gonzalez has made up for the loss of Manny Ramirez. Rookie C.C Sabathia is having an impres-

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Sports Editor: Frank D'Angelo

Sports Section

Ask Blind Brook***What do you think about the one-week professional sports hiatus in the wake of the events of September 11?***

Brett Weisblum
(9th grade)

"I think that it was a very respectful and sensitive act to put an end to sports for a week. The players, coaches, and staff of professional sports teams all know the severity of the events that happened and feel the pain and suffering just as much as any other person. Therefore, this hiatus was a very good idea because it would have been unfair for athletes to do their job in the state of depression they were in."



Drew Anderson
(10th grade)

"Although I feel we should not forget what happened, a week off of sports in wake of the tragedy was inappropriate due to fact that as a society, we should move on with our lives."



Lauren Ellenbogen
(11th grade)

"I think the sports hiatus was good because they had to respect and show support to those who were lost and to the people that lost someone. I also believe it was good because they had to take security precautions."



Lauren Morabito
(12th grade)

"I believe a week break in sports was not a good idea for the country because sports would have done a good job of getting people's minds off the tragic events. I believe, in some cases, exceptions could have been made so that players or coaches could take a temporary leave from a team, but only if those certain athletes or coaches had friends or family members associated with the catastrophic events."



Eda Klinger
(Math teacher)

"I think the one-week professional sports hiatus was appropriate. I think the events in the world warranted the suspension of all recreational activity. It was appropriate for not only the fans, but also the athletes to have the opportunity to deal with the enormity of the events."

—Compiled by Jeffrey Kaplow
Photos by Tori Quaranta

Baseball at Center Stage: A Playoff Preview Continued from page 6

sive first year in the rotation, going 15-5. However Bartolo Colon and Chuck Finley are not having the years they were expected to have. The bullpen for the Indians has John Rocker, who has been shaky in his set-up role. Fortunately for Cleveland, Bob Wickman has been solid as the closer.

In the National League East, the Braves are the favorites to win this year. They have strong starting pitching with perennial strengths Maddux and Glavine, as well as John Burkett. Their bullpen has become very strong with the shift of John Smoltz to closer. He has become today's version of the A's Dennis Eckersley, switching from starting to relieving and being dominant at it. The Phillies' reawakening can mostly be attributed to Larry Bowa's managing. He has brought life to a team which has lacked enthusiasm in the past. They are still within a few games of the Braves. The Mets were a terrible team the first half of the year but have made a comeback run the second-half, moving fairly close to the Braves and Phillies. However, it isn't likely they will win because they would need to have a

better record than the two teams that are currently ahead of them. Suffice it to say, their comeback was a few games too late.

In the National League Central, the Astros are in first place, and will probably win the division. They have a very impressive team that has a nice balance of pitching and offense. The middle of their lineup is especially scary with the Bagwell-Berkman-Alou combo. Alou has put up an uncanny batting average this season. The starting pitching is the most surprising aspect of this team, though. The only veteran is Shane Reynolds, yet their young rotation has been very impressive. Wade Miller has become the ace of the team and Roy Oswalt is one of the leading candidates for NL Rookie of the Year. Their bullpen has been one of the best this year with Billy Wagner coming back as closer and Octavio Dotel and Mike Jackson setting him up in style.

In the NL West, the Diamondbacks are the team to beat. Their starting pitching is intimidating with Randy Johnson and Curt Schilling dominating batter. This desirable one-two punch has more combined

strikeouts than any other two pitchers in the league. Either of them could be the Cy Young Award winner this year. Closing for them is Byung-Hyun Kim. He has been a fine replacement for Matt Mantei, who went down with an injury for the year. The D'Backs have many veterans in their lineup like Mark Grace and Matt Williams, but Luis Gonzalez has done the most damage for them this year. He has posted well over 50 homers.

The Wild Card in the National league is close at this point with the Cardinals ahead of the Giants. The Cardinals have gotten good starting pitching from the likes of Matt Morris and Darryl Kile. Although Mark McGwire has been injured for a good part of the year, Albert Pujols, their All-Star contribution, has replaced him with stellar numbers and is the leading candidate for Rookie of the Year. J.D. Drew came into his own this year, and Jim Edmonds is having a fine year as well. The Giants have a good pitching with Estes and Ortiz holding down the fort, Felix Rodriguez setting up, and Rob Nen closing it out. They strengthened their offense when they picked up Andres Galarraga to complement Bonds who is on pace to hit more than 70 homers. Jeff Kent, RBI machine, is also worthy of praise.

It will be intriguing to see how the playoffs turn out this year. The Mariners have the best record in the majors, but the Yankees are kings of October. In the National League, the Diamondbacks will be extremely difficult to beat in a short

series, given the fact that Johnson and Schilling take the first two games. However, the Astros are formidable with their offense and relief pitchers. It's hard to make a definitive prediction in a year with so many good teams. One simply has to keep in mind playoff experience. Will the Yankees and Braves slip into their normal roles of post-season dominants, or will young teams like the D'Backs and A's steal the show this year? The cards are stacked pretty evenly, but Seattle is on one heck of a run. One thing's for sure: it'll be an interesting month.

Hand In Hand

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But, the Giants knew better than almost anyone did what that date meant. The players had visited the debris of the World Trade Center and talked to the rescue workers working at the site hour after hour. While they were heartbroken, they were also motivated. They didn't want to win to move up in the standings, as much as they wanted to win for the people of New York.

"If Notre Dame could win one for the Gipper, we can win one for our fans who were lost," Giants linebacker Mike Barrow said. On this day, one wish was granted: Giants 13, Chiefs 3.

Michael Jordan Continued from page 5

At the end of last season, when the rumors started that Jordan was going to return, Charles Barkley's return was also considered. Barkley was overweight at the end of his career, and it was obvious that, as the rumors started, he was losing weight. At that time Barkley was more willing than Jordan

to talk about it, and he said that either one of them could return if they got in shape. It seems only Jordan pulled through. Here's a taste of what he's done in the past. Whether or not we'll be seeing more of this is a question only time can answer.

Career highlights

- 6-time NBA champion and Finals MVP (1991, '92, '93, '96, '97, '98)
- 5-time NBA MVP (1987-'88, '90-'91, '91-'92, '95-'96, '97-'98)
- 10-time All-NBA First Team member (1986-'87 to '92-'93, '95-'96 to '97-'98)
- 11-time NBA All-Star (1985, '87 to '93, '96 to '98—missed '86 due to injury)
- 10-time NBA scoring champion (1986-'87 to '92-'93, '95-'96 to '97-'98)
- Most points in a playoff game (63 in 1986)
- Highest scoring average in the Finals (41.0 in 1993)
- Defensive Player of the Year (1987-'88)
- Rookie of the Year (1984-'85)
- 4th all-time regular season scorer
- 1st all-time playoff scorer
- 1st all-time career scoring average (regular season and playoffs)



Features

Features Editor: Matt Stolzar



Neither rain, nor sleet, nor snow will stop Blind Brook students from reaching their beloved Portables!
Photo by Francesca Pomara

Same Classes, New Settings

By Vani Nambudiri

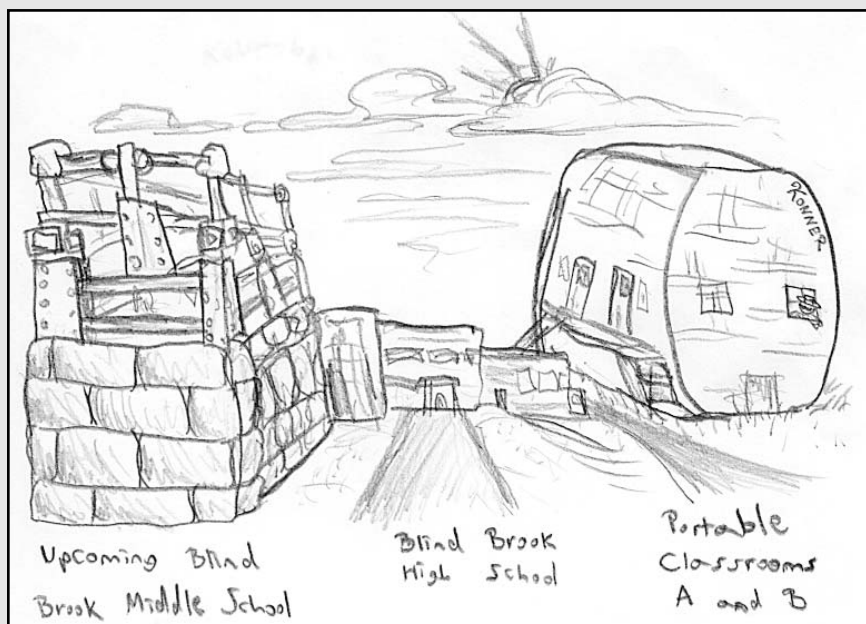
As you open the heavy metal door, a cool draft hits your face. You close your umbrella and hang it up along the hooks on the wall by the door. The carpet is a bit damp in the corner of the room from a leak in the roof, but that's just a minor problem—the brand new, fully equipped bathroom makes up for it! Your heart beat races as you've just run down a flight of stairs, through a couple of halls, in between a few bulldozers, and up the flight of metal stairs that lead here. The rush to get here gives you a great workout, especially with an overloaded backpack weighing you down. The second bell rings, and you're ready to begin another class in one of the new portable classrooms.

Due to the lack of space and the ongoing construction at Blind Brook, two new portable classrooms were installed over the summer. Commonly known as Port 1 and Port 2, these new additions are situated towards the back of the school, adjacent to the loading dock. Although they are referred to as "the portables," they are actually staying for good. Even after the new middle school has been constructed, the por-

tables will be used as classrooms. One new classroom is now home to Spanish teacher Marsha Arest and the other to English teacher Del Shortliffe; however, Charlene Decker also uses them on occasion to teach Accounting.

Known to some as "the Cadillacs of classrooms," the new portable classrooms have gained a great deal of positive comment. Almost everyone agrees that many of the noises and distractions that are present in the main building do not disrupt classes in the portables. Unlike the open classrooms inside the main building, the portable classrooms never have students wandering through. Senior Elana Shapiro said, "The portable classrooms are great facilities. You can hold better discussions and focus more easily in them than in the main building." Windows, also missing in many of the classrooms in the main building, let in light and fresh air. The rooms are also equipped with working heat and air conditioning, which is something Blind Brook students rarely experience at school. When Mrs. Marsha Arest was asked about her feelings towards teaching in these new rooms, the first thing she said was, "I love my portable

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Community Chips In After WTC Attacks

By Rachel Barbarisi

The recent tragic events at the World Trade Center have impacted the lives of everyone in our community. Over the past several weeks, residents of Rye Brook and Port Chester have shown their support in many ways in, from volunteering at hospitals and donating blood, to attending candle lighting ceremonies and aiding the victims' families with both financial and emotional support.

Perhaps the most immediate and direct reaction from our area came from the Rye Brook and Port Chester firefighters. Upon hearing of the catastrophe, the four local fire chiefs initiated what they call the "mutual aid system." According to this system, firefighters nearest to the disaster scene go to the site and help, while fireman from other districts fill their positions. As a result, four volunteer companies of firemen from Rye Brook and Port Chester filled posts in the Bronx fire stations, which enabled the Bronx firefighters to travel to Ground Zero. Once their assistance was no longer needed in the Bronx, the firefighters relocated to Yonkers Raceway overnight, in case there were any additional emergencies.

In addition, the community has given a tremendous amount of financial aid to the victims' families. For example, local Firefighters held a "Fill the Boot Drive" from September 29th through the 30th to benefit the New York City fire and police departments' Widows and Orphans Fund. These fund-raisers were held at several locations in the area, including local fire stations, Washington Park, and the Kohl's Shopping Center.

Everyday citizens also reached out to help in any way they could. When United



Midway through the day, donations to the Red Cross multiplied, quickly surpassing Blind Brook's set goal and totaling to over \$6000. Photo by Jessica Nanus

Hospital called for blood donations they were surprised by the degree of support they received. Julia Schwartz, spokesperson for the hospital, stated, "The amount of people that arrived for the blood drive was overwhelming. We wound up turning away several hundred people because of the overflow and the fact that all the New York City blood drives had reached their limit as well. Since then, over 400 people from the community have called to donate. Now that people are becoming so involved, blood drives will be held on an ongoing basis to

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New Schedule Not a Hit

By Ariel Page

Change. It's a double-edged sword. Its can solve problems and prove advantageous for some, while feeling like a punishment to others. Take, for example, Blind Brook's new schedule. The sacred, mid-day hour block afforded students the opportunity to combine lunch with activity period. For many, this was an excellent way to take time out from a demanding academic schedule and devote more time to special projects (or just have a massive lunch time break). So why change a good thing? The expansion of the middle school and high school population has created lunch time gridlock: too much human traffic in a limited lunchroom space. Principal Robert Chlebicki confirmed this, stating that there was "an over-crowded situation, and there wasn't enough space in the cafeteria."

So what could the school do about this? There were several options presented by the School Congress, as student members tried desperately to keep the schedule as close to the old one as possible. They considered switching activity periods to the beginning of the day, having no hour blocks, or moving all activity periods to the end of the day. But just as consensus seemed impossible, Jeff Licitra came up with the final solution, one known to the Congress as "Option X". "Option X" provided a long block only on Wednesdays, as

opposed to the hour blocks students used to have on Mondays and Thursdays. Because of the overcrowding situation, "Option X" was the only viable way to "save" the hour block, and for that reason, most of the members on Congress agreed with Jeff's proposal.

But students still miss having the hour block twice a week. Senior John-Michael Grzan commented on the new schedule. "I do not like the new schedule whatsoever. I have Congress during the block, so that eliminates my long lunch period totally. Those one-hour lunch periods were like a rescue." He said he didn't like 24 minutes for lunch because, "I can't get any food, and I'm left starving for the entire day." His enthusiasm rose as he thought about what a perfect schedule would be like—"I want [the hour break] three times a week, no wait, five times a week!"

Junior Matt Hill cut straight to the point and said, "I don't really like the fact that we don't have activity lunch anymore." He continued by saying that there's not enough time to eat lunch, and that "it's just not good at all."

Senior Stefanie Platt commented, "I think that the 24 minute lunch period is definitely not enough time to eat lunch. You can't even go out to lunch, and if you need to meet a teacher, I'd rather meet during the day than after school."

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The Bizarre World of Blind Brook

Role Reversal: "My Teacher's Dog Ate My Homework!"

This new Features section covers unusual events that happen inside of Blind Brook. As unbelievable as they may sound, all stories in this section are true.

By Sarah Powell

For years students have made excuses for not doing their homework. While some have worked, others were seriously lacking



Suspects #1 and #2

Photo by Lee Waldman

in the reality department. Although many excuses are quite imaginative, some students remain loyal to traditional excuses, the most famous of course being "my dog ate my homework."

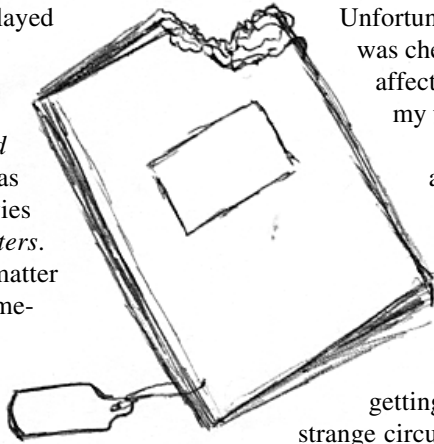
But in today's society, that excuse is dying down, and few students still use it. Sophomore Allisa Stein said, "I would never use that excuse because no teacher would

actually take it seriously; they would probably lose respect for you and think less of you if you used it."

This could be because, for as long as any of us can remember, this excuse has been played out. It appears in the theme song of the popular high school show *Saved by the Bell*, and has been used in movies such as *Little Monsters*. But the truth of the matter is there had to be someone, somewhere, whose dog really did eat their homework. And it could happen again; in fact it did. But from a different angle.

On the night of Wednesday September 12, Marsha Arest's dog actually ate Senior Matt Stolzar's summer diary assignment, leaving Matt's notebook chewed up. If the roles were reversed and the student were the one who had left their homework on the floor, would he or she be penalized? An argument could easily be made now that

one shouldn't leave their homework lying around because it really does run the risk of being eaten. Matt said, "I was hoping I would get an automatic 'A' on the assignment, but that was not the case. Unfortunately for me, the notebook was chewed in places that did not affect Mrs. Arest's ability to read my work."



If a teacher's dog actually ate a student's homework assignment, then maybe other excuses deserve more merit. Surely most excuses are not 100% truthful, but who knows; maybe students have been getting a bad reputation when strange circumstances really have hindered their ability to do an assignment. Matt Stolzar had this to say on the particular issue. "It just makes you think that all these years, maybe students have been telling the truth, and the teachers just haven't believed them. This event will single-handedly revolutionize the world of excuses, and teachers may be forced to let students get away with forgetting their homework."

In-Depth with Blind Brook's New Staff

Bart Grachan: A Welcome Addition

By Sanghee Lee

The history department has received a new addition to its staff—Bart Grachan. After being introduced by his close friend Chris Orphanides, a Blind Brook physical education teacher, Grachan joined the staff at Blind Brook in his first year as a teacher. In the process of looking for a job, Grachan chose Blind Brook because he was impressed by its "strong school system and district."

Selecting any new teacher for the school involves an in-depth interviewing process. First, the department coordinator (in this case Mrs. Judy Mella), collects all the résumés. She reads them all, looking for candidates worthy of serious consideration. Next, both she and Principal Robert Chlebicki interview these chosen candidates. The people thought to be best qualified eventually meet with Dr. William R. Miles, the Superintendent of Schools, and ultimately the most qualified of the group of applicants is chosen.

Grachan has been seriously interested in becoming a teacher since college, and has always had a love for history, a passion he attributes to his father's former involvement in the army. Said Grachan, "I enjoy teaching and the process behind it."

But his day does not end at 3:00, when



Mr. Bart Grachan

Photo by Lee Waldman

school lets out. On the contrary, Grachan spends his afternoons as the Football Coach for Iona Prep. After receiving his masters' degree, he was offered a job as coach of the Iona Prep football team. Through football, he became acquainted with Chris Orphanides who suggested to Grachan that he consider Blind Brook High School as one of his choices.

According to the people who know him well, Grachan is both a devoted teacher and an affectionate person. Chris Orphanides said, "Mr. Grachan has a strong desire to

educate people and loves his subject area; he is also a very caring and friendly person." His students share these opinions.

Sophomore Arielle Fredman said, "I was a little skeptical at first when I heard that we had a new teacher, but Mr. Grachan has turned out to be a really nice guy and a good teacher." Fellow sophomore Jeff Genova echoed, "He's very organized, and always makes himself available to the students." Sophomore Yusuke Kawano added, "He is a very intelligent guy, and really knows the subject matter. In terms of the September 11 terrorist attacks, Mr. Grachan was very knowledgeable, even more so than the media. He really helped to comfort a lot of the students."

Grachan's strong personality and meticulous teaching methods make him a noteworthy addition to the school system. He commands respect from his students, and at the same time shows affection. Said Grachan, "I strongly believe in discipline and work ethics. Learning should come from both teachers and students, not just from one side; it always has to be a double effort." And from the looks of it, the effort is obviously there on one side.

Next month's feature:
Mrs. Patrizia Varbaro

Same Classes, New Settings Continued from page 8

classroom. It's just wonderful."

But the portables are not perfect. Because they are not attached to the main school building, they do pose some difficulties. An obvious problem occurs when the weather is bad, and students and teachers have to walk outside to reach their classes. There was an awning built to prevent people from getting wet during rain showers, but it doesn't extend all the way out to the portable classrooms. "So far,

we've had a couple of rainy days. After the first day, I learned to bring my umbrella," comments Mrs. Charlene Decker. Students also find it difficult to reach classes in the portables on time, and it's equally challenging for them to reach their following class before the second bell rings. Another negative aspect is that both Marsha Arest and Del Shortliffe have admitted, despite their enthusiasm for the classrooms themselves, to feeling isolated from the rest of

the Blind Brook community.

The two portable classrooms have brought needed teaching space to Blind Brook, as well as mixed reactions. The two new classrooms are nicely furnished, and offer a pleasant environment. On the other hand, they are sometimes hard to reach and can leave teachers feeling isolated. But the irony is, no matter how anyone feels about them, the portable classrooms will not be carried away; they are here to stay.

How Much Is Too Much?

Brian Rosenberg

The date September 11, 2001 will live on in all of our minds as the day the world went wrong. The widespread images of the tragedy, broadcast and rebroadcast across the world by satellite, will live on forever in our minds. Now, in the wake of this horror, while the fires in the carapaces of the rubble that were once the symbols of America are still alive, a new debate rages onward. While President Bush rallies America and the world to his "war on terrorism", he has also appointed leaders for the defense against terrorism on the home front. Recently Bush created the Office for Homeland Security, a cabinet-level position. He has also talked about asking Congress for new powers that would undoubtedly make our nation more secure, but also have the potential to undermine many of the freedoms and liberties that we take for granted. Nobody doubts that new security measures must be instituted to protect the general public from another horrid attack, but to what degree are they required, and up to what point are they constitutional. Indeed, how much is too much?

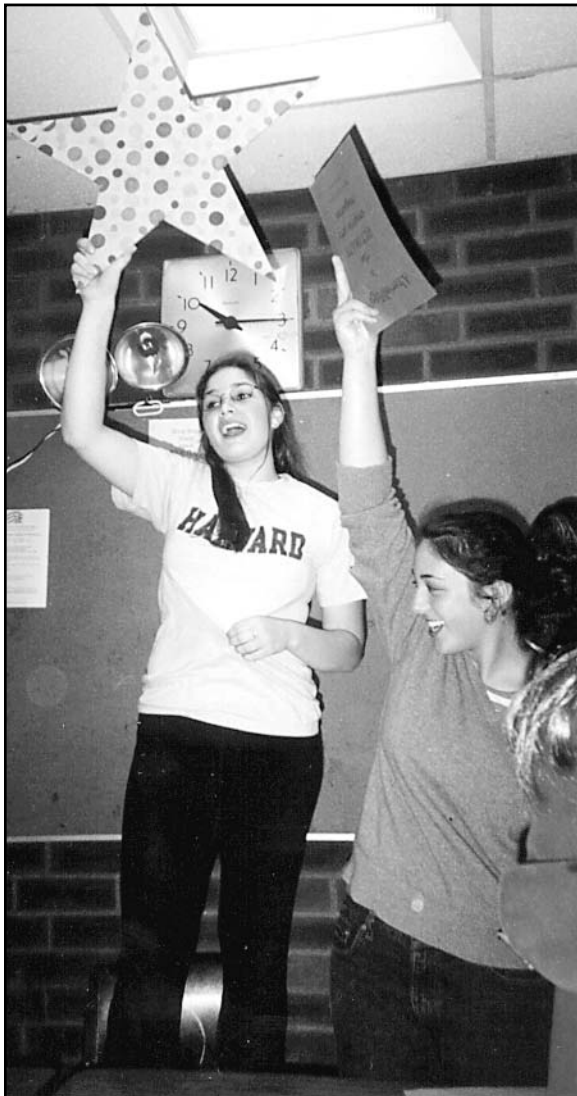
As the immediate but temporary security procedures put into effect after the terrorist strike are ended, America must decide what permanent security is justified and necessary for its protection. What can be done without invading a citizen's privacy and violating his inherent liberties as set forth by the Constitution and the Bill of Rights? Already there is talk of having Military police or reservists on commercial airplanes, "so that every passenger has a feeling of confidence to go back on the airplanes," says House Democratic Leader Dick Gephardt. More alarmingly our own President wishes to give law enforcement officers expanded powers to tap telephones, conduct searches, seize assets and detain suspected terrorists. Says Bush, "Now that we're at war we ought to give the FBI tools to track down terrorists." However, will these "tools" violate the very civil rights that the terrorists were trying to make such a mortal statement against? Will the terrorists succeed after all, in not only murdering hundreds of innocents, but by murdering the very rights that we hold so dear?

In the present age of technology there is a large potential for terrorism on a scale that we have never seen before. With the ease and speed of travel, instantaneous communication, and widespread availability of harmful information it is easy to see how many terrorists attacks are realized. However, on the flip side of the coin, there is a large potential for security measures against terrorism that may seem benign, but actually invade our privacy. It is obvious that we must strike a balance between the protection of our rights and liberties

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Features Section

Features Editor: Matt Stolzar



CLUB SIGN UP DAY

Senior Tarynne Goldenberg and Junior Blair Mosner try to recruit students for Alter{ed} Ego.

Photo by
Francesca Pomara

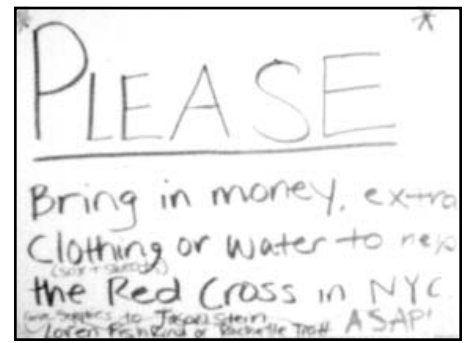
Community Chips In Continued from page 8

try and help the overall blood shortage in this country."

Blind Brook also tried its best to reach out to the Community. Students Jason Stein and Rachelle Tratt led a campaign to donate money and supplies to the Red Cross. Over \$ 6,000 were raised, showing the true character of the school district.

Specific members of the Blind Brook community provided their assistance as well. Mr. Citron, the Blind Brook High School biology teacher, offered his services as a former EMS worker at the Allan Pavilion, a local branch of the Columbia Presbyterian Hospital. He reported, "There was a tremendous amount of support at the local hospital because anyone with any type of qualifications had gone down to help out. By the time I arrived there was such a surplus of helpers that there wasn't a lot for me to do."

Some community efforts were directed towards comforting local residents and showing solidarity rather than providing direct aid to Ground Zero victims. The Rye Brook and Port Chester communities jointly sponsored an interfaith candle lighting service on Sunday, September 23rd at Port Chester High School. The ceremony, which commenced at 7 p.m., drew approximately 250 people. From the very beginning, local fireman and policemen were standing by collecting donations and selling candles, the proceeds of which would all go to the Red Cross. Spectators, including Rye Brook boy scouts and local firemen, lit candles and took their seats to listen to a series of speeches and poems from local students, clergy, and political figures. The various speakers talked of everything from the current battle between the forces of good and evil, to the feeling of unity now realized as different ethnic groups in this country band



Senior Jason Stein and Juniors Loren Fishkind and Rachelle Tratt organized BB's Fund-raiser for the Red Cross.

together as Americans. Among the speakers that night were Scott Berman and Chatman Richman, seventh grade students from both the Port Chester and Blind Brook School systems. These students discussed their fear of war, their anger, and their confusion over these past events. Aishy Jacob, a twelfth grader at Port Chester High School, spoke of her hope that Americans would not target people in this country who may be of a different race who were in no way connected to this attack. The youngest speakers of the night were a group of 2nd grade students from Edison High School who recalled the events in a poem called "United We Stand."

Mayor Filipowski of Rye Brook recently expressed his enthusiasm at the communities' dedication, "I am amazed at the amounts of money that have been given, and the numerous blood drives that are taking place. Even the local establishments are turning people away because of the outpour. People in this community have relentlessly been asking what they can do and how they can help. There is a strong sense of people just wanting to come together, get away from watching people on TV and basically share with each other."

New Schedule Not a Hit Continued from page 8

Sophomore Caroline Fortino explains, "I think that it was better when we had more activity periods in the middle of the day because when the activity periods are at the end of the day, people don't really focus on going to teachers for help or doing their homework; they are more concentrated on just hanging out with their friends and playing sports in the gym."

Freshman Brett Weisblum expressed that he didn't think the new schedule was fair. He thought that having the hour block was "better than [having activity period] at the end of the day because you can do your homework, and it's just better overall."

Teachers, however, didn't seem to share in students' rapture about the hour blocks. Mr. John Mills said, "Well, I prefer this to

the old schedule, but I was actually hoping that we would have all five activity periods in the afternoon."

What bothers many students is not just that they have been left with only one hour block, but that it's not even an hour, it's only 50 minutes. So, technically, there are no hour blocks anymore. Those extra 10 minutes gave the upperclassmen time to drive back from lunch at a relaxed pace, but now those ten minutes are gone.

So although the schedule was changed with the admirable intention of resolving the various "security issues" caused by over-crowding, it appears that the majority of the student body's opinions on the new schedule can be summed up by Senior Heath Ward when he says "It's lame."

How Much Is Too Much? Continued from page 9

and the security of our nation.

As a community, Blind Brook was relatively lucky in that not many of its members were directly affected by the tragedy. However, we all experienced the general shock, horror, and sadness that permeated the entire country. As life goes on and the nation as a whole grapples with its security issues, we must come to terms with not only our security as a school and community, but also with our personal rights and liberties as students of Blind Brook and citizens of the United States.

Most students in Blind Brook feel very safe in their homes, their school, and even on commercial airplanes. Says Barry Yawitz, a 10th grader "I feel that security in the United States will become better as a result of the terrorist attack." Chad Murray, also a 10th grader felt the same way "I'm not afraid to fly, but now there's always a kind of tension in the back of my mind when I'm flying or just in New York City, can it happen to me?"

However, when asked about their reaction to our President's controversial ideas on improving security through measures such as phone tapping, more security cameras, and other, perhaps invasive methods, students became very defensive. Says Lee Waldman, "Can they do that? That's an infringement on our rights!" This feeling

seemed to be prevalent in the school. Most students agreed that there must be changes made in the security procedures of our nation, but many prove skittish when it comes to setting a limit on the degree of security needed.

When examining the security of our school with respect to the degree of invasion of privacy, many questions arise. Are the SAVE laws really necessary to the security of our school? Are our files and where we go online being monitored? Are these an invasion of our rights and for that matter does it really bother us that much? Says Brian Shassian, "The dress code and the SAVE laws haven't really affected me or anyone I know." On the other hand many people voice the same concerns as Mike Valientis, "I'm worried about how much I'm monitored when I'm on the computer."

The bottom line is that there will always be a struggle between proponents of stricter laws that limit our liberties for the gain of security, and those who value their rights above all. It is evident that equilibrium must be reached, but our nation is well prepared for that with its unique sets of checks and balances. In the end, our nation will emerge stronger, more unified, and better prepared for what promises to be a long and bitter struggle against terrorism across the world.

SADD CLUB

Believe In Yourself and Make Wise Decisions

On Thursday, October 11, Guest Speaker Bobby Petrocelli spoke to the entire Middle/High School student body. Organized by Student Assistant Counselor, Terry Frank, and SADD Club President, David Stockel, the event discussed the power of an individual's choices and the importance of building

a strong foundation for oneself. Mr. Petrocelli, having lost his wife to a drunk driver who drove his trunk into their home, uplifted students by encouraging them to believe in themselves and to make wise decisions they are comfortable with. "Life's more simple than we make it. 10 seconds can change your life."

Do you feel that this event will help students change their actions and make them see the impact their choices can have on their life and the lives of others? Write your responses to FOCUS (Mr. Shortliffe's mailbox). We're interested to hear your opinion.

Write For FOCUS!

NEW WRITING Sections

Open to ALL Blind Brook Students and Faculty

"I am a ..." **The Diary of a Blind Brookian:** This focuses on what it's like to have a certain title—a Homecoming queen, basketball player, a straight-A student, a straight-C student, a new teacher, a new student, a lead in a play, a high school junior—and sharing the inner emotions, pressures, and responsibilities that come along with it. Entries can be written informally and printed (not submitted) anonymously.

End Page: The last page of FOCUS will be devoted to a featured column, photograph, or artwork (e.g. comic strip) that any BBHS student submits.

Opinion Section and Letters to the Editor

**If you have any questions, please contact
Francesca Pomara or Mr. Shortliffe.**

Arts & Entertainment

A & E Editor: Gillian McBride

Summer Sequels: Part II

Do you think original movies should be left alone, or should sequels be produced?

"I think sequels are a good idea, although usually they are worse than the original. If the person who produces the movie could make the sequel better, then it would be cool."

--Kyle Wirshba (9th grade)



"I think for the most part they should be produced, but it depends on the movie."

--Alison Dubrow (10th grade)



"Sequels should not be made."

--Michael Fuchs (11th grade)

"The success of a sequel is based on the number of fans from the original movie. Some movies really are not made to be sequels, but you don't know that until after they are released."

--Rachel Kaplowitz (12th grade)



—Compiled by Melissa Matles
Photos by Jessica Nanus

By Brett Konner

As the movie-packed summer fades on the horizon, we can reflect on the highlights of the hot films of the hot months. For, no matter what movie genre you may be a fan of, there was enough variety this summer for *everyone* to be disappointed.

Well, perhaps I am being unfair. It was really the movies of the first half of the summer that gave a bad name to the movies of the summer's second half. Especially when it came to the risk-encrusted sequels:

Scary Movie 2: Had its moments.

Wasn't as funny as the first one, though, as it chose to parody big movies and commercials, which, well, weren't all too scary.

Jurassic Park 3: At only 25 minutes in length, this "sequel sequel" was 65 million years in the making and had 65 million viewers wanting their money back. The movie included Sam Neil as well as other cast members from the original *Jurassic Park*. Fun was to be had as people were chased through the dinosaur-infested island, resulting in about 3 people to be eaten and the rest to be just a little shaken up. Of course the actor who did the most running was Jeff Goldblum, the smart one, who did not appear in the movie.

Dr. Doolittle 2: Eddie Murphy talks to the animals again. Pure genius, I tell you.

Rush Hour 2: A turning point in the summer; sequels are starting to look good again. And the two most hard-to-understand actors of the world have coalesced again to pick up exactly where they left off when *Rush Hour 1* came to an end. In our wallets. Jackie Chan received \$15 million to make this action-comedy and Chris Tucker netted \$20 million (I'm guessing because he's a better fighter). Anyway, RH2's comedic fight sequences and "so, so wrong" ethnic jokes made this movie a whole lot of chow fun to watch.

American Pie 2: Sequel status has completely re-righted itself as this teen-targeting summer mega-flick helped itself to a piece of the August Pie. Well-written, well-put-together, and well-er, good...in-bringing...back the original-cast, um...you know what I mean. Qualms? More Shannon Elizabeth; less Alyson Hannigan.

We might as well also throw in:

The Mummy Returns: I'm sorry, I didn't know the Mummy had ever left. Brendan Fraser and Rachel Weisz continue their game of "Name that Tomb" and the WWF's The Rock delivers a performance that was as multi-layered and probing as his name. Basically, it was computer-generated toilet paper on caffeine.

So what's the deal? What is Hollywood's big obsession with the sequels? Well, it's the money.

Planet of the Apes: Re-imagined and fully loaded with special effects and great make-up, this "sort-of-sequel" introduced a whole new brand of gorilla warfare. It also had a surprise ending which scared the living chimp out of me until I realized it had more holes in it than a PGA Tour.

So what's the deal? What is Hollywood's big obsession with the sequels? Well, it's the money. Sure. Sequels to movies that have brought in big box office figures are considered a "sure thing." No one cares about producing original scripts any more. They figure, "Well, anything I can come up with has probably already been made. Hey, that *Nutty Professor* movie was pretty cool, though, let's give that a Part Two!" So the movie-makers wind up with a big, fat commission, and we wind up with a big, fat family.

How about this upcoming *Lord of the Rings* trilogy? Miss Cleo has already informed them that first one is going to do really well, so they've already made

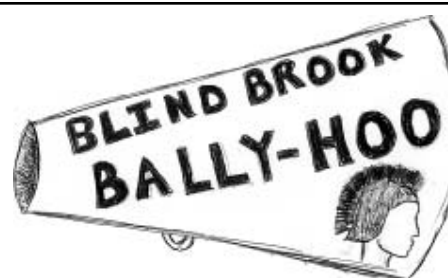
the second and third ones. And then they tell us that the three parts are going to be released one year apart from each other. What's this? Are you playing a game with us? I'll give you a game. I say we boycott *Lord of the Rings: Part I*, and give everyone anxiety attacks about *Parts II* and *III*. This will cause them to release *Parts II* and *III* early to get the

embarrassment over with. Then, with all three parts out at the same time, we can see them all in the same night without forgetting a thing.

But I mean, seriously, what if every

movie had a sequel? And, even worse, what if every sequel had a sequel? *The Mummy Returns...Again. The Mummy Returns for a Third Time. The Mummy's Son Comes. The Mummy Stays Home This Time but Wishes He Could Have Been There.* It's like *Friday the Thirteenth* all over again. You know they're making a *Fast and the Furious II*? A *Shrek II*? A *Matrix II*? A *Men In Black II*? A *Meet the Parents II*? Well, heck, why don't they make a *Pearl Harbor II*? I'd like to see how they do that one. No, wait, I wouldn't.

As far as our near future is concerned, the films opening this month should get us snugly through the winter. So go out there and see these soon-to-be-Part-One-of-Two's before *Don't Say A Word* is replaced by *Don't Say A Full Sentence*, *Hearts Of Atlantis* is followed up by *Lungs Of New Jersey*, and *The Others* is succeeded by *No, I Meant The Other Others*. Until then, this is Brett Konner saying, "Until then, this is Brett Konner."



Announcing
What We Do
on Our Down Time

www.familyfeud.com

By Ben King

Whether in mornings, free periods, or even at the end of school, Blind Brook students began visiting this site last year, and, as fall brings Blind Brook back to session, the trend is still staying strong for this online version of the ever-popular game show.

The objective of the game is to guess the most popular answers to various survey questions asked already to people off the streets, such as "Give me the last name of a famous George." For this example, the players would have to type in the last name of a famous person with that first name, like, say, George Washington. Sounds easy enough, but with only ten seconds to respond, you need to work fast.

The Family Feud game is comprised of three survey rounds, where you have the opportunity to receive bonus points for guessing the most popular answer on the first try. But if your answer isn't one of the most popular responses, you are then allowed only two more misses for that round. The last round is "Fast

Money," where you try to accumulate the most amount of bonus points in the least amount of time while choosing the single most popular answer to five different survey questions. The player with the most points at the end wins.

If you find yourself with a low score at the middle of a game, don't sweat. That's because points earned in the second and third rounds are doubled and tripled, respectively, so you can still manage to catch up and even win.

This game cannot only keep you amused, but it can also get you, hey, free stuff! For players using an uproar.com account, the game's host site, "i-coins" can be earned that are redeemable for prizes.

While people may not realize it, this web game also holds some educational value. To be the best, players not only have to be quick typers but also pretty fast thinkers. So in the end, leave it up to Blind Brook students to discover a place with competition, entertainment, and even some pretty cool trivia.

Blind Brook Goes Out to Lunch

By Blair Mosner

The phrase "out to lunch," typically used to denote someone who's, well, not the sharpest knife in the drawer, picks up a completely new tone when applied to the many Blind Brook High School students fortunate enough to have off-campus privileges. Each day, those juniors and seniors (and maybe a few of those daring freshman and sophomores) with time and rides, take advantage of what is considered the highest perk of being an upperclassman: good lunches.

Fifth period, I caught up with Juniors Stephanie Vasile, Sarah Wolff, and Sarah Powel—all self-described as daily fast food junkies—on their way in from a McDonald's in Port Chester. Vasile is

admittedly grateful for her off-campus privileges as well for as her conveniently placed (and much envied) free period. As a former patron of the school cafeteria, Stephanie noted that, "just waiting on line takes 24 minutes." As Sarah Powell was disclosing the difficulties inherent in a 24-minute lunch period with off-campus privileges, 10th grader Jordan Lutsky comes over with his brown-bagged lunch from home. His reason for bringing lunch from home? "It's less expensive."

Surprisingly enough, Lutsky was the only person I spoke to who named price as a reason for packing lunch. I sat down with Seniors Spencer Howard and Jill Diamond during their 6th period free, and

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**PATRIOTISM:
A spirited country
or a trend-hungry
nation?**

By Lauren Levinson

When the most unstoppable, unthinkable disaster struck down New York's legendary Twin Towers and the Pentagon within one hour, the civilized world was profoundly shocked. Since then Americans have come together in a way never before seen, heard, or imagined. Patriotism has swept the country, leaving us even more astonished at our own unity and strength. Coming together is how we will eventually win the war against terrorism, but to what extremes will Americans go to follow this new trend of the red, white, and blue?

The craze began with nationalistic ribbons of stars and stripes, identified as the American flag. As these flags slowly started disappearing from stores, and reappearing almost anywhere, waving proudly in front of homes, on cars, and displayed in windows, the demand for them grew exponentially. Currently, Family Discount and many other stores have been sold out of flags for weeks, leaving month-long waiting lists online to purchase them. To feed the flag-craving public, The New York Times featured a pullout flag in one of its latest issues. Yet flags on public display were not enough to quell the flag fad, the next move was to decorate ourselves in this ribbon of red, white, and blue. In less than a heartbeat, tiny flag pins became a staple of the American dress code, spotted on professional blazers, purses, and even Ben Stiller's sweater. In Los Angeles there has been an American flag tattoo frenzy, where multitudes are lining up to get tattoos of the flag, the bald eagle, and sayings such as Remember the day. It seems as if any American going out in public without some sort of symbol of the flag, is a citizen walking around naked. This raises the question of whether the flag is in danger of becoming more of a fashion statement than a symbol of liberty.

The trend hungry media immediately devoured this patriotic fixation, adding to its potency. Since its full-fledged coverage of the September 11 tragedy, MTV has taken a major role in feeding American patriotism. The new symbol of the MTV logo is designed to look like an American flag. The flag also boldly hangs from the TRL window overlooking Times Square, as one of the prominent leaders of the flag fad. Celebrity promotion of patriotism has also taken root. With the creation of The All Star Tribute "What's Going On," some of the most famous celebrities including Christina Aguilera, Britney Spears, Eve, 'NSync, Puff Diddy, Nelly, Destiny's Child, and Limp Biskit have united to sing a song about this disaster. Radio stations

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**What's in a Name:
Fall TV's Newest Celebrity Sitcoms**

By Melissa Gentile and Gillian McBride

As with every year, an overwhelming number of celebrity-associated shows are appearing in this fall's television lineup. They're easy to spot with main character's name incorporated into the title—adopted, in part, as a way to familiarize audiences to a brand new show, but also as ratings ploy intended to attract viewers to a prominent name. Unfortunately, these kinds of sitcoms end up as failed efforts, only to disappear before spring. I think we've all already forgotten the predecessors—*The Geena Davis Show*, *Bette*, etc. Despite the unpromising failure rates, there are those few exceptions that manage to survive, even to become cornerstones in television history like *Seinfeld*, *Roseanne*, and *Everybody Loves Raymond*.

With the season premieres comes *Emeril*, a workplace comedy starring "Bam!" famous TV chef, Emeril Lagasse. Emeril plays himself striving to fulfill his obligations as America's favorite culinary connoisseur. The first episode shows his cast and crew

going through a weight loss contest. Needs salt.

A bold attempt of a television comeback for comedian Ellen DeGeneres aired September 24th on CBS. The show, which incidentally is named the *Ellen Show*, centers on a fast-paced dot-com executive who forsakes her city life to return to her small hometown. Along with other critics, I can't help but find it as anything more than just a repackaging of *Ellen*; certainly, switching networks and keeping the title does not necessarily mean an improved show.

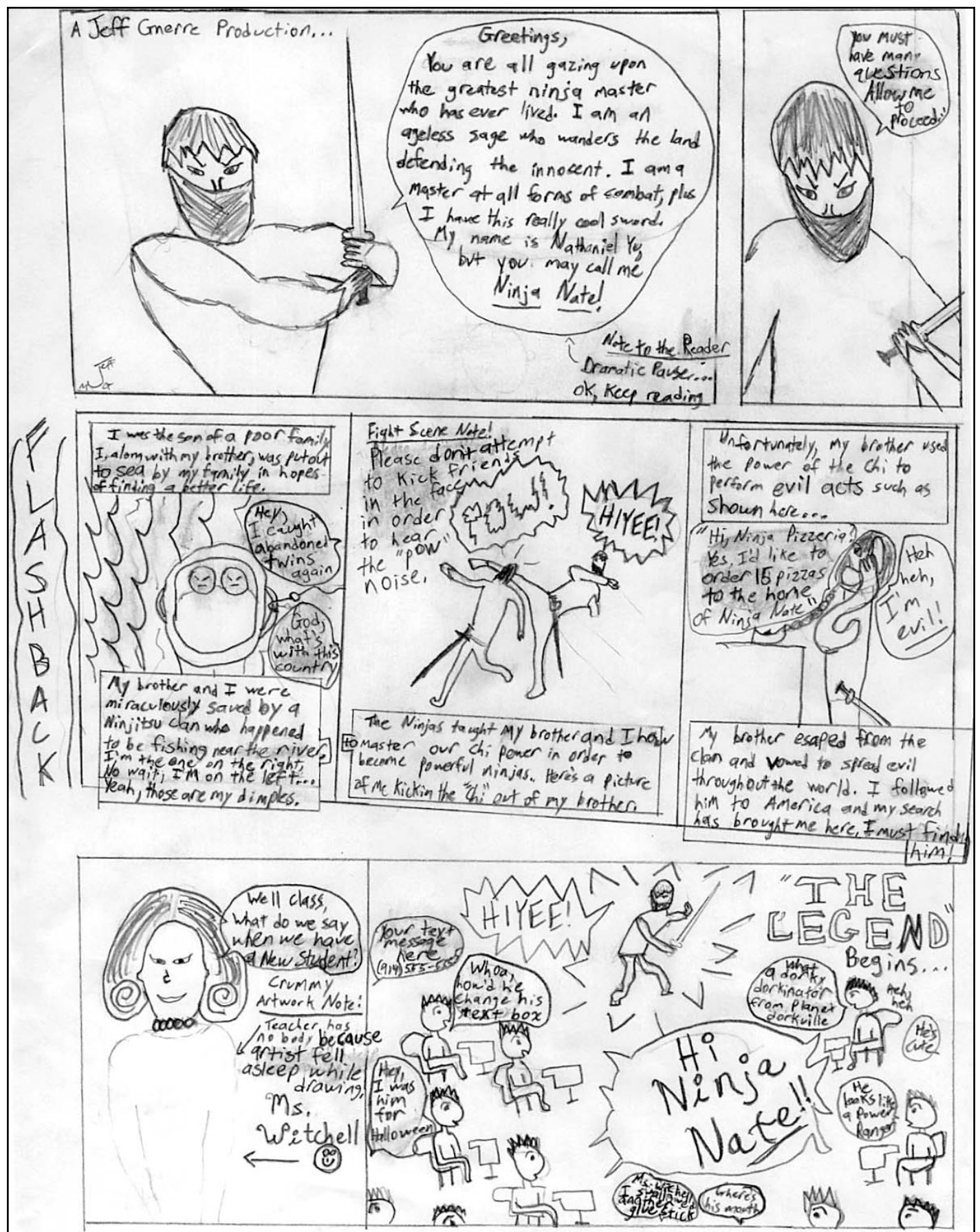
Starring *Seinfeld*'s Jason Alexander comes ABC's new *Bob Patterson*, the story of "The Nation's No. 3 Motivational Speaker." Alexander's first big role since George Costanza, Bob Patterson is "an empowering speaker with a serious case of personal disempowerment" with an almost dangerously low self-esteem, meddling ex-wife, and a profession on the rocks. All I can say is that the promo is great (visit www.bobpatterson.com for more details).

Country superstar Reba McEntire dabbles into television with her new show

Reba. This spirited comedy, also starring JoAnna Garcia, Scarlett Pomers, and Steve Howey, is focused on the typical dysfunctional suburban family. It takes in to account teenage pregnancy, divorce, and adultery—all contemporary family issues. Reba must reconstruct her shattered life and family before everything caves inward. Critic Aaron Barnhart calls it "a refreshing new comedy, and its star, Reba McEntire is terrific."

Hey folks, look who's back! Yep, it's Bob Saget from TV's *America's Funniest Home Videos* and *Full House*. But now it's different because this time he plays...a single dad. The WB show's called *Raising Dad*, with Saget playing a teacher at his daughter's high school. With its "low-key laughs and heartfelt moments," it's a warm family show in, well, a 9:30 slot.

It has been said that the show makes the celebrity, not the converse. But, while anyone can predict which shows will endure the formidable competition faced by the fall sitcom, in the end, time is the ultimate test.



A Costly Patriotism

Continued from page 2

generation has not. Perhaps this feeling of national pride was even present in our last war in the Persian Gulf, but teens around my age were not mature enough to understand the emotion. However, we are now ready to feel it for the first time.

Our democracy is of the people, for the people, and by the people and, therefore, its survival will be determined by the resolve of the people. Suddenly, America has been reunited in its deepest moment of despair. I see mortal rescue workers going beyond their human duty risking their lives trying to save others. Although more than 270 rescue workers have died, more continue to face grave perils undaunted as they go in the hazardous rubble looking for more victims. Some are not even paid, but rather, volunteers. It is not only these rescue workers, but a myriad of other Americans. Some have offered moral support like the people who gather by the roads to, rightfully so, cheer on these rescue workers. Others have crowded the city's blocks waiting in line to give blood while others donate money and clothing. The public response has been so great that the Red Cross and Salvation Army cannot handle any more donations. Even those who are not in a position to help do whatever they can. Some take time out to pray or put an American flag on their house. K-mart and Walmart even sold out of flags. Still more fight against grief as they share stories and listen to one another. This patriotism is not only evident in our actions, but in our words for our country. Watching the news we constantly hear people saying phrases like "for America," "to help America," and "so that America's greatness will endure!" The national anthem is sung with the meaning that Scott Keys intended for it as he wrote it inspired by his view of Americans courageously battling to preserve their freedom. More importantly, the many who listen to it now finally no longer shallowly dismiss it as a bothersome pre-game necessity.

The ethnic and cultural walls that might have separated us at times have crumbled faster than the two towers. Our country has worked, mourned, and wept together. Jews and Muslims and blacks and whites have struggled side by side as brothers. Even our national mass was non-denominational as the leaders of our country prayed together. The same respect was shown to the Protestant Reverend as to the Moslem imam. The princes of darkness who are responsible for this disaster have not awakened a sleeping giant, rather they have awakened 250 million smaller creature who, when united, far exceed the power of a mere giant.

The wonderful volunteerism and brotherhood displayed by Americans is contagious. When I see other people helping out, a voice in my mind says I want to help too; I want to show these terrorists that our people are too strong for them to conquer. The day Blind Brook collected donations for the Red Cross I felt excited to help our country and fellow Americans as I ran around my house looking for clothes and money that I could contribute.

To see such solidarity in such a time of calamity sends a shiver scattering down my spine. But it also makes me ask myself a question. Why must it take so much death and destruction for Americans to pull together? Let us learn a costly lesson from this painful experience. In the future, let us not be separated anymore by our differences, but instead make our common culture brotherhood. Let our generation take this suddenly acquired patriotism and carry its benevolent message into the future so that the selfless, compassionate actions that fill me and innumerable others with a warm feeling continue after the smoke has cleared over New York City. This is a feeling that allows me to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope as I look to a brighter day. This is a sentiment that has me believe that our nation will show the world that from this tragedy, the resolve of our people will bring us together to grow stronger. And it is a feeling that makes me say, "I'm proud to be an American!"

PATRIOTISM: A spirited country or a trend-hungry nation? Continued from page 12

have also done much to encourage American nationalism. From Z100's commercials about what you can do for your country to playing techno versions of "America the Beautiful," patriotism is the hot topic to talk about and sing about. Songs by Jewel and Enrique Iglesias have been remixed with narrations from New Yorkers about the events of September 11. Z100 also changed its annual School Spirit Contest to the American Spirit contest, looking for the person who has done the most to help out since the planes crashed. With all the media coverage taking place, one wonders why it took such a trauma for these icons to discover their patriotic spirit.

Charities have been a prime example of how Americans have displayed their spirit in response to the crisis. On Friday

September 21, an unprecedented telethon was held to raise money for relief efforts for the victims of the terrorist attacks. Not only was the telethon teeming with stars of cinema, television and music, such as the three Toms (Cruise, Hanks, and Petty), Julia Roberts, George Clooney, Dave Matthews, Bruce Springsteen, Sting, Stevie Wonder, and Pearl Jam, but amazingly, it was shown on 35 separate broadcast and cable networks simultaneously and was seen by just under 60 million viewers. Reports state that more than \$150 million was pledged. To raise more funds, Z100 is sponsoring the American Spirit Concert at the Vanderbilt, and 92.7 is organizing the Rock The Relief Show concert. Even Blind Brook has shown its own intense support by collecting over \$3,000 to donate to the Red Cross in just

one day. These efforts are truly wonderful, but it is important that we build on what has been done already and not just forget the flag frenzy, as we have abandoned trends in the past, since the suffering of the victims and the war on terrorism will be with us for the long haul.

As Americans walk around waving flags and declaring their nationalism, we hope that they will never forget the cause. Two tall towers fell and suddenly American patriotism rose. September 11 must be the catalyst for their discovery of American patriotic values. And as the war against terrorism continues, we hope that Americans stay true to their red, white, and blue. Trends come and go, and although it took a catastrophe to unite our country, we need to keep the flag flame glowing strong, until the very end.

Out to Lunch Continued from page 11

discussed the prices of their Subway lunches from Port Chester. The two agreed that the \$5 to \$7 they each normally spend on lunch everyday is not the biggest deal when it isn't money they've worked for. They also agreed that lunch is really more than just time to eat. Spencer succinctly summed up what many others were getting at: "Lunch isn't even as much about eating as it is a break in the middle of the day. It sounds childish, but it's like free time." Childish or not, many Blind Brook students—myself included—have found lunch to be a vital breather in an otherwise non-stop workday. An exasperated Craig Raphael refused to comment as he rushed out to Mobile near Port Chester's train station for a cup of coffee; but Junior Tori Quaranta commented that she goes out simply because "this school is too ugly to stay in all day."

Getting out is not the overwhelming

influence in all cases, though. Alex Harik, the self-proclaimed "biggest eater this side of the Mizzizyzy," talked to me about the driving force in his mid-day excursions: food. "I'm a big kid," he said. "I go to places that serve big portions, and I get a lot because I love to eat. It's my favorite habit, so I pick good places. I don't eat fast food. I go to delis." Alex's tablemates, Laurence Katz and Michael Klein, chimed in to inform me that "the fridge ruins it. A deli ham sandwich and a homemade ham sandwich are two different things." That same sentiment that a good deli sandwich beats out any other meal seemed to be prevalent throughout most of the interviews. Sarah Wolff enthusiastically ran down a list of her favorite places to get lunch—which, by the way, she always eats at school. Greenwich's Firehouse Deli and Stateland Deli rank highest among her carefully selected picks. Other students say they

go to Garden Catering, Marinie's, The Purchase Deli, or Rye Ridge's Club Sandwich. Some students head home or to a local super market where they can make a "phat salad." An unnamed faculty member said she would like to see a salad bar in school since she and many of her colleagues simply don't have time to go out.

Only a few students mentioned Castlevue Deli, which had been a Blind Brook favorite up until recently. Was it a favorite, perhaps, because of its close approximation to the school? After all, Blind Brook students and faculty only get a 24-minute lunch period. Laurence Katz agreed with Mike Klein when he said, "Lunch should be 42 minutes even if school is longer." Almost everyone I spoke to about his or her lunching styles/preferences had a free period surrounding lunch, and said that they would most likely not go out if not for these frees.



Editorials

Bill Maher Gets Politically (In)correct

By Gillian McBride, A&E Editor

(SCENE: It's September 17th, six days after the attack on the World Trade Center and Washington, D.C., and the first day back for Bill Maher's late night talk show, "Politically Incorrect" with guest Dinesh D'Souza, policy analyst for Reagan administration.)

"Bill, there's another piece of political correctness I want to mention," Dinesh D'Souza says at one point. "And, although I think Bush has been doing a great job, one of the themes we hear constantly is that the people who did this are cowards."

Maher: "Not true."

D'Souza: "Not true. Look at what they

did. First of all, you have a whole bunch of guys who are willing to give their life. None of them backed out. All of them slammed themselves into pieces of concrete."

Maher: "Exactly."

D'Souza: "These are warriors. And we have to realize that the principles of our way of life are in conflict with people in the world. And so—I mean, I'm all for understanding the sociological causes of this, but we should not blame the victim. Americans shouldn't blame themselves because other people want to bomb them."

Maher: "But also, we should—we have been the cowards, lobbing cruise missiles from 2,000 miles away. That's cowardly.

Staying in the airplane when it hits the building, say what you want about it, it's not cowardly. You're right."

(CONVERSATION CONT.)

No studio member or backstage crew, no executive producer or monitoring representatives, nobody, not even Bill Maher himself, could have predicted the repercussions that 30-second sound bite would hold on the show, the media, and free speech itself. Though this wasn't the only controversial statement made after the Sept. 11 catastrophe (Peter Jennings received roughly 10,000 angry phone calls after one potentially unpatriotic comment), this certainly was the most publicized example.

After all, one could have easily inferred from Maher's own words that he considered the United States' military men and women were cowards, and in turn, Al-Qaeda terrorists were martyrs for their cause. Is this what he meant? Probably not, I say. And even though this may have been this bad timing on Maher's part, in regards to sensitivity to the American audience, he is still entitled to his opinion, right, America?

As the show's hour drew to a close, guests, crew, and host packed up, leaving for home after another seemingly normal day back at work. But when Dan Patrick, a self-proclaimed God-fearing Christian and loyal husband of 26 years, saw the show go to its final commercial and credits, the Houston-native was livid. The next morning, Patrick, a right-wing radio talk-show host, went on the air at KSEV (700 AM) to spur his listeners to action against this blatant act of un-patriotism. Something must be done, he cried, to show that we won't support any disloyalty to the nation. Soon he urged listeners to call Sears and FedEx, two companies with advertisements on the "PI" time slot, to demand that they stop promoting the show. Soon both Sears and FedEx, having reviewed tapes of the show, had pulled their ads from the slot. Washington, D.C.'s WJLA, an ABC associate, stopped airing episodes. Rumors began circulating that ABC was considering canceling the talk show altogether. Walt Disney Co. chairman Michael Eisner openly told reporters that he disapproved of Maher's comments. Even the White House condemned Maher's words and issued a statement saying that, "there are reminders to all Americans that they need to watch what they do." Frankly, things were looking bad for Bill and our freedom of expression as well.

The country now faced a particularly important question: could this sudden surge of patriotism hold darker implications, and through that I mean restrictions on our beloved freedom of speech? In a country where "political correctness" keeps watch over our media, suddenly the President is allowed to step up to millions of American citizens on national television and declare our opponents "barbarians" and "evil"? It has been decided for us; we know where we are supposed to stand. What about those of us who see the situation from different vantage points? Are our views now "wrong views"? Can we ever express them? If this terrible, terrible event had happened in some other country, I probably would find Maher's words the most, well, American thing to say. We are known, after all, for our individual opinions and our right to express them even on TV.

As we could very well be entering a time of war, I cannot help but think back to our "Red Scare." That was, of course, during a period of strained relations between the US and Russia where anyone who spoke out against the US government was considered one of "them:" a communist vigilante to be subsequently silenced and shunned by the community. Though this is quite a melodramatic comparison, can we honestly believe that in these next tense few months our opinion as Americans over the matter of the terrorist attacks has not been predisposed? Can anyone share empathy with ethnic groups that are now identified as our enemies and still be considered an American? It is a valid question that needs evaluation.

In the end, of course there was the public retraction in which Maher apologized to a bristling America, telling them that "in no way was I ever intending, because I never think this way, to say that the men and women who defend our nation in uniform are anything but courageous and valiant." Maher certainly had supporters who see him as "the victim of his own personality," and a "martyr for the first amendment." Says Maher now, "I've gotten more calls than ever from people saying, 'You've gotta keep doing your show.'" And I say to you, my dear readers, you've gotta believe in your own opinion.

If You Had Built It, They Would Have Come

By Matt Stolzar, Features Editor

Moisture dominates the field, causing the ball to die as it hits the ground. Three-inch deep puddles form around midfield on the right and left side, a result of the pipes that lie nearby. The single set of bleachers allows enough room for at most 20 fans, a number much lower than the bleachers they replaced permitted. The drainage system sucks up less water than a dust buster, causing rain from two days prior to necessitate the canceling of any game. This is our great new soccer field, the one that took a year to build.

The soccer team has been provided with an inadequate, dangerous field, creating a situation that has essentially forced the team to play most of its home games once again at the Bruno Ponterio Ridge Street School field. Even homecoming had to be canceled because of the drainage problem, and it has yet to be rescheduled.

The field has never been well built for drainage, lying flat at the bottom of a hill, but this year the problem has even elevated. The ideal soccer field is built in a parabolic shape, with the high point at the center of the field, allowing water to slide down the sides of the field and off of it. But to restructure the Blind Brook field into this shape would have cost too much money.

So rather than target the drainage problem (since it hadn't been as bad in the past), the school targeted the surface of the field, putting sod and additional grass seeds down to improve the surface.

But when school began this year, the

drainage problem was worse than ever. As Athletic Director Jim Spano observed, "The field is just retaining water like it never has before." So what's causing the drainage problem? Nobody knows the answer, although the school is desperately trying to find out. There has been some speculation that the change in the contour of the land and the new roofs built during the construction have caused additional water runoff that has led to the flooding of the field after each rainstorm. But if this is the case, why didn't the school take any measures to prevent this from happening?

In an attempt to salvage the field for at least the last few weeks of the season, holes have been dug to try to find where the excess water is coming from and how to stop it from coming. But why did it take so long for this to happen? Shouldn't this have been done over the summer, or at least in the first few weeks of the school year, rather than now, when the season is two thirds finished and the team is still trying to rebuild its image as a top soccer team in Westchester.

Soccer had always been a strength of Blind Brook, right from its early days. In the late 1970's, Blind Brook captured multiple state championships, building up an impressive reputation. But as time passed, the teams began to worsen due in part to lack of interest in the game by many students, and Rye Neck became known as the best local team. That was until last year.

After a mediocre regular season in which the boys' team went 6-8, they gained momentum in the playoffs, capturing the Regional

Championships and losing in the State Final Four. The girls' team followed this effort with impressive wins of their own, particularly their defeat of Haldane in the Sectional Championships. Soccer was gaining popularity locally. Numbers for the recreational leagues, as well as the middle school and junior varsity teams, increased steadily. And with the unveiling of the new field scheduled for this season, Blind Brook was on its way back to soccer glory.

But because of the disappointing new field, Blind Brook soccer has received relatively little publicity, as the team has played one home game at Ridge Street and one at Blind Brook (all other games have been canceled or moved to the opposing team's field). Of course, this hasn't stopped the team from winning. On the contrary, the boys team is off to its best start in years, posting an impressive 5-1 record, 3-0 in league play. The team has a 25:7 goal differential, allowing no more than two goals in any games up to this point.

So in a slight variation to the field of dreams motto, I say, "If you had built it, they would have come." They being the fans, that may have come to watch, the newspapers, that may have come to see if Blind Brook could repeat what it did last year. But no, despite the fact that the team is off to a strong start, this year is being treated like any other. Therefore, I make one plea to the school. Please do whatever is possible so that the field is in better condition for the last few weeks of the boys' season and for the girls' season in the spring.

The Things We Can Control

By Craig Bergman, News Editor

Since the horrific tragedy of September 11, unsettling events have continued to unfold around us, creating an atmosphere of discomfort, agitation, and fear. Particularly as teenagers, we are affected by such pervasive feelings, because one of the aspects of the conflict most troubling to us is the sense that it is beyond our control, out of reach for us as high school students.

While we are struggling to learn to live with sadness and uncertainty, we should also not forget to focus on some dangers in our daily lives over which we may in fact have some control. During times of such national crisis, there is a tendency to become increasingly wrapped up in the drama of world events, but perhaps this must be balanced with devotion and eagerness to deal with the equally real problems of our own families and communities.

During the four-day stretch between October 4 and October 7, two Westchester high school students were involved in fatal automobile accidents. Such news hits very close to home because we are still recovering from the tragic death of Blind Brook student Michael Blank last December.

Recently, and certainly in retrospect at an appropriate time, the Blind Brook/Ridge Street PTA took the initiative to send a pamphlet entitled "Drive Smart Stay Safe, A Driving Guide for Teens and Their Parents," to the homes of hundreds of Blind Brook High School students. Included in the manual was a heartfelt and moving letter written by Mike's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Rick and Tina Blank, which implored us to "let [Mike's] memory give [us] the judgment to treat [our] privilege of driving with great care."

It is indeed very important for us, even in the midst of worldwide tension and conflict, to strive to ensure that Mike's

death not be in vain. We need to take to heart the words of the Blanks and recognize the overall message that those tragedies that can in fact be prevented, must be prevented. Admittedly it is not easy to set our minds to such endeavors with the deaths of so many innocent individuals still looming over everything we do, but here there is another fact to be taken into account. Over the next two years, it is highly probable, according to statistics compiled by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, that somewhere in the range of ten thousand American teenagers will be killed in automobile accidents, considerably more than are likely to lose their lives as the result of further terrorist action. So while it is certainly natural and necessary that we grieve over the losses of the World Trade Center attacks and while it is certainly understandable that our sense of national sanctity and security has been threatened, we must meet and embrace the fact that such occurrences are beyond our ability to control as teenagers. And rather than letting this notion drive us into fear and passivity, we must band together to take from Mike's death an important lesson and to thus do everything in our power to stop those deaths that we are able to stop from occurring.

We mustn't lose sight of fatal automobile accidents as a very imminent danger in our daily lives, but in contrast to the one that shattered our illusion of America as impenetrable and invulnerable, it is one that we, as individual high school students, can control. Just as the terrorist attacks aroused in us feelings of patriotism and national pride, we should allow the various car-related deaths of Westchester teenagers over the past year to arouse in us feelings of determination to prevent, protect, and save. Let's keep Mike, not only in our hearts, but also in our minds, as we drive safely and keep the rest of the year free from tragedy.

Editorials

“From Me to You”

By Francesca Pomara, Editor-in-Chief

*Yesterday, all my troubles seemed so far away
Now it looks as though they're here to stay
Oh, I believe in yesterday.*

I've been struggling to find the right words to express myself, and in my mind, if I let myself think about what has happened, I only hear music. Never in a time have I felt so isolated and confused as I do now; I've turned to music to fill the silence in my mind. This is strange for me because I've never listened to music that much, and now have found myself immersed in it as the days go by. I've turned to the Beatles. Working on homework, sitting in class, listening to lectures all seem so pointless at times, but music has helped me sort my emotions and get me back on track with my life. The melodies and lyrics are healing and meditative, giving me a background to think and listen to myself. I've only slowly started reading the newspaper—as strange as it sounds being in my position—but I hope that this little

newspaper can be my and the FOCUS staff's gift to you – a way to get your mind to look at the importance of your life and to slowly start to ease your way back to Blind Brook routines.

The United States has just bombed Afghanistan, and the truth is, I wish I didn't have this editorial to write. But should we shrink away? Let our minds go to waste? Not keep forcing ourselves to keep pushing ourselves to the limit? And just as Pandora's opened box points to human nature, so does our ability to hold on to hope and to keep moving forward. Change is inevitable and painful, yet we can be strong.

My inability to find any words for you is temporary—I promise. I offer you this newspaper as a way to get you focused on the world, on our lives here in Rye Brook, and on our strength to move on thoughtfully, holding on to the past and looking forward to the future.

*And when the night is cloudy,
There is still a light that shines on me,
Shine until tomorrow, let it be.*



Have Something to Say?

Write To FOCUS: Blind Brook High School's FOCUS
Blind Brook High School, King Street, Rye Brook, NY 10573
or drop in the FOCUS mailbox in main office.

Chili View

By Frank D'Angelo, Sports Editor

I'd like to take this opportunity to talk about something of immense importance to all of us. Something that, as maturing young adults, we face each and every day. Something that is essential to our general well-being—heck, our survival.

I'm talking about food.

With the recent tragic renovation of the Castle View Deli, our student body (and some of our faculty as well) has been left without what many have come to consider the highlight of their day: the Deli Run. Long gone are the “chicken-cutlet-provolone-bacon-lettuce-tomato-and-mayo-on-a-roll's.” Extinct is the “pasta fagioli,” the “meatball parm on a wedge,” and the ever popular “Cajun chicken,” in the Blind Brook vernacular.

Students have been forced to take full advantage of their free periods and span out to all corners of Rye Brook, Rye, Port Chester, Greenwich, and Purchase for a decent school-time meal. As of late, the Purchase Deli and Frank's Franks have opened their spheres of influence to the hungry Blind Brook masses. But let's be honest—these surrogates have paled in comparison to the comforting confines of Castle View. Although Castle View opened up just a few days ago, it has not yet regained its mainstream popularity. I have yet to see 20 Blind Brook students crowded on line, each expecting to complete their Deli Run in a meager 24 minutes. It gives me a warm feeling of nostalgia just remembering those days. Although I believe a return to that standard is viable, it will take a long time before we see it at hand.

Suffice to say, when the Deli does recover from its lunch-time furlough, we will all be happier inhabitants of our educational construction site. But while we wait in anticipation for the effects of the renovation to subside, let us turn our heads in another direction. Let us take advantage of the other opportunities that Westchester fast food has to offer. I can offer one suggestion; our famished student body should broaden its horizons.

We must not rely upon the afternoon Deli Run as our sole source of pleasure. There is another world entrenched in the darkness of the night. A world where the main road veers off to back parking lots and shady street corners. This world lies in a shadowy cranny of Port Chester. Amidst the hair salons, fortune-tellers, pubs, and bodegas of Main Street lies a hole-in-the-wall that has burned many a hole in peoples' stomachs. It is a place where preppies and thugs can come together and marvel at the majesty of Texan cuisine. I am referring to none other but Hubba's.

Formally designated Pat's Hubba Hubba, this magical little restaurant/burger bar/heart-attack house has gradually been winning the

favor of Blind Brook students. The fad originated with past senior classes. Recent alumni may argue that Hubba's has already reached the height of its popularity. Trips at 1:00 or 2:00 a.m. were the staples of weekends past for, particularly, last year's senior class. They have certainly left their mark. The evidence is on the ceiling.

One of the unique aspects of Hubba's is its decorum. While some may see it as a dirty, I see it as nostalgic, as historic. Adorning the ceiling and walls of Hubba's are dollar-bills, signed and tagged (defaced) by the regulars. Alumnus Michael Hofer has three fairly distinguishing dollar-bills to his name. I, myself, collaborated on a bill with Robert Frank and Rodrigo Carvalho. This makeshift wallpaper serves as a link to our past, and a nice little mid-meal diversion.

While Hubba's may be an anomaly to many of you, let me assure you that it certainly is not at our neighboring schools. Amongst my many visits, I have encountered students from high schools in Port Chester, Rye, Greenwich, and even Harrison and Rye Neck. But Hubba's does not only serve as a merging of towns, but as a merging of cultures as well. I once met a long-time Port Chester resident (his name escapes me) who emigrated from Poland decades ago, and became a local construction worker. We struck up a conversation when the early morning waiter mixed up our orders.

It's hard not to feel a connection to your fellow patrons at Hubba's, especially since the seats are so close together. The restaurant, essentially, is a one long counter extending from Main Street towards a back road, with about 10 to 20 stools stacked nearly upon one another. It is not uncommon to see people standing behind the stools, crowded against the wall, waiting for orders to go.

Truly, the decorum at Hubba's can be found at no other restaurant or fast food joint. But what may be most distinguishing about Hubba's is the food. Famous for its chili, Hubba's is not for the meek. While the piquancy of the chili varies from day to day, its quality is enduring. I can safely say that Hubba's has the best chili in North America...okay, in Westchester, but it's really yummy.

I will recommend the chili cheese dog, the chili cheeseburger, and the chili cheese fries. Feel free to modify your order as you wish. Include onions, lettuce, tomatoes, mayonnaise, ketchup, and mustard at your discretion. For those of you who find yourselves especially hungry upon arrival, they offer a double dose of burgers and hot dogs on wedges. Also available, but not as popular, are steak sandwiches, buffalo wings, and onion rings, among an array of Texan delights. Just don't order the fried clams.

Don't expect to get a menu at Hubba's, because the menu's on the wall. Each order is written neatly on a baby-blue paper plate affixed to the wall across from the counter—right next to the dollar bills. Beneath each dish, is a price, which, I may add, is indeed reasonable. A chili cheeseburger on a wedge and an order of chili cheese fries, enough to satisfy even the most hungry Trojan, costs a meager \$7.25.

But I am afraid I have said too much already about the wonder that is Hubba's. Call it whatever you like. Pat's. Hubba's. Or Hubba Hubba. Either way, it beckons. Hubba's is most extraordinary when one does not know what to expect. Late last school year I was led into the skinny, hallway of a restaurant without an expectation in the world. I simply followed the smell of fried food toward the front entrance, where a huge steel bucket of chili stood in the restaurant's widow, greeting me with a benevolent smile. Therein, I submitted. I admit, with a sense of pride and a simultaneous sense of shame, that I have become a

regular, and now, an advocate.

Open your hearts to Hubba's, Blind Brook. At Hubba's I once overheard a mother say to her adult child, “Thanks, baby. Every mother deserves a good meal every now and then.” As odd as that may sound in the given context, we too deserve a good meal every now and then.

Do not be discouraged by the transience of Castle View. Go to Hubba's and catch your own glimpse, your own view, of the bucket of chili. It is the only suggestion I can offer while we wait for the Deli to regain its strength in our hearts and hearths. I warn you though, don't try to go to Hubba's during school (unless you have a free surrounding lunch). Instead, satisfy your urge for a Deli Run with a Midnight Run. Satisfy your mid-day craving for a deli sandwich with a late-night childdog. Because Hubba's in the day is like Christmas without snow; it just doesn't feel right. So go now, rather tonight, or early tomorrow morning, and experience Hubba's for yourself.

Take a Midnight Run to the Chili View.

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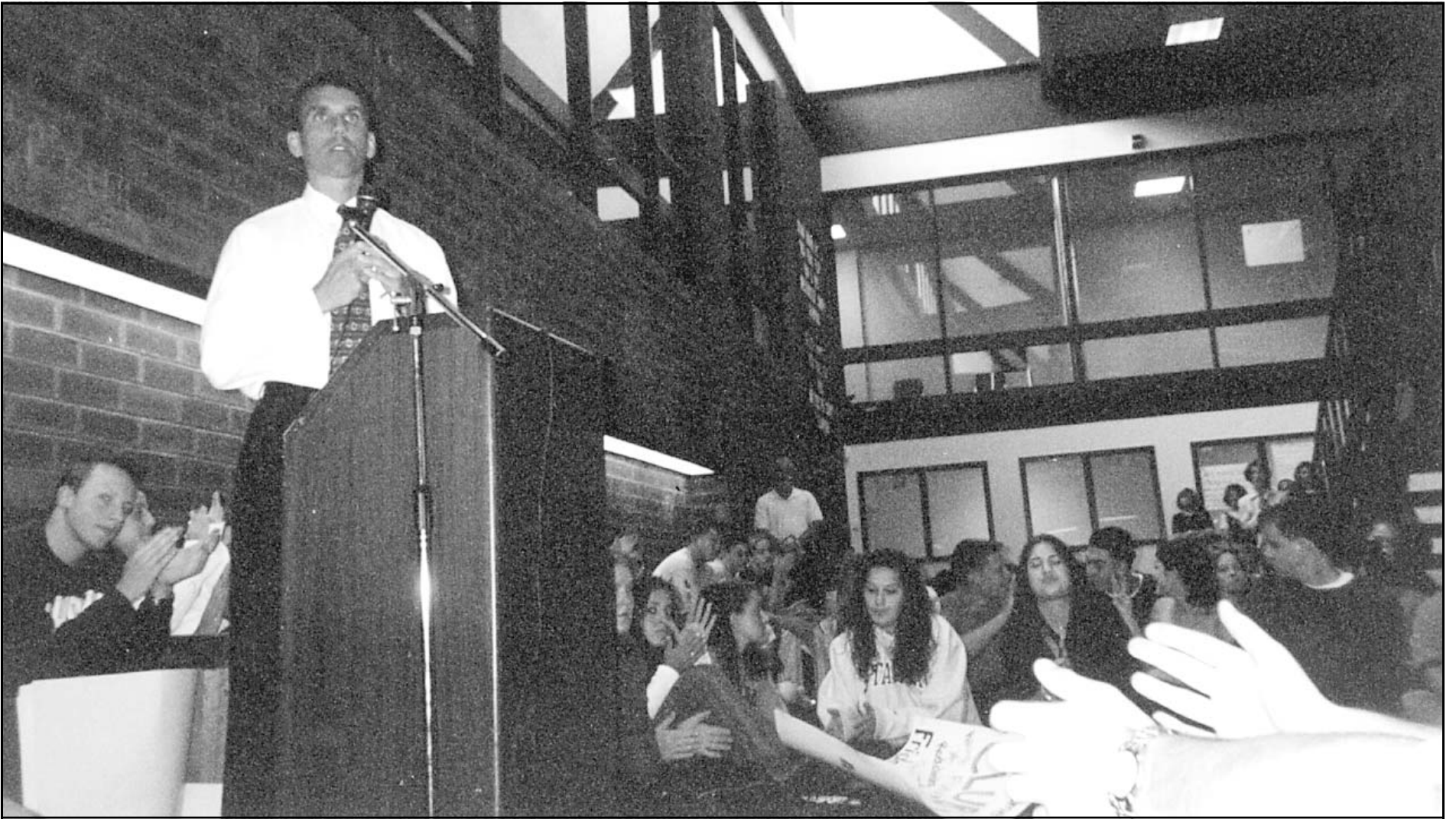
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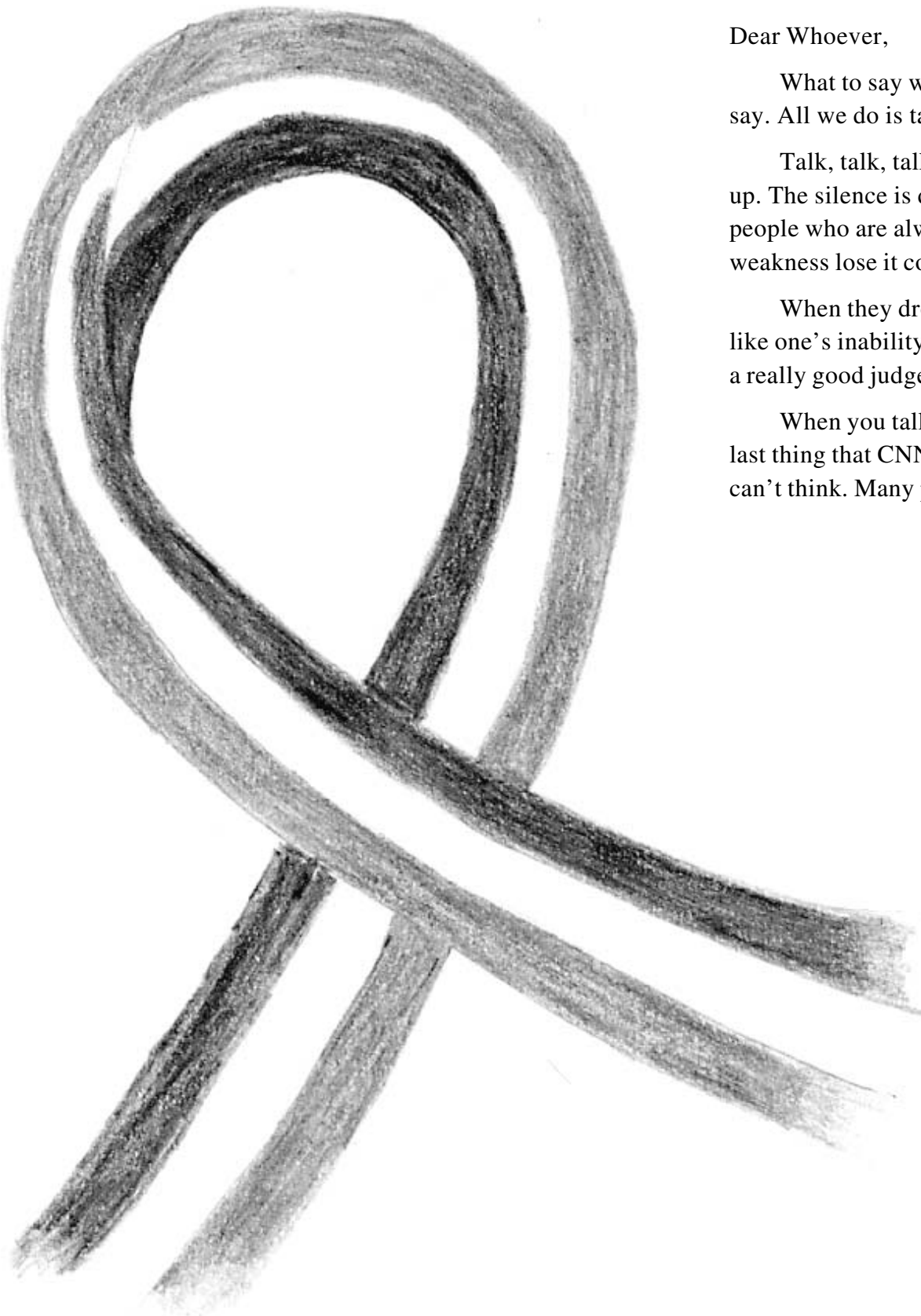
CARTOONISTS

Brett Konner (Cartoon Coordinator)
Jordan Lutsky



Principal Robert Chlebicki speaks to students about Blind Brook's success in coming together to help each other and those directly affected by the World Trade Center tragedy.

Photo by Francesca Pomara



Dear Whoever,

What to say when the unimaginable occurs? There is nothing to say. All we do is talk.

Talk, talk, talk and then something happens and for once we shut up. The silence is deafening. You know what is scariest? When the people who are always composed, always professional, never showing a weakness lose it completely right in front of you.

When they drop to the pavement and you can't stop staring at them, like one's inability to look away from a train wreck. This whole thing is a really good judge of character.

When you talk about it with people, and they just regurgitate the last thing that CNN has been shouting at you, then it's clear that they can't think. Many people can't think. You can only trust yourself.

Love
Me

By Craig Raphael

September 11, 2001

In the beginning of the day
We were shocked and horrified
A gaping maw of millions
Tears of glass, steel, and concrete
A dismayed world, eager to blame
And so soon began, the urge to save
From the terror that rained down upon New York
So many died and even more cried
Yet cannot believe what happened that day
Still, they try to save, while others pray
For those that died that day

By James Davidson