

FOCUS

A Blind Brook High School Student Publication

November 2005



Chemistry Teacher John Latino hands back one of his exams to junior Juliana Argentino. Photo by Emily Brackman

New Test-Return Policy Sparks Controversy

By Aaron Wirshba

Rarely has a school district policy change been surrounded by as much controversy as the new test-return policy passed at the end of last year and implemented for 2005-2006. The new policy requires that Blind Brook teachers return all quizzes, tests, projects, and papers (with the exception of midterms and finals) within a reasonable period of time.

The Board of Education's rationale for the new policy is to "...strengthen the home-school partnership," by allowing parents to understand their child's mistakes and to participate in corrective

action. It seems that many parents felt that they were being "left in the dark" as to how their child was performing until progress reports and report cards came in the mail, by which time it was often too late to help the student. The new policy allows parents to react more quickly since they are informed about each test result immediately throughout the marking period.

Those who remain opposed to the change, including some of Blind Brook's most seasoned and respected teachers, claim that the policy is misguided in that it is not in the best long-

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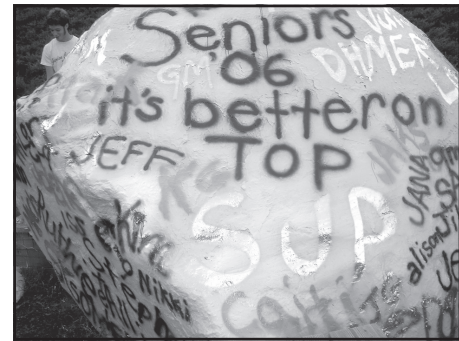
It's Better on... Where?

By Joey Goldstein

For two months, the slogan "It's better on top" was visible in bright blue across the seniors' infamous, bright yellow rock in the back of the school building. Unfortunately for the senior class and their tradition, this slogan was recently painted over.

At the end of the summer vacation, the same scheduling process for the rock painting that had been followed in previous years went smoothly. Two months later, in mid-October, however, complaints followed, and the Senior Class Officers were called in to talk to the Blind Brook administration.

According to Charlene Decker, the senior class advisor, parents from the middle school made formal complaints about the slogan, specifically regarding its sexual connotations, and there was some speculation that a title nine violation was present. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ronald Valenti and the Board of Education had to take action soon



The rock as it was originally painted about two months ago.

Photos by Jeff Wiener



The rock, although half-buried because of construction, has been censored, and its slogan has been painted over.

and gave the senior class two options: either repaint the rock in its entirety, or just cover up the words "on top." Decker and the class officers decided not to go through all the trouble of completely repainting it so, instead, the custodial staff just painted over the words "on top."

Decker feels that many slogans and sayings have double meanings and gave the example of Nike's "Just Do it." It is how people interpret the saying that makes them appropriate or not.

The senior class is upset about the altering of their tradition as well.

Senior Jillian Bennett summarized the senior sentiment, "It's frustrating because we have waited for this tradition for years and now that it's finally our turn, the tradition has been taken away. In my opinion, this never should have been an issue in the first place."

Eliot Scher Welcomed to BBHS

By Eric Taitz

After an extensive interviewing process, administrators finally found a new Social Studies teacher in Eliot Scher, who has come out of retirement to teach 3 sections of Advanced Placement Macroeconomics, 1 section of Advanced Placement Government and Politics, and 1 section of Economics at Blind Brook. Scher replaced Brian Kelleher, who abruptly resigned on September 28, citing personal reasons. During the interim, John Romanello filled in as a short-term substitute.

After meeting with Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ronald Valenti, Principal Anthony Baxter, and Social Studies Department Coordinator Judith Mella, Scher was determined to be the right man for the job. Scher said of the interview, jokingly, "I promised [Valenti, Baxter, and Mella] to be here until June."

Scher has extensive teaching experience at both the high school and college levels. He taught economics and politics at White Plains High School for 34 years and Ridgefield High School for 1 year. In addition,

Scher has taught part-time at Touro College and Pace University.

Although they have only known him a few short weeks, Blind Brook students



New Social Studies teacher Eliot Scher helping AP Macroeconomics student Jen Pasquale.

Photo by Amanda Park

have come to love Scher and his teaching style. Junior David Fries said, "I find his teaching methods effective. His boundless enthusiasm is the quintessential element that makes his class a great learning en-

vironment."

"Mr. Scher is an extremely demanding teacher, but when I signed up for this class [Advanced Placement Macroeconomics] I did not expect it to be easy. He really gets your best effort," echoed Junior Jonny Sonkin.

The story of Scher's journey to becoming a teacher is unusual. In the 1960s, during the pinnacle of fighting in the Vietnam War, Scher graduated from high school in the Bronx and went on to the City College of New York. Scher was uncertain about his career prospects, but he was certain that he did not want to go to Vietnam.

"Everything was upside down," said Scher of the war and his life in general at the time. So, instead of waiting around to get drafted, Scher found a legitimate way to stay home and avoid the draft. Scher discovered a law that exempted educators (people with at least undergraduate teaching degrees) from the draft and sought an education degree to take advantage of that exemption. The law, however, was revoked before Scher gradu-

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News Section

A Whole New Blind Brook

By Amy DeLynn

Blind Brook Middle/High School is currently undergoing the long-awaited construction that will drastically change the appearance of the school, both inside and out. A ceremony was held on the afternoon of November 7th on the school's baseball field to mark the "official" breaking of the grounds.

"When we place our shovels in the ground, we are dedicating each and every day to your successes," said Lawrence Engle, President of the Board of Education.

In the middle of October, preparation for the construction began when fences were set up around the fields and the school building. The construction should be finished by the time school begins in September of 2006.

The construction is not a quick process, and it will therefore be completed in several steps. The first item on the list, the renovation of the fields at Blind Brook, should be completed by the summer of 2006; however, the classrooms will not be ready until September

of 2006, in time for the commencement of the new school year.

Included in the plans is the erection of three new science classrooms as well as a general-purpose classroom. A special education room, resource room, and teachers' room are also going to be built, along with new lockers. There will also be a new cafeteria and a new kitchen for the 2006-2007 school year. Finally, a new fitness center is going to be built that will benefit all of the Blind Brook students, many of whom find it difficult to work out in the present facility due to the limited space.

To supplement the interior alterations, the outside building structure is also going to change. The sports fields on the side of Blind Brook are going to be redone; a new multi-purpose, artificial turf field will be built in place of the old fields. This field will be suitable for baseball, soccer, football, field hockey, and lacrosse. In addition, a community track with six lanes will be constructed.



The Board of Education members and Blind Brook Administrators grab their shovels to symbolize breaking ground for the new construction.



The construction and digging behind the Blind Brook school building has already commenced. Photos by Emily Brackman

The Middle/High School is not the only school benefiting from the new construction bond. Some construction is also going to take place at Ridge Street Elementary School, but the major part of the bond is going to be spent at Blind Brook because that is where student enrollment is skyrocketing. The current senior class consists of 80 students, while this year's incoming kindergarten is composed of 135 students.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ronald Valenti said, "When I started working at Blind Brook, there were only about 1,000 students, but now the number is supposed to grow to 1,700 students."

There is currently a construction committee composed of multiple constituencies throughout the Blind Brook community. Valenti said, "The Blind Brook High School and Middle School construction committee has regular meetings to monitor how the construction is going to affect both the students' and staff's safety." The construction committee wants to make sure that the construction benefits the school, but they also want to look out for the students and staff and make sure that the construction is not causing problems for them in the process.

The November 7th ceremony was well-

attended by school administrators, along with the Board of Education, physical education department, Athletic Director James Spano, Rye Brook Mayor Lawrence Rand, Rye Brook trustees, Rye Brook police officers, and a number of student and teacher representatives. At the ceremony, senior Dana Fleishaker played the viola and senior George Miata played the guitar and sang for everyone. In addition, junior Ian Dubrowsky, President of Congress, shared some of his ideas on the construction. Valenti and Engle also spoke about the construction and took time to thank some people who helped make the construction possible.

Valenti added, "There is a representative of every group at Blind Brook here. All of us together are the Blind Brook family."

Engle agreed, "We are all joining together to make these fields a reality." In their respective speeches, Valenti and Engle stressed the fact that these fields were being built for the student body.

Valenti said, "We support the students, this is for the students, and that is what we are here celebrating today."

At the end of the ceremony, all that was left to do was grab a shovel, put on hard hats, and start digging.

Activity Period at Maximum Capacity?

By Tal Ackerman

It seems that Blind Brook High School students barely have time to breathe after their ninth period classes due to the abundance of new clubs being offered.

In such a small school, the introduction of new clubs such as this year's Herpetology Club and World Language Club makes it especially difficult to make decisions as to how to maximize your activity period time while participating in the most interesting clubs. Since there are so few students per number of clubs, students often end up joining more than they can handle, which makes many Blind Brook students over-committed.

Along with the enjoyment of being in clubs and taking part in fun events like bake sales, being a member also includes responsibility and loyalty to the club.

"I think that many students feel they need to be in as many clubs as they can, when they should really only choose to be in the ones you are truly interested in," said Taylor Fuller, a freshman.

To get credit for a club, students must attend most or all meetings unless they have prior engagements. Many students feel overwhelmed because every day they have another club and another busy activity period. Being involved in many clubs also makes it hard for students to be very interested and involved in them.

"With regard to the overwhelming number of students that have committed

themselves to more clubs than there are activity periods, I feel that these students are spreading themselves too thin, only leading to an inability to give their full attention to each and every club they join," said junior Samantha Christal.

This situation is also frustrating to many students because if they need to go to a teacher for extra help, unless they go during a free period or their lunch period, they usually do not have time. Along with students, teachers are also affected by clubs for this reason as well.

Spanish teacher Mrs. Maggie Brennan-Juana, who is the faculty-advisor for both the Spanish Club and Human Relations Club, explained that teachers who are club advisors and run the clubs also feel over-committed and overwhelmed, just like students. She added that many students join clubs for the credit and sometimes do not even enjoy the club or its purpose, and that is frustrating for the presidents and advisors of the clubs.

Additionally, teachers' availability to offer extra help is extremely limited for their club duties often impair their flexibility in scheduling time to meet with students. Because there are so many clubs and each needs an advisor, the faculty is spread out amongst them as well. Juana summarized her sentiments saying, "I feel bad for not being as available for my students as I could be if I were not running a couple of clubs."

Senate Update

By Lee Arvoy

On October 29th, a semi-awake senior Jen Flaxman, President of Senate, welcomed Senate members during one of their bi-weekly Friday morning Senate meetings during which they discuss and share their ideas regarding school initiatives and events. After the introduction, she then opened up the floor to any comments from the Senators.

From there, the meeting took a turn to talk about committee updates.

Junior Greg Millar, who shared the success of the Hurricane Katrina concert with the group, led the first discussion. In all, the concert raised over \$1700, an admirable feat for such a small school.

The group then went on to decide which charity should receive the concert proceeds. No decision was made, but some ideas were given and are to be discussed at a later date.

The topic then changed to future fundraisers for the school. Ideas were discussed on items to sell at upcoming Varsity Basketball games to get students more into the school spirit.

The conversation then segued to the sensitive issue regarding the seemingly infamous rock painted annually by the senior class. A

dilemma has come up due to the imminent construction, which began just weeks ago. The rock in its current location has become an obstacle for construction workers and will have to be moved. Senators from every grade gave their opinions on where to relocate the relic of Blind Brook. A committee was formed which will discuss all the possible options for the new location.

Also, Senate was responsible for the very successful blood drive held on Thursday, October 27. It was announced at the meeting that the blood drive successfully obtained 30 pints of blood - roughly equal to thirty Poland Spring pint bottles. The drive took in 50% more blood than the one previously held in the spring of this year. After the discussion of how wonderful (yet slightly gory) the results were, it was announced that there would be another Senate-sponsored blood drive in the spring of 2006.

As the clock approached 7:35 (yes, that's A.M.), Flaxman proceeded to politely ask this reporter to leave the meeting. She then shut the door and made sure no one heard what the next topic of discussion was: the theme of the homecoming dance. Traditionally, the theme is kept secret until the day of the dance, and this year there will be no exception.

News Editor: Julie Ganz

News Section

BB Students' Pride Survey Results Reveal Frightening Statistics

By Jason Freyberg

Since 1998, Blind Brook has surveyed its middle school and high school students every three years on a variety of subjects

relating to the use and perception of drugs and alcohol. Terry Frank, Blind Brook Social Worker, administered the survey and put together a PowerPoint presentation summarizing the results of the survey, taken in English class, administered during the 2004-2005 school year. Frank believes the results generally have excellent reliability and validity due to the way the survey is administered.

The findings reveal that 87.5% of 12th graders, 81.9% of 11th graders, 73.2% of 10th graders and 65.1% of 9th graders have consumed alcohol within the past year. The averages for the Michigan Alcohol and Other Drug Survey 03-04, which Frank uses to compare Blind Brook's results to, are 64.9% for 10th graders and 77.4% for 12th graders (only 10th and 12th graders are used for this survey). In addition,

more than half of Blind Brook's 11th and 12th graders have smoked marijuana within the past year. Again, this is above the Michigan Survey average.

Of the students who drank beer or smoked marijuana within the past year, the greatest percent said they drank or smoked monthly. Only 2.5% of 12th graders drank beer or smoked marijuana daily. A much smaller percentage of students used cocaine in the past year - 3% of 9th and 10th graders, 7% of 11th graders and 10% of 12th graders said that they have used the drug. This compares with 7% of 10th graders and 9% of 12th graders in the Michigan Survey.

Unfortunately, students' perceptions of drug risk generally decrease as they get older. The survey shows that 43% of 9th graders see alcohol as risky while 37% of 12th graders see alcohol as risky. 78% of 9th graders view smoking marijuana as risky compared with 41% of 12th graders.

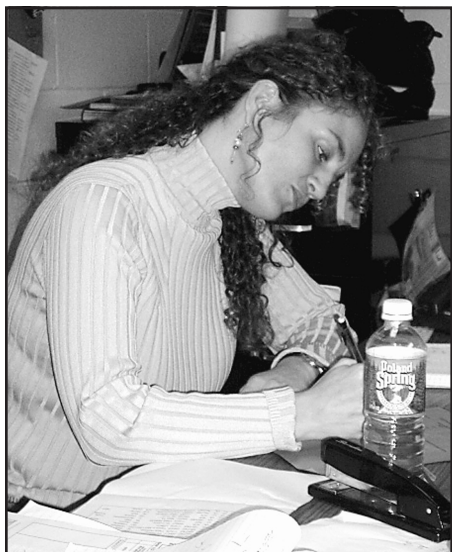
The percentage of students who are

concerned with parental disapproval for alcohol use is in the mid 80s for 9th through 11th graders, but drops down to 63% for 12th graders. For marijuana use, this number is in the low 90s for 9th through 11th graders and again drops down to 71% for 12th graders.

Approximately 30% of parents re-

sponded to the survey. These results indicate that the parents underestimate their child's usage of alcohol and narcotics.

The survey also addressed the "where" question. The majority of students say they consume alcohol at a friend's house. Also, most alcohol and marijuana usage occurs on weekends.



School Social Worker
Ms. Terry Frank hard at work.

Photo by Emily Brackman



New Crossing Guard Eleonora Budries helps middle school students after school on King Street.

Photo by Jaclyn Azia

Crossing Guards Added To Blind Brook Schools

By Adam Potter

Crossing guards have been placed at two of Rye Brook's busier intersections near the elementary and middle/high school in Rye Brook. The crossing guards are part of a program that went into effect as of Monday, October 17th.

One guard will be stationed at the intersection between King Street and North Ridge Street, and a second crossing guard will be located at exit 30 of the Hutchinson River Parkway. The guards have been stationed there to encourage students to walk to or from school, while giving a greater sense of safety to these students.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ronald Valenti said, "This is a major step forward [in terms of student safety]."

These crossing guards will be on duty from 7:15 a.m. until 8:30 a.m. and from 2:00 p.m. until 3:45 p.m. Initially, a police officer will act as the crossing guard at the dangerous intersection of King Street and North Ridge Street.

Valenti commented, "I think it's wise to begin with one police officer until people get used to it. Once it is institutionalized, hopefully they will have a crossing guard." The district is piloting this program this fall.

"A lot is going to hinge on student interest," said Valenti.

The police are keeping a tally of the students walking to and from school during the hours that the crossing guards are on duty. To date, few students are taking advantage of the crossing guards. If students do not show enough interest, the pilot is likely to be put on hold

during the cold winter months, and the village board and school district would revisit the issue in the spring.

Before beginning this pilot, a survey was sent out to 130 families with students who were eligible to walk to school along a route that went by the location of the crossing guards. Approximately 90 families responded, with just over 50 percent showing some interest. Prior to implementing this pilot, the village board heard Rye Brook resident Fran Miller tell of a near-fatal accident at the intersection of King Street and North Ridge Street on September 30th. Miller said the accident occurred when a car stopped short to avoid hitting her daughter and another boy walking home from school. Understandably, Miller expressed her concern saying, "If the car hadn't stopped, my daughter might have been injured. Anything you can do will help."

Miller further linked the need for crossing guards to the school district's decision to deny universal bussing. Indeed, an alternative solution to crossing guards may be to lower the restrictions for kids to be bused to and from school. Since the start of Valenti's term as Superintendent, he has increased the number of students eligible for bussing by reducing the mileage distance requirements. He says that bussing is the safest way to transport students to and from school, and it decreases traffic congestion.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, crossing guards were instituted in similar locations. Students, however, did not take advantage of the crossing guards and the crossing guards were removed.

Michael Dockwiler: A Man to be Remembered

By Ben Lubkin

Retired English and Psychology teacher Michael Dockwiler passed away on Friday, October 18th, 2005. Dockwiler, who arrived at Blind Brook in 1979 and retired at the end of 2002, was deemed one of the most kindhearted and compassionate members of the Blind Brook faculty. Dockwiler was a role model to many of his students, and he took pleasure in talking to them about their interests. He was also known to assist students who had learning issues and help them to better enjoy school.

Librarian Steven Jones, a colleague and friend of Dockwiler, described him for, "truly embracing people for who they were. [Dockwiler] found value in what they were, not what they weren't."

Math teacher Eda Klinger believes that Dockwiler "was a gentleman, somebody who cared about each and every student he taught...there is no question in my mind that Blind Brook is a better place because of him."

Dockwiler was the Political Action

Representative of the Teachers' Federation and fought for the fair treatment of the faculty at Blind Brook. He organized rallies and regularly attended conventions during his time in office.



Middle School Spanish teacher and President of the Teachers' Federation Trudi Davis, said, "He was always there, a person who you could lean on."

Math teacher Rita Schupp believes that "Mr. Dockwiler encouraged students to think for themselves, to be independent, and to realize what they could do for themselves."

Friends and family speculate that Dockwiler died from a ruptured aorta which led to a heart attack, a hereditary condition that also claimed the lives of his brother and mother. He leaves behind a brother and a father as well as several close friends. A memorial service will be held at 2:00 pm on Saturday, November 19, at the First Presbyterian Church of Yorktown. All members of the school district are welcome to attend. The Teachers' Federation will be holding an event in the spring in Dockwiler's honor.

Fight for Your Right... to Drive?

By Adam Fischer

Junior year in Blind Brook has become an ironic one, to say the least.

We overburden ourselves with APs and extracurriculars while struggling with an intense addiction to SAT psychosis. Whether our free time is spent in Driver's Ed. or at school for play practice, we somehow manage to keep ourselves academically afloat while saving what is left of our sanity.

We are always told that junior year is the "most important year" of our high school careers. Our third year along the path onto college is tirelessly portrayed as that pivotal steppingstone brimming with possibilities and opportunities.

But something does not make sense to me. If this year is truly one of such significance, why are we, the juniors, not treated with the respect that should accompany such an important stage of our lives?

Case in point: the junior off-campus policy (or lack thereof).

The exhausted issue has grown to be both a nuisance and a focal point for student discussion, especially amongst the anxious junior class. But to all of the freshmen and sophomores who remain indifferent, just remember that history repeats itself.

Last year's junior class fought the same battle that we are fighting now. An agreement was reached with the administration and, accordingly, an off-campus policy, which catered to their proposals and the school's demands, was enacted. Though the policy was contradictory to the Board of Education's adamant decision to prohibit any form of a junior off-campus policy (it allowed for juniors to go out for one period on what became two designated days per week), it was seen as a "test run." One false move by any junior and the policy would have been revoked as quickly as you could say "Castlevision."

We, as sophomores, were relieved and grateful knowing that the juniors had finalized a rational off-campus policy that would resonate and trickle down to junior classes to come. However, we were clearly mistaken.

Logic would have suggested that the decision, which had been the outcome of unflagging negotiations, would solidify itself as a Blind Brook policy. The compliant juniors, thankful for the privilege bestowed upon them, flawlessly followed the rules ordained by the policy.

But here we are, well into our junior year, and we are still being denied the opportunity that was ultimately given to last year's junior class.

I will be the first to admit that the title of my column is misleading; being able to drive off-campus let alone drive, in and of itself, is *not* a right. It is far from it. It is, however, a privilege. A privilege that we have unfairly, as juvenile as it sounds, been denied without ever having been given the chance to have it. A privilege that we have never proven our capability or incapability to deserve. A privilege, that for all I know, we may not deserve after all. Nevertheless, it is

unreasonable to prejudge the junior class without any reason to do so.

We do not deserve the "right" to drive. Rather, we deserve the right to be given the chance to prove ourselves fit or unfit.



Our four junior class officers had worked patiently in devising a reasonable proposal that would suit the Board's requirements. The pitch identically mirrored the one which so aptly worked last year.

The suggestion was that the junior class be allowed one day per week upon which students could go off-campus solely during a free period or lunch. Every single student's parent or guardian would be required to sign a form which either allowed or prohibited his/her child from going off-campus. The agreement stated that if one solitary student did not bring his or her signed form back to school, there would be absolutely no junior off-campus policy. The proposal also insisted upon the requirement that students sign in and out when going off-campus. If at any point a student neglected to sign or returned late to the following period, he or she would lose the privilege of going off-campus.

Several weeks into school, our class met and discussed the off-campus conundrum. We had unanimously signed a petition to be passed on to the administration and the Board. We agreed on our proposal's guidelines and completely understood their importance.

We were not asking for much; simply, we wanted to be treated with the maturity that we are relentlessly told we have the potential to possess. How are we supposed to learn this sense of responsibility and trustworthiness if we are never given the opportunity to exhibit it?

When I, along with the rest of the junior class, heard of the rejection of our proposal, I was confused and taken aback. Last year's junior off-campus policy had worked faultlessly. We could not understand why the administrative decision was so impulsive.

In essence, the reasoning behind the proposal's dismissal is that Board of Education's policy simply states that juniors are not allowed off-campus. Instinctively, my response to this explanation was, "Okay, but *why* is it that we are not allowed off campus?"

It truly is a vicious cycle; basically, we are not allowed off-campus because we are not allowed off-campus. That is how things have been in the past and that is how the school wants to keep things today. Nobody enjoys reinventing the wheel, so why bother?

Again, I cannot help but notice the irony. If anything, it seems to me that Blind Brook salivates at the mere mention of change. Our arms are open wide and impatiently await the arrival of opportunities to embrace change. We packed away our couches in the Commons and waved goodbye to our beloved Wednesday mid-day activity period. We revamped the now watered-down Senior "Service" Auction and unplugged the music which once greeted

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Annual Blood Drive is a Huge Success

By Matthew Goldwater

The Senate-run Blood Drive, which took place on October 27, proved to be a tremendous success. The blood, which was sent to White Plains Hospital, totaled 50% more than that collected from the previous blood drive, which took place last spring.

Thirty students donated blood, accumulating thirty pints' worth (for those of you who are unaware, this is equal to thirty Poland Spring water bottles). Jean McCloud, from White Plains Hospital, was responsible for setting up the Blood Drive and drawing the blood. Senate advisor Thomas Glickman said that another blood drive would take place in the spring before AP exams.

In order to donate blood, you had to be over 17 years of age and have a signed parental consent form. It was also preferred that the blood donor weigh more than one hundred pounds.

Blind Brook has hosted eight to ten blood drives in the past ten years. The blood drives had stopped at one point because students at the time did not need parental consent and parents were

angered that students donated blood without their approval. Now parental consent is required to donate blood.

Senior Stephanie Zverin, one of the thirty blood donors, said, "Physically, it was not the most enjoyable experience. After giving blood, I felt a bit dizzy, but that's the price you pay for helping others. Looking back on it, I am really happy I could help other people, and the small sacrifice was definitely worth it." Senior Ruthie Brown, who was unable to donate blood, remarked, "I was upset that I couldn't donate blood in school. It is one of those things that I think is such a good cause, and there's no reason not to. Unfortunately, I was not allowed to donate because I was recently too sick in the hospital. It was such a bummer."

Along with numerous other faculty members, Assistant Principal Jane Wermuth also donated blood. She said, "I am always delighted to give blood. It is an easy way that I can help and give to others in need." Wermuth added, "I will always give blood as long as I am healthy."

New Test-Return Policy Sparks Controversy

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term interest of the student or the course and is solely the result of pressure from the community.

Martine Curto, an Advanced Placement European History, Global History, and Law teacher, remains steadfastly opposed to the new policy. Her view is that releasing tests ultimately affects the quality of the assessment. She feels that because new tests must be created every year, "[the policy] compromises the integrity of all exams. I must now come up with a whole new bank of exams for each of my courses in order to maintain integrity," she said. "This will become increasingly difficult as there is a limited amount of quality questions available." In fact, when teaching a course like Law, which is given two times a year, or in the case of a course that has several sections, teachers will be required to make up at least two versions of every exam each year it is given. Curto's situation is also made increasingly difficult because there are so few released Advanced Placement questions.

Science teacher Maggie Lynch agreed, "I used to hand out review packets that had many exam-type questions on them so my students could practice and ask me questions. Now, I can't really do that because I'm going to have to change the exams every year and need to conserve my question bank."

Curto fears that old tests will circulate and, since questions will inevitably be re-used, students will not study as hard. She believes that "students will begin to rely on old exams instead of plain old studying."

Mark Greenwald, a middle school social studies teacher, agrees with Curto. He predicts that students will look at previous tests rather than study the material. Greenwald believes that students will ultimately be less prepared for state and AP exams.

Greenwald understands that parents should have access to tests, but he believes that "access to exams should always include the teaching professional to offer guidance to the students and parents."

Curto added, "I have always had student exams in personal folders available

for anyone who wanted to come in and use the exams as a learning tool. Most students looked at their grades and that was that. Hardly any students came in to look at their exams... the few who did were given the opportunity to really learn from the mistakes."

Greenwald is convinced that there could have been a better solution to the problem. He feels that teachers' concerns should have been given greater weight when the policy was formulated.

Assistant Principal Jane Wermuth has a slightly different opinion. She believes, "It is a well thought-out policy. It is the product of open discussions with various constituencies within the school."

Acknowledging the difficulty in creating multiple tests on the same topic, a new software program called Eduware was recently purchased by the district and introduced to teachers. This software has a test-generator with which many teachers are experimenting. While the intent is to alleviate some of the additional burden on the teachers, some feel the program is weak and that the questions are, as Greenwald said, "inadequate to keep Blind Brook students at the highest level of performance on state tests." He also believes that data analysis is not reliable if the assessment instrument varies too much from year to year.

"In order for me to best serve my students, I need valid data on their performance, in order to correct deficiencies from year to year," Greenwald explained.

Not all teachers, however, are against this policy. John Mills, the head of the mathematics department, said, "The math department has always returned exams, with the exception of midterms and finals. Personally, I think having access to my quizzes and tests benefits my Math 4 students when they prepare for the midterm and final exams."

It is possible that the new policy will accomplish the objectives of the board, but it is also possible that the plan will fail all constituencies—faculty, parents, and most importantly students. Only time and experience will tell.

News Editor: Julie Ganz

News Section

Shelly Jacobson Speaks At Washington D.C. Conference

By Scott Statman

Blind Brook High School American history teacher Shelly Jacobson attended a Cold War conference at George Washington University in Washington D.C., which was held to celebrate the launching of a website that Jacobson helped create called "www.coldwarfiles.org." Funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and created by the Cold War International History Project (CWIHP), this website makes recently declassified Cold War documents available to students, high school and college alike.

Jacobson was invited down to the November 4-6 conference because of the work she did with historians during the summers of 2002 and 2003 at the National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute, which included researching declassified documents and developing methods to use them in the classroom. Her summer experience was a thrilling

learning opportunity that revolutionized her teaching methods.

Jacobson said, "My work in Washington was so exciting because I was able to interact with real historians. I learned about this new Cold War research and how I could use these documents to teach in the classroom."

In fact, Jacobson has gained valuable primary documents from this experience that she uses to teach the Cold War to her American history classes. One such document, the famous Novikov Telegram, was recently released from the archives of the Soviet Union.

Jacobson, along with other high school and college teachers, presented in D.C. to prove the project's success to NEH officials. According to Jacobson, "I was invited to present how I teach the Cold War, how my teaching has changed from my summer experience, and how I would use the website in the classroom."



American history teacher Mrs. Shelly Jacobson displaying the website she helped to create. Photo by Emily Brackman

Congress and Senate Eat Breakfast with the Board

By Steve Frazer

Blind Brook Senate and Congress met with the Board of Education and several teachers and parents on Friday, November 4th to discuss the hot-button issues surfacing in the high school. The issues of the junior off-campus policy, current Advanced Placement courses, questions about construction, and the never-ending "Senior Rock" saga were all addressed.

All issues were discussed in several small groups, each of which was designated its own Board of Education representative to whom students and faculty could voice their concerns.

First on the agenda was the pending right of juniors to leave campus. The junior class has presented the board with a signed petition from everyone in the grade asking for the same privileges the current seniors had received, which included the ability to leave campus one period per school day, several days a week.

"We never proved we didn't deserve this," said junior Karlyn Adler.

"The Board can only put into play policies we can enforce," responded Board of Education President Lawrence Engle. Engle also made reference to a rather "disappointing" letter written by the junior class proposing they receive such privileges. Engle remarked that the letter made reference to possible reasons for leaving the campus as "forgetting homework in The Arbors." Citing such a reason as insignificant, he called for a better means of voicing their requests.

Fellow Board of Education Member Monroe Haas recited a multitude of questions that prevent the juniors from receiving such a privilege. He had concerns regarding release forms and

proper legal precautions that are necessary before they can allow students to drive themselves and other students during school hours.

Advanced Placement courses were next on the list to discuss as several people voiced their concerns that APs seemed to be taking over the curriculum at Blind Brook.

Engle responded that he "would like to see more electives because kids are forced into APs they really aren't fit for."

A Blind Brook parent, who felt that students have been "taking nonsense stuff in 9th and 10th grade," raised another concern regarding the inclusion of electives in the course offerings. "This really isn't how it should be," she explained.

Yet, Blind Brook is not the only school bombarded with this issue. All of these concerns have led the College Board, the creator of the AP curriculum, to reevaluate its courses, gearing them more toward rigorous work and less toward being appealing on students' resumes.

Another concern was the issue of AP exams and whether or not seniors' exam results truly reflect their knowledge of the subject or if they are a better measurement of the students' effort (or lack thereof).

Senior Congress member John Magliano commented on the reported senior apathy felt toward the AP exam score. "I haven't felt it yet," he said, in reference to the lack of determination. "People still take the exam seriously because you can place out of class in college."

Construction seemed to be a minor issue on the students' minds. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ronald Valenti

quickly addressed any questions. "There hasn't been anything cut [from being accomplished] yet. We *are*, however, reevaluating some of our goals." These goals deal mostly with the gymnasiums, specifically the possibility of scrapping the plans for a new high school gym roof and Ridge Street gym roof.

The final issue for discussion was so anticipated that it prompted the Board Members to meet beforehand and conclude that it was to be brought up at a later time. This was not the case.

The senior class had been told that their slogan, "It's Better on Top," had to be removed from the rock, which is traditionally painted at the beginning of senior year and is currently located in the back of the building. Valenti cited a Title 9 complaint from a middle school parent that the rock was offensive to the students.

Board of Education Member Caren Furst revealed that she felt the issue has "nothing to do with Title 9." It does, however, in her opinion deal with "professionalism."

"As a business woman," she declared, "that is just something that is inappropriate."

A complaint was raised in another group that there are more offensive things said around school grounds and between students than what was painted on the rock. Engle responded to this by saying, "We can't control other environments, but we can control this one."

With the morning supposedly dedicated to proactive discussion, many feel as if not much actually got accomplished.

One anonymous student said, "If they [Board Members] spent half the time listening as they did talking, a lot more could get done."

Fight for Your Right... to Drive?

Continued from page 4

us every morning. Now, in the midst of Blind Brook's baby boom, we are expanding once again and constructing new fields to play on. Our once-simple school is evolving faster than ever and truly learning how to keep up with the Joneses.

If I gained one sliver of insight from the off-campus debacle, it is that the issue is a revolving door of conflict. The problem had arisen last year and did so once again this year. What should lead us to assume that it will not resurface next year?

The last thing I intend to do by writing this column is point fingers; however, somewhere in the school, some organization needs to take a stand. The Congress represents all of Blind Brook's constituencies and accordingly should be the proper venue to discuss issues such as the junior off-campus policy. If the juniors are looking to be heard on this issue, we must work alongside Congress. From what I have heard, fortunately, Congress has spent much time debating the subject.

The junior off-campus policy should not be a year-to-year discussion. It should not have to be deliberated for months at a time before a compromise, or refusal, can be reached. I am not sure if there is any possibility, even the slightest chance, that we will accomplish our goal and regain an off-campus policy. Nonetheless, I think that the issue must be objectively discussed and permanently decided upon.

The power to drive is one of the hallmarks of junior year. While teens can be the "most dangerous" drivers on the roads, they can be the safest at the same time. We understand the outcomes that can result from our decisions. We know that the privilege of driving is a risky one. But if being able to drive off-campus is not a true gauge of our capacity to be trusted and respected, I do not know what is.

My intentions are not to bad-mouth the hand that rocks the cradle. However, I think that we need to reconsider our actions and realize the implications they may have for the future of Blind Brook.

Eliot Scher Welcomed to BBHS

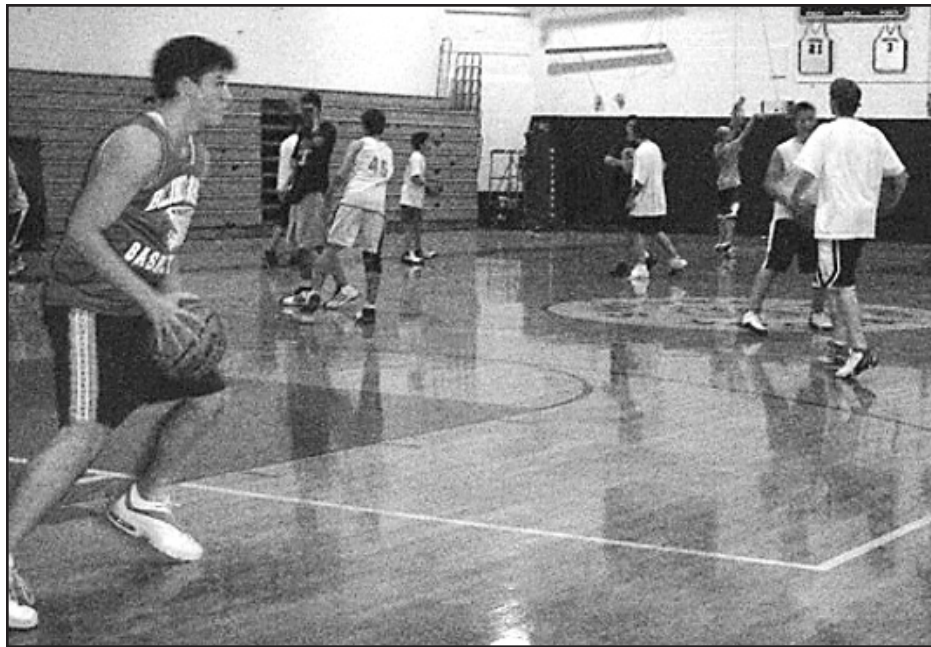
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ated, and he was drafted as a member of the United States Army. Eventually, Scher was excused from military service because of an asthma condition. He went on to become a teacher anyway and found it to be a rewarding career. Scher explained, "I didn't plan it. The profession found me."

Scher has thoroughly enjoyed educating students for over 35 years, and he is looking forward to a great year at Blind Brook High School. "These are the most intelligent kids I have ever had in my life," said Scher of his new students. "I have been treated beautifully by both students and faculty members," he added.

Sports

Sports Editor: Jared Hoffman



Junior Ross Burack practices a lay-up at a pre-season basketball clinic with Coach Ward. Photos by Emily Brackman

Preseason Watch: Trojan Basketball

By Matt Adler

A successful basketball program is something that Blind Brook has prided itself on for many years. From the way preseason has begun, the 2005-2006 season appears to be no exception to the winning tradition.

Boys

After a disappointing loss early in sectionals last year, the Boys' Varsity Basketball team seeks to reestablish themselves as a playoff presence. Even though the team lost three of their most potent scor-

Weissman. "I feel very comfortable with all of the seniors who played last year, and I feel that the fact that we are all close friends makes our chemistry work even better. We all have the ability to know what the others are thinking on the court."

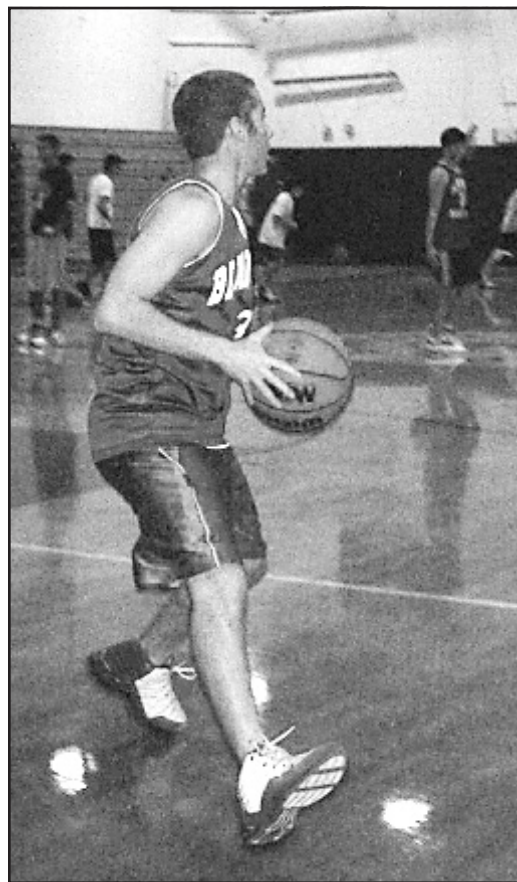
Besides losing talented seniors last year, the Trojans also lost seasoned coach Greg DePaoli. A member on both the 2001-2002 and 2003-2004 state championship teams, DePaoli was an invaluable asset to the Trojans. To fill the void left by DePaoli, Blind Brook promoted the JV Boys' head coach Mike Welsh to Varsity (see: "A New Coach in Town"). Welsh served as an assistant to DePaoli and is familiar with Blind Brook's style of play. "This will be my third year playing for him, and I am looking forward to it because he gets along with the players really well and already knows who everyone is and how they play. There won't be a transition period," explained Levine.

The Trojans hope to do what Blind Brook has been capable of in past seasons -- bring home a state championship. "We have a goal in mind and we don't plan on coming up short," declared Levine.

Girls

The Varsity Girls' Basketball team, headed by returning coach Manny Martinez, is hungry for a state championship after losing early in the playoffs last year. The girls also face a huge blow as a result of departing seniors; Blair Fisher and Allison Caley were an integral part to the Girls' team. Additionally, Yasmine Harik, Blind Brook's all-time leading scorer and Varsity staple since she was in eighth grade, also graduated.

Nonetheless, senior captains Ruthie Brown and Steph Zverin, in addition to three "rotating captains" senior Jen Flaxman and juniors Sabrina Stockel and Karlyn Adler, still feel that they have what it takes to win big this year. "I'm very excited for my last season because everyone has doubted our ability to perform without Yasmine," said Brown. "I can't wait to prove them wrong. This is going to be the first time we are really team-oriented and each player can step up and contribute. If we continue to work hard and stay motivated, we have the potential to go all the way."



Junior Steven Berman dribbling down the court.

ers, Stevie Gross, J.P. Zendman, and Jared Anderson, all of whom graduated last year, senior captains Ben Levine, Evan Alper, and Victor Paterno have taken over the reins. "Although it may not look like it on paper, we bring back a lot of experience," stated Levine.

The team chemistry seems to be a valued asset this year; the players are all good friends and have plenty of experience playing with each other. "Most of us have been playing together since we were very young," explained returning senior Alex

Trojans' Soccer Ends In Heartbreaking Shootout

By FOCUS staff

In their second game of sectionals, the Blind Brook Trojans squared off against the Dobbs Ferry Eagles, the Trojans' perennial arch-nemesis. Stakes were high in this contest -- a win would secure a match against the Keio Unicorns and a loss would end a team's season. Over the course of the season, B.B. barely defeated the Eagles in the two games the teams played against each other by scores of 2-1 and 1-0 -- clearly, this game had drama written all over it.

The Blind Brook bleachers and sidelines were filled with supportive fans -- parents, teachers, and friends were all on hand to provide the Trojans with moral support. What a game they would witness!

The Eagles opened the game in the first half with an early goal, news of which traveled around the school quickly as students were made aware of their team's early deficit. Eagerness filled the halls of B.B. as students and teachers awaited the ninth period bell, signifying their time to watch the game. By the time the final bell rang at 2:17, senior co-captain Ben Levine had already tied the game, assisted by freshman Scott Kaufman who was called up to the JV level for sectionals.

The Trojans suffered a terrible blow early in the second half. When senior Josh Grossman, the anchor of B.B.'s defense, and a Dobbs Ferry player kicked the ball at the same time, Grossman's shin suffered the impact; his resulting yelp of pain sent chills down the spines of the players and spectators. As he tried to get up from the ground, he lifted his upper body but collapsed when his legs provided him no support. As coaches,

the refs, and Grossman's parents surrounded the fallen player, B.B. knew they would have to continue the game without one of their best defenders. The Fire Department and Ambulance rushed to the B.B. soccer field to escort Grossman to Greenwich Hospital where he was diagnosed with a broken shin. As the fans cheered for Grossman in honor of his valiant efforts as he exited the field, he acknowledged them with a peace sign and a smile to thank them for their support.

The game would go on but B.B. glaringly suffered. Unable to clear the ball from their own goal, the Trojans spent most of the game on the defensive and could muster nothing on offense. The second half would end tied, and the two teams prepared for sudden death overtime. If two fifteen-minute sudden death overtimes declared no winner, then a shootout would be enacted.

With fatigue now heavily settling in on both teams in the overtime periods, it was inevitable that both fifteen-minute overtimes would go scoreless. Offensive aggressiveness and defensive intensity both declined as the shootout drew closer and closer.

When the whistle blew signifying the end of the second overtime, a new energy was instilled in the players and fans. The referee called the captains, goalies, and coaches from both teams to midfield to discuss the technicalities of the shootout; fans were informed that the team that scored the most goals out of five shots would win the game. For any reader unaware, soccer shootouts are one of the most intense events that can take place in sports. Momentum sides with

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Running Their Way Into B.B. History

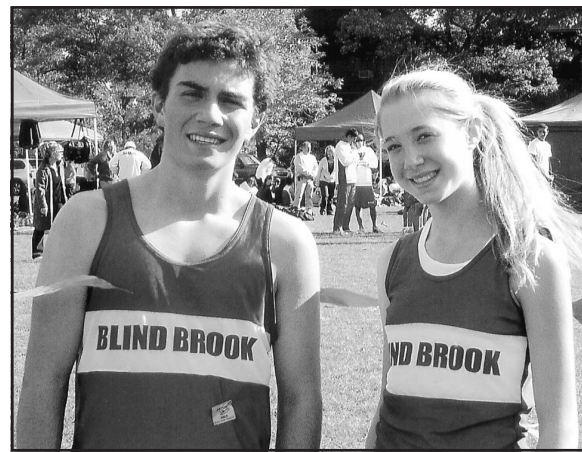
By Lisa Ganz

After constant hard work and dedication to the Blind Brook Cross Country Program, senior Jonathan Tenzapf and sophomore Andrea Green qualified for the New York State Intersectional Cross Country Meet. By performing exceptionally well at sectionals, the two athletes secured their right to compete in the State championship.

Over the course of the year, Keio Academy had the best Boys' Cross Country team; Haldane had the best Girls' team. Both of these teams took their school to the State Championship in addition to five other players county-wide who had competed well during the course of the season to represent all of Class D; Tenzapf and Green were among the five players chosen county-wide. Global history teacher and Cross Country head coach Judith Mella said, "John and Andrea's discipline and willingness to work hard really paid off."

Tenzapf was the first boy in

Blind Brook history to reach the State Championship. "I'm just really pumped and excited to be able to experience States; it's a once in a



Senior Jon Tenzapf and junior Andrea Green at a cross country competition.

lifetime thing, especially because I'm a senior. I'm really glad that all our training paid off."

Although Tenzapf and Green did not place as well as they hoped to in the State Championship, their accomplishments are still awe-inspiring and impressive. Continued Tenzapf, "Andrea and I definitely gave it our all for Blind Brook."

"I'm very proud of both of them. I think this epitomizes hard work and dedication to the sport," said Mella.

Sports Editor: Jared Hoffman

Sports Section

Step Team Launched at Blind Brook

By Nicole Haber

Step Team is the newest dance organization to be added to Blind Brook's athletic department. The establishment and development of this team was a dream of its founders, juniors Ashley Forbes and Danielle Willig; this year, that dream has become a reality.

When the two ambitious juniors discovered that 7th grade English teacher Cher Treacy was in a sorority at college that boasted a Step Team, Forbes and Willig realized that starting their own Step Team at Blind Brook was a strong possibility.

This new form of dance is a mix of two already established Blind Brook teams: cheerleading and dance. Forbes explained Step Team as, "Mixing rhythm and beats while using your feet and clapping and dancing."

Added junior Dana Berman, "Step Team is a different genre of dancing than most people would think of. There's a

feeling of energy and liveliness in Step Team that can't be explained."

The team will perform at different events throughout the school year including pep rallies, Homecoming, Varsity basketball games, and potentially Midnight Madness -- if they're prepared by then. The team has yet to hold any form of tryout or audition, but the popularity of the Step Team can be measured in different venues; the sign-up sheet alone overflowed with students eager to take part in the new team.

Senior Hilary Mosner is optimistic about the team, stating, "I think it'll be fun but a ton of work. I'm excited about all of the new clubs and teams popping up in Blind Brook because it gives the students an opportunity to explore."

Whether the Step Team will be successful has yet to be determined, but one thing is for sure—they certainly are making noise throughout the halls of Blind Brook.

Everybody Dance Now

By Amanda Gottlieb

With the beginning of the basketball season just around the corner, the dance team is back in action. This year, the dance team is guaranteed to perform at half-time at all of Blind Brook's basketball games even though last year they had to split the time with the cheerleading team.

The team contains a core of leadership comprised of senior captain Kerri Dunigan and junior captain Danielle Fortino; head coach, physical education and health teacher Christine Keegan; and choreographer Dana Giordino.

The team accepted three new dancers this year including sophomore Alex Bombace and freshmen Marissa Fortino and Kristina DiMaggio. Three alternates, sophomore Alyssa Futterman and fresh-

men Mariana Barreto and Becca Sweetbaum, were also added to the team in case one of the ten members is unable to perform. All the members will be responsible for going to every practice, learning all the routines, and helping out in any other way they can. "The alternates are a new addition to the team this year and they are going to be extremely helpful," explains Dunigan. "In past years if not everyone could attend one of our performances the whole dance was thrown off. It's a lot better to have a full team in order to put on a good show."

"I am extremely confident in the girls that we picked for this year's team. I can already tell that they have a lot of potential and I am excited for a great season," comments Keegan.



The 2003 WJBL Champions

Menorahs, Dreidels, Matzoh Balls... and Basketball?

By Ross Burack

"Time out!" hollers Community Synagogue and Kneses Tifereth Israel head coach Mark Rosenberg to the referee. This is the 2003-2004 Westchester Jewish Basketball League, or WJBL, Championship game at its climax. "Bring it in boys. You guys aren't hustling, we need to run the fast break and play more physical on defense," explains Rosenberg. Perspiration saturates the players' jerseys; fatigue begins settling in. "The fourth quarter is our time. L'Chaim on three. One, two, three, L'CHAIM!" The huddle disperses and the players go back onto the court to play. The CS-KTI "Blue" team, referring to the blue jerseys they don, would go on to win the game and the championship.

The WJBL is a league of utmost intensity for Jewish boys desiring a league to play basketball in. Nine of Blind Brook's current juniors comprise the CS-KTI Blue team, including Jesse Sedler, Steven Berman, Jared Hoffman, Eric Taitz, Ross Burack, Matt Held, David Fries, Greg Goldstein and Jacob Mikva. Mark Rosenberg, Mikva's father, has coached the team for both years the squad has participated.

This is not the first CS-KTI or WJBL team to be made up of Blind Brook students. The B.B. Senior class of 2005 was the first team to begin a CS-KTI team; they were the CS-KTI Black team. B.B. alumni featured on this team included Eric Strauss, Elliot Rifkin, Kyle Wirshba, Kory Zverin, Ben Solarz, Brett Weisblum, and Justin Gottlieb.

Wirshba, also known as "Bifocal Man" by his teammates for the protective eyewear

he wore during games, commented, "The WJBL is a great way to enhance friendships, hone the intricate skills of the game of basketball, and also a way to give something back to your religion. We're glad we could start something in Blind Brook that has had such an overwhelmingly positive outcome."

One rule of the league mandates that players participating on a high school's Varsity basketball team may not participate in the WJBL; therefore, CS-KTI Blue will have to play without at least two of their players this season. Their hustle, dedication, skill, and leadership over the last few years will be sorely missed. CS-KTI Blue is currently in the process of recruiting new players from either the Community Synagogue or Kneses Tifereth Israel Temple to join the team.

In addition, there are younger CS-KTI teams that have come into athletic maturity. Both Taitz and Berman have younger brothers on this team, Alec and Brian, respectively. Both young players look forward to taking over the winning tradition of CS-KTI when their older brothers graduate.

While CS-KTI Blue did manage to win a championship in their first year, their second year proved disappointing. CS-KTI Blue suffered an early round defeat at the hands of Temple Beth-El located in New Rochelle. Taitz remains optimistic for the upcoming season, stating, "Even though we had a tough year, we all gained valuable experience. Maybe this year we'll be able to bring the Westchester Jewish Basketball League Title home again."

L'Chaim.

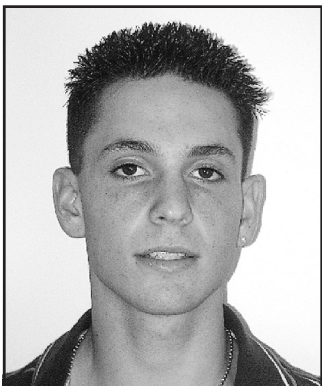
SPORTECH ATHLETE OF THE MONTH

Josh Grossman

By Greg Millar

With a 12-5-1 record, Blind Brook's soccer team earned the number nine seed in New York State Class C and the number two seed in their respective league as a result of their aggressive defensive prowess and consistent hustle. The successful season can be largely attributed to senior defenseman Josh Grossman. Last year, Grossman played on the school's football team; his athletic conversion to soccer has been invaluable to the Trojans' team this year. Grossman provided crucial defense in every game, often clearing the ball from his team's territory in order to give the offense more time to score.

Grossman also flashed signs of offensive talent throughout the season, accumulating two goals and five assists. One of these goals came during Sectional quarterfinal against Tuckahoe, a game the Trojans would



go on to win. The second half of the subsequent semifinals game against Dobbs Ferry proved tragic for the Trojan defense when Grossman suffered a broken shin, disabling him for the rest

of the game. Grossman's absence was noticeable because the Trojans spent most of the game defending their goal instead of attacking their opponents; they would end up losing that game in a heartrending shootout. Senior co-captain Ben Levine explained, "Part of the reason we lost that game was the absence of Josh in the second half. He was an important leader of our defense and our team as a whole."

Furthermore, Grossman's injury will cause him to miss all of this year's basketball season. The entire school and community wishes Grossman a speedy and full recovery. Grossman looks forward to returning to athletic activity in the spring so he can be the baseball team's starting pitcher.

Sports Challenge

Questions compiled by Mike Tramontelli

- Who was the first Chinese player to play in an NBA game?
- What player won All-Star Game MVP, NBA MVP, and NBA Finals MVP awards in 2000?
- What team won 3 Super Bowls in the 1990s?
- Where was the first NASCAR race held?
- How many members are there in a NASCAR pit crew?
- Who did John McEnroe defeat in the final to win his first Wimbledon singles title?
- What Monday Night Football announcer was known as "The Mouth"?

Answers:

1. Wang Zhi-Zhi
2. Shaquille O'Neal
3. Dallas Cowboys
4. Charlotte Speedway
5. 7
6. Bjorn Borg
7. Howard Cosell

A Field of Opportunity

By Benjamin Engle

Over the past few weeks, Blind Brook's campus has undergone a massive transformation. Gone are the grass and the school's tranquil atmosphere; our school now resembles a fenced-in trailer park and is constantly bombarded with loud and offensive noises. Besides the new classrooms and offices that are being built as a part of the construction plan, new artificial turf fields and a six-lane track are also being built. These new and much improved fields are projected to be able to accommodate more practices and games than the current thirty-year-old fields.

With more fields at Blind Brook, can Blind Brook field more teams?

Over the past few years, Blind Brook has added a gymnastics team, wrestling team, and an ice hockey team to their repertoire. All of these sports are played indoors and during the winter season, however. With more outdoor fields and venues to play on, it is time for Blind Brook to consider additional sports for the fall and spring seasons, such as field hockey and lacrosse.

Finding local teams to play against will not be a problem for Blind Brook. Rye and Harrison, along with at least forty other schools in the area, have field hockey and lacrosse teams. While these aforementioned teams are from much bigger schools than Blind Brook, there is no reason why we shouldn't give student athletes more choices of sports if there is an interest base large enough.

More teams translate to more opportunities to play a sport. Even though Blind Brook is a small school, there are still many students who either: A) Make the team but don't get a chance to play and "warm the bench"; B) Get cut and "warm the couch"; or C) Have no interest in the sports currently offered. For these students who are athletically alienated from Blind Brook's current sports' program, new teams are the solution to get these students involved.

Additionally, coaches are now taking more athletes on a team than they have in the past. The athletic department wants students to be active and live healthy lives, so being "alternates" (see also: *scrubs*) on the bench will at least give these people the chance to practice with the team. One can only imagine how boring and demoralizing sitting on the bench waiting to get in the game can be.

Having the opportunity to participate in a school sport is both physically and mentally advantageous. Physically, you are not sitting at your computer

staring at the screen or blindly playing PS2; rather, you are running around, getting in shape, learning new skills and developing sportsmanship. Mentally, student athletes are able to feel



good about competing for their school and are uplifted when they hear fans cheer. These fans will have a new energy for the school's new teams. During the fall, football, soccer, and volleyball consistently brought out huge crowds; adding lacrosse and field hockey can only increase the

spirit and camaraderie of our already tightly knit community.

Similar to the football conundrum four years ago, several technicalities must still be worked out. Will there be enough players to field such teams? How much will a new team cost? Is there room in our school's budget for uniforms, equipment, a coach's salary, and transportation? Should we use that money for Mock Trial instead?

Student athletes need to bring the issue to the forefront in order to answer these questions. The upcoming months should be the best time for discussion of new sports at Blind Brook. While the fields might not be done by the spring, now is the time to get your voice heard and to secure money in the budget for these teams to come to fruition for next year.

When I asked Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ronald Valenti if new sports teams at Blind Brook were a possibility, he quickly said yes and also mentioned another important part in the fields' equation. As a result of an agreement between the school district and the village of Rye Brook, Blind Brook will have priority to use the fields at the adjacent fields being built by the village as part of the Legacy Project; while one team is playing on the Blind Brook fields, another can be on the village fields.

In a community where the population is predicted only to increase, the construction project was the best solution. While the main goal of the construction project was to be able to accommodate more students in more classrooms, we have the opportunity to accommodate more students on the playing fields as well. Let us use our new fields as best we can. Get out there and read about lacrosse or field hockey, talk to other students who have played these sports before. *Why not?* These new sports are feasible to incorporate into our program and will only allow for more students to actually play a sport. Let's get off the bench and bring new sports to Blind Brook's new fields.

A New Coach In Town

By Jon Gold

When Blind Brook's Athletic Director Jim Spano received word of the Boys' Varsity head coach Greg DePaoli's retirement from Blind Brook, he immediately knew the right man to fill the void. Spano and DePaoli summarily agreed upon JV Boys' head coach Mike Welsh to replace DePaoli.

Welsh started at Blind Brook seven years ago as modified basketball's head coach. Since then, he has advanced through the ranks of the freshmen's head coach to JV, and now in his eighth year with Blind Brook, the coveted Varsity spot. Welsh does have experience with the Varsity team, however; Welsh sat on the bench next to DePaoli as an assistant for the majority of the Varsity team's games.

Furthermore, all of the current Varsity players have participated on Welsh's JV team. Said Welsh, "The success I have here at Blind Brook will help me. I am familiar with the program and the kids." Echoed Spano, "By knowing each player's indi-

vidual roles and knowing what they can and can't do, Welsh's past experience with the boys will be invaluable."

There are several differences from the JV level to Varsity, including increases in speed and physicality, but Welsh's experience alongside DePaoli will enable him to learn the new style of play quickly.

Although there is a new coach in town and a lot of new faces to the Varsity team, there remains one constant in the equation: high expectations for Blind Brook basketball. New member, junior point guard Steven Berman, believes, "The expectations for this season are very high. We have a very talented team and due to last year's disappointing loss in the playoffs, we will be hungry to return to sectionals."

Welsh added, "Our goal for the season is to have continued improvement so we can be a factor in the sectional playoffs." Blind Brook begins their new season on Dec. 2 against Martin Luther King and looks to have a supportive fan base as they have had in past years.

Much Ado In Yanks' Off-Season

By Jon Tenenzapf

After a disappointing 2005 season, the New York Yankees have several aspects of their team they need to improve. New York has not won a World Series since 2000 and George Steinbrenner, affectionately known as "The Boss," or "Darth Vader," is running low on patience.

The first area that needs to be addressed in the off season is the coaching staff. After hostile remarks were exchanged between manager Joe Torre and "The Boss," Torre ultimately decided to return for his eleventh year as the Yankees' manager. The Yankees also hired Lee Mazzilli as bench coach, Larry Bowa as third base coach, Tony Peña as first base coach, and Ron Guidry as the pitching coach.

Mazzilli, let go by the Orioles after a dismal second half this past season, replaces Joe Girardi, a New York fan favorite who will fill a vacant manager position on the Florida Marlins. Mazzilli, the Yanks' first base coach from 2000-2003, is a veteran of the organization; his prior relationships with the players should enhance the progress and evolution of the players' games.

Bowa worked as a studio analyst on ESPN's Baseball Tonight in 2005, though previously he had been a third base coach for the Philadelphia Phillies, Anaheim Angels, and Seattle Mariners, in addition to managing the Phillies from 2001-2004. Bowa stated, "It would be great if you could ever wear a Yankee uniform," and that he would be "foolish" not to take a job with the Yankees. Excited by Bowa's enthusiasm, General Manager Brian Cashman responded, "His experience as a player, coach and manager, combined with his intense desire to win, are ingredients we welcome to the Yankees' organization."

The Yankees will look to Peña to help improve the skills of second baseman Robinson Cano, whom the former Royals coach has experience with in the Dominican Republic. Peña won a number

of awards for his 2003 turn-around of the Kansas City Royals and looks to bring his enthusiasm and love of baseball to the Yankees.

The Yankees' previous pitching coach, Mel Stottlemyre, departed from the Yankees at the conclusion of the season. There were many potential suitors for this vacant position, but former Yankee Ron Guidry was ultimately hired. Guidry had been eyeing the pitching coach position ever since Stottlemyre mentioned retirement three years ago. Since 1990, Guidry has worked with Yankees pitchers every Spring Training, working with their pitching mechanics and delivery. Guidry remains in Yankees' all-time top ten in games pitched, innings pitched, wins, winning percentage, strikeouts and shutouts. The former Cy Young winner and four-time All-Star knows what it's like to be a Yankee and his presence is much anticipated by the Yankee team and Torre. Said Cashman, "This is the man [Joe] wanted."

Although the Yankees did not win the World Series, players on the team were acknowledged for their outstanding individual achievements. First baseman Jason Giambi was named the American League Comeback Player of the Year for providing the Yankees with the majority of their offensive momentum in the second half of the season. Closer Mariano Rivera was runner-up for the American League Cy Young Award, an award that is seldom won by closers. Rookie second baseman Cano was the runner-up for the American League Rookie of the Year. Most importantly, however, Alex Rodriguez was honored with his second Most Valuable Player award of his career.

With the revamping of the Yankees' coaching staff in addition to the success stories of last season, Steinbrenner is confident he has the right ingredients to return the World Series Championship to the Yankees' organization. Fans all over New York are waiting for Opening Day in April to measure the Yankees' progress.

Come Watch The Annual Powderpuff Football Game

Support The Blind Brook Senior Class as the senior and junior girls face off.

WHERE: BMP Ridge Street School Football Field

WHEN: Wednesday, November 23 at 3:00 p.m.

There is a \$2 admission charge.

TODAY'S LESSON:

Good
Neighbors
are hard
to find!

Thanks for welcoming us to Rye Brook.
From your new friends at Cadbury Schweppes

AMERICAS BEVERAGES



Features

Features Editor: Melissa Lumish

Michael Blank Memorial Fund Sponsors Defensive Driving Course

By David Fries

On Saturday, November 5th, at Blind Brook High School, juniors and seniors were given the opportunity to take a defensive driving course sponsored by the Michael Blank Memorial Fund. The fund was established in honor of Michael Blank, a Blind Brook High School student who died as a result of a car accident in December 2000. Michael's parents, Tina and Rick Blank, stated that they "wanted to do something in Michael's name that could make a difference." The memorial fund covered the full cost of the six-hour course that accommodated up to 30 students. The course was taught by Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Facilities, Jonathan Ross, who is a certified Empire Safety Council Instructor.

The defensive driving workshop has

been proven to be an effective safety program with impressive results. According to Ross, completion of the course "results in both reducing accidents and a reduction in repeat traffic offenses." Statistics have demonstrated "up to an 18% reduction for traffic accidents and a 57.3% reduction in repeat traffic offenses," Ross claimed. In addition to gaining valuable defensive driving skills from the workshop, students can save a significant amount of money on their automobile insurance. Ross explained, "Drivers who complete the course receive a ten percent discount on automobile liability, personal injury protection, and collision insurance premiums for three years in only six hours! They can also reduce four traffic violation points on their driving record, every 18 months."

Junior Josh Adelsberg originally

signed up for the workshop to save money on his insurance premiums, but realized that he could also benefit from the safety skills he was about to acquire. Adelsberg commented, "I [took] the course mainly to reduce my insurance costs, but I'm sure [I've learned] some new defensive driving tips as well." Ross believes the defensive driving course may have an effect on drivers, even on

those who have been driving for many years. Due to the thoughtfulness and generosity of the Blanks, Blind Brook students were introduced to safety practices that could help prevent future accidents. Ross added, "There are always new driving skills to learn. It doesn't matter how long a driver has been licensed. You never know, just one new technique learned today may save a life tomorrow."

Need for New Construction Again?

By Adam Harris

The Village Board of Trustees has recently taken the next step in allowing the creation of 43 condo-style houses in a newly proposed housing development. The plan is to build the housing complex on the corner of King Street and Anderson Hill Road. Although most of this property is in Rye Brook, a portion also lies on Greenwich property.

Previously, there have been two notable attempts to build on this location; the first was intended to be a shopping center and the second, a 125-room Hilton Garden Inn. The first attempt failed and was knocked down, while the second proposal caused a total of three lawsuits to be filed against the village and ended in turmoil.

The proposal for new housing is a great way to increase income for the village through taxes and would thus be a beneficial use of the land. Yet, many people are concerned about the impact that this will have on the Blind Brook school system. These housing units will bring new students into the school system, just as the construction of Belle Fair and Blind Brook Estates did. The new houses that were built caused the student body to swell and brought on the need for construction to increase the Blind

Brook Middle/High School's size.

While there is currently no definite plan for the construction of these housing units, it seems that the need for further construction at Blind Brook will be imminent if the housing development is built.

In the October 6th issue of *The Westmore News*, Village Attorney Ed Beane was quoted saying, "When you take a look at the design of the project, it is designed for empty nesters [childless homes]." Yet, details show that the condo houses are 2,700 square foot, 3-bedroom units. Is it realistic that only childless couples will be attracted to houses with three bedrooms in close proximity to an established high school? Beane later added, in reference to price, "It is not something anybody expects families with school age children will be interested in." However, price has not deterred families moving into newly constructed areas in Rye Brook in the past. It may not be reasonable to assume that a young family moving to Rye Brook will be dissuaded by the price or by the fact that there are only three bedrooms.

Still, before the housing development can actually be built, there are many steps that need to be taken. Mayor Lawrence A. Rand explains, "The site is currently zoned as H-1,

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The maximum security Sing-Sing prison.

Sing-Sing Inmates Impart Values To BBHS Seniors

By Rachel Polonsky

On Thursday, October 10th, Social Studies teacher Mrs. Martine Curto took her twelfth grade law class to the maximum security Sing-Sing Prison in Ossining, New York. This trip was designed to inform the students about the legal system and it coincided with the half-year course's unit on procedure after a person is arrested, the final step of which is sentencing.

The trip to Sing-Sing is part of the Youth Awareness Program, which Curto helped to found. This was Curto's twentieth year of taking her class to the prison, and her two laws classes (one each semester) hold two of only twenty opportunities to visit the prison each year. Mostly inner city schools with at-risk teens take this trip in order to impart a "this could happen to you" sentiment to the students. However, an increasing number of well-off schools are being encouraged to take part in the program as crime rates continue to rise in suburban areas.

Before being allowed to partake in the trip, the seniors went through a federal search to verify that they had no criminal records. After arriving at the prison, the visitors received approval to enter, passed through metal detectors, and were given ID tags.

Subsequently, a group of inmates greeted the students with stories of their

personal convictions. After a tour of the jail, including the A and B Blocks, gym, group showers, barber, and disciplinary unit, the class reached the highlight of the day: the students had the opportunity to speak with the inmates in small groups and to pose any questions that were occupying their minds. The day ended with a group discussion of what the students had learned.

Surprisingly, the inmates all appeared to be friendly and willing to share stories of their lives, crimes, and encounters in jail. The general consensus was that the trip was both interesting and informative, leaving the seniors hoping that many years of students to follow will be granted the same opportunity to visit Sing-Sing. Senior law student, Josh Grossman, stated, "[My experiences with the inmates] taught me to value what I have." The students were instilled with the messages that no one is above the law, that it is dangerous to give out too much personal information, and that these horrible events could happen to anyone. They were shown that the criminals were left with nothing and that fights could easily break out, even over something as insignificant as a new sweatshirt.

Curto summarized, "[What the students saw in the prison] is so far from what you see day to day and worse than what you could possibly imagine."

For the Benefit of Humanity

By Corinne Segal

Picture a family whose life Blind Brook students have permanently changed for the better. This vision is soon to become a reality through the efforts of the recently founded Blind Brook chapter of Habitat for Humanity. This non-profit, charitable organization has huge input from all over the country. This year, Blind Brook is proud to renew its efforts to help build houses for the homeless.

Beginning this past summer, the school planned to organize a Habitat for Humanity club and was met with strong approval from both students and faculty.

Before school began, principal of Blind Brook High School Anthony Baxter spoke with Jim Killoran (the executive director of the Westchester County chapter of Habitat for Humanity) to express the school's interest in participating. They agreed that Blind Brook would collaborate with other towns in the county to help the homeless.

When sign-up day arrived, 120 students – one-third of the school – joined the newly instated Habitat for Humanity club. "It was a very visible sign of our interest in helping the less fortunate," said Baxter.

Students will receive community service hours based on the amount of time they spend at the building sites where they

can either construct or paint houses that are already assembled. Future build dates are November 19th, December 10th, and December 17th – the times are still to be specified.

On Sunday, November 6th, members of Blind Brook's Habitat for Humanity Club also participated in the Larchmont walk which drew about 200 people from towns all over Westchester. To date, the walk raised over \$400 from Blind Brook students alone.

Senior Nicole Haber was glad to have been part of it. "It was really fun," she said. "We had lots of spirit – we were basically singing the whole time."

Senior President of the Habitat for Humanity Club Dana Fleishaker hints at other fundraisers for the future, possibly a "bumper sticker or t-shirt sale." The other members of the executive board, Vice President Greg Goldstein and Secretary Matthew Sadownick, both juniors, support Fleishaker's ambitions and are enthusiastic about the future of the club. One freshman member of the club commented that helping the homeless is a "very rewarding experience." Many other students have demonstrated the same motivation to change lives—for the benefit of humanity.

What newly instated Blind Brook policy is most or least beneficial?

Quotes collected by Melissa Prusky. Photos by Melissa Lumish



"I disagree with the policy that things that we say at town meetings have to be censored in advance."

—**Kristina DiMaggio**
(Freshman)



"I think that juniors deserve to have off-campus privileges and I also wish that juniors could drive to school, although I know there is not a lot of space for parking."

—**Sam Christal** (Junior)



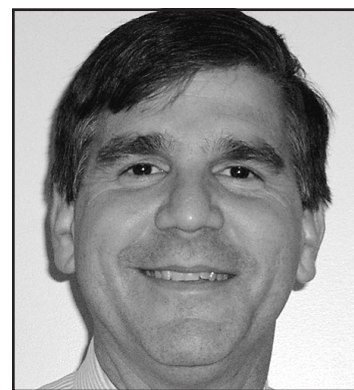
"I think the policy that seniors are no longer allowed to write what they want on 'the rock' is not fair."

—**Jen Pasquale** (Senior)



"I think the new policy that tests can go home with students makes it difficult for teachers to create original tests. Students and teachers should be able to review them in class periodically, and when the tests are brought home, they are often lost."

—**Patrick Mulvany**
(History Teacher)



"I think the policy that you're not allowed to give more than two unit tests to a student on the same day is beneficial because it allows students to prepare adequately. Also, it does not burden any one group of students on a particular day."

—**John Latino**
(Science Teacher)

Coming Attraction: BBTV

By **Sonia Taneja**

Many students, upon returning from school, fall onto their couches and reach for the TV remote control. As they flip through the channels, they often quickly flick past

Blind Brook's local TV channel, 77. Yet, based on the efforts of a new club at Blind Brook, students will be forced to glance back at it once more. Instead of announcements covering the screen, the Blind Brook TV club's shows will appear in front of their eyes. BBTV is

working on making Blind Brook's channel 77 an entertaining alternative to after-school channel surfing.

"Your imagination is not limited in this club," exclaims Ethan Klapper, co-president of the BBTV club, which is commemorating its one year anniversary this year. The joint efforts of Blind Brook juniors Brett Parker and Ethan Klapper have made this club an

enlightening and enjoyable way for students to spend their Wednesday afternoons. They have the opportunity to craft a program that will shine through on channel 77 as a lasting Blind Brook achievement, making their painstaking efforts worthwhile.

This club, established last year and popular once again this year, welcomes anyone who wishes to submit broadcasting ideas. The co-presidents are open to adding any of students' appropriate suggestions to the channel. These contributions consist of various submissions such as dramas, comedies, and even weather reports. They incorporate individual student's projects as well as club projects completed by a few members. The club was created in order to allow students throughout the high school to express their creativity and ideas on BBTV. "It's a club dedicated to improving the quality and quantity of our

enlightening and enjoyable way for students to spend their Wednesday afternoons. They have the opportunity to craft a program that will shine through on channel 77 as a lasting Blind Brook achievement, making their painstaking efforts worthwhile.

News Channel," said Parker.

During its meeting on November 2nd, the club discussed a Blind Brook News Magazine that it is putting together. This will be primarily a school-based news magazine that will include submissions from many of the students. Those working on the maga-

zine, in addition to those who work for the news channel, will have the opportunity to present unbiased news on TV and to spread it throughout the student body.

Keep your eyes open for BBTV and the BBTV News Magazine coming soon to the local channel 77.



The New Video Club during one of its meetings. From left: Manuel Davila-Molina, Alex Cohen, Eric Schulkin, and Kyle McLean. Photo by Joey Goldstein

Student Spotlight:

Asuka Fukamachi

By **Sarah Rish**

Senior Asuka Fukamachi, creator of the new Foreign Language Club that meets on Mondays during activity period and member of the Advanced Placement Art class, is a student who has mastered the art of self-expression in more ways than most.

Fluency in a language other than English, especially in languages not offered here, is a rare skill within the Blind Brook pool of students, but Japanese comes just as naturally to Asuka as English does. Japanese is spoken in Asuka's home, which is an integral part of who she is and a factor in her unique sense of diversity.

Explaining this significance, Asuka shares, "My parents aren't American, so I've had to be independent."

Combining her valuable autonomy with years of education at the Japanese Weekend School in Greenwich, CT, Asuka is determined to bring diversity to Blind Brook to raise awareness about languages and, more importantly, about cultures that do not receive much attention. Asuka and her Chinese-speaking co-president of the Foreign Language Club, Serena Lo, are already full of ideas through which this taste of diversity could be spread. "A multi-cultural fair with different kinds of foods and costumes" is one event she is considering

to kick off the club with the help of her advisor, Mrs. Joan Mele.

Channeling herself not just through language but also through drawing, Asuka is active in the AP Art class.



Senior Asuka Fukamachi working on one of her artistic creations during an AP class.

Photo by Emily Brackman

"I think in terms of images," Asuka shared. She enjoys the class not only because it is conducive to her artistic nature but also because it allows students to be "independent." The teacher, she explained, "gives an assignment, but we can do what we want and explore different mediums, such as charcoal or clay. It's different from other AP classes because everything depends on your skills and

how imaginative you are."

Over the summer, Asuka took classes at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City where, through the study of interior design, she "gained a new perspective" and developed a talent for "focusing on what is important" in her artwork and in her life.

Although Asuka is not planning to pursue art as her sole profession, she continues to get pleasure out of trips to the Metropolitan Museum, where she admires the work of Van Gogh and Monet, and gains inspiration for her own works of self-expression, which she hopes that "people can interpret in their own way." Amidst all of her passions and pursuits, Asuka has but one complaint: the daily AP Art Class "is just too short!"

Getting to Know Mr. Greshes

By **Alison Genova**

It is 7:50 am and the bell has just rung commencing first period. Most of the constituents of Blind Brook High School are shuffling to class, half asleep, and very grumpy; yet, one individual has already been awake for over four hours. With his usually bright-colored shirt, black rubber-soled shoes, and brown leather belt, Mr. Robert Greshes stands eagerly in the front of his classroom, watching his first period AP Literature students file into the classroom.

Greshes teaches the two twelfth grade AP English Literature classes as well as the three English 12 classes. As a newcomer to Blind Brook in September, facing the senior class might not have been ideal. Yet, Greshes has proven himself to be up for the challenge. Despite the imminence of senior slump, he

asserts that this will not be a year of rest and relaxation.

"I came to college unprepared," regretted Greshes, and he will not allow his students to do the same. He explained that higher standards are expected of students in college than in high school and that there are no second chances. Over fifty percent of all college-bound students are unprepared for college-level reading and writing and Greshes is adamant that Blind Brook graduates not be among them.



Twelfth Grade English teacher Mr. Robert Greshes

Photo by Emily Brackman

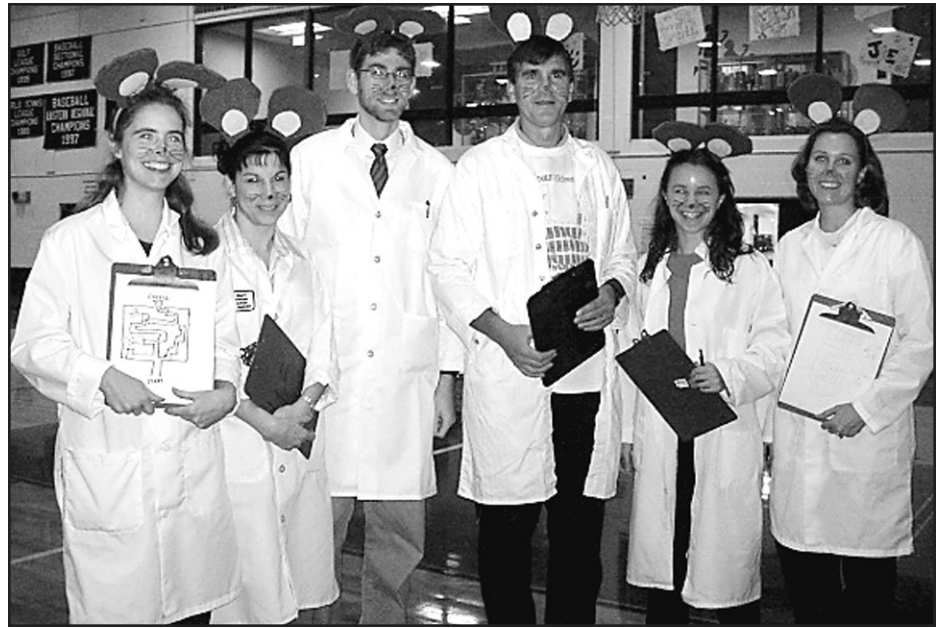
Surprisingly, Greshes' passion does not stem from a deep background in teaching. He began his professional career as a litigator and continued along that path for three years before joining his family's manufacturing business for the next fifteen years. After selling the business, Greshes finally decided to

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Juniors Daria Contegiacomo, Jenna Kaplowitz, Candace Carlucci, Sam Christal, Ashley Forbes, Dana Berman, and Amy DeLynn dress up as crayons for the Halloween dance.

Photo by Halley Feldman



The Blind Brook Science Department dressed as lab rats.

Photo by Emily Brackman

HALLOWEEN DANCE IS A SCREAM



At left, seniors (top, from left) Julie Ganz, Heidi Lumish, Melissa Lumish, (bottom from left) Asuka Fukamachi, Jaclyn Azia, and Rebecca Blank on Halloween as Santa's helpers.

Photo by Emily Brackman



At right, junior David Yawitz dressed as a hot dog for the Halloween Dance.

Photo by Emily Brackman

By Rebecca Raider

Streaming into the gym on Friday, October 28, 2005, for the Halloween dance, dressed in various costumes and festive attire, Blind Brook High School students were eagerly prepared to get a head start on the long-awaited holiday. The dance was primarily planned by the Rye Brook Community Coalition which provides students with safe activities and the guidance needed to make safe decisions, and was executed by students, police, village government, local businesses, parents, and administrators. The intent of the dance was to provide safe entertainment for students, not to make a profit, so the admission charged for entry was only used to help the Coalition to break even after paying for the DJ and the food. The Halloween dance was a big hit among both the students, who enjoyed themselves, and the administrators, who had no complaints about students' behavior.

Sophomore student senator Dana Silverstein remarked, "It was very successful. It had a higher turnout rate than last year." Sophomore Jaclyn Donat commented on the refreshments available, "The food was very good. There were a good amount of choices, but there could be more next year." Senior President of Senate Jen Flaxman agreed, "The dance was a lot of fun and it went really well."

Donat added, "The DJ was also great. He had all the newest songs and this was definitely the most successful year in getting people to dance. I saw almost everyone on the dance floor."

The dance's success was partially owed to the students' compliance with the administration's general guidelines for conduct. Students were required to notify Joanne Goldstein, one of the parents on the Coalition, of guests in advance. Visitors were only admitted if their names appeared on a prewritten list, including names, schools, and parental information, before the day of the dance.

In addition, the chaperones and policemen were stationed both inside and outside of the main door of the building to ensure that no one left and came back in and to certify that the doors were locked at 9 p.m.

Students were also asked to comply with a "no mask" policy as a safety precaution so that chaperones could see all guests' faces. Yet, despite this restriction, Andrew Becker commented that "more people should be in costume" for the next Halloween dance.

Although some people commented that the dance could have been more appealing to the upperclassmen, the freshmen and sophomores had a great time. Sophomore Justine Matthews added enthusiastically, "I had a great time and I had fun dressing up."



Juniors Taryn Klein, Emily Brackman, Dani Kaufman, and Jessie Komitor dressed as the Spice Girls at the Community Coalition Halloween Dance.

Photo by Halley Feldman



Seniors (from left) Jen Flaxman, Kimera Rosen, Ruthie Brown, Allie Stein, Jolene Gordon, Marisa Berman, Steph Zverin, and Michelle Simon on Halloween as yodelers.

Photo by Emily Brackman



The entire Human Relations trip gathers together at Camp Sloane.

Photo contributed by Emily Brackman

Human Relations Weekend Breaks Down Barriers

By Akshay Nagia

Every year, the Human Relations weekend is a big hit among Blind Brook High School students. It was just last month that the sign-up flyers were being passed ubiquitously around school; everyone seemed to have one in his or her hand.

This year, close to fifty applications were considered, and thirty students were selected to go on the trip, which lasted from November 4th to November 6th. The Human Relations Club Treasurer Adam Fischer commented, "By having such a small group, students form a close bond with each other. Also, it allows for a great deal of focus and cooperation. We try to get an even amount of students from every grade on the trip, as well as an even number of guys and girls." Fischer also explained, "Students who signed up are picked at random to go on the trip." However, the club does try to avoid picking students who are good friends or siblings; doing so would contradict the club's main goal. In this respect, the selection process is paramount for the success of the trip.

Yet, the mystery behind what actually goes on during the trip strikes even more excitement than does the selection process. Everyone wants to find out what makes the trip so exciting and why its details must remain undisclosed.

The weekend is generally an expansion of the club's overall goal: to break the social barriers among different social groups, ethnicities, and grade levels at Blind Brook and to unify the students. The action-packed weekend at Camp Sloane in Connecticut

provides a perfect environment for students to get to know each other. Spanish teacher and Human Relations Club Advisor Maggie Brennan-Juana commented, "It's very beneficial to allow students a safe place to communicate and to get to know people in a way they might not have gotten to at Blind Brook."

Although there are teacher and parental supervisors, they are not overpowering and give students the opportunity to interact freely with each other. Freshman Mariana Barretto stated, "On the trip, it was like all distinctions between the grades and even the teachers disappeared." This ice-breaking weekend is responsible for much of the inter-grade social activity that occurs at Blind Brook.

Upon the participants' return on Sunday evening, their away messages, dedicated to their new-found friends, are evidence that they both enjoyed and benefited from the weekend. Senior Gavin Romm described his experience as, "A life-changing experience. I not only made great new friends, but also learned more about myself as an individual." Senior Harry Foster added, "It was amazing and a great way to make new friends with people I have never met before." Both students feel that they have benefited from the trip and would definitely recommend it to other students. It is evident that this action-packed weekend is a highlight of many students' high school careers.

As Brennan-Juana put it, "Being at a camp away from Blind Brook allows students to get to know each other and to learn new things. It's a great way for kids to cross social barriers and to meet new people."

Getting to Know Mr. Greshes Continued from page 11

indulge in his desire to teach literature.

When asked about this sudden change in profession, he explained, "I always felt I had an inner English teacher waiting to come out." In pursuit of his passion, he enrolled in a New York City Teaching Fellows program for four years. He then proceeded to teach at Christopher Columbus High School in the Bronx for three years before making his transition to Blind Brook.

Although teaching is time-consuming, especially when coupled with the forty-minute drive from his Manhattan apartment, Greshes finds time for additional pursuits. He keeps busy by taking care of his eight-month-old daughter, watching films and, of course, reading. He has a passion for sports

and exercising, which is displayed by his unthinkable wakeup at 3:30 am and arrival at the gym by 4:30 am. It is a wonder that he has such vibrant energy to teach five classes a day! He reassures us, "When I get into the classroom, adrenaline starts to flow; I just like teaching."

His intensity and enthusiasm are expressed in the classroom and his love for teaching is a continual positive influence on his pupils. Senior Marisa Berman, a student in one of his AP Literature classes agreed, "We've learned so much from him already, but what amazes me the most is his energy. From the first day of school, he has taught every class with unparalleled enthusiasm."

Spring Break In... Rye Brook?

By Heidi Lumish

As I sat staring blankly at the empty white screen before my eyes, I cringed at the thought of writing yet another college essay. Plagued by the "blank-pageitis" that I am sure we have all felt at one time or another, I longed for the time when that unhappy burden of college applications would have dissipated, giving rise to a much-awaited sense of relaxation. My thoughts led me to what is, for many, one of the countless highlights of senior year: spring break.

After several stressful years of SATs and ACTs, AP exams, and college applications, a spring break vacation seemed to me the ideal outlet for the stress and anxiety that the modern high school experience inevitably imposes upon its youth. It offers a last opportunity for seniors to spend time with their friends, some of whom they have known throughout their thirteen years at Blind Brook, before they all depart for their respective colleges. As a culmination of the years of memories that have been collected through Halloween costumes, birthday parties, and school trips, spring break would add a final picture to the enduring images of a Blind Brook experience.

However, only a few days after my boredom-inspired daydream, I returned home to find a trim white envelope, bearing the familiar blue Blind Brook return address, on my kitchen counter. Sure enough, when I opened it, I discovered that it was directed at the latest topic of conversation: spring break.

When I had finished reading the letter, my first thoughts were of the valid concerns it posed. I, too, had seen the news reports chronicling the disappearance of Natalie Holloway in Aruba last spring. I still shudder to think of her family and friends, the gap in whose lives will long remain a source of pain. I, like everyone else, have missed days of school and recognize that school attendance is essential for maintaining acceptable scholastic performance.

Nevertheless, this letter, though it did address many valid concerns for the education and well-being of seniors at Blind Brook, inspired some objections. A spring break vacation has become a tradition among seniors, not only at Blind Brook, but also in districts throughout the country. Why not consider it a reward for students who have devoted themselves to their schoolwork and extracurricular activi-

ties throughout high school, in an effort to lay the foundation for a successful future? Though it may not have been condoned in the past, this vacation has become a veritable tradition.

Regarding the absence of seniors from school during the days surrounding the vacation, I must agree that not only would it be an inconvenience to the teachers but it would also impede the learning

process. However, how can we assume that every student is a participant in the spring break phenomenon? By October, a family may have already booked a flight to visit relatives in Florida or California for Passover or Easter. Are we justified in denying these seniors the right to use a "personal business day" for a holiday celebration? Also, all students were required to sign an agreement over the summer verifying their support of the provisions of the Family Guidebook. The stipulation stating that personal business days could not be used surrounding spring break was seemingly absent from these school guidelines.

Moreover, while the letter may have pinpointed the stereotypical image of a senior spring break, not all students seek to travel in groups of thirty to "exotic ports of call." For some, spring break is simply what it appears to be – an opportunity to spend time with friends who you have known nearly all your life. As high school seniors, whose lives will be revolutionized by the college experience in a mere few months, it is important that we be entrusted with the power to make our own decisions regarding the use of drugs and alcohol. Perhaps we should not punish those who have learned to make rational choices in light of the destructive decisions made by students in other areas. Though understandably bound by its negative implications, senior spring break has the potential to be the positive culmination of the Blind Brook experience.

As I returned, once again, to my blank screen, I found that in my mind I was split over the issues surrounding spring break. The concerns raised by the administration are undeniably valid, considering past events and the value of school; yet, spring break is a tradition, nonetheless. Perhaps the decision will simply have to be left up to each student and his or her family, fully equipped with the pros and cons of this April vacation. Now all we need is a cure for "blank-pageitis."



Need for New Construction Again? Continued from page 10

which is for a hotel... To move ahead with a residential project will require re-zoning and then the developer will have to go through the normal site plan approvals at the Board of Trustees." He notes that it will take a lot of work and the participation of many different boards before anything can be finalized.

Although Rye Brook's residents may rest assured that no changes will take place in the near future, many question whether the village board is being realistic in considering such a plan. Is the school board aware of the potential impact? Will the residents of Rye

Brook be caught in a squeeze again over a lack of space in its schools? Will the benefits outweigh the costs of this proposal? Should the prospect of such an influx of students have been taken into account when planning for the current construction at Blind Brook?

Already on its second round of construction in less than five years, Blind Brook is reminded that a glance at the past may be helpful in avoiding the repetition of mistakes, specifically those regarding school expansion. How soon will it be before Blind Brook hits construction again?



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Top Nine Most Popular Movies

By Dan Levy



Saw II

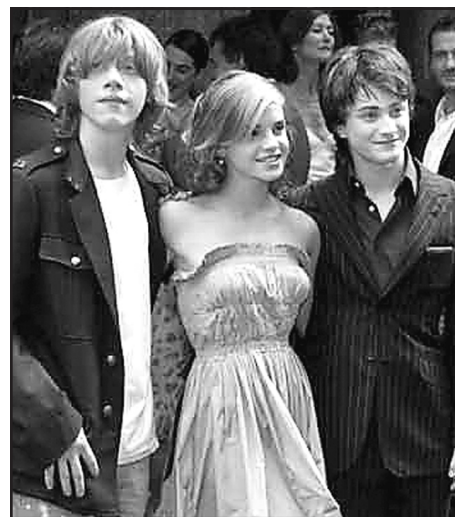
The twisted serial killer Jigsaw (Tobin Bell) is back in the sequel to the 2004 hit horror film *Saw*. However, the unconventional twist that makes the movie so compelling is the fact that Jigsaw has never actually murdered a single person; instead, this malicious menace utilizes a variety of sick and twisted strategies to force his victims to kill either themselves or each other. This time, Jigsaw has locked six victims, one of whom is the only living survivor from his first set of games, in a remote shelter in which they are forced to inhale deadly nerve gas. Throughout the movie, the unlucky six, chosen because Jigsaw considers their lives insignificant and wasteful, are forced to torture themselves in order to determine the combination to a lock that, if opened, would allow them to escape the perilous cavern before their lives are taken from them. Although dedicated detective Eric Mason (Donnie Wahlberg) appears to be on the case, he is thoroughly unaware that he too has been drawn into Jigsaw's twisted games. This terrifying sequel is sure to be a box office hit, and its plot twists are guaranteed to leave audience members completely awe-stricken. *Saw II* was directed by Darren Lynn Bousman and premiered on October 28th.



Rent

After months of anticipation and excitement, Jonathan Larson's 1996 Tony Award winning Broadway musical, *Rent*, has finally been released as a movie. The storyline consists of the trials and tribulations experienced by eight Bohemians (people with artistic or literary interests

that disregard conventional ideas of life) living in the East Village of New York City over the course of one full year. Throughout the film, the characters are forced to overcome such obstacles as drugs, AIDS, death, and simply paying the rent. The movie, directed by Chris Columbus, stars Rosario Dawson (Mimi) as well as members of the actual theatrical cast, including Taye Diggs (Benny), Anthony Rapp (Mark), Adam Pascal (Roger), and Jesse L. Martin (Tom). *Rent* is scheduled to be released on November 23 and is sure to attract a multitude of movie and theater fanatics.



Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire

Harry Potter (Daniel Radcliffe), Hermione Granger (Emma Watson), and Ron Weasley (Rupert Grint) have returned in the fourth installment of J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series, a collection of books and movies that has gathered overwhelming popularity throughout the world since the release of the first novel in 1997. The fourth segment, titled *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, chronicles Harry's fourth year at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry and depicts the various mysteries that correspond with life in the wizarding world. This year, Harry, along with one other student from Hogwarts, is selected to participate in the infamous Tri-Wizard Tournament, a series of competitions between adolescent wizards designed to test their physical, mental and magical dexterity in which the victor receives a substantial monetary prize (1,000 galleons, to be exact). In addition to coping with various scholastic and romantic hardships, Harry also must also endure excruciating bursts of pain in his scar, indicating that Lord Voldemort, the most wicked wizard of all time, is close to regaining his physical form and that the forces of darkness are once again on the rise. Unlike the previous three films, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (directed by Mike Newell) is rated PG-13, abolishing the widespread belief that *Harry Potter* is merely a children's storybook. This action-packed thriller, released on November 18th, is sure to provide Harry Potter fans with a magical adventure they won't want to miss.

Jarhead

If you are into adventurous, suspenseful war films, *Jarhead* is definitely the movie for you. The film, based on the memoirs of Marine Anthony Swofford, portrays the lives of a group of U.S. Marines fighting in Iraq during the Gulf War, and it focuses primarily on Swofford (Jake Gyllenhaal), a third-generation Marine, whose military activities are chronicled from his time spent at boot camp to ac-

tive combat in the battlefield. Although Swofford and his fellow Marines are forced to suffer through brutal weather and the constant threat of being attacked by Iraqi soldiers, their employment of witty, sarcastic comedy allows them to get by. *Jarhead*, released on November 4th, stars Jake Gyllenhaal and Jamie Foxx and was directed by Sam Mendes.

North Country

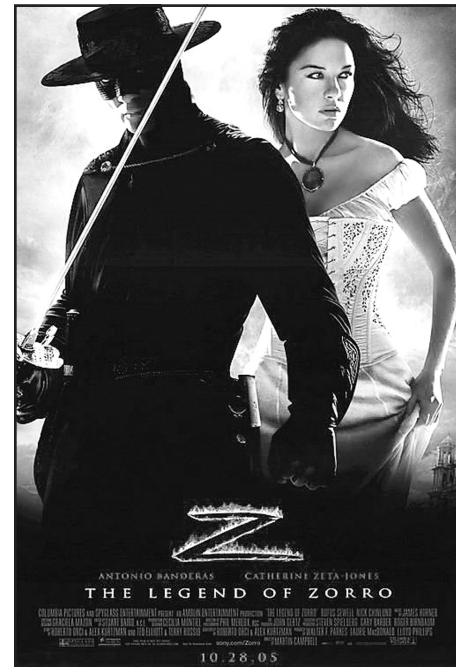
Non-fiction graced the big screen on October 21st with the release of *North Country*, a film based on the actual events that led to one of America's first successful sexual harassment lawsuits. The movie profiles native Minnesotan Josey Aimes (Charlize Theron), a single mother in the 1970s who has recently returned to her hometown after a painful breakup with her husband in order to find a job. After pursuing a recommendation from a friend, Josey takes a job at a local iron mine where the majority of the positions are occupied by chauvinistic men. From the outset of her employment, Josey is sexually harassed by a number of male employees, including the owners of the mine; however, her few female co-workers are reluctant to support her for fear of losing their well-paid jobs. She then decides to file a sexual harassment suit against the mine owners, a suit that will earn her nationwide attention and fame. *North Country* is a true story that depicts adversity, struggle and, most importantly, a woman who had the courage to fight for her beliefs and beat the odds in a male-dominated society. Viewing this film (directed by Niki Caro) is an opportunity you'll most certainly want to take advantage of, especially if you are a proponent of women's rights.

Prime

Meryl Streep and Uma Thurman pair up in the hit romantic comedy *Prime*, a heartwarming yet hilarious tale of love and lust that is sure to give you some "bang for your buck." Uma Thurman plays Rafi, a thirty-seven-year-old entrepreneur from New York City who has just been through a rough divorce and is seeing Lisa (Meryl Streep), a therapist, in order to cope. While in therapy, Rafi meets Dave, a twenty-three-year-old painter from Brooklyn and, despite the fourteen-year age difference, the two fall madly in love with each other. Although Lisa initially encourages the relationship, stating that her patient needs to have fun in order to recover from her divorce, she is appalled when she realizes that Rafi is dating her son, a discovery that severely complicates the relationship among therapist, patient, and male lover/child. Directed by Ben Younger and released on October 28th, *Prime* is a romantic comedy that depicts the benefits and complications of falling in love.

The Legend of Zorro

Zorro has returned in the sequel to the 1998 box-office hit *The Mask of Zorro*. After years of combating crime, Zorro (Antonio Banderas) has decided to abandon his high-profile alter ego in order to spend more time with his wife, Elena (Catherine Zeta-Jones) and his son, Joaquin (Adrian Alonso). However, after learning of a plot made by acquisitive Europeans to prevent California from applying for statehood, the renowned Mexican hero must come out of retirement and save the day once again, much to the dismay of his beloved Elena. Growing



wary of the nights spent without her husband, Elena issues Zorro an ultimatum and states that he must remain at home or risk losing his family. When Zorro refuses to back down, the couple separates, and Elena, along with Joaquin, leaves her husband. All of a sudden, Zorro's task is twofold; not only is he responsible for the ejection of criminals from California, he must also win back his family, which coincidentally becomes involved with the European swine as well. *The Legend of Zorro*, directed by Martin Campbell and released on October 28th, contains a unique fusion of action and comedy that is sure to attract a wide range of viewers.

The Weatherman

Admired Chicago weatherman Dave Spritz (Nicholas Cage) finally gets the break of a lifetime when he receives a call from a New York morning broadcast show that has scheduled him for an audition. Professionally, Spritz has reached the pinnacle of his career, and it seems as though his life cannot get any better. On a personal basis, however, he has reached an all-time low, and he is unsure if he can cope with an agonizing divorce from his wife, a dilemma with his children, and the sickened state of his father (Michael Caine). Catch *The Weatherman* (in theaters on October 28th and directed by Gore Verbinski) to find out if Spritz deals with his problems or merely collapses under them.

Elizabethtown

An all-star cast consisting of Kirsten Dunst, Alec Baldwin, Susan Sarandon, and teen heartthrob Orlando Bloom recently appeared on the big screen in Paramount's new romantic comedy *Elizabethtown*. After being fired from his job, breaking up with his girlfriend, and facing the death of his father in one fell swoop, industrial designer Drew Baylor (Orlando Bloom) is considerably "down-in-the-dumps" and even contemplates suicide to rid himself of the immense emotional pain he is experiencing. However, Baylor finds solace in his old Kentucky hometown, Elizabethtown, to which he must fly in order to arrange and attend his father's funeral. On the way, Baylor meets Claire Colburn (Kirsten Dunst), a fiery flight attendant with whom he falls deeply in love. Baylor's romance with Colburn allows him to rectify his seemingly hopeless situation and teaches him that his life is not so bad after all. *Elizabethtown* was directed by Cameron Crowe and was released on October 14th.

Blind Brook Graduate, Josh Shaw, Makes an Impression on Donald Trump

By Madeline Sims
and Scott Winston

Joshua Shaw, a Blind Brook alumnus from the class of 1993, recently appeared on the fourth season of Donald Trump's hit reality T.V. show *The Apprentice*, which is the second time in one year that a Blind Brook graduate has been seen on Mr. Trump's show (Stacy Rotner, an alumna from the class of 1995, appeared on the second season of *The Apprentice*, but like Shaw, she did not make it to the finals).

As a student at Blind Brook, Shaw displayed a variety of positive characteristics that he also expressed as a contestant on *The Apprentice*. Even in high school, he was an excellent leader and always embodied the distinguishing traits that characterize a good entrepreneur, including the fact that he was never afraid to voice his opinions. "He always had the gift of gab," remarked Blind Brook Middle School Media Literacy teacher Doris Patrao. Not only was Shaw an extremely sociable, outgoing young man, he also was a class officer and played an active role on the Blind Brook Varsity soccer team. Though he liked to take charge, he was always a



Blind Brook graduate
Josh Shaw

good listener and was always open to his classmates' ideas.

After graduating from Blind Brook, Shaw received his Bachelor of Science degree in marketing and finance from the University of Albany. He went on to become the co-founder and chief operating officer of GoSMILE, Inc: The Smile Beauty Company, which specializes in

the production of teeth-whitening agents. At a mere thirty years of age, Shaw has already managed to transform a simple business idea into an eighty-five million dollar corporation, and he is currently one of the most prominent rising stars in the entire beauty industry.

Shaw appeared on the season four premiere of *The Apprentice* on September 22nd, 2005. As most Blind Brook students know, the winner of *The Apprentice* is bequeathed with an extremely comfortable job under billionaire extraordinaire Donald Trump as well as a six-figure salary, both of which are strongly desired by each contestant. In order to attain this highly valued prize, contestants are divided into teams that follow instructions for their assigned project and work together in order to achieve their goals that differ from week to week.

During his time on the show, Shaw was the project manager for team Excel, which was charged with the task of creating an interactive sales event based on the athletic activity of its choice to increase revenue at Dick's Sporting Goods store. Team Excel designed a baseball-themed display for the store that consisted of the establishment of

an actual baseball diamond in the building as well as the placement of batting cages throughout the store. Unfortunately, team Excel's extensive focus on the utilization of the batting cages rather than product sales ultimately contributed to its downfall, as sales fell by a whopping 34% after the baseball display was publicly viewed. According to a disgruntled Mr. Trump, team Excel had suffered "the worst defeat they've ever had on *The Apprentice*."

Shaw made it to the sixth week of the program before being fired in what is being described by viewers as "a complete massacre." In the boardroom, aired on October 27th, Shaw blamed his team's failure on the fact that it was unable to convert browsers into buyers; however, after being held responsible for the atrophy of the entire project by fellow teammate, Jennifer Murphy, his attempts to defend himself proved futile, and he was soon subjected to Donald Trump's utterance of those fateful words that crushed the spirits of so many contestants before him: "You're fired!" Though only one contestant is normally fired per episode, team Excel's unparalleled dismal performance led to the ejection of four contestants from the show, including Mark Lamkin and James Dillon in addition to Shaw and Murphy.

Sophomore viewer Michelle Caley, a Blind Brook sophomore, was outraged by Shaw's expulsion. "I didn't think Shaw deserved to be fired. The team clearly lost because of Jen's inability to sell products. Kicking off four people was obviously a stunt intended to increase the show's ratings and attract more viewers," she said. Junior Danielle Burnette echoed this sentiment, stating that "[Shaw] was a really hard worker. People make mistakes and nobody's perfect, but there are a lot of other people who should have been fired before him."

Although Shaw was fired, Rye Brook residents were still excited to see a familiar face on such a popular show. The Blind Brook High School faculty always expected great things from Shaw, and faculty members who taught him were extremely impressed by his performance. School nurse Nancy Garretto, who was the advisor for the class of 1993, was not at all surprised by his success. "[When he was at school], he was always trying to think of new ideas to make money for his class," expressed Garretto, who described him as a confident, outgoing, and charming young man. "He always said, 'One day I'm going to make it big.'" Regardless of his ejection from *The Apprentice*, it seems likely that Shaw will continue to be a driving force in the business world for years to come, particularly in the eyes of various members of the Blind Brook community.

Harvey to be a Hit

By Andrew Creadore
and Ashley Woychowski

The Blind Brook fall drama production is always an excellent performance, and it seems as though this year will be no different. Twelve high school students, under the direction of high school English teacher Mrs. Kristen Buchanan, will be performing *Harvey* on November 18th and 19th. This year's fall play features performances by freshmen Kelley Cano, Stephanie Sherry, and Steve Fisher; juniors Matt Sadownick, Ian Dubrowsky, Emily Brackman, Jessie Komitor, Sarah Rish, Mikey Goldberg, Samantha Christal, and Chris Weiss; and senior Alex Frost, along with a variety of juniors as production stage managers and junior Nathan Cohn as assistant director.

The storyline of the play focuses on a man named Elwood Dowd, played by Sadownick, who has befriended an invisible rabbit named *Harvey*. As a result of this odd hallucination, his family, ashamed of what their son has become, attempts to check him into a mental hospital. However, his sister, who accompanies him into the hospital, becomes so overwhelmed with the absurd situation that the doctor decides to check her into the hospital rather than Elwood. *Harvey's* plot is undoubtedly more eccentric than that of most Blind Brook drama productions, but the faithful and dedicated cast has high hopes for opening night and feels that the play will be a success. "This is definitely one of the funniest plays I've performed in at Blind Brook," commented Dubrowsky. "I've been having so much fun working on the play this year, especially because the play is just so funny." Goldberg echoed, "I really feel that the entire cast has adapted to their characters and are performing to the best of their ability." Directed and produced by Buchanan,



Juniors Jessie Komitor and Sarah Rish rehearsing for the fall play, *Harvey*.

the fall play is definitely taking shape. As the director, she leads the actors in rehearsal and helps them to achieve a theatrical sense of direction so that they can learn how to successfully reproduce their characters. In addition to working with the actors, she is responsible for securing the set, planning out costumes to properly match the essence of each character, and coordinating ticket sales. Buchanan reported that the actors have really come together and have become comfortable with their characters, developing them more and more with each rehearsal. She stated that it is common for the actors to feel a sense of uneasiness when they first start working on a play, saying, "At first, actors are really [only] worried about learning their lines." However, as of recent, the play has truly come together.

One of the key reasons behind the success of the 2005 fall drama production, in

addition to the hard work and dedication displayed by the cast members, is the choice of the play itself. Many student actors thoroughly enjoy performing in *Harvey* not only because of their adoration for theater, but because they find the actual plot extremely stimulating and gratifying. "I feel that it was really a great choice because *Harvey* is both serious at points and comical at others. It's a good way for the audience to see what this cast is truly made of," remarked Christal.

Blind Brook should certainly expect a great performance when the curtain rises at 7:30 P.M. in the Blind Brook auditorium on the 18th and 19th of November. Tickets have been selling for \$10 since November 7th, and everyone should attend to show their support for the time and effort that each and every cast member has invested in this production. "This cast has been extremely dedicated," commented Buchanan. "It shows in their performances."

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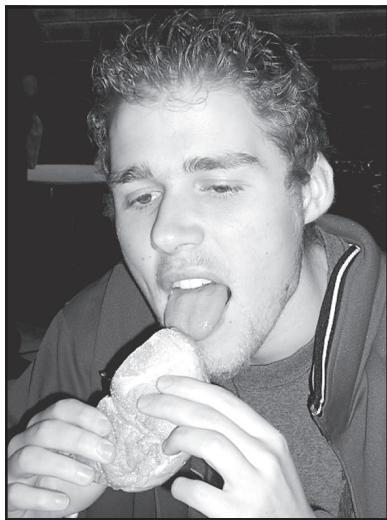
E-mail us at
FOCUS@blindbrook.org

Feasting With Foster

By Michelle Caley
and Chloe Greenbaum

When we last left dining extraordinaire Harrison Foster, he was sinking his teeth into a succulent slice of Sicilian pizza at the Westchester-renowned Italian haven, A'Mangiare. However, for this month's segment of "Feasting with Foster," we decided to switch gears and venture into Edo, a marvelous Hibachi-style venue located in scenic Port Chester, New York, between Western Tool Supply and Carpet World. Mr. Foster selected this fine locale for his next critiquing expedition after receiving positive feedback from fellow restaurant connoisseurs who have had the privilege of experiencing its fabulous cultural atmosphere.

As we strolled casually through the entrance hall, we were promptly greeted by a friendly host and were quickly seated without reservations. Although he seemed to radiate fine-dining know-how, Mr. Foster tried as hard as possible to conceal his profession, donning a casual array of vintage Abercrombie and Fitch garments. After being seated, we admired the restaurant's exotic atmosphere, which included a wall-to-wall Japanese mural as well as birch shoots strategically positioned throughout the dimly-lit building. "Wow!" exclaimed Mr. Foster as we prepared to order. "[There are] so many options on the menu, but I think I'll have to go with the classic chicken and shrimp hibachi medley." After devouring a series of appetizers, including a spicy onion soup (which he referred to as "pungent"), the famished Mr. Foster summarily inhaled his salad and a large bowl of rice. The real fun began with the entrance of



hibachi master, Chef Okta, to the culinary scene. After introducing himself to the multifarious hibachi-enthusiasts squeezed in at our table, he passionately ignited the iron grilling slab and, with a tone indicative of a warning, stated, "Don't try this at home." After emphatically screaming, "Showtime!" Okta proceeded to perform the classic "volcano" trick and lit an entire onion on fire, which hurled the audience into a state of complete awe. "Too much sake last night," chef Okta remarked as he accidentally catapulted a piece of shrimp over his shoulder. He went on to cook fried rice, vegetables, chicken, shrimp, and steak, which he enthusiastically called "Japanese cow."

While enjoying his zesty Asian smorgasbord, Mr. Foster noted that the cuisine offered at Abis, a competing hibachi restaurant, was more delicious than that of Edo; however, the exquisite decor and display of culinary dexterity present at Edo undoubtedly made the restaurant all the more striking. Following our filling meal, we were pleasantly surprised when a waiter informed us that all entrées include ice cream or sherbet for dessert. After delightfully swallowing his last bite of his chocolate ice cream, Mr. Foster exclaimed, "You always get a happy ending here." Both its exotic ambiance and flavorful food add to the restaurant's overall positive qualities. However, the chef's antics, which are extremely entertaining, truly put Edo over the top in terms of the spunkiness of its atmosphere. The restaurant's stimulating environment and close proximity to Rye Brook make it the perfect spot for an impromptu dinner.

Featured Movie of the Month:

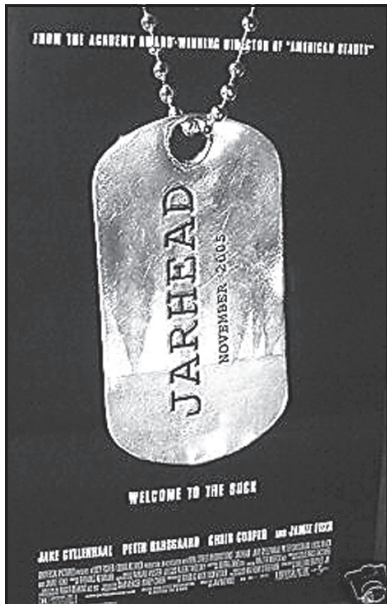
Jarhead

By Kimera Rosen

Although its tagline reads "Welcome to the Suck," *Jarhead*, which premiered on Friday, November 4th, is perhaps the most outstanding film in theaters today, so much that its position on the "Top Nine Most Popular Movies" list has been magnified as the Featured Movie of the Month. The movie is based on the 2003 best-selling memoir *Jarhead*, written by former U.S. Marine, Anthony Swofford, about his pre-Desert Storm military experiences in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

The film contains an outstanding cast starring Jake Gyllenhaal, Peter Sarsgaard, and Jamie Foxx. Gyllenhaal plays Anthony Swofford himself, a young third-generation enlistee in the Gulf War known by his fellow Marines as "Swoff." Foxx plays Sergeant Sykes, a Marine lifer

and head of Swofford's scout/sniper platoon, while Sarsgaard portrays Swofford's friend and mentor, Troy, a dedicated, true-blue Marine. Throughout the movie,



these three jarheads must trudge through perilous Middle Eastern deserts with no protection from the intolerable heat or the constant threat of combat with the ever-present Iraqi military. (The term "jarhead" is a self-imposed nickname for "Marine.")

The cinematography displayed in *Jarhead* is quite striking, particularly during the desert scenes. Each frame is shot perfectly while the intriguing score and soundtrack elevate the film to an extremely powerful, emotional level. The movie also contains a substantial amount of comedy that provides relief from the intense wartime storyline. Though some critics argue

Have Celebrity Motives Gone Awry?

By Sarah Rosenberg

Just a few Saturdays ago, I was sitting lazily on my couch, flipping through the television channels and contemplating how terrible T.V. really is these days. Finding nothing, I was about to turn the television off when a commercial for the Taurus World Stunt Awards appeared on the screen. Being an avid fan of *The O.C.*, my initial reaction was, "Oh yeah, I'm sure so many people would



rather watch stuntmen fly over flaming debris on motorcycles than Ryan McKenzie shooting someone or Mischa Barton in a bathing suit." I don't have anything personal against stunt people; I am simply unable to comprehend why our society feels the need to reward people for every trivial and dangerous action they perform. However, what truly bothered me about the Taurus World Stunt Awards was not the award recipients themselves, but the fact that, in our society, such recipients care solely about the attainment of trophies or plaques as opposed to the artistic journey they have taken to reach the pinnacle of their career. Maybe it's just me, but I'm truly appalled by a situation in which stuntmen who have risked their lives to perform various death-defying feats value an award more than their actual achievements. The same holds true for modern celebrities.

Case in point: Jennifer Lopez, an exceedingly wealthy singer/actress, has repeatedly told the media, "I don't want anything else but an Oscar." Well, perhaps someone should inform her that one must normally star in a decent movie before being nominated by the Academy for one of America's most prestigious film awards. And no, *Gigli* does not qualify. But on a more serious note, why not strive to make a noteworthy, critically acclaimed movie that a celebrity can be proud to say he/she took a part in? Acting is supposedly the true internal passion harbored by these people, so why not do it for the pure enjoyment of pursuing one's craft?

Another prime example of celebrities' extensive preoccupation with awards: What does Britney Spears consider one of the most upsetting moments of her career? Not a debilitating knee injury, not invasive paparazzi, not having her day-long marriage publicized and mercilessly mocked, but her loss of the Grammy for Best Newcomer to Christina Aguilera. Was it not enough

that she had gained overnight popularity and was almost instantly given the opportunity to perform in sold-out tours? Was it not enough to have her album go platinum multiple times over? No, for Britney it was all about the Grammy and the physical tokens she received as recognition for her talents. To her and so many other celebrities, album sales which, in essence, reflect fans' support of such artists, bear much less personal significance than a trophy awarded to them by fifty people.

It is here that the distinction between actor or singer and award-crazed celebrity becomes apparent. Those who truly have a passion for the entertainment industry are not exclusively concerned with the number of awards they receive; they care about their masterpieces being seen and enjoyed by the public. Yet, celebrities seem to be branching out everywhere these days, hence the evolution of multi-hyphenated titles. Whether it be the infamous Lindsey Lohan (actress-singer-dancer) or Jessica Simpson (actress-singer-makeup and clothing-line owner), it seems as though we cannot take the work of these "multi-hyphenates" seriously and that their only incentive to work is their acceptance of a shiny silver trophy. They have become more widely recognized for their alternate artistic ventures and numerous awards than for the actual reason they became famous: their talent. And the saddest part is they do not even seem to care. Gone are the days in Hollywood when people were rewarded solely for talent. Today, more actors are known for their latest marriage, divorce or famous award than for their actual performances in films. Recently, it has become acceptable to honor a television show with eight awards at the Golden Globes simply because of its current award quotient when there is a much more deserving cast in the midst of its sophomore year.

Every day, critics complain about the degeneration of the entertainment industry, but have they ever done anything to curtail the downfall of Hollywood? The answer is an overwhelming "No." If we continue to value celebrities for the number of awards they have received and reward them at every possible opportunity, how many of these entertainers can we truly trust to go on to do great things, as so many in old Hollywood have?

that the film does not harbor a true plot and that the ending is extremely disappointing, I feel that the unique blend of comedy and seriousness make *Jarhead* quite exceptional.

Aside from the compelling cinematography and direction, each of the actors gives a phenomenal performance. Jake Gyllenhaal, the actor who once played Bubble Boy, both surprised and stunned me by performing in such a genuine, realistic fashion. Not only does he accurately portray his character, his enjoyable acting infused every second

of the movie with stimulating intrigue as well. In addition, Jamie Foxx is able to provide comic relief while adequately replicating a passion for the U.S. Marine Corps and, once again, use his extensive capabilities to portray a likable character. Peter Sarsgaard also offers a spectacular performance and, as in many of his previous films, he stays true to his character from beginning to end. The overall combination of superb acting, excellent cinematography, and a compelling storyline truly makes *Jarhead* a film worth seeing.

A & E Editor: Marissa Barbaro

Arts & Entertainment

Advice for the Unsound**Dear Blabby**

By Jamie Florindi and Dana Silverstein

Dear Blabby,

I can't believe "the Rock's" location is being changed! I know that since construction is commencing at Blind Brook (mainly in the back near the athletic fields), the issue of the infamous Rock has arisen in a variety of cases. It's been a tradition since who knows when to decorate the rock during senior year, but since there seems to be no designated site for the Rock after its removal, I'm afraid that this privilege will no longer be available to seniors in the future. Personally, I think that if the rock *must* be relocated, it should be moved to the front of the school where everyone can see it; this would definitely save everyone the hassle of trying to find an adequate alternate location. However, certain individuals feel that the front of the school is just not the place for this colorful emblem of Blind Brook tradition. Wherever the Rock is situated, it will most likely be there permanently, and its relocation is an issue that affects present and future senior classes at Blind Brook. I would really like to get involved and take an active role in this issue. Blabby, how can I help, and what should be done?

Sincerely,
Distraught Delilah

Dear Distraught Delilah,

Sounds like you've got a very controversial issue on your hands, one that I am not used to dealing with. I realize that "the Rock" is the symbol of the Blind Brook senior class and that other grades look forward to their senior year so that they can decorate the rock and infuse it with their own sort of uniqueness. As a senior, viewing your name written on the Rock in brightly colored paint for the entire Blind Brook student body to see is, without a doubt, extremely special, so I understand why you are so concerned. However, it seems as though it will take months of dispute and long meetings to reach some sort of compromise regarding the location of the Rock. At the moment, the various branches of the Blind Brook student government are working collectively to review construction plans in order to find a suitable place for the Rock. If you are this passionate about the cause, you should approach the presidents of these standing committees and ask if you can participate in finding a new location for the Rock. A piece of advice: never stop fighting for what you believe in. Your ideas can sway a decision if you speak up for what you believe in. You never truly know the power of an idea until you put it into action.

Good Luck,
Blabby

Dear Blabby,

Boy do my hands hurt! All that clapping really made them sore! A couple of weeks ago, I was one of the only students at the Blind Brook pep rally cheering my heart out for our fall sport teams. You would think that a pep band, cheerleaders, and fun activities among the different athletic teams would get everyone in the gym pumped up for the events, but the onlookers barely acknowledged them! Even when the cheerleaders got up to do the dance that they have been working on for weeks, the student body simply stared and did not respond at all to their hard work and commitment. Trying to get my friends to cheer even took a lot out of me. Also, on top of everything else, the pep rally was optional! Students didn't even have to attend unless they wanted to! Pep rallies are supposed to unite the school and get students excited for the upcoming homecoming games, not allow them to leave school early. I was also surprised to see that there wasn't as large of a turnout at the actual sporting events that there usually is, which disappointed me greatly. I feel as though the dedication and planning that went into this event was not fully recognized, and it seems as though it isn't even possible for Blind Brook students to show more spirit. Please help me out! It would be greatly appreciated!

Truly Yours,
Super-Spirited Sally

Dear Super-Spirited Sally,

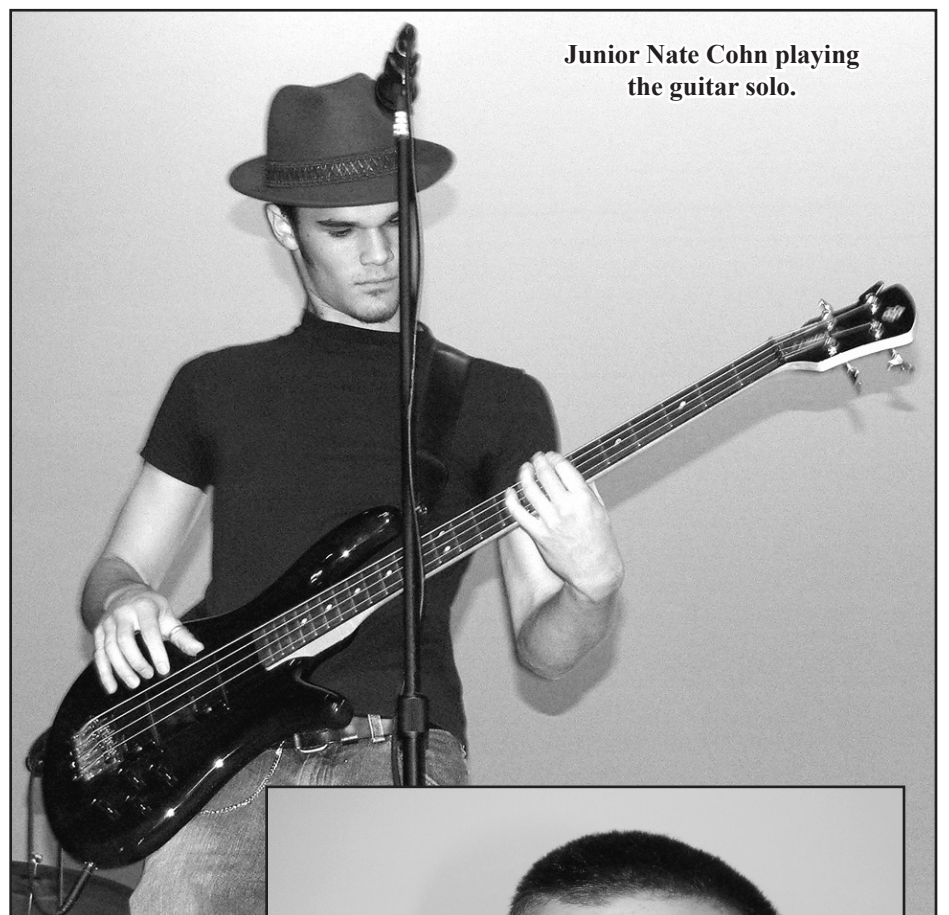
Spirit can't just be thrown into a gymnasium on one specific day; it has to be introduced to the students over time. You need to show them that spirit is important and that it really helps to support athletic teams by assuring them that their school is behind them 100%, even if they don't bring home a victory. Now, we don't want Blind Brook students to go absolutely wild with spirit (i.e., defacing opposing schools and jeering snidely at games), but you do need to clap that extra second when the teams are being announced during the pep rally and to help out the cheerleaders by participating in their cheers. Is that really much to ask? I don't think so. Being a cheerleader myself back in the day, I understand how hard it is to maintain everyone's full attention, but making an effort to prompt others to cheer certainly won't hurt. You should also try to encourage other students to give the Senators who organized the pep rally some feedback on how to make the next one better. If you have any concerns, it is your job to take action. Talk to your friends and classmates and tell them that you need their help. It won't hurt to ask. I truly believe that spirit will surface eventually, but it'll take both time and effort on the students' part. Just be patient and do the best you can to make Blind Brook a more spirited school.

Hope this helps,
Blabby



Seniors Jen Flaxman and Michelle Simon doing their rendition of "Run-Around" by Blues Traveler at the Katrina-relief concert organized by the Blind Brook Senate. The event took place on October 21 in Blind Brook's auditorium.

Katrina-relief concert at BBHS



Junior Nate Cohn playing the guitar solo.

Photos by
Emily Brackman



Junior
Greg Millar
on stage.

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Submissions are due December 15. See Jeff Wiener or Ms. Patrão, or e-mail us at FOCUS@blindbrook.org for submission or for more information.

Editorial

Separate But Equal—Please!

By Melissa Lumish

It was my first day in phys. ed. this year after my two-month exemption for being on the varsity tennis team. Although I had enjoyed my second period free every other day, my reluctance to join the class was eased by the fact that we were playing basketball. I enjoy basketball and I planned to join the “non-intense” game, a seemingly minor decision, considering that the duration of the period is only forty minutes. Just twenty minutes into our game, however, I caught sight of my friend, who had been accidentally knocked to the ground by a much sturdier male classmate. Our “non-intense” game suddenly became intense as we rushed to find the school nurse. Six hours and three layers of stitches later, my friend came to a simple conclusion: co-ed gym is not for her.

The idea to simultaneously run “intense” and “non-intense” games was advantageous and can surely be maintained in the future, despite the accident. However, it did not protect my friend from encountering an injury.

Now, one might argue that she is a single student, victim of one of many accidents that are bound to happen when high school students of various skill levels come together to play a sport. Yet, this instance of dissatisfaction with the physical education program reminds me of a similar scenario that occurred just one year ago when I was in a co-ed gym class playing floor hockey. Though I was a participant in the game, I was a spectator, once again, to an unfortunate run-in, this time between a female student’s nose and a male student’s hockey stick. You can

guess what happened next.

In a high school of fewer than four hundred kids, two serious accidents within a year are sufficient to warrant change. Action was taken after the incident last year to ensure that students wear safety goggles while playing floor hockey. Yet, I question whether wearing safety goggles would have protected the student’s nose from being broken and I have reservations about the effectiveness of these goggles in protecting other body parts. In addition, this requirement, instituted only for hockey, bore no protective influence on my friend during our basketball game.

The only appropriate response to these unfortunate events and to the guilt that unfairly plagues the good-intentioned male offenders is the separation of female and male physical education classes. We have

two teachers and over forty kids using the middle and high school gyms during second period and we have, therefore, a sufficient number of students and teachers to divide the gym class by gender. Although the equality of men and women is endorsed in today’s society, the difference in the physical builds of the two genders is a fact of nature that cannot be overlooked. This is not to say that all males are larger and more athletic than females. Yet, there is clearly a need for separate classes based on the average sizes of men and women, regardless of the bias in my generalization.

Before we strive to add any more AP classes to Blind Brook’s repertoire, perhaps we should add an extra gym class or two in order to accommodate the need for separate classes and for the maintenance of students’ safety.

Freedom of the Dress

By Jared Hoffman

Those who know me best know I’m most comfortable in a certain style of clothing. It’s really not difficult for me to decide what I’m wearing in the morning before school. I wear the same pair of jeans I’ve worn every day for the last three years of my life. I haven’t worn a different style of shoe other than New Balance for five years. I have a seven shirt rotation: DARE, Wildlife Conservation Society, Westchester Jewish Basketball League Championship, Jewish Basketball jersey, green Nike swoosh, and a grey Abercrombie that I stole from my friend Steven Berman in eighth grade. Occasionally, I’ll wear a collared shirt to keep my fan base (mainly my mother) impressed.

My AP American teacher, Mrs. Shelley Jacobson, told me it’s my right as a student attending a public school to dress however I want, granted my skirts must be well below my knee and my cleavage can’t protrude. Oh, and I can’t make any shout-outs to Jesus or my friend’s mother.

Therefore, when the National Basketball Association instituted a dress code policy that requires players to dress in a suit and tie and which, in essence, restricts their individual style, my liberal heart went out to them. Doesn’t the first amendment guarantee freedom of the dress? If I can dress however I please, why should their freedom of the dress be trampled on?

I can only imagine how our precious Blind Brook, a school noted for catering to the whims and whines of its students, would be affected if a dress code were enacted that restricted our freedom of the dress. There’s only one word that I can think of that would do justice upon the actions of the Blind Brook students: mutiny. Every student in Blind Brook would have their own reason why they think the policy should be retracted. Some would cite the unconstitutionality of the new code. Others would note the fact that it’s never been done before, so what has happened now to change the policy? I know plenty of girls who would say the new “uniform” doesn’t simultaneously match with their hair, nails, and accessories. Plus, how would some males feel (namely the Editor-in-Chief of this newspaper) if they couldn’t double pop two collared shirts?

Hence, I can sympathize with the fact that wearing business attire to *every single game* can be onerous. After all, this makes earning millions of dollars tough, doesn’t it?

Man up.

And grow up. I don’t work for a multi-million dollar corporation. I attend a public school; had my parents decided to send me to a hoity-toity private school, I would be deal-

ing with the same problem the NBA players face today, minus the millions of dollars, of course. If you want to work for a multimillion-dollar conglomeration, say goodbye to your “bling-bling”, sleeveless shirts, do rags, and headphones boys; and don’t forget to take off your sunglasses while you’re inside.

Last year, Commissioner David Stern was faced with an unfortunate situation; after a fan threw a cup of ice at a player during a Detroit Pistons and Indiana Pacers game, chaos ensued. Players from both teams jumped into the crowd and started fighting with the fans, resulting in hefty fines and suspensions for their reprehensible behavior.

Knowing this, arguments against the dress policy are untenable. Stern’s motive is to distance the league from last year’s ugly brawl, behavior that emulated the conduct of thugs, hip-hop, and “gangsta” culture. Some critics believe that the new mandate is racially motivated and targeted towards African-American players since approximately eighty percent of the NBA is comprised of players of color. However, the new policy is color blind; *every* player in the league has the choice to comply or defy but not without penalty. Furthermore, who says an African American can’t wear a suit? As film director Spike Lee said, “Who says that to have a black man in a suit and tie, you’re not black?” Other critics claim that the dress code straitens a player’s individual freedom and sense of style. In reality, all Stern really wants is for the players to go to work dressed like professionals, thinking like professionals, and acting like professionals. I know every morning, my father wakes up and puts on a suit and tie, puts a comb through his hair and heads off for work; most American professional industries require such attire for their business people. And yet, somehow, this dress code has become a huge controversy in the NBA.

Some NBA players have a penchant for attending press conferences casually, as if they’re only representing themselves and not their organization. Players often don baggy undershirts, saggy jeans, baseball hats, do rags, and “bling-bling”. These outfits do express the individuality about the people wearing them; they are in essence the wearers’ “signature”. However, no one would expect any player to show up on the basketball court wearing baggy pants, do rags and shades on, right? Of course not -- these garments are inappropriate attire for “work.” You don’t hear players complaining that they can’t express their individuality on the court by having to remove their street clothes, do you? No, because there is a designated uniform required while you are on the job. Coming to the arenas, leaving after the game

and giving press conferences are all part of the job, a job, I might add, that pays just a bit more than minimum wage. For the wages they are earning, the least the players can do is comply with a simple dress code.

So wear your “bling-bling” and all that goes with it any other time you want, express yourself

with your friends and family, hang around your house in anything that makes you comfortable and allows you to convey your inner spiritual and emotional feelings. If you want to play for the NBA, knock yourself out and put on a suit.

My only advice—set up a seven-suit rotation. It’s worked for me.

Trojans’ Soccer Ends In Heartbreaking Shootout Continued from page 6

no one in shootouts; it is purely a test of outsmarting the other opponent. With so much on the line in this game, every shot and every save would be crucial. Trojan fans backed their players as they had been doing all season long to try to extend the season one game longer.

B.B. sent forward their best penalty kickers: senior Jordan Glazer, juniors Jesse Sedler and Jonny Sonkin, sophomore Brett Novick, and Kaufman. Sophomore goalie Harris Brett would remain in net.

Dobbs Ferry would get to shoot first. With intensity building, Brett flared his arms up and down in net to represent nothing was getting past his wingspan on this one. Upon kicking, the ball rolled hard along the ground; Brett fell straight down to secure the ball in his hands. Brett pumped his fist as he ran to the sideline to be congratulated by his onlooking team. Glazer would be first for the Trojans. His kick went wide left to keep the series tied.

The second shot for the Eagles deflected off the left goal post as the Trojan fans let out a great sigh of relief. Novick was selected to shoot second. His shot appeared to be in; however, his shot also deflected just off the left goal post to keep the series tied.

The turning point in the game proved to be the third shot of the series. The Eagles were able to put one past Brett in the upper right corner of the goal. The Trojans’ third shooter, Sedler, took his time to examine a fault in the goalie’s defense. Upon determining a target, Sedler unleashed to the bottom left corner, perfectly placed. Unbelievably, the Eagles’ goalie made a diving stop to give the Eagles a 1-0 cushion going into the fourth round.

Upon their second goal, Sonkin was faced with a do-or-die shot. If he missed this shot, it wouldn’t matter what hap-

pened in the rest of the series because he was one of two shooters left to try to tie the shootout at two. Under pressure, Sonkin calmly approached the ball from the designated penalty kick spot. Intensity built as time stood still; the crowd held their breath in awaited anticipation. A slight mistake in Sonkin’s shot would send the Trojans home for the season. As clutch as can be, Sonkin sailed the ball into the upper right corner of the goal, putting the game in the hands of his goalie. “The first three shots by our team went to the goalie’s right, so he was anticipating another shot to the right,” explained Sonkin. “I shot to his left side and it went in.”

If Brett could save this goal, Kaufman would have the chance of a lifetime to tie the game and send it into another best-of-five series. However, Dobbs Ferry’s best kicker delivered for them, ending the Trojans’ season. As Brett and his teammates lay on the ground with their heads buried in defeat, fans applauded the Trojans for their outstanding 12-5-1 season.

Levine said, “Part of the reason we lost the game was the absence of Josh in the second half. He was an important leader of our defense and our team as a whole.”

Graduating this year, along with co-captains Levine and Evan Alper, will be Glazer, Jason Calman, and Nick Di-Canio. The Trojans seek to gain revenge next season with the same core players from this year’s team.

“We had a great season and no one should be ashamed,” reflected junior Steven Berman. “We always fought hard, played well, and had fun.”

Echoed Sedler, “We’ll be back next year, there’s no doubt in my mind. While we will miss the graduating seniors, I’m confident that the team we’ll have will put up a good fight next year.”

Editorial

It's [Not] Better on Top: The Narrative of a Bitter Senior

Let me first set the stage. It is the second to last week of summer, and my fellow senior class officers and I have gathered to plan out our senior "traditions" that coincide with every start of the school year. Meeting with Assistant Principal Jane Wermuth, it was decided that we would have our traditional scavenger hunt and banner painting the weekend before school would start, but that we would paint the infamous "rock" the weekend after the commencement of the 2005-2006 school year.

At first we were disappointed that we could not paint the rock before school started, but the senior class quickly rebounded from frustration and the officers started to finalize the details. Letters were typed, folded, and mailed to every member of the senior class in order to help ensure that as many seniors as possible would participate in the event that has come to represent senior class unity. Fellow officer Kerri Dunigan and I purchased paint supplies at Home Depot and stood on line for over an hour and a half, waiting to have our yellow paint mixed...this was after the debacle over what color to paint the rock, which was an issue within itself.

The day finally came, in the first week of September, and the senior class was as united as I have ever seen it. Typically, we have had a reputation of being "cliquish," and I think I can

say without much objection, that there are divisions; however, this occasion seemed to put those divisions aside, as we all came together to unite to accomplish one project, while having fun and smothering one another in bright

suggestions, it was deemed acceptable and the slogan was inscribed onto the rock in deep blue spray paint, for all to see.

Let me fast forward two months (note: during these two months, the

The phrase "It's better on top" can simply mean that we, the senior class, feel that it is better to be at the top of the school; any other inference of this expression lies merely within the mind of its reader, which is something that the senior class cannot, and has not intended to, control.

yellow paint.

The miniature chaos, one might say, began when deciding on a slogan—a process that took much longer and a lot more yelling than I had anticipated. The suggestions varied from extremely inappropriate, which were instantly rejected by the administration, to innocent, which were instantly rejected by the senior class.

Initially, the slogan "It's Better on Top" was rejected by the administration and senior Class Advisor Charlene Decker, but after hearing some of the other, more inappropriate and offensive

rock was never spoken about, and the school was seemingly peaceful for Blind Brook). My fellow officers and I, along with our beloved advisor, are asked to meet with Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ronald Valenti and Principal Anthony Baxter regarding the rock.

We were told that a complaint had been filed by a middle school parent and that there was a possible Title 9 violation on school territory with regard to the offensiveness of the saying "It's Better on Top." We were told that the rock could not stay as it was and that it would be up to us, the senior class officers and advisor, to determine how it should be altered. Let me just say two words: instant chaos.

My class has been angry about several school policies in the past but, to be perfectly honest, I have never seen anything like this before. It was all anyone would talk to me about. Every sentence seemed to start with "This makes no sense..." or "I don't understand..."

So, now I get to my point—my objections to this alteration of the symbol of senior unity, pride, and tradition.

First of all, let me discuss the past rocks of Blind Brook. The class of 1997's rock read, "Seniors '97, Higher than Heaven." The Class of 2003's rock read, "Seniors '03—We're Rock Hard." The Class of 2004's rock made a reference to National Marijuana Day saying, "Seniors '04-20 Cuts to Freedom." And finally, last year's class of 2005's read, "Trojans '05—We're Finally Bustin' Out." Now, let us be realistic: does Blind Brook have a history of obvious double entendres? I think so.

Secondly, I would like to direct your attention to the expression, "Beauty lies in the eye of the beholder." But,

I would like you to change the word beauty to vulgarity. The phrase "It's better on top" can simply mean that we, the senior class, feel that it is better to be at the top of the school; any other inference of this expression lies merely within the mind of its reader, which is something that the senior class cannot, and has not intended to, control. Whatever younger middle school students have knowledge about up to this point is their problem and their parents', not that of the class of 2006.

Furthermore, obviously certain people never even saw the rock before this objection was raised, which leads me to believe that many people in the Rye Brook community have never even seen the rock. For those who deemed the expression on the rock so inappropriate or offensive, I hate to break it to you, but you have only drawn more attention to it. Many people would have never seen it but, because the objection has been raised, so have eyebrows. Now, it is on the front page of this newspaper because it is my duty to head an organization that reports accurately the events that take place within this community.

My final objection lies in what I discovered today. Because the back windows to the school are boarded up due to construction, I, along with the rest of Blind Brook, have not seen the rock since construction initiated. So, when I went to take a photograph of the newly painted rock for this newspaper, I discovered something surprising—the rock is almost completely covered in dirt. Now, you might be asking what I am trying to say...well, here is my point. All of this senior and, yes, community members' resentment has been brought about for nothing—no one can even see the rock right now.

I try not to complain about much. I hate whining about change, and I hate when others do it, especially when they have no viable alternatives; however, I cannot help but be frustrated with this current situation. My officers and I spent hours planning this event: choosing dates, writing letters, mailing them, purchasing supplies, organizing and hushing my grade to vote, and now what do I have to show for it? A rock that has had my senior class slogan removed from it, covered in a mound of dirt.



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