On Exhibit

The Annual Student Art Exhibition
April 27–May 23, 2017, in The Romano Gallery

Displaying student work in all different mediums, this show celebrates the accomplishments, hard work and dedication of Blair’s talented fine artists.
On the Cover:
Blair Academy continued a 169-year tradition when School opened at Convocation on September 5, 2016. (Left to right) Will Sigety ’18, Alec Valle ’18, Jon Carlsson ’18, Maryrita Curcio ’18, Franklin Colburn ’18, Katharina Kremer ’18, Alex Roberts ’18, Ernesto Lippert ’18 and Kenza Fernandez ’18 posed under the Arch before processing down the front hill of campus and back up to Armstrong-Hipkins Center for the Arts, where assembled faculty members applauded students’ arrival. At the Convocation ceremony, Head of School Chris Fortunato set the tone for the year when he challenged students “to look up more than down; to be builders and not cynics; and to be kind when others might not be.”
Evan Grohowskí ’18

Evan snapped this photograph of a “barren sky, full of colors” during a cross-country bike trip last summer. Shot near the eastern border of New Mexico just after sunrise, “Morning Flats” depicts the simple beauty of nature while Evan’s fellow bikers catch a quick break from their long ride. “We had very little time off the bike,” Evan said. “There were countless occasions when I would see one of the most beautiful sights nature has to offer and could only take a mental picture of it. So whenever I was off the bike, usually because of flat tires, I would take as many photos as possible, no matter where I was.”

What do you think about the stories in this issue of the Blair Bulletin? Let us know—your letter may be published in the next issue. Please send your comments to bulletin@blair.edu.
“It is Blair’s time-honored tradition of relationship-based learning that will truly bring our newest building to life.”

by leveraging the talents of alumni and parents—the people who care deeply for this School—in unique platforms and events that will benefit our students and every member of the Blair family.

Through the years, alumni and parents have shared a wealth of experience, wisdom and expertise with students and fellow members of the Blair community. We are grateful that this generous offering of time and talent continues today. In just the past year or so, alumni and parents have contributed to the academic life of the School in many ways, including as Skeptics speakers; by taking part in Blair LEADS and Day of Service activities supporting those in need; by leading lively classroom sessions in economics and biotechnology; by inspiring us at Chapel (as only Trustee Chairman Emeritus John C. Bogle ‘47 can); and by enriching a fine arts trip to the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Once the CIC is open, we envision even more opportunities for alumni and parents to become involved in the Blair experience not only for our students and teachers, but for alumni, parents and all who are connected to this great School.

The CIC will be a place where the power of Blair’s extended network will shine. One of our goals for CIC programming is to more purposefully connect elements of our curriculum to the opportunities and challenges of the world beyond campus. And one of the ways we hope to do this is

As the CIC’s state-of-the-art academic spaces continue to take shape, I can’t help but reflect that it is Blair’s time-honored tradition of relationship-based learning that will truly bring our newest building to life. Of course, students and faculty will enjoy daily opportunities to pursue intellectual ideas and tackle problems together in these spaces, but I also anticipate that relationships will be forged among many members of the extended Blair community as a result of the project-oriented programs that will be based here and extend beyond our campus. And I hope many of you will become part of School life by participating in some large or small way.

As Head of School, I am deeply grateful for Blair family members’ sense of responsibility for our School and for the kindness and care that is always shared with our students—and that we share with one another. This is what makes the Blair network special and the Blair connection priceless.

As we look ahead to the bright days of spring, to our annual Day of Service, graduation and Alumni Weekend, I thank you again for your ongoing support of our great School, and I look forward to the many time-honored and new ways we will continue to connect with one another.

Christopher Fortunato
Head of School
FOUR ALUMS DISH ABOUT THEIR LIVES IN FOOD
Everyone loves to talk about food.

And why not? We all eat, we have an opinion about what’s on our plates, and food, in all its glory, is a *bona fide* media darling.

Here we dish with four Blair young alumni who probably talk about food more than most: They are all food-industry professionals. From the halls—and the dining hall—of Blair, each has cooked up a unique recipe for success in a field that is notorious for long hours, stiff competition and customers with ever-changing tastes.

Pull up a chair and find out what’s cooking in these young entrepreneurs’ food-centric careers. You’ll discover there’s one not-so-secret ingredient they all have in common: hard work.
BUSINESS: Figbar, a dessert-and-drinks restaurant in Norwich, England

OCCUPATION: Co-owner with her husband, pastry chef Jaime Garbutt

HOW HER BLAIR EXPERIENCE FLAVORS HER CURRENT CAREER: I learned to be organized at Blair. Hands down, that has helped me in every way.

ADVICE FOR WOULD-BE FOODIES: This is a tough, tough business, so be sure to think through every decision. Surround yourself with a strong support system, and be nice to and treat your suppliers with respect. Befriend anyone you can in the field, especially those you admire. There is room enough for everyone, so do the best you can at what you are doing, and then you won’t view anyone as competition.

FAVORITE BLAIR DINING HALL FOOD: The salad bar—“But there’s just something about those Blair cookies!”

@ www.figbarnorwich.com  @ FigbarNorwich  @ FigbarNorwich  @ figbarnorwich
FROM POETRY TO PASTRY
You might expect someone who runs a dessert restaurant to have a culinary background, but Steph Leal Garbutt, 33, “got interested in the food industry in a different way.” She actually had every intention of pursuing a career in academia. Having developed a love of the humanities at Blair, she earned dual bachelor degrees in English and philosophy at Mary Washington College in Virginia and an MA in creative writing at the University of East Anglia (UEA) in Norwich, England. By 2009, she had published a volume of poetry, worked as a performance poet at literary events throughout England and returned to UEA to begin her PhD in philosophy.

Along this professorial path, Steph met her husband-to-be, Jaime Garbutt, a British pastry chef with Michelin-star credentials. Jaime “wooed her with a whirlwind tour of Norfolk’s eating scene,” and in 2012, they married in Steph’s native New Jersey and took up residence in London, where Jaime worked as head pastry chef at the iconic Playboy Club in Mayfair.

Steph, meanwhile, had decided that teaching philosophy to undergrads was not her dream job—but she wasn’t quite sure what was. In the interim, she went to work for chef James Knappett, Jaime’s friend and owner of two popular London restaurants.

As Chef Knappett’s administrative manager, Steph wore a number of hats, and none of them was a chef’s toque. She became the company’s social media, reservations and public relations expert and wrote recipes for magazine spreads. This led to similar work for American celebrity chef Judy Joo, Jaime’s boss at the Playboy Club.

“Both chefs realized it was good to have employed someone who was not an industry insider,” Steph said. Her creative thinking and eye for detail (the recipes she wrote not only worked but boasted correct punctuation!) were invaluable, and she began to see that she could do a lot in the industry with what she already knew.

As Jaime and Steph settled into married life and started their family (daughter Ella was born in 2014), the pair put plans in motion for their next phase of work/life: opening their own business. “The big challenge of a chef’s life is working long, late hours,” Steph acknowledged. “We wanted our work to be our lifestyle. Owning your own place allows you to set your own schedule—to a degree—and prioritize your life when you need to. That’s especially important once you have kids.”

By 2016, Jaime and Steph felt they knew enough about the restaurant industry to make the leap to business ownership. With their second daughter, Ariele, on the way, and a deliciously original dessert-and-drinks concept in mind, they moved to Norwich (where they met); gutted, designed, built and furnished a 500-square-foot storefront; and launched Figbar.

AMPLIFY YOUR SWEET TOOTH
Figbar is a “modern meeting place” that aims to “amplify your sweet tooth,” open for sweet treats five days a week. On-the-run commuters grab coffee and breakfast “cruffins” (braided croissants baked in a muffin tin); midday shoppers relax at the restaurant’s sharing table or window bar for tea and whimsically flavored financiers; and couples, not-quite-ready to go home after an evening at the theatre, linger over plated desserts (including the chocolate-mousse-peanut-parfait-salted-caramel “Snickers”) and expertly paired glasses of wine.

A plus of Figbar’s desserts-only concept is that Jaime and Steph have no direct competitors—certainly not in Norwich, and perhaps not in all of England. At the same time, Steph conceded, “You can go into any good restaurant with a good chef and have dessert.” It’s Jaime’s ingenuity and all-pastry, Michelin-star background that sets them apart. He makes and bakes every element of every dessert, and he is the culinary creative force behind the enterprise.

Asked whether she plays a role in the kitchen, Steph laughed, “Oh, God no!” and wryly described her position as the company “catch-all.” In truth, she runs the business side of Figbar, and she has developed a savvy skillset that has been integral to the restaurant’s success in its first year of operation.
“You have to understand food, you have to love food and you have to make excellent food, but you really have to understand the business side, too. You can have the best food ever, but if nobody is coming in, your establishment won’t stay open.”

– STEPH LEAL GARBUJT ‘02, co-owner, Figbar restaurant

Steph was Figbar’s interior designer, not to mention an eight-months-pregnant painter, in the days leading up to its opening. She is the company’s administrator, accountant, human relations department, front-of-house trainer, social media guru, recipe writer and public relations specialist.

She has also discovered a knack for food styling and, having learned much about wine and champagne during her stint with Chef Knappett and from her father, who “has a wonderful wine cellar,” Steph chooses all the wine pairings for Jaime’s creations. Last, but certainly not least, she is the busy mother of two toddlers who has honed her ability to “do anything from any place that has Internet.”

GLOBAL PASTRY DOMINATION

Life in the dessert business is pretty sweet for Steph, Jaime and their daughters. Their home is less than a mile from Figbar, so it’s easy for Steph to stop by and for Jaime, despite long hours in the kitchen, to spend time with Ella and Ariele every day. They enjoy the flexibility and freedom to innovate that comes with owning their own business, and they are inspired by their enthusiastic customers and the positive feedback and support they’ve received from the Norwich community.

Of course, the couple has experienced a few challenges, too: Some of Jaime’s original dessert concepts have shown up on other restaurants’ menus—which is flattering, but frustrating—and the plethora of food TV shows and food media has pretty much given license to anyone to be a critic.

Steph views any such criticism philosophically, though, having come to the realization that the food, while essential, is not necessarily the most important part of a successful food business. “Yes, you have to understand food; you have to love food and you have to make excellent food, but you really have to understand the business side, too,” she said.

“You can have the best food ever, but if nobody is coming in, your establishment won’t stay open.”

The Garbutts plan to keep Figbar open for a long time and are taking on more wholesale accounts and catering clients and hoping to acquire a food truck—all the rage at British weddings—to grow their business this year. Their long-range plan includes additional Figbar locations, one of which will likely be in the States, because Ella and Ariele, who are American citizens in addition to being British citizens, must live in the United States for two years before they turn 16.

“We’re not talking about global pastry domination,” Steph said with a smile, “but we have a plan that’s achievable, and it’s enough to keep us interested and motivated.”

In the meantime, the couple will continue to “bring dessert into focus” for the lucky citizens of Norwich, treating them daily to the likes of double-baked chocolate tortes, Earl Grey crème brûlée, brioche pretzels and more. If you’re in the neighborhood, stop in; if you’re anywhere else in the world, follow Figbar on social media (@figbarnorwich) or read “Crumbs” (www.figbarnorwich.com/news), the blog where Steph gives readers a taste of life in pastry.
Shaun MEHTANI ’02

BUSINESS: Mehtani Restaurant Group in northern New Jersey, operating four restaurants (Ming, Ming II, Mehndi and Moghul), a catering hall (Mirage), a cocktail bar (SM23) and four adult day care centers

OCCUPATION: President

HOW HIS BLAIR EXPERIENCE FLAVORS HIS CURRENT CAREER: At Blair, I lived with and got to know a very diverse group of people. This helped me understand that different people have different needs and preferences.

ADVICE FOR WOULD-BE FOODIES: Stay calm under pressure and be very fast on your feet. If you are a person who is easily made anxious, this is probably not the right industry for you! The restaurant business involves working many late nights and every weekend, guaranteed, so you must have a supportive partner.

FAVORITE BLAIR DINING HALL FOOD: Chicken Kiev—“I love butter!”

@ www.mehtanirestaurantgroup.com
PRESIDENT & FIREMAN
Shaun Mehtani, 33, is president of Mehtani Restaurant Group, a collection of beautifully appointed, high-end dining establishments in northern New Jersey that specialize in creative and classic Asian and Indian cuisine. He considers “president” an interesting title.

“I spend much more time figuring out why things aren’t working than I do sitting in an office,” he reflected. Is a dishwasher broken? Is a sewer line backed up? Is the reservation system offline? Despite the fact that he has the right people in the right places throughout his restaurant empire, Shaun never hesitates to troubleshoot a “hiccup” in the operation and determine its solution. “I consider myself a fireman, putting out fires all day,” he continued. “I actually have put out fires!”

Today, the hospitality industry’s daily fires—both real and figurative—keep Shaun interested and challenged in the exciting business of running restaurants, but they don’t necessarily come as a surprise. Having grown up in his parents’ restaurant business, established just before he was born in 1983, he already has two decades of experience under his belt. In addition, he’s learned a great deal through his own successes and failures on his path to becoming company president. And all of it informs the way Shaun addresses the trials and the changing landscape of food-business ownership.

LEARNING THE ROPES
Shaun’s undergraduate education took him from high school at Blair, where “phenomenal teachers” fueled his love of math and the arts and living with kids from all over the world underscored the diversity of people’s needs, to New York University’s Stern School of Business, where he earned a BS in economics and marketing in 2006. After graduation, his parents had further, practical education in mind: Satish and Sneh wanted their son to have the experience of opening a restaurant, so for the next year-and-a-half, this became Shaun’s job and project.

Starting from scratch, he created a three-outlet concept that would complement his parents’ successful Indian establishments. He found a Morristown, New Jersey, location, designed the spaces, oversaw construction and compliance with local regulations, traveled internationally to choose every facet of the décor, hired and trained staff, and more. “It was a huge learning experience, and I messed up a lot,” Shaun recalled. “Thankfully, I had tremendous help and guidance along the way.”

On Shaun’s 23rd birthday in early 2007, the Mehtani family celebrated the opening of their company’s three newest venues: Mehndi and Ming II, sophisticated North Indian and Pan-Asian restaurants, respectively, and SM23, a hip, commemoratively named creative cocktail bar. Shaun became vice president of operations for Mehtani Restaurant Group and ran the restaurants until 2009, when the economic downturn created an opportune time for him to earn his MBA at Dartmouth College. When he returned to New Jersey two years later, his parents retired—and Shaun took the helm of Mehtani Restaurant Group.

INDUSTRY CHANGES & CHALLENGES
As a person who describes himself as “easily bored,” Shaun loves that no two days are alike in the “very evolving” restaurant business. There are always new customers, new staff members, new regulations and, of course, new problems to keep him on his toes.

Property maintenance presents a particular challenge. “I spend a lot more time on construction and general maintenance than I ever would have thought,” Shaun marveled. “We joke that we build up the restaurants on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, only to have things break on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Then we start all over, every week.”

The need to maintain consistency in every aspect of food and service is another industry must, and Mehtani restaurants shine in this regard, thanks in large part to their loyal staff.

“Some days, there are no issues; some days, I feel like I need three of me.”

– SHAUN MEHTANI ’02, president, Mehtani Restaurant Group
“We incentivize our employees to stay with us,” Shaun said. “Our chefs and servers have been with us for years, and they know our customers and our food, they know our business and their role in it. All of this is key to maintaining a consistent product, and it sets us apart from our competition.”

On the flip side of the loyalty coin, Shaun acknowledged that it is much more difficult to achieve customer loyalty now than in the past. “In my parents’ day, we had many guests who would come to our restaurants two or three times a week. Our staff knew their names, seated them at their favorite tables, knew their drink orders, their favorite dishes and even how they liked them prepared,” Shaun reminisced. “My chefs, my staff and I love making those human connections—it is really the best part of this business. But that is much harder to do today, now that everyone is always looking to try new, trendy places.”

Shaun believes the advent of social media, food blogging and restaurant rating apps like Yelp is driving restaurant patrons’ insatiable hunger for fresh finds. Although Mehtani Restaurant Group maintains a robust Internet presence, he is, understandably, not a big fan of such things as the “Instagram-ification” of food. “We recently had a customer take 20 minutes to set up a special light on his table and photograph his dinner before he ate it,” Shaun said, shaking his head. “Obviously, the experience of eating lost something in the time it took the man to document the meal. I say enjoy the moment! But, that’s a life thing now, too; it’s not just happening in restaurants.”

**LETTING THE FUTURE UNFOLD**

Trendiness, apps and maintenance issues aside, Shaun has been in the industry long enough to know that the restaurant business, driven as it is by consumer spending, can be extremely volatile. Thus, no matter the problem du jour, it’s essential to remain calm, not overreact and work diligently to resolve the situation.

He is applying this sense of calm leadership to the Mehtani Restaurant Group’s future, too. He knows that, at some point, he will grow the business, but he is not sure what that growth looks like yet. “I’m a planner, but I try to let business unfold and allow opportunities to present themselves,” he said. “My grandmother always said, ‘If you follow your heart, you will never be upset. If you follow your brain, you will act logically, but you may be upset.’ I try to follow my heart.”

For now, as life unfolds the way it will, Shaun continues to lead Mehtani Restaurant Group in hands-on style. On a typical Saturday night, the busiest night in the restaurant week, he will not be home with his wife of two years, Maria (whom he describes as very supportive and understanding and the maker of delicious risotto). He will be on the floor of one of his restaurants, because it is at maximum occupancy, with the maximum number of VIP events going on—perhaps a 16-person birthday party, a bachelorette party and a man who’s about to propose, all at the same time. He will be there in case “hiccups” occur, and he will be taking mental notes as to how he and his staff can make customers’ experiences even better. And he will fight fires, if necessary.
BUSINESS: Remarkable Cuisine, a premiere personal chef and catering service in metro New York City

OCCUPATION: Executive chef and owner

HOW HIS BLAIR EXPERIENCE FLAVORS HIS CURRENT CAREER: Blair is integral to everything I do. I was privy to good options at Blair and developed my work ethic through athletics and academics. I push the idea of family-style dinner to my clients—it’s important to sit around the dinner table and talk.

ADVICE FOR WOULD-BE FOODIES: This is not Food Network! The food business is highly competitive; you have to make food that’s going to resonate. Good food and good service will stand out.

FAVORITE BLAIR DINING HALL FOOD: The “Egg Man’s” croissant sandwich—“To this day, I’m on the lookout for a great breakfast sandwich!”

@ www.remarkablecuisine.com  @RemarkableCuisine  @RemrkbleCuisne  @remarkably_better
TRADING WALL STREET FOR THE KITCHEN

Ask Mark McLean what he likes most about his personal chef and catering business, and his answer comes from the heart: “I like that it’s mine.” Truly, everything about Remarkable Cuisine—its moniker, its imaginative cuisine and its unwavering dedication to client-focused service—is a reflection of its owner and principal, one of the most down-to-earth professional chefs you’re likely to meet.

Chef Mark, 36, is a former college varsity athlete and coach, a former commodities trader, and a lifelong foodie, self-trained in classic cooking techniques. His path to the professional kitchen is atypical, but that’s by no means a drawback—it flavors the personal connections he creates with his clients, and it’s part of what drives him to excel in the highly competitive food industry.

Tracing his love of cooking to the family dinners he prepared as an elementary schooler, Chef Mark admits unabashedly, “Whatever else I was doing, I was always planning menus in my head and cooking whenever I could.” At Blair, as a varsity wrestler and football player, he enjoyed the “awesome variety” of food in the dining hall, and during his college years at the University of Virginia and New York University (NYU), he often hosted big meals for friends and wrestling teammates. After graduating from NYU in 2004 with a BS in management information systems, he entered the “crazy, fast” world of Wall Street commodities trading, yet he frequently cooked for friends in the city and returned home to New Jersey to stage dinner parties for his mom.

The economic woes of late 2008 catalyzed Chef Mark’s entrée into the world of professional cooking. “My job in the financial sector was threatened, but turning my passion for cooking into a business was risky, too,” he said. “It wasn’t a decision I made on a whim.”

In fact, Chef Mark spent about a year talking to people he knew and trusted, finding food-industry mentors, researching business options and honing his cooking chops. “I borrowed a set of Culinary Institute of America textbooks and basically put myself through culinary school, page by page,” he said. Once he mastered those classic techniques, he staged in restaurants, shadowing chefs and gaining unpaid—but highly valuable—insights into their world. Chef Mark thought deeply about his culinary brand and baked his ideas into a carefully crafted business plan. Finally, in October 2010, he launched Remarkable Cuisine, LLC, a premiere personal chef and catering service designed to “set a new standard” for in-home catering and events.

A CHEF’S LIFE

Changing careers was “crazy tough,” but Chef Mark was determined to validate his decision. He started as a private chef and built a reputation for listening to his clients’ needs, preparing outstanding food customized to their tastes and providing unmatched value and service. This led to bookings for events, including intimate dinners, cocktail parties, store openings and weddings for 100 or more, and Chef Mark executed each occasion with style, down to the very last seared diver scallop with cilantro-scallion pesto and sweet chili sauce.

With six years of success behind his distinguished culinary brand, Chef Mark has, indeed, proven himself in the food-business arena: Today, Remarkable Cuisine is a bespoke catering enterprise with a five-star Yelp rating; three employees; a Newark, New Jersey, commercial kitchen; and a roster of high-wealth clients throughout metro New York City that includes four professional athletes and “Cake Boss” Buddy Valastro.

His days as a chef are long and dynamic, beginning at sunrise when he procures ingredients and heads to
Young & Hungry

the kitchen. Chef Mark and his team work restaurant-style, transforming those carefully sourced provisions into appetizers, entrees, sides and desserts, and then packaging and transporting them to a client’s home or venue. On-site, the dishes are finished to perfection and beautifully served, often with personal commentary or a cooking demonstration from Chef Mark. After the party, there’s breakdown and a trip back to Newark to clean up and prepare for the next event.

“Remarkable Cuisine takes catering to a different level,” Chef Mark said proudly. “We will take on any event, at any venue. I have excellent rapport with my clients and make sure they are pleased in every way. Through my business, I’ve been part of many special events in people’s lives—and I’m very fortunate to be able to do this.”

REMARKABLY MARK

You might say that besides hard work, Chef Mark’s good fortune in the food industry boils down to the fact that he has immersed himself in and infused his personality into every aspect of his business. Case in point—his growing personal chef service to professional athletes. “An NHL hockey player found me on Yelp a couple of years ago,” he said, “and my experience as an athlete has helped me serve him well and connect with other players, too. Athletes need foods that support their training regimen, but they want to sit down to meals their families can enjoy, too. Organic, gluten-free, high-protein—I do the research and prepare the best version of whatever it is they want or need.”

Another signature aspect of Remarkable Cuisine is the thought that goes into each dish Chef Mark prepares and his joy in conversing about food with clients and their guests. He has parlayed this into a couple of television appearances and would love to host his own show someday, possibly one that showcases his approachability—and his unorthodox background—as a professional chef.

Chef Mark is emphatic that his Blair experience is an integral ingredient in Remarkable Cuisine. Hours at wrestling and football practice developed his strong work ethic; his academic work taught him to set high standards; and the support he received from his teachers showed him that he could excel. “I’ve come to expect excellence from myself,” he said, and his network of Blair friends and faculty boosts him to this day.

Having taken the tremendous risk of starting his own company and achieved a good measure of success, Chef Mark, now married for two years to his wife, Shrita, a physician, tries to let go of some of the worry that comes with business ownership. “You might say I walk by faith,” he mused. “I figure you have to go through things to come out on the other side. Opportunities in this business have opened up with me not knowing how or why.” But he pours his heart into all of them.

One such unexpected opportunity came at the end of last summer, when Chef Mark was invited to cater his first-ever event at Blair. It was the “welcome new faculty” dinner hosted by Head of School Chris Fortunato and his wife, Erin. Chef Mark had a blast, serving up a healthy-but-fun, enhanced Blair menu and demonstrating cooking techniques. He chatted with the new teachers about what a great place Blair is—and, of course, about food.

“It felt good to make that dinner happen,” Chef Mark said, with a satisfied grin. With the joy he brings to the table, he could probably say the same about each of his remarkably executed events.

“We don’t count hours, we count successes.”

— MARK MCLEAN ’98, executive chef & owner, Remarkable Cuisine, LLC
Matt Gallira '08

**BUSINESS:** Big Mozz, a Brooklyn, New York-based market vendor and caterer specializing in Vendy Award-winning mozzarella sticks served at music festivals and events around the country

**OCCUPATION:** Founder and CEO

**HOW HIS BLAIR EXPERIENCE FLAVORS HIS CURRENT CAREER:** I would 100 percent not be where I am today without Blair. Blair gave me great opportunities as a student, and to this day, I appreciate the support of my friends and teachers.

**ADVICE FOR WOULD-BE FOODIES:** Know everything about your business. Be open and honest about your process with customers and investors. Get in the trenches with your employees—that's how you lead and inspire.

**FAVORITE BLAIR DINING HALL FOOD:** Chicken and dumplings—“It was comforting, filling and delicious. Sometimes things just work.”

[www.bigmozz.com](http://www.bigmozz.com)  [@bigmozznyc](https://www.instagram.com/bigmozznyc)

Photo by Big Mozz
THE BIG CHEESE

According to Matt Gallira, more than 50 percent of cheese consumed in the United States is mozzarella, yet nobody knows where it comes from. He is out to change that, one hand-stretched ball of melty, warm, salty goodness at a time.

Matt is the founder and CEO of Big Mozz, a Brooklyn-based company that since 2015 has satisfied the cheese hankerings of thousands at Smorgasburg, the city’s über-highly competitive weekend food market. Beginning with a single booth selling Mozz Bombs (basil pesto encased in stretched-before-your-eyes mozzarella), Matt and company have since expanded to a second booth for their “always awesome” deep-fried Mozz Sticks and created a mobile wood-fired-oven pizza operation that sells crusty, chewy, cheesy pies at six New York City outdoor markets. Oh, and they sell Mozz Sticks at New York Mets home games and music festivals nationwide, and they cater, too.

How has the Big Mozz team, now with more than 50 employees, accomplished so much in just a few short years? “All we know is yes,” Matt said, sharing the mantra he and his partner, executive chef Jimmy Warren, live by in growing their business. “When we see an opportunity, we have the discipline to look at it carefully. If it fits our goals, we make it happen.”

At age 28, Matt already has a history of making things happen in food, and the industry has taken notice: In 2015, he made Zagat’s “30 Under 30” list, and Big Mozz was named among Forbes magazine’s “10 Innovators Under 30 Shaking Up the New York Food Scene.” Such swift success might make it look like it’s all been a piece of cake, but Matt will be first to tell you that behind the scenes, “everything is pure hard work.”

THE ROAD TO MOZZ: ATLANTIC AVE.

It took Matt about a year after his 2012 graduation from Dartmouth College with a BA in English to make his first foray into food. Right out of school, he took the “cool opportunity” of a four-month internship in South Sudan and then accepted a Boston-based position in corporate sales. “I could feel early on that it was the wrong place for me,” he said, but he used the time to determine what he wanted to do next—and for go-getter Matt, starting his own business was at the top of the list.

Matt had grown up cooking with his Italian family and had worked in enough restaurant jobs before and during his Blair years to know that 18-hour catering days felt more exciting and invigorating than exhausting. A food business, then, was the “obvious path.” The deal was sealed when Matt’s now-fiancée, Ali, moved to New York for her work, and he got a taste of Brooklyn’s innovative food scene. He knew he wanted in on the action.

Putting his freshly minted business plan in motion, Matt quit his job, moved into his dad’s New Jersey basement and, in November 2013, launched The Atlantic Ave. Company, maker of fine Italian red sauce. He was an all-in, one-man operation, stirring San Marzano tomatoes with a wooden spoon six hours a day on the stove of a rented firehouse kitchen; bottling, labeling and packaging jars; and then marketing his slow-cooked, old-school-quality sauce throughout north Jersey from the trunk of his car.

By spring 2015, Matt’s hustle and enthusiasm—not to mention his delicious product—had landed Atlantic Ave. in 30 food retailers in New Jersey and New York, and the brand had been picked up by a major distributor and was poised to go into Bed, Bath & Beyond stores nationwide. But Atlantic Ave.—an actual major thoroughfare in Brooklyn—was not a one-way street, and it was about to take Matt to his next opportunity.

SMORGASBURG CALLING

Matt had set his sights on Smorgasburg, the Brooklyn vendor market dubbed by The New York Times “The Woodstock of Eating.” According to Matt, it’s a “totally continued on page 18
Mealtimes are important parts of the day, especially for kids living away from home at boarding school. Here are some “quick bites” about dining at Blair today:

- **1,500** cookies baked for “Cookie Mondays”
- **03** entree options at typical dinner, plus a “fun food special,” such as Chicken Quesadillas
- **300,000+** meals served during the academic year
- **Too many to count** # of plates in inventory
- **Three popular meal offerings:** CHICKEN PARM, CHICKEN TIKKA, SLICED FLANK STEAK
- **1,200** bag lunches prepared for Peddie Day 2016
- **84 gallons** of ice cream consumed per week
- **44** family-style dinners per year
- **37 table feet**
- **44 different soups served per month**
- **70** hours per week The Black Canteen is open
- **808 pieces & 350 lbs. cut** Fresh fruit served per week
- **Top-selling item in The Can:** CHICKEN FINGERS
- **Three special holiday dinners:** Halloween, Thanksgiving & Christmas
- **45 dining hall staff**
- **32** salad bar items
- **84** gallons
- **20** different soups served per month
- **Breakfast starts at 7:30 a.m.**

One dessert that bombed: **SWEET POTATO BROWNIES**

Special diets accommodated: **VEGAN, VEGETARIAN, GLUTEN-FREE**

6 fresh produce deliveries per week
insane spectacle” showcasing ultra-creative people who are “doing things differently in food.” He needed a unique concept to get in, though, and an Atlantic Ave. sauce demo with a cheesemaker sparked the idea that developed into Big Mozz. Made-while-you-watch mozzarella became Matt’s ticket to the big show.

From its April 2015 Smorgasburg debut, Big Mozz built a reputation for exceptional professionalism, quality and service that opened the door for expansion. Smorgasburg’s managers were happy to allot Big Mozz a second booth for Mozz Sticks—which became one of the market’s top-selling stalls last year—and they invited Big Mozz to make and sell wood-fired-oven pizza when the market’s pizza vendor left to open a restaurant.

Looking back, Matt admits the growth targets Big Mozz set for 2016 were “kind of insane”—but that didn’t stop the team. Over the winter of 2015-2016, they drew up business and operations plans, raised capital from family and friends, hired and trained 50 employees, acquired three mobile pizza ovens and trailers, developed a pizza logistics platform, and more, all with the attention to detail and quality that was a hallmark of the Big Mozz brand. Always on the lookout for business and food industry mentors, Matt described how the team “found the smartest people who were willing to talk to us and became sponges.” At market opening in April 2016, Big Mozz Pizza was “off to the races,” and the three-booth, 300-pizza-per-day season was an incredible ride.

KEEP THE PEDAL DOWN

As the 2017 market season began, Matt was excited about the future of Big Mozz. “I’ve done a ton of soul-searching, and I know we have a great product that’s unique and delicious and that customers love,” he said. “We’ll stay disciplined, refine our operations and use our existing resources to grow in ways that make sense.”

This year, Big Mozz’s new projects are centered around Mozz Sticks: The company now has a manufacturer for its signature product, which has opened a huge opportunity for retail and wholesale expansion. Of course, the team has already capitalized on this opportunity: In addition to serving up to 1,000 orders of deep-fried cheesy goodness per day at Smorgasburg, it is selling Mozz Sticks at Citi Field for all New York Mets home games and at major music festivals throughout the country, including Governor’s Ball in New York City and Coachella in Palm Springs, California, the largest music festival in the world.

Through it all, Matt remains inspired by the many Blair friends and teachers with whom he keeps in touch, and he was happy to share slices of wisdom about food-business start-ups with fellow alums and students. Keep the pedal down, he advised. Realize that it takes constant work to build a brand and make any start-up a success. Nothing is automatic, and nothing is easy. Financial uncertainty is hard. Be confident that what you’re doing will develop into something real, but be flexible.

He shared a final tidbit that anyone who eats might appreciate: The best foods are the ones that let the ingredients speak for themselves. “They’re a lot harder to find than it might seem,” he admitted. Unless you’re looking for good mozzarella—then you should head straight to Brooklyn. ■

“When we see an opportunity, we have the discipline to look at it carefully. If it fits our goals, we make it happen.”

- MATT GALLIRA ’08, CEO & founder, Big Mozz
At almost every phase of our lives, we are exhorted to remember places, faces, events, words, lest we should forget and regret the lapse, but why do we rely so much on a faculty that is so notoriously unreliable? To a large extent, our memories tend to be more or less reliable depending upon what it is, exactly, that’s being recalled. For example, I distinctly remember being 6 feet 2 inches and 215 pounds when I was in college, but as a result of a bad night in a soaking rainstorm, I am now a short, skinny weakling. The Charles Atlas bully could easily kick sand in my eyes!

As a matter of fact, memory is pretty unreliable, because it is susceptible to time. How many of you remember with any clarity what you were doing this time last week, last month, last year? For those of us over 50, it’s tough remembering what we were doing this morning! There’s a wonderful line in a sonnet by Wilfred Owen that perfectly captures the nature of our remembering—and forgetting. In the sonnet, a dying soldier asks his loved one to wear his identity disc or dog tag: “May thy heart-beat kiss it, night and day / Until the name grow blurred and fade away.” It seems to me that “blurred” and “fade” accurately characterize the way our memories work—or fail to work. We don’t necessarily forget, but those memories that are retained grow ever fainter with time, and details are lost—and added—as we move away from the experiences that prompted them in the first place.

Think how easy it is to disabuse people of “facts” they are desperately certain they “know.” If only one person challenges my memory, then it’s easy to resist the suggestion that I may
be mistaken; however, if two or more challenge that memory, the teasing doubt that I may be wrong begins to work on my confidence. Think Hitchcock. As soon as several people contradict a memory, then its value, its reliability is gone, so we either abandon it or go mad—unless we happen to see a Harriman’s Herbal Tea bag cover or encounter a nun in high heels (à la the 1938 classic *The Lady Vanishes*). Orwell examines a similar phenomenon in *1984*: Smith, his protagonist, is actually in the business of destroying anything that might support memory and history. In fact, the tube into which he must deposit expurgated snippets and photographs from published text is called a “memory hole.” The material is vacuumed up and incinerated, so the destruction is more complete than is the process that occurs in our brains.

Oh, I suppose you could argue that your memory is, in fact, reliable and that your recall is 20/20—a rather odd and problematic analogy to sight, because we don’t always see what we think we see. I’m sure we’ve all had arguments over the accuracy of a particular memory, but how do we verify the accuracy of a memory? We can and do rely on external evidence to validate our memories—official forms, historical documents, photographs. But these kinds of sources are subject to loss, distortion and destruction in much the same way our memories are.

I remember my grandmother kept her birth certificate in her handbag behind her front door (go figure), but it was stolen in a burglary. From that point on, the date of her birth was called into question: She couldn’t remember, and there was no external evidence. From my perspective as a little boy, she might well have been as old as, well, the creation of the world. Orwell and Hitchcock have both demonstrated, to my satisfaction, the danger of relying on external evidence for verification of one’s memories.

The unreliability of memory is a trope I explore in my various courses, but it’s also something that I’ve given a deal of thought to in recent years because of trips I’ve taken to battlefields of both World War I and World War II in France and Belgium and to Civil War battlefields throughout the eastern United States. Now the notion of memorialization, of remembrance, is different because of what we tend to do, culturally, when we create a memorial or dedicate a place of remembrance. The physical location or structure tends to serve as a tangible reminder and survives for so much longer than a fragile memory held by an individual.

Commitment to remembering is imperative, too, and I think it’s this commitment that we see evinced in the various war memorials that dot Western Europe and the eastern region of the United States. While in France, I visited the graves of two of my uncles who died on the Somme in World War I and who have, for all intents and purposes, been forgotten by our family. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission has done an admirable job of preserving the sites, and I was able to refresh a family memory that had, essentially, faded to almost nothing.

Later in the trip, I was taken by surprise and momentarily overwhelmed with sadness when visiting Tyne Cot Cemetery near Ypres. There are numerous friezes bearing the names of the missing with as many as 100 names on each (the total number exceeds 34,000), and, by chance, we stopped in front of one that memorialized a “J. Brandwood.” James had been lost to the family memory for almost 100 years, but he is now remembered by me. The same thing happened at the Thiepval Memorial to the missing of the Somme; out of some 75,000 names popped “Jos. Brandwood,” another forgotten relative. My point is that, despite our best intentions to remember, captured
by Kipling’s exhortation “Lest we forget,” which is inscribed on the central memorial or Stone of Remembrance at most British cemeteries in Belgium and France, we do forget, even something as momentous for thousands of British families as the Battle of Ypres or the Somme or the Great War in general.

World War II memorials across Europe and the United States are better attended than are their Great War counterparts, and this, in part, may be due to the fact that the war and the sacrifices that they commemorate or memorialize are still part of communal, living memory. Yes, they have passed into the history books, but they still live in the minds and febrile dreams of veterans and survivors. So what has become of those Civil War sites and memorials that commemorate men and women long dead? This was a question that intrigued me as my wife and I undertook a long-sweeping tour of American battlefields (Revolutionary War, War of 1812, Civil War) this past summer.

Having lived in the Northeast for the past 33 years, I’ve often been puzzled by just how distant the Civil War seems, culturally, to many folks in the region. Perhaps it’s a function of immigrants, like me, who have come into the area in the last 100 years and so have no historical connection to the events of 1861 to 1865. By contrast, it seems to be freshly remembered and still actively litigated once one crosses the Mason-Dixon Line. Confederate battle flags are flown proudly in front of many homes, and Confederate graves are remembered with miniature battle flags planted on each in much the same way that we commemorate veterans in cemeteries across the country. The narrative surrounding the Civil War and the major battles is now told from the Union perspective, and the majority of memorials reflect that narrative and have shaped the collective national memory of the war over the past century; however, a different memory of the conflict is clearly alive and well and nourished by generations of Alabamians, Georgians, Carolinians, etc., and I suspect those conflicting narratives lie at the heart of at least some of our national contemporary political disputes. Certainly for this outsider, perhaps even for a Yankee, an abiding sense of grievance and loss pervades the culture of the Deep South.

Finally, just look around Blair’s campus: Timken Library, Armstrong-Hipkins Center for the Arts, Hardwick Hall, Freeman Hall, Insley Hall, Kathryn Hall, so many of our buildings serve as tangible reminders of people we want to remember, but my guess is that the generations of students who pass through have little awareness that Albert Freeman was a Blair master from 1894 to 1938 or that the performing arts center is named in memory of John C. Bogle ‘47’s mother, Josephine Hipkins Bogle, and her parents, John Clifton Hipkins and Effie Armstrong Hipkins. Even our best intentions to remember are overwhelmed by time and our absorption in the minutiae of our everyday lives, both individually and collectively.

But one of the wonderful aspects of a place like Blair is that we dedicate time each year to remember our past, on both personal and collective levels. Alumni Weekend offers former students the opportunity to refresh fading memories, fact-check reminiscences against those of classmates, and bolster the collective memory of a particular class and its attendant experiences. So, next time you’re on campus, take a few minutes to walk through your former classrooms, dormitories, sports facilities—remember those faces and voices from the past, your past, and know that your memories are insured against time by the people and friendships you’ve carried with you over the years.
Blair’s fall athletic teams gave it their all on Peddie Day, but the Falcons prevailed once again and took home the Kelley-Potter Cup for the third-consecutive year. With a final score of 5-6-2, the competitions drew to a close in Blairstown at the conclusion of the 113th rivalry football game, which Peddie narrowly won, 19-17.

The Kelley-Potter Cup was presented to Peddie’s Head of School Peter Quinn at the traditional mid-field ceremony immediately following the football game. Head of School Chris Fortunato thanked the Falcons and Mr. Quinn for a tremendous day of competition and commended all the athletes for strong performances in their respective matches.

In the weeks following Peddie Day, Blair students proved they were undaunted by defeat, said Associate Head of School Ryan Pagotto ’97. “Our students thoroughly enjoyed the school spirit that defines Peddie Week and are grateful for the friendships that were strengthened through the many activities that preceded Peddie Day.”

He added that the Bucs quickly turned their focus to excelling throughout the winter athletic season, with an eye toward next year’s competition. The Bucs will travel to Hightstown, New Jersey, in fall 2017, hungrier than ever to take back the Kelley-Potter Cup.
John C. Bogle ‘47’s Service to Investors Highlighted in Awards & Press

John C. Bogle ’47, founder of The Vanguard Group, Inc., and inventor of the index mutual fund, was the subject of several prominent news articles and received two prestigious awards in late 2016 and early 2017 in recognition of his lifetime of work in the financial industry.

One of the most significant press pieces appeared in November 2016, when Mr. Bogle was profiled as “The Unsung Hero of Your Comfortable Retirement” in The Sunday Times of London, his first major recognition in the British publication. In the feature, writer Louise Cooper notes that Mr. Bogle “isn’t a celebrity” and “rarely speaks to the British media,” introducing her hero as a man who “gave up the chance to make billions for himself—to help the rest of us save more.”

Ms. Cooper describes two revolutionary things Mr. Bogle did when he set up Vanguard: “First, he established the world’s first passive fund that ordinary people could invest in…Second, and equally importantly, Bogle took the extraordinary decision to set up Vanguard as a mutual, meaning it is owned by its customers.”

“Rather than giving profits to external shareholders, he has instead reduced the fees we all pay,” the article continues. “Vanguard has relentlessly driven down fund management fees, leaving substantially more money for the individual saver. Indeed, even if you don’t have funds with Vanguard, other firms have had to lower their fees as a result of its strategy.”

The article highlights Mr. Bogle’s steadfast respect for hard work and deep satisfaction at having helped individual investors meet their financial goals over the years. “[I get] at least a letter a day from fund-holders to thank me,” he tells Ms. Cooper, acknowledging that it is gratifying to receive such correspondence. “We are in the business of helping ordinary human beings.”

Honors from Philadelphia & Pennsylvania

Mr. Bogle’s dedication to investors was recognized in fall 2016 with accolades from The Philadelphia Inquirer and the Pennsylvania Society. The Philadelphia Inquirer presented Mr. Bogle with an Industry Icon award in honor of his distinguished record of civic engagement and professional achievement and named him one of five inaugural inductees to its Business Hall of Fame.

Following on the heels of that honor, the Pennsylvania Society awarded Mr. Bogle its 108th-annual Gold Medal for Distinguished Achievement in December 2016. The award recognizes leadership, citizenship, and contributions to the arts, science, education and industry.
In the NEWS

Praise from Warren Buffett
Mr. Bogle was also the subject of high praise from business magnate Warren Buffett in Mr. Buffett’s recent annual letter to Berkshire Hathaway investors. “If a statue is ever erected to honor the person who has done the most for American investors, the hands down choice should be Jack Bogle,” Mr. Buffett writes. “For decades, Jack has urged investors to invest in ultra-low-cost index funds. In his crusade, he amassed only a tiny percentage of the wealth that has typically flowed to managers who have promised their investors large rewards while delivering them nothing—or, as in our bet, less than nothing—of added value.”

“In his early years, Jack was frequently mocked by the investment-management industry,” Mr. Buffett continues. “Today, however, he has the satisfaction of knowing that he helped millions of investors realize far better returns on their savings than they otherwise would have earned. He is a hero to them and to me.”

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www.blair.edu/london-times

CNN Interviews Olympic Rower André Matias ’07
In the lead-up to the 2016 Summer Olympics, CNN profiled André Matias '07 and teammate Jean-Luc Rasamoelina as the first-ever rowing team from Angola to qualify for the Olympics. The duo was one of just 20 teams competing in the lightweight men’s double sculls during the Summer Games in Rio de Janeiro.

“It’s a great honor for us,” André told CNN’s Christina Macfarlane just weeks before taking to the water in Rio. “We hold ourselves to the highest standards to honor the Olympic experience.”

André and Jean-Luc rowed four races in the Summer Games, and although they did not medal, they made waves for fellow Angolan rowers during the country’s Olympic debut in the sport.

After picking up rowing at Blair, André was a four-year member of Hamilton College’s Division III team. For nearly a decade, he has represented Angola in numerous rowing competitions around the globe.

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www.blair.edu/andre-matias
Examsining the Issues: Analysis & Discussion Drove Presidential Election Seminar

As the presidential election heated up last fall, politically minded Blair students delved deeply into its issues and implications at the School’s multipart Presidential Election Seminar. During more than a dozen lunchtime and evening sessions and a daylong trip to Boston, students from every grade, along with faculty, administrators and guest participants, discussed the candidates, their campaigns, the media, the election’s outcome and much more in an effort to better comprehend the many aspects of the contentious political season.

The seminar was an outgrowth of Head of School Chris Fortunato’s popular Round Table series, a forum Mr. Fortunato established two years ago to promote conversation and increase understanding of issues in the news. “The 2016 presidential election cycle was extraordinary on many levels, and it was important to provide our students with an outside-of-class venue where they could voice their opinions, learn from one another and immerse themselves in the issues,” Mr. Fortunato said. “Even though most of our students are too young to vote, they were deeply interested in this election’s impact on their future and the country’s future, too.”

Engaging Topics, Knowledgeable Leaders

History teacher Hannah Higgin, PhD, and religion and philosophy department chair and Blair chaplain Russell Powell joined Mr. Fortunato in planning Presidential Election Seminar sessions, which focused on a variety of topics. The series led off in mid-September with “How did we get here?,” during which Harvard University Kennedy School of Government professor and political strategist Timothy Patrick McCarthy, PhD, joined nearly three dozen students for a discussion of the raucous primary season that ended with nomination of the two candidates who had consistently garnered the highest unfavorability ratings in polls.

In early October, history teacher and attorney Quinten Clarke ’87 led an exploration of the implications either candidate’s election would have for the Supreme Court. Cleary Waldo ’19 found this session especially engaging, as it gave students the chance to “take our analysis much further” and think deeply about the election’s impact on the future. “We debated whether the Supreme Court has too much power, and, as social issues came up, people became really invested in the conversation,” she said. “It was eye-opening to see my peers expressing their points of view.”

A trip to Boston on October 13...

“The 2016 presidential election cycle was extraordinary on many levels, and it was important to provide our students with an outside-of-class venue where they could voice their opinions, learn from one another and immerse themselves in the issues.”

—Head of School Chris Fortunato
brought Mr. Fortunato, Dr. Higgin, Mr. Powell and 20 freshmen, sophomores and juniors to Harvard and the Museum of Science for a day of election-centric discussions. The group first met with Dr. McCarthy and Kennedy School faculty, then attended a panel titled “Looking Forward: Race in America After Obama,” held in conjunction with the Kennedy School’s Conference on Race and Justice in the Age of Obama. The day concluded at the Museum of Science, where Dr. McCarthy moderated “Politics, Prejudice & Polarization: Can We Cross the Divide?,” a panel that explored “the fascinating and enlightening science of political ideology, voter behavior, prejudice and stereotyping.”

Franklin Colburn Sanchez ’18, a junior who is politically involved but “not a fan of either major party,” described the Boston trip as a very interesting day. “I gained insight on aspects of politics I didn’t know much about,” he said. “The Kennedy School panel was the first time this year I saw people from different political parties engage in well-mannered discussion, and part of it was about how young people could become more involved and aware. Anybody can become involved in politics,” he continued. “It’s a matter of how brave or interested you are, or how much you care.”

Back at Blair, Dr. McCarthy joined the Presidential Election Seminar’s October 20 session via Skype, during which the group focused on the role of the media in the election. Also connecting via the Internet were students and faculty from Radley College, a boarding school in Oxford, England. Questions and comments flew across the Atlantic about the candidates’ trustworthiness, the brave new world of social media, the role disaffection and alienation played in the election, and similarities between the Brexit vote and the 2016 U.S. presidential election.

“Ultimately, we all have to figure out how to navigate social media,” Dr. McCarthy commented during the discussion. “To find truth in the muck and mire of constant information requires us to be more engaged and sophisticated than ever before. It requires heightened citizenship.”

The pre-election sessions wrapped up with a discussion led by economics and Chinese teacher David Facciani on the economic impacts of the election and another led by history department chair Jason Beck that put the 2016 election in context with past presidential elections. Election night brought a Society of Skeptics review of Blair’s mock election results—which, for the first time in three decades did not mirror national results—followed by election-return viewing in The Black Canteen that lasted until the early-morning hours.

Post-Election Conversation

Campus conversation about the election’s results commenced—as it did worldwide—just about as soon as the sun rose on November 9. Faculty welcomed in- and out-of-class discussion and encouraged students to voice their opinions, amid an atmosphere of mutual respect. “We may have divergent political views,” Mr. Fortunato reminded the community in a post-election email, “but we are bound together as a community in which we speak our minds and truths and treat each other with dignity and care.”

At the final Presidential Election Seminar session on November 17, Matt Thomas, a senior public policy specialist and lobbyist with more than 10 years’ experience navigating the federal government, joined the conversation to help answer post-election questions. Issues including government transition, the trustworthiness of news sources and the fulfillment of campaign promises were all on students’ minds, and Mr. Thomas encouraged attendees to contact their elected representatives whenever they have a concern involving government.

“Early in my career, I was the person who answered constituent calls,” he
said, describing one of his first jobs in Sen. Bill Nelson’s (D-FL) Washington, D.C., office. “Your opinion really does make a difference, and even if you’re not old enough to vote now, every elected official knows that soon, you will be.”

Paying Attention to Politics

The sustained level of student involvement in the Presidential Election Seminar throughout the fall suggested to faculty that Blair students are well on their way to becoming engaged U.S. and global citizens. “Our students are becoming adults, and this may have been the first election they were keenly aware of or the first election in which they could vote,” Mr. Powell reflected. “The Presidential Election Seminar fostered great conversation on the political and cultural dynamics that surrounded the election, and kids said they appreciated having a deliberate time, outside the school day, to discuss the issues.”

Attendance at each discussion session was usually between 20 and 30 students, while debate watches and election-night coverage packed The Black Canteen with upward of 90 attendees. Dr. Higgin noted that there were a lot of different kids at every meeting, suggesting that students from across the Blair spectrum are paying attention to politics.

About 15 students attended early planning meetings and helped shape the entire series, too, while several students, including Helen Mercedes ’18, Sade Johnson ’17, Franklin and Cleary, served as session moderators. “As moderator, I had to steer the conversation, keep it moving and make sure as many voices as possible were heard,” Cleary said. “It was a real learning experience.”

Optimistic for the Future

Despite the divisiveness of the political landscape during the 2016 election season, Mr. Powell, Dr. Higgin and Mr. Fortunato are optimistic for the future of politics in America, having witnessed Blair students’ thoughtful engagement in the election. “Throughout, I was surprised by our students’ hopefulness about how things can change,” Mr. Powell remarked. “Our students evidenced curiosity and willingness to figure things out and create change for the better.”

“Our kids are hopeful,” Dr. Higgin added. “If we can keep this hope alive by continuing open, honest discussion and endeavoring to answer tough questions, that’s a massive accomplishment for our community.”

Mr. Fortunato, too, is heartened by the conversations and analysis that highlighted the Election Seminar. “Our students are curious, inquisitive, and want to make sense of national and world events. Throughout the fall, they frequently looked beyond this year’s election to future elections, and that is where they will make their impact. They are optimistic for our country’s future—and so am I.”
Sophomores Take Action: LEADS Groups Served Others in Fall Semester Projects

Blair sophomores learned about leadership through action last fall as they tackled a wide variety of group projects that aided local, national and international causes. The service-learning efforts were a new feature of Blair LEADS, the School’s cross-curricular initiative that endeavors to teach essential 21st-century leadership skills. By planning and executing projects—and examining the “why” behind their actions—tenth graders gained experience in decision making, communicating, taking initiative and more, and they had the opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of others.

Character Curriculum
Sophomores’ project work—which included everything from hosting military veterans on campus to collecting shoes for a nonprofit global social enterprise—went hand-in-hand with LEADS’ focus on character development, according to Dean of Campus Life and Blair LEADS coordinator Carolyn Conforti-Browse ’79. “Sophomore year is often a time when a student is figuring out what kind of person he or she wants to be. Instead of getting lost in thoughts and feelings, it’s important for kids to connect their feelings to action,” she said. “By taking concrete steps to solve a problem, students feel empowered and develop a sense of self-knowledge, first steps to becoming leaders.”

While they considered their projects during LEADS sessions, students and faculty facilitators dove into discussions about the important life skills and character traits that many good leaders possess. Time management, motivation and collaboration were among the weekly topics, and as students talked and worked through exercises and games, they got to know one another and began to understand how to work as a team to accomplish a goal.

“The group discussions themselves were a crucial part of the experience,” Ms. Conforti-Browse said. “Much like formal dinner or required sports, LEADS compels students to interact, and they meet classmates whom they might not otherwise have met. Having the ability to work with a diverse group of people is an invaluable leadership skill, and alums consistently tell us it’s one of the best things they learned at Blair.”

Organizations & Projects
Of course, LEADS discussion also revolved around the organization each group would serve and how students could assist in its mission. And talk led directly to action.

Director of Timken Library and history teacher Ann Williams’ students

Common Sense for Animals
Director of Timken Library and history teacher Ann Williams brought her LEADS group to Common Sense for Animals in Broadway, N.J., where students captured images to use in the creation of animal-rescue media appeals.
were “excited and full of ideas” to help Common Sense for Animals, a Broadway, New Jersey–based nonprofit that promotes animal welfare through education and community service (see photo on page 29). Her group executed projects that included expanding Common Sense’s social media presence, drumming up entries for a pet calendar contest and photographing rescued animals for use in media appeals. “Several girls had a blast assisting at a tricky-tray fundraiser, too,” Mrs. Williams said.

Assistant Director of Athletics Brian Antonelli ’93’s LEADS group also worked with a local nonprofit, the Ridge and Valley Conservancy of Blairstown. Divided into two teams, students aided the Conservancy’s northern New Jersey land-preservation efforts by enhancing its web presence and volunteering at a save-the-bobcat fundraiser.

The LEADS group headed by English and theatre teacher Craig Evans and Associate Dean of Admission Leucretia Shaw took a global view in their approach to helping others when students voted to support Soles4Souls, an organization committed to fighting poverty worldwide. The group created posters and ran a campus-wide shoe drive throughout the fall, netting 10 large bags of shoes that were donated to Soles4Souls for distribution throughout the United States and around the world.

A variety of additional nonprofits, both local and global, benefited from LEADS group efforts (see photos for more), but Ms. Conforti-Browse noted that the sophomores themselves benefited from the projects, too.

No Problem You Can’t Attack

As they took steps to bring their projects to fruition, students had the opportunity

Melanie’s Miles

The LEADS group facilitated by Head of School Chris Fortunato, Mrs. Erin Fortunato and art teacher Evan Thomas staged the Melanie’s Miles 5K at Blair to aid families of those suffering from lung cancer. Tanner Humphrey ’19, a member of the LEADS section, lost his mother, Melanie, to lung cancer in 2008, and last summer, he established the Melanie Humphrey Breath of Life Fund at Pocono Medical Center in East Stroudsburg, Pa. More than 250 runners and walkers participated in the November 13 event, and more than $36,000 was raised through donations and the generous support of local businesses. Read more at www.blair.edu/melanies-miles.

Honoring Military Veterans

Associate Head of School Ryan Pagotto ’97’s LEADS section honored members of the Blairstown Givens-Belet American Legion on Veterans Day. Sophomores introduced the former service members at School Meeting, held a special flag-raising ceremony and escorted the veterans to class and to lunch in the Romano Dining Hall. Read more at www.blair.edu/veterans-day.
Pedals for Progress

LEADS students in English teacher and community service coordinator Kaye Evans’ and history teacher Tim Goggins’ group hosted the School’s annual Pedals for Progress bicycle and sewing machine collection in October. Thirty-seven bicycles and 14 sewing machines were collected, and students later held a bake sale to help cover bicycle reconditioning costs. The bicycles and sewing machines will be distributed in developing countries worldwide. Read more at www.blair.edu/pedals-for-progress.

Well-Read at Blair: Engaging & Expanding the School’s Literary Community

In a world where the daily deluge of e-communication may comprise the bulk of our reading, great literature remains fundamental to a Blair education. This year, the School’s English faculty, led by department chair James Moore, has taken some novel approaches to integrating literature into School life, with the goal of helping students become more thoughtful and well-read members of society.

“ar it’s important to develop an appreciation for literature,” Mr. Moore observed. “Our ability to understand and empathize with fictional characters helps us understand what real people are experiencing. Along with the critical thinking we teach across our curriculum, such understanding is essential to our students becoming engaged citizens of our global community.”

Expert Teachers, Unique Electives

One of the first places English teachers looked to infuse a greater variety of literature into the Blair experience was in their classrooms. Last fall, Advanced Placement (AP) English language took on a new look as seniors enrolled in six first-semester electives designed to hone their rhetorical skills through in-depth study of a specific literary genre. Each new course—from “America at War” to “Children’s Literature”—was developed by its teacher, allowing expert faculty to dive deep into favorite topics and share their enthusiasm for literature amid preparation for the spring AP exam.

“The elective model gave our students the opportunity to take courses they wouldn’t typically encounter in high school and read works that go well beyond those included in broad survey courses,” Mr. Moore said. “The courses also connected teachers’ work in the classroom to genres and subjects about which they are truly passionate.”
Among the new courses were two taught by English and theatre teacher Craig Evans: “Modern Drama” and “America at War.” While “Modern Drama” might come as no surprise to those who know Mr. Evans—his career as a thespian stretches back to his childhood, and he has directed more than 60 Blair Academy Players’ productions—“America at War” drew on his lifelong fascination with the American Revolutionary and Civil Wars. Conceived and co-taught by history teacher Joanne Brandwood, the course was uniquely interdisciplinary at Blair, as it combined historical fact with literature to help students examine the legacy of two wars that helped define our country.

English teacher Douglass Compton’s “Harlem Renaissance” course centered on Ralph Ellison’s *The Invisible Man*, a work that profoundly influenced Mr. Compton during his undergraduate studies of African-American literature. Through extensive reading and writing, the class examined the cultural and historical context of 1920s Harlem, the co-emergence of the black literary art form and jazz, and Ellison’s great love of jazz music.

“Children’s Literature” was also inspired by a college experience: English teacher Marney Egan described her children’s lit course at Bucknell University as one of the best classes she has ever taken. Ms. Egan reimagined the course for Blair students, selecting five classic novels and viewing the books through a rhetorical lens while closely examining strategies used by the authors to engage both adult and child audiences.

Lorry Perry, Blair’s new assistant head of School for academics and dean of faculty—and a 15-year boarding school faculty veteran—chose to teach “Boarding School Literature” in part to get to know the Blair community through students’ eyes.

“My students observed that the works we read portrayed boarding schools as ‘kid space’ where the absence of parents and faculty led to mayhem,” she said. “They were pleased to note this is not the case at Blair, and they’re glad to live in an environment in which they feel challenged, nurtured and supported.”

Ms. Perry’s class wrote at length about Blair as they learned to capture the institution through daily experience. Similarly, students in English and theatre teacher Micki Kaplan McMillan’s class, “The Art and Craft of Memoir,” wrote about their years at Blair—as well as many other experiences—as they examined the events that shaped their
lives. Ms. Perry and Ms. McMillan agreed that their seniors were at an ideal point in their lives for introspection, one of the reasons Ms. McMillan chose to focus her course on the art of memoir. “We defined memoir as ‘an examination of who we were then to reveal who we are now,’” Ms. McMillan said. “What better time for students to reflect than as they go through the college application process?”

**Community-wide Reading**

In contrast to the multiple genres covered in fall AP English language electives, every English class in the School studied the same work this spring: Shakespeare’s *Much Ado About Nothing*. “Our all-School read went beyond the usual model of simply assigning the same book,” Mr. Moore said, explaining that classroom study will culminate with the Blair Academy Players bringing the work to life on the stage this spring. “This will give our students, all of whom read *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, a taste of Shakespeare’s lighter side—and they’ll have the bonus of seeing their friends perform in the play.”

Mr. Moore also encouraged the community to read for pleasure over School breaks this year, acknowledging that Blair’s demanding schedule leaves little time for discretionary reading and writing. Students and teachers wrote reviews of books they read last summer for personal enjoyment and shared them on Blair’s website at [www.blair.edu/summer-reading-reviews](http://www.blair.edu/summer-reading-reviews), providing a list of “great reads” for any community member looking for his or her next good book.

**Toward a More Vibrant Literary Community**

The English department further championed literature at Blair this year by encouraging creative writing submissions to the student-run online publication *The Oracle*, by resurrecting the School’s literary magazine *Between the Lines* after several years’ hiatus, and by developing a screenwriting workshop with author, screenwriter and former Blair faculty member Steven Kampmann.

Mr. Moore has also initiated conversation about creating new physical spaces on campus designed especially for reading and writing. These may include a “writing room” that would serve as a resource and refuge for independent student writers and an outdoor poetry trail through the adjacent Siegel Property. He has even installed a couch in his classroom to encourage students to take a break from their busy lives with a good book.

“Blair has a strong literary tradition that includes a number of alumni authors,” Mr. Moore said. “I’m interested in continuing that tradition of reading and writing with today’s students. Our English faculty is extraordinary,” he added, “and we are all committed to creating a more literary community at Blair.”
Worth a Thousand Words: The Arts in Photos

Blair’s instrumental and vocal artists performed an eclectic repertoire in the annual Fall Concert. Performing arts department chair Jennifer Pagotto and Director of Vocal Music Ryan Manni taught fundamental ensemble skills throughout the first semester to “form a new community of artists.” Concert highlights included the Orchestra’s Sleeping Beauty Waltz (Tchaikovsky), the Jazz Ensemble’s in a Mellow Tone (Duke Ellington) and the Singers’ Stars, a Latvian piece that features American poetry.

In October, the Blair Academy Players presented Will Eno’s Middletown, a touching and humorous examination of small-town America. Director Craig Evans and the Players were excited to bring a recent play to Blair’s stage. “Like Thornton Wilder’s Our Town, Middletown is funny but also remarkably sad,” Mr. Evans said. “It has much to tell us about how we live our own lives.”

December’s traditional Christmas Vespers heralded the holidays for the Blair community. The candlelit service included scripture readings by members of the senior class and musical interludes performed by the Chamber Orchestra and Singers.

To view more performing arts photos, visit www.blair.edu/performing-arts-photos.
At Blair, students practice traditional analog photography and learn the latest techniques in digital photography, too. Here, Advanced Placement photography student Faith Rohrer ’17 studies negatives on a light table. “Photography is increasingly important in today’s visual world,” said photography teacher Tyson Trish. “Blair students have the opportunity to gain a strong foundation in this growing form of communication.”

The annual Faculty Art show, held February 9 to March 9 in The Romano Gallery, featured artwork created by teachers and members of Blair’s professional staff. Ying Devaney, wife of language department chair Tim Devaney and a caregiver in Blair’s Childcare Learning Center, carved these intricate creations from fresh fruits and vegetables.

New York City’s Washington Heights neighborhood was the backdrop for the Blair Academy Players’ February production of the 2008 Tony Award-winning musical In the Heights. Conceived by Lin-Manuel Miranda—who wrote the lyrics, music and book for the Broadway sensation Hamilton—the production was “a very enticing prospect for audiences,” according to director Mr. Evans. “We were delighted to be one of the first area producers of this classic.”

To view more performing arts photos, visit www.blair.edu/performing-arts-photos.
If you mention Quinten, aka “Q,” Clarke ’87 at Blair, it might involve one of three “quint”essential things: constitutional law, girls’ varsity basketball or “Blair in Kenya.” Q is well-known throughout the campus community for his central roles as history teacher and developer of a signature elective, head coach of a powerhouse athletic program, and founder of a nonprofit organization that works to improve the lives of Kenya’s rural poor. But what may not be as well-known are the life experiences and events that brought Q to where he is now—which is actually the place where he started. Welcome to “Outside the Classroom.”

Q was just 2 years old when he moved to Blair in 1971 with his parents, Tallarie (Tally) and Richard Clarke, PhD. Dr. Clarke, whose father, Richard, was a 1933 Blair grad, had accepted an offer to become a physics teacher and chair of Blair’s science department, positions he would hold for the next 38 years. Q and his brother, Bradley ’90, grew up on campus, and they loved the hills, the woods and the School community.

Following his 1987 Blair graduation, Q headed to Rutgers University in New Brunswick, a “big, impersonal” school that afforded a bit of anonymity after his years as a Blair faculty child. He double-majored in history and political science, subjects he enjoyed because of the reading, writing and critical thinking they involved. Next, it was on to Rutgers University School of Law in Camden, where Q earned his JD in 1994. He returned to northwest New Jersey to clerk for Judge Ronald Graves in Newton for a year before joining a Sparta firm, where he practiced criminal, matrimonial and real estate law.

“I loved my work as an attorney and would have been happy to remain in that career,” Q reflected—until a life-changing trip literally opened a world of possibilities (see page 37 for the full story).

Q’s road back to Blair was somewhat long and winding, but since his return in 2001, he has built a teaching career that has impacted the lives of hundreds of Blair students and combines everything he enjoys—history, law, basketball, travel and service to others. His trips to Africa with Blair faculty and students catalyzed his 2005 establishment of “Blair in Kenya,” a nonprofit organization that has since provided vital educational, medical and economic opportunities to hundreds of villagers. Most of all, Q has had the opportunity to share what is important to him with a community that deeply respects his passion, his dedication to his students and fellow teachers, and his commitment to making the world a better place.

Spend a few moments getting to know Q Clarke.
Q. As a “faculty kid,” what was it like to be a Blair student after having grown up on campus?  
A. I remember my childhood being like permanent summer camp; it was great to just run around this incredible campus with my friends and spend quality time with the “big kids” who were my babysitters and my playmates. My dream was always to go to Blair, and it was special to finally become one of the “big kids.” The experience was extra special since I was here with my parents and brother. Of course, it was both strange and awesome that my teachers were people I had known my entire life. Math teacher Wayne (Razz) Rasmussen, history teacher Marty Miller, PhD, and English teachers Charlie Underwood and Henry Cowan were people I’d admired growing up, and it was very cool to see them in a new role in the classroom. During my junior and senior years, I took physics with my dad, and these were two of my favorite classes ever.

Q. When you contrast Blair in the 1970s to Blair today, what do you think are the School’s most significant gains?  
A. Obviously, the facilities today are so much better than they were back then. In addition, the quality of our kids is tremendously impressive. Blair students routinely blow me away with their talent, their drive and their overall goodness. Maybe it’s the different perspective, but I would love to be a student at the Blair of today.

Q. Michael Crichton’s memoir Travels inspired your first trip to Africa, which you described as “life-changing.” Please tell us about that trip and how it changed your life.  
A. In 2000, I was a young lawyer, spending 60-plus hours a week in my office, wondering if there was something I was missing in life. In Travels, Crichton talks about a number of adventures around the world, including a hike up Mt. Kilimanjaro. This appealed to me, because it was adventurous without being dangerous or too strenuous. Further, I could do it in the one-week vacation I had from work. So, I went to the travel agent, bought a ticket and, the next thing I know, I’m on a flight to Moshi, Tanzania. The sights, the smells, the noise and the energy I encountered on that trip were all so unlike anything I had ever experienced before—I couldn’t get it out of my head. I realized that I couldn’t go back to my old life, so I sold my house and my car, bought a one-way ticket to Nepal and spent the next 11 months backpacking around the world.

Q. After traveling around the world, why did you decide to begin a teaching career rather than return to law? What was it like to be back in Blair’s classrooms as a teacher?  
A. I loved being a lawyer, but, ultimately, I felt unsatisfied with my life. Having grown up at Blair, I knew what
Outside the
CLASSROOM

an amazing work environment this place has, so I decided to try teaching while I figured out my next big career step. And, fortunately for me, this seems like it is my next career.

One of the first things I learned about teaching is that it’s a lot harder than it looks. My first day in the classroom happened to be September 11, 2001: I was worried about being a decent teacher, but I soon realized I couldn’t just stick to my syllabus during this crazy time. To this day, I am constantly working to emulate the great teachers I had at Blair, including Marty Miller, Charlie Underwood, Razz, math department chair Latta Browse and, of course, my father. But it’s a long process, and I’m not there yet.

Q. Having taught English, religion and history at Blair, which courses have you enjoyed most and why?

A. I love the two I teach now, “Global Issues” and “Constitutional Law.” Both courses focus on current events and, I hope, excite students about learning and understanding how the world works. “Global Issues” is based on the freshman-year course I took with Marty Miller (then called “Developing World”), and I created “Con Law,” an upper-class elective, based on my law school experience. In that class, we cover controversial and topical issues, such as abortion, gay marriage, the death penalty, affirmative action, religion in public schools and free speech. We read excerpts from Supreme Court cases, and much of our class time is spent in spirited debate. It’s gratifying to hear students continuing these conversations in dorms or the dining hall. I believe we learn best when our opinions are challenged and we are forced to defend our statements, and I am probably most comfortable playing “devil’s advocate” in class. Teaching appeals to me because I love engaging students and being part of a robust discussion of controversial and tricky issues.

Q. You ran cross country and played basketball and tennis as a Blair student and have coached about a dozen Buccaneer teams during your teaching tenure. What has it been like to helm Blair’s girls’ varsity basketball team for the past six years, a high-profile program that regularly sends players to top Division I schools?

A. I’ve been extremely lucky to have inherited such an amazing program and to have had the chance to work with such talented and driven athletes. It’s extremely stressful and mind-bogglingly time-consuming to run the many aspects of this program, but the opportunity to be a part of something bigger than myself is unmatched. I just hope I can be the coach these girls deserve.

Q. Describe how you came to establish your nonprofit organization “Blair in Kenya.”

A. I traveled to Kenya in 2003 with Blair faculty members [history teacher] Andrew Sykes and [fine arts department chair] Kate Sykes. I was so impressed with the energy and positivity of the Kenyan people that I decided to take students back. That first trip in 2004 was crazy, and, looking back, I can’t really believe I did it, but it established the foundation for what we have in Kenya today. Our first Blair trips were purely cultural travel, but, after a while, I thought, “Why not figure out a way to help?” And, here we are, 12 years later, operating two elementary schools, sponsoring the educational expenses of 150 students, running a microfinance business and conducting an annual medical clinic. It’s been
Outside the CLASSROOM

Q. In what kinds of work have students engaged when they’ve traveled to Kenya on Blair service trips? What do you think they’ve gained from the experience?

A. We have assisted doctors in bringing medical treatment to villagers who have never seen a doctor; we have built and supplied a library and computer center; we have painted the buildings; and we have brought more than 10,000 pounds of essential goods, such as clothes, shoes, medical supplies, books, balls and computers, to the villages. This March, we started a new tradition when we traveled to Kenya with members of the girls’ basketball team and our students taught basketball skills at the schools. It was exciting to introduce the Kenyan kids to this great game. Most importantly, we try to bring smiles to people’s faces and hope to an area that doesn’t have much. It’s a special privilege to be a part of this program, but I’ve always felt that we receive more than we give in Kenya. It’s amazing to teach kids how to throw a Frisbee or read books to them, but the smiles and the hugs we get in return are so much more amazing. I think we leave more touched and changed than the people we are “helping.” And, I hope Blair students and faculty leave with a greater understanding of another culture and an authentic awareness of the challenges of living in a society without electricity, running water and so many other things we take for granted. We learn that, in the end, all humans want the same things: to be happy and to leave a better life for our children. I hope the lessons of these trips stick with us for the rest of our lives.

Q. What inspires you to continue your work in Africa?

A. I feel most fulfilled when I am connected to others and to something bigger than just me. That is what our work in Kenya provides and what inspires me to continue. And, even if I wanted to stop, the smiles and laughter of the children whom we help would make this impossible.

Q. You’ve traveled throughout the world. What has been your favorite destination?


Q. Who is your role model and why?

A. Each in their own ways, my role models have always been my parents. I strive to live my life the way they did: to be content with what life gives me and to always try to make the world a better place. My parents are very different, and I have tried to take the best traits from each of them. My father was one of my favorite teachers, and although I lack some of his natural talent, I try to emulate his ability to make a subject interesting and relevant.

Q. What words of wisdom would you share with your childhood self?

A. Don’t be afraid to make mistakes, and don’t worry so much about what other people think. I admire Blair students who are outgoing and fearless, and I wish I had been more like them.

To learn more about Blair in Kenya, visit www.blairinkenya.com.
ADVANCEMENT TEAM WELCOMES ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT KRISTAN PEARSON

If you stop by Ivy Hall on your next campus visit, Kristan Pearson, the advancement office’s newest team member, will cheerfully greet you from her desk near the entryway. In her administrative assistant role, Ms. Pearson works closely with all members of the advancement team, aiding them in countless ways, from making travel arrangements to helping maintain Blair’s alumni database. Since joining the Blair community in September, she has enjoyed meeting alumni and friends of the School, and she especially looks forward to engaging with alums at Alumni Weekend 2017. Prior to her position at Blair, Ms. Pearson gained extensive customer service experience at a number of companies in neighboring Pennsylvania.

COMMUNITY CELEBRATES BLAIR’S DIVERSITY AT INTERNATIONAL WEEKEND

A sea of delicious aromas wafted through the Romano Dining Hall, which had transformed into an international marketplace of sorts for the School’s annual International Weekend, a mid-January celebration of Blair’s cultural diversity. Proving that the Blair community stretches to all corners of the globe, students and parents representing more than 15 countries—from Latvia to India, Ireland to Colombia, and Jamaica to Japan, to name a few—invited peers to take a closer look into their cultures by sharing their ethnic food, music and fashion.

Ellie Chi ’17, who resides in Beijing, China, said she enjoys the “cultural exposure” that the event, as well as living at Blair, has given her. “I don’t think I will have the opportunity to get a taste of the world in a single room anywhere else after I leave Blair,” she said.

As a student leader of Blair’s International Awareness Club (BIAC), Ellie helped organized this year’s event along with fellow BIAC leaders Zeynep Cavusoglu ’18 and Chloe Kim ’17.

A “fashion lover” and Seoul, Korea, native, Chloe was particularly excited to participate in this year’s annual international fashion show, which showcases traditional clothing from around the world. “It’s heartwarming to see all types of fabrics, colors and patterns being enjoyed by every community member at Blair. But most of all, the fashion show embodies different nationalities, ethnicities and cultures, which is what International Weekend is all about.”
STUDENTS BOND & BATTLE DURING ANNUAL HEADMASTERS’ SOCIETIES GAMES

In a week of energetic and spirited competitions, members of Teams Sharpe, Kelley, Howard and Breed challenged each other in many conventional and untraditional arenas, from trivia contests and basketball games to a bake-off and spoon soccer. From February 20 to 24, the much-anticipated Headmasters’ Societies Games (HMS) returned to Blair’s campus, bringing new events to the scene, including a board-game tournament and Blair’s annual Poetry Out Loud competition, during which students earned points for their teams by delivering powerful poem recitations. Fan favorites, such as a life-size “Hungry Hungry Hippos” game, cup-stacking races and traditional tug-of-war contests, also returned this year, bringing many competitors to Hardwick Hall’s gymnasiums throughout the week.

“The games always help students get to know peers they may not otherwise meet in their daily routines,” said Associate Dean of Students Andee Ryerson, who organizes the festivities with her husband, science teacher Mike Ryerson. “Every year, students spend time with their teammates and meet new faces. That newfound camaraderie, plus the spirit of competition with other teams, often results in lasting friendships.”

The week’s events culminated in the annual talent show and presentation of the coveted HMS trophy: Team Kelley was crowned the winner, with Teams Sharpe, Howard and Breed, placing second, third and fourth, respectively.
YOUNG ALUMNI IMPART WISDOM ABOUT LIFE AFTER BLAIR AT SKEPTICS

Four accomplished recent graduates returned to campus in October to share their academic and professional experiences with current students, divulging wisdom and helpful insights into life beyond the “Blair bubble.”

This year’s Young Alumni Skeptics panelists—Geoff Brunn ’02, Macailagh Herman ’03, Jon Phillips ’03 and Ho-Jung (Rachel) Tseng ’10—represented a wide array of interests and career paths, from art, running and investing to marketing, law, structural engineering and architecture. Throughout the evening, the group shared experiences and tips for excelling in college, breaking into the workforce, and realizing their passions in the “real world.” History teacher Martin Miller, PhD, moderated the forum. Read on to learn more about each alum’s accomplishments since graduating from Blair.

Geoff Brunn ’02

As manager of the engineering start-up FIRMITAS, Geoff oversees a number of building and renovation projects every day. Geoff’s company, which specializes in the design of creative and sustainable buildings, has numerous assignments taking shape right now, including renovation of a cathedral in Chelsea, Manhattan; construction of a luxury retail location in SoHo, Manhattan; construction of a new artist’s loft and studio in downtown Jersey City; design of a new apartment building in Williamsburg, Brooklyn; and an
investigation into a roof failure in Portland, Oregon. Geoff earned two bachelor’s degrees from Lehigh University (in civil engineering and architecture) before pursuing graduate work at the University of California, Berkeley, where he completed a master’s in structural engineering. At Blair, Geoff discovered a love for math, architecture and crew; later, the sport led him to meet his wife, Dr. Katie Thoren. The couple lives in Westchester, New York.

**Macailagh Herman ’03**

Macailagh, a dedicated student-athlete and editor-in-chief of The Blair Breeze during her years at the School, earned a bachelor’s degree in American history from Smith College in December 2006. Soon after, she secured her first job with Credit Suisse and began her career in the firm’s private banking division. While continuing to work full time at Credit Suisse, Macailagh earned her JD at Brooklyn Law School in 2012 and joined Credit Suisse’s legal department as an in-house lawyer for Private Banking North America. She left Credit Suisse in 2014 to focus on the investment advisory business within the private wealth division of Barclays. The division was subsequently acquired by Stifel Financial, a brokerage and investment banking firm in New York City, where Macailagh currently works as deputy general counsel.

**Jon Phillips ’03**

Since graduating from Blair, Jon’s passion for running has crossed paths with his career. As manager of runner programming and products at New York Road Runners (NYRR), Jon develops and produces programming at the NYRR RUNCenter, a community space that celebrates the company’s mission to inspire people of all ages to run and be active. Formerly an event guru and marketing manager for Brooks Running, Jon also has experience in producing and managing events at major marathon races across the United States. A two-time cross country prep “A” state champion for the Buccaneers, he was also a member of the NCAA Division III championship cross country team at New York University (NYU), from which he earned bachelor’s degrees in Spanish and communications in 2007. Jon, a semi-professional runner, returned to NYU after his graduation to coach several seasons for the collegiate cross country team. Just as his runs typically do, Jon says his professional life has taken many “twists and turns,” and what ultimately landed his career in brand marketing is an “unwavering belief in following passion.”

**Ho-Jung (Rachael) Tseng ’10**

A multitalented Blair student, Rachael received accolades in music, fine art, chemistry and mathematics. She continued to flourish in the arts and sciences at Cornell University, earning internships with several architecture firms, including S.O.M. (Skidmore, Owings & Merrill), among others, and completing a bachelor of architecture degree. In August 2015, Rachael joined the workforce as an architectural designer for Rafael Viñoly Architects, where she has designed and coordinated multiple projects to be built in New York City.

To view a video of Young Alumni Skeptics, visit [www.blair.edu/young-alumni-skeptics](http://www.blair.edu/young-alumni-skeptics).
Service to others is a pillar of a Blair education, and students volunteer their time and talent in many ways during their years at the School. Seniors George Pektor ’17 and Emily Lunger ’17 have gone above and beyond in serving others by spearheading projects that have truly made a difference in the lives of young people; they are leaders who have inspired others to join them in their causes. Here, we share George’s and Emily’s stories of leadership in action.
Blair prefect and basketball player George Pektor has scored a “slam dunk” helping others as the founder and president of Go Pro Skills Camp, a nonprofit organization that runs an elite basketball camp for underprivileged youth in Pennsylvania’s Lehigh Valley. For the past two summers, boys between the ages of 13 and 17 have benefited from an advanced training and motivational experience that includes focused coaching, guest speakers, transportation, meals and gear, completely free of charge. The program is now headed into its third year, and all of it is the result of George’s leadership, hard work, and good old-fashioned hustle.

The idea for Go Pro Skills Camp grew from George’s own experience with elite—and often quite expensive—basketball camps during his middle school and high school years. “My basketball skillset was taking off,” he said, “but I realized that many potentially good athletes didn’t have the opportunities I was fortunate to have, simply because they couldn’t afford it. I wanted to do something to address that disconnect.”

Then a Blair sophomore, George ran his idea to create a free basketball camp by his father, Louis Pektor, a Lehigh Valley–area real estate developer whose “sense of wisdom” George deeply respects. His goal was to create an experience that would help kids improve their basketball skills and motivate them at a critical time in their lives when they might be questioning their futures in basketball, as well as overall. With his dad’s encouragement and advice, he hit the ground running.

Idea to Reality
From January to June 2015, George spent every spare moment launching Go Pro Skills Camp. He wrote a mission statement and formed a board of directors; incorporated the organization as a 501(c)3 nonprofit; enlisted sponsors and solicited donations of lunches, snacks, shirts and water bottles; and raised more than $25,000 from individual and corporate donors and a GoFundMe.com online campaign.

With the foundation of Go Pro Skills Camp in place, there was still more work to be done. George recruited kids to attend camp by contacting coaches for recommendations and visiting the local Boys & Girls Club and YMCA to promote the opportunity; he procured guest speakers, including Blair’s head varsity basketball coach, Joe Mantegna; and he hired Ed Jennings, the founder and CEO of Select Competition Basketball League—and a coach who has helped George “map out his goals”—to run day-to-day camp operations.

Seventy boys attended Go Pro Skills Camp at Allentown’s Jewish Community Center in June 2015; building upon that success, the camp moved to a larger gymnasium at William Allen High School in June 2016 and welcomed 100 boys over two weeks. DeSales University men’s coach Scott Coval and New York Knicks assistant coach Jim Cleamons served as guest coaches and speakers, and, to George’s surprise and delight, Go Pro Skills Camp garnered coverage by Lehigh Valley newspapers and TV outlets. “It really created an effect in the community,” he said gratefully.

Keeping Up Connections
George has enjoyed working with the boys at Go Pro Skills Camp and sharing his passion for basketball in a way that instills hope for a better future. He has kept in touch with camp attendees during the off-season, well aware that maintaining a strong connection helps keep youngsters in the game. And, as he prepared for Go Pro’s 2017 season, he executed a donor and sponsor outreach campaign that included newsletter updates and solicitations for funds and materials needed for this summer’s camp.

Through it all, George has been amazed at how basketball has brought about relationships and connections he never would have imagined, and how it has created a “little family” among the coaches and advisors who have helped make his idea a reality. “Mostly, I’ve realized how fortunate I am,” he said, “and how important it is to share that good fortune with others.”

Visit www.goproskillscamp.com for more information.

“...and how making a dream a reality takes incredible grit and passion. George has both in spades!”

– JOE MANTEGNA, Blair head varsity basketball coach
Senior Emily Lunger is a familiar face among Blair’s student leaders: She is a Locke Hall prefect, co-leader of the a cappella singing group and Christian Fellowship club, and has starred in many Blair Academy Players’ productions. Having generously shared her time and talent over the past four years with her fellow Bucs, Emily used her leadership skills last fall to initiate a Blair service project benefiting teenagers half a world away—she enlisted 30 student pen pals to help Afghan girls improve their English.

Although the pen-pal effort was new at Blair, it was not new to Emily. Since middle school, she has been writing letters to more than two dozen Afghan girls through her youth group at St. Luke’s and St. Mary’s Episcopal Church in Hope, New Jersey. “When I started writing letters, I had no idea this project would affect me so deeply,” she said. “I’ve learned so much about the world and about myself in doing it, I wanted to take the project further this year and share it with the Blair community.”

The Afghan School Project
The letter exchange is part of the Afghan School Project at St. Luke’s and St. Mary’s, an initiative started by St. Luke’s in 2003 with the goal of raising money to build a school in Afghanistan. The organization has since helped build Yakawlang Central Girls High School near Kabul, which enrolls about 1,000 girls in grades 7-12, and the Afghan School Project continues to support the school through fundraising, as well as the letter exchange.

“The Afghan schoolgirls have dreams of becoming doctors, lawyers, engineers and teachers, but in order to go to university and have professional careers, they need to know English,” Emily said. “In our letters, we encourage them to follow their dreams and practice their English skills, which they do when they write back. It’s partly an academic exercise, but it involves a great deal of friendship and love, too.”

With a Little Help From My Friends
Working with Dean of Campus Life and Director of Leadership Programs Carolyn Conforti-Browse ’79 last fall, Emily took action to bring her pen-pal effort to the next level. The pair set up a letter-writing station in the lobby of Hardwick Hall on a Saturday evening, and Emily explained her project to kids as they came by. By the end of the night, more than 30 students had joined the pen-pal project and taken the time to write letters of encouragement to the Afghan girls. Emily also prepared English lessons to be included with the letters to help the Afghan girls “grasp every opportunity” to refine their all-important English skills.

As Emily proudly shared her pen pals’ carefully written letters, she noted that she has learned a great deal about life in Afghanistan through the letter exchange. She has also developed a heightened sense of gratitude for her Blair experience and for all the good things in her life. “I’ve been inspired to work harder on my letters and to take more action to help these girls in any way possible,” she said.

“There are more Afghan girls who want pen pals than there are available correspondents, so it’s significant that so many Blair students have generously volunteered to help,” she continued. She hopes to enlist volunteers at her college, too, and she has already begun fundraising in support of Yakawlang Central Girls High School, having helped secure a $2,000 grant from the Episcopal Diocese of Newark’s Alleluia Fund in 2016. The money will be used to provide the Afghan girls with school supplies and to hire additional English-language teachers.

As she prepares to graduate later this month and head to college in the fall, Emily is determined to keep up her correspondence with 27 Afghan girls. “The girls are inspirational, and their desire to learn English is intense,” she said. “I really love this project—the more I do it, the more I want to do.”
**Stained Glass With an Unclear Past**  
by Holly Newcomb, Library Assistant

The history of this stained-glass panel depicting the Blair seal presents a bit of a mystery. Donated in 2015, the 13-by-14-inch panel came from the estate of stained-glass artist Gordon Henderson, who had been commissioned some years ago to re-create the piece because it was damaged. After making the replica, Mr. Henderson stored the damaged original for future reference. His representatives gave it to the School.

According to the donor, the panel may have been given as a School prize or award. Its corners depict baseball, golf, tennis and football, so the recipient may have been a four-varsity-letter athlete. The word "Blair" appears across the bottom in an ornate lettering style similar to the heading of the June 1932 alumni newsletter, so the panel may date to Headmaster Dr. Charles H. Breed’s tenure (1927-1946).

We ask readers for their help in identifying this unique piece of Blair memorabilia. If you have any information on its history or origin, please let us know by sending an email to newcoh@blair.edu or calling (908) 362-6121, ext. 5727.

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**Can you identify the students in this picture from the 1960s?**

Email your answers to Suzy Logan at bulletin@blair.edu. The first three people to correctly identify who is pictured will win a prize from the Blair School Store.
Center for Innovation & Collaboration Rises on the Hilltop

Construction of Blair’s Center for Innovation and Collaboration (CIC) continued through the winter months and into the spring. Targeted for completion in fall 2017, this exciting new academic center will feature technology classrooms; art, ceramics and architecture studios; media labs; a maker space; and highly configurable spaces ideal for small team work or large group presentations. The fine arts and technology departments will be housed here, and classes across the curriculum will utilize the CIC for collaborative and project-based work, making this state-of-the-art facility a campus-wide learning hub.

In addition, plans for realigning and repurposing space in Weber Hall and Bogle Hall to optimize math and science teaching have been refined over the past several months, and Chief Operating Officer Jim Frick anticipates that work in Weber Hall will begin as the CIC nears completion. To read more about the CIC and Bogle and Weber projects, visit www.blair.edu/forward-thinking.

Blair community members, including alumni, current and past parents, Trustees and friends of the School, have already contributed more than $11 million to help fund these academic-focused projects as part of the Forward Thinking campaign. If you would like to make a gift to the Forward Thinking campaign to enhance the Blair experience for all students, please contact Chief Advancement Officer Craig Hall at (908) 362-6121, ext. 5640, or email hallc@blair.edu.

Please visit Blair’s website, www.blair.edu, for periodic updates on CIC construction.

BLAIR’S DAY OF GIVING

One Day. One Gift. One Community.

Day of Giving 2017
Blair hosted its second-annual Day of Giving on April 6, 2017, the 169th anniversary of the School’s founding. To read more about the day’s success, visit www.blair.edu/day-of-giving-2017.
Orr Scholars Program Founded With Estate Gift of Setsuko & Richard K. Orr ’48

Richard K. “Dick” Orr ’48 came to Blair in 1942 on a full scholarship and made the most of his six years at the School. A varsity cross country and track runner, singer in the choir and honor roll student, he received the Blair Academy Trophy at graduation, the award given to the member of the senior class with the highest all-around level of achievement.

From Blair, Mr. Orr matriculated at Princeton University, where he won a Hibben Memorial Scholarship and graduated in 1957 as a member of Phi Beta Kappa. He proudly served two years in the U.S. Army between his sophomore and junior years at Princeton and later enjoyed a long career as an Exxon executive, traveling the world in support of the company’s international operations.

Mr. Orr deeply appreciated Blair Academy, the School that gave him his start, and, together with his wife, Setsuko, created a legacy of caring that will impact the lives of Blair students for many years to come. Mr. and Mrs. Orr, who passed away in 2013 and 2011, respectively, donated the bulk of their estates to Blair to establish the Orr Scholars Program, a named scholarship program that gives promising young men and women the priceless opportunity of a Blair education.

In keeping with Mr. Orr's devotion to issues of social and economic justice and racial understanding and harmony, the Setsuko and Richard K. Orr 48 Scholarship strengthens Blair's ability to attract students from many backgrounds who might not otherwise be able to afford a Blair education. Mr. and Mrs. Orr firmly believed in the importance of having a diverse student body, as this would enhance the educational experience for all at the School they held in such high regard.

With more than $2 million in giving, Mr. and Mrs. Orr were inducted posthumously into Blair’s John C. Bogle ‘47 Circle of Benefactors at the Leadership Dinner this spring. The first two Orr scholars were named at the start of the 2016-2017 school year, beginning a legacy of learning and caring that will endure far into the future.

A Classmate Remembers

Former Trustee David D. Wakefield ’48 came to Blair as a seventh-grader in 1942 with his classmate Dick Orr. Mr. Wakefield fondly remembers "always running behind Dick on the School track" during their student days, and the two men kept in touch and enjoyed occasional get-togethers with their wives and other Blair friends over the years.

In his role as a Trustee, Mr. Wakefield talked to Mr. Orr about his estate gift. “Dick was an intellectual man with practical, loyal affinity for Blair and a soft heart for those who struggled to afford an education,” Mr. Wakefield said. “His own Blair experience gave him the opportunity to shine, and he wanted to give others that same opportunity. His generous gift to the School certainly accomplishes his wishes.”
Herbert J. Siegel ’46 Establishes Endowed Fund to Support Blair Athletes

Honorary Trustee Herbert J. Siegel ’46 is one of Blair’s most generous benefactors and a devoted supporter of Buccaneer teams. In 2016, he again demonstrated his belief in the importance of sports in a young person’s life with a gift that will enhance the athletic experience of every student at the School.

With a contribution of $500,000, Mr. Siegel established The Ed Sabol Class of ’36 & Herb Siegel Class of ’46 Endowed Athletic Fund to support travel and training programs for Blair athletes. Money from this fund will enable all students, regardless of financial ability, to participate in the skill- and life-enhancing opportunities that athletic training affords. As a result, individual teams and the entire Blair athletic program will be strengthened.

The naming of the new fund holds special significance for Mr. Siegel, as it honors his longtime friendship with his late brother-in-law, Edwin M. Sabol ’36. Mr. Sabol was the founder, president and chairman of NFL Films, and, in that role, he revolutionized how sports were filmed and presented. He won more than 100 Emmy Awards during his career and was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 2011; he is the only Blair alumnus to ever achieve that honor. Having died at the age of 98 in 2015, Mr. Sabol was posthumously inducted into Blair Academy’s Athletic Hall of Fame in 2016 as a member of the Hall’s inaugural class.

Both Mr. Siegel and Mr. Sabol excelled as Blair athletes. Mr. Siegel was a member of Blair’s varsity football, swimming and baseball teams, while Mr. Sabol was a standout in football, swimming and track. Mr. Sabol set World’s Interscholastic swimming records in both the 40- and 100-yard freestyle races as a senior and continued his swimming career after accepting a scholarship to The Ohio State University. He was selected to the 1936 Olympic team but refused to compete in Nazi Germany.

The Ed Sabol Class of ’36 & Herb Siegel Class of ’46 Endowed Athletic Fund represents the latest chapter in Mr. Siegel’s exceptionally generous Blair philanthropic history. His gifts include support for faculty through the establishment of the Siegel Equity Fund; support for students through the establishment of the Ann L. Siegel Scholarship, the Herbert J. Siegel ’46 Prize for athletic spirit and outstanding sportsmanship, and the naming of the Ann L. Siegel “Annie” Hall girls’ dormitory; and support for the entire community through the purchase of the Siegel property adjacent to campus. Mr. Siegel served on Blair’s Board of Trustees from 1985 to 1992 and was elected an honorary Trustee in 1999. He received the School’s highest honor, the Citation of Merit, in 1991, in recognition of his exceptional service.

Head of School Chris Fortunato (center) welcomed Herb Siegel ’46 and his wife, Jeanne, to Blair in January.
Edwin M. Sabol ’36 won more than 100 Emmys during his career as founder, president and chairman of NFL Films. He passed away in 2015 at the age of 98. (Photo courtesy of NFL Films)

Blair Academy seeks to grow The Ed Sabol Class of ’36 & Herb Siegel Class of ’46 Endowed Athletic Fund to $1 million.

If you would like to make a gift in support of Blair athletes, please contact Chief Advancement Officer Craig Hall at (908) 362-6121, ext. 5640, or email hallc@blair.edu.


BLAIR ACADEMY’S JOHN C. SHARPE SOCIETY:

Help shoulder Blair’s future with a strong foundation.

Join the many John C. Sharpe Society members who will provide the base of support for the future needs and progress of Blair through their wills, trusts, retirement plans or other deferred gifts.

Please consider joining the effort to reach new heights!

For information about gift planning or membership in the Society, contact:

Velma Lubliner, Assistant Director of Advancement for Capital Giving, at (908) 362-6121, ext. 5634, or lubliv@blair.edu.

www.blair.edu/john-c-sharpe-society
01 Blair wrestling won its 37th national prep team championship, Leo Tarantino '18 (170 lbs.) earned a third-place medal in the tournament.

02 Erica Martinson '18 notched double-digit scores in MAPL and state title games.

03 Zach Kent '17 helped the boys’ varsity basketball team achieve a 20-6 record.

04 Matt Turner '17 was a recipient of the 2016-2017 Haskins Basketball Prize.

05 Winter track team captains Ekrem Ayhan '17 (left) and Justes Nance '17 finished first and second, respectively, in the 200-meter sprint at the prep “A” state championships.

06 Girls’ varsity squash compiled a solid 8-2 record this winter; Clio Bersani '17 earned the Blair Squash Prize.

07 Nick Incontrera '19 (106 lbs.) placed fourth at Ironman and Beast of the East and fifth at the national prep tournament.

08 Sydney Brown '18 (left) and Elayna Daniels '17 helped girls’ varsity basketball to the team’s seventh-straight MAPL and state titles.

09 Boys’ swimming had a strong season (4-1-1) in the pool (Ronan Smarth '18 pictured).

10 Boys’ varsity squash (Adham Sobhy ‘18 pictured) dominated in matches vs. Hun, Delbarton, Rumson Fair Haven and Millburn.
Winter Teams Finish Season as Champions

Wrestling Wins National Prep Championship
The wrestling team earned its 37th national prep team championship at the 2017 national prep tournament, during which Blair’s wrestlers also won all 12 of their medal matches.

Six Bucs earned individual championship titles: Trevor Mastrogiovanni ’20 (113 lbs.), Chris Cannon ’19 (126 lbs.), Zach Sherman ’17 (132 lbs.), Malcolm Robinson ’18 (138 lbs.), Andrew Merola ’18 (160 lbs.) and Chase Singletary ’17 (220 lbs.). This marked the second national championship for Chris, Andrew and Chase.

“The guys raised their intensity and competed extremely well in the medal round,” said head varsity coach Brian Antonelli ’93. “Overall, the team made great progress over the past several months, and team members are better wrestlers than they were at the beginning of the season. A great deal of our wrestlers’ success came from their hustle and dedication in the wrestling room.”

Coach Antonelli also commended the team for a number of accomplishments this season, including winning the Ironman and Beast of the East tournaments; Zach, Malcolm and Julian Ramirez ’19 each earning their third individual Beast champion titles; a strong team victory over a tough Lake Highland Prep School opponent; and Trevor and Chase wrestling undefeated in the season.

He added that the Bucs will miss the team’s graduating seniors next season—Chase (The Ohio State University), Zach and Nick Mosco ’17 (University of North Carolina), and Anthony DeMartino ’17 (Duke University)—and look forward to watching Blair wrestlers progress in college and beyond. Coach Antonelli will travel with several underclassmen to competitions in the United States and abroad throughout the spring and summer.

Girls’ Basketball Earns MAPL & State Titles
The girls’ varsity basketball team capped off another successful season in February, winning its seventh-straight Mid-Atlantic Prep League (MAPL) and prep “A” state championship titles.

The team started its championship run in mid-February, defeating Hill, 72-25, in the final round of the MAPL tournament to be named champions. The girls overwhelmed Hill with a balanced scoring attack that included four players in double figures: Sydney Brown ’18 (19 points), Maryrita Curcio ’18 (13 points), Onome Akinbode-James ’18 (11 points) and Erica Martinsen ’18 (10 points).

A week later, the athletes took the court in front of a packed house at home for the state tournament. Blair had decisive wins over Lawrenceville (73-48) and Peddie (64-23) in its run for the state title. In the championship game, several Bucs recorded notable scores, including Sydney (14 points), Katie Douglas ’18 (13 points) and Erica (12 points).

For head coach Quinten Clarke ’87, the season was marked by dedicated team members whose selfless attitudes made their collective accomplishments possible.

“Winning is always fun, but winning the right way is even more rewarding,” he said. “In addition to being very talented, this team was amazing to coach. They practiced hard every day, they loved the competition, and they were supportive of each other. When you have a group of girls that doesn’t care who scores or who gets the credit, it’s amazing what you can accomplish on the court.”
‘This Is Absolutely the Place I Want to Be’: Lacrosse Coach Teddy Wenner ’96

by Joanne Miceli

Teddy Wenner ’96 picked up lacrosse as a Blair freshman for the best of all reasons: He thought he would enjoy it. As it turned out, he was right. “I was better at soccer, but I really loved the game of lacrosse and the team dynamic,” mused the four-year athlete, who eventually captained both varsity Buccaneer teams. “Lacrosse was just so much fun.”

Fast forward to 2017, and Teddy Wenner, former West Point lacrosse player, Army officer and sales professional, and current Blair associate dean of admission, director of financial aid, husband of Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Teresa Wenner and father of two, is again enjoying himself on Blair’s lacrosse field. However, now he’s head varsity Coach Wenner, at the helm of the Blair boys’ lacrosse program for the past four years.

Since returning to his alma mater in 2012, Coach Wenner has also found great joy and satisfaction in his admission roles, where, as a proud alumnus, he is helping guide the next generation of “character kids” to the School he holds in high regard. “This is absolutely the place I want to be,” he affirms, and his work with his players and colleagues as he helps shape Blair’s future makes that perfectly clear.

Leading Lacrosse

Standing firmly in the shoes of his own “great Blair coaches,” former Dean of Residential Life Dave Vachris and former history teacher Dave Braemer, Coach Wenner’s commitment to his players has resulted in a strong Blair LAX program over the past five years. His coaching philosophy is based on two principles: His team members must be continually improving, and, not surprisingly, they must be having fun.

“It’s important to me to create a team atmosphere in which kids can do their best,” Coach Wenner said, describing how he aims to strike a healthy balance between hard work and enjoyment of the sport. So, even while he may be “out on the practice field cracking jokes,” he insists on players’ best effort, leads them with the confidence and finesse of a military academy grad and creates ample opportunities for skill development.

Blair’s boys’ lacrosse program “builds from the ground up,” bringing in talented freshmen and sophomores at the JV level and molding them into great varsity players as juniors and seniors. Coach Wenner considers JV and varsity one unit, and he credits much of the program’s success to his dedicated varsity assistant coaches, history teacher Tim Goggins and science teacher Mike Ryerson, and JV coaches, classics department chair Eric Lunger and math teacher Rob Anthony.

“Every coach is highly knowledgeable and puts in tremendous effort to teach fundamentals, instill a strong work ethic, and emphasize sportsmanship and teamwork,” Coach
Wenner praised. “It takes years to create a positive and healthy lacrosse culture—our fantastic coaches have made that happen. They’re committed to our players, and the kids know it.”

Having such a cohesive coaching staff has resulted in “real, strong commitment” from team members. Players at every level participate in multiple off-season developmental opportunities, including travel to nearby towns for professional clinics and to Florida for spring break training. In season, Coach Wenner’s players “give it their all,” day in and day out. “That says a lot about their character—they’re good people and good young men. I’m proud to be their coach.”

Coach Wenner is also pleased that Blair’s lacrosse program provides an excellent experience for top players who go on to play at the college level—including advising and advocacy through the recruiting process, if needed—as well as for four-year “joumeymen” who are enjoying high-school LAX purely for its challenge, competition and camaraderie. In either case, Coach Wenner wisely encourages his team members to make the most of their time at Blair by becoming multisport athletes and active members of the community. Having been a four-year Buc himself, that encouragement comes straight from the heart.

**From Blair to West Point**

The son of Richard and Judith Wenner, a former public school principal and Blair’s former language department chair, respectively, Coach Wenner came to Blair as a freshman day student from Knowlton in 1992. Following in the footsteps of his sister, Elisabeth ’91, and his brother, Richard ’93, he sums up his Blair experience in a single word: amazing.

“My years at Blair were fundamental to my development as a young man,” Coach Wenner said, recounting the many faculty members—including English teachers Bob Brandwood, Tom Parauda and Monie Hardwick, and science teacher Rob Merrifield—who impressed him with their depth of knowledge and passion for their subjects. “These were people...
who cared about how I was doing as a student but cared even more about me as a person.” In this supportive environment, Coach Wenner became a campus leader, serving as freshman, sophomore and junior class president, co-president of the School as a senior, a Blue & White Key Society member, an East Hall prefect, and a dual varsity team captain.

Dean of College Counseling Lewis Stival was another of Coach Wenner’s most-influential Blair faculty: He suggested the U.S. Military Academy (USMA) for college. After giving this novel idea some thought, Coach Wenner decided to go for it—and West Point was the only college to which he applied. He laughs now, admitting he “really had no concept” of what life at West Point or in the Army would be like. But he proudly accepted his appointment to West Point and reported just weeks after graduating from Blair.

USMA proved to be the right place for Coach Wenner, and to this day, he appreciates the intense, four-year experience for its emphasis on values and discipline and the lifelong bonds of friendship it forged. He played JV lacrosse for the Black Knights as a freshman and made varsity as a sophomore, but as a junior and senior, he decided to forego the five-hour daily commitment to practice and conditioning to concentrate on academics, intramural sports, and company activities.

In the Army
Coach Wenner graduated from West Point in 2000 with a BS in European history and served in the Army until June 2005, during the militarily demanding years that included the September 11 terrorist attacks and subsequent U.S. operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. A field artillery officer, he deployed with his unit in late 2001 to Macedonia, Kosovo, and Turkey, the Army’s staging area for Iraq; worked in war planning as aide-de-camp to 1st Infantry Division Brig. Gen. Stephen Mundt from 2001 to 2003; and served 15 months on the front lines in Iraq, a multifaceted experience that involved everything from daily combat patrols to working closely with tribal leaders to improve political relations and develop economic opportunities.

While Coach Wenner “loved being in the military,” he also knew as he neared the end of his commitment that he did not want to make the Army his career. “I loved the way I had grown up—living in one house throughout my childhood, eating dinner with my parents and siblings, going to church on Sundays,” he reflected. “I wanted that life with a family of my own someday, and I couldn’t see that happening with the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East.”

As it happened, Coach Wenner met then-Captain (CPT) Teresa Gardner, the woman who would become his wife, near the end of his Iraq deployment. “We just clicked,” Coach Wenner said with a smile. He proposed three months later, and in October 2006, the Wenners were married and began their life together, he having made the “tough transition” to civilian life and she continuing her Army career.

Teddy ’96 and Teresa Wenner with their children, Archie, 6, and Elsie, 3.
For the next six years, the Wenners moved as Teresa advanced in the Army, posting first to Fort Huachuca, Arizona, where she led the military’s first combat drone command, then to Seattle, where she served as recruiting district commander. Coach Wenner worked as a construction supervisor and in sales management for a manufacturer of arms and weapons during those years, and although he liked his jobs, he knew that he wanted to do something more, “something that mattered,” in his professional life.

The light bulb moment came in early 2012: After much thought and prayer, Coach Wenner decided to pursue a career in boarding-school education. “It absolutely made sense,” he said. “Both my parents were educators, and my own experience at boarding school made a tremendous difference in my life.” He fondly remembered the many faculty children and families at Blair during his student days and relied heavily on language teacher Maria Bowditch and her husband, Penn, and Jim and Rachel Stone, Blair’s former athletic director and dean of faculty, respectively, to share their experiences in raising a family in a boarding-school environment.

Coach Wenner contacted then-Headmaster Chan Hardwick for advice and guidance on how to make the career change, and, as luck would have it, an opening in Blair’s admission office a few months later presented the opportunity he knew would be right. In May 2012, the Wenner family, which now included Archie, age 2, and a second child on the way, moved to Blair Academy and took up residence in Insley Hall. It was, as Coach Wenner happily put it, their “best move ever.”

Proud to Be a Buccaneer

Having been a Blair faculty member for five years now, Coach Wenner is thrilled with the life his family has made on campus. His work in admission and with Blair students as head varsity lacrosse coach, dorm parent and advisor is deeply fulfilling; LTC Wenner continues working in military intelligence and cybersecurity; and their children, Archie, now 6, and Elsie, 3, are growing up surrounded by the close-knit Blair community and with their loving grandparents, uncle, aunt and cousins nearby.

Coach Wenner’s appreciation for the School and its students has grown even greater as he has traveled around the country for the admission office. “There’s a ‘secret sauce’ here that isn’t found everywhere,” he said. “At Blair, we pay homage to our roots and traditions, yet we continually advance our programs and facilities. And this attracts our families and the kind of character kids who make us proud. I know I am the product of the many wise mentors and role models I’ve had throughout my life, and I am so happy to hopefully give a small piece of that back to the wonderful students at Blair.”

As an alumnus, Coach Wenner finds his work at Blair especially affirming. “Twenty-plus years after my graduation, Blair is still Blair, and the community itself hasn’t changed,” he said. “Our excellent leadership continues to point us in the right direction, while never losing sight of where we’re from. Knowing what Blair meant to me, I’m proud to bring great kids here and help them make the most of their own Blair experience and, at the same time, help shape the School’s future.”
As a private wealth advisor for Morgan Stanley in Menlo Park, California, Victoria Paige Bailey ’97 answers many questions. She also asks a few. For instance, as she guides clients in matters of wealth management, investment strategy, and estate and trust planning, she advises that there are really only four things people can do with their money: spend it, give it to family, donate it to charity or pay taxes. “What do you want your legacy to be?” she asks.

Victoria decided in 2013 that her own answer to that all-important question included making a bequest to Blair. “Through my work, I’ve become aware of the importance of a person’s legacy and what they leave behind,” she said. “Estate gifts are the final gifts you can give to thank organizations that were impactful in your life. My husband and I wanted to support institutions we are passionate about, and for me, that absolutely means Blair.”

**Best Educational Experience Ever**

Victoria described her four years at Blair as her “best educational experience ever.” That’s saying a lot considering she earned a BA in economics at Princeton University in 2001. “Blair’s culture was extraordinarily inclusive, and every teacher was committed to students’ success,” she reflected. That culture and commitment made all the difference for Victoria.

She was a busy and involved student, playing tennis and lacrosse, gracing the Blair stage in musicals, dramas and as a Singer, and serving as a tour guide and senior-year prefect. Her classmates—just 60 of them at the start of their freshman year—were exceptionally supportive of one another, and the class of ’97 became a tight-knit group that remains close to this day.

Academically, Victoria enjoyed the challenge of high-level math, even as the only girl in math teacher Latta Browse’s BC calculus class. “That class was a pivotal experience thanks to Latta’s inclusivity,” she said. “It’s one of the reasons I went on to study economics and now work in finance, which not many women do.”

The life lessons gleaned at Blair have remained with Victoria, too. “I learned how to be a student, how to stay organized, and that it was okay to step out of my comfort zone and try things that made me nervous, like new sports or getting up on stage,” she said. “Theatre teacher Craig Evans and so many other teachers went the extra mile and taught us to do the same. And, because Blair is such a demanding place, I learned to stop at times and just take care of myself. That was an important lesson for college, and one I still try to remember.”

**Think About It**

Victoria’s life now is just as busy as it was during her Blair days: In addition to a career that she loves, she and her husband, Peter, are parents of three active sons, Will, 7, Andrew, 6, and Christopher, 4. Yet she takes the time to connect often with her Blair friends and classmates, and she remains engaged and up-to-date with all that is happening at the School she holds dear.

“Blair’s history and culture are so special and were so impactful in my life that it’s important to me to stay involved,” she said. She encourages alumni of all ages who cherish their Blair experiences to remain connected, support the School with annual Blair Fund gifts and consider estate gifts, too. “Make an estate plan—it’s not that hard to do, and it’s important at all levels of wealth,” she advised. “And be sure to tell the organizations you’ve named about your gift, as it helps them plan for the future. Estate gifts are the last gifts you get to give. Think about it—and set your plan in motion.”
Gatherings Bring Together Alumni, Parents & Prospective Families

From November to April, the School hosted numerous receptions and events, inviting past, present and future members of the Blair community to various locations around the globe.

In November, members of Blair’s admission and advancement teams traveled to Asia, where they hosted gatherings in Thailand, Singapore, Vietnam, South Korea and Hong Kong for prospective families and met with current parents and alums, too. In the days leading up to Peddie Day 2016, young alumni from Blair chapters in New York City, Boston, San Francisco and Washington, D.C., hosted gatherings to connect with former classmates and display their School spirit prior to the rivalry festivities on campus.

Later that month, alumni, parents and faculty gathered

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ALUMNI EVENTS

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at Yards Brewing Company in Philadelphia for a casual reception. The event—the first Blair has hosted in the City of Brotherly Love in nearly a decade—was punctuated by opportunities to learn about the brewery, which was founded by Tom Kehoe ’83.

December brought the Blair family together in Washington, D.C., for a faculty panel discussion and cocktail reception. Attendees had the opportunity to learn more about the future of the School and enjoyed conversation with classmates and former teachers.

Early in the new year, alumni gathered for a casual reception in Austin, Texas, and young alums mingled at the annual networking event in New York City, hosted by Trustee Emeritus Jim Krugman ’65 and his wife, Connie. This always-popular evening was followed by an early spring reception in Boston and a “Skeptics on the Road” event in New York City, at which former faculty member Elliott Trommald, PhD, Hon. ’65 led a discussion about Blair’s founder, John I. Blair. Each gathering brought opportunities for alums to reconnect with faculty and friends.

Next up on the calendar is Alumni Weekend on June 9-11. For more details on reunion festivities, as well as other upcoming alumni events, visit www.blair.edu/alumni.

Blair regularly posts alumni news on its website at www.blair.edu/alumni. Jenny Maine also sends a monthly e-newsletter, Alma Matters, to keep alums connected to campus. Questions? Contact Jenny at (908) 362-6121, ext. 5655, or mainej@blair.edu.
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<td>1948</td>
<td>William M. Hunt</td>
<td>December 19, 2016</td>
<td>Sussex, New Jersey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>David E. McFarlane</td>
<td>September 9, 2016</td>
<td>The Villages, Florida</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wallace S. Peyton</td>
<td>July 16, 2016</td>
<td>Englewood, New Jersey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thomas J. Bain</td>
<td>December 5, 2016</td>
<td>Augusta, New Jersey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roger B. Koehler Jr.</td>
<td>January 30, 2017</td>
<td>Wellesley, Massachusetts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>J. Barry Lamb</td>
<td>December 24, 2016</td>
<td>Cream Ridge, New Jersey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>John R. Naisby III</td>
<td>January 21, 2017</td>
<td>Sparta, New Jersey</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Thomas J. Mackie II</td>
<td>July 4, 2016</td>
<td>Croton-on-Hudson, New York</td>
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<td>1961</td>
<td>David C. Carrad</td>
<td>April 11, 2016</td>
<td>Augusta, Georgia</td>
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<td>1963</td>
<td>Edward S. Baker</td>
<td>August 18, 2016</td>
<td>Jacksonville, Florida</td>
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<td>1989</td>
<td>Christopher C. Curry</td>
<td>December 5, 2016</td>
<td>Temecula, California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Oliver B. Rodriguez</td>
<td>August 16, 2016</td>
<td>Castro Urdiales, Spain</td>
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<td>1994</td>
<td>Simone N. Saxon</td>
<td>September 30, 2016</td>
<td>Sicklerville, New Jersey</td>
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<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>Juliette Dajani</td>
<td>January 9, 2017</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963-1973</td>
<td>Former Faculty</td>
<td>January 27, 2017</td>
<td>Savannah, Georgia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963-1973</td>
<td>Clemens S. Burke</td>
<td>February 27, 2017</td>
<td>Savannah, Georgia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>Former Trustees</td>
<td>October 9, 2016</td>
<td>New York, New York</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>James M. Davin</td>
<td>New York, New York</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carol R. Kimmelman</td>
<td>January 6, 2017</td>
<td>Rancho Santa Fe, California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jean D. Lieberman</td>
<td>January 10, 2017</td>
<td>Allentown, Pennsylvania</td>
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In Memoriam

1934

John H. Barry. Entering Blair Academy in 1933 as a postgraduate, Mr. Barry was a member of the varsity basketball and baseball teams. He graduated from Lehigh University and served in the 759th Light Tank Battalion during World War II, earning five battle stars and a Bronze Star. A certified public accountant, Mr. Barry retired as the general auditor of Mobil Oil Corporation in 1981. He was a member of St. Vincent Martyr Church and the Madison Golf Club in New Jersey. He is survived by his wife, Barbara, three children and six grandchildren.

1936

John M. Richards. Following one year at Blair, Dr. Richards attended Cornell University, where he earned his BA and MD in 1940. He served his residency at New York Eye and Ear Infirmary of Mount Sinai, and established his eye surgery practice in Santa Barbara in 1947. His interests included gardening, traveling and hunting, and he served his community as a Rotary Club member in Sea Isle City and Cape May, New Jersey, and Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Mr. Kroner is survived by his wife of 73 years, Geraldine, and their son.

Arthur A. Richmond III. A lifelong supporter of Blair and member of the John C. Sharpe Society of planned givers, Dr. Richmond was the proud standard-bearer for the class of 1938 at many Alumni Weekend celebrations. He came to the School in the footsteps of his father, Arthur Richmond Jr., class of 1912, and cousin, Archibald Richmond, class of 1907, and distinguished himself as an honor roll student, a varsity athlete and 1938’s senior class president. Dr. Richmond matriculated at Williams College, graduating with a BA in 1942 as part of an accelerated wartime program. His World War II service in the Army brought him to the Philippines and New Guinea, where he met his Australian-born wife, Eugenie; they married in 1945. Upon returning to civilian life, Dr. Richmond began his university teaching career at Williams. He earned a master’s (1949) and PhD (1951) in history at Yale University and served on the Blair faculty for two years before beginning a tenure of more than three decades on the history faculty at the U.S. Naval Academy. Dr. and Mrs. Richmond were avid golfers who enjoyed traveling and golfing worldwide. Predeceased by Eugenie and his brother, John C. Richmond ’40, Dr. Richmond is survived by his sons, Harvey and Hugh M. Richmond ’77; daughter, Brenda; nephew, Michael H. Richmond ’67; two grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

1939

Albert G. Danker Sr. Mr. Danker was a loyal member of the class of 1939, serving as a class representative and attending many Alumni Weekends. His Blair legacy includes his late brother, August E. Danker, class of 1929, and three grandchildren, Cadence Case ’97, Chad Butt ’00 and Benjamin Danker ’07. Mr. Danker came to Blair for a postgraduate year, studied briefly at Duke University and joined the Merchant Marines to serve his country during World War II. He enjoyed a long career as a Realtor, working with his brother at Danker & Danker in Westfield, New

Former Trustee

James M. Davin. Father of Christian ’97, Alexander ’01 and Nicholas ’03, Mr. Davin was a deeply loyal supporter and friend of the School. He served as a Blair Trustee from 1997 to 1999 and was an active member of the Investment Committee and, alongside his wife, Tina, the Blair Academy Parents’ Advisory Committee. A graduate of Georgetown University, Mr. Davin was a retired president of Davin Capital Corp. who had enjoyed a successful career on Wall Street. He was a director of Greg Manning Auctions, Inc., of West Caldwell, New Jersey; the past president of 1120 Park Corporation; a member of the Carnegie Hill Association; and a member of the Park Avenue Malls Project. A good friend to many, Mr. Davin was known as an engaging storyteller with a fine sense of humor. He is survived by his loving wife and their sons.
Jersey. A community leader, Mr. Danker served as president of the Westfield Board of Realtors, vice president of the Westfield YMCA and president of the Westfield School Boosters Association. The 1939 ACTA notes that his “piano playing was a joy, as well as a firm foundation of the orchestra,” and he continued to entertain friends at the piano throughout his life. An avid traveler, golfer and beach-goer during his lifetime, Mr. Danker is survived by two children, three grandchildren and one great-grandchild. He was preceded in death by his first wife, Lena, and second wife, Ellie.

Frederick G. Wiegand. Dr. Wiegand was a varsity swimmer, track team manager and member of the press club during his two years at Blair. A graduate of Yale University and Hahnemann Medical College, he served 21 years in the U.S. Navy during World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War, providing obstetrical and gynecological care to Navy personnel and military dependents. Dr. Wiegand served as chief of gynecology for the resident training program at the U.S. Naval Hospital in Portsmouth, Virginia, and as director of the residency training program at the U.S. Naval Hospital in Chelsea, Massachusetts. Following his military retirement, he continued his medical and teaching career, retiring in 1985 from Wake County Memorial Hospital and the University of North Carolina as a tenured associate professor after 40 years in medicine. His work involved the first obstetrical ultrasounds, the first laparoscopic surgeries and the first colposcopies for early detection of uterine cancer. In 1982, he proudly received the OBGYN Chief Residents’ Award for excellence in resident teaching. Predeceased by his beloved wife of 54 years, Jean, he is survived by four children, eight grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

1940

Donald R. Bryant Jr. An honor-roll student who attended Blair for one year, Mr. Bryant is described as “friendly and a hard worker” in the 1940 ACTA. He matriculated at Princeton University, graduating in 1944 to serve in World War II. He received a Purple Heart for injuries sustained in the Battle of the Bulge. Mr. Bryant graduated from the University of Pennsylvania Law School in 1946 and enjoyed a successful law career in Trenton and Princeton, New Jersey. He was a member of the Nassau Club for more than 65 years and enjoyed backgammon and bridge. Preceded in death by his wife, Elizabeth, Mr. Bryant is survived by five children, 14 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

1942

Covert G. Palmer. A supply sergeant in the U.S. Air Force, Mr. Palmer was stationed in the United States and abroad during his military career. In 1969, he settled into civilian life in Coeur d’Alene, Idaho, where he worked as a taxi driver and musician. Mr. Palmer was an avid photographer, accomplished musician and a friend to many. He is survived by six children, nine grandchildren, 15 great-grandchildren and numerous great-great-grandchildren.

1943

Thomas Freund. During the summer of 1943, Mr. Freund spent 10 weeks at Blair immersed in a concentrated course of study to earn his diploma. He served 16 months in the U.S. Navy and graduated from Princeton University in 1947. Mr. Freund was a physical chemist who worked for RCA, the U.S. Navy and Stanford Research Institute; he also taught at The George Washington University. He was keenly interested in politics and was a member of CITRO È NIE, a community of Citroën automobile enthusiasts. Predeceased by his wife, Mr. Freund is survived by two children.

Howard K. Mott. Mr. Mott graduated from Blairstown High School in 1941, came to Blair Academy for a postgraduate year and remained a loyal member of the class of 1943. A lifelong Blairstown-area resident, he was active in town government, serving on the Blairstown Township Committee, Blairstown Planning Board, as fire commissioner and as mayor of Blairstown for two terms. He was also a trustee of the Knowlton Presbyterian Church. For 28 years, Mr. Mott worked as a telephone electrical engineer for West Jersey Telephone. He enjoyed memberships in the Independent Telephone Pioneer Association, American Grange Association and the Future Farmers of America. Later in life, Mr. Mott received his private pilot license and flew his two small aircraft out of Blairstown Airport. He was a respected local historian and an avid reader, and he loved to spend time observing birds and horses. Mr. Mott is survived by nine sons, three daughters, three stepchildren, 32 grandchildren, three step-grandchildren and many great-grandchildren. He was predeceased by his wife, Irene, and his former wife, Dorothy.

Douglas B. Tiffany. A two-year Blair student, Mr. Tiffany was a member of the choir, glee club, band and dance orchestra, and president of the camera club. He served in the U.S. Navy as a pilot during World War II. In 1949, he earned an engineering degree from Cornell University. Mr. Tiffany was granted a number of patents during his career with global biotechnology company PerkinElmer. He established a real estate business in Boston and, eventually, retired to Florida. Mr. Tiffany is survived by his wife of 35 years, June, and his children.
1944

J. Bruce Gilman Jr. A dedicated member of the class of 1944, Mr. Gilman attended Blair for five years. He was “very popular among all the fellows,” according to the 1944 ACTA, and he went on to earn a BA at Columbia University (1948) and a JD at Duke University (1952). Mr. Gilman worked as an attorney for Texaco, Inc., and, together with his wife, Roxie, enjoyed traveling and swimming, making several appearances at the National Senior Olympics. Survived by Roxie, four daughters and seven grandchildren, Mr. Gilman was preceded in death by his brother, Richard A. Gilman ’41.

1945

Eugene H. Buttle. Mr. Buttle was a lifelong supporter of the School and a member of the John C. Sharpe Society of planned givers. During his three years at Blair, he excelled at swimming and cheerleading. He earned a BA in history at Princeton University, where, as a member of the swim team, he was the East Coast collegiate diving champion. From 1946 to 1948, Mr. Buttle served in the U.S. Army Signal Corps and, during his corporate career, he worked for two decades at PPG Industries and then served as CEO of American Inks and Coatings until his retirement. Mr. Buttle loved traveling, golfing and boating with his wife of 64 years, Ann, and he was a proud volunteer docent and guide at his local Mighty 8th Air Force Museum. He is survived by his wife, their daughter, three grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

George F. Johnson Jr. Mr. Johnson attended Blair for two years and remained connected to the School throughout his life. While at Blair, he was a member of the varsity football team and the Blair Academy Players. A Dartmouth graduate, he served in the U.S. Army during World War II and the Korean War. Mr. Johnson enjoyed a diverse business career, working in early television for CBS and Looney Tunes, as an advertising account executive for Anheuser-Busch and, finally, retiring after several years in the hospitality industry at Virginia’s Kingsmill Resort. A man of many interests, he enjoyed playing competitive bridge, collecting 1776 memorabilia and feeding his hummingbirds. Mr. Johnson is survived by his sister, nephew and niece, Ruth R. Turner ’71.

1947

John J. Coats. A lifelong resident of Newton, New Jersey, Mr. Coats attended Blair from 1946 to 1947, after having received his high school diploma from Newton High School and having proudly served in the U.S. Navy during World War II. Certified as a master watchmaker by the Horological Institute of America in 1950, Mr. Coats became a third-generation jewelers and owner/operator of John Coats Jewelers in Newton. He was an Eagle Scout, a life member of Christ Church, a 35-year member of the Newton Firemen Steamer Company No. 1 and a 50-year member of Lt. Charles A. Meyer American Legion Post 86. Predeceased by his wife, Katharine Ann, Mr. Coats is survived by four daughters, nine grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

William M. Hunt. A graduate of Lafayette College who served two years in the Marine Corps, Mr. Hunt came to Blair in 1946 and was a member of the JV baseball team. The 1947 ACTA notes that he was known for his “encyclopedia of baseball information.” A Sussex County, New Jersey, resident for most of his life, Mr. Hunt was a field representative for GMAC in Newark, worked for the 1960 census, and retired in 1991 from Sussex Borough, where he served as treasurer, assessor and tax collector. He was a member of the First Presbyterian Church of Sussex for more than 65 years, a member of the Minisink Historical Society of Port Jervis, New York, and a life member of the Sussex County Historical Society. Mr. Hunt is survived by his wife of 44 years, Suzanne.

1948

David E. McFarlane. Mr. McFarlane attended Blair for two years and remained a loyal alumnus, serving on the 1848 Society Committee and attending many reunions, including his 65th in 2013. While at Blair, he ran varsity cross country and was assignment editor of The Blair Breeze and a member of the press club. At his 60th reunion, Mr. McFarlane shared that his Blair years were the most significant in his life, “imparting values (plus some knowledge) that proved invaluable.” Mr. McFarlane graduated from Syracuse University in 1952, served two years in the U.S. Army and then joined his family’s printing business in Fulton, New York, of which he became president. A leader in business and his community, he served as chairman of the Flexible Packing Association, the Fulton Chamber of Commerce and A.L. Lee Memorial Hospital; president of the United Way of Greater Fulton; and a trustee of the YMCA of Fulton. Mr. McFarlane was preceded in death by his wife of 45 years, Mary Lou, and is survived by three daughters and three grandchildren.

Wallace S. Peyton. Following his one year at Blair, Mr. Peyton earned a BA from Bard College and an MFA from Yale University and enjoyed an extensive career in public relations and advertising. Passionate about theater, he was a longtime member and former president of the Leonia Players Guild in New Jersey, where he directed many major productions. He volunteered at Englewood Library’s English as a Second
George W. Volland Jr. Mr. Volland, known to his class as “Volly,” attended Blair for two years, during which he was a member of the football and track teams and an honors student. He served in the U.S. Navy during World War II as special assistant to Adm. James Forrestal. Mr. Volland studied business at Cornell University and had an extensive career in marketing and sales at Goodyear Tire and Rubber and Ozite Corporation, as well as a second career as a financial advisor. He was preceded in death by his wife, Alice, and second wife, Carol, and is survived by two sons and two grandchildren.

1949

Thomas J. Bain. Mr. Bain was a loyal Blair alumnus and member of the John C. Sharpe Society of planned givers who enjoyed many visits to campus and co-hosted an annual alumni luncheon at the Newton Country Club in Newton, New Jersey. He served on the School’s Board of Governors from 2001 to 2007. The 1949 ACTA describes Mr. Bain as “an all-American boy with commendable character.” An honor roll student and varsity football and track athlete, he served on the student council, and was editor-in-chief of the 1949 ACTA and business manager of The Blair Breeze. He graduated from Princeton University and Harvard Law School (1958) and spent his entire legal career at Morris & Marshall College, serving as managing partner for many years until his retirement in 1999. Mr. Bain served as a municipal attorney for several Sussex County, New Jersey, towns and, for more than 30 years, as a municipal court judge. He was a leader in his community and was elected president of the Branchville Businessmen’s Club, the Branchville Rotary Club, the Sussex County Bar Association and the Newton Country Club. He was a trustee of Newton Memorial Hospital for 35 years and chaired its board of trustees. History, especially local history, was one of Mr. Bain’s lifelong passions, and he also enjoyed working on his family farm. Mr. Bain is survived by his wife of 57 years, Ann, three children and seven grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his brother, Donald C. Bain ’50.

Roger B. Koehler Jr. The 1949 ACTA notes that Mr. Koehler “is truly a fine example of a Blair graduate.” He spent two years at Blair and was a member of the ACTA staff, camera club and international club. An alumnus of Franklin & Marshall College, Mr. Koehler’s professional career was spent in the specialty food industry. He enjoyed golf and volunteering for Special Olympics and the American Cancer Society. Mr. Koehler is survived by his wife, Joan, two children and two grandchildren.

1953

J. Barry Lamb. Mr. Lamb, known as “Barry” to his classmates, was a member of the football team. He continued his education at Delaware Valley College, earning a BS in ornamental horticulture. A farmer by trade, Mr. Lamb later branched into landscaping and, together with his father, established Lamb’s Farm Market and Garden Center in Yardville, New Jersey. He is survived by his wife of 60 years, Patricia, four children, 10 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

1957

John R. Naisby III. A proud Blair graduate, Mr. Naisby was a steadfast member of the class of 1957 and generous supporter of the School. He was a lifelong Sparta, New Jersey, resident, who always enjoyed visiting campus for Alumni Weekend and other events. Mr. Naisby was a man of many interests and talents: He was a self-taught and self-employed mechanic, farmer and construction equipment operator; he played guitar, hunted and fished; he was passionate about local history and researched any topic that intrigued him; and he loved to travel the nation and the world with his wife of 30 years, Danielle (Dani). Active in his community, Mr. Naisby was a charter member of the Col. John Rosenkrans Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution and a member of the Branchville Businessmen’s Club, and he always found time to help others with any mechanical and automotive challenge. He and Dani were also members of the Lake Grinnell Association, the Sparta Historical Society and Wallkill Golf Club. Mr. Naisby was a Blair prefect and JV athlete, and he proudly served his country in the U.S. Army Signal Corps from 1961 to 1965. Predeceased by his wife in 2014, Mr. Naisby is survived by his brother, James H. G. Naisby ’57; two children; seven grandchildren, including Jessica Lowndes ’15; and many dear friends and family members.

1959

Heyward F. Lawton Jr. “Taff” came to Blair for his junior and senior years and remained connected to his class, serving on a reunion committee and attending his 50th reunion. His car’s front vanity license plate read “Blair 1959.” Mr. Lawton studied at Franklin & Marshall College and earned a BS in accounting at Saint Joseph’s University. A resident of Orange, Virginia, he owned Main Street Accounting from 1986 to 2014, volunteered at the Orange County Chamber of Commerce and Historical Society, and was a member of the Orange Volunteer Fire Company. He also served as a member of the Hatboro-Horsham, Pennsylvania, 2nd Alarmers for a number of years. A train enthusiast, Mr. Lawton enjoyed train and nature photography. He was preceded in death by his first and second wives, DeSales and Audrey, and is survived by five children and five grandchildren.

Thomas J. Mackie II. A two-year Blair student, Mr. Mackie was a member of the varsity swim team, The Blair Breeze and ACTA, and served as the class photographer. The 1959 ACTA notes, “Tom can’t be seen without his camera,” and during his career, he
worked at Eastman Kodak Company and as a freelance photographer. An avid traveler who enjoyed time with his family, Mr. Mackie is survived by his son and two grandchildren.

1961
David C. Carrad. Mr. Carrad attended Blair for seventh through ninth grade and later graduated from Trinity College, Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism and Harvard Law School. Admitted to the New York and Delaware bars, he practiced corporate and family law and later became involved in consulting and writing ventures. Mr. Carrad was founder and President of QDRO Solutions, Inc., and author of The Complete QDRO Handbook: Dividing ERISA, Military and Civil Service Pensions in Divorce Cases and Collecting Child Support from Employee Benefit Plans, published by the American Bar Association. A Vietnam War veteran, Mr. Carrad spoke about Vietnam at a Society of Skeptics lecture in 2012. He is survived by three children.

1963
Edward S. Baker. Entering Blair in 1962, Mr. Baker was member of the varsity football team. He continued his education at Monmouth College. Mr. Baker spent most of his life in Florida and worked as a jewelry salesman and stock broker. He enjoyed volunteering at a children’s home. Mr. Baker is survived by his daughter, Elizabeth, a stepson and two grandchildren.

William J. McElligott. During his one year at Blair, Mr. McElligott was a member of the varsity football and track teams, co-editor of The Blair Breeze and a member of the international club. He earned his bachelor’s degree at Hamilton College and JD at Suffolk Law School. Mr. McElligott practiced law in Pembroke, Massachusetts. He was an avid traveler, an outdoor enthusiast, a Boston sports fan, and author of several novels and poems. Mr. McElligott is survived by his wife, Annette, five children and three grandchildren.

1977
John B. Brewer. “Bucky” came to Blair for one year and attended West Virginia University. His many interests included fly-tying, scuba diving, fishing, camping, boating and nature, and he developed an encyclopedic knowledge of these subjects. Mr. Brewer was a master machinist and a problem solver who generously shared his time and expertise. He is survived by his sister and his brother, David S. Brewer ’81.

1981
Alfred S. Dally Jr. A three-year Blair student and golf team captain, Mr. Dally was a lifelong supporter of the class of 1981 and a member of the John C. Sharpe Society of planned givers. He was a dedicated contributor to the Sallyann and Alfred S. Dally, Sr. ‘43 Library Fund and very active in his 35th Blair reunion last spring. Mr. Dally graduated from the University of Tampa in 1985 and worked in finance and insurance management at Dally Insurance & Investments and Summit Brokerage Services. He served on the board of Chairscholars, was an avid golfer and could frequently be seen on the sidelines of Blair football games. Preceded in death by his father, Alfred S. Dally ’43, Mr. Dally is survived by his wife, Kimberly, and his sister, Jane.

1989
Christopher C. Curry. Mr. Curry attended Blair for a postgraduate year during which he played football and captained the lacrosse team. A lifelong lacrosse enthusiast, he continued playing at the collegiate level and later coached teams in Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and California. He studied at Radford University and West Chester University and then worked in the restaurant industry in Newport, Rhode Island. In 2010, Mr. Curry relocated to California and joined his brother's business, The Temecula Olive Oil Company, where he worked in special events, milling, and overseeing orchards and production. He is survived by his parents and four siblings.

1991
Oliver B. Rodriguez. After spending one year at Blair, Mr. Rodriguez attended university in Spain. On his personal page in the 1991 ACTA, he wrote “A remembrance to the friends with whom I shared my time in high school, so that they are reminded of the time that we spent together.” Mr. Rodriguez was a talented musician and is survived by his parents, his wife, Loli Ramos, and two daughters.

1994
Simone N. Saxon. A four-year Blair student, Ms. Saxon was a member of the field hockey and track teams and the Blair Academy Dancers (BAD). She remained a loyal friend to many classmates who will remember her infectious smile and laugh. Ms. Saxon graduated from Rutgers University with bachelor’s degrees in political science and history, and she worked for Verizon and PHH Mortgage. She is survived by her parents, daughter, Bianca, and five siblings.

2020
Juliette Dajani. Juliette came to Blair from Singapore, having also lived in China and traveled extensively with her family. She resided in Locke Hall, where she was known for her genuinely happy persona, her friendliness and kindness to everyone, and the dimpled smile she always wore. Juliette enjoyed swimming at the beach and being outdoors, and she discovered an interest in photography during her first semester at Blair. A member of the JV tennis and ski teams, Juliette passed away following a skiing accident that occurred during a Blair ski team practice. She will be remembered on campus and by all who knew her for her optimism, compassion, appreciation for life’s spontaneity and positive spirit. She dearly loved her family and is survived by her parents, Sam Dajani and Jing Huang, and her brother, Zach.
Former Faculty

**Clemens S. Burke.** A U.S. Army veteran and high school language teacher for more than 40 years, Mr. Burke graduated from Franklin & Marshall College in 1951 and earned master’s degrees in Spanish and German languages at Middlebury College in 1958. He began his teaching career at Blair Academy, where he taught Spanish and German from 1963 to 1973 before moving to Georgia. Mr. Burke was an accomplished piano player, well-known for his sense of humor. Preceded in death by his first two wives, he is survived by his third wife, Margaret, three children and seven grandchildren.

**Past Parent & Friend of Blair**

**Jean D. Lieberman.** Mrs. Lieberman was a loyal supporter of the School and member of the John C. Sharpe Society of planned givers. Her children, **Michael J. Lieberman ’71, Mark T. Lieberman ’74** and Trustee **Marianne Lieberman ‘79,** attended Blair from 1967 to 1979, and she is remembered as a caring parent who showed love to many on campus and at her home in Pennsylvania. The focus of Mrs. Lieberman’s life was her family, and she leaves 13 grandchildren, including **Maria Lieberman Smalley ’01, Thomas Lieberman ’02, Nicholas Lieberman ’03, Kevin Lieberman ’07, Meghan Grant ’17 and Clare Grant ’19.** Mrs. Lieberman’s late brother, **John O. Doern,** was a 1948 Blair graduate, and among her 26 nieces and nephews are **David B. Lieberman ’74, E. Andrew Kapp ’82 and Richard C. Wilt ’84.** She is also survived by six great-grandchildren. Mrs. Lieberman was a 1947 graduate of Wellesley College, and she earned her MA in English literature at Lehigh University in 1981. Her professional life included a brief career as a radio broadcaster and a stint as Miss Jean on the syndicated television show Romper Room. She and her husband built Lieberman Appalucci Advertising into a leading agency in eastern Pennsylvania. She was also a shareholder and member of the board of directors of a family firm, Interspace Airport Advertising, which was successfully sold to Clear Channel Outdoor in 2006. Mrs. Lieberman was actively involved in her Lehigh Valley community, where she served on the board of directors of the Allentown YM/YWCA and was a member of the Wellesley Lehigh Valley Alumni Association, St. Thomas More Parish and the Lehigh Valley Girl Scouts. Mrs. Lieberman earned her private pilot’s license at the age of 55, and she enjoyed golfing, tennis, skiing and traveling the world with the many members of her family.

Former Trustee

**Carol Richardson Kimmelman.** A passionate and generous champion of education, Mrs. Kimmelman was deeply devoted to her family—her husband, Chairman of the Blair Board of Trustees Douglas Kimmelman; their children, **Annie ’12, Robert ’13, Tommy ’15 and Scottie;** and many loved ones. She was elected a Blair Trustee in 2009 and brought her energy, commitment to helping others and experience as a classroom teacher to the Board. Mrs. Kimmelman was a member of the Education and School Life, Buildings and Grounds, and Advancement Committees, and, together with her husband, generously supported many projects that enhanced life at Blair for students, faculty and faculty families. In addition, she was a gracious ambassador for the School.

Mrs. Kimmelman earned a BA at the University of Southern California where, as a gifted and fiercely competitive athlete, she was a member of the school’s 1983 undefeated national championship tennis team. She taught elementary school in South Central Los Angeles for eight years, and her love for her students, the classroom and tennis inspired her many volunteer and philanthropic pursuits, including her work as a tutor, a tennis coach at children’s clinics and a founder of academic scholarships. Since 2008, Mrs. Kimmelman served on the board of the United States Tennis Association (USTA) Foundation, the USTA’s philanthropic and charitable entity; she received the Foundation’s inaugural Service Award in 2016 for her many contributions to the sport of tennis.

“In her brave battle with cancer, Carol showed us all what it means to be a courageous mom with a bright and incredibly positive spirit,” said Head of School Chris Fortunato. “In the short time I knew her, I was incredibly moved by her dedication to helping others, particularly young people, whether through her generosity and commitment to Blair or her other important philanthropic works. Most especially and importantly, I am humbled by her devotion to her family.”

The Kimmelman family, together with the USTA Foundation, plans to honor Mrs. Kimmelman’s memory by creating a community tennis center in inner-city Los Angeles. The Carol Richardson Kimmelman Tennis Center will fulfill her dream of making the sport she loved accessible to children in need.
JOHN I. BLAIR SAYS:

Join us for Blair Academy’s Alumni Weekend…

It’s going to be EPIC!

June 9-11, 2017

Weekend Highlights:

- Blair Cup Golf Scramble
- Athletic Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony
  - Robert Novogratz ’55
  - Michael Lieberman ’71
  - Laura Cochran Morris ’75
  - Tamara Parrott ’97
  - Luol Deng ’03
- John Insely Blair: From Poverty to Philanthropy Trolley Tours
- Portraits of Stone: A Cemetery Walking Tour
- “Tell Your Blair Story” Workshop with Carolyn Conforti-Browse ’79
- Friday-Night Class Gatherings
- 5K Run with Blair cross country coaches Martin Miller & Latta Browse
- Head of School’s Assembly & Awards Presentation
- John I. Blair historian & former Blair history department chair Elliot Trommald, PhD, presents: ‘The Elusive Search for the Truth About John I. Blair’
- Alumni Lacrosse Game, led by Teddy Wenner ’96
- Dinner & Dancing to “The Good Times Band”
- “Verdant Hills” Road Cycling Tour, led by Carl Cramer ’72 & Rob Merrifield

Stay connected to Blair by visiting www.blair.edu/alumni for information about:

- Upcoming alumni receptions
- Alumni in the news
- Class Facebook pages
- And, of course, Alumni Weekend 2017

Questions? Contact Jenny Maine, director of alumni relations, at (908) 362-6121, ext. 5655, or mainej@blair.edu.

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Questions?
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